TERESA HOSKYNS

The Empty Place

DEMOCRACY AND PUBLIC SPACE

ROUTLEDGE RESEARCH IN PLANNING AND URBAN DESIGN

ROUTLEDGE

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In *The Empty Place: Democracy and Public Space*, Teresa Hoskyns explores the relationship of public space to democracy by relating different theories of democracy in political philosophy to spatial theory and spatial and political practice.

Establishing the theoretical basis for the study of public space, Hoskyns examines the rise of representative democracy and investigates contemporary theories for the future of democracy, focusing on Chantal Mouffe's agonistic model and the civil society model of Jürgen Habermas. She argues that these models of participatory democracy can coexist and are necessarily spatial.

The book then provides diverse perspectives on how the role of physical public space is articulated through three modes of participatory spatial practice. The first focuses on issues of participation in architectural practice through a set of projects exploring the 'open spaces' of a postwar housing estate in Euston. The second examines the role of space in the construction of democratic identity through a feminist architecture/art collective, producing space through writing, performance and events. The third explores participatory political democratic practice through social forums at global, European and city levels. Hoskyns concludes that participatory democracy requires a conception of public space as the empty place, allowing different models and practices of democracy to coexist.

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The Empty Place

Democracy and public space

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Introduction

Democracy and public space – theory and practice

> The universal mistake made by man … was the mistake that allowed power to be placed outside of life.
>
> Henri Lefebvre, *The Critique of Everyday Life*

In the twenty-first century we are experiencing a unique moment for democracy, influenced by circumstances of globalisation, new forms of communication, political thinking and activism. New and participatory democratic practices are rising up throughout the world, transforming public space and resulting in the need to reformulate both democracy and public space. But what does this mean for space, spatial practices and cities? This book explores a set of complex relationships in political philosophy, spatial theory, and spatial and democratic practice.

The problem of how the architect can make political space is one that has troubled me since I first started architectural studies. The desire to investigate political space came from a combination of wanting to escape a feeling of emptiness from moving around the city's consumer spaces and a yearning to re-create spaces that reflect times I consider to be moments of political freedom in my life, but knowing that the tools I had – pen, paper, drawing board and site – were not enough.

The starting point of the research for this book was my experience of working in architectural offices on the growing area of architectural practice called 'participation'. Participation in architecture and planning developed in the 1990s in response to inner-city problems such as urban decay, poor environment, unemployment, high crime rates and general social exclusion.[1] Although I found this type of socially engaged architectural work to be exciting, I also found the work to be frustrating and problematic as architectural participation appeared to operate within the realm of democratic space, but frequently without the political will or formal participatory democratic framework that it required in order to be effective. Public policy often has the contradictory policies of advocating participation in architecture and planning at the same time as marginalising political actors and privatising public space. For example, in King's Cross in London, community groups contested the development proposals for many years, and during this period a number of arts and community groups grew, became

active and developed proposals for the Railway Lands area.[2] But the participation process I was involved in, led by the Architecture Foundation, took place directly following evictions of many groups from the Railway Lands area and bypassed existing campaigns. Instead of the formal participation process building on relations formed around local and community campaigns such as housing, cycling and green initiatives, the participation process formed new sociological groupings of residents defined through ethnicity, age and sex.[3]

As architect Jeremy Till notes:

> In architecture, participation is now a necessary part of most public planning processes, but much of it remains token. The mere taking part is seen to be enough; endless sticky notes with handwritten exhortations plastered over architectural drawings to create a sense of activity, but at the end of the day those notes are literally and metaphorically peeled off, leaving the barest trace of the voices of others.[4]

Till shows how the word 'participation' is commonly used in architecture and urban planning to describe a consultation process, where 'taking part' is seen to be enough while the decisions are made elsewhere.[5] This highlights a question about whether participation can work as a purely architectural project without re-thinking the relations involved in the production of space. If space is produced through social relations and then reproduced through everyday life, actions and repetitions, architecture, the built environment and lived space are the product of social relations, but equally influence the production of social relations themselves. Often by the time the architectural participation process starts, decisions such as whether to build, what to build, the budget and the selection of the architect have already been made.

Architectural practice is in the difficult position of being unable to create political space through design alone. Instead if we accept that 'space' is produced from social relations then I am interested in participation within the social production of space. At what point does the social become spatial and where does politics lie between the social and the spatial? I ask why community participation is focused on architectural rather than political practice when urban decisions are made in the democratic arena and I question what type of democratic structure is necessary for participation in the production of the city. I therefore explore participation from the joint perspectives of architecture and political philosophy, concentrating on the intersection between architecture, planning and democratic practices, which is where I consider participation to lie. The book therefore gives equal time to political and spatial theory *and* to political and spatial practice, and aims to develop an approach that combines both disciplines.

Since I began this research in 1992, the relationship of democracy to public space has changed dramatically and, at a global scale, we have seen movements such as the social forums, the Arab Spring and the Occupy movement transform public squares into new and sophisticated spaces of participatory democracy.

Democracy works differently on different scales, from the local to the global, and by means of case studies I examine how participatory spatial practices can

operate on these different scales and challenge prevailing power structures. I discuss the issues of architectural practice and democracy on a neighbourhood scale, examining the work of atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa) in Paris and Regent's Park Estate in London, and continue by bringing the feminist voice into the use and function of institutional buildings, and examining gender relations at the scale of the room in Homerton Hospital.

Whereas the first case studies discuss specific sites and buildings in relation to architectural design, Chapter 7 on spaces of participatory democracy, examines how political democratic participatory practices articulate space at different geographical scales. Scale refers to the geographic parameters of the people between whom the democratic discussion is taking place and the discussion generally includes issues relevant to that scale. So, for example, the London Social Forum concentrates on issues concerning London as well as other general issues. The World Social Forum has attendance of people from around the world. I found that participatory democratic forums are weak on the national scale where representative democracy is at its strongest.

The term 'global' has many different, contingent and competing meanings, and in this book, 'global' does not refer to 'the whole world'. Global derives from globalisation and therefore generally means market-led world capitalism, but there are also competing definitions referring to global processes.[6] In the final chapter on the social forums, I discuss 'global' as a locally constructed concept,[7] and examine competing meanings of 'global' through the study of the cities of London and Porto Alegre that have contrasting forms of city governance. I have chosen the cities of London and Porto Alegre to examine in detail as they are both cities which export models of city governance. London can be seen to produce and export a neo-liberal concept of the global or globalisation and Porto Alegre a participatory concept, or anti-globalisation. The different experiences of the social forum in these two cities illustrate the issues of representative and participatory city governance for the production of public space. Thus, the location of forum meetings is important, and as it travels to different continents, for example Asia and Africa, different non-Western concepts of the global and different issues are raised, but I do not have the space to discuss these. I also find that the idea of Europe changes as the forum moves to different European cities.

My investigation here into participation in political philosophy shows that participation has been one of the most contested subjects since the beginnings of political philosophy in ancient Athens. Throughout history, the debate has taken many different forms and there are many different theories of democracy advocating participation to different degrees. If the word 'participation' relates to power and is not just another name for 'consultation', decisions are made directly by the citizen and are no longer delegated to representatives. Participatory democracy describes a public realm that is not run by the state on behalf of subjects but by citizens, where citizenship becomes defined by participation and where the citizen's role includes a public political life. To define participation in its political sense as the practice of politics or political life or speech and action within the public realm, the *vita activa*,[8] changes the conditions of participation for the

architect. In this sense participation does not mean, as is sometimes thought, that 'the public' will be consulted in the design of the building. Rather the concern of the architect should be to re-think public space for the direct practice of politics, and bring architectural discourse itself into political democracy.

I hope to show through the chapters of this book that the spaces of democracy (spaces for the practice of democracy) and the democracy of space (democratic relations in the production of space) are intertwined, and link to conceptions and imaginations of public space, democracy and citizenship. However, this is very complex and involves continually shifting relationships between public space, the public realm and the public sphere. These terms have different interpretations and changing meanings. In this book, I define 'public space' (following Setha Low and Neil Smith) as 'anywhere that has public access'. This may be open space or buildings open to the public, and I also include virtual public space. As I discuss in Chapter 3, Low and Smith argue that following privatisations, public space can no longer be defined through public ownership or management.[9] The term 'public realm' here is distinguished from the private realm and refers to the public sector, state and administration, so this includes government, the welfare state, publicly owned, managed or funded public space, public services and public workers.[10] The public realm is in theory democratically accountable as democratically elected bodies control it. I define the 'public sphere' as 'the political realm of social life' or by Malcolm Miles's definition as 'the realm where members of a democratic society determine the shape and values of that society for themselves'.[11] Geoff Eley describes how the relationship between the public realm and public sphere is linked to democratic ideals so, for example, socialists argue for a democratic public realm which involves an extension of the public sphere into the public realm through nationalisations,[12] whereas for Jürgen Habermas, the public sphere operates outside the state and comes into being when private individuals assemble to form a public body; the public sphere operates in civil society and mediates between society and the state.[13]

Public space both expresses and reproduces these ideals. Socialist or civil society ideals suggest different democratic alternatives for public space as it interacts with the public sphere or the public realm. However, increasingly representative structures of democratic governance, culminating in neo-liberalism in the last quarter of the twentieth century, have seen a joint attack on the public sphere and the public realm. Neo-liberalism not only advocates the exclusion of citizen participation, but also strives to achieve a minimal state, which involves a dismantling of the public realm, and includes a transfer of public space to the private sector. These combined factors can be seen to have broken the links between democracy and public space, and produced a de-spatialisation of democracy and a de-politisation of public space. At the same time, the emphasis has moved from citizen to subject or consumer.[14] Cultural geographer David Harvey links neo-liberalism to capitalism and shows how capitalist relations depend on the accumulation of space for the production and consumption of surplus value, and this transfers to a meaning of public space as spaces for the consumption of surplus value.[15] Therefore, on the one hand, the rise of representational democracy has

coincided with capitalist relations in the production of space and a de-politisation of public space. For cultural theorist Miles, it is possible to defend public space for democratic reasons but it is flawed to justify the design of new public spaces, such as piazzas, as democratic, because they reflect political structures of representation and capitalist relations of consumption.[16] On the other hand, as I show in Chapter 2, most contemporary thinkers in political philosophy are arguing for participation in some form. The discourse regarding participation in democracy has shifted, particularly in the twenty-first century, where globalisation and the Internet have changed the spatial conditions for democracy. The arguments that have dominated Anglo-American democratic theory and practice during the twentieth century suggest that while public space was central to democracy in the ancient city-states, public space is no longer a necessary component of democracy in contemporary Western society. For example, democratic theorist Robert Dahl argues that classical theorists were concerned with city-states but that national-scale democracies are too big to include public participation.[17]

These arguments can be questioned for a number of reasons.

The first reason concerns scale. Accelerating globalisation, combined with the growth and reach of cities means that global, local and regional administrations are becoming more important at the same time as we are seeing a reduction in the power of the nation-state. Global civil society theorists argue that representative democracies mainly operate at a national scale, while multinational markets are operating on a global scale without equivalent democratic institutions, and are therefore outside democratic control. They argue for public participation in a strong global civil society and the strengthening of global institutions as a democratic counterbalance for market capitalism.[18]

The second reason concerns communication. In the ancient Greek city-state, communication was by necessity face to face. The newspaper, television and particularly the Internet mean that physical public space is no longer necessary for the practice of democracy; in fact the Internet is widely described as the new participatory democratic space.[19] However, as I show in Chapter 3 and Chapter 6, the mass global meetings of civil society have coincided with the advent of the Internet. In practice, the Internet provides the structure for mass communications and creates a global public sphere, which transforms democracy and public space. The Internet results in an increase in the need for physical public spaces in the city for the participatory practices of democracy.[20]

The third argument concerns the representative nature of political governance. The rise of representation, combined with liberal individualism, has weakened formal democratic practice in everyday life. This has resulted in a lack of articulation about what constitutes contemporary democratic practice and therefore the democratic spaces of the city. I argue that participatory democratic practices are spatial as they take place as part of everyday life. If we are to re-think democratic relations then spatial thinking must inform the practice of democracy. Therefore the question of whether physical public space is necessary for democracy can be seen to be both a political and an architectural question, directly linked to the participation/representation debate in political philosophy

discussed in Chapter 2. Architectural theorist Jane Rendell defines political space through action. She argues for a thinking of public space that is beyond the binary of public and private as these are shifting boundaries: space is not static. Rendell argues that instead we need 'to map a new topography of places that exist between the two spaces of collective action and shared resistance'.[21]

The definition of 'practice' as 'action'[22] is central to participation in architecture, political philosophy and theories of democracy. It is located with theorists such as Aristotle, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Hannah Arendt, who argue that democracy is a participative action rather than something delegated to political elites, and with Chantal Mouffe, who argues for a notion of citizenship as 'a principle for collective action' as opposed to the liberal notion of citizenship as 'a set of rights'.[23] The question of who should practice democracy is one of the central questions running through democratic writing since Plato, who advocated thought over action.

In this way, action and thought inform each other in a dialectical relationship, as Claude Lefort shows when he uses Merleau-Ponty's *Adventures of the Dialectic* to describe how the thought of Arendt 'thinking' does not simply mean 'passing through the realm of what has already been thought; it means making a new beginning and more specifically still beginning again on the basis of events'.[24]

For this research I am defining practice as action and action as a research methodology for design, a methodology that allows one to be a participant or actor rather than an observer in research projects. This methodology allows for the creation of new types of spaces that relate to the democratic models discussed in Part I, through the development of social relations. So rather than using *case studies* as one would in traditional research, where the researcher is an observer of other people's practice, I am using *practices* that develop through participation. I argue, and this research demonstrates an understanding of practice, as much about the production of social conditions or programmes as about drawing or designing.

I decided to research participatory politics and went to Florence in 2002 for the first European Social Forum, attended by 40,000 people.[25] It was like Glastonbury Festival, but with politics instead of music. There I began to see how city-scale politics works, giving words like 'polis' (people, politics, city) a new understanding. Endless stalls, each occupied by a participating organisation, intertwined with discussion spaces, illustrated what an *agora* might have been or how the types of associational and discursive public spaces advocated by Habermas could work. In 2003, with theatre director Steve Tiller, we took the play *Warcrime*,[26] about the Kosovo war, to Thessaloniki in a parallel forum of the EU summit. As Tony Blair spoke at the official summit (moved at the last minute to a peninsula outside the town), the Wedding Collective theatre company performed *Warcrime* in an amphitheatre in the town, offering another voice on British foreign policy.

The book is in two parts. The focus of Part I, 'Theorising democracy as a spatial practice', develops the idea of participatory democracy as a spatial practice, and examines more theoretical aspects of democracy and public space through political philosophy and spatial theory. Part II, 'Participatory spatial

practices', explores how democracy can be enacted through spatial practice: the first two chapters in Part II investigate participatory design practices and examine questions relating to practice, site and identity; the third explores the role of public space in participatory political democratic practice, which I research through participating in the social forums.

Chapter 1, 'Ancient Greece and the tri-partite model of democracy', examines the birth of democracy in ancient Athens. I explore the participatory roots of democracy by examining the public spaces of the political centre of the city. Whereas the understanding of modern democracy is more linked to the assembly, democracy in ancient Greece is better understood by the coexistent activities of the old *agora*. Democracy involved a number of practices which developed first from the activities practised in the large, cleared, open space of the old *agora* (meaning 'place of assembly')[27] and then the activities were pulled out and became established spaces of the city. I discover that democratic citizenship took on a number of different identities and activities, practised by Athenians as they moved around the city. The investigation shows that during the years of Pericles (495–429 BC), when Athenian democracy was at its height, the assembly at Pnyx was the main decision space (exclusive to freeborn, adult, male citizens) but participation in democracy was not exclusive to that space.

The three key spaces of democracy which developed out of the activities from the old *agora* were the new *agora*, better known as the market place, but still a space of different democratic activities, the theatre and the assembly. I argue that it was through a tri-partite relationship between these spaces that democracy was practised. The new *agora*, however, was still multifunctional: it provided space for associations and trades, involving acts of production as well as consumption; it was a space for news and public opinion, for philosophy and reflection. The *agora* was associational and provided a space between the home and the assembly. Nicholas Jones argues that performance in associations gave access to citizenship.[28]

The theatre at Dionysus also can be seen to play a different, but important, role in democratic practice as it was there that disagreements in society were acted out. Unlike contemporary theatre, the theatre started in the early morning and continued for a number of days with hundreds of actors. Characters like the protagonist,[29] the lead character, and the plays described as the *agones* show how conflict played a central role in the theatre, and therefore in democracy, as sophists and rhetoricians concerned themselves with the theory and practice of argument. Citizens went to the theatre to reflect on conflicts and develop sophisticated arguments for the assembly.[30]

The Parthenon, built during the time of Pericles in the so-called 'golden age' of Athenian democracy, can be seen to be the earliest example of architectural participation, and provides a model for how participation can work; it has been described by Mary Beard as 'the triumph of the citizens' assembly'.[31] The existence of specifications and absence of drawings suggest that architecture was a discursive practice rather than a drawn or representational practice and took place through a collection of assemblages between the assembly space at Pnyx

and the *agora.* For architectural theorist Spiro Kostof, the citizens were the client, and decisions regarding commissioning of the work, the budget, appointing of the architect and electing men for the building commission were all decided in the mass public meetings of the assembly.[32]

Plato's critique, which came in the 'twilight years' of Athenian democracy, would lead us to believe that this system was purely agonistic and that politics as a lived practice meant that city life became a life of conflict and power struggles. Plato set out to show that politics is not a lived practice and that conflict is not the normal mode of human life. Opinion is not the same as truth. He advocated that city life should be harmonious and unified, and this means entrusting the foundation of the government to thought, centred on the idea of philosophers as rulers. This formed the basis of political representation.[33]

Chapter 2, 'From politics to the political', investigates the history of political philosophy, discussing the birth and rise of representative democracy in England. The chapter first discusses the tension between liberalism and democracy by examining the thought of the founder of liberalism, Thomas Hobbes, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, philosopher and advocate of participatory democracy. Democratic revolutions around the world at the end of the eighteenth century and revolutionary forces in England put pressure on England to form a democracy. Democracy entered England in the form of representative democracy, a system of free elections, freedom of speech and information, described by James Mill as 'The grand discovery of modern times' in which 'the solution of all difficulties, both speculative and practical would be found'.[34] This model, which started in England, has changed the meaning of Western democracy.

The second part of Chapter 2 examines future possibilities for democracy, focusing on two theories of participatory democracy that could both be seen to complement the existing democratic system. The theory of civil society and the theory of agonistic democracy can also be thought of as part of the universalism versus radicalism debate. Can we attribute universal values and universal rights to world citizens or can different conceptions of the common good coexist? For the universal position, I include the deliberative model of democracy theorised by Habermas, the cosmopolitan model of democracy put forward by Daniele Archibugi and David Held, and the model for global civil society advocated by Mary Kaldor. For the radicalism side of the debate, I include the work of Hannah Arendt, Claude Lefort, Carl Schmitt and the agonistic plural democracy model advocated by Chantal Mouffe. My argument is that Habermas and Mouffe are describing different types of democratic participatory space, one associational and one agonistic, that can also be understood through the democratic practice in ancient Athens.

While I am not advocating the elimination of representative democracy, as I see the act of electing and replacing governments as important to democracy, representative democracy needs to be supplemented and surrounded by participatory practices. Claude Lefort shows that if democracy is thought of in its philosophical sense, indeterminacy is central to democracy. His critique of democratic centralism, a system of single party participatory government, practised in Eastern Europe, is that it became totalitarian.[35] However, representation is one

conception of democracy, and in my view there is a need to open democratic structures to formal participatory practices of democracy. The civil society model and the agonistic model, alongside representative democracy, form the kind of tri-partite system we have seen in ancient Greece.

The civil society theory of democracy can be seen as the closest to a theory of democratic public space, but does not describe a formal public space, as by definition civil society is located in the realm Habermas terms 'the lifeworld' or space between the family and the state.[36] Civil society describes any persons that come together for collective action on issues towards the common good. Civil society has taken on different meanings throughout history that have included the bourgeoisie, trade unions and the grass roots of political parties. The contemporary definition is more vague and includes associations, community groups, social movements and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).[37]

The newest emergence of civil society is global civil society that has risen up as a counterbalance to the increasing strength of global market corporations and global governance institutions such as the World Trade Organization. While on the one hand global civil society is spatial, as the mass meetings of global civil society appropriate public space and demonstrate how political public space can be practised, on the other hand I would argue that global civil society is lacking in a formalised spatiality and there is also a lack of articulation concerning what constitutes the spaces of global civil society. This creates a dislocation with the local and a lack of access to global civil society. As a result, it is often criticised for being elitist and ephemeral, comprising academics, young professionals working for NGOs or charities, and people that can afford air tickets.

The examples discussed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 6, on the London Social Forum, of campaigns around Queen's Market in Upton Park, show how the global can produce local public space. The associations that have arisen from these spaces are exactly the types of democratic practices that give access to global civil society. Associational democratic spaces like markets can be seen as a breeding ground for global civil society as well as spaces for discourse and deliberation. As Doreen Massey shows, space plays a key role in the construction of political identities, and she states: 'Space does not exist prior to identities/entities … identities/entities, the relations between them and the spatiality which is part of them, are all co-constitutive.'[38]

Agonistic democracy, however, puts disagreement at the centre. It takes a philosophical approach to the meaning of democracy as the empty place between the multiple subject positions and different conceptions of citizenship. Instead of being the arena for rational consenting human beings as in the civil society approach, it is the arena for passions and conflict. Mouffe argues that 'The agonistic struggle should take place at a multiplicity of levels, it cannot be localised in a privileged space, it is a dimension that can manifest itself in all kinds of social relations, whatever the specific space is like.'[39] The agonistic dimension can be seen to appear in public space when the unified and homogeneous properties are challenged; to manifest itself through the term Rendell describes, referring to public art, as 'critical spatial practice'.[40]

Chapter 3, 'Dis-locations of democracy*:* democracy and public space', examines the construction of public space and how it expresses and at the same time reproduces broader social and democratic relationships.[41] I first set out changing definitions of public space and discuss how these first relate to capitalist relations and second to neo-liberalism. David Harvey shows that the appropriation and transformation of space as spaces of consumption has been key to the growth of capitalism.[42] The neo-liberal model of democracy, however, with its aims to make new markets available while reducing itself to a minimum, can be seen to be going much further. The neo-liberal model of democracy's aims to make new markets available while reducing the state to a minimum can be seen to have had the effect of fragmenting the public realm. This has occurred through privatisations and asset stripping, which involves a process of dismantling the public realm and privatising the profitable parts.The result has been a dis-location of formal politics from public space, a split between the public realm and the public sphere. Mark Purcell argues that neo-liberalism disenfranchises democratic citizens through the removal of the elected democratic framework of the city.[43] Political action becomes opposed, that of resistance or occupation rather than the formal participation in democratic institutions experienced during social democracy. Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt describe the change in participation as a shift in citizenship from habit to performance.[44]

In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre shifts in focus and scale from Marx's industrial relations and the production of material objects to the production of the space in the city. In doing so he creates a more inclusive *demos* that is no longer divided between workers and capitalists but questions the power relations in the production of the city.[45]

Lefebvre's triad theory of the production of space describes how space is conceived, perceived and practised.[46] Where initiatives such as participation in architectural design are often located in the area of the conception of space, perceived and practised space are equally if not more important to democracy because they deal with lived space and everyday life, the space of political action and resistance. Participation in the design and production of physical space is important, and my examples of the Parthenon in Athens and the city of Porto Alegre in Brazil show that if participation is not 'token', the participatory process can produce links to the democratic. Politics is located in the space itself and in the way space is perceived and practised.

In neo-liberal society we have seen a shrinking of the *public realm* through the privatisation and corporatisation of public space. The fight to save the market spaces in London is just one example where we are seeing opposition to the removal of public spaces from democratic control and accountability.

The neo-liberal retreat from the public realm can be seen to have left an opening for new, more autonomous imaginations of democratic practice in public space. The twenty-first century has seen the birth of the Internet as a new participatory political space that has strengthened and globalised the public sphere. New networked forms of political identity are rising up with new imaginations for the performance of democratic practice and this can be seen to be transforming the meaning of physical public space.

Chapter 4, 'The production of democratic public space', discusses the implications for the construction of democratic public space. The chapter includes three modes of production linked to architectural and art practices that produce different democratic models of public space. To illustrate this, the chapter cites Parc de la Villette and architect Bernard Tschumi's use of deconstruction to remove function and create a universal model of space. The second example is the creation of the commons, and discusses the work of atelier d'architecture autogérée who aim to produce common space through participatory community practice. The third example involves methods of contamination and disruption to create an agonistic public space from artist Krysztof Wodiczko. The final section in this chapter discusses the production of democratic space through rights and describes the growing global movement of the 'Right to the City'.

Part II of this book, 'Participatory spatial practices', describes diverse practices ranging from the disciplines of art, architecture and politics that engage with the production of democratic public space. The practices each take on different aspects of participation. The first examines architectural space, construction of identity and the spaces of participatory democracy. Each practice encompasses a number of projects.

Chapter 5, 'From antagonism to agonism on Regent's Park Estate', takes the antagonistic relations occurring on the open spaces of a housing estate in Euston, London, as a starting point to discuss the relationship between architectural practice and democracy. The research first examines the conception of Regent's Park Estate, and the decisions influenced by the modern movement and the post-war period, which led to the production of an architecturally unified, zoned, high-density development in central London. I then discuss the relationship between the urban environment and identity, and use the work of Massey, who argues that democratic identity is spatially constructed, to argue that antagonistic relations can occur when diverse communities live architecturally and politically in homogeneous urban environments. Problems with street violence, between gangs of young people from the different communities living on the estate, could be explained using Carl Schmitt's *The Concept of the Political*. Here 'the political' is located in between friend and enemy. Schmitt describes violence as 'politics by other means'.[47]

In practice with architect Yvonne Dean and Delroy Beaton from the Nottingdale Technology Centre, we undertook a number of projects on the estate between 2001 and 2005, working with young people on a new funded youth activity called 'Open Spaces For All'. The work started out with the aim of achieving a kind of participatory architectural practice, designed to inform the refurbishment of the estate, but developed into a series of projects concentrating on the estate as perceived and practised. An identity-based art project, where young people made work that mapped out territories and expressed their desires for the estate, used projection, banners and film. Architecture as a spatial practice has since become an on-going area of youth work on the estate.

Chapter 6, 'Feminists taking the empty place', concerns the feminist practice, *taking place*, which is the name for a group of artists and architects occupying an

area termed by Jane Rendell as 'feminist spatial practice'. The practice expands architecture into writing, performance and art. I use the example of feminist practice to discuss the relationship between spatial practice and the construction of radical forms of identity.[48] The chapter follows a thread of feminist architectural practice that started with the Women's Design Centre in 1978, developed into the practice Matrix, Anne Thore Architects, WAFER and lastly *taking place,* and maps various shifts in approach, from an inclusive architecture for women seen in early Matrix work, to art/architecture collaborations that concentrate on representations and perceptions of space, to *taking place*, which uses event and performance to imagine space (particularly the space of the architecture school) differently. I use feminist theory and continental influences to theorise this shift in practice, and discuss issues around feminist work. Following a long period of avoiding the material elements of design and concentrating purely on the event and performing space, the latest project of *taking place* is a public art project for Homerton Hospital in London. It is a project that has followed the birth of a very premature child of Katie Lloyd Thomas, one of the members. I find the issues in the maternity ward to be very different from those in the architecture school and find that identity is contextual.

Chapter 7, 'Social forums and the spaces of participatory democracy', researches the participatory democratic practices of the social forums and discusses how tensions within the movement relate to different participatory models of democracy explored in Chapter 2. These tensions manifest themselves as spaces and different practices within the social forum. Social forums started on a global level with the first World Social Forum (WSF) in 2001. Social forums have grown throughout the world and now operate on many different scales – global, continental, national, city and local. My research includes participation in the WSF in Porto Alegre, Brazil (2003), and the European Social Forums in Florence (2002), Paris (2003), London (2004), Athens (2006) and Malmö (2008). This practice started as an examination of how participatory democracies appropriate and produce the public spaces of the city through spatial democratic practice, but through participation in the sessions on urban issues and cities the practice has become much more focused on developing discussions within the social forum and linking the urban struggles with democracy. I have found, therefore, that the public forum is key to my research on architecture and democracy as the forum itself provides an autonomous and democratic framework for participation running parallel to the formal democratic structures.

The word 'space' is commonly used within the social forum movement as a description for a model of participatory democracy. 'Space' describes a democratic system that is horizontal, participatory and open to a multiplicity of political subject positions. In Chico Whitaker's discussion of the WSF he describes the forum as a 'space' rather than a 'movement'.[49] Here, 'space' is an abstract notion that allows for a multiplicity of political positions, non-exclusive and participatory. He argues that a 'space' cannot have a manifesto or one political ideology like a political party. So the word 'space' describes a democratic arena where different concepts of democracy and democratic citizenship can coexist.

The practice/research also examines democracy at the city scale and compares London with Porto Alegre. One could argue that opposing positions in democratic theory from liberal and communitarian perspectives have embedded their conceptual ideas in these two cities. London is the city where neo-liberalism was invented, practised and exported.[50] London's model of the global city as a city of free markets and finance is one that many cities around the world have mimicked. Likewise, Porto Alegre can be seen as the city that invented and practises the participatory budget. This has provided a city model for alter-globalisation that has been adopted by cities in Brazil and throughout Latin America. The participatory budget started in 1989 when the Workers Party (PT) came to power. A third of the city's residents lived in isolated slums at the city outskirts, lacking access to public amenities (water, sanitation, healthcare facilities and schools). Neighbourhood assemblies combined with city-wide assemblies provided the framework for local and city-wide participation. Each neighbourhood decides independently on the budget priorities for that locality. This democratic re-structuring can be seen as a foundation for Porto Alegre to become a world political city offering an alternative to the general hegemonic view of democratic practice. It has also offered an alternative political voice to world politics through hosting the world's largest public assembly, the WSF in 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2006.

In contrast, I collaborated in forming the London Social Forum (LSF) and participated in organising a number of meetings, starting at the London School of Economics in 2003. The Right to the City Urban Forum (October 2004) was organised at the Bartlett as part of the European Social Forum (ESF) in London with Jane Rendell, Doreen Massey and Michael Edwards. At the London Social Forum, City Hall (October 2005), city issues such as public space, the Olympics, Thames Gateway and the London Plan were discussed alongside questions of democracy. The LSF has been focused on defending the public spaces of London, particularly the market spaces, and has hosted meetings where different community action groups can meet and discuss.

The research found a marked difference between social forums in Latin America and social forums in Europe. In Porto Alegre, the forum could 'plug into' the city which offered all of its public space and celebrated the WSF. In European cities, the ESF was mostly marginalised both spatially and through publicity, and found it difficult to find space. The lack of ability to 'plug in' to the city could be seen to have resulted in the Arab Spring and the Occupy movement in 2011. Occupy started in the United States and Europe and no longer attempted to participate in the city but occupied public space in city centres.

Throughout the book I discuss many different models of democracy and different modes of democratic practice, and I argue that democracy has a dialectical relationship with public space. Therefore, like democracy, democratic public space can take a multiplicity of forms. However, all of the examples have a common theme and this is how active participation and spatial interventions create a challenge to power, and enable the different voices required for the production of the empty place. In Claude Lefort's theory of the empty place he states that democracy requires a site of power that is empty; [51] not literally empty,

but produced through differentiated activities and practices of the social. The empty place separates democratic public space from spaces of identity, as it is a space that can be appropriated but not dominated: a space that contains different identities, but none that identify with it.

I argue that participatory democratic practices differ from representative ones, and I explore these, first in ancient Greece, then through political philosophy, and lastly from the position of three diverse practices, which each investigate this subject from the different positions of architecture, feminism and participatory politics.

Notes

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Part I
Theorising democracy as a spatial practice

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1 Ancient Greece and the tri-partite model of democracy

This chapter describes the origins of democracy, two thousand years ago in ancient Athens, where democracy was direct or participatory; each citizen had an equal right regardless of their property or class to participate directly in political decision-making through public assembly and not through representation.[1]

Classical historian M. H. Hansen, discussing the extent to which the Athenian democracy has influenced modern democracy, argues that Athenian democracy was both a set of political institutions and a set of political ideals. For Hansen, it is advisable in an analysis of Athenian democracy to treat the institutions and ideals separately. He argues that, as a set of institutions, there is very little similarity between ancient democracy and modern democracy. As an ideology, the Athenian triad *democratia–eleutheria–isonimia*, interpreted by Pericles in his funeral oration, has a striking similarity with its modern counterpart, democracy–liberty–equality, but these are unrelated as there is no direct tradition that connects the two.[2] In this chapter, I aim to examine the role of public space and the city, and therefore I will discuss the institutions rather than the ideology of Athenian democracy. While the ancient public spaces do not have a relationship with modern democracy, I argue that they can be understood through contemporary political theory, discussed in Chapter 2, and the social forums, discussed in Chapter 6.

For Hansen, Athenian democracy was not just a constitution or a set of institutions but a way of life. For the Greek way of thinking, no constitution could take effect unless it matched the lifestyle of the citizenry. Democracy corresponded to 'democratic man' and 'democratic lifestyle', but it was the democratic institutions of the *polis* that shaped and moulded democratic man.[3] He states that participation in Athenian democracy involved a number of practices which took place in political institutions: 'The Greek *poleis* were characterised by the abundance of political institutions and Athens was in the lead'. He particularly refers to the assemblies and the law courts. Hansen argues that unlike modern democracies where participation is limited to voting for the majority of people, most adult males were involved daily in working for those institutions.[4]

Classical political theorist Sara Monoson expands the notion of democratic practice to include a multitude of activities, spaces and changing roles of the citizen. She argues that democracy was not seen as something that happens in democratic institutions, which govern and make laws; democratic identity was something

fluid and changing. Democracy not only involved participating in the assembly and the council but also involved participating in the *demos*, where democratic citizenship entailed a cluster of cultural practices. Athletic competition, poetic production, theatre-going or sexual behaviour were as much about democratic citizenship as deliberation in public affairs.[5]

Hansen argues that the meaning of ancient democracy changed at the end of the eighteenth century, with the advent of modern democracy,[6] and it could also be argued that so did the criticisms of Athenian democracy. Hansen states that until 1790, democracy was invariably taken to mean government by the people, over the people, through a popular assembly.[7] The ancient democracy referred to was the general type critically described by Plato and Aristotle, who criticised Athenian democracy for, among other things, its inclusionary nature, the rule of ordinary people, artisans, traders, labourers and idlers in contrast to the propertied class. The assembly was a political organ in which the majority poor could out-vote the minority of countrymen and property owners.[8]

Hansen argues that during the first half of the nineteenth century, the appraisal of Athenian democracy changed to an historical analysis from a philosophical analysis, and this was a more positive account.[9] However, for David Held, critics of participatory democracy argue that the rise of democracy in ancient Athens coincided with the rise of slavery in mining, agriculture and the craft industries. They argue that citizenship was extended only to adult, male, freeborn Athenians who were citizens and that others were excluded. Men had the free time to participate in the *polis* because women, slaves, boys and foreigners were confined to the work at home.[10] As Habermas writes, 'the status in the *polis* depended on status as the master of the home or *oikos*'.[11] Many academics, for example Malcolm Miles, dismiss the democracy of ancient Greece for its exclusionary nature:

> This contradicts a more common alignment of public spaces with democracy, projected onto the *agora* (market) of classical Athens or its equivalent in north American bourgeois democracy. For example the piazza in an urban redevelopment scheme becomes a new *agora* where new urbanites mix and shape society. This is fanciful in two ways: firstly, because new urban spaces are primarily zones of consumption (often masking zones of corporate power); and secondly, because such a view is contradicted by the historical model – political decisions in Athens were made in the assembly (Pnyx) not the market, and were made only by men born free in the city who owned a talent of silver – maybe 5 per cent of the population.[12]

Where the exclusion is undoubtedly true in terms of the status of citizen and for the decision-making assembly, the boundaries as to what constitutes the practice of democracy seem to be more blurred, particularly if we take Monoson's definition of democratic practice. For example, the polis describes all public space; the craft industries were producing items as well as selling them in the *agora*, where the trade council and associations operated. Nicholas Jones argues that it was

through membership and performance in associations that people gained the right to become citizens, and associations may be said to mediate between the state and the individual.[13] So it appears that status in the *polis* depended on performance in the *polis* as well as the *oikos*.

It is important to examine the city in ancient Athens because this allows us to imagine a political rather than social[14] sense of public space. Democratic participation can be seen to have a different spatiality in antiquity than in modern times, where, for Arendt, modernity has been intent on excluding political *man* that she defines as 'man who acts and speaks, from its public realm'.[15] The *polis* of the free and equal referred to citizens and to the parts of the city that were common. Rather than having democratic institutions in the way we have now, public space was political. However, for classical theorist M. H. Hansen, the *polis* referred to the political sphere and the *polis* regulated a range of social activities. Matters such as industry, trade, education and agriculture were within the private sphere.[16]

If one looks at the plan of the site of the Athenian *agora* whose ruins still remain (see Figure 1.1), the word *agora* is used to describe both the larger site or the political centre of ancient Athens and the market place within the larger space. As I show later in this chapter, the assembly and the theatre started as practices in the market place before they became established spaces. The word

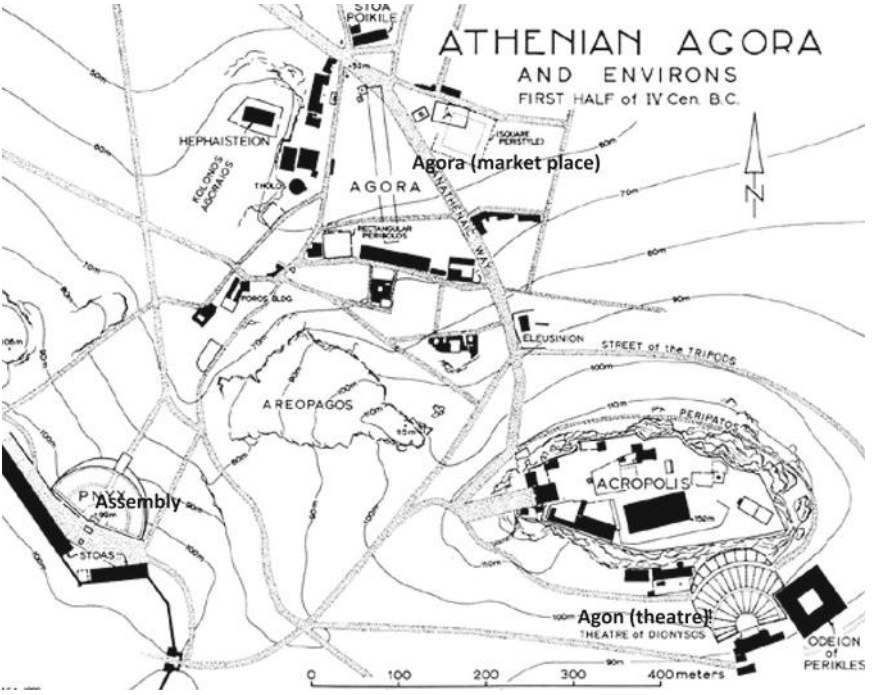

Figure 1.1. Topographic map and plan of the Athenian *agora* and environs (Pnyx, Areopagus, Acropolis), circa the first half of the fourth century BC

agora, meaning the place of assembly, comes from the word *agoraomai*, meaning to speak in the assembly, extending public speaking to the larger site. Three key, but very different, democratic spaces are the theatre at Dionysus, the market place (the *agora* proper) and the assembly at Pnyx. These, I argue, operated in a tri-partite way, where the democratic nature of the *agora* required differing democratic identities relating to the democratic practices.

Monoson's thesis is that democratic citizenship required differing aspects of the self-image; *theatés* was the word used to describe the citizen as theatregoer, and being a *theatés* was a fundamental political act: 'To attend a play was designed to hear critical speech regarding political matters … and citizens practised important intellectual skills that they would then use in the assembly.'[17] For example, Aristophanes's plays were concerned with issues of communication, persuasion, the nature of leadership and the nature of democratic participation. Thousands of spectators gathered at the Festival of Dionysia, where the theatre held between 14,000 and 17,000 people, two and a half times the size of the assembly at Pnyx.[18] Michael Lloyd describes these plays as *agones* and argues that contemporary Athenian life provided the formal context for the conflict of arguments in Euripides's *agones*. This life took place in law courts, and in political and diplomatic debates. Sophists and rhetoricians concerned themselves with the theory and practice of argument. Citizens went to the theatre to reflect on conflicts and develop sophisticated arguments for the assembly.[19]

The *agora* was both a political and a religious centre, a place of complex associations, a place for producing craft, buying and selling, but also a place for law, politics, philosophy and religion. The porch or *stoa* ran around the perimeter of the *agora*, which was a large, open, covered space. The *stoa* was where news tellers told their stories and the space where philosophy was discussed. Socrates was said to have met his friends in the Stoa of Zeus Eleutherios built in the fifth century BC.[20] 'Stoicism', one of the philosophical movements of the Hellenic period (third century BC), was named after the *Stoa Poikile* (Painted Porch) decorated with mural paintings, where the Stoics held their philosophical lectures. In Aristophanes's *Lysistrata*, Lysistrata, the leader of the Athenian citizens' wives, organises both a sex strike and a women's strike of market sellers in the *agora* to protest about the war with Sparta.[21] For Richard Sennett:

> The Athenian agora made diverse male citizens interact in two ways. First, the open space of the agora contained few visual barriers between events occurring at the same time; Athenians did not experience physical compartmentalization. Thus, coming to the town square to negotiate with a banker, one might observe a trail in the law court and even shout out one's opinion about the proceedings. Second, the agora established a space for stepping back from such engagement – the edge, just under the roof of the stoa; here was a fluid, liminal zone between private and public.[22]

I argue later, in the section about Habermas in Chapter 2, that this type of associational public space is important to democracy for the creation of

associational forms of identity, the formation of public opinion and the reflection on politics.

R. E. Wycherley argues that the *agora* was a focus for life in the city, a political but also importantly a religious centre. Although overshadowed by the Acropolis, the *agora* encompassed many shrines, temples and altars.[23] Wycherley claims that most public buildings were in some sense sacred, had associations with deities and housed cults. For example, the Old Bouleuterion contained an altar-hearth sacred to Zeus Boulaios. Councillors prayed to this deity and to Athena Boulaia as they entered. The Bouleuterion with its cities records office also was connected to the Mother of the Gods, her cult and shrine.[24] He argues that the sanctity of the *agora* could to some extent be attributed to the site, as it was built on a prehistoric burial site.[25] The inner square, in the centre of the *agora*, was the most sacred of the spaces. It housed the Altar of the Twelve Gods and was a focal point in the religious life of the *agora.*[26] The altar marked the precise spot for the centre of Athens, a point from which all distances were measured.[27] It is interesting to note that both the centre of the *agora* as a market place and the centre of the larger site were religious and sacred sites, occupied by the Altar of the Twelve Gods and the Acropolis, respectively.

Two spaces were the seats of power: the council of the 500, the *boule,* and the sovereign body, the assembly of six thousand *ekklesia* which met on the hill at Pnyx. Ten tribes would each send fifty people to the council that prepared material for the assembly. The council met on week days and was the executive and preparatory body for the decision-making assembly.[28] Government seats were rotational, and one tribe would run the council for one month, citizens from that tribe each taking turns to be prime minister for a day.[29] The decision-making assembly met forty times a year, started at daybreak and lasted one day.[30] The council would decide when the assembly would take place and a notice was displayed four days before. Not more than six thousand citizens, one fifth of the adult voting population, would attend the assembly. Hansen argues that while any person could speak at the assembly and any person could submit a petition[31] about anything they like, the vast majority were content to listen and vote. A minority of the citizens were speakers or *rhetores*, but at any assembly meeting there were several hundred *rhetores*. Monoson argues that it is possible that the ancient Athenians did not write a great statement of democratic theory because they enacted it; that is, democracy was in fact a spatial practice and it was only after Plato's critique that democracy became an academic discourse.[32]

Women, *metics* and slaves were excluded. Foreigners could be present as spectators.[33] Although the Aristophanes play *Assembly Women* describes an annual women's gathering that took place in the assembly at Pnyx and then was replayed in the theatre. The problem with exclusion concerns the participatory rather than the representative nature of the assembly; only citizens (adult, male, freeborn) could attend. *Parrhésiastés* means the citizen as frank speaker. Speaking with *parrhésia* is 'to say everything' or 'speaking one's own mind' or 'saying what one thinks'. To speak with *parrhésia* was also radical as it meant to 'oppose', 'confront' or 'find fault with' another individual. But what is interesting regarding

participation and representation is that if each citizen speaks with *parrhésia*, then they speak only for themselves. Although the assembly was limited to men of a certain age and standing, citizens were not representing others.[34] So although the non-citizens informed decision-making through public opinion in the *agora* or disagreement in the theatre, the assembly only represented the citizens present.

The democratic model I have described, of three spaces (the assembly, the *agora* and the theatre), was part of the democratic arrangement of the city during the fifth century at the time of Pericles, when Athenian democracy was supposed to be at its height. But the order of the construction of the political centre of Athens gives us clues as to how the democratic city emerged. According to Greg Anderson, it was only after 550 BC that the *agora* area became a public square. Before 550 BC the square was largely residential. The leader of Athens at that time was Peisistratus (a populist rather than a democrat), and his sons first created and levelled an open space and placed an altar in the north-west area. The space was thought to be first for religious activities and second for large public gatherings such as the meetings of the assembly, the contests of the festival of Dionysus, military parades and athletics.[35] So democratic spatial practices of the theatre and assembly first developed in the *agora* before they became materially established as built spaces in the city.

In the years 508–507 BC there was emphasis on mass participation in public life and the assembly gained greater powers. Directly following this, in the years 508–490 BC, the physical setting for public life was radically altered. The square of the *agora* was transformed into the civic and commercial centre and moved from being a privately developed utility to a publicly administered space. The economic centre was developed on the east side and this included the famous potters' corner and the great stoas. On the west side, a new structure was built for the Old Bouleuterion, the meeting place of the council of the 500BC. A large theatre space was built on the slope of the Pnyx hill to house the assembly.[36] In many ways the cleared public square can be seen as the space from which democracy emerges and on which really free and lived politics is based: first through freedom of association, their physical presence in the *agora*, and it was on this basis that men became citizens; and second as the space from which the democratic practices emerged following the construction of Athens's political centre. The Parthenon was finished in 445 BC, during Pericles's time, and formed the centrepiece of his building programme in the supposed 'golden days' of Athenian democracy.

However, there appears to be a contradiction surrounding the role of the architect during the construction of the Parthenon where nineteenth-century writings attribute the work to Phidias and Ictinus, who were said to be the greatest sculptor and architect of the ancient world. Under the auspices of the great statesman, Pericles and twentieth-century descriptions describe the architect in a more technical and organisational role.[37] Phidias, the sculptor, is named by the British Museum as responsible for the Parthenon frieze. R. C. Lucas describes the Parthenon as a building in perfect proportions: 'The united excellencies of design, decoration, and material may be recorded as the most perfect that was ever executed.'[38] He is referring to the Doric columns, the interior chambers, the

scale of the statue of Athena within the interior chambers. More recent twentieth-century thought claims that the building was actually a participatory affair. For Mary Beard, the Parthenon was 'one of the great achievements of the citizens' assembly, which took the important decisions at open meetings and rigorously scrutinised both the conduct of state officials and the architects'.[39]

According to Kostof, despite the greatness of the architecture during this time, there was very little praise for the architect in Greece and no architect ever obtained the high position of an Imhotep or Senmut.[40] It is thought that architects worked mainly on public works and that private houses were designed and built by masons and carpenters. Architects were elected by public vote, meaning that the assembly was responsible for choosing the architects, who commonly worked in teams. The architects worked closely with the building commission, who were responsible citizens from the business, political and professional worlds, not necessarily experienced in architectural matters, but only in matters of taste and aesthetics.[41]

The creative design aspects of architecture and planning were therefore open, and as much a part of political practice as design practice. An example of this can be seen with the political theoretician Hippodamus of Miletus (discussed in Aristotle's politics) who, from a concern with social organisation, invented one of the most popular schemes in urban design, the city grid.[42] For Kostof, the architect would agree the design with the commission and the architect's role would be to advise the commission more on technical matters than on matters of design. The commission would collaborate with the architect in procuring suitable designs. The commission was not the client: the client was the 'city', as matters such as appointing the commission, agreeing the budget and whether to build were decided by mass public vote in the citizens' assembly.[43] The only evidence of drawings from that period are drawings of the Parthenon frieze which, Mary Beard argues are so different from the much more elaborate frieze that was built that the frieze must have been designed on the job.[44] However, Kostof argues that the presence of specifications and other types of drawings, for example on thousands of vases, has led to the theory that drawings did not exist and the architect did not draw plans.[45] From this evidence, architecture appears to have been more of a discursive political practice than a drawn practice, a practice of participation rather than representation. The architect would write detailed specifications for each job that would outline the decisions made by the commission. The architect and the commission would put the work out to contract and a notice of this would be placed in the *agora* where the trade associations would be present. The architect's engagement with the building process was continuous, from the mining of the materials to the levelling of the site, to the assemblage of the parts. It appears, therefore, that architecture was a participatory city practice rather than an individual practice.

> The materials to be used were marble, bronze, ivory, gold, ebony and cypress wood; the craftsmen required to do the job and work such materials were carpenters, moulders, bronze workers, masons, dyers, gilders, ivory carvers,

> painters, inlayers, turners; and the people who provided and transported the materials were merchants, sailors and pilots by sea; and on land cartwrights and cattleman and drivers, also ropemakers and weavers and leather-workers, roadmakers and quarrymen and miners. And since each craft had its own body of unskilled labour, practically every able-bodied man was employed.[46]

Plato's critique

The description given so far of Athenian democracy suggests a city where different practices of democracy coexist: agonistic, associational and representative. But Plato's critique would lead us to believe that this system was purely agonistic, and that politics as a lived practice meant that city life became one of conflict and power struggles, with politics as a technique for domination and corruption.

Plato was born in 428 BC, just one year after the death of Pericles, and therefore at the end of the so-called 'golden age' of democracy. He died in 327 BC, when Athenian democracy as described above was a distant memory. Plato called into question the very existence of cities and the citizens' belief that they all belonged to the same community. He claimed that Athens was no more of a city than its oligarchic neighbours.[47] He set out to show that the gathering of human beings does not constitute a city. In Plato's writings on the republic, he sought to argue that through philosophy and thought one could achieve truth and political perfection. In 387 BC, Plato opened a philosophy academy that, according to Pradeau, in part trained students to take part in city affairs and in the republic, and developed the concept of the statesman for those who worked in politics. He wrote: 'the city is not a market place or an army', and 'the governor cannot behave as a merchant or military commander, he must devote himself (his soul) to thoughts concerning communal life and the unity of the city'.[48]

In *Timaeus-Critias*, two descriptions of imaginary cities are given: Timaeus, the astronomer and devotee of natural science, describes the universe, and Critias follows with a description of mankind. For Timaeus, the city is part of the universe *kosmos*, the word meaning the universe, nature, order and the world. For Plato, perfection and order can be achieved through a study of nature, and space is seen as objects in relation to each other. 'The sensible world is an image of the eternal' and through this belief Plato developed his idea of the republic, no longer constituted by citizens' actions but 'uninstantiated universals', a world of universal forms.[49]

> We have to think of space as originally agitated by random irregular movements. God's first step in introducing order was the construction of bodies of definite geometric form … the right-angled triangle [and] the right-angled scalene whose sides have the ratio $1 : \sqrt{3} : 2$.[50]

However, Aristotle, a student of Plato, saw the city as constructed by politics and argued that there are no universals that are unattached to existing things; for Aristotle the natural community was the city *polis*.[51] In Aristotle's definition, the citizen constitutes and is constituted by her\his environment, and for Plato the

environment is governed by universal norms separated from the citizen. Plato saw space as universal and therefore neutral, while Aristotle saw space as constituted by citizens, and this view for Aristotle benefited the community and public space as well as the individual.

> Even if the good is the same for the individual and the *polis*, the good of the *polis* clearly is the greater and more perfect thing to attain and to safeguard. The attainment of the good for one man alone is, to be sure, a source of satisfaction; yet to secure it for a nation and for *polis* is nobler and more divine.[52]

For Noëlle McAfee, the Greeks were said not to think of the self as substance. The self was 'fleshed out' by the city, only as strong as the polity to which it belonged: 'for the Greeks the city produced citizen-selves'.[53] In contrast, the contemporary view of politics is based on the modern self being discrete, atomistic and autonomous. For McAfee, in ancient Greece, there was a direct relationship with the city and environment. Instead of seeing ourselves as overlapping with the community and environment, and seeing our communities as constitutive of our being, we see ourselves as fixed and exclusive, with the community and others becoming sites of struggle. This view, she argues, puts us in a position of antagonism and clashing interests.[54] The liberal opposition to this view of the citizen-self is that the individual becomes beholden to the group and this inhibits individual freedom.

Athenian democracy was based on a combination of these spaces: the *agora* and the stoa, the theatre and the assembly. The movement between these spaces allowed the citizenry to move between participation and representation, actor and spectator, practice and theory.

When modern democracies began to be established within the framework of the modern state, democratic theory tended to focus on the assembly, that is to say the procedures of democracy. Within modern democratic theory, there has always been a tension between a liberal version of democracy. which emphasises the importance of individual rights, the protection of private space and the need for a reasoned debate about public affairs among educated men (and they always were men), and a more participatory version emphasises the importance of active citizenship and the reaching of decisions that reflect the popular will. The next chapter describes the tension between liberalism and democracy, and discusses future participatory possibilities for democracy within political philosophy.

Notes

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3 Mogens Herman Hansen, *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes: Structure, Principles and Ideology* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999 [1991]), p. 320.

4 Hansen, *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes*, p. 319.
5 Sara Monoson, *Plato's Democratic Entanglements: Athenian Politics and the Practice of Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 6.
6 Hansen, 'The Tradition of the Athenian Democracy'.
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11 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), p. 3.
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13 Nicholas F. Jones, *The Associations of Classical Athens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
14 For Arendt, the social realm or society originated only during Roman times and comes from the Latin word *societas*. Originally the meaning of 'social' was 'political', indicating an alliance between people for a specific purpose, but the social was later used to substitute for the political. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 23
15 Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 159.
16 Hansen, *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes: Structure, Principles and Ideology*, pp. 79–80.
17 Monoson, *Plato's Democratic Entanglements*, p. 89.
18 Monoson, *Plato's Democratic Entanglements*, p. 88.
19 Michael Lloyd, *The Agon of Euripides* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 2, 71.
20 See www.culture.gr, accessed June 2006.
21 Roger Just, *Women in Athenian Law and Life* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 107.
22 Richard Sennett, 'The Spaces of Democracy', Excerpted from a long article about the idea of what a public space for democracy would look like at Damascus Gate shared by Israelis and Palestinians, www.newcommons.com, accessed Dec 2012.
23 R. E Wycherley, *The Stones of Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978) pp. 27–75.
24 Wycherley, *The Stones of Athens*, p. 51.
25 Wycherley, *The Stones of Athens*, p. 62.
26 Wycherley, *The Stones of Athens*, p. 64
27 Wycherley, *The Stones of Athens*, p. 33.
28 Hansen, *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes*, p. 245
29 Held, *Models of Democracy*, pp 22–6.
30 Hansen, *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes*, p. 136.
31 Aristotle's Politics, 43.3-6 quoted in Hansen, *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes*, p. 132.
32 Monoson, *Plato's Democratic Entanglements*, p. 6.
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43 Kostof, *The Architect*, pp. 22–3.
44 Beard, *The Parthenon*, p. 129
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51 Robert B. Talisse, *Democracy after Liberalism: Pragmatism and Deliberative Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 5.
52 Talisse, *Democracy after Liberalism*, p. 22
53 Noëlle McAfee, *Habermas, Kristeva and Citizenship* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2000), pp. 1–20.
54 McAfee, *Habermas, Kristeva and Citizenship*, p. 7.

2 From politics to the political

Democracy as a spatial practice

The subject of democracy is widely contested and has a multitude of interpretations and meanings across many political persuasions, although the origin of the word is actually very clear. Democracy's meaning comes from the Greek word *demokratia*: *demos* meaning 'people' and *kratos* meaning 'rule'.[1] Therefore the word means 'the rule of the people' as opposed to the rule of nature, the rule of a monarch or a dictator. The discourse of democracy, however, becomes ambiguous and complicated, and often contradicts its original meaning. It could be argued that on some accounts democracy has triumphed because in the past many political thinkers were critical of democracy, whereas most political thinkers today call themselves democrats and agree that society should be democratic in some sense. At the same time a situation has emerged that is becoming commonly known as a 'crisis of democracy', a term coined by Francis Fukuyama in *The End of History and the Last Man*, a thesis that predicted the dawn of an everlasting, US-led, New World Order. He declared a 'total exhaustion' of all other modern alternatives to free-market democracy.[2]

For the democratic theorist C. B. Macpherson, the word 'democracy' is commonly used by politicians to describe one form of democracy, 'liberal democracy'.[3] However 'liberal' and 'democracy' contain historically ideologically opposed definitions of citizenship, as 'liberal' describes the rights of the individual to pursue private interests and 'democracy' describes collective rule. The contrasting meanings produced a tension within 'liberal democracy' which, for Macpherson, has a double meaning. The first describes capitalist market society and freedom for the stronger to win over the weaker; and the second means equal freedom for all to develop their capacities. Macpherson argues that it is the former definition and not the latter that has dominated Western liberal democracies to date.[4]

It was only when it was thought of that representation could enter democracy (Jeremy Bentham and John Mill) that democracy was introduced into liberalism at the end of the nineteenth century. Representation allowed for the continuation of both representative government and the definition of the citizen as a private individual. Liberal democracy, however, has been described by Mouffe as an exercise in 'reconciling the incompatibility of liberalism with democracy' where 'many democrats and many liberals were perfectly aware of the conflict

between their respective logics'.[5] The conflict between the meanings of 'liberal' and 'democracy' has created an ongoing tension in democratic theory between representation and participation. The representation versus participation discourse within democratic theory can be seen to have had different manifestations throughout history but to continue the same fundamental views. There are those who believe in a transfer of sovereignty, deferring power to people who are voted into office, and those who believe in popular sovereignty, self-government for the people.[6]

The representation versus participation discourse manifested itself in ancient Athens between Plato and the Athenians, and between Plato and Aristotle, as I have shown in Chapter 1, as well as during the French Revolution of 1789 between Immanuel Kant and Rousseau. Whereas Rousseau believed in popular sovereignty and citizenship,[7] Rousseau's ideal society was the city-state, the public person formed by the union of others to create the *body politic* or the city: 'While houses make a town, only citizens can make a city.'[8] Kant argued that man's freedom comes from being 'equal subjects before the law, which … can only be single in form'.[9] During the twentieth century, the representative versus participatory politics debate formed the liberal and communitarian camps and has seen an ongoing tension between liberal democracy and communitarianism.

Dick Howard's critique of communism is that although communist states are theoretically organised on participatory democratic principles, they become totalitarian and undemocratic as they fail to realise the radical nature of democracy.[10] Democratic centralism and the one-party political system means that one political position remains in power.[11]

The fall of communism in Eastern Europe, seen as a victory for liberalism, has shifted the contemporary debate from 'liberal democracy or communism' to asking 'what kind of liberal democracy?'. I am therefore going to concentrate on the more contemporary question of democratic thought and look at the 'universalism versus contextualism' debate. Should the world be run by one world order that is based on rational values? Or are there contextual differences, and can there be different conceptions of the common good?

Two concepts underlie the thinking of the two approaches just mentioned. One is very common in British democratic theory and was first termed by C. B. Macpherson the 'models of democracy'. The models of democracy approach of Macpherson and Held take an institutional approach to democracy that describes a set of procedures or a structure of relations that govern a city, nation-states or, as Held is now arguing, global institutions. These are often based on 'politics' or political ideologies, such as the Soviet model based on communism or the Western liberal model of democracy based on liberalism.

The second is a more philosophical approach to democracy. It is one favoured by political philosophers such as Hannah Arendt, Chantal Mouffe and Claude Lefort. This approach sees democracy not as linked to one political ideology such as liberalism, but as inhabiting the space between those ideologies, a space they term 'the political'. This approach includes different political positions, rather than basing democracy on one political ideology, as does the first approach. The

very nature of democracy then becomes that of a contested ground. Mouffe argues that for a healthy democracy there needs to be a vibrant clash of political ideals; for her the problem now is the emergence of one political ideology that dominates the Western world.[12]

Both ways of thinking about democracy are useful for thinking about spatial politics. This chapter gives a brief history of democracy in order to give a context to the discussion, and then concentrates on the contemporary debate mentioned above since I see this as the pressing question of today.

The rise of modern liberal representative democracy

For two thousand years, governance in Britain has been through monarchies and religious societies where sovereignty is given to monarchs and God. The earliest democratic societies were reflected upon by Thomas More during the sixteenth century, and described as utopias.[13] These were small classless societies that had risen up in opposition to class-based regimes. Utopias were small communities where people had taken on self-government at a local scale. More used descriptions of utopias to critique class-based society.

According to Macpherson, during the eighteenth century in British liberal society, democracy, when it was thought of at all, was thought of as the 'rule of the poor, the ignorant and incompetent at the expense of the propertied classes'.[14] 'Liberal democrat' is sometimes confused with 'liberal', but the liberals were not democratic at first. Their incompatibility can also be seen in terms of class, as before the nineteenth century a prerequisite for democracy had been a one-class society. Macpherson describes liberal democratic thinking at the beginning of the nineteenth century as a 'sharp break' with democratic forerunners Rousseau and Jefferson, the new thought was from a completely different base that accepted liberal individualism, class society and the market economy in democracy.[15]

Representation, too, was part of liberal government before liberal democracy, initially used by monarchs and aristocrats in the Middle Ages. According to Robert Dahl, the beginnings of representative government are to be found, notably in England and Sweden, in the assemblies summoned by monarchs, or sometimes the nobles themselves, to deal with important matters of state, such as revenues, wars and royal succession. Representation was spatial, the typical pattern, those summoned were drawn from and were intended to represent the various estates, with the representatives from each estate meeting separately. Over time, the estates diminished to two, lords and commoners, who were represented in separate houses.[16]

Liberal thought before democratic thought can be understood through the seventeenth-century writings of Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes, who is described by Manent as the founder of liberalism,[17] was concerned with civil war, in particular the rift between King and Parliament in 1637.[18] He aimed to provide peace through scientifically solving the problem of politics. His aim was to 'reduce *politics* to the rules and infallibility of reason'.[19] As a monarchist, he believed in a single ruler, a monarch, as opposed to an assembly or aristocracy. For Hobbes, power had to

have a single locus to prevent the kind of division likely in an assembly. Hobbes's philosophy was that human beings are profoundly self-interested and the human condition is located in the struggle for power. Hobbes described democracy as anarchy, which signifies the lack of a government or ruler. He imagined a state of nature as one of continuous fighting where life was 'short, solitary, poor and brutish'. His suggestion for society was *the social contract* outlined in *Leviathan* (1651). In this contract people would surrender their rights to a powerful authority that can force them to keep their promises.[20] This theorisation of society and state led to the formation of the public and private spheres, in which individuals hand over their right of self-government to a single authority and in return are free to pursue private interests. From this there emerges the relation of sovereign to subject. Hobbes advocated a relationship of sovereign and subject rather than popular sovereignty and citizen.[21]

Political philosopher Pierre Manent describes Hobbes's thought as 'the common matrix of modern democracy and liberalism'.[22] Hobbes founded the idea of the law as external to individuals based on each person's consent. He argued that the democratic idea of sovereignty and the liberal idea of the law are not easily compatible. For Manent, Hobbes's idea of 'liberty' depended on 'free space' between the individual and the sovereign that can only be achieved through obedience to the law and absolutism (unlimited sovereign power). 'Whatever is outside the law is free; where the law is silent, subjects can do whatever seems good to them.'[23] If absolutism is abolished, the exteriority of the sovereign to the individual is also abolished and the law becomes, as Rousseau argues for, 'the register of our wills'. Manent argues that the law is no longer external to free action but becomes the principle of this action, for in this case, liberalism is dead.[24]

Charles Louis de Scandat, Baron de Montesquieu, addressed the problem of abolishing absolutism while maintaining liberty.[25] He supported a constitutional government that would guarantee the rights of the individual (the adult property-owning male). Montesquieu was famous for advocating the separation of powers; legislative power consists of the right to deliberate, alter the law and to hold the monarch to account, while executive powers are in the hands of the monarch. In this system which was also called 'aristocratic liberalism', nobles retained their right to reject legislation, but the commons had legal initiative. It was this system that led to the two-house system still operating in the UK today with the House of Commons and the House of Lords.[26]

Edmund Burke defined the representative in the late eighteenth century; his definition is still prevalent in British politics. For Habermas, Burke's *Speech to the Electors of Bristol* was exemplary in the development of the Liberal Theory of Virtual Representation.[27] Burke described the representative as someone who acts on his own judgement, not as a delegate who speaks for others: 'the Member of Parliament acts not as a member of Bristol but as a Member of Parliament'. He describes the difference between the representative and the electorate: 'the representative has an unbiased opinion, a mature judgement and an enlightened conscience … Government and legislation matters are of reason and judgement and not of inclination … One set of men deliberate and another decide.'[28] This

definition allows the representative to make a decision that can be against the opinion of the electorate.

One of the leading figures of the French Revolution was Rousseau, described by Carol Pateman as 'the theorist *par excellence* of participation'. Rousseau's theory, outlined in *The Social Contract* (1762), hinges on the individual participation of each person in political decision-making:[29]

> The English people believes itself to be free; it is gravely mistaken; it is free only during election of members of parliament; as soon as the members are elected, the people is enslaved; it is nothing. In the brief moment of its freedom, the English people makes such a use of that freedom that it deserves to lose it.[30]

Rousseau's idea for the social contract was directly opposed to Hobbes's social contract: for Hobbes, private individuals hand over their right to sovereignty to a single power, authorised to act on their behalf. Rousseau saw Hobbes's idea of society as 'dividing the human race into herds of cattle, each with a master that preserves the herd, only to devour its members'.[31]

Rousseau found freedom in the right to self-government: 'no man must be master of another; when one is master of oneself and one's life, freedom is enhanced through control of that life'.[32] His idea for the social pact was that 'each one puts into the community his person and all his powers under the supreme direction of the general will; as a body, we incorporate every member as an indivisible part of the whole'. [33] So for Rousseau, people were not part of society living under the laws of the state, but gave up their individual rights for the common good. Rousseau saw participation in political decision-making as educative and felt that a person develops a public self through participating in public life. He also found that this increases the feeling among individual citizens that they belong in their communities. Citizens not only gain control of themselves but gain control of the environment around them.[34]

Rousseau's ideal society was the city-state, the public person formed by the union of others to create the *body politic* or the city: 'While houses make a town, only citizens can make a city.'[35] The democratic structure of society formed both the city and the working institutions within it.

The period 1760–1800 was known as the period of the *great democratic revolution* because of revolutions all over Europe and in America. The French Revolution in 1789 saw the creation of an assembly in Paris that was used to apply the principles of the revolutionaries such as Rousseau. These principles included the people as the constituent power, national sovereignty, equality of rights and free citizenship. Nobility was abolished and there was a redefinition of property.[36] For Barry Holden, at this time, the Liberal government in England was under pressure; democracy was growing rapidly around the world in the form of republicanism.[37] In France, the old monarchy was replaced with a republic and in America the founders of democracy replaced ancient republicanism with a new republican order.[38] French theorist De Tocqueville, returning from a trip to

America, famously described the problem of majority rule as the 'Tyranny of the Majority'. In England, the Chartist movement was threatening revolution. It was only when it was thought of that representation could enter liberalism, at the end of the eighteenth century, that Britain saw the birth of democratic government, giving democracy throughout the world 'an historic change of meaning'.[39]

The liberal democratic tradition first came about in the nineteenth century. For Macpherson, it was only when it was thought that class, society and property could be protected that democracy entered liberalism in the form of voting rights for 'male persons', following a series of reform acts starting in 1832 known as The Representation of the People Act 1832. The Houses of Parliament were built in 1834 but the full suffrage including full voting rights for women was achieved in 1928.[40] James Madison, one of the key architects of the American constitution, saw the system of representation as a cure for the problem of faction. By a faction, Madison meant 'a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community'.[41]

The first model of Liberal democracy was named by Macpherson as the 'protective model of democracy', described by Held as English liberalism. The case for the protective model was a system of government that in principle could protect the governed from the government.[42] Held argues that the protective model concerned the protection of individuals and private property, and critics say that it is the protection of the haves from the have nots, the minority from the majority.[43]

The original thinkers of this model of democracy were Jeremy Bentham and James Mill. Mill saluted representation as 'the grand discovery of our time' in which 'the solution of all difficulties, both speculative and practical, would be found'. Bentham and Mill provided the definition of 'English liberalism' and the English democratic state: 'The state was to have the role of umpire or referee while individuals pursued their own interests in civil society, according to the rules of economic exchange.' Periodic elections plus the free market would lead to maximum benefit for all citizens.[44]

> We have already seen that whomsoever the community entrusts the powers of government, whether one or a few, they have an interest in misusing them. All the power, therefore, which the one or the few combined, can apply to ensure the accomplishment of their sinister ends, the checking body must have the power to overcome.[45]

The protective model was a two-house system, which gave checking power to both the King and to the aristocracy in the form of the House of Lords.

Following Hobbes, the citizen in the protective model was based on a liberal rather than democratic definition of citizenship that described someone who did not want to pursue political life, only self-interest. For Mill, citizens act for individual gain and not for the common good. Mill envisaged a society inhabited by citizens, on their guard against rulers or representatives who would

deprive them of their liberties.[46] Particularly the model named by Macpherson as 'developmental democracy' challenged the protective model.[47] John Stuart Mill, the son of James Mill, who in his later life came to severely criticise Bentham and his father, supported developmental democracy.[48]

After a long period of depression, he decided that he agreed more with continental philosophers such as Rousseau. John Stuart Mill argues that one of the dangers of representative government is the danger of class legislation that lies in the 'sinister interests of the holders of power'.

The development model sees an active citizenship as crucial because democracy itself is seen as a means of self-development; it is through participation in democracy that an informed citizenry emerges. For J. S. Mill it is by participating at a local level that the individual learns democracy. His suggestion was for a mixture of representation and participation. He agrees with Bentham that representation is necessary at the national level, but advocates participatory democratic institutions to operate at a local level.[49] J. S. Mill considered how Rousseau's model could be replicated for modern industrial times and focused on industry and the work place as the area where the individual could exercise self-management in the form of the cooperative. For Pateman, Rousseau and J. S. Mill both express how theorists of participatory democracy are concerned with the connections between participatory democracy, the individual and their institutions.[50]

The contest between representation and participation turned into a democratic divide between East and West in the twentieth century. Democracy is described by political theorist David Trend as existing on a participatory continuum, with communism and direct democracy at one end and neo-liberalism, with the complete exclusion of citizen participation, at the other.[51]

Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin were critical of representative democracy. For Lenin, representative democracy is capitalist democracy and it provides the machinery for the suppression of the majority by the minority; representation restricts political participation through obstacles to the right to public assembly. Public buildings and institutions are elitist and not for the poor. Lenin called for 'the dictatorship of the proletariat' as a great expansion of democracy:[52]

> The proletariat must inevitably involve not only a change in the forms and institutions of democracy, but change of a kind which results in an extension of actual democratic usages, on a scale never before known in the world, to the working classes whom capitalism enslaved … And in fact the forms taken by the dictatorship of the proletariat, which have already been worked out, that is, the Soviet power in Russia, the workers councils in Germany, the shop stewards committees in Britain.[53]

Marx was a follower of Rousseau and saw the dictatorship of the proletariat indicated in the Paris Commune (1871):

> The Commune was formed of the municipal councillors, chosen by universal suffrage in the various wards of the town, responsible, and revocable at short

> terms. The majority of its members were naturally workers, or acknowledged representatives of the working class. The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary body, executive, and legislative at the same time. [54]

Marx believed in revolutionary democracy that takes the form of 'democratic centralism', a term that describes forms of inner-party communist organisation as well as state organisation in the USSR and other communist regimes.[55] But since the fall of communism in Europe, very few theorists see any return to communism in the near future, at least in the forms we have seen. In an interview with *RedPepper*, Laclau describes how communism was procedural rather than understanding the indeterminate nature of democracy:

> Many forms of Marxism have supposed that society can be entirely rational and reconciled around a single popular will. As has happened in practice in Communism in the East and Social Democracy in the West, the state has had to intervene to compensate for the failure of this collective will to emerge. In that case this social control becomes bureaucratic control.[56]

The post-war period of the 1950s and 1960s was a period of social democratic politics with full employment and economic growth. With the development of the welfare state it appeared that the state was promoting the common good.[57] This period was a long period of consent for the representative democratic system. The end of the Cold War, however, brought about difficulties for democracy. For Held, the threat of communism to liberal democracies was an immense pressure confining 'respectable' politics to the centre ground, a period of social democracy.[58] However, the fall of communism was a victory for capitalism and allowed for more 'liberal' rather than 'democratic' ideals to enter democracy.

The social democratic model of democracy that appeared to work during the post-war period could be seen to have been tamed by the Cold War. Macpherson has described the model in which democracy becomes a mechanism for choosing governments as 'the equilibrium model' or the 'elitist model'. The voters' role is not to choose representatives or to decide on political issues, but to decide between two or more sets of self-chosen political elites – 'To decide on the men that will do the deciding'.[59] This model has been theorised by Joseph Schumpeter, in his classic book *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (1950).[60] Schumpeter shifts from the John Stuart Mill notion that democracy is a necessary activity for human development. He also questions the concept of common good or common will in classical democracy. He defines 'the democratic method' as 'that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote'.[61] Schumpeter criticises the classical understanding of democracy:

> Democracy does not mean and cannot mean that the people actually rule in any obvious sense of the terms 'people' and 'rule'. Democracy means only that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the *men* who are

> to rule them. But since they might decide this also in entirely undemocratic ways, we have had to narrow our definition by adding a further criterion identifying the democratic method, free competition among would-be leaders for the vote of the electorate.[62]

The period of post-war politics has been described as a period of consensus for a 'one-dimensional society'. For Held, the crisis of democracy came about with the erosion of consensus during the late 1960s and 1970s.[63] The erosion of consensus saw the development of two new political positions, the 'new right' and the 'new left'. The new right was also known as neo-liberals or neo-conservatives or the 'legal model' of democracy. Held argues that the 'new right' rose up in opposition to the 'new left'. The 'new left' was made up of the new social movements and consisted of new types of political positions such as feminism and environmentalism, all advocating participatory democracy.[64] Participatory politics began as a slogan for the new left and spread throughout the 1960s and 1970s. On one side, the new right gained democratic legitimacy while on the other, the new left remained in civil society. The failure of the new left to gain democratic legitimacy meant that power was placed with the new right, rather than the democratic positions of the new left and the new right replacing the antagonism seen in the Cold War.[65]

Ulrich Beck has described the result of the inability of the new social movements to gain democratic legitimacy as a 'disavowal of politics'; he argues that freedom and individuality have gone so far that most young people today are completely disinterested in party politics. Most young people are interested in the kinds of participatory politics put forward by the new left, for example environmental activism.[66]

Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan were effective proponents in re-introducing eighteenth-century liberalism (known as neo-liberalism) into state democratic practice in the 1970s.[67] They were committed to the view that political life, like economic life, is a matter of individual freedom. They advocated a 'rolling back of the state' as they claimed that individual freedom had been diminished owing to state bureaucracy and argued that the collective good could only be achieved through competitive individuals acting in isolation. The result of 'rolling back the state' was the extension of the market into more and more areas of life. Held argues that at the root of new right ideology has been the advancement of 'liberalism' against 'democracy'.[68]

For Hilary Wainwright, the values of the new left have been in permanent opposition to the values of those in power, and the language of new left politics has been hijacked and used for privatisation, de-regulation and the market. Words and phrases like 'community empowerment', 'civil society', even 'the third way' and 'new left', have been used in the speeches of politicians like Tony Blair and Bill Clinton to pursue the agendas of private corporations.[69]

Mouffe describes the current position of political theory as being in a 'deadlock':

> Neo-liberal dogmas about unviable rights of property, the all-encompassing virtues of the market and the dangers of interfering with its logics constitute

> nowadays the 'common sense' in liberal democratic societies and they are having a profound impact on the left as many left parties are moving to the right and redefining themselves as 'centre left'. In a very similar way Blair's 'third way', Schröder's 'neue Mitte', both inspired by Clinton's 'triangulation', accept the terrain established by their neo-liberal predecessors.[70]

Mouffe asks what the fall of communism, heralded as a victory for liberal democracy, means. She wonders whether 'liberal democracy' is another name for 'capitalist democracy' or whether it could exist outside capitalism. 'If we refuse to accept that liberal capitalism is the end of history then there is enormous room for liberal democratisation'.[71] For Macpherson, the Cold War created a view that the only alternative to Schumpeter's 'competing elites' form of democracy was the communist totalitarian state. For him, the great challenge facing democracy is how liberal democracy can become more participatory.[72]

In this brief sketch of democratic theory, definitions of citizenship appear to be key to the debate on democracy and public space. Aristotle's *polis* and Rousseau's *body politic* both describe a democratic public realm that is constituted from citizens' actions, and therefore they describe a political sense of public space. Plato, Hobbes and Schumpeter describe a public realm constituted by universal norms that are exterior to the citizen and outside citizen control. This suggests that for public space to be democratic, democracy must to some extent be participatory. I am surprised by how fixed and divided the democratic positions are. If democracy is thought of in its philosophical, rather than procedural sense then democracy accommodates different political positions. It is only John Stuart Mill, in his descriptions of local and national democracy, who explores how participation and representation can coexist. For me, citizenship is far more complex and diverse. Depending on the circumstances, one should either be able to act as an individual or for the common good, citizenship is contingent.

Future models of democracy and the universalism versus pluralism debate

As we have seen, debates in democratic theory can appear to be resolved for periods of time. For example, the debate over representation and participation appeared to be resolved at the end of the nineteenth century, when representation was thought of as 'the grand discovery of modern times'.[73] This assumption is now highly questionable, and almost all progressive thinkers on democratic theory and spatial theory are arguing for participation in some form.

This section is not therefore concerned with whether the public should participate, but with *how* and to *what extent* they can participate in democracy. In order to discuss this problem, I look at two different lines of thought in political philosophy; the deliberative or civil society model of democracy and the agonistic approach, both of which contain democratic models within them that operate on different scales. The civil society approach has been developed by theorists such as Jürgen Habermas, Mary Kaldor and David Held, and includes ideas about civil

society, deliberation and the cosmopolitan model of democracy. The agonistic approach rests on the work of theorists such as Arendt, Lefort, Laclau and Mouffe and includes theories about radical democracy and the agonistic plural model of democracy. I have chosen these two approaches because they both argue for a democratisation of liberal democracy, are participatory, and include the types of subject position of the new left or the new social movements. However, there are fundamental disagreements among these theorists. They disagree over whether democracy reveals universal values or, on the contrary, becomes the contested arena for difference and alterity.

For Habermas, the French Revolution in 1789 created an intense debate that he named 'the dialectic between liberalism and radical democracy'. He describes this dialectic through the work of Rousseau and his philosophical contemporary Immanuel Kant. Rousseau understands 'liberty' as the equal participation of each person in the process of self-legislation. He believes that through popular sovereignty (direct participation in the process of self-legislation) isolated individuals can be transformed into citizens orientated towards the common good. In contrast, liberals following Kant believe in the legal institutionalisation of equal liberties, in the liberals' view that human rights have normative priority over democracy.[74] Kant states:

> The legislative authority only can be attributed to the united will of the people. Because all right and justice is supposed to proceed from this authority, it can do absolutely no injustice to anyone. Now when someone prescribes for another it is always possible that he thereby does the other an injustice … he who consents cannot receive injury … Hence only the united and consenting will of all can legislate.[75]

Habermas emphasises the distinctly different attitudes to both participation and citizenship in democratic thought. Rousseau insisted that it was through participation that individuals were transformed into citizens, whereas for Kant citizenship consisted of consenting to the legislative authority (the law-abiding citizen). Central to Kant's thought is that 'rational consenting' human beings will agree on fundamental rights. Critics argue that popular will can be achieved only through the suppression of individual wills.[76] What develops is a kind of inside/outside in democracy, where rational consenting human beings are inside and non-consenting people are irrational and on the outside. Habermas, however, takes an in-between position where he argues that there is a 'united will', but this can only be achieved through participation and therefore there needs to be democratic procedures which relate to discursive practices to form the 'united will'.[77] One way of interpreting the civil society argument of democracy is that a strong civil society provides the infrastructure for the discursive practices necessary to enable a united will of the people; through civil society, reason acts to create a universal law that influences not only the uncivilised, but the state and market capitalism, having a regulating influence on society as a whole as an indirect power.

Gramsci and hegemony

Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony is one of the key concepts underlying contemporary democratic thought.[78] The theory shows how lived practice can enter into democratic theory. Gramsci's theory articulates how informal as well as formal power bases are actors within democratic structures; power is located in the social realm in a complex web and the social power base interacts with the formal power base of the state. Gramsci, while reflecting on why the working class had been successful in Russia but failed to take power in Italy, concluded that there were other powers that were interfering with the revolution. The church and bourgeois civil society in particular were able to influence public opinion in such a way that there was an alternative reality to the revolutionary forces. These power bases located in reality were practically orientated, lived and experienced, and had specific practical meanings and values that were difficult for most members of the communist party to move away from.[79]

> In Russia the state was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the west there was a proper relation between the state and civil society, and when the state trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The state was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks.[80]

The word 'hegemony' is used by Gramsci to describe the way power in civil society works through action and common thought. For Gramsci hegemony is not a totalitarian concept because it is formed from free will and not coercion, thus Gramsci argued that under specific circumstances hegemony can be radically transformed.[81] In liberal societies, power was diffused through a wide variety of unofficial practices and organisations rather than being embodied in a central core of state institutions. Gramsci used the contrast between societies in Russia and the West to explain the success of the Bolsheviks in Russia, and he argued that a completely different strategy for revolution was needed in the West, a strategy that incorporated plurality and acted on many different fronts. For example, he argued that the future for the Italian communist party lay in the allegiance of the labour force with other democratic forces, such as the movement for the development of school cooperatives and the fight against the mafia.[82] This can be described as a post-Marxist position because there is a shift in focus of the left, from the means of production and the labour force to inclusion of other democratic positions in society. In *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Mouffe and Laclau later formulated the argument through a strategy for the development democratic subject positions from democratic struggles within society.[83]

Civil society

Habermas and civil society democratic theorists use Gramsci's theories concerning the hegemonic power of civil society to argue that the associational relations that

prevented the revolution in Italy but were not present in Russia are a necessary part of democracy. These relations form the neutral context for the emergence of a rational political discourse: 'A public sphere that functions politically requires more than the institutional guarantees of the constitutional state, it also needs the supportive spirit of cultural traditions and patterns of socialisation.'[84] Habermas sees the democratic relationship between the state and civil society as being crucial for a healthy democracy.

In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas idealises the eighteenth century to show how civil society (the bourgeois public sphere) and deliberative democracy can work together. The bourgeois public sphere is the 'sphere of private people, come together as a public'[85] and for Habermas the town was the life centre of civil society. Its institutions were coffee houses and salons or table societies. Social discussions developed into public criticism, and this was expressed in the world of letters. Private people would write to newspapers, and this world of letters – the letters pages of the newspapers – was a public space that had influence on democratic decision-making. Habermas's public sphere was confined to a bourgeois stratum of independent property holders who began to gain control over the process of governance through their rational deliberation on public affairs. Holders of power had to justify their decisions in order to maintain support.

One of the key arguments in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* is that in modern society, the culture-debating society described above has been replaced by the 'pseudo-public or sham private world of culture consumption'.[86] According to Habermas, since the eighteenth century we have moved from a culture-debating to a culture-consuming public. It was when the laws of the market governing the sphere of commodity exchange pervaded the sphere of private people as a public that rational critical debate was replaced by consumption. Reasserting an early twentieth-century scepticism about the possibilities of modern democracy in the age of corporate capitalism, Habermas argues that it was only in the eighteenth century that rational communication among men of property effectively mediated between state and society. After 1830, the public sphere started to degenerate and at the same time was discredited in political philosophy. He also argues that the reading public was reduced, transformed by modern journalism and that the critical public gradually became a minority of specialists.[87]

Habermas argues that a normative rationality occurs through democratic practices in society that may be associational rather than formal. A 'rationalisation of the lifeworld' that produces universal values. He defines democratic associations as a group 'that institutionalises such a procedure for the purposes of democratically regulating the conditions of common life' and through this associational purpose focused on common life, a group constitutes itself as a body of citizens.[88] His theory of democracy is as a two-tiered concept of society – as lifeworld and as system. The system is the state and the economy or market which are integrated, and these he argues can no longer be transformed democratically from within. Habermas advocates that a 'separation of powers' is maintained

and democratisation takes place in society only when a new equilibrium can be attained between societal resources, allowing social integrative power to prevail over administrative power and the economy, through practically orientated demands.[89] In contrast, the radical approach argues for a 'redistribution of power and a dismantling of the structures that institutionalise inequality'.[90] Habermas argues that democracy involves open discussion in search of the answer to a question.[91]

For feminist writer Seyla Benhabib, in this model of discursive democracy public space is not viewed agonistically as a space of competition, but is viewed democratically as the creation of procedures whereby those affected by social norms can have their say. For Benhabib, in order for society to be democratic, forms of deliberation need to exist that precede the making of a decision. This deliberation provides legitimacy to representative decision-making.[92] For deliberative democrats, the essence of democratic legitimacy is the capacity of those affected by a collective decision to deliberate in the production of that decision.[93]

> Democracy, in my view, is best understood as a model for organizing the collective and public exercise of power in the major institutions of society on the basis of the principle that decisions affecting the well-being of a collectivity can be viewed as the outcome of a procedure of free and reasoned deliberation among individuals considered as moral and political equals.[94]

There are, however, problems with implementing deliberative democracy because in order for it to work there must be public deliberation, and modern life in late capitalist individualistic society rarely includes this practice. This poses a logistical problem of how deliberative democracy can take place. As Thompson, one critic of Habermas, writes: 'we live in a world today where the sheer scale and complexity of democratic decision-making processes limits the extent to which they can be organised in a participatory way'. In his research into whether European polls can replace deliberation, James Fishkin states that we have the problem that 'if we ask elites, we have deliberation without political equality. If we ask the people directly, we can have political equality but usually without deliberation.'[95] For Benhabib, it is only through the process of public discussion with a plurality of opinions that people gain new information and develop rational sophisticated arguments.[96] In order, therefore, for deliberative democracy to be effective, there needs to be some sort of public space for deliberation.

The end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century have seen the rapid acceleration of globalisation, and this has changed the discourse of democracy. Globalisation is challenging the widely accepted theories that classical theorists were concerned with; city-states and democracies are now too big to include public participation.[97] During this period we have seen the rise of global civil society and participatory global democratic practices that have emerged as a counterbalance to the increasing strength of global market corporations. At the same time we have seen huge developments in the tools of

mass communication and social networking with increasing use of the Internet. This has led to mass participatory face-to-face forums that operate on a global scale.

Global civil society could be seen to be the newest and fastest-expanding democratic structure, defined by John Keane as 'a vast interconnected and multilayered social space that comprises many self-directing or non-governmental institutions and ways of life'.[98] Kaldor argues that the last decade has seen new meanings for the term 'civil society' but these are open to interpretation. The meaning can vary from interpretations of Hegel concerning bourgeois society. For Hegel, civil society takes place in social life and lies between the public realm of the state and the private realm of the family.[99] G. W. F. Hegel is known for his work on the separation of civil society and the state. Hegel provided the key understanding of civil society, *bürgerliche Gesellschaft*, literally translated as 'bourgeois society': Hegel states that 'civil society is the [stage of] difference that intervenes between the family and the state'. He saw civil society as the one institution that decisively separates the modern state from earlier and less developed social orders. Before the modern state, civil society was largely interchangeable with the state; citizens would act within the state rather than in civil society. Within European society, the 'political' and 'civil' conditions of society were separated.[100] Another definition of civil society is a term used by activists to describe social movements and civic protestors. The term is also used to describe non-governmental organisations and charities and the voluntary sector. Kaldor argues, however, that there is always one core meaning for civil society, and that is 'a rule governed society based largely on the consent of individual citizens rather than coercion'. The oldest meaning for civil society, *societas civilis*, is polite society, a political community based on consent to rules, a zone of civility.[101] One of the main arguments between free society and totalitarian or coercive regimes is that totalitarian regimes suppress the 'freedom of association' that is linked with civil society.

The meaning of civil society within the discourse has also changed in democratic terms. Civil society was originally the realm of nature; the state would have to intervene to resolve conflicts, but is more thought of as the realm of reason in global society. Kaldor argues that civil society needs to be re-conceptualised in the global context. She defines civil society as the 'medium through which one or many social contracts between individuals and political and economic centres of power are negotiated'.[102] Using Ernest Gellner's definition, Kaldor argues that democratic civil society should be 'a set of non-governmental institutions which are strong enough to counterbalance the state … and prevent the state from dominating or atomizing the rest of society'.[103] One of the main problems for Kaldor with Gellner's model is not simply that civil society now operates on a global scale, but that it operates in the absence of a global state. If the civil society theory of democracy holds that democracy is relational between civil society and the state, the problem on a global scale is the lack of a global state. Kaldor questions whether global civil society can act as a 'functional equivalent' to democracy. Her idea for global civil society is that it should push for global

governance with an active global citizenship, but at the same time continue to act as the realm of reason in preventing abuses of power.

The 'cosmopolitan' model of democracy theorised by proponents such as Daniele Archibugi and David Held outlines proposals for a global state 'linked to an expanding network of democratic states and agencies'.[104] It is therefore compatible with civil society theories. Cosmopolitan democracy is based on what cosmopolitan democrats call 'realism', continuing the liberal democratic project but at a global rather than a state scale. The premise is that liberal democracy has won an enormous victory, both over communism and over many autocratic regimes that are now democratic. However, the situation that political decision-making is still at a state level, even regarding international decisions, means that the international situation can be described as 'governance without government'.[105]

The rise of globalisation, for example, in international law, multinational organisations and global civil society means that states take fewer and fewer decisions and global institutions therefore operate outside of democratic control. Cosmopolitan democracy is based on a Kantian tradition that depends on the existence of a universal moral law, backed by international treaties and institutions. This moral law is the basis for international law and entails a world political organisation that governs the relations between all individuals.[106] This is not the same as the universal law proposed by neo-liberals, as they mostly reject measures curbing market forces. For example, cosmopolitan democrats argue that resources should be redistributed, sanctioned in favour of the less well off. A global citizen would be entitled to basic human rights and a share of the world's resources.

Archibugi, one of the main advocates of cosmopolitan democracy, describes democracy as 'an endless journey that should be conceived as an interaction between civil society and political institutions'.[107] For Archibugi, the main problem for cosmopolitan democracy is that universal law and the global citizen depend on a central and global consensus, yet one-third of the world is still governed by autocratic regimes that cannot be included in the cosmopolitan model. Cosmopolitan democracy accepts that every democracy has its own set of rules and procedures, suggesting perhaps that cosmopolitan democracy can include different models of democracy within it.[108] Cosmopolitan democracy encompasses states with different constitutions, unlike the federal model, but the cosmopolitan model sets out to 'transmit' methods and tools of government to states. Intergovernmental organisations are used to manage multinationalism and to prevent states from violating international law or committing acts that have harmful consequences for other members. Various methods, from sanctions to military force, can be used to force states to comply.[109] The Parliament is based on reform of the United Nations and so it operates as an improvement and a democratisation of an existing institution; its democratic structure will consist of a number of houses, one with representatives from civil society organisations. One can see how the ideals of cosmopolitan democrats, which include human rights, international peace and a global welfare system, can help some of the most under-privileged people in the world. Cosmopolitan democracy could even eradicate poverty!

David Chandler, a critic of cosmopolitan democracy, writes that 'rather than challenging international structures of power, there is a real danger that the cosmopolitan impulse can legitimise a much more hierarchical set of international relationships'. He agrees with the ideals but states that they would be better achieved without the institutional constraints of democratic accountability.[110] In my view, the ideals of the cosmopolitan theorists, such as the end of poverty, are admirable. But the only way that I can see cosmopolitan democracy working is if Gellner's theory were in place and the structure of civil society became so strong that it really could act as a counterbalance to the global institutions of government. The danger with the cosmopolitan model is that theorists are advocating a single global democracy and this will occur through the reinforcement of existing power structures such as the United Nations. This gives enormous power to that assembly. What happens if the people in power don't share the objectives of the cosmopolitan theorists? It could be the case that the United Nations remains in neo-conservative control but with total power.

The democratic approach mentioned above sets out how democratic legitimacy can be achieved through a balancing of representative practices with the participatory democratic practices of the 'life world' or civil society. Associational practices and deliberation in public affairs lead to a communicative rationality that can eventually lead to the formation of universal values and global cosmopolitan law. One of the underlying presuppositions here is that there is a right answer and that rational deliberation can reach universal values despite differences. Democracy here becomes the process of solving the problem.

Radical democracy and the plural agonistic model

This section describes democracy through the work of Chantal Mouffe, who takes a philosophical rather than a procedural approach. Democracy is not about achieving consensus but about embracing difference. Democracy is the empty space between different political positions and notions of citizenship. Her work includes a number of models of democracy, and I shall discuss three. The first is the model of radical democracy, described in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985).[111] The second, plural and agonistic democracy, is described in *The Democratic Paradox* (2000)[112] and can be seen as a development of radical democracy. The third is the multi-polar world order, put forward as an alternative global model to cosmopolitan democracy and found in *On the Political* (2005).[113]

Hegemony and Socialist Strategy (1985) was written with Ernesto Laclau at the end of the Cold War, a time when socialism was seen to have failed and many people were trying to rethink left-wing politics in that context. Very much like Gramsci's proposal for the Italian communist party, the book offers an alternative for the left that links the new-left subject positions that arose in the 1960s and 1970s with workers' struggles. The model is based on principles from the democratic revolution that Laclau and Mouffe see as the possibility for the radicalisation of social resistance.[114]

Laclau and Mouffe identify the French Revolution in 1789 as the key moment for the beginnings of the democratic revolution in that it replaced a hierarchical regime producing subordinated subjects. During the period between the French Revolution in 1789 and the revolutions of 1848, democracy was conceived as 'a field of popular action'.[115] For the first time, there was something new because the government found itself with no other legitimacy than the people. The revolution provided the discursive conditions that made forms of inequality illegitimate and transformed them into forms of oppression.[116]

Following the revolutions of 1848, the unions and the social democratic parties were in increasing solidarity. In 1850 there was a radical break between democracy and socialism. A working class that would engage in a long-term struggle against the dominant classes replaced the amorphous 'people'. Democracy was unstable and vulnerable owing to its lack of economic roots and this prevented it from being entrenched in this struggle against an established order: 'From then on there was no politics without hegemony.'[117] In this case the term 'hegemony' is used to describe a politics where one class ruled over another.

Laclau and Mouffe's concern in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* is that the new right or neo-conservatives (they use the example of the policies of Margaret Thatcher in the 1970s and 1980s) were forming a new hegemonic power. Laclau and Mouffe seek to rethink the left in that context. They describe the new right as hegemonic in that it seeks 'a profound transformation in the terms of political discourse and the creation of "a new definition of reality"'. In the name of individual liberty the new right was restoring hierarchies that had previously been destroyed through democratic struggle.[118]

Laclau and Mouffe's idea for radical democracy, closely linked to the thinking of Gramsci, involved the left manifesting itself as a counter-hegemonic power: 'The alternative left should consist of locating itself fully in the field of the democratic revolution through expanding the chains of equivalences between the different struggles against oppression.'[119] The term 'new social movements' is used to describe the types of struggles that are differentiated from workers' struggles but it links together highly diverse groups and movements like urban struggles, feminism, anti-racism and anti-capitalism.[120] The chain implies that there is a linkage between struggles. Laclau states that the Ku Klux Klan, for example, could not be in the same chain as an anti-racist group.[121] The use of the term 'equivalent' implies that each political position takes an equal position in the democratic arena regardless of whether it is the dominant position.

In contrast to Habermas's discursive theory of democracy, Laclau and Mouffe argue for the extension of democratic struggles into the whole of civil society and the state. Radical democracy in their view requires 'a multiplication of political spaces' and a decentralisation of power into these spaces. Therefore they do not, like Habermas, discuss participation as indirectly influencing political decision-making through associational practices, but call for new localised assemblies of power.

Critics of Laclau and Mouffe's version of radical democracy argue that it promotes an 'us' against 'them' power struggle. Like Marx theorising society

as two agonistic camps of the classes, Laclau and Mouffe create hegemonic oppositions between the new left and new right.[122]

One could argue that since *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* was written, political circumstances have changed. The book was written between the new-left struggles of the 1960s and 1970s and the rise of the anti-globalisation movement in the 1990s, a time when it appeared that liberal democracy was triumphant. However, the turn of the century has seen the rise of assemblies like the World Social Forum and the European Social Forum, provide a 'field of collective action' for the left participatory, non-party political struggles as called for by Laclau and Mouffe.

It could also be argued that Mouffe's own work, moreover, has started to answer the critics of radical democracy through the model of agonistic plural democracy. The concept of radical democracy can be seen to occupy a political position, as it is concerned with the left-wing project and a redefinition of political subjectivity so that the demands of the working class link to the demands of the new social movements.[123] Agonistic democracy, on the other hand, breaks from the political position and takes a more philosophical approach, where democracy occupies the space between political positions. Mouffe made this shift by reformulating radical democracy, making citizenship the defining position. Radical democracy thus becomes just one concept of citizenship within agonistic democracy, which allows for different concepts of citizenship within it. So an agonistic debate can take place between people whose conceptions of citizenship are, for example, neo-liberal, social democratic, radical democratic, conservative and so on:[124]

> And that's what I call agonistic pluralism … radical democracy will be one of the forms in which the struggle could take place, because this agonistic pluralism, I see as taking place between different conceptions of citizenship. The radical democratic project is just one way which strives to become hegemonic in this agonistic pluralism.[125]

The agonistic democratic model can be seen to be influenced by the writings of Lefort, which were contemporaneous with *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*. While Laclau and Mouffe were critiquing socialism's failure in terms of pluralism, Lefort, strongly influenced by Hannah Arendt, was critiquing the Soviet Union in terms of totalitarianism, and through this critique Lefort developed his theory of 'the empty place'.[126]

Lefort argues for a political form of the social, in which democratic change occurs not through an institution or cluster of institutions but as a form of society.[127] For Lefort, the emergence of the democratic form of society first took place in medieval times. There was a gradual development of a system of states and different societies within which they exercised power. The sphere of political power was separated from society, the economy, law and knowledge. The legitimacy of political power was no longer based on divine right, but on 'the people' and on 'the image of popular sovereignty'. This Lefort describes as 'the image of the empty place', a place impossible to occupy. Those who exercise public authority can never claim

to appropriate it; democracy is sustained by the principle that on the one hand it stems from the people and on the other hand it is nobody.[128] Lefort draws on his own experience as a young left Trotskyite when he found that the Trotskyite party functioned like a micro bureaucracy despite the rules of democratic centralism. His critique of the regimes of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was that the image of popular sovereignty was actualised by means of a party, one which claimed to identify with the people and popular sovereignty but in fact attempted to occupy the empty place of power.[129] He shows how communist Russian society, despite the democratic procedures of direct and participatory democracy, was in fact totalitarian because the democratic centre was occupied by a political position and therefore lost the indeterminacy central to democracy.[130]

But how does this view inform modern society in the West? A system of free elections in theory means that power remains an empty place. However, in order to maintain such an empty place, different political positions or political alterity are required. In *Politics Without Adversary*, Mouffe shows that the spectrum of political positions has disappeared from the political arena. The Liberal Party used to take a centre position between the left and right, but Blair's 'third way', theorised by Anthony Giddens, is 'beyond left or right' and attempts to take a political position that does not acknowledge other positions and attempts to resolve the left–right opposition. Mouffe argues that for Giddens socialism is dead not only in its communist form but in its social democratic form, and the new form of politics is 'life politics' in which private individuals require the power to make life decisions without interference from the political community.[131]

For Mouffe, liberalism relies on a limited and passive conception of citizenship, which provides a minimum set of basic rights allowing each individual to pursue self-interestedly his or her private definition of the good life. Active participation in the public sphere is discouraged, as this implies an effort to promote a common conception of the good life, thereby reducing the liberty of individuals to pursue their own, perhaps different, conceptions.[132] This conception of citizenship as a private individual one is one of the key factors contributing to political atomisation and depoliticisation of society. In agonistic democracy, this would be just one conception of citizenship among many; alterity would allow both those who want to pursue private interests and those who want to pursue common interests to coexist.

The agonistic critique of aggregative democracy is that it is based on rational consensus. The notion of consensus suggests that disagreements get pushed outside the realm of democracy into the uncivil realm. Antagonism therefore occurs outside the democratic field. This can be seen in the example of cosmopolitan democracy where Archibugi explains that if autocratic regimes refuse to comply with cosmopolitan rule then military force will be used as a last resort.[133] By autocratic, I presume that Archibugi is including far-right, far-left, nationalist and religious regimes, for example Islamic fundamentalist forms of governance. By placing disagreements or antagonisms at the centre, the agonistic model allows for all forms of politics to be included within it, removing democracy from any specific political position and placing it between them all.

Mouffe argues that extreme politics, for example the rise in the far right and fundamentalist positions, are a reaction to the central consensus. One difference between agonistic democracy and other forms of democracy is that it advocates 'the political', not 'politics', so difference rather than consensus lies at the centre:

> By 'the political' I refer to the dimension of antagonism that is inherent in human relations, antagonism that can take many forms and emerge in different types of social relations. 'Politics', on the other side, indicates the ensemble of practices, discourses and institutions which seek to establish a certain order and organise human coexistence in conditions that are always potentially conflictual because they are affected by the dimension of 'the political'.[134]

In *The Concept of the Political*, Carl Schmitt, a leading Nazi philosopher, says that to define the political it must be located between actions, in the same way that aesthetics is between beautiful and ugly, and morality is between good and evil. The political is between friend and enemy and can exist practically and theoretically, on its own, without having to draw on other distinctions such as moral, aesthetic or economic. The enemy, for example, may not be evil or ugly. Underlying the enemy concept is the real possibility of combat and war, which for Schmitt is the 'continuation of politics by other means'.[135]

Mouffe's argument for agonistic democracy is that 'the political', and therefore power, lies between people of differing opinions. She argues that deliberative democracy lies in the realm of morality and not 'the political', because if rational consensus could be reached in the ideal situation of Habermas' discursive democracy then power would be eliminated. Power and therefore democracy are constitutive of social relations, so for Mouffe power is not understood as an external relation taking place between identities but as one constituting those identities.[136] The thesis of *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* is that social objectivity is constituted through acts of power and so is ultimately political.

Mouffe and Laclau were concerned with how to allow a formation of democratic subjectivity such that power would be constitutive of social relations. If democracy ignores the social power relations in the way liberal democracy appears to in its present form, through concentration on consensus, then apathy, depoliticisation and identity politics start to occur. Mouffe's theory is that liberal democracy should make room for dissent and create institutions in which passions can be made manifest. Relations of antagonism become democratic relations, which she describes as relations of agonism. The aim of agonistic pluralism is to construct the 'us/them' relationship so that the 'them' is no longer perceived as an enemy to be destroyed, but as an adversary. The adversary is a legitimate enemy. Thus in agonistic democracy, conflict can be central for the production of new subject positions.

The third model of democracy described in Mouffe's work is the model for a multi-polar world order described in *On the Political* (2005). Mouffe argues that the problems of continuous war that we are facing today are the consequence of

a uni-polar world and that the best way to overcome them is not an illusory form of cosmopolitan governance but the establishment of a true pluralism through the establishment of a multi-polar world order. This notion of the multi-polar global order is supported by both Russia and Japan, who exert every effort to underscore their positions as active regional and international powers. Since the end of the Cold War, there has been a conflict in international relations between a uni-polar order headed by the United States and a multi-polar order. The ever increasing and sustainable growth of China's economy and the consolidation of its international position enhance the latter tendency. In the same way, the development of the European Union's procedures to attain unity and its attempts to apply common foreign and security policies directly, may temper the US role.[137]

Lefort's later work, *La complication* (1999), describes the implications of totalitarianism for the constitution of a world space. Lefort argues that the formation of such a space would entail 'a total mastery of human relations under the sign of the One, thus conjuring up not an *interdependence of states* or societies but a complete *unification of the globe*'.[138] For Lefort, the danger lying at the heart of modernity is the temptation to fill up the open space created by democracy with a new type of 'incarnation' or definitive unity, especially the imaginary fantasy of the 'People-as-One': 'the democratic character of society can only be given by the fact that no social actor can attribute to herself or himself the representation of the totality and claim to have the mastery of the totality'.[139]

Conclusion

At a conference in Budapest in September 2005, I gave a paper discussing the issues of participation and local democracy. One of the comments after the talk came from an Italian who said that every time they had open participatory forums in his town in Italy, the discussions would be dominated by the fascists arguing with the Muslims about proposals to build a mosque in the town. For this reason, he said it was easier not to have open forums in order to maintain the discussion at a more rational level.

If we look at the two theories of civil society and agonistic democracy, I find myself agreeing with both and not seeing them as incompatible. On the one hand, for many people the danger of participatory politics is that if a political assembly is open then it will be the arena for conflict and passion. There is a certain comfort in thinking that a civilised political arena will adhere to cosmopolitan law and basic human rights. On the other hand, I agree with Mouffe that there are enormous problems with the central consensus in liberal democracy and homogenised society. The danger is that if discussions like the one mentioned above, between fascists and Muslims, are not part of the political arena then they will be fought in the street.

There is a theoretical problem, which becomes a spatial problem for the civil society approach, and this is that creating a realm that includes civilised people only, in effect also creates an outside realm of the uncivilised. The danger is that this can result in the production of uncivilised, possibly violent space. I do not see

these two models of democracy as mutually exclusive; in fact, I would argue that both of these forms are essential to participatory democracy and that when we are discussing the democratisation of public space there should be a multiplicity of democratic spaces based on different concepts of democracy and citizenship.

Kaldor argues that civil society is really about a public 'good tempered' conversation, involving reason and sentiment and not just bargaining or the conflict of interests or passions. For her, civil society can be described as the realm of 'politics'.[140] In contrast, Mouffe argues that democracy should be about the mobilisation of passions and should inhabit not the realm of 'politics' but 'the political'.[141] For me, Kaldor and Mouffe are describing two very definite and different *types* of public space. Both are participatory, but one is associational and the other is conflictual; one inhabits the realm of 'politics' and the other 'the political'. If we look back at the democratic spaces of ancient Athens described earlier in Chapter 1, both these types of public political spaces were present. The *agora* or the market place was the space where the associational practices of politics occurred. The theatre, or *agones*, was the space where disagreements in society were acted out and replayed. Citizens would participate in both of these spaces in order to hone their arguments for the assembly.

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3 Dis-locations of democracy

Democracy and public space

> Imagine ourselves as architects, all armed with a wide range of capacities and powers embedded in a physical and social world full of manifest constraints and limitations. Imagine also that we are trying to change that world. As crafty architects we have to think what to change and where, about how we live in this world. This is a fundamental dilemma that faces everyone interested in progressive change.[1]

I have shown in the previous chapter on political philosophy that 'democracy' is not fixed but has multiple definitions, interpretations and models. This chapter discusses public space and I aim to show that the definition of public space is equally varied and changing, linked to conceptions and imaginations of democracy and citizenship.

This chapter explores the construction of public space and how it expresses, and at the same time reproduces, broader social relationships. I start by setting out some definitions of public space and then examine how contemporary definitions relate to capitalist social relations. I argue that the neo-liberal model of democracy lacks a notion of the public and has therefore tended to undermine both the democratic nature of space and the possibilities for the democratic development of space. I examine the relationship of the public realm to the public sphere and discuss the increasing importance of virtual public space following the dismantling of the public realm by neo-liberal policy.

Elizabeth Blackmar describes how, traditionally, public space was differentiated from private space by rules of access, the source of control over access, and the rules of the space regarding individual and collective behaviour. Where private space was protected by state-regulated rules, public space was socially regulated and therefore open to some degree of democratic control.[2] Legally, the meaning of public space has been related to property rights wherein the Anglo-American tradition recognises three kinds of property: private, public and common. Private property rights give rights to individuals to exclude others from the uses or benefits of resources (the term 'individual' includes corporations). Public property, owned by governments, gives state officials the right to determine who has the right to resources on behalf of a wider constituency. Common property does not relate to ownership as it can be owned, for example, by a local authority, a trust or a private

individual; it is an individual's right not to be excluded from resources.[3] So it is only in the case of common land that power is placed with the users of the space. Private property and public property are both remotely controlled, as rights are placed with the private owners or the state, rather than the users.

Neo-liberal practice, introduced by Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan in 1979, was implemented through a series of privatisations that changed the meaning of public space. The result of these privatisations meant that it was no longer possible to define public space either as 'publicly owned space' or 'publicly regulated space'; these criteria can now only be used to describe the publicness of space rather than public space. Neil Smith and Setha Low's definition of public space as 'any urban space that has public access' appears to have the nearest meaning for twenty-first century public space. They argue that public space can also be described through non-place-based definitions such as the media or the Internet.[4] Place-based definitions therefore include open space, for example the park, the square, the street, the market, and public buildings such as the town hall, the parliament, the shopping mall and so on. The publicness of these spaces is highly differentiated, legally, culturally and politically, as is the extent to which the public has access. The democraticness of these spaces is also differentiated as there is a complex web of private and public ownership and management. But depending on the extent to which democratic activity takes place, all these spaces could be seen to play a role in forming us as democratic citizens.

For example, as I move between the library, the theatre, the university and the swimming pool, my changing identity in these spaces contributes to forming me as a citizen, and if these spaces were no longer available my identity would be different. Each of these spaces, to a lesser or greater extent, could be seen to be playing a role in the democracy of society. For example, the library gives access to publicly owned archives and therefore freedom of information, one of the precepts of democracy.[5] The library also provides a space for social interaction. The university provides the space for debate, research and reflection, but the university has limited access and so on. In *Place and the Politics of Identity*, Steve Pile and Michael Keith argue that space and identity are contingent and that democratic identity is spatially constituted. Space cannot be dealt with as if it were merely an abstract arena in which things happen.[6] They argue that identity should always be a process, never an artefact; the moment the former is transformed into the latter, a contestable closure is transformed into a reified boundary. Pile and Keith argue for an alternative spatiality in order to allow for the development of radical forms of identity: a space of radical openness, no longer passive, no longer fixed.[7] They cite Ernesto Laclau to argue that democratic identity depends on conditions of existence which are contingent. There is no identity outside of its context.[8]

Public space and capitalist relations

> Until now, in theory as in practice, the double process of industrialization and urbanization has not been mastered. The incomplete teachings of Marx and Marxist thought have been misunderstood. For Marx himself,

> industrialization contained its finality and meaning, later giving rise to the dissociation of Marxist thought into economism and philosophism. Marx did not show (and in his time he could not) that urbanization and the urban contain the meaning of industrialization. He did not see that industrial production implied the urbanization of society, and that the mastery of industrial potentials required specific knowledge concerning urbanization. Industrial production, after a certain growth, produces urbanization, providing it with conditions, and possibilities. The problematic is displaced and becomes that of urban development. The works of Marx (notably *Capital*) contained precious indications on the city and particularly on the historical relations between town and country. They do not pose the urban problem. In Marx's time, only the housing problem was raised and studied by Engels. Now, the problem of the city is immensely greater than that of housing.[9]

In 'The Social-Spatial Dialectic', a chapter of *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (1989), cultural geographer Edward Soja aims to re-open the debate among Marxist theorists about the role of space in the production of the social, and calls for the social production of space to be incorporated into Marxist analysis.[10] Soja was among a number of Marxist geographers, including Harvey, Massey and Castells, who turned to Lefebvre in order to critique material Marxism. In material Marxism, history was seen to be the active entity in shaping social production, and discussions about the role of space in producing the social were seen as essentialist. Rendell argues that in material Marxism political practice was seen as projected onto the spatial field.[11] Soja describes how social and spatial relationships are interconnected, so social relationships produce space but are also spatially constituted:

> Space and the political organization of space express social relationships but also react back upon them … Industrialization, once the producer of urbanism, is now being produced by it.[12]

David Harvey argues that there is a long history of the capitalist takeover of space and in fact capitalism itself depends on the appropriation of space. 'The perpetual need to find profitable terrains for capital-surplus production and absorption shapes the politics of capitalism. It also presents the capitalist with a number of barriers to continuous and trouble-free expansion.'[13] For Harvey the model for the appropriation of public space by industrial capitalism began in nineteenth-century Paris, with the work of the urban planner Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann and commenced after an attempt at revolution by unemployed workers in 1848.[14] Harvey describes this process as 'Haussmannisation' and argues that the scheme had a dual value: first to rebuild the centre of Paris, but it also solved the problems of surplus capital and surplus product brought about by industrial capitalism. The debt-financed building scheme absorbed surplus capital while the new boulevards with the shops, cafés and department stores solved the problem of surplus product and Paris became a great centre of consumption.[15]

Lefebvre's concern is with democracy during the period leading to Haussmann that started with an attempted urban revolution in 1848. He describes the public works of Haussmann as a period of the greatest political intensity for Paris, when the city 'engaged itself with literature and poetry with vigour'.[16] Lefebvre suggests that during this period the bourgeoisie and the working class were both entrenched in the centre of Paris and that there were meetings, confrontations, ways of living, 'patterns' that coexisted in the city, which took the form of an urban democracy. The place-based democracy that was being practised in the centre of Paris threatened the new ruling class and at this time prevented it from establishing power in the city.[17]

Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte became emperor in 1851 and appointed Haussmann to take charge of public works in 1853. Haussmann's scheme to rebuild the centre of Paris solved many problems at once. Haussmann replaced the winding streets with straight boulevards and squares. The straight boulevards were not for beauty but for surveillance, as they enabled the police to 'comb the streets with machine guns'; at the same time, the monumental squares were an expression of power as they represented the glory of the state.[18] Haussmann insisted on scale; when the architect Jacques Ignace Hittorff showed his plans for boulevards that were 40 metres wide they were rejected, as Haussmann wanted them 120 metres wide.[19] This shift in scale is a technique that has since been continually reproduced with neo-capitalist development and was used by Robert Moses when he famously 'took a meat axe to the Bronx', in order to solve problems of surplus capital and unemployment after the war. His debt-financed scheme also had the effect of repressing the social movements active in New York during the 1930s. Harvey argues that the process of suburbanisation in the US produced a new lifestyle that opened markets for surplus products, such as household appliances and two car drives. In the new capitalist cities of the emerging markets there has been a further shift in scale, as we see in Dubai and China.[20]

According to Richard Sennett, Haussmann solved the problem of overcrowding for the bourgeoisie by segregating the city. He displaced working-class areas to create new bourgeois boulevards three times the width of the old streets and he created new spacious quarters for the bourgeoisie to inhabit.[21]

> Haussmann tore through the old Parisian slums, using powers of expropriation in the name of civic improvement and renovation. He deliberately engineered the removal of much of the working class and other unruly elements from the city centre, where they constituted a threat to public order and political power.[22]

However, Haussmann failed in his attempt to expel the proletariat from the city centre. One of the main demands of the Paris commune in 1871 was a return to the city centre for the dispossessed proletariat, to rebuild their previous urban democracy. Lefebvre claims that Haussmann attempted to replace *oeuvre* (the city as a body of work which includes arts, philosophy and urbanism) with *product*, but even though the physical city was replaced, the *oeuvre* in the form of poetry and writing continued.[23]

For Lefebvre, neo-capitalism and capital accumulation depend on the appropriation of space for both the production and the consumption of surplus product. Within neo-capitalism, public space becomes the space of consumption. The neo-capitalist system is dynamic and highly expansionary. While this is always contested, and although the production of space is carried out through state intervention, the state acts in accordance with capital.[24] However, the creation of consumer space is just one aspect of the neo-liberalisation of space. The difference between neo-liberalisation, described in the next section, and past forms of accumulation of public space by capitalism is that neo-liberalisation is not just about the spaces of consumption but affects all public space. Indeed, it involves a complete dismantling and re-structuring of the public realm through a transference, from the public to the private sector, of the individual components and networks that produce the public realm and space.

Neo-liberalisation of public space

The neo-liberalisation of public space is commonly imagined to be the corporate takeover of public space and the provision of public spaces of consumption: Dubai-style shopping centres with chain stores and cafés. Since the implementation of neo-liberal policy, public space has been in an ideologically difficult position as continual privatisations have resulted in the core meaning of public space as 'space belonging to the public' or 'publicly owned space' being challenged, transformed and removed. Blackmar shows how the question of democracy has become fashionable in urban design circles to appear to give new notions of 'medieval collegiality' in the design of private public space as an antidote to the soulless feeling of suburbanisation they invoke. It is often described as a 'third way' or a contemporary 'commons', precisely for Blackmar, because there is no intention of this being a place of citizen rights and political deliberation. New mall-like centres with a 'commons' enclosed by stores and given such names as 'festival marketplace', even 'agora', are making their appearance in these new developments.[25]

Doreen Massey argues that 'neo-liberal globalisation is yet another in a long line of attempts to tame the spatial' and that neo-liberalism can be seen both politically and through its geographical spatial mirror as an attempt to de-politicise society.[26] However, compared with earlier attempts to curtail, depoliticise and control space, neo-liberalisation is qualitatively different; it not only defines the meaning of space in terms of capitalist relations, but removes the framework, the public infrastructure and access to democratic control over public space through the dismantling of the public realm. The public realm refers to, for example, publicly owned parts of the city, public sector workers, utilities companies and the welfare state. The dismantling of the public realm has weakened the connection between the public sphere, the area of social life where people discuss societal problems to influence political action, and the state, as privatisation removes social regulation and democratic accountability.

The two main advocates of neo-liberal theory are political theorists Friedrich Hayek and Robert Nozick, who were strong influences Margaret Thatcher's

government in the late 1970s and 1980s.[27] Their central concept is that human beings will always favour themselves. The term 'human beings' means private individuals, and this also applies to people holding office. Neo-liberals differentiate themselves from the liberal democrat tradition in many ways; one is through their definition of the meaning of freedom. For neo-liberals, freedom is an individual rather than a collective right, as Hayek states: 'Freedom does not mean active power and participation'; it is not political freedom as in the participation of men in their choice of government and in the process of legislation and administration. Freedom in Hayek's definition is the opposite: freedom is freedom from coercion either from the state or the collective.[28] Therefore democratic rights are seen as 'negative' rather than 'positive' as they relate to the absence of political action.

For Hayek, an ideal libertarian society is one that advocates the minimal state and the market. Government services should be limited to the services that cannot be provided by competitive enterprise because it would be difficult or impossible to charge the individual beneficiary for them.[29] Hayek mistrusts government enterprises because they can use their unfair advantage of taxation to subsidise their enterprises. So to prevent this, he argues that equal subsidies must be given to private enterprises; therefore Hayek argues for public money to be used to fund private enterprise.

The central theory of neo-liberalism as outlined by Nozick in *Anarchy, State and Utopia* concerns the protection of individual rights from the state. Individual (the term 'individual' in neo-liberal theory generally refers to corporations) rights are so strong that there are no things that a person or group may do to them without violating those rights.[30] These are not rights created by government law but natural rights: for example the right to liberty, a right to do what one wants with one's life without interference from the state or other persons, as long as one's actions don't interfere with the liberty of others. These libertarian rights are described as negative rather than positive rights: while negative rights are the rights not to be interfered with by the state, positive rights are rights such as the right to social security or housing or the right to participate in political affairs.[31] For Nozick, anything paid for by taxation should be replaced; government programmes such as supplying food and shelter, education and healthcare to people in need should be eliminated and replaced by private charities. Public support for art, science and recreation should be removed, and museums, libraries and parks should be privately funded, paid for by the users of the spaces.[32]

Nozick's idea for society is the ultra-minimal state. In the ultra-minimal state, the state is limited to the functions of protection against violence, theft, fraud and enforcement of contracts. A state that is more extensive will violate a person's rights not to do certain things, and for Nozick this is unjustified.[33] Nozick describes the right to liberty as a 'side constraint'; according to Richard Hudelson, this means that if a government wants to do something to benefit society but this violates an individual's right to liberty then this will be blocked by the side constraint.[34] The very concept of the public realm as common rights must therefore be removed. In Nozick's theory, the state will make new markets available while reducing itself to a minimum. The public sector has to be reduced as far as possible to create a free

market, as neo-liberals believe that a free economy equals a strong (but minimal) state. Therefore public space in neo-liberal theory becomes the possibility for new markets, both in the space itself and in the various utilities and transport networks that also form public space.

The transfer of socially regulated space to the unregulated private sector, in effect, becomes the removal of the democratic framework that allows the possibility for citizens to exercise political control over their environment. Power is therefore removed from the public realm and placed in the hands of private corporations. Roche notes that neither Hayek nor Nozick make any direct reference to the concept of citizenship as he claims that the 'neo-liberal view has no use for, and little understanding of, citizenship'.[35]

Political sociologist Keith Faulks argues that Thatcherite governments asserted an elitist and exclusive conception of citizenship which increased the sense of insecurity and powerlessness felt by citizens in Britain.[36] Faulks argues that Thatcher's introduction of neo-liberalism in 1979 broke from the period of social democratic consensus and returned to the liberal ideals of the nineteenth century advocated by political theorists such as James Mill. For Faulks, Thatcherism undertook a Hayekian rejection of citizenship: 'They wish to undermine citizenship as a status denoting the interdependence and collective nature of a political community.'[37] This meant an attack on any form of collectivism, not only within socialism but even in Thatcher's own Conservative Party. She attacked 'paternalistic conservatism', a form collectivism in the party where members believed that the elite had a paternalistic responsibility to the rest of society. For Faulks, Thatcher was a liberal rather than a conservative, as conservatives have a pragmatic and undogmatic approach to government rather than a distinct ideology.[38] Thatcher argued that Edward Heath's Conservative Party government (1970–74) 'resulted in the most radical form of socialism ever contemplated by an elected British government'.[39] In 1987 she famously announced that 'there is no such thing as society'.[40] The twenty years of Thatcher's neo-liberalism saw a series of privatisations combined with large cuts in funding for public space (funding for public space fell by £1.3 billion between 1979 and 1997).[41] Public space was no longer identified with a notion of the public realm or the public sphere; instead it was broken down into a series of components that could or could not, depending on profitability, be opened to private enterprises described as stakeholders. Thatcher set about asset stripping the public realm and privatising the profitable parts.

A government report written by the Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions Committee of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2002–3 acknowledged public spaces to have been 'starved of funding and with no one organisation taking responsibility for their condition, they are suffering from physical neglect and the car has been allowed to dominate. The public gives this issue very high priority and the Government has recognised this problem.'[42] The *Cleaner, Safer, Greener* report described the state of public spaces following two decades of Thatcherism as in a 'poor' to 'unsatisfactory' condition, 'fragmented' due to a web of publicly and privately owned land. Public spaces usually

comprised of a number of stakeholders and public and private management, a mixture of often contradictory legislation, and no overriding document that deals with public space.[43] The report states that although the public generally identifies local authorities as responsible for managing and maintaining public spaces, this is not actually the case; the reality is a fragmented system of ownership, statutory roles and management responsibilities:

> In a street you may well have a frontage, a part of the pavement, which is the responsibility of the person who owns the house. The next bit of the pavement will be the responsibility of the local authority. You will have an uplifted kerbstone because it is the utility underneath that is responsible for the repair or maintenance. You will have a cable company that will be responsible for another bit. Then you will have the highway authority, which is not always the local authority responsible for the next bit.[44]

The problem of fragmentation is that a 'number of unrelated organisations with different priorities and focus, managing the public realm as a set of unrelated components'. No one has the responsibility for the public realm in its entirety. Stakeholders' (private and public bodies that have a stake in the public space) actions are often carried out with the interests of that particular stakeholder, and this may have a negative impact on another stakeholder. In principle, the only real stakeholder for public space is the public realm itself.[45]

When New Labour gained power in 1997, the party took a contrasting view to Thatcher's view that 'there is no such thing as society' which did not acknowledge collective responsibilities of citizenship, and set out to ameliorate the problems of social exclusion and social economic disparities that had been brought about by the Thatcher policies of competitive individualism.[46] New Labour's policies recognised the limitations of both the state and the market and created policies for extending local governance through 'community participation'. For the main purpose of community participation is 'the involvement of people from a given locality or given section of the population in public decision making'[47] and this concern arises from evidence of increasing alienation and disengagement of the public from political processes. Local Neighbourhood Renewal strategies and the New Deal for Communities (NDC) were designed to 'bridge the gap' between deprived areas and the mainstream.[48] In contrast to the view that had underpinned Thatcherism, New Labour brought in a notion of citizenship, rights and responsibilities. A contract between the state and citizens which described an active and conditional definition of citizenship, that meant that the state gives rights and citizens have responsibilities, which if they fulfil they have rights to public services.[49]

The government and local authorities used new forms of inclusion and empowerment. Tony Blair stated 'success depends on communities themselves' and re-introduced a notion of community into the urban discourse.[50] The importance of community participation was central to the NDC areas as they were based around community partnerships. Community groupings were established:

these were localised groupings based around residents in each particular NDC area. Community groups were, for example, the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community.[51] Harvey suggests it is a characteristic of the neo-liberal state to use 'soft' notions of community, rather than political notions of association, since these soft notions of community do not threaten the power of the dominant classes.[52] Limiting the participation to a bounded area encourages participation with limited horizons beyond the neighbourhood. Margit Mayer claims that this policy of New Labour is unlikely to develop into a wider critique of neo-liberalism or to connect with wider networks of the public sphere.[53]

However, New Labour's neighbourhood renewal strategies did not mean a return to an old Labour system of welfare and a strong public realm but rather they continued the policies central to Thatcherism of 'modernisation' of public services, privatisation and managerialism. They introduced quasi-autonomous agencies (quangos), where public sector bodies had to act like private sector bodies in areas such as competing for contracts. *New Public Managerialism* (NPM) is central to neo-liberal policy rather than social regulation. Part of managerialism is the focus on outputs and targets as part of schemes for monitoring and evaluating activities and expenditure. The problem with this is that it constrains the possibility for Local Neighbourhood Renewal and NDC schemes to act autonomously, as targets predetermine their actions and success is dependent on outputs.[54]

Residents of NDC areas claim that although they do have more access to the state decision-making, this does not give them any real power and that there was no change in the public sector bodies that possess the decision-making power. In other words, community participation is an attempt to remedy the neo-liberal problem of social exclusion and poor-quality public space, but without changing the central policy of neo-liberalisation and without restoring the democratic framework of the public realm. For Fuller and Geddes, community participation creates a contradiction as neo-liberal policies are based on restoring power to the economic elite.

> The contradiction of roll-out neo-liberalism lies, therefore, in its subordination of the 'social' to the market: given that the widening of social and economic disparities is not merely a by product of the neo-liberal project but the intention and consequence of the restoration of the power of the economic elite, it is unrealistic to expect anything else.[55]

The New Labour contradiction of community participation lay in the proposal to strengthen the public sphere and, at the same time as dismantling the public realm, transferring state operations to non-state and quasi-state bodies. Control was taken from citizens and their elected governments and given to transnational corporations and unelected transnational organizations.[56] Mark Purcell describes this as 'a shift from government to governance', for Purcell 'a central problem of neo-liberal global restructuring is that it is disenfranchising democratic citizens' through the removal of the elected democratic framework.[57] Nancy Fraser

describes this transfer of citizenship as a shift from 'strong publics' to 'weak publics' as citizens lose their sovereign decision-making power. The next section examines the relationship between public realm and the public sphere, and asks whether the public realm is necessary for democracy, by discussing Habermas' sdeliberative theory of democracy which advocates the strengthening of civil society as an independent sphere between the private realm and the state.

The public sphere and the public realm

Nancy Fraser argues that neo-liberalism was a reaction to the social democracy of the post-war period; the socialist vision during this period was for a strong public realm formed through citizen participation, but for Fraser the public realm became institutionalised in an authoritarian statist form.[58] Fraser states that there is a failure within socialism to distinguish between apparatuses of the state and the arenas of discourse and association.[59]

Mary Kaldor argues that in the late 1970s and 1980s (around the time of the introduction of neo-liberalism), civil society made a break with the state and therefore the public realm. Before that, the public sphere was linked with the territorial state and the meaning of civil society was to do with participation with the state through trade unions, political parties, labour clubs and so on.[60] Now, particularly in the last decade, since the Internet became widely available, civil society is formed through global networks. There has been a shift from place-based forms of political organising towards transnational mobilisation networks.[61]

Fraser explains how the concept of the public sphere, set out in Habermas' s*The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* in 1962, was particularly useful to academics and theoreticians as it allowed them to overcome the problems of territorially-based democracy that have plagued social movements; the inability of the Marxist and socialist tradition to distinguish between the public realm and the public sphere meant that the political sphere could not exist outside the state. For Fraser, Habermas's public sphere breaks with the idea of the public sphere as the public realm, the state, public economy, public employees, public space, and describes the public sphere as 'a theatre in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk'.[62]

Fraser argues that *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* charts the rise and fall of bourgeois democracy with the concern that liberal democracy's link to the state suppressed the autonomous bourgeois public sphere.[63] Civil society takes a position in between the market and the state, and therefore differentiates itself from both the public and the private realm. Civil society is a nexus of non-governmental associations that are neither administrative nor economic, and so is differentiated from the private realm through the nature of the discourse, limited to the common good rather than private interests.[64]

For Fraser there are a number of problems that arise from Habermas's notion of the bourgeois public sphere and its separation from the state. One is that Habermas sees civil society as a single public and fails to recognise other competing publics; she argues for a multiplicity of publics in the public sphere.[65]

Another problem is that the sharp division between civil society and the state means that there is a question of access. Fraser states that the bourgeois public sphere was based around private property and this was exclusive. By detaching itself from the state and the public realm, civil society also detached itself from public space and therefore open access. She questions whether there is a need for formal public arenas with formal rights of access, linking civil society back to public space. Fraser argues that the problem with detachment creates weak rather than strong publics.[66] Civil society is a counterweight to the state in as much as it operates through public opinion rather than having the sovereign decision-making power of a strong public.

The detachment of civil society from the public realm also creates a problem for public space. Civil society's de-territorialisation is, in effect, an abandonment of public space. Fraser asks if this is a *laissez-faire* position towards capitalism and neo-liberalism and argues that to insist on civil society's break with the state is to defend classical liberalism, civil society theory becomes that of a privately ordered capitalist economy.[67] The public sphere's break with the state therefore leaves the physical public spaces of the city undefended, open to appropriation by market capitalism, described previously in this chapter.

First, the dismantling of the public realm following Thatcherism and New Labour and second, the public sphere's break with the state leave place-based definitions of public space democratically, in a doubly weakened but new position. I would argue that we are in a very particular point in history, where the dislocation of the public sphere from the public realm has freed the public sphere, and this has left a radical opening for the re-imagination of public space.

Fraser argues that weak publics can become strong publics through locations or involvement in particular spaces and this can be achieved through self-managed and autonomous institutions; these could be, for example, work places, residential areas or childcare centres.[68] She argues for new forms of community-led public space that could be both arenas for opinion formation and decision-making. Fraser describes these spaces as 'sites of direct or quasi-direct democracy, wherein all those engaged in a collective would participate in deliberations to determine its design and operation'.[69] Therefore for Fraser, the relationship between the public sphere and public realm is central to democracy and this meaning is determined through public space.

However, Fraser argues that while these micro-sites give access to democratic practice, it is still necessary to think about the wider issues of democracy and how civil society can contribute to decision-making. Which institutions should be representative and which participatory? Fraser wonders if we should think of a participatory central parliament with authoritative discursive sovereignty.[70] The re-thinking of physical public space is central to the re-thinking of democracy, particularly in view of globalisation. The last decade has seen the opening of a new global participatory space, the Internet, and I will argue in the next section that the Internet is transforming place-based public space.

Virtual public space

I have argued earlier in this chapter that neo-liberalism has attempted to undermine the political infrastructure of the public realm. In this section, I argue that the dissolution of the public realm was followed by a transformation of the public sphere due to the Internet, which has provided a new virtual framework for the dislocated public sphere to inhabit. Unlike other forms of media, like the television and the newspaper, which can be seen to be temporal in as much as information is viewed in a time-based linear progression, the Internet is spatial, as the Internet consists of many coexistent activities taking place in a virtual space. In *For Space,* Massey re-conceptualises space so as to open it up to the sphere of the political. First, she insists that space must be thought of as the product of interrelations constructed from the global to the tiniest scale. Second, she argues that space must be thought of as the sphere of multiplicity and third, that we understand space as always under construction. Space is the sphere of relations, negotiations, practices of engagement, power in all its forms.[71] The Internet therefore meets Massey's brief for political space in all three accounts.

In 'Public Space, Virtual Space and Democracy', Marcel Hénaff and Tracy B. Strong conclude that where physical public space was thought of as essential for the functioning of democracy in ancient times, this is no longer necessary with the advent of the Internet.[72] They use the Internet to solve the problem raised by Rousseau and Montesquieu, who argued that direct democracy is the ideal regime because any form of representation is corrupting. However, for Hénaff and Strong, participation has become impossible because contemporary states now have millions of members: 'In contemporary society public space is no longer physically perceivable such that citizens would be present in person. Instead such a space becomes metaphorical and designates not a physical meeting place but non-visible network of positions.'[73] Their argument is that democracy cannot be separated from shared information and free access to information. Older forms of information, however, such as newspapers and television gave us the feeling of a universal global as being 'out there' while our understanding of ourselves was fixed to a particular locality: 'The network model of the Internet permits a previously impossible affirmation of the local, not because it is virtual but because it permits an integration of individual spaces into one without emptying them of their singularity.'[74] So their argument is that the Internet is a global space, formed from local spaces. We can participate in this global space while retaining our local identity. It could equally be argued that the Internet allows us to create global networks of like-minded individuals, and identities formed on the Internet are more linked to interests and issues rather than tied to local places.

Hénaff and Strong's idea is that the Internet has the capacity to host debates in which millions of people can participate, and then decisions can be made through electronic voting.[75] However, as for Rousseau and Montesquieu, democracy in this sense is still seen as time-based rather than spatial. If democracy is seen as co-existent activities rather than linear decisions, then there is not a need for everybody to be discussing the same point at the same time. I agree that there may be some

decisions that could be made by everyone participating at once, but the strength of the Internet as a democratic space is in its spatial dimension; like the ancient *agora*, the Internet is an associational space of democracy where many activities can coexist. There are a few reasons why I would question Hénaff and Strong's notion that the democratic virtual space of the Internet can replace physical public space as the space of democracy. I agree that the Internet has transformed democratic participation in the last decade and potentially forms the basis of a truly democratic space. But what about the city? Is the space for deliberation on public affairs really sitting in the privacy of our homes or in Internet cafés? What happens to the public spaces of the city and space as experienced?

Virtual and physical public space have always had a symbiotic relationship – for example, Habermas's bourgeois public sphere of the eighteenth century: 'a body of private persons assembled together to discuss matters of "public concern" or "common interest"'. Deliberation took place in coffee houses; the state would be subject to political scrutiny and the bourgeois public would hold the state accountable via publicity – letters to *The Times*. The letters pages of *The Times* and the coffee houses were both public spaces.[76]

Research by Anastasia Kavada shows that the Internet has changed the nature of democratic participation and that new forms of place-based democracy are arising from Internet activity. Kavada argues that virtual space does not replace real space but rather changes the nature of real space. For example, she argues that the Internet has changed the nature of the left on a global scale as the network encourages connections between diverse actors, and people that meet on the Internet are more likely to speak on the phone and meet in real life.[77]

Kavada's research into the European Social Forum showed that the alternative globalisation movement or social justice movement is inextricably linked to new communications technology and has managed to unite diverse groups, from anarchist to left political parties, individual activists and the community sector: 'The Internet will foster collective identity on an international scale among diverse actors whose ideological differences may have otherwise been considered irreconcilable.'[78] The Internet is the way a movement communicates its goals and protests but also the organising structure, collective identity and ideas. However, Kavada shows that whereas the Internet is the space for organisation, debate and deliberation and even conflict, democratic decisions are always made face to face in assemblies. The mass assemblies, protests and meetings of the alter globalisation movement, which have only risen up in the last decade, could be seen to have mirrored the Internet becoming widely available.[79] For Naomi Klein, 'what emerged on the streets of Seattle and Washington was an activist model that mirrors the organic decentralised interlinked pathways of the Internet'.[80]

Virtual space and physical public space therefore have a dialectical relationship, and the Internet has meant a distinctive change for social movements throughout the world. This argument is further illustrated by the uprisings in Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab world. Historian, planner and Middle East studies specialist, Nezar Alsayyad described the particular relationship of urban space to virtual space that took place in the uprisings in Egypt. Tahrir Square (meaning Liberation Square)

has a long history of protest in Cairo and Alsayyad argues that the meaning of Tahrir Square is a testament to how place and history come together. The protests in Tahrir Square had been taking place by small groups for many years before the uprising. The mass demonstrations of January 2011 started after cyber activists managed to attract activists from diverse groups to join the protests in the square. For Alsayyad, 'the new multi-faceted repertoire is best observed through the relations between social media, urban space, and media coverage of the protests, whose messages are mutually constitutive'. The Internet played a major role in communication networks and in facilitating and broadcasting the uprisings to the rest of the world:

> In the end, revolutions do not simply happen in cyber space even if they get their start there. And what the Cairo experience clearly shows is that the real Tahrir Square, with all the sweat and blood that spilled onto it and its messy, disorganized, and ever-changing virtual counterpart, are two sides of the same coin. In fact, I would suggest that today the real Tahrir Square may not continue to possess a meaningful existence without its virtual other, one that could legitimately be called Tahrir2.[81]

But this transformation of public space is occurring on a small and local scale as well as on the global scale, as an article by Simon Jenkins in *The Guardian* shows how the Internet is changing live performance space and live debate in London. He argues that live performance and live debate are more popular now than ever. The number of licences for events of more than 5,000 people has risen from 40 in 2005 to about 200 in 2009. Debates that invite the audience to speak, to think, to make up its mind and to vote are especially popular. Jenkins concludes that where politicians have failed democracy, the market is taking their place.[82]

As Hénaff and Strong have shown, the Internet has created a constantly accessible global public space and this has globalised local identity. I have been arguing that there is a dialectic relationship between the global space of the Internet and place-based public space. The next chapter discusses the social relations involved in the production of democratic public spaces of the city.

Notes

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5 Low and Smith, *The Politics of Public Space*, p. 3.
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7 Pile and Keith, *Place and the Politics of Identity*, p. 5.

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11 Jane Rendell, 'The Reassertion of Time into Critical Spatial Practice', paper given at One Day Sculpture: An International Symposium on Art (Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand, 26–28 March 2009).
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15 Harvey, 'The Right to the City', p. 26.
16 Henri Lefebvre, 'Industrialization and Urbanization', Kofman and Lebas, *Writings on Cities*, pp. 75–6.
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24 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 167.
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4 The production of democratic public space

We have seen in the previous chapter that capitalist relations and neo-liberalism have resulted in a dislocation of the public sphere from the public realm and a virtualisation of the public sphere. In this chapter, I spell out the implications for the construction of democratic public space. I include three modes of production that can be linked to different democratic models of public space: a universal model by architect Bernard Tschumi, a community model from atelier d'architecture autogérée and an agonistic model from artist Krysztof Wodiczko. The final section discusses whether democratic space can be obtained through rights and describes the growing global movement of the 'Right to the City'.

For political philosophers Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, neo-liberalism is characterised by diffuse, decentred relations of power, not operating through consent but through the production of bodies and subjectivities; this has undermined the existence of an 'outside' from which oppositional politics can organise. Oppositional politics can no longer be thought of in bounded terms of labour movements and trade unions, and instead they put forward the theory of the 'multitude', an open expansive global network. Hardt and Negri describe a conceptual shift in citizenship concerning political participation in the production of the common that can be explained by the dislocation of the public sphere from the public realm described in the previous chapter. Hardt and Negri describe this shift in citizenship as moving from habit to performance.[1] Habit is common practice: singularities interact and communicate socially on the basis of the common; we continually produce the common through our actions, and the common continually produces us as it serves as a basis for our actions. They argue that habits are not merely repeated actions from the past but are means that project themselves, demonstrating ways of acting.[2] Performance on the other hand is different; performance lies in the realm of resistance; the political is produced and reproduced through performance. Performance subverts social bodies and new social forms are invented through performing everyday actions differently. This description of the shift from habit to performance can be seen as the shift from power to resistance. Habit is politics, the everyday activities that contribute to the formation of the public realm, and performance is political, the activities that challenge and re-imagine the public realm.

Hardt and Negri cite Dewey to claim that the roots of this shift in citizenship emerge from industrial capitalism. Dewey argues that 'industrial modernization and corporate capital have created not only economic disaster but also a disastrous political situation in which the public cannot participate actively in government'. According to Hardt and Negri, Dewey viewed the characteristics of the factory as running counter to democratic exchange and tending to form a silent passive public.[3]

Lefebvre outlined the spatial problem of alienation that occurs from a lack of participation in public life. Alienation is one of the key concepts discussed in *Critique of Everyday Life* written in 1945 after the end of the Second World War. Reflecting on the war, Lefebvre states that the universal mistake made by man was not just a German mistake, but a mistake that allowed power to be placed outside of life.[4] He develops his spatial argument from Marx's theory of alienation. For Marx, capitalism has created a division of labour that produces an *estrangement* or *alienation.* The worker is alienated from the process of production because the object that the worker produces is *power independent* from the worker, who is unaware of the profit the object is yielding. The product that the worker produces is labour embodied but stands opposed, something alien to the worker.[5]

In *The Production of Space* Lefebvre shifts the 'object' of interest from industrial objects to the actual production of space.[6] Lefebvre's shift from the factory to the city shifts the 'object' of interest from objects produced in a factory to lived space. This shift also changes the citizenry, as he moves the focus from the 'workers' to the users of space, and in doing so creates a more inclusive *demos*, not based on the subordinated relations of workers and capitalists but inhabitants of the city.

For Laclau and Mouffe, Marx's aim to re-think society on the new principle of the confrontation between classes was undermined from the start, as 'class opposition is incapable of dividing the social body into two antagonistic camps'.[7] Socialists argued for reform to the relations of production, thereby legitimising the relations of subordination between workers and capitalists and 'producing a unified discursive space without a discursive exterior'. The socialist discourse of workers' struggles and state should have been part of the democratic revolution insofar as it was a critique of economic inequality.[8] However, if the relations of production relate to the city and built space rather than the objects produced in the factory then the same argument of alienation can be made but without the relations of subordination of industrial capitalism. If the production of public space and architecture is power independent of users then alienation occurs between citizens and their environment.

Lefebvre states that to understand the complexities of society one must understand a dialectical relationship between a triad of spaces. The first is 'conceived space' that he describes as *representations of space*: this is conceptualised space that is the space of architects, planners, scientists, engineers and so on; they work with materials of representation such as drawings. This is the dominant space of society because it deals with the conception of the production of space. The second is 'perceived space' which he describes through *spatial practices*: these are the

everyday routines and experience of space and urban realities such as transport networks; spatial practices produce and master space through appropriating it. The third is lived space, *spaces of representation*: this is directly lived social space that includes the associated images, codes and symbols of inhabitants and users often in the form of objects to provide meaning and identity of space.[9] In market-led development, the conceived, perceived and lived spaces are often all decided remotely. One could take the example of a shopping centre that includes many chain stores: the lived *representations of space* (the signs and symbols that give the space identity) are those of global capitalism rather than local culture. Without access to the *spaces of representation* or the *representations of space*, the city user has a purely consumer-based rather than participatory relationship to the city, and this is profoundly alienating. It is only through performance that the user can start to reclaim space. Lefebvre states that the lived, perceived and conceived realms should be interconnected so that subjects should be able to move freely between them.[10] Participation in architectural and planning practice therefore could be seen to start to address the problem of alienation as it has the potential to open a connection between the conceptual space of the architect, and lived space and perceived space. A space of dialogue that allows subjects to move between these spaces theoretically becomes a space of active citizenship, embedded in the production of the city. But participation in the formation of publicly owned space has been undermined by three decades of neo-liberalism which advocates the transfer of ownership and regulation of public space from the public to the private, de-regulated realm. Privatisation has meant that socially regulated democratic spaces can be removed from the public realm, as a matter of public policy without, it appears, any legitimate defence of space on the grounds of democracy.

The architect is in a difficult and ambiguous position in relation to the construction of political public space. First, the architect is ultimately dealing with design and form in the material world, and politics is ephemeral. Politics exists in power and resistance, networks, flows, spatial nomadic practices. Space is defined as political through its appropriation, yet politics can appear and disappear. Politics in this sense is something that cannot be materialised or localised. Yet on the other hand, and this is the concern of this book, neo-liberalism, as I have shown, has become firmly embedded in the spatial fabric of the built environment and there is a lack of articulation about its alternative. Where there is a clear brief for one, the other seems vague. For Richard Sennett, 'architects are forced to work with present day ideas of public life'.[11] Space is constructed from social relations, informal and formal – power and resistance and the democratic construction of space requires an equivalence of these relations – architecture however tends to be located in the formal; public architecture is commissioned or agreed by the state; while this is always contested, architects are often forced to work with relations of power and not resistance.

There is also the question of architectural tools, architectural practice and representation. Drawings show space as a slice through time, an ideological closure. As Massey argues, representation therefore creates an imagination of space that is fixed and divorced from time. Representation tames the spatial into the conceptual

and textual.[12] Architectural drawing is always an abstracted view of space and cannot represent the multiplicity of relations, physical–non-physical, human–non-human, that produce space. As we saw in the example of the Parthenon in the first chapter, architecture was a discursive rather than drawn practice. In fact the survival of specifications and the absence of drawings of the building have led Kostof to believe that drawings of the Parthenon building never existed.[13]

The idea of architectural practice as discursive as well as drawn practice, and the notion of the public forum as the space for architectural design, is continually re-addressed throughout this book. Discursive practices allow us to reconceptualise architectural practice to allow for democratic spatial practices to contribute to the construction of space. The forum gives the imagination of architecture not as forms in space but as the social and political relations that construct that space. For Massey it is the contestations and antagonisms that arise through the negotiations of space that make space genuinely public.[14]

In *For Space*, Massey argues that the problem of political space is the way space is conceptualised or imagined. Her attempt in the book is to re-conceptualise space as she argues that thinking of space in a particular way can open up space to the political. Massey insists that space must be thought of as relational, the sphere of coexisting heterogeneity, multiplicity and as horizontal.[15] If we imagine democracy, therefore, through Massey's spatiality, not only is space opened to politics but democracy is opened to space. Democracy stops being a time-based linear progression of activities and starts to be multiple and coexistent. It is not necessary, therefore, to resolve political philosophy as a model of democracy but to think about how competing models of democracy can coexist either as democratic spaces or dimensions of space. Therefore if the architectural political project concerns reconceptualising space as democratic the role of the architect can be to re-imagine space to allow for alternative models of democracy to enter and to facilitate democratic relations in the production of space.

In *Actions of Architecture*, Jonathan Hill cites Lefebvre to argue that the architect has authority over conceived but not lived space; therefore the architect cannot determine the use of space but the architect can understand different types of user. Hill identifies a number of different users. The passive user is predictable and transforms neither use nor meaning of space. Hill also identifies five types of creative user. For Hill, through understanding the user, it is possible for the architect to create a user design strategy.[16]

Models of democratic space

I argue in Chapter 7 that democratically produced public spaces in the city are necessary for participatory democracy and these take on different forms. Two examples of democratic public space opened to the European Social Forum in Paris in 2004 and illustrate how very different architectural approaches can create models of democratic public space.

The first, Bernard Tschumi's Parc de La Villette, constructed in 1982, is on the site of a disused abattoire and shows how the design of form can be used

to produce political and democratic space. In this case, the challenge of design is to design form that is as indeterminate as possible, to remove function from form in order to allow for appropriations, chance and events; or if form does follow function then the function is multiple. For Bernard Tschumi, architecture poses the possibility of constructing the conditions that make it possible for non-hierarchical non-traditional societyto exist within the relationships between spaces and events. For Tschumi architects cannot, however, design a new definition of society or determine the use of space. He gives the example of a building at Parc de la Villette in Paris that was designed as a garden centre, reorganised as a restaurant during construction and finally used as a children's painting and sculpture workshop. I am using the example of Parc de la Villette because Tschumi has purposely created an indeterminate space to allow for spatial politics. Tschumi argues that to define space architecturally is to determine spatial boundaries. Tschumi deconstructs the idea of the material building as a boundary between inner and outer space, creating what he describes as follies. The follies have the scale of a small building but in structure only. For Tschumi the follies are points of activities, of programmes, of events.[17]

The real success of the Parc de la Villette could be seen at the meeting of the European Social Forum (ESF) in Paris (2003), where the park hosted literally thousands of people in a multiplicity of discussions and activities. The forum met on different sites in the suburbs of Paris but the only central site available for this kind of participatory political meeting was Tschumi's park.

But democratic political architecture takes on a multiplicity of forms. While I think Tschumi's spaces are essentially important and provide one type of universal democratic space, I also think that there is a need for different conceptions of political space.

Tschumi creates an empty place of power through the removal of power from space, creating a space that is impossible to dominate or determine through use, and therefore is open to appropriation and allows for unknown political events. There are also other definitions of the empty place of democracy as the space between different conceptions of space, a public space that is impossible to dominate because of constant negotiations of diverse publics and an equivalence of those publics with regard to space.

Another very different type of democratic space that opened itself to the ESF in Paris was ECObox in La Chapelle in the north of Paris. ECObox was a community renewal project focussed on reclaiming the commons, and became a pilot project for a number of similar projects in the Paris suburbs. The ECObox project was conceived by the design collective atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa) (studio for self-managed architecture), founded by architects Doina Petrescu and Constantin Petcou in 2001.[18] Petrescu and Petcou describe their practice as 'a platform for experimentation and renewal of derelict urban space'. They aim at providing a third way beyond markets or states, a system of community self-management and self-government for disused or neglected open spaces in the city.

As we have seen earlier, common space differs from public and private space in law regarding rights of access. For public and private space, the owner of the

space retains the rights and can withhold access; for example in the case of public space, rights are held by the state, and for private space, rights of access are held by the individual or corporation. Common space however is different. While common space can be publicly or privately owned, traditionally the users rather than the owners of the space hold the rights of access. De Angelis claims that the commons started after acts of sharing in public space or common customs became rights of that space. The commons are therefore defined by spatial practices rather than ownership. They are created, maintained and practiced by communities. The acts of 'commoning' being the social processes that create and reproduce the commons.[19] Communities are sets of commoners who share resources and who define for themselves the rules according to which the shared resources are accessed and used. For Stavros Stavrides, 'communities' differ from 'the public' as the community refers to a homogeneous group of people, whereas 'the idea of the public puts an emphasis on the relation between different communities'.[20]

For Petrescu and Petcou, reclaiming the commons is a central concept for their architectural design process and produces an alternative concept and resistance to market-led or neo-liberal development. While Petrescu and Petcou are working on physical space in particular localities, the commons are not necessarily linked to a locality and can operate through diverse community practices. The commons become a social territory of shared resources and include literature, music, arts, design, film, video, television, radio, information, software and sites of heritage and so on.

Relating the discourse surrounding the commons to Marxist thinking and Marx's concept of alienation, Massimo De Angelis describes capitalism as ongoing separation of producers from the means of production. Capitalism is described as a space of separation dislocating citizens from their environment. However, he argues that processes of production are acts of commoning. For De Angelis, to produce the commons these acts need to be reclaimed, power needs to stay in the hands of those producing the products. 'He conceptualizes the political as constitution of communities who struggle for self-management, equal association and re-appropriation of the means, conditions and results of livelihood'.[21] De Angelis also argues that in order to empower and sustain the commons, whatever is produced in the commons must stay within the commons.

aaa's first space, ECObox, started in a disused warehouse and courtyard, but moved after the space was evicted, and ECObox has since occupied a series of spaces in the La Chapelle area of Paris. In 2006, aaa were invited by the local mayor of the Saint Blaise quarter to explore the possibilities of a disused passage that had been neglected for many years. They are currently working in Colombe, a working class suburb of Paris which links to a larger network, R-URBAN.

Architectural practice for aaa is about producing the commons through community action and participation. Participation involves community practices on the actual development site, rather than through methods of representation or consultation. Petrescu and Petcou start by creating a garden out of recycled materials that enables the community to inhabit the site through gardening. At

ECObox this was a wooden deck made of pallets in the courtyard that formed a number of allotments. While they did not refurbish the existing fabric of the building, aaa and the residents of La Chapelle made a series of interventions, a number of mobile pieces – a kitchen, a library, a music desk and a workshop that could be moved around and opened up. These pieces meant that the spaces on the ECObox site were constantly reinvented in terms of use, interpreted by the individual members of the association. One member used the courtyard to fix his cars while another, a fashion designer who found it difficult to gain access to the Paris fashion world, used ECObox to hold fashion shows. Others had individual allotments and came to grow food. There were also communal uses: discussions, international conferences, films, art exhibitions, picnics, big community dinners and dances were among the activities that I witnessed. But underlying these activities was a lot of discussion, very serious engagement and resistance to the development proposals in La Chapelle.

The first ECObox was evicted in 2009, following which ECObox moved to a series of sites in La Chapel. ECObox became a set of mobile pieces that could be used to activate unused public space and reclaim the commons. The acts of commoning that are required to re-appropriate and inhabit the derelict spaces therefore become the basis for producing the commons.[22]

One of the arguments supporting these physical community spaces is that communities sustain the commons, yet communities themselves are a problematic concept. Petrescu argues that participation in the space itself is hegemonic, and through the practice of commoning, forms of public association develop in the sensitive and alienated suburbs of Paris. For Nancy Fraser it is through participation in community-organised public spaces that weak publics become the strong publics.[23] Petrescu notes how the residents of La Chapelle developed a public voice and a public confidence as ECObox developed as a political entity. aaa's notion of the commons differs from open public space, as the commons involves a 'community' rather than 'the public'. The gates remain padlocked for a large proportion of the time, but community members hold keys. Trust builds through participation in the space and associational membership comes through obtaining a key and therefore continuous access and use of the space.

In 2006 aaa moved into their second district of Paris, to the Saint Blaise area where they were commissioned by the local mayor to propose new uses for an unused ancient passage called 56 Rue Saint Blaise. An alley between two buildings had become neglected and uncared for. Passage 56 is described as a space 'open for all of the inhabitants of Saint Blaise and outside'. After a period of research, forming collaborations with local actors, inhabitants, associations and schools, aaa developed a design for the space along ecological principles and through the desires of local people. The result was a collectively managed space for gastronomy and horticulture. The alleyway includes a garden and community space that can accommodate meetings, screenings, workshop activities and commercial exchange. The space aims to produce as much water, fertiliser, food and energy as it consumes, so it has solar panels, compost pits and a system of rainwater collection.[24]

> As with other projects initiated by aaa to promote stronger democracy and resilient ecologies in urban areas through 'micro-political' activity, design for urban agriculture here is an ongoing process, with the lines between client and designer being blurred and the result being a productive space that is in continuous flux.[25]

aaa's most ambitious project to date is R-URBAN that proposes a participatory structure for urban resilience in European cities, an international network for the commons. aaa's latest site in Colombe, a working-class district in the suburbs of Paris, consists of three sites: a site for urban agriculture, a cooperative housing site and a recycling unit. R-URBAN aims at the creation of local ecological circuits of resilience, linking what they describe as 'fields of urban activities', for example economy, habitat, urban agriculture and culture.[26] So for example water collected on the roof of the housing is used for the urban agriculture. The urban agriculture supplies food for the housing and so on. The circuits support De Angelis's argument for sustaining the commons that what is produced in the commons should stay in the commons. aaa's aim is 'to produce what we consume and consume what we produce'.[27]

I asked Petrescu and Petcou about the questions of democracy in their work. The work is clearly hegemonic, building an alternative social vision and challenging neo-liberal values. They are also using participation to produce a social infrastructure that allows people to access democratic life. People also develop as citizens through participation in the projects. The sites are organised around democratic lines, there is a decision-making structure and decisions are made in open meetings. However, Petrescu and Petcou themselves, as architects, are in a more powerful position as they have more control of the spaces at a conceptual level. People gain entry to Petrescu and Petcou's community through acts of communing; in the case of Colombe, inclusion (a key to the gate) is given after members of the local area make some sort of communal rather than individual act. The sites are therefore not agonistic as they are based on common values rather than disagreement. Petcou noted that there had been problems with some local actors wanting to take, rather than share power, and on long-term projects power can become embedded. Petcou reflected that the democracy lies in the temporality of the sites, the starting and finishing of projects (see Figure 4.1).

One of the key points about ECObox was that the interim and undefined use of space opened it to the political. This was similar in King's Cross, London, where the redevelopment of the railway land was fiercely contested over a period of eighteen years. There are numerous other examples where the low-cost space is made available for community use pre-redevelopment, which provides the conditions for civil society to move in and flourish. Lefebvre gives the example of Les Halles Centrales, the market in the centre of Paris which was occupied by students as a centre for play and continuous festivals in 1969–71, following the 1968 uprising in Paris.[28] The point is that a truly political sense of public space rises up when space is negotiable, open or contested. This is why Rosalyn Deutsche claims: 'If the "dissolution of markers of certainty" calls us into public space, then

Figure 4.1 ECObox, La Chapelle, Paris (image Doina Petrescu)

public space is crucial to democracy not despite but because it is a phantom'. For Lefort, 'The hallmark of democracy, is the disappearance of certainty about the foundations of social life', so political public space occurs when the meaning of social life is negotiable and this occurs when public space is negotiable.[29] Deutsche claims that public space is always the product of conflict. But Massey points out that social relations are uneven, so while space is always contested and different imaginations for public space are always expressed, hegemonic conceptions of public space and capital almost always win.[30] As Mouffe insists, for agonistic democracy there must be equivalence between the different and often conflicting political subject positions or political entities. If the production of space is to be democratic then it is the imaginations of these political entities that should form the core of any agonistic space.

Artist and activist Krzysztof Wodiczko's focus is on agonistic democratic space. He shows how agonistic democratic space can be produced through critical spatial practice and states that artists have the ability to contribute to new forms of democracy, by creating work that is challenging and disrupting. He argues interpreting Claude Lefort's democratic theory that 'democracy is founded on public space that should be, essentially empty'.[31] For Lefort in order for space to be empty, space can be appropriated but not dominated, therefore space must be founded on power relations that can be negotiated in some form, rather than controlled by a single power. Wodiczko also argues that Chantal Mouffe has offered a new concept for public space based on her agonistic model of

Figure 4.2 Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Projection de Grand Army Plaza*, New York, Saint-Sylvestre 1984–85 (image source: blog.e-artplastic.net)

democracy.[32] Wodiczko can be seen to have been attempting to produce the *Agon* in a number of projects. He is renowned for his focus on monumental public spaces, large-scale projections on classical monuments. The projections produce agonistic relations through subverting and challenging the classical hegemonic authority of the monuments. Using projection, Wodiczko layers the monument with an alternative voice, a representation of the social relations that the space conceals. [33] In doing so he reclaims the space as an agonistic space rather than a space of consensus or a space of domination (see Figure 4.2).

However, more recent work on the memorial for the World Trade Center bombings of September 11, 2001 in New York, explores the production of agonistic public space in a different way. For Wodiczko, Mouffe's model of agonistic democracy puts disagreement in the centre and treats the enemy as an adversary rather than an enemy. He argues that rather than the event of September 11 leading to the war on terror, it would have been possible to take an agonistic approach. September 11 could have formed the basis of a discursive space and led to a more responsible and responsive global policy. Wodiczko uses Levinas biblical description of Moses and

the city of refuge to argue that the memorial for September 11 could have developed New York as a city of refuge. The memorial would suppliment the existing memorial by providing a place for more critical and discursive memory. A space for the articulation of contending voices and 'a multitude of converging memories'.[34]

The examples of Tschumi's Parc de La Villette, aaa's ECObox and Wodiczko's projections show that it is possible to create an empty place through intervention. Tschumi achieves this through deconstruction and conceptual design, Petrescu and Petcou through modes of practicing lived space and Wodiczko through disruption and subversion. The next section examines the relationship of democracy and space through rights, and the growing global movement and campaigns around the right to the city.

The right to the city

The right to the city started as writings of Henri Lefebvre and was first published in 1967; it became a movement at the time of the 1968 student revolution in Paris and a slogan for students who occupied les Halles market in the centre of Paris.[35] The right to the city has been rekindled in the social forum movement, following a seminar entitled The Right to the City at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre in 2002, which discussed producing a World Charter for The Right to the City.[36] Since 2002, The World Charter for the Right to the City has been through a number of revisions: Social Forum of the Americas, Quito, July 2004; World Urban Forum, Barcelona, October 2004; World Social Forum, Porto Alegre,2005. The charter can be seen as an example of an out-put global of participatory democracy, as it was produced and discussed in the open participatory assemblies of the social forum movement (see Appendix A). The Right to the City is now a growing movement, increasing throughout the world in different forms. In the USA, a national movement formed in 2007 as a response to gentrification and to halt the displacement of low income and people of colour from their historic neighbourhoods.[37] For political and urban theorist Margit Mayer, 'The Right to the City' has emerged as a slogan within urban resistance movements; taking the form of a 'rekindled' movement it has a less radical and depoliticised form. For Mayer, in these cases, the Right to the City describes a set of rights rather than the Lefebvrian notion which involves participatory inhabitation of the city, political self-management and community culture.[38] Urban practitioner Camillo Boano echoes this claim, stating that 'in recent years the term has become a catchphrase, frequently cited but generally not engaged in depth, at its core Lefebvre's right to the city is a claim for the recognition of the urban as the (re)producer of social relations of power, and the right of citadins to participate in this process of production'.[39]

For Lefebvre:

> The right to the city ….should modify, concretize and make more practical the rights of the citizen as an urban dweller (citadin) and user of multiple services. It would affirm, on the one hand, the right of users to make known

> their ideas on the space and time of their activities in the urban area; it would also cover the right to the use of the center, a privileged place, instead of being dispersed and stuck into ghettos (for workers, immigrants, the 'marginal' and even for the 'privileged').[40]

Therefore the Right to the City describes both the democracy of space and the spaces of democracy as it is the right to participate in shaping the city and the right to access to the cities' public spaces. For Purcell, 'Lefebvre's right to the city is an argument for profoundly reworking both the social relations of capitalism and the current structure of liberal-democratic citizenship', and 'The right to participation maintains that citizens should play a central role in any decision that contributes to the production of urban space.'[41] So the right to the city is about having a direct power relationship with our environment and the things around us that affect our lives. According to Harvey, 'the right to the city is far more than individual liberty … it is a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization.'[42] Lefebvre argues that the modern city is about individual needs motivated by consumption. But there are also social needs, anthropological needs to do with the notion to inhabit. Some of these needs cannot be satisfied by the commercial and cultural, and through these needs lies a desire for creative activity, for the *oeuvre*, for *jouissance*, art and knowledge as particular expressions and moments.[43] Inhabit means to take part in city life as a producer as well as a consumer. Lefebvre argues that before Haussmann urban life gave that right, and it was that right to inhabit that was fought for with the Paris commune. Yet the urban remains dispersed and alienated. The science of the city envisages the city as 'object', as product rather than *oeuvre*. [44]

The Right to the City in practice develops a creative–productive definition of citizenship rather than the passive negative definition that we experience today in neo-liberal society. Therefore the Right to the City is access to the democratic processes of the city and access to the processes of production of the city. David Harvey shows how the city has been central to the expansion of industrial capitalism and neo-liberalism; he argues that without the appropriation of space they would have ceased to function. For Harvey, one of the problems of these spaces is that 'a select few do the imagining and designing'.[45] So for the mass of the population, human creativity in the production of space is denied, and this is a profoundly alienating situation. [46]

So on the one hand, the Right to the City concerns participation in the production of the city, but on the other hand it is about democratic space and the direct practice of politics as part of everyday life. Spaces for active citizenship, for political participation and for the public voice. Public space is produced and re-produced through active participation rather than passively experienced.

Mayer shows that the slogan of 'The Right to the City' is now widely used within urban movements but the meaning is contested.[47] In her view, the radical Lefebvrian meaning adopted by the anti-globalization movement and protest groups, and discussed in the social forum process, has been used to explore

the shared experiences and commonalities in the various struggles against privatization and dispossession. However, for Mayer, another meaning has emerged, as a rights-based rather than an action-based movement; this view of the right to the city has been adopted by organisations and NGOs such as UN-Habitat, Habitat International Coalition (HIC) and UNESCO, who participate in a working group on the right to the city. Mayer argues that these movements use the slogan of 'The Right to the City' to demand inclusion within the existing system, yet they do not challenge neo-liberal policies such as the privatisation of public space.[48] They also do not campaign for new forms of city governance. Although these NGOs participated alongside other organisations in the creation of the 'Charter for the Right to the City' to campaign around these rights, for Mayer their approach is to campaign around specific struggles for already existing human rights such as housing, sanitation and transport (not the right to the city).[49] for example: paragraph 11 of the World Charter for the Right to the City

> encompasses the internationally recognized human rights to housing, social security, work, an adequate standard of living, leisure, information, organization and free association, food and water, freedom from dispossession, participation and self- expression, health, education, culture, privacy and security, a safe and healthy environment.[50]

It would appear, however, that the action-based approach and the rights-based approach to the right to the city are not mutually exclusive. Constitutional rights can be exercised and lead to a more radical inhabitation of the city. Camillo Boano shows that the two meanings of the right to the city are crucial in urban planning and the democratic relations of the production of space. On the one hand, the action-based approach describes a bottom-up development in which citizens exercise their right to the city through rehabilitating their area; on the other, the rights-based approach can be adopted by the state and the private sector as a development alternative involving the community in neo-liberal policies.[51]

For my part, I agree with Mayer and Boano that the right to the city should take the form of participative action rather be defined simply as a set of rights. However I have also found that the World Charter for the Right to the City is useful for defining urban rights in the context of the neo-liberal city as the charter does emphasise action as well as rights; both for emphasizing the importance of participation in the production of the city and in defining the types of public spaces required for the practice of politics in which this participatory action is based. In neo-liberal cities such as London there is a need to become very clear about these types of democratic public space and democratic rights of citizenship because we are experiencing the erosion of our right to the city through the diminishment and privatisation of democratic space. The World Charter for the Right to the City includes both of these and also starts to define political types of public space (appendix A). In the charter, two such types of political public space are described – the first is the space for direct participation in city decisions and the second is the space for civil society and

associational practices of democracy. I would add a third type of public space, a common space for more autonomous groups and arts activities, for example the social centres that are provided by the cities in Italy and are emerging from the anarchist movement here in London, described in detail in Chapter 6.

Article III, 'Planning and Management of the City', states:

> Cities should open institutionalized forms and spaces for broad, direct and democratic participation in the processes of planning … management … public policies and budgets.

Article IX on the 'Right to Associate, Gather, Manifest and to Democratic Use of Urban Space' states:

> All persons have the right to associate, meet, and manifest themselves. Cities should provide and guarantee public spaces for this effect.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948 [52] states:

> Article 21 (1). Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

The UDHR therefore describes a fourth type of public space that capital cities should provide for the direct participation in national governance.

On the space for direct participation in national governance, the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 means that it is now illegal to demonstrate in the political centre of London, in an exclusion zone that covers everywhere within 1 km of Parliament Square except Trafalgar Square, without applying to demonstrate six days in advance to the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, who can then impose any conditions he likes on the demonstration. The act means that Parliament Square, a historically political public square, is no longer freely produced through direct acts of participation and that the public voice or free speech has to be pre-negotiated with the police, who of course make conditions to minimise the impact on parliament. The exclusion zone not only restricts historic democratic rights of protest outside the House of Commons but the zone includes Downing Street, the Home Office and New Scotland Yard.

The 2010 elections in Britain saw a new wave of protests regarding historic rights of participation in national governance through protest in Parliament Square. The occupation was over the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq; campaigners argued that their views were not represented by the parliamentary system and they evoked rights of popular sovereignty. For Tony Benn, 'The idea of turning Parliament Square Gardens into a Democracy Village is an imaginative idea. It exactly sums up my view of its role.' Benn beleived that this democratic process has to be understood in its entirety, referring back to great historic predecessors like the Suffragettes, the Chartists and the Tolpuddle Martyrs[53] (see Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3 Democracy Village, Parliament Square, May 2010 (photograph Teresa Hoskyns)

Democracy Village was being treated as an assembly and, according to Mayor Boris Johnson's bye-laws, anyone who wishes to take part in an assembly on Parliament Square must ask for permission.

On the space for associational practices of democracy, one of the campaigns we are involved with in the London Social Forum discussed later in the book is around the markets. Among others, Elephant and Castle Market, Wards Corner market in Seven Sisters, Ridley Road Market in Dalston and Queen's Market in Upton Park are under threat of privatisation, and many like Spitalfields Market have already been privatised. The stall holders of Wards Corner Market in Seven Sisters have just lost in their planning attempt for a community plan that would mean that the space is both designed and run through the participation of the stall holders. Instead the council have opted to knock the market down and build a shopping centre that includes chain stores like Marks & Spencer. Queen's Market in Newham was taken over by the private developer St Modwens pre-redevelopment for a scheme that has been fiercely contested. Queen's Market can be described as an associational democratic public space, or a space that produces associational democratic practices, at least six different associations have emerged from and are active in the market. The scheme was eventually defeated after an 8-year long campaign headed by Friends of Queen's Market.

On the space for the practice of politics, as soon as you try to organise politically you experience the absolute impoverishment of spaces for civil society and the practice of politics in London. In 2004 the European Social Forum came to London but due to the privatisation of public space, the Greater London Authority (GLA) could not offer any public space at all to the forum despite the support from the Mayor Ken Livingstone; even City Hall is not publicly owned but is leased from the private corporation More London. The official forum rented a conference centre in Alexandra Palace, in a suburb of London and other spaces became autonomous public spaces including London School of Economics and The Bartlett, University College London. But it is only through sympathetic professors and self-organised groups that these spaces were available.

Mayer argues that Lefebvre sought to create rights through social and political action, a right that exists only as people appropriate it (and the city). Therefore the right to the city is a practised right, which can only exist through participatory spatial practices. These are a multiplicity of different practices and the next section describes three types of participatory action – architectural, feminist and participatory democratic – that demonstrate what it might mean to practice or exercise one's right to the city.

Notes

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13 Spiro Kostof, *The Architect: Chapters in the History of the Profession* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 11–24.
14 Massey, *For Space*, p. 153.
15 Massey, *For Space*, p. 9.
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17 Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1994).
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19 De Angelis claims this verb was recently brought up by the historian Peter Linebaugh, who wrote a book on the thirteenth-century Magna Carta, in which he points to the process of commoning, explaining how the English commoners took the matter of their lives into their own hands. They were able to maintain and develop certain

customs in common – collecting wood in the forest, or setting up villages on the king's land – which, in turn, forced the king to recognize these as rights. An Architektur, 'On the Commons: A Public Interview with Massimo De Angelis and Stavros Stavrides', *e-flux journal*,17, 2010, www.e-flux.com, accessed December 2012.

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49 Mayer, 'The "Right to the City" in the Context of Shifting Mottos of Urban Social Movements', p. 368.
50 Mayer, 'The "Right to the City" in the Context of Shifting Mottos of Urban Social Movements', p. 368.
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Part II
Participatory spatial practices

Architectural, feminist and participatory democracy

In Part I, I researched democracy and public space by examining different models of democracy in political philosophy, and examined how theories of democracy relate to democratic space and the production of public space and democratic identity. I discussed how different concepts of citizenship in representative and participatory democratic models are played out in public space and I aimed to show that participatory democracy is spatial and can be considered through spatial practices. I examined two distinct positions in contemporary democratic theory.

Part II investigates the ideas explored in Part I through practice, and examines the production of public space and democratic identity from the position of three collaborative spatial practices: architectural practice on Regent's Park Estate; the feminist art/architecture collective, *taking place*, and the participatory politics of the social forums. Whereas in Part I, I was a theorist and a spectator, in Part II, I explore specific situations from situated positions and my role moves from architect to actor to activist in these practices. The three practices took place during the same period of time and examine democracy and public space from different viewpoints and inform the subject area in different ways:

Chapter 5, 'From antagonism to agonism on Regent's Park Estate', takes an architectural approach. This practice was the starting point for this research. It was working on the open public spaces of the estate that inspired me to investigate the role of architectural practice in on-going conflicts on the estate and how these relate to the wider questions of democracy and participation. First, I was interested in the modern movement, post-war housing and the extent to which the physical environment contributes to social relations. I was particularly influenced by Giancarlo de Carlo's critique of the modern movement in terms as based on universalism and homogeneity and lacking procedures for participation.[1] Second, as an architectural designer, I was directly involved in the work of West Euston Partnership and in projects completed between 2000 and 2005 which aimed to build a democratic infrastructure within the estate. The practice involved a series of projects working with young people using projection, performance and image to examine territories and identities. It explored how the meaning of architecture on the estate could be constantly re-imagined by residents, allowing them to contribute to developments in the area.

Chapter 6, 'Feminists taking the empty place', examines the role of spatial practice in the construction of radical democratic identity as developed through the feminist art/architecture collective *taking place*. Feminism is one of the democratic identities called for in radical democracy. This practice examines the construction of feminist identity in relation to the project work of *taking place*, contextualised through historical shifts in both practice and feminist theory. These shifts involve a move from a concern with equality to representation to participation and difference within the public realm. My experience working with the collective was first as an actor as we imagined new types of spaces through performance and appropriation and second as an artist in the Homerton Hospital projects. I argue that feminism and feminist spatial practice are particularly informative to the radical democratic project as is demonstrated by the methods of the *taking place* collective. These include discursive procedures and multiple projects taking place simultaneously, based on equivalence and difference within the group. Rather than attempting to find universal values, *taking place* is concerned with the production of a feminist space in which diverse identities and multiple voices can develop.

Chapter 7, 'Social forums and spaces of participatory democracy' emphasises the participatory angle. The social forums in which I got involved specifically for this research enabled me to compare the spaces produced by participatory democratic practice with the spaces produced in representative democratic practice. In each of these forums I found that performance events and the construction of identity are central components and I examined how social forums appropriate space for the practice of participatory democracy. I discuss how different conceptions of participatory democracy within the social forums create a tension, expressed both through the debate about whether it is a 'space' or a 'movement' and in the actual construction of the spaces within the forum. I go on to discuss participatory democratic practice through the examination of social forums from the global scale to the continental and the city. Although social forums vary in size, the scale relates to the focus of the discussion, for example global or European issues. I argue that social forums always have a relationship with cities, and with the democratic infrastructure of cities, which in part can be seen through the comparison of London and Porto Alegre. The practice concludes by focusing on Occupy and the transformation of participatory democratic practice in the global north into a more confrontational movement.

5 From antagonism to agonism on Regent's Park Estate

This chapter examines Regent's Park Estate in west Euston, London, a post-war housing complex, built in the 1950s and 1960s for the joint purposes of slum clearance and re-housing following bombing destruction during the First and Second World Wars (see Figure 5.1). The research examines the relationship of cultural and democratic identity to the built environment through an examination of the culturally and spatially divided communities living on Regent's Park Estate. The study was made through a series of practice projects undertaken between 2000 and 2006 for Open Spaces for All, a newly defined youth activity on the local authority housing estate in central London. The project's explorations of the contestation of the open spaces form part of a wider regeneration aim for West Euston Partnership: to support young people from diverse communities to become involved in the regeneration of their own area through direct project work.

But what are the connections between 'participation' in the construction of architecture and issues of identity and belonging in the built environment?

Figure 5.1 Regent's Park Estate

Architectural historians and theorists Peter Blundell Jones, Doina Petrescu and Jeremy Till argue that the need for participation comes from a problem that emerges from an imbalance in power between the architect/client and the user. In most cases the architect, engaged by the client, is willing to express the demands and ideology of the client financing the work. The user is unable to express her/his desire in the process and a gap forms for the user between the world as built and the world as desired. Petrescu therefore defines participation via the desire of the user.[2]

Blundell Jones, Petrescu and Till define 'participation' as a 'continuum', where at one end in its most simplest definition participation describes the involvement of the user in some stage of the design process and on the other end, participation as citizen control, and this requires a re-definition of architecture as 'occupation of space by sensate, politicized beings, not architecture as an aesthetic or technically determined process'.[3] The work described in this practice/research is focused particularly on the second meaning. The practice concentrated solely on the occupation of space and the desires and imagination of young people, which the built environment could somehow not include. Regent's Park Estate was part of a Social Regeneration Budget-funded project; we were not however directly involved in the regeneration of the buildings but started to create practices inhabiting the space between the reality of the open spaces of the estate and young people's desires.

The project addressed sensitive relations while acknowledging that there were no easy architectural solutions. No building was commissioned, and this absence of object changed our approach, enabling young people to play out inner desires and fantasies through taking part in a process of occupying, performing and creating new spaces by using digital imagery and film-making. Through this experience a different understanding of space started to emerge. We discovered that beneath the homogeneous architecture of a council estate lies a multiplicity of identities, tensions and complex relations, played out by young people through their occupation of the estate's open spaces.

For Owen Hatherley, slum clearance schemes had a naïve paternalism and would involve the slum-dweller being re-housed in housing that was superior in terms of space, security and hygiene. Now the paternalism is missing and slums are cleared for gentrification, so that the middle classes can inhabit them.[4]

Giancarlo de Carlo uses the concept of participation to critique the modern movement. He argues that although the aims of the modern movement were admirable, their failure to engage the users' desires meant that the social ideals to provide architecture for the poor were lost.[5]

Following the war, the modern movement represented an important chance for change, and de Carlo argues that the challenge, however, was to create something new in terms of content as well as form. The new architecture resulted in a set of universal values that substituted one symbol for another. The modern movement substituted academic art for modern art. The movement replaced a business and academic elite with a new elite that distanced itself from the real context of society, and the gulf between architecture and user was widened.[6]

For de Carlo, modern architects chose an elite position rather than taking the side of the user, the poor, who they were designing for. They argued that they could incorporate the needs of the user by taking a position of universality and neutrality. Rather than working with user needs and contexts, the universal was found through reducing user needs to a minimum. The problems of what to do about the great demand for housing after the First World War in many world cities was addressed at the Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) conference in Frankfurt in 1929. The conference was devoted to minimum housing, and following this conference architects competed to design minimal homes with minimum square metres in floor space. For de Carlo universal post-war housing meant that 'it became accepted that housing for the poorer classes could be the cheapest product on the market.'[7]

De Carlo asks why. 'Why minimum space? Why minimum cost? Why minimum materials?'[8]

For de Carlo, the second mistake of the modern movement and CIAM was to do with zoning where, following the design of minimum dwellings, zoning meant that the mixed use of space was removed so industry and shopping districts were separated from housing. The CIAM conference at Hoddeston in 1951 on 'The Heart of the City' discussed how city centres would be. For de Carlo, 'excluded to the edge in their minimal housing, the poor were cut off from the real life of the city'.[9]

Massey states that these communities are often viewed politically as one community by police and authorities, but consist of a multiplicity of communities often in conflict with one another. It is in these situations that difference is expressed through actions, narratives and performances.[10] Universality can also be seen to have created problems of representation to do with the fundamental and aesthetic values of the modern movement. Problems of conflict and social exclusion can be seen to occur in an isomorphic, universal and rationalist environment.

Neil Leach and Vikki Bell argue that spatial and territorial practices of identity stem from a desire for belonging, and that a performative process of identification takes place within some communities that helps to engender a sense of belonging. One does not simply belong to the world or any group within it, but there are practises which develop identity towards belonging, and these practises have performative processes. Communities colonise territories through performance and ritualised repetition, acted out on the architectural stage and through those performances they achieve an attachment to place.

Central to Bell's argument, which links with Petrescu's definition of participation as the desire of the user, is that the community identities themselves are imagined.[11]

In her essay 'Re-membering Places', Anne Marie Fortier shows how identity and place is formed and continually reinforced via individual practice within culturally defined spaces, which are themselves constituted out of the same practices. She maps the immigrant Italian community in the Holborn /Farringdon area of London, where an imagined, spatially bound community is centred around St Peter's church. The church provides the stage for the performance and provides continuity against the threat of dis-continuity.[12]

For Fortier, through performativity an imagined place can be inscribed onto a real place to incorporate a sense of belonging. She describes how common histories, cobbled together out of fragments, form a collective memory and in doing so create places, imagined and sustained. The self or group is projected onto the external world; one reflects the other and identification takes place. Group belonging is constructed through a process of identification by the imagined communities and is formed through an attachment to places and culture. Practices of group identity constitute terrains of belonging, appropriated as historical and cultural through the production of a collective history and performative rituals; privileged points become the sites of iterated performance of a collective body, the formation of which is the constitution of differentiated subjects, or a radical identity.[13]

For Mouffe the decline of the political is due to the lack of democratic forms of identification offered to citizens in liberal societies. Describing the neo-liberal regime of globalisation, she states that 'When a society lacks a democratic life with a diversity of democratic political identities, when passions cannot be mobilised by democratic parties because they privilege a consensus at the centre, the ground is laid for other forms of identifications to take their place. Identifications of an ethnic religious or nationalist nature.'[14]

Although Mouffe is referring to a national or a global scale, she identifies a key problem we encountered when we started work on Regent's Park Estate: that the only identifiable groups on Regent's Park Estate are a nationalist gang, the Cumberland Front, and a Bangladeshi gang, the Drummond Street Posse. Both gangs, taking their names from local street names, are territorially linked, divided by the imaginary boundary which runs north to south and is somewhere between Stanhope Street and Hampstead Road.

The Drummond Street Posse inhabits the east side of Stanhope Street and takes its name from Drummond Street, a street that forms the southern boundary of the estate and runs to the east across Hampstead Road, the eastern boundary of Regent's Park Estate to Euston Station. The Cumberland Front (or the Cumbo) takes its name from Cumberland Market, the central square of Regent's Park Estate positioned to the west of Stanhope Street on the northern area of the estate. There are two youth clubs on the estate, and at the time when we started work there each group had a youth club: the Samuel Lithgow, mainly white with a few black youths, and the Bengali Workers Association Youth Club at the Surma Community Centre (also known as Surma Youth Club) was the Bangladeshi youth club.

In 'Thinking Radical Democracy Spatially', cultural geographer Doreen Massey addresses the relationship between space and democracy; she argues that in order to consider this relationship, it is necessary to think about democratic identity as spatially constructed. For Massey, identity is not externally constituted, something out there that people identify with; rather, she argues that identity is constructed through spatial practices and that space is an actor in the constitution of those identities. Massey develops the argument that democratic identity is spatially constructed to distinguish between space and place, arguing that social space is constituted out of social relations and interactions.[15] So if space is conceptualised in this way as constituted from social relations then place is constituted out

of *particular* social relations and interactions, and it is these *particular* social relations that construct differentiated places rather than universal space. It follows therefore that for the construction of differential rather than universal space there needs to be involvement of *particular* user groups and spatial practices.

If one takes the opposite scenario of how universally constructed space affects particular user groups then we are faced with the situation of Regent's Park Estate.

Regent's Park Estate can be seen as what Massey describes as 'no-go time-spaces on housing estates'. Massey states that 'while these estates are often considered as single constituencies by police and by political parties they contain a multiplicity of identities quite often in conflict with each other'.[16] Here one could argue that a lack of a formal framework in which particular cultural groups can negotiate their habitat creates an antagonism.

Context

Regent's Park Estate is described by estate agents as a prime location in central London, bounded on the west side by Regent's Park itself and on the east side of the estate by Hampstead Road. The north boundary of the estate is the Regent's Canal and the Cumberland Basin, now allotments, and the south of the estate is the ongoing development of Regent's Place, a major London business district.

The area, originally acquired by Henry VIII in 1538, was known as the Crowns Marylebone Estate, planned by the crown architect John Nash. Regent's Park was the king's hunting ground, and the area east of Regent's Park (now Regent's Park Estate) was conceived by Nash as a working-class residential neighbourhood and constructed between 1833 and 1838.[17] Nash envisaged three purposes for the area: first, as a working-class quarter with markets and shops; second, as a barracks; and third, as a miniature garden suburb. The shopping districts were Cumberland Market, Clarence Market and York Square, designed to link to Nash's Regent's Canal, which opened in 1820 and at that time was 8.5 miles long. The canal basin directly north of Cumberland Market was to facilitate the daily supply of fresh fruit and vegetables, straw and hay from the Middlesex market gardens to the shopping district of Regent's Park.[18] Cumberland Market was the central fruit and vegetable market of the estate and later became a straw and hay market in the 1930s, following the closure of the straw and hay market in Piccadilly at the request of King George IV. The market also had a huge underground ice store: ice was brought from Norway, loaded into canal boats at Lime House and brought into the Cumberland basin via King's Cross.[19]

The area was damaged during the First World War and after the war a scheme began of the Crown Commissioners to redevelop the area. They planned to build residential properties north of Robert St and around the Cumberland basin. Six blocks were built in the inter-war years between 1926 and 1932, commercial properties south of Robert St, constructed around the Cumberland basin by the Crown Estate and architect Mr Varndall.[20]

Bombing during the Second World War caused further damage and areas of west Euston were completely destroyed. The north-east side of Cumberland

Market, which was at that time three-storey houses, shops and pubs built around a central square, received a direct hit from a V2 bomb. The bombing caused silting of the Cumberland basin and it was decided by the Crown Estate to fill in the basin with rubble from the building clearance.[21]

At the end of the war the Prime Minister set up a committee called the Goral Committee to investigate preserving the Nash terraces, and as a result the terraces around Regent's Park were restored.[22] At the same time the Metropolitan Borough of St Pancras were investigating a proposal by councillor Eric Cook for the east of the Nash terraces of three-storey Georgian houses, partly bomb-damaged and partly housing that had fallen into disrepair, occupied as tenement dwellings, to be redeveloped into flats.[23] The Metropolitan Borough of St Pancras approved the plan for the area, purchased some of the land from the Crown Estate and obtained the rest of the land through compulsory purchase.[24] One account claims that there was a proposal to restore the Nash terraces from Regent's Park to Hampstead Road but it was decided due to lack of funds and post-war homelessness to build maximum-density housing instead.[25]

L. E. White argues that planners were well aware of the problems people had in forming communities on new housing estates, as there were a number of reports made during a pause in the enormous building plan that started during the inter-war years. A great housing demand developed for three reasons: the growth of cities in the pre-war years as a result of migration to cities from the countryside; war damage to cities from the First World War; and third, the policy of slum clearance. The construction stopped at the start of the Second World War and planners had the chance to reflect on the process. A number of reports, for example The Barlow report, dealt with defects of inter-war housing estates andillustrated the problems of the estates built in the inter-war years of housing estates.[26]

The problem of young people's behaviour, or 'juvenile delinquency' as it was called in the 1950s, was also well known and was thought to be due to the size of the flats. Children did not have the space to play in the flats without annoyance to parents and therefore would play for a disproportionate amount of time outside. Flats were also inadequate in terms of space for family gatherings, parties and social behaviour and lacked space for men to do workshop activities.[27]

However, despite this, Forshaw and Abercrombie's *County of London Plan* (1943), written during a pause in the building construction during the Second World War and when many people were evacuated from London, put forward a plan for maximum-density housing. They argued that owing to depressed housing and unrestricted planning, much of London was a jumble of housing and industry, and this led to 'indeterminate zoning' and a lack of open space. Describing London housing, they claimed 'if it isn't blitzed, it is blighted' and planned to clear large areas that were either war-damaged or slums.[28]

Forshaw and Abercrombie put forward a plan with clear housing zones separated from industrial zones. The plan states that for families with children, houses are preferred to flats as they provide a garden or yard at the same level as the main rooms. Nevertheless, the severe housing problem meant that the 1943 London Plan could only recommend medium- and large-sized families to

be housed in houses. To compensate, they proposed that flats would have public open space of 4 acres per 1,000 persons and this would provide recreation for young people.[29] However, the zoning that took place at the same time resulted in the removal of markets, industry, shops, pubs and the workshop spaces, as part of the scheme was to remove areas of unregulated planning. This meant that the inhabited streets were replaced with empty open space that no longer had a natural adult presence; sports facilities were provided but there appeared to be limited understanding of how young people would occupy the new open spaces, and there was very little to engage most young people.

In 1946 St Pancras borough launched a redevelopment scheme. The plan left the Nash terraces facing Regent's Park, Park Village East and Park Village West, the Albany Street Barracks and the Crown Estate Housing around Cumberland basin undisturbed. The redevelopment scheme was to clear all of the rest of the existing properties, including two churches, two schools, twenty-three public houses, shops, workshops and other types of business; community buildings are not mentioned in the plan.[30]

The land was divided into three zones: a commercial zone east of Hampstead Road, the north of the estate to be a housing zone, and to the south, between Euston Road and Robert Street, an industrial zone. The housing zone stretched from the Albany Street Barracks around Cumberland Market to William Road. The total area for redevelopment was 68.75 acres, and 86.7 per cent of the redevelopment would be for flats. Included in the construction was a library, two schools, an area with shops and a youth club. The plan was for straight uniform high blocks of flats, spaced at intervals of approximately 55 yards apart: high blocks, ten and eleven storeys high, running north–south and lower blocks running east–west. The report acknowledges that the regimentation of the scheme was controversial[31] (see Figure 5.2). The area was rebuilt between 1952 and 1968 by the then Metropolitan Borough of St Pancras.[32]

Wimpey and Stock Conversion developed the industrial zone, to the south of the estate, in the 1960s. It was first named 'The Euston Centre' and occupies 18.5 acres south of William Road to Euston Road. The development was one of the first high-rise office developments in London's West End. The industrial zone comprised a number of blocks and the Euston Tower. The Euston Centre was an immediate success, attracting lettings to major companies including Rank Xerox, Capital Radio and pharmaceutical companies. The area's comparatively low rents combined with the central London location and excellent transport links have made the business district very popular. The zone has now been renamed 'Regent's Place' and is being redeveloped by British Land. Most of the 1960s buildings have been removed, leaving only the Euston Tower, which has been refurbished, adding retail units to the ground floor. The first new building, 1 Triton Square, was completed in February 1997. An article in *Building* describes Regent's Place as 'a series of medium and high rise office blocks set in a landscape of pedestrian plazas and alleyways'.[33] The industrial zone, however, did not have direct links with the housing zone and its success did not appear to reflect benefits for the residents in the housing zone.

CUMBERLAND MARKET
(*a*) EAST SIDE, (*b*) SOUTH SIDE

Figure 5.2 Mixed-use buildings on Cumberland Market included workshop spaces (source: London Metropolitan Archive)

From the history of the estate it appears that youth work, involving architects in trying to solve the youth problems, has been ongoing for over fifty years and the young people today must be at least the third generation of unruly adolescents on Regent's Park Estate.

Youth Projects have been present in Cumberland Market since the 1950s, and since that time architects have been invited to think up imaginative schemes for the youth in the area. In 1953 it was decided to start a 'commando' area for adolescents, and an advertisement was placed in the press inviting people to give ideas. One of the winning ideas was to place an obsolete steamroller painted in bright colours in the square.[34] In 1965 Toy Town was officially opened; it had a miniature row of shops, a road system with a dual carriageway and underpass, traffic lights, a miniature petrol station and miniature cars. Describing the scheme as a children's 'miniature paradise', a doctor, Eric Sykes, wrote in the BMA's *Family Doctor* magazine, 'If you are busy, you haven't time to be naughty.'[35]

However, the youth problems became gang culture in the 1970s. The Bangladeshi community was established in West Euston and King's Cross in the 1950s and 1960s and became prosperous. The area, particularly around Drummond Street, included Bangladeshi shops, halal butchers and restaurants.

According to the website Gangs in London, gang culture started in the two areas in the 1970s and Drummond Street was the scene of regular attacks by whites on Asians. The website states 'the road looked prosperous, just a stone's throw north and the estates blocks are vandalised and battered':[36]

> The oldest gangs in Camden, and some of the oldest in London, can be found in King's Cross and Euston, Somers Town Boys and Cumbo Boys … were originally white gangs although today include white and black members who began in the 1970s/1980s as young racist firms who attacked the newer Asian communities that eventually formed a gang known as Drummond Street Posse, a second Asian gang formed in the 1990s known as the Cromer Street Massive. Whilst initially violence between these gangs was often along racial lines the conflicts and alliances throughout the estates are now an integrated part of growing up in NW1 as these inter-estate conflicts are generational.[37]

West Euston Partnership was set up in 1992 by local people on Regent's Park Estate concerned about local issues of young people including street fighting, racial tension and the lack of facilities and opportunities.[38] Problems of deprivation, high unemployment and street fighting had a follow on effect on the open spaces of the estate. West Euston Social Regeneration Budget (SRB) scheme, which commenced in 1997, is defined as a Neighbourhood Renewal Area (NRA) where there are high levels of multiple deprivation. Part of the SRB funding was for the Integrated Youth Project that aimed to support young people from diverse communities to become involved in the regeneration of their own area through direct project work.

Integrated Youth Project: Open Spaces for All

The work of the Integrated Youth Project was a proposal by Helen Peacock Sevilla, the head of West Euston Partnership (WEP) following an investigation by the Women's Design Service (2000) into why women didn't use the open spaces of the estate. The report revealed 'open conflict' on the streets of west Euston: a group of women from three cultural groups said that they could not use the open spaces because gangs of youths were hanging around taking drugs.

> The overwhelming concern was antisocial and intimidating behaviour by some young people in the area. Residents complained of young people congregating in stairways and on street corners. Most people who expressed concern said they felt intimidated by the sheer numbers of young people hanging round the estate.[39]

A recommendation for tighter security followed, which included the installation of secure door entry systems. This would mean that there were fewer spaces for young people to meet if they no longer had the staircases, so there would need to be some provision for young people in the open spaces of the estate.[40]

The work was a series of projects with architect Yvonne Dean as part of the Integrated Youth Project as part of the Open Spaces for All objective of WEP between 2001 and 2005.

Three major projects came out of the five years of work at West Euston, each taking the same format. The format involved young people becoming photographers and film-makers and going on cultural outings, such as to films and art exhibitions and on walks.

The idea was to take young people from the two racially and spatially divided youth clubs on the estate, away from their territories to different parts of London, outside London or abroad, taking photographs and films of anything that interested them, and through this developing their interest in architecture and place through the direct experience of other places outside their own world. This methodology has since become an established working process for projects involving young people on the estate. The methodology allows young people to understand and express their desires.

At first the young people were bemused by the project, and there was much discussion about the meaning of architecture and why this was the subject of a youth project. We seemed to spend a lot of time hanging around outside discussing buildings, the environment and open space, and gradually a meaning started to emerge that was more of a spatial activity than a discipline or a drawn practice.

Some time later I met by chance one of the boys who said to me, 'Teresa, I've been doing "architecture" again.' He had attended a Glasgow Letters on Archtiecture and Space (GLAS) workshop run by the Architecture Foundation. This involved running around King's Cross with mobile phones and phoning the information back to the GLAS team who were writing the information as headline news on newspaper stands outside the station.[41]

Projections

The first project started with a group of eight young people who were taken to a photographic studio in a different part of London, Brixton, and introduced to photography. We discussed ideas and then gave them cameras to take photos based on their ideas. A local artist, Sue Ridge, gave a talk about an art installation called 'The Flags' that she designed outside Euston Station, a major London railway station next to the Estate – a familiar space for many of the young people.

The next stage of the project was on Regent's Park Estate where the same young people took photographs of their own environment. About twenty young people took part. They were given disposable cameras and they each went around recording their own environment.

They were then given the chance to make computer manipulations of the photos using Photoshop software. After more photographic workshops and trips out with the young people, further images were chosen, young people made computer manipulations to help them produce versions of their own reality and to imagine how the environment could be different. These altered images were

used in an exhibition at the local library to demonstrate the possibilities of making change, which was attended by the local mayor.

At a feedback event, a group of eight young people talked about the project. One said 'we all agreed we wanted more colour'.

Another talked about the tension when they came back to the estate after the visits: 'Everybody was watching, they couldn't understand why we were together, they thought a fight was about to break out.'

They described the difficulty they had in moving around the estate. Young Asians felt uncomfortable on the west side of the estate past Stanhope Street and claimed that the police would move them to the east if they were found there.

The images show both the surrounding diversity and how the space is contested within Regent's Park Estate. One image puts the two groups of young men together. Another shows a crashed car that the young people have manipulated to look like a police car; the red sky could be sunrise or sunset, a time when young people own the streets of Regent's Park Estate.

Using Krzysztof Wodiczko's projection methods of creating an agonistic rather than antagonistic space by using projection to represent the social relations that the space conceals, the altered images were used as part of a show that was projected onto the side of a tower block on the estate. Finding a site for this show was a problem, as the ethnic spatial divisions on the estate leave no empty space. We opted for the most suitable block – one on Cumberland Market, a centre for the Cumberland Front, one of the gangs on the estate and the central square of the estate. In this way the event itself was a democratic act, appropriating the main square with images from the different positions within the estate.[42] For one evening, the event appeared to reclaim this space for everyone (see Figure 5.3).

Four films for West Euston

The second project involved the use of film; the brief was to make a short film about the open spaces of the estate. It had become clear that the concentration on the two positions, stemming from the two youth clubs, was excluding others, creating a duality. In order to create more of a forum we decided that more than two positions of identity were needed. We therefore proposed to work with four groups, one male group from each youth club and two female groups. The films became a process of mapping out the territories that self-constituted groups of young women and young men inhabited. The four territories, which did not cross, showed how the open spaces of the estate were not only contested by the two main groups but gendered.

We were determined to work with Bangladeshi girls because they had not been involved in the project before and were absent from the open spaces of the estate in general. This group had one evening a week where they were allowed to go to the girls-only session at the Surma Youth Club and we managed to persuade the youth club coordinator to allow them to make a film during this session.

We met a group of girls at the Surma Youth Club and discussed making a film. They decided they wanted to do a film about dance, one of their youth club

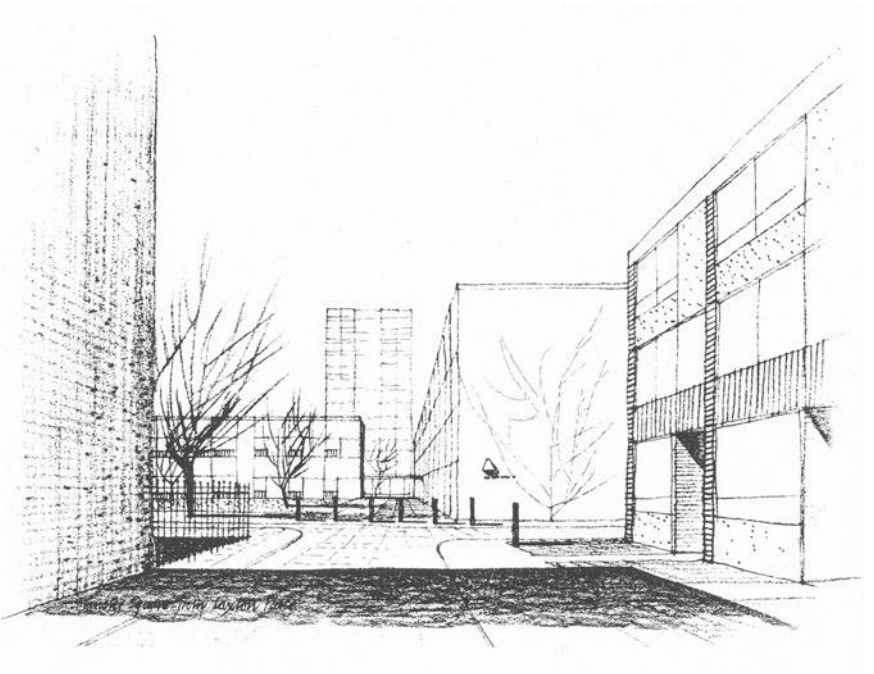

Figure 5.3 Image from the Regent's Park Redevelopment Area: pamphlet for the visit of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, Metropolitan Borough of St Pancras (December 1955)

activities. The girls chose St James Gardens as the space to make their film and prepared a dance that they would perform in St James Gardens.

The following week we set up cameras in St James Gardens and the young women performed their dance. Their gendering presence caused a disruption, as they danced, young men started to arrive and then the police drove into the gardens and stopped the dance.

The rest of the film took place in the Surma Centre. The story line was as follows: young women were dancing in the park. One young woman was late home and pretended she went to the library after school. Her parents found out she was dancing in the park. An argument broke out between the young woman and her parents about whether she could be a dancer rather than a doctor. The film ended up with the family going on *The Jerry Springer Show*, with the youth worker Mukith playing Jerry Springer.

The Drummond Street Movie was a film made by a group of young men from the Surma Youth Club. The film covers the territory between the Surma Youth Club and Drummond St, taking the length of the street and some surrounding roads. The story, mimed with a music background, is about a group of young men who hang around Drummond Street and get chased by the police; they end up at the Surma Youth Club where they get rescued by a getaway car. *Cumbo*, a similar film to *The Drummond Street Movie*, starts in Cumberland Market when the gang

are calling each other to arrive. The film includes a drive around Cumberland Market and the area between the square and the Samuel Lithgow Youth Club. There is a commentary describing the fights that have taken place around the estate and on Robert St, the road that connects the Cumberland Market square with the Surma Youth Club. The film opened the discussion, asking questions about why young people are so territorial in that area.

The Light is a film made by young women from the Samual Lithgow Youth Club. The film is about a blue light which arrives and chases the young women around the estate. It eventually catches them and transports them to Regent's Park, where they fight and defeat the light. They return to Regent's Park Estate in peace.

We found that while the territories of the estate were clearly divided, the making of the films gave the teenagers a public voice and a method of expression, particularly a group of Bengali girls who had previously appeared to be absent from the open spaces of the estate. While the differences were clear, a respect grew for each other's work.

A breakthrough with the divisions of the estate came when the Samuel Lithgow young women organised a disco at the Samuel Lithgow Youth Club and decided to show all four films as a backdrop to the music instead of using disco lights. The Surma young women helped them set up. Halfway through the evening the Surma young men arrived and said they had heard their film was being shown, and the four groups enjoyed an evening together.

Panoramas

For the third project, the young people made their own designs into panorama collages of fantasy transformations of Cumberland Market. The project started with a residential exchange to Lille in France as it was the European City of Culture for 2004. The trip was organised to enable encounters with other people and places, and to follow the progress of a new garden designed by Yvonne Dean, John Medhurst and Sue Ridge for the Mosaic Garden in the Parc de la Deule near Lille. The young people included images from Lille: a copper path is placed through the centre of the square, with a pink glass theatre, roller coasters, swimming pools, a theatre and chocolate walls. The panoramas were made into banners and exhibited in both London and Lille. These banners became outside drawings and were used in festivals and occasions of the estate and represented young people's desires for the square.

Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, I am going to fast-forward to the present day on Regent's Park Estate and an interview with Helen Peacock-Sevilla that reflects on the legacy of the work. I asked Peacock-Sevilla whether the work we did with young people had had any lasting effect.

Peacock-Sevilla said that in terms of directly influencing the design to improve the open spaces for young people, the work had no effect. Many proposals came

out of the Open Spaces for All project, which continued after we left, and some (like our youth shelter) reached developed stages but none of these projects were acted on.

Peacock-Sevilla describes the relationship with Camden Council:

> When we first started West Euston Partnership Camden Council were landlords, they were concerned with collecting rent, repairs and maintenance. Young people were a problem on the estate and there was a fear that any attention to young people would lead to more problems.

The problem with Camden is that they are not one voice; WEP started because one officer thought it would be a good idea and applied for funding, but other officers think differently. Between the council chamber and WEP there is a huge hierarchy of officers who are all scared to make bold decisions regarding the open spaces of the estate because none of them are really empowered to do so.[43]

However, Peacock-Sevilla claimed that the real legacy of the work was shown with the development work of the estate by British Land of Regent's Quarter and the Samuel Lithgow Youth Club. She claimed that they were required to work with residents, and the formula of 'doing architecture' that we had introduced of taking groups out of the estate and then back to do project work has become an 'architectural culture' on Regent's Park Estate. British Land, a large conglomerate, found they could easily work with residents and were surprised about how architecturally literate the residents are. For Peacock-Sevilla, residents had moved from being 'passive aggressive' about works on the estate to a position of responsibility. She stated that 'if anything is done now without consultation there is outrage'.[44]

When British Land were developing Regent's Quarter, residents were continually consulted and a monthly forum was set up. British Land worked with young people on a billboard project creating animated artworks for their development site (see Figure 5.5). Peacock-Sevilla noted that 'young people on Regent's Park Estate can read plans'. The design of Regent's Quarter was changed as a result of the consultation. A wall between Regent's Quarter and the estate was removed, replaced by a walk way through Regent's Quarter towards the West End for the residents. A great victory was a zebra crossing from the pathway that runs through Regent's Quarter from the estate across Euston Road, as part of the section 106, a community theatre was also included in the design and funding was available for the re-building for the Samuel Lithgow Youth Club.

The Samuel Lithgow Youth Club was rebuilt. British Land and Shephard Robson Architects worked with young people from the different groups in developing their designs (see Figure 5.6). The youth club is now completely mixed and racial tensions surrounding the club no longer exist. Cumberland Market is still not mixed. Bangladeshi young people use the space for organised events but not as social space.

The Surma Youth Club is more mixed; the youth club was used by all of the children on the estate while the Samual Lithgow was being refurbished. However,

Figure 5.4 Teresa Hoskyns, Yvonne Dean and Delroy Beaton, *Projections Cumberland Market*, 2002 (photograph Sue Ridge)

being linked to the Bengali Workers Acton Club, the Surma remains mainly Bangladeshi.

We found that the images were a form of representation and mediation that allowed young people to retain, transform, develop and project their own identities and desires at the same time as building respect for others.

Discussing Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus',[45] Mouffe argues that agonistic pluralism requires a democratic habitus, which is unthinkable within a rationalist problematic. Allegiance to democratic institutions can only rest on identifications with practices constitutive to our form of life. A well-functioning democracy calls for a vibrant clash of political positions. Too much emphasis on consensus, together with aversion towards confrontations, leads to apathy and to disaffection with political participation. The problem is that in a society of consensus political identities are lost.[46] Mouffe's work examines the intersection between identity and power where the construction of identity is the construction of power. For Massey, 'Power is inherent in the social interrelations which construct both social identity and social space and place.'[47]

Estates like Regent's Park Estate are often slated for demolition because of social problems. This study shows that participation of political and cultural positions in architectural planning and construction is essential for the construction

Figure 5.5 Panorama collages showing young people's desires for Cumberland Market, with Yvonne Dean and Delroy Beaton, 2004.

of common space and a well-functioning democratic environment. However, the Open Spaces for All projects show us that it is possible to use spatial practice to construct missing layers and re-construct democratic relationships in problematic and homogeneous environments.

Notes

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6 Feminists taking the empty place

The construction of political identity

Introduction

This chapter explores women's identity as one example of the types of political groupings described by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, and the project of radical democracy and discusses the role of spatial practice in constructing radical forms of political identity. Laclau and Mouffe argue that the democratic struggles of women are one example of the types of subject position or political identity, as described in Chapter 2.[1]

Can women be grouped into a political universal whole, regardless of political or cultural backgrounds? Surely, as feminist philosopher Judith Butler states, any grouping of women as a single political identity can only lead to mis-representations and contestations.[2] Women have historically been treated differently from men in politics and the law, and Butler points out that the political identity of women has largely been formed through exclusions.[3] Feminist struggles have been against those exclusions, such as demanding the right to vote and the right to equal wages and so on. Women's fight for equal rights has been a fight for inclusion within the public realm and to be treated as equals to men.

The question also arises of whether it is possible to define a woman. While sex – male and female – is described through biological differences between bodies, gender – masculine and feminine – refers to a socially constructed set of differences.[4] This leads to a debate within feminism, where on the one hand much of feminism historically has opposed any separate political subjectivity for women and argued for gender equality, and on the other hand there are those who argue that there is a political necessity to speak as and for women. So in a radical democratic context, what does it mean for women to be the subject of a political identity?

To examine the issues related to the construction of radical forms of political identity based on, for example, gender and race rather than political affiliation, I research the feminist spatial practice *taking place*, a group of architects and artists with whom I have participated since 2000.[5] *taking place* are one of the many possible narratives of the story of feminist practice in architecture, a narrative connecting British and French feminist positions at a particular moment in time, shaped by specific circumstances and recalled in personal memories and

interpretations.[6] The thread has an historical path that goes back through WAFER (Women Architects for Equal Representation) and Matrix, a women's architectural collective, founded in 1980, and the Women's Design Service in 1978.

I first locate *taking place* within feminist spatial practice and history, and then discuss a series of projects that illustrate how debates within feminist theory, such as equality versus difference and the essentialist versus non-essentialist debate have manifested in spatial practice.

The essentialist versus non-essentialist debate is important because some feminists argue that it is necessary to have a specific legal category for women in politics. Is women's identity based on essential ontological differences and specificities to women such as the body, motherhood and childbirth? Or is maternity a social relation, a particular situation for women?[7] Women's biological identity and childbirth is examined in the final project of this chapter 'The Other Side of Waiting', a project undertaken by *taking place* in the maternity ward at Homerton Hospital in London.

There are a number of approaches to gender identity and space and these are described as shifts in feminist architectural practice that have an historic and situational context. The shifts range from equality in architectural practice; to representation of women in the built environment; to aims to create a feminist space in architectural education; to interventions in traditionally women's spaces. The research describes a number of shifts and different positions in theory and in practice, but throughout the projects, there has been one unifying factor, a continuous focus on public space and women's position within the public realm.

Construction of the feminist subject

Women's political identity encompasses many different theories and surrounding discussions within feminism. For feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti, the 1980s saw a debate among Anglo-American feminism and continental feminism that she described as between equality and difference-inspired feminism.[8] Rendell argues that feminism can be viewed in terms of first and second wave, where the variation between the two is characterised by a shift in focus from equality to difference, which Rendell sees as a shift from liberal to radical politics.[9] The shift to radical politics suggests that the two positions of gender equality and sexual difference can also be understood through the universalism versus radicalism debate discussed in Chapter 2 and describe different notions of citizenship. These are the liberal notion of citizenship, as a set of rights and the radical sense as an active citizen.

In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir is concerned with the way women are constructed as an embodied other, while the male subject is defined as a disembodied universal subject. For Beauvoir humanity is male, and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him.[10] Likewise, for Luce Irigaray democratic citizenship has been constructed around the universal male subject. In *Thinking the Difference*, Irigaray claims that women's citizenship, as it was being developed in the European Union, was 'outlined negatively through what it lacks'.

There was a concern for women to be recognised as citizens on equal footing but there was no description of what women are.[11] Irigaray argues that citizenship requires a change of thinking about the universal. Universal subjectivity should not be thought of as unique or as a multiple but in terms of two, male and female.[12]

This, however, reveals a problem concerning the construction of the female subject and raises a question as to whether the democratic identity of women is feminine or feminist (i.e. whether women's political identity relates to women as a sex or the democratic struggles of women). Irigaray argues for a sexed civil identity, based on a set of rights.[13] For Mouffe, it is around the points of difference between women that she argues the feminist subject is constructed. The question of feminist identity is not, as many feminists may argue, that of seeing women as a coherent identity in which they unite in order to achieve feminist aims. She instead argues that the construction of the feminist subject should be from a non-essentialist position.[14] Following Jacques Lacan, the place of the democratic subject stems from a desire or lack, which though represented in the structure, is for Mouffe the empty place.[15] Therefore feminist identity is not pre-existing but relates to the democratic struggles of women. If we think of democracy itself as 'the empty place', if democracy is the arena for the construction of political identities which develop from democratic struggles and therefore from a position of desire, then women as political subjects cannot be the point of departure as this only serves to form a new site of political contest. Instead of pre-existing rights as Irigaray advocates, it is the practice of democracy that constructs the female subject or any other political subject.

Laclau and Mouffe put forward the democratic notion of equivalence to address the problem of unity within democratic identity. For Laclau and Mouffe, equivalence means that, for example, within the democratic struggles of anti-sexism and anti-capitalism, where there are not necessarily obvious links, a unity between the two can be formed through a hegemonic articulation: 'Equivalence is on the basis of separate struggles, which exercise their equivocal effects in certain spheres of the social.'[16] Laclau and Mouffe argue that equivalence can also be thought of within a particular democratic struggle so within feminism different positions are contained, such as Marxist feminists and liberal feminists. The notion of equivalence and hegemony is important not only among different democratic struggles but as a foundation for the construction of the identities themselves and the spaces they inhabit. The practice methods of *taking place* opened this space. As I argue later in this chapter, the practice methods of *taking place* are based on equivalence and difference within the group rather than attempting to find universal values. *taking place* is concerned with the production of a feminist space in which diverse identities and multiple voices can develop.

If we use the definition of feminist from the Italian feminist and philosopher Rosi Braidotti as 'a movement that struggles to change values attributed to and the representations made by women in the longer patriarchal time of feminist history',[17] feminism therefore can be seen as continually shifting away from those values as the historical situation changes. Feminism takes on new struggles as values become appropriated into the main stream. In both theory and practice,

feminism has a continuous and dialectical relationship with non-feminist struggles and mainstream culture.

Feminist spatial practice

taking place is a collective practice constructed around multiple voices rather than single project work. The practice opens a multidisciplinary and feminist space that allows for each individual member to explore her own work. My account and description of *taking place* is therefore from my own viewpoint, which is different to other people's. For me 'Taking Place' was first an article for the *Public Art Journal* where I asked if there was a common theme in architecture of collaborations with feminist architects and artists working on public art projects. Practices such as muf architecture/art, Anne Thorne Architects, Dolores Hayden and other feminist practices used long participatory community processes to produce public art. Feminist practices used site-specific art to intervene in architecture in order to physically represent those that they saw as marginalised within the public realm. A diverse and differentiated aesthetic was emerging. Could this architecture be described as 'feminist' or 'feminine'?[18] Projects like muf's 'A Pleasure Garden of the Utilities', a competition organised by the City of Stoke-on-Trent for the first public art installation within the City Centre Gateways Project, celebrated the traditional craft industries of the city by designing two benches fabricated from the ceramic that Stoke is famous for, patterned with a distinctive blue and white floral design. The benches were made at local ceramics utilities company Armitage Shanks, where the artists worked closely with the production and design divisions. Two local companies then applied surface transfers. The strength of this project came from the involvement of local networks. As the pieces passed through the factory, people became involved in the artwork, creating a shared ownership, although muf still retained authorship. Like the plates in people's kitchens, the pieces were very obviously from Stoke-on-Trent, emphasising the connection between the work and a powerful sense of place associated with the town.[19] A video installation was projected on the site for the first month that documented the design process and contained portraits of the local people who worked on the project. For Rendell, the role of tracing relationships and the ceramic benches prompted a conversation for local people about the site and ceramic culture of production in Stoke.[20] For muf 'the scheme brings to the public street a scale of domestic intimacy and delicate detail'.[21]

The Aldgate Subways project by Anne Thorne Architects Partnership[22]can also be described as 'identity'-based architecture. Like Dolores Hayden, Thorne was concerned that the male, universal, architectural reading of the city does not represent the culture or history of place.[23] The Aldgate Subways art project, in the newly branded 'Cityside' area of east London, was created to address some of the social and economic disparities that existed between Tower Hamlets and the City. The uniformity of the subway system with twenty-eight exits meant not only that it was very difficult to find the right exit as they all looked the same, but that the

subway was a place feared by women. Thorne's methods included working with three artists to organise the area into colour zones, closing some subways and providing new crossings. The artists' work involved lining the walls with enamel panels, installing canopies above the exits, and building a glass archive of artefacts collected from local businesses and residents to be placed next to the panels. This patchwork of ideas also included Thorne's own designs for railings. Thorne was thus transforming a clean-cut 'universal' sixties subway system by collaging it with contributions from the local community to recreate difference within the perception of place. She used decoration to represent those she saw as 'marginalised'. Urban theorist Ben Campkin argues that identity-based work becomes problematic when artwork is used to claim space for particular sections of the community. In a lecture at University College London he used the example of Thorne's 'Bangla Town' gates at the entrance of Brick Lane, east London, to argue that this street has historically seen cultural changes of which the Bangladeshi community is one part. The latest of these has been a process of gentrification with an influx of higher-income people moving to the area. [24]

The projects described above are interventions that connect the community groups to public space through involving local people in making work that represents local identity. This can be seen to be a shift from the previous work of Matrix, which was concerned with inclusion and equality. Theoretically Matrix (formed in 1980 after the split of the Feminist Design Collective, which was formed in 1978) can be seen as operating within Braidotti's definition of 1980s Anglo-American feminism. Matrix argued that men and women were *equal* as architects. They were concerned with 'making space' by women who designed in a man's world. 'Sexual difference' was something to be argued against, as it was associated with exclusions from the public realm and the placing of women within the private realm and the interior.[25] Matrix were concerned with producing space that *included* women by directly involving them in all stages of the design. Matrix found they could make spaces that were more suited to women's lives: for example lifts big enough to carry prams, provision of crèches and so on. But they found it difficult to define an aesthetic difference between architectural designs made by women and those made by men. For Frances Bradshaw this was owing to the influence of architectural training.[26] At that time much of architectural training was within modern architectural tradition and embraced the values of universality and rationality. Architectural students produced similar work regardless of context, culture or background. Bradshaw wrote that in education, women students' work would often be devalued as 'emotional or confused'.[27] One of the problems continually addressed within feminist discourse is whether a 'truly' women's art can exist. Can women make art that is completely free from patriarchal influences? Kelly Ives argues that the '*écriture feminine*' was an attempt to recognise specificity within female writing. Luce Irigaray, Hélene Cixous and Julia Kristeva broke out of the traditional academic framework and used different voices in their writing, mixing together feminist, political, poetic and confessional modes.[28]

Feminism is described by Rendell as 'a praxis, a political practice which embraces both action and theory'.[29] In a lot of cases, whether architecture and art, different modes of writing or theory and practice, feminist work moves between disciplines. I would argue that it is through practice and the critical reflection on practice that feminist art or architecture develops; it was in practice rather than theory that Matrix started to explore alternative aesthetics. So while Matrix claimed there was not an aesthetic difference between designs by women or men, they were also critical of much modern architecture.[30] For example at the Jagonari Asian women's centre in Whitechapel, Matrix worked with their female clients/users on decorative components placed outside the building, breaking from the universal ideals of modernism. Matrix used art to express an identity that reflected the users of the building, reflecting a shift from equality to representation that later became widespread in feminist practice and in mainstream practice.

The first shift in feminist practice following this thread was a shift from equality to representation, and a second shift opened practice to continental feminism and the question of difference. The conference 'Alterities' (ENSBA, Ecole d'Architecture de Paris-Villemin, Paris, 2000) theorised a shift from feminist practices of identity to practices of difference. The conference discussed the shift from politics to poetics, from 'feminist' to 'feminine'. In this respect, *écriture feminine* was invoked. The conference was followed almost directly in practice by a second shift that interprets difference within spatial politics. This is explicit in the experience of the architectural feminist practice and research group *taking place*.[31]

Although Alterities took place in Paris, for Doina Petrescu, the conference organiser, architectural practice in the United Kingdom was more sympathetic to continental feminist discourse than architectural practice in France, and Alterities marked a shift in the UK which can be attributed to the work of Jane Rendell and also described through the practice of *taking place*.[32] Rendell was bringing together continental feminist and architectural theories through her teaching at Nottingham University (where Katie Lloyd Thomas and Helen Stratford were her students) and in her doctoral research and following publication, *The Pursuit of Pleasure: Gender, Space and Architecture in Regency London.* The thesis uses works of Irigaray to discuss sexual difference in relation to gendered movements in public space, shaped by social and historical relations.[33] Rendell was also co-editing the book *Gender Space Architecture*, which introduced different feminist orientations in relation to space and architecture, including continental feminist theory.[34]

Katie Lloyd Thomas and I met at WAFER who were meeting monthly in London at that time,[35] and she had just come back from Alterities. I was working for Anne Thorne Architects Partnership. At that meeting women were discussing whether women and men have equal opportunities in architectural offices and describing situations where they thought women were not equal. Some of us didn't want to discuss this any more; the conference Alterities was used to critique WAFER. The starting point was that something had already been achieved: the question was no longer about equality but about difference. Also something new

was emerging and needed placing. It was decided that Lloyd Thomas and I would organise the next meeting in which we asked: 'What does a feminist architecture look like?'[36]

taking place is a spatial practice of architects, artists and writers. Ten women who began by wanting to organise a feminist architectural conference founded the art/architecture practice in 2000. This became a conversation about architecture, art and politics over many months of meetings.

taking place suggests a fundamental shift from previous feminist architectural work. The group had moved away from the aim of representation (as seen in many public art projects), and from an understanding of the architectural space as space formed by objects in relation to one another, to a more political understanding of the space–time relationship. The notion of participation had shifted from a participation in the production of objects to a spatial participation that locates itself in the socio-political networks that produce space through everyday acts and activities. The aims are no longer to be 'included' or 'represented' but to participate directly from a differential position. This was the legacy of Alterities: 'difference' became a tool for 'taking'.

Irigaray and her work *The Ethics of Sexual Difference* (translated into English in 1993) Braidotti's work on 'nomadology' and Butler's work on 'performativity' influenced the development of this position. In her seminal book *Gender Trouble*, published in 1990, Butler argues, appropriating Foucault, that 'gender identity' is constructed along 'culturally intelligible grids of an idealised and compulsory heterosexuality'; she suggests that reality is fabricated within some sort of interior essence. This interiority defined by signifying absence is 'performative'. It can only be suggested and revealed through playful enactment.[37]

In *Nomadic Subjects*, Braidotti appropriates Deleuze and Guattari's thinking to provide an alternative to the essentialism versus sexual difference debate by locating female subjectivity with the 'nomad':

> The nomadic subject I am proposing is a figuration that emphasises the need for action both at the level of identity, of subjectivity, and of differences among women. These different requirements correspond to different moments … different locations in space … different practices. The multiplicity is contained in a multilayered temporal sequence whereby discontinuities even contradictions can find a place.[38]

Taking Irigaray's ideas further, Braidotti locates the feminist political project within the idea of a *practised difference*. She says also that 'difference to be operative has to be acted ON and acted OUT collectively'.[39] She stresses 'on' and 'out', the necessary performativity and transmission of the experience of difference, but we would also place a stress on the word 'collectively', which is also very important for us. The feminist political project of a practised, performative difference is necessarily a collective project. 'Difference' is a relational concept. It can't exist independently and has always to be established within a relational condition. One can only be different in relation to others.[40]

This is the way we have performed difference with the *taking place* group, always perceived as a collective, relational practice, which provided not only a 'common place', but also a multiplicity of places taken simultaneously by our different subjectivities.

> What are our politics-poetics? … Maybe we can't simply define them because they are not just 'ones' but different, they are not just consensual but also conflictual, heterogeneous, altered … that's why the initial taking place group has changed, it seemed that we had different interests that we cannot accommodate … Then we have chosen to accommodate our identity as a group, to make our group identity follow the differences by altering our number and configuration according to every instance of the 'taking place'. This made us aware of not only our 'common place' and shared identity but also of our (radical) difference, of the different places we take simultaneously when we act as a group …[41]

The 'nomadic subjectivity' at work in *taking place* has not only freed us as architects by allowing us to move freely from site to site, but has allowed us to move across hierarchies and disciplines, in our case into writing, art and performance, evoking something of Lefebvre's space as *oeuvre* described in the spatial theory chapter.

By expanding the notion of space into writing, performance and art, *taking place* wanted to create an extended space within the public realm and a redefined discipline of architecture in which feminist discourse can be explored. The feminist conceptions of 'location' and 'situatedness', as suggested by the syntagm that names the group, refer to physical, cultural, professional and virtual space rather than the more traditional notion of architectural space, which refers only to a physical site. But, as stated by Maria Puig de la Bellacasa – a feminist who takes further Haraway and Hardig's lines – 'situatedness is also an *act*, a gesture, a political gesture. It doesn't function as an accusative external "moralistic theory" but as an embodied gesture of affirmation: we situate ourselves. As such, it is better propagated by contagion, not as a normative framework.'[42]

Being aware that knowledge is always produced from *somewhere*, *taking place* has deliberately chosen to situate itself as a group, acting between academia and other practices from outside academia. We have politically chosen to practise difference ON and OUT, and propagate it by 'contagion'. We have tried to find out how difference could be enacted in space, in the same way as Foucault demonstrated how power could be directly expressed through spatial relationships. We have started to think of 'difference' as 'power'.

Before us, Matrix concentrated on how women architects, planners and clients might take part in the making of built space.[43] Asking 'how do we use architectural skills to further the liberation of women?', Matrix found that it was possible to build buildings that respond better to women's needs but found it difficult to define what a radically different architecture might be.[44] By considering space as more fluid, both physically and socially, *taking place* has discovered that it

is possible to produce another quality of physical public space, maybe one that responds more to the construction of feminist identity, through intervening in the power relations expressed through space. Place can simply be 'taken'.[45]

taking place has now organised five events, each one further developing this feminist space, the practice of participating in the event and challenging preconceived theories of what the space might be.

taking place 1 was a very small event that only involved the members of *taking place* and happened in a caretaker's house at the University of East London in the summer of 2001. Following many discussions about organising a conference and inviting 'important' feminists, it was suggested by Jane Rendell that instead of inviting other people we should start by presenting our own work to each other. This first decision by *taking place,* I will argue, formed the basis of a feminist democratic practice. Instead of bringing others in to represent us, the event was formed through an equivalent participation of each of the members. Individually we each decided what we would like to do and then presented, performed and enacted pieces in an event that took place over two weekends. This relationship between the members expressed difference rather than attempting to find any unifying same. Although it was later expressed by women from outside the group that a common language was emerging, at the time it felt that *taking place* was producing a space of difference that expressed the differences between its members; it could be argued that what was forming could be described as what Mouffe describes as a 'hegemonic articulation'.

taking place became a space that each of us could interpret differently. This process produced a rich diversity of work ranging from confessions to performances, city walks and film and slide shows, most taking place around a table with food, in a cosy and interesting atmosphere. For me, I was interested in taking place as a critical space or forum; I wanted to discuss within *taking place* architectural work that I was doing outside with Anne Thorne and on Regent's Park Estate, and provide a space for others to do the same. *taking place* 1 produced the material for a larger event, but asked how other people could be involved in this feminine, cosy, domestic yet academic space, which was at the same time too vulnerable and in need of protection.

taking place 2 was organised in November 2001 at the University of North London School of Architecture. It was introduced in place of the regular Thursday evening college lecture, followed by the main, one-day Saturday event. Each of us invited ten people known to be involved in feminist thinking to this day. The college was transformed: the front window became a kitchen; lectures and performances took place on staircases, in the toilet, outside in the courtyard, in the pigeonholes of staff members. The main lecture space became a cabaret area, and cooking aromas filled the air.[46] Breaking down boundaries and forming a new space was slightly uncomfortable for participants, and the main criticism of the day came from women wanting to participate more. Everybody needed to be actors.

> My favourite spaces in the building were the toilets, partly because they were the place I would go between tutorials to regain energy and pause for reflection. Despite the fact these six toilets were all used by the staff and students of a large school of architecture certain aspects of their design – each cubicle was sealed with low lighting, an individual basin and a mirror – created an intimate and private setting. I decided to place candles by the mirrors, to lock myself in a cubicle and to whisper the words of 'Closer' through a microphone. My voice was conveyed via a number of loudspeakers placed in the roof space, the listeners squeezed into the cubicles:
>
> I've recently got close to an artist. In the days and months as we moved towards each other he sent me a series of postcards. Some were of landscapes, others of land art. All are reference points of our mutual topography – a mapping of the merging of our emotional, creative, intellectual worlds.

taking place 3 was held at the University of Sheffield in November 2002. It formed part of a three-day feminist 'whole school' event for students and staff in the School of Architecture. Fears that the (mostly male) students would be hostile to the event meant that it was open to all. Instead of a series of performances, it was a series of workshops. Instead of the *taking place* team appropriating the space, students did. Starting with a debate asking the question 'Do women experience space differently from men?', feminism was openly discussed from the start and positions evolved throughout the day.[47] Students were asked to produce spaces, writing, objects, arguments and interventions. 'Contaminations' was a series of spatial interventions. 'Talking Places' was a series of discussions combined with spatial transformations. 'Writing Instead of Speaking' gave students the opportunity to perform a piece of writing. The 'Food Constructions' workshop ended in a party in the first year studio.

taking place 4 developed from an invitation to give a talk at 'Becoming Space: Ideology, Invention and Immanence in Human Surroundings', an international conference on 'Event Space' at the Living Art Museum, Reykjavik, Iceland, in October 2003. We set up a web forum to enable us to discuss the talk without the need to be physically present and to increase possibilities for intermittent and extended participation. This recorded the extended discursive processes that characterised our meetings, which exceeded the public events they produced. Katie, Helen and Brigid talked about this place and exhibited the entire contents of the forum. The separateness and distance in time and place, as well as the recording technique inherent in the process, allowed us to articulate thoughts and ideas in a different manner. As Helen has put it:

> *Talking Places* was an exchange that is slowed down and stretched out … strangely rigorous and focusing … also interestingly disconnected. And while the language of the posting attempted to exert hierarchies, rating of 'members' as 'senior', 'junior' and 'new', the excess of this space enabled a more intense sharing of concerns and ideas, and gave us time and space to go further than we often had the chance to, when we meet face to face.[48]

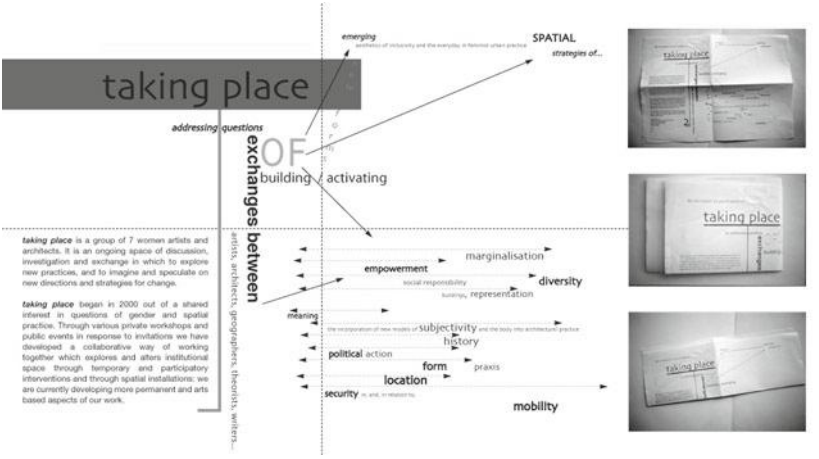

Figure 6.1 Brigid McLeer, invitation to *taking place* 2, 2002

As a public space that can be freely produced, *taking place* became a forum where it was possible to invent a new practice and to allow each of us to explore projects that we were working on. The forum infrastructure has been used on other occasions, for example to host the discussion about the relationship between Taking Place and Alterities.

taking place 5 took place in March 2005, when we were invited to intervene within the framework of the symposium 'Technologies of Place' held at Akademie Schloss Solitude in Stuttgart, Germany. The intervention took the form of a circular walk (see Figure 6.1). Made up of a series of presentations, the walk examined:

> 'technologies of power', technology as both product and productive of shifting socio-economic and political networks or assemblages. Part interior, part exterior, the presentations responded to the space of the Akademie and the conference to explore intersections of technology, power relations and spatial practices, in order to add necessary critical and political dimensions to these concepts. Areas addressed included: the critical potentialities of new media/technology in the need for new fields of action in public space, the idea of the virtual within the everyday, the temporality of the dialogic space of an Internet forum, and the restructuring of individual and collective subjectivities within new technological contexts. In this context new media and technology were less the distinct object of discussion than part of an assemblage of practices, incremental methods or enmeshed ways of working.[49]

taking place has been a 'practised theory' shaped from inside academia: how has this informed architectural practice? First, we have expanded the understanding of the architectural practice. This dropping out from conventional architecture has been part of a strategic feminist political struggle of liberating the architectural

practice of its restrictive norms and regulations (like those defined by professional bodies and centralised institutions such as RIBA and ARB in Britain).

Another concern has been the coexistence of individual approaches with the possibility of collective practices and the multiplicity of forms of collaboration that a feminist practice can take in architecture. We have also felt the need to go outside the feminist 'club' (and its academic location) and expose our approach to other practices and other social contexts.

In other words, how to 'take place' both inside and outside of the profession and what to do with this 'place'? How to open a place once 'taken' and how to define feminism in architecture as an inclusive, participatory spatial practice, which doesn't belong necessarily only to architects?

> Being particularly interested in forms of collaboration and participatory spatial practice, Teresa and myself have recently carried out a project together, which overlapped the different experiences and contexts that we had both experienced previously. We worked with teenagers in La Chapelle – a neighbourhood in the north of Paris – who were also users of the ECObox garden, a project that I have co-initiated in this area with other architects, students, sociologists, artists and residents as a form of collective practice.[50]
>
> This led to our collaboration in a film involving the young users of ECObox, and mixes our projects developed in separate contexts. We worked with a self-constituted team of 10- to 11-year-old girls, assisting them in producing their own films. We were interested to learn how these girls 'take place' in the city: what is their 'vision' and the role they want to 'play' and how do they express themselves politically and interpret urban space?

They chose the topic and the title of 'Impossible Mission', drawing on the imaginary game of spies and the contemporary series of spy thrillers reviving the 1970s, a period never experienced by them but inherited through various narratives of the modernist ideal of 'saving the world'. This topic was also addressing directly issues of escaping control and tactical surveillance. The girls' team wrote the storyboard and chose the areas where they wanted to shoot different scenes. The fiction film acted as an urban tool to allow them to express their choice of representation within the city and their implicit political position, to legitimise their misbehaviour in public space and their disapproval of what they have read and understood as city spatial policies: to literally *take place* within a transformational practice (see Figure 6.2).

They also chose to renegotiate gender identity, to fight, to run from place to place, to parodise the male winner position within an imaginary battle aimed to save the 'ECObox garden', threatened with eviction (for real) by the city authorities. They have in a way directly addressed their condition as inhabitants of a contemporary city and have expressed the ironic position of a generation of young females for whom the city is a field of performed identity, a space to be curious about, to be spied on, desired, fought for and claimed back. The real 'impossible mission' of the film was the imperative to invent another access to the

Figure 6.2 Katie Lloyd Thomas, *Cabinet* (photograph: Katie Lloyd Thomas 2010)

city: one which is more creative and unpredictable, more democratic and allowing everybody to play the role of her choice, to win a battle, to take the desired place within the system of power relationships, to simply *take place*.

One of the questions of any contemporary feminist practice is 'What are the other feminist practices today?' We think that the contemporary feminist practices in architecture do not constitute anymore the privileged territory of feminist academia and profession in developed countries. This territory is a shared territory. By defining 'taking place' as a relationship between women and power, we recognise all other movements that are reclaiming participation in decision-taking and spatial transformation. Our projects have to learn from the practices of the peripheral actors of globalisation processes, such as women's organisations in the cities of the geopolitical South or peripheral actors of the urban processes with the cities of the North: immigrants, inhabitants of council estates, children, and so on.[51] Practising with others alters the way we conceive and practice architecture, and frees the transformative power of *alterity* in space.

We have learned within and beyond Irigaray's legacy how difference can become something else; how it can be used for taking a different position, a different role from the one assigned to us by society; how difference is 'power enacted in space'. From the perspective of our feminist practice in architecture, practising difference has evolved into practising differently … taking place *differently*.

Homerton Hospital

The final project I discuss in this chapter is the delivery ward at Homerton Hospital, which can be seen as another shift for *taking place*. This time the practice is not 'taking' a feminised notion of space in the context of the male hierarchies of the architecture school or institution. Taking space through performing space differently. The construction of female identity in relation to the male universal. 'The Other Side of Waiting' at Homerton Hospital is a project that takes place in a traditionally female space, away from the non-object-based time-spaces that *taking place* had previously opened, to a real site and to making physical interventions in that site. In one way the Homerton Hospital project can be seen as a return to the public art projects first mentioned in this chapter when I discussed the collaboration of artists and architects making public art projects to intervene in the socio-political relations, but I also argue that the experience of the previous *taking place* work informed the practice, which becomes as Katie Lloyd Thomas described it in *Feminist Review*:

> about recasting the terms that define architectural space in terms of formal structures into ways of practising … it has meant working in ways which are event based and performative … constructing alternative discursive spaces we have tried to find ways to transform space through practised interventions and to produce an architecture in which … building would not function as finished object but rather as spatial process, open to whatever use it may be put to in an indeterminate future …[52]

Katie Lloyd Thomas gave birth to a premature baby at twenty-six weeks, and spent three and a half months in the hospital. Katie's experience was such that she opted to be a hospital governor and proposed that *taking place* make artworks to coincide with the building of the new delivery ward wing. While Katie wished to explore gender through maternal technologies, the equivocal method of working with *taking place* meant that each group member explored her own project and a series of interconnected artworks were proposed:

> 'The Other Side of Waiting', a series of six interconnected artworks for a range of spaces in the new Mother and Baby Unit being built at Homerton Hospital in East London and due for completion in early 2010. Each of us has brought our own preoccupations to the site and selected locations, which relate to different aspects or groups within the birthing process. In *This is For You*, Katie Lloyd Thomas builds on the artist's own experiences as a mother in the neonatal unit at Homerton to explore the ways in which objects and practices stand in for the maternal body when a baby is born very prematurely. *The Homerton Tree* by Julia Dwyer and Sue Ridge will make glass artworks in windows in the delivery suite from images of a tree felled on site and reuse its timber in installations and a set of rulers. Jos Boys' *Places we've been; things we've seen* will work with users of the antenatal clinic to produce an

> in-house magazine. In *First Moments* by Teresa Hoskyns, fathers and birth partners describe their feelings just after birth in their first language/mother tongue. Fragments of their handwritten or transcribed texts will be overlaid on the glass panels in the doors to delivery room en-suite bathrooms. Helen Stratford's *Routine Procedures* looks at curtain use and privacy issues in the post-natal ward and *In The Name of Love* by Brigid McLeer will produce durational drawings of labour connecting the names of mother and child.[53]

As a group, we walked around the hospital, through the delivery wards. While this is a gendered space, largely dominated by women, it could not be described as a feminist space. Questions were spinning in my head about the issues surrounding feminist spatial practice in the delivery ward. Could this be a truly women's space because it was to do with natural differences between men and women? Is childbirth, as some feminists argue, a real point of sexual difference that women's identity should be defined around? Or is feminism's concern liberating women's identity from being defined by the natural functions of the body? I found that at first I had an awkward out-of-place feeling: this women's space was challenging our growing conception of female space that had largely developed as a reaction to the male hierarchies of the architecture school. As Brigid McLeer wrote after meeting expectant mothers: 'What can this work offer them, when they are already so replete?'[54] And the delivery ward was also so replete, full of activities, people machinery, cards, hospital art, patients and nurses. A criticism from one of the midwives was that it was too utilitarian, nothing to show the scale of the life-changing event that takes place in the delivery room.

At the same time there was an acceptance of us by the hospital staff; somehow the fact that we were women was a point of inclusion, regardless of our experience of motherhood. As we delved deeper, we found that the gender relationships were far more complicated.

The delivery room is not a women-only space; in fact a National Childbirth Trust survey shows that 96 percent of men are present with their partners during labour and/or the birth.[55]

I talked with James Torr, a representative from a politicised group of fathers called FathersDirect, who were protesting about the lack of focus and value on fathers' role in childbirth. They wanted male toilets in the wards, sleeping places in the delivery rooms; some were even arguing that the delivery bed should be a double bed. They wanted pictures of fathers and babies around the hospital, signage to be addressed to parents rather than mothers and clear information directed to fathers about childcare. But when we looked at the plans for the new ward we realised that men's toilets had not been included, nor this time a birth partner's room; a widening of the corridor had been made in one place for a space for fathers and birth partners.

James Torr's book *Is There a Father in the House?* describes a decision, made by himself and his partner, that he would give up his job as a city lawyer to be a stay-at-home parent and look after their newborn child at home, while his partner continued her job as a teacher. He describes a barrage of barriers that he and his

partner faced from this decision, which he argues, inhibit men's parenting. These are in society, for example, men's working hours and paternity leave, but he also argues that many barriers come from the attitude of the family, the general public, healthcare professionals and institutions. The barriers started with opposition from their families, who both wanted him to pursue his career. They found a lack of inclusion in maternity, pre-natal and post-natal services. Torr describes fathers as welcome in the delivery room as long as they only play a support role; but men are excluded from much of the maternity information, directed towards and distributed to mothers. He describes the difficulties he faced as coordinator of the local Mothers and Toddlers group and the emasculating effects for men who have made similar decisions. Men face difficulty in public with regard to showing affection to their children, particularly female children, and an increasing awkwardness of men's bodies around children stemming from much publicity about child abuse. Torr's call is for a re-thinking of masculine identity with regard to childcare.[56]

I came back to the wards to speak to new fathers and birth partners after the birth, to try to capture their feelings; the fathers I spoke to were emotional and tired after being up all night; they spoke of the happiness they felt as well as being tearful and anxious. The midwife said I was lucky, it was a busy morning. She pointed to a room where a woman was giving birth and suggested that I wait in the corridor outside. Suddenly a nurse came into the corridor wheeling a plastic cot with a baby that had just been born. The nurse held the baby up, a moment passed and everyone stopped … the baby cried, the father cried, a tear came into my eye, the nurse spoke softly to the baby and the atmosphere melted as we experienced a new person in the first moments of his life. The father went back into the delivery room with the baby and came out later to give me his description of the moment.

I decided to use these feelings, texts/words/fragments of words in my project to represent men and to place them in the delivery rooms, evoking something of the way women architects and artists have represented women in public space. I made postcards that pulled out key words and phrases from the text and took fragments from the words to embed in the new building.

The fragments were placed as glass panels in the en-suite bathroom doors of the delivery rooms, first to allow light to filter into the delivery room from the bathrooms as an alternative to the fluorescent lighting, and also as a question about the men's toilets: can they use the en-suite bathrooms, or will this contaminate the birthing environment?

Very soon it was clear that my project was very problematic for the hospital and the main objection was to the word 'father'.

Questions were asked of me, such as:

> How will women feel if the father is absent?
>
> What about lesbian couples?
>
> If you do a project about fathers' feelings then does this exclude mothers' feelings?

They argued that in some cultures it is not acceptable for fathers to be present at the birth; the name 'birth partners' was more acceptable. So where the father's role seemed to have no biological connection and was interchangeable between men and women, the role of the mother was fixed to the biological mother. Even in the case of premature babies, which are gestating in an incubator rather than the womb, and the care role is continually changing between machinery, the mother, nurses and the father, the role of the mother is still fixed to the biological mother for the hospital.

I changed the name of the project from 'fathers taking place' to 'first moments', and it was immediately more acceptable.

Serene J. Khader shows, in her study of the Fathers' Rights Movement in the USA, that demands of gender equality by fathers are undermining women's reproductive rights in the name of a gender-neutral subjectivity. She argues that fathers' demands of 'choice' regarding childbirth have led to demands for abortions, demands against abortion and that women continue the full term of pregnancy, refusal to use unborn foetuses and refusal to pay child care on the grounds of not having chosen to have the child. Khader states that equality claims are so susceptible to use for anti-feminist ends that they offer little hope to the feminist movement.[57] Khader references Irigaray to argue for sexual difference, and proposes that we continue to advocate reproductive rights but stop articulating them in the language of equality. According to her, women should demand that the state articulate rights specifically for them, and that pregnancy and childbearing are uniquely female experiences.

In *Democracy Begins Between Two*, Irigaray argues that women's alienation derives from being reduced to the natural state, to a nature-body capable of reproducing; but equal opportunities for women does not mean that women should model themselves on masculine ways of being and doing, but they should enjoy equivalent opportunities to men. She argues that there should be a transition from natural to civil coexistence, and for this women need the rights associated with the recognition of civil identity: the right to free choice of maternity, the right to the dignity of the civil individual, a separate civil identity for women equivalent to and not the same as that enjoyed by men. Irigaray calls this 'the right to motherhood as a component of civil identity'. It includes the right to bear children, to decide not to, to decide where and how many, and to receive social support for one's project of doing so.[58] It replaces a purportedly gender-neutral (but actually equivocal) universal with a sexed one – one that attempts to be faithful to the lives of actual women.

The experience at Homerton shows that although motherhood is a point of biological difference between women and men, motherhood is also constructed, contested and defended.

For Mouffe what is required is not citizenship based on sexual difference but for a new definition of citizenship constructed around the multiplicity of social relations and therefore difference; if citizenship is constructed around difference then sexual difference becomes irrelevant.[59] I agree with Mouffe on this point and would argue that what feminist practice has to offer is not the construction

of a different identity or citizen but a practised theory of how citizenship can be constructed around difference and equivalence rather than unity. For me feminism offers a method of discovering how sexual difference and other types of difference can be practised without getting into the problematic area of trying to define these differences. My problem with this for radical democracy is if sexual difference is irrelevant then how can women be thought of as a subject position for radical democracy? While I agree with Irigaray and Khader that there should be civil rights for women around the area of motherhood equivalent to civil rights for men, I also think that the gender contestation around this area means that childbirth is an area of democracy where parenting roles are negotiated and gender is constructed. Having looked at the issues surrounding feminism in different spaces, for example architectural education and in the maternity ward at Homerton Hospital, I have found that the feminist questions are very different. In both cases gender is performed, contested and defended, but this is always contextual and situated.

Notes

1 Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985). Laclau and Mouffe argue that in order to create an equivalent articulation among the alternative left between, for example, women, gays, blacks, workers and others, there needs to be a *chain of equivalence* among different democratic struggles against oppression. The aim is to form a counterweight to the hegemonic power of the right.
2 Judith Butler, 'Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of "Postmodernism"', in Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott (eds), *Feminists Theorise the Political* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 3–21.
3 Butler, 'Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of "Postmodernism"', pp. 13–15.
4 Jane Rendell, 'Gender', in Jane Rendell, Barbara Penner, Iain Borden (eds), *Gender, Space, Architecture: An Interdisciplinary Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 15.
5 *taking place* is a group of women artists and architects. The group began in 2000 out of a shared interest in questions of gender and spatial practice. Through a series of private workshops and public events we have developed a collaborative way of working where projects are created out of differences between individuals, disciplines, participants, audiences and ourselves. We are currently developing more permanent and arts-based aspects of our work, with longer-term creative impact on people's engagement with spaces of public buildings; see, www.takingplace.org.uk.
6 Teresa Hoskyns and Doina Petrescu, 'Taking Place and Altering it', in Doina Petrescu (ed.), *Altering Practices: Feminist Politics and Poetics of Space* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 15–38.
7 Butler, 'Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of "Postmodernism"', p. 15.
8 Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 146–172.
9 Rendell, 'Gender', p. 15.
10 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H. M. Parshley (London: Penguin, 1972 [1949]).

11 Luce Irigaray, *Thnking the Difference: For a Peaceful Revolution*, trans Karin Montin (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 61; Emily Zakin, 'Between Two: Civil Identity and the Sexed Subject of Democracy', Maria C. Cimitile and Elaine P. Miller (eds), *Returning to Irigaray: Feminist Philosophy, Politics and the Question of Unity* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2007), pp. 173–204.
12 Luce Irigaray, *To Be Two* (New York: Routledge, 2002[1998]), pp. 145–7.
13 Luce Irigaray, *Democracy Begins Between Two* (London: Athlone Press, 2000), pp. 1–20.
14 Chantal Mouffe, 'Feminism, Citizenship and Radical Democratic Politics', in Butler and Scott (eds), *Feminists Theorize the Political*, pp. 369–84.
15 Mouffe, 'Feminism, Citizenship and Radical Democratic Politics', pp. 369–84.
16 Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, pp. 76–8.
17 Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 146–72.
18 Teresa Hoskyns, 'Taking Place', *Public Art Journal*, 1(4) (2001), pp. 37–43.
19 Hoskyns, 'Taking Place', pp. 37–43.
20 Jane Rendell, *Art and Architecture: A Place Between* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2006), pp. 153–62.
21 See www.muf.co.uk/southwrk.htm, accessed 2010.
22 See www.annethornearchitects.co.uk, accessed
23 Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).
24 Ben Campkin, Bartlett lecture, 2005.
25 Matrix, *Making Space: Women and the Man Made Environment* (London: Pluto Press, 1984).
26 Matrix, *Making Space.*
27 Frances Bradshaw, 'Working With Women', in Rendell *et al.*, *Gender, Space, Architecture*, pp. 282–94.
28 Kelly Ives, *Cixous, Irigaray and Kristeva: The Jouissance of French Feminism* (Worcestershire: Crescent Moon Publishing, 1996).
29 Rendell *et al.*, *Gender Space Architecture*, p. 15.
30 Jos Boys and Katie Lloyd Thomas, 'The Changing Shape of Gender and the Built Environment in the UK', Gender and the Built Environment Database*,* www.gendersite.org/, accessed 2010.
31 Hoskyns and Petrescu, 'Taking Place and Altering it', pp. 15–38.
32 Hoskyns and Petrescu, 'Taking Place and Altering it', pp. 15–38.
33 Jane Rendell, *The Pursuit of Pleasure: Gender, Space and Architecture in Regency London* (London: The Athlone Press, 2002).
34 Rendell, *et al.*, *Gender, Space, Architecture*.
35 'WAFER' was a network of women architects who met intermittently from the early 1980s until around 2001 in London.
36 Hoskyns and Petrescu, 'Taking Place and Altering it', pp. 15–38.
37 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 137.
38 Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 171.
39 Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, p. 145.
40 Hoskyns and Petrescu, 'Taking Place and Altering it', pp. 15–38.
41 Forum 'Taking Places' on www.inplaceofthepage.co.uk (posted on 3/2/2004, 9:32:38 PM by Doina).
42 Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, 'Feminist Knowledge Politics in Situated Zones: A Different Hi/Story of Knowledge Construction', womeninweb.women.it/cyberarchive/files/puig.htm, accessed 2005.

43 Helen Stratford, Katie Lloyd Thomas and Teresa Hoskyns, 'Taking Place', *Scroope, Cambridge Architecture Journal*, 2002.
44 Bradshaw, 'Working With Women'.
45 'I have experienced both Taking Place and Alterities as "places" through a kind of belonging to them; perhaps Alterities was for me, a place that I could enter, while as Teresa suggests, Taking Place has been one that is taken' (posted on 2/9/2004, 4:35:54 PM by Katie Lloyd Thomas).
46 'Part of the joy of Alterities was in the discussions that took place in cafés, in the metro, in the hotels around it – in the way it exceeded the centre of the planned event, and Taking Place is also a part of that excess and momentum. On the other hand, just as Teresa describes a transformation from WAFER to Taking Place, there is a transformation from ideas and discussions that occurred at Alterities into practices – that Taking Place 2 no longer had a conference format, its structure as an event (or performance) attempted to embody those ideas. Modes of thinking perhaps moved into modes of doing. And if we reacted against the discussion of equality that was being had at WAFER we also took with us some of WAFER's way of proceeding – eating, socialising as well as the central discussions, and the format of making short presentations (at least during taking place 1)' (posted on 2/9/2004, 4:35:54 PM by Katie Lloyd Thomas).
47 'For me "taking place" picked up on the exciting notion of a constantly evolving action, as we wrote for the Berlin proposal "what began as a shared and indefinable loss of place has become a process; a practice. We have no fixed place and no identity apart from our encounters. This unfolding process that we have initiated forms our practice." Like taking place 3, this proposal and the e-mail forum begun for Iceland, aimed to engage a wider public audience to create its space: as the proposal continues: "a means by which to have place and a desire for others to join in this critically assertive and productive place." I think this echoes a lot with what Brigid was saying about opening the space out …' (posted on 2/23/2004, 9:29:55 PM by Helen), cf. Forum 'Taking Places' on www.inplaceofthepage.co.uk, accessed 3 April 2014.
48 Forum 'Taking Places' on www.inplaceofthepage.co.uk, accessed 3 April 2014.
49 Excerpt from the presentation of Helen Stratford, co-organiser of the Symposium.
50 atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa) is a non-profit association and an interdisciplinary network founded in Paris in 2001 which conducts research into participatory urban actions and aims for the re-appropriation and reinvention of public space through everyday life activities (gardening, cooking, playing, reading, producing, debating, walking, etc.). The starting point was the realisation of a temporary garden made out of recycled materials on one of the derelict sites in the La Chapelle area, in the north of Paris. This garden, called ECObox, has been progressively extended into a platform for urban criticism and creativity curated by the aaa, residents and external collaborators, catalysing activities at a local and translocal level (www.urbantactics.org). For more about ECObox, see also Doina Petrescu, 'Losing Control, Keeping Desire' in Peter Blundell Jones, Doina Petrescu and Jeremy Till, *Architecture and Participation* (London: Spon, 2005).
51 Our more recent practice deals specifically with these issues. We can briefly mention here my involvement in the Social Forum in London (www.londonsocialforum.org.uk) and Doina's practice with aaa as well as her collaboration with REFDAF (Réseau des Femmes pour le Développement Durable en Afrique) for the Cité des Femmes in Dakar. See also Doina Petrescu, 'Life Matters Making Place', in Katie Lloyd Thomas, *Material Matters* (London: Routledge, 2006).
52 Katie Lloyd Thomas with taking place, *Feminist Review: Birth*, 93, (February 2010).
53 Katie Lloyd Thomas with taking place, *Feminist Review: Birth*.
54 Katie Lloyd Thomas with taking place, *Feminist Review: Birth*.

55 James Torr, *Is There a Father in the House?: A Handbook for Health and Social Care Professionals* (Oxford: Radcliffe Medical Press Ltd, 2003), p. 48.
56 Torr, *Is There a Father in the House?*, p. 24.
57 Serene J. Khader, 'When Equality Justifies Women's Subjection: Luce Irigaray's Critique of Equality and the Fathers' Rights Movement', *Hypatia*, 23(4) (Fall 2008), pp. 48–74.
58 Irigaray, *Thinking the Difference*, p. 61.
59 Mouffe, 'Feminism, Citizenship and Radical Democratic Politics', pp. 369–84.

7 Social forums and the spaces of participatory democracy

In the previous chapters I have examined political philosophy and argued that increasing representation in democratic governance creates a de-spatialisation or dis-location of democracy. The aim of this chapter is to explore the practice of participatory democracy through research into the social forums and Occupy movement. Social forums are parallel participatory democratic assemblies that have risen up over the last decade throughout the world in response to neo-liberal globalisation. I ask whether the social forums form a model that can be established as a practised reality in global governance, and discuss how deliberative and radical models of participatory democracy, discussed in Chapter 2, form tensions within the social forum movement. The tensions are expressed in the debate within the World Social Forum as to whether it is a space or a movement. I have chosen the social forums rather than state initiatives to increase participation because of their autonomous nature. For example, Habermas advocates a double-track process, with 'informal' deliberation taking place outside institutions and then, as public opinion, influencing institutional deliberation.[1]

For research, I participated in a number of parallel democratic events, the World Social Forum (WSF) in Porto Alegre in 2003, and all of the European Social Forums (ESFs) – Florence 2002, Paris 2003, London 2004, Athens 2006, Malmö 2008. I also participated in parallel summits at the EU summit in Thessaloniki, 2003 and the parallel summit of the G8 in Evian in 2004. I began as an observer at the first ESF and the WSF and then started to actively participate in the ESF. I chaired the cities seminar at the Paris ESF 2003 and organised the Right to the City, Urban Forum for the London ESF as part of the autonomous spaces in 2004. I was also involved in founding London Social Forum (LSF) in 2003 with which we have organised a number of events.

The success and form of the forum varies greatly as to which city it takes place in and in this chapter I aim to show that the democratic organisation of the city is a major factor in participatory democracy. This can be seen if one compares the WSF in the city of Porto Alegre in Brazil with the ESF in London (2004). Porto Alegre is produced/re-produced through participatory budgeting and planning, whereas London is produced/re-produced through neo-liberal policies, discussed in Chapter 3.

Contrary to the historical argument in political philosophy that claims that participatory democracy has a maximum scale,[2] participatory democratic

assemblies have made a resurgence in the twenty-first century and have started on a global scale.[3] The social forum movement started with the WSF in 2001 and this influenced hundreds of social forums worldwide. Social forums are mainly attributed to the anti-globalisation or social justice movement but can also be seen as the convergence of a number of simultaneous struggles linking Europe with Latin America that provide the concept, the democratic theory and practice, the spatial conditions and the publicity for the WSF.

International movements that campaigned for economic alternatives to the neo-liberal doctrine, such asATTAC,[4] provided the concept of the WSF. The idea was to create an alternative to the annual gathering of the World Economic Forum (WEF), made up of the top 1,000 corporations, world leaders and opinion-makers who usually meet in Davos, Switzerland. The WEF, also known as 'Davos', is a global space where heads of international corporations can meet informally with banks and politicians. From this informal network a number of symposiums involving European and US foundations have developed, for example the Bilderberg Group and the Transatlantic Business dialogue. In 1999, ATTAC hosted a meeting which attempted to provide an alternative space to Davos, in the Paris suburb of St Denis.[5] For Bernard Cassen, one of the leaders of ATTAC, the concept behind the WSF was similar to the WEF: to provide a global space for geographically isolated groups to meet, but also to provide alternatives to neo-liberal globalisation, as nothing like this existed on the left. In 2000, simultaneously with the WEF, several groups including ATTAC and Le Monde Diplomatique protested in Switzerland against capitalist exploitation and the dominance of European economic elites.[6]

However, while the concept originated in Europe, the Brazilian Workers Party (PT) gave both financial and municipal support for the idea and provided the city for the WSF. The civil society foundations of the PT combined with the participatory planning of Porto Alegre provided the democratic infrastructure for a mass participatory meeting to take place. A Brazilian organising committee was set up which consisted of eight Brazilian organisations including the trade union organisation and the Movement of the Landless (MST).[7]

The parallel practices and theories of participatory democracy emerged simultaneously from Italy in the form of social centres and local social forums, and from the social justice movement. The social centre network in Italy was a parallel political sphere that, rather than trying to gain state power, provides alternative state services such as day care and advocacy for refugees, at the same time that it confronts the state through direct action.[8]

The social forums however, are also to be attributed to the anti-globalisation or social justice movement; they came about around the same time as the riots of anti-globalisation campaigners surrounding the World Trade Organization (WTO) talks in Seattle (1999) the World Bank and IMF in Prague (2000) and the G8 summit in Genoa (2001) (see Figure 7.1).[9] These demonstrations were said to be an important turning point for the social justice movement, as for the first time the protests succeeded in disrupting the summits and preventing members from attending. For Mario Pianta, the protestors had 'both the arguments and

Figure 7.1 World Social Forum, Porto Alegre, 2003 (photograph: Teresa Hoskyns)

the strength to disrupt the official summit', while the movement also caught the attention of the global media and the public.[10] For some years following these demonstrations it became impossible for summits to be hosted inside major cities.

An example can be seen at the Genoa summit of 2001, described by the *Guardian* newspaper as the 'blood-soaked G8 summit in Genoa' (2001), which epitomised the difficulty summits were having at excluding protestors.[11] The demonstration was organised by the Genoa Social Forum (GSF) who brought together some eight hundred groups of extremely diverse sizes and origins.[12] Thirty thousand protestors gathered to protest about the vilification of refugees and the right to asylum (one of the main campaigns of the Italian social centres). Berlusconi's Italian government thought that they could defeat the movement through the use of policies of exclusion and police violence. The authorities built a five-metre-high fence around the area where the summit was taking place in the centre of the city. The fence could be seen to symbolise the divide between the parallel political practices. The police raided buildings where the protestors were sleeping as well as the headquarters of the GSF. The fence was seen as a legitimate target for protestors; as police violence increased so did the resistance, and the numbers of protestors rose to 100,000. The summit ended up with one person dead, more than 240 people injured and the Italian government being investigated for encouraging police brutality.[13]

The political geography of international summits changed after Genoa, illustrating the difficulty for political elites in excluding the parallel participatory

forums. Summits had always taken place in major or capital cities, but following Genoa they would take place in increasingly remote locations. Fearing violence, the Greek government decided to move the EU summit at the last moment. It was due to take place at the main conference centre in Thessaloniki city centre, but moved to Porto Karas, the second knuckle of the middle finger of the three-finger peninsula of Chalkidiki, 125 km from Thessaloniki. The conference centre in the city originally planned for the summit was given to the parallel summit. The next G8 summit took place in Evian-les-Bains in 2003, a small town in the Swiss Alps on the northern point of Lake Geneva. The city of Geneva was the location for the parallel summit. In 2004 the G8 summit was held in Sea Island, Georgia, USA; Gleneagles, Scotland, in 2005; Heiligendamm, Germany, on the Baltic sea in 2006; and in 2008 on the remote island of Toyako, on the island of Hokkaido in Japan.

At the same time as the moving of elite forms of governance from city centres to remote locations, dislocated by resistance, a new development in the global justice movement emerged, transforming the movement from a protest movement into a new political assembly. The peaceful shift came about with the deliberate choice to site the WSF in a different place from the forum at Davos. The geographical distancing of the forum from the summit meant that the antagonism between the parallel and official summit was removed; with the slogan 'another world is possible' the forum set out to construct an alternative political world opposed to neo-liberalism through the practice of direct democracy. Marlies Glasius sees the social forum movement as the solution for the problem of violence that has largely defined the anti-globalisation movement in focus of the media rather than a concentration on the debate: 'While violence may seem appropriate in direct confrontation with the power-holders, the G8, the World Bank, or the WTO, it has no similar logic in a civil society-only forum, where internal debate is the main item on the menu.'[14] The shift started with the first WSF but has since mushroomed with the start of the ESF in Florence 2002, and hundreds of international, national and local social forums worldwide. But with this move came a growing debate inside the social forums as to how parallel structures are effective and their relationship with power. The debate takes on different forms; it is described by Glasius as 'deliberation or struggle?',[15] but it also takes place among the founders of the WSF as to whether the WSF is a space or movement, as I will describe in the next section.

The World Social Forum: a space or a movement?

The World Social Forum is described in its charter of principles as a 'public space', open to all individuals and organisations opposed to neo-liberalism and the domination of the world by capital.[16] Since the first WSF in 2001, the forum has grown enormously, with 11,000 participants in 2001, 50,000 in 2002 and 100,000 in 2003. The forum was in Porto Alegre for the first three years and in Mumbai in 2004; the WSF moved back to Porto Alegre in 2005, reaching a peak of 150,000 people attending. In 2006 there was an experiment of a de-centred forum in Africa

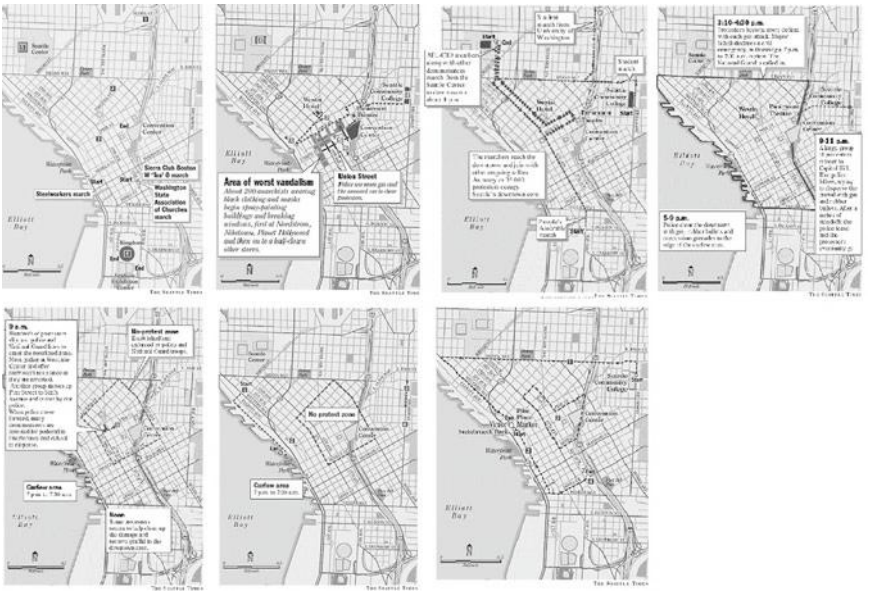

Figure 7.2 Activist maps, Seattle G8, *Seattle Times*, 2000

in Bamako, Caracas and Karachi, totalling 100,000 people. In 2007 the WSF went back to Nairobi and in 2008 there was a new experiment in the World Social Forum process: a Global Day of Action (GDA) which involved activities all over the world. The WSF went to Belem Brazil in 2009 and in 2010 the WSF took place in Porto Alegre again, celebrating the first decade of the WSF.[17]

But despite the popularity of the forum, and despite the joint global crises of the financial sector and the environment in 2007–9 that could be seen to vindicate the ideas and proposals of the forum, a problem has arisen within the WSF relating to global power.[18] Decisions are still being made by global elites, and as Bernard Cassen says, 'the forum can continue to grow in size, but for what?'[19] While the aim of the WSF is to create alternatives to neo-liberalism, a debate has started within the WSF as to how effective the WSF has been. As Solana Larson writes, 'nothing seems to be coming out of this enormous effort'.[20]

The apparent failure of the left to take power through the WSF has left the forum divided about its meaning as to whether the forum is a space or movement. The first WSF in 2001 was publicised as 'a democratic and open space of meetings to favour the construction of an international movement capable of joining alternatives to the unique neo-liberal thinking'.[21] Within this statement that describes the forum as both an 'open space' and an 'international movement' began a tension between the foundational positions of the WSF and the two approaches to participatory democracy discussed in the political philosophy chapter of this book. The open space theory links to the civil society theory of democracy and describes the WSF as an indirect power, an associational public space where dialogues and deliberations will affect public opinion. An alternative

reality will emerge through deliberative change. Whereas the WSF as a movement argue more of radical democracy, the WSF links together left organisations and social movements, and therefore forms alternative hegemonic power of the left that can be effective in global politics as a counterweight to market-led global power.

The two arguments can be seen through a debate between founders of the WSF: Chico Whitaker from Brazil, an architect by profession who argues the WSF should be an open space; and Bernard Cassen and Boaventura de Sousa Santos, who argue that the WSF should be a movement.

For Whitaker, a space and a movement are completely different things, and while the two can coexist, the WSF cannot be both at once. The difference for him is that a movement has collectively decided strategies, directions, actions and programmes formulated to achieve certain aims. A movement necessarily has leaders as it has precise and specific objectives. A space, by contrast, does not have leaders. Whitaker compares the forum to a public square – a square that does not have an owner and can be used by the collectivity in any way they can find. Unlike the square, the WSF has one objective and that is to allow as many people as possible that object to neo-liberalism to meet. Whitaker's description is as follows:

> A space has no leaders. It is only a place, basically a horizontal space, just like the earth's surface, even if it has some ups and downs. It is like a square without an owner. If the square has an owner other than the collectivity, it fails to be a square, and becomes private territory. Squares are generally open spaces that can be visited by all those who find any kind of interest in using it. Their purpose is solely being a square, whatever service they render to its users. The longer they last as squares the better it is for those who use them for what they offer for the realisation of their respective objectives.

Even when a square contains trees and small hills, it is always a socially horizontal space. Those who climb the trees or the hills cannot control from above the actions of those inside the square. Being considered ridiculous by the others in the square is the least any such climbers would expect. Should they become insistent or inconvenient, they will end up talking to themselves, for those who are in the square will leave it. Or they may even come back with 'public authorities' that will make them leave or stop preaching from above to restore the peace and tranquillity typical of public squares.[22]

Whitaker uses the word 'space', and the analogy of the 'public square' is a description of horizontal rather than vertical political relations with different activities coexisting but none dominating. Whitaker however also makes the point that if the forum is an open space and the collective can use it in any way they choose, people may not act responsibly. Like the civil society model, there are universal rules to his space that are accepted by all, so when someone climbs the tree and tries to dominate, people ignore them, and if they continue to dominate, the authorities will come and ask them to leave.

The description of the forum as a space refers to physical public space but cannot be taken literally as the social forum movement does not own any physical space at all. There are some offices in São Paulo and temporary offices in cities for the months before a forum, but otherwise the social forum appropriates, re-programmes and politicises space through spatial practice. The only permanent space of the forum is virtual space as it exists through email lists and websites, and has physical manifestations that take on different forms and scales depending on other factors that make the forum possible like physical space.

Whitaker can be seen to be arguing for the social forum to be a type of Habermasian public space. For Habermas the political public sphere can best be described as a network for communicating information and points of view. The public sphere extends to politically relevant questions and leaves their specialist treatment to the political system.[23] The public sphere refers to the social space generated through communicative action:

> Every encounter in which actors do not just observe each other but take a second person attitude, reciprocally attributing communicative freedom to each other, unfolds a linguistically constituted public space. This space stands open, in principle, for potential dialogue partners who are present as bystanders or could come on the scene and join those present … [It] can be expanded and rendered more permanent in an abstract form for a large public of present persons. For the public infrastructure of such *assemblies*, performances, presentations, and so on, architectural metaphors of structured spaces recommend themselves: we speak of forums, stages, arenas, and the like.[24]

For Whitaker, 'the social forum was not created in order to enter into competition with political parties or to conquer governments; it was intended to reinforce civil society'. The social forum is not attempting to govern or replace governments or the institutional forms of government; the forum's relationship with them is similar to the ancient Greek *agora*'s relationship to the assembly which provides a public space of association for deliberation and reflection on public affairs. The WSF does not replace governments but provides a discursive space.[25]

Whitaker's argument is that horizontal relations, with actors organised into networks, are actually much more efficient than vertical pyramidal relations as they make it possible to build a collective power. Networks function following the logic that action is taken not because someone gives an order but because people feel it necessary as active subjects.[26] The WSF process can be envisaged as unlimited horizontal networking spaces at world, regional, national and local levels. His idea is that through these networks it is possible to build a unity previously not possible because of weakness due to division. However, Whitaker does admit that there is a frustration due to what he sees as a 'distressing delay' in the process of building a collective power that can translate into another world. He states that a lot of the participants of the WSF feel that an effective collective power is urgent.[27]

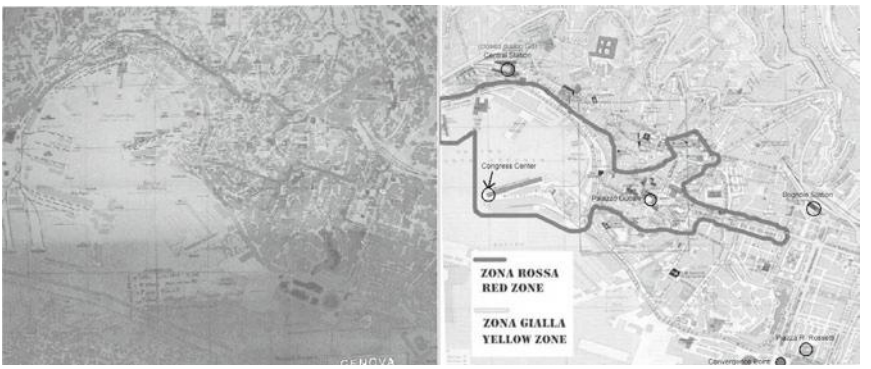

Figure 7.3 Activist maps, Genoa G8, 2002

On the other hand, Boaventura de Sousa Santos and Bernard Cassen are among a growing number of members of the WSF who are calling for manifestos and proposals, believing that in order to gain power and to achieve the its aim of providing an alternative to neo-liberal globalisation, the WSF needs to become an actor in its own right.[28] For de Sousa Santos, if the WSF is a space it will be 'discredited as a talking shop and the anti-capitalist energy will be wasted. The celebration of diversity will have a paralyzing effect and become vulnerable to domination by capitalist relations.'[29]

Bernard Cassen, who had helped found the ATTAC network in France, argues that the purpose of such gatherings was 'to give a global visibility to struggles that are atomised and aren't even aware of each other'. He describes the decision for the first WSF as being a counterweight to Davos where world leaders, bankers and corporations get together to discuss neo-liberal globalisation in a non-accountable and non-democratic way. Cassen sees the WSF as a gathering to develop clear proposals that can be 'injected into national, continental and international politics'.[30]

Cassen and de Sousa Santos are among a group arguing for the WSF to have a clear manifesto and are among the authors of a document described as the Porto Alegre Charter: Twelve Proposals for a Different World.[31] The document includes the cancelling of third world debt and global taxes on financial transactions (Tobin Tax), one of the big campaigns of ATTAC. As I read through the manifesto I notice that the themes I have been involved with in the social forum movement are not included. These are themes to do with cities, housing, social territories, the Charter for the Right to the City, a document that has developed out of a number of meetings at the WSF and regional and urban forums.

For Cassen, the debate about whether the social forum is a space or a movement is not only about the forum having concrete proposals but to do with the relationship of social movements to the political sphere and elected political representatives. At the meeting of the ESF in Paris 2003, Cassen called for concrete political alternatives, such as having one or more political parties to introduce ideas from within the anti-globalisation movement into the political arena.[32] Cassen gives the

example that it was the attendance of the Mayor of Paris and the Mayor of Saint Denis at the WSF that gave rise to the ESF in Paris, and without this it would not have happened.[33]

If we define space as coexistence and a movement as common ideology, structurally the WSF and ESF shift between being a space and a movement. The WSF and ESF both start as a movement for the opening party, where everyone agrees to the principles the forum celebrates. For the next three days, the forums become a space as hundreds of activities take place at the same time. Despite the struggles for control of the WSF, it is not possible for a single group of people to be present at all of the discussions, so the forum cannot have leaders in the same way that a representative assembly does, where leaders discuss the issues in a linear progression. But on the afternoon of the fourth day, the forum again becomes a movement; typically the demonstration is on the Saturday afternoon and the Assembly of the Social Movements follows this on the Sunday morning, which marks the close of the forum. Both happen when nothing else is programmed, so clear, consensual statements and decisions can be made.

For the rest of the year two committees control the WSF. The main decision-making power of the WSF is with the Brazilian organising committee (OC), of which Whitaker and de Sousa Santos are members, consisting since its foundation of the same civil society organisations that collaborated to form the Brazilian Workers Party (PT). These include the Central Trade Union Confederation (CUT), the Movement of Landless Rural Workers (MST) and six smaller Brazilian civil society organisations. The other main organising committee is the International Council (IC), which includes Cassen, and which was founded after the first WSF in June 2001. When the committee was first founded, the IC only had an advisory role to the OC. The year I went to the WSF in 2003 was the year Naomi Klein described the WSF as being hijacked by Latin American leaders. There were big speeches from the newly elected president of the PT, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, to 75,000 people, and from Hugo Chavez, who made a surprise visit.[34]

The WSF could also be seen as neither a space nor a movement as both conceptions of the WSF diminish the real power of the forum as a participatory world assembly. For the WSF as a space argument, the assembly becomes a cacophony of multiple voices; and for the WSF as a movement argument, the assembly becomes a stage for pre-existing ideas like the Tobin Tax; its aim is for the WSF to have a clear manifesto so that it can act like a political party on the world stage. Neither conception of the WSF is focused on the democratic assembly qualities of the WSF, which is where I see the power as lying: the process of people coming from all over the world to discuss different issues for five days and reaching conclusions from the deliberations.

There are key differences between participatory and representative politics. In participatory politics, decisions are not made by public vote and no one can claim to represent the forum. The forum itself is horizontal; issues are discussed simultaneously and are coexistent, therefore spatial. In the social forum, themed areas start to emerge such as war, cities, health, communications, food, youth, democracy and so on. The discussion is also very different in participatory

political assemblies from assemblies of elected representatives because people are speaking from lived experience and expertise rather than the acquired knowledge of MPs. So, for example, the discussions on cities and urbanism that I have participated in would include architects, planners, urban theorists, urban activists and community groups concerned with local urban problems.

The discussion of the WSF as a space or a movement is peculiarly abstract and dis-located from the physical space of the city. For Hilary Wainwright, social democratic institutions provide connections and wiring through which currents of democratic energy flow from civil society to political power: 'In Western Europe, privatisation, deregulation and a generalised onslaught on state provision has weakened the leverage of civil society on political institutions.'[35] It is in fact only Cassen who describes the importance of the forum's relationship with local authorities without which the forum cannot exist.

In the next section I will discuss the democratic infrastructure of the city of Porto Alegre and how the infrastructure has contributed to the establishment of the WSF. I will then discuss the ESF in relation to European cities and the European Parliament.

Porto Alegre

If we look at Porto Alegre, the city where the WSF started, the struggle for democracy was first urban and local. The struggle for democracy in Brazil followed what is known as the 'authoritarian period'. Authoritarianism took its central locus of power at city level through a process of modernisation and urbanisation, resulting in the enormous growth of Brazilian cities between 1950 and 1980; the population of Porto Alegre grew over this period from 394,000 to 1,125,000 inhabitants. Decisions taken at the time led to the removal of the lower-income population to the outskirts of the city, areas that received practically no investment in infrastructure. These outlying suburbs, described as *favelas* or shanty towns, had large areas left unpaved, scarce sanitation, and few schools or health centres.[36] It is argued that the marginalisation of these city districts incited the emergence of an autonomous and democratic civil society organised around demands for urban facilities and public services, and from this movement completely new forms of urban government emerged, including the renowned participatory budget system at Porto Alegre.[37] Terence Wood and Warwick E. Murray define the concept of participatory budget as 'the divestment of some budget decision-making power away from the mayor's office (which is traditionally responsible for budget allocations in Brazilian cities) to the inhabitants of the city'.[38]

The participatory budget for Porto Alegre started after the Workers Party, or Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), was elected to municipal office in 1989. For Avritzer an autonomous sphere of civil society rose up in Brazil from the 1970s, limiting the power of the state and creating alternatives for social and political organisation.[39] Wainwright argues that the PT grew out of an alliance of the urban, rural and religious civil society organisations that had risen up during the authoritarian period, and included the Landless Movement (MST) and Central

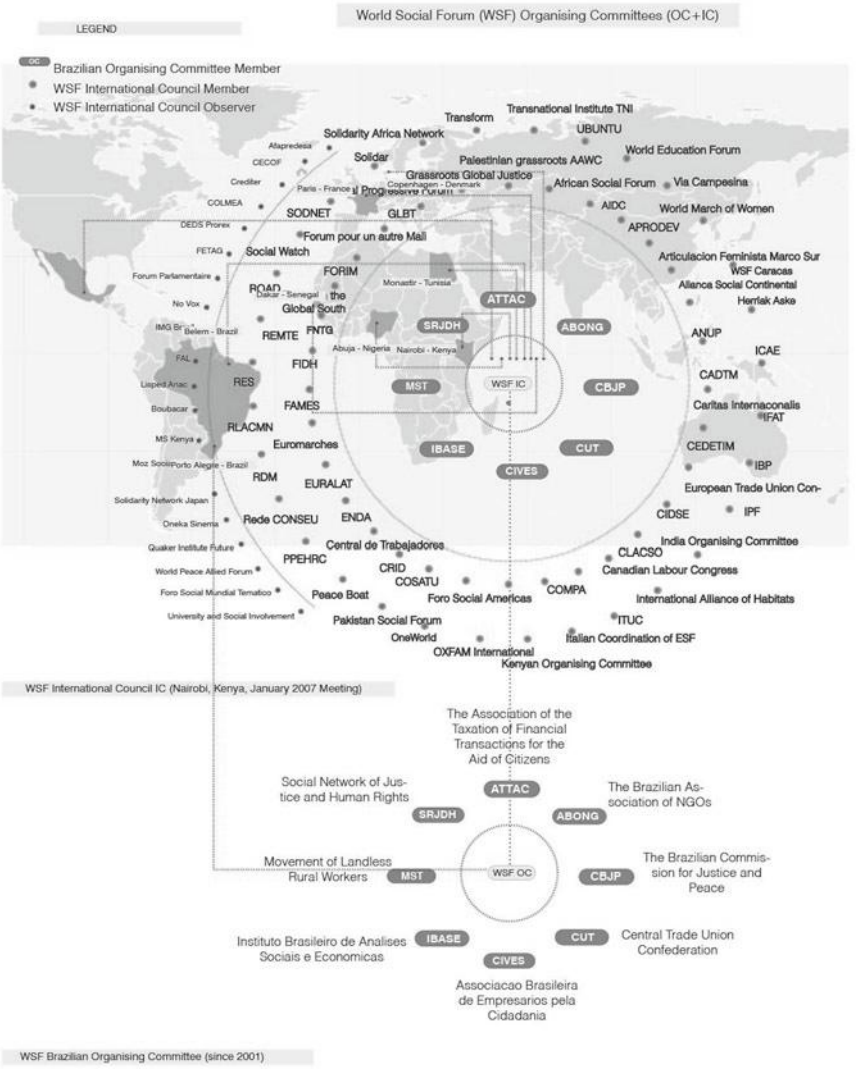

Figure 7.4 Map of World Social Forum International Council, by Marinela Pasca, 2012

Trade Unions Confederation (CUT).[40] The administration found a city deeply in debt, demands from the community for investment and no money to spend. Faced with this situation, the new PT mayor, Olivio Dutra, decided that he would follow the party policy of participation; decisions involving the city budget would be participatory and transparent and the poor neighbourhoods would get priority.[41]

The participatory budget is defined as a process designed to promote sound, transparent management by involving city residents in decision-making on budget allocations. Each neighbourhood decides on the priorities for that neighbourhood. Paving has been one of the big priorities for people in poor neighbourhoods

because it is paving that distinguishes a poor neighbourhood from a rich one; since the introduction of the participatory budget, between 1988 and 2002 the citizens paved three hundred kilometres of streets.[42] Rural communities directly control budgets for transport, social housing, education and rubbish disposal. Civil society councils, which govern together with elected government officials, control universal healthcare, reforestation, water reclamation, recycling, transport and public safety programmes.

The participatory budget process of Porto Alegre begins in March each year with citizen forums across sixteen geographical and sectorial areas of the city. Citizens from each neighbourhood attend plenaries and make proposals for their area. Forums of five hundred to seven hundred people elect two representatives and two alternates to serve for one year on the budget council. In April and May the forum representatives organise open assemblies to propose the budget priorities of the public for the following year. When the plenaries were first held in 1990, about one thousand people attended the open assemblies; this grew to ten thousand in 1993 and 40,000 in 2002. For meetings of up to 100 people one speaker is allowed for every 10 people, and for meetings of above 1,000 people, one delegate speaks for every 80 people. Wainwright notes that where the elected representatives are mainly men, the open plenaries are attended mostly by women and that women will attend on mass to make sure their demands are met; she gives an example of 600 people, mainly women attending a meeting from one neighbourhood with a population of 3,000 people.[43] Between May and mid-July the proposals are forwarded to the municipal council, 30 members elected by traditional democratic means. Simultaneously, the forum representatives attend training sessions on municipal finance. A draft budget is constructed by the municipal bureaucrats and sent to the budget council, the mayor and the municipal council for consultation. Between October and December the participatory budget council amends the budget for final approval from the municipal council and for final implementation in January.

The citizens of Porto Alegre have increased the proportion of the budget spent on the public parts of the city from 2 per cent in 1989 to 30 per cent in 1999. They have completely transformed the quality of life in Porto Alegre, taking it from slums to make it the most liveable city in Brazil and even in Latin America.[44] For Wainwright the participatory budget does not go far enough, and while citizens decide how the budget is spent for their neighbourhood, the town council then implements the work. Wainwright argues that participatory budgeting should be followed with participatory planning.[45]

Critics of 'participatory democracy' say that this form of decision-making is very time-consuming and inefficient, whereas with 'representative democracy' it is possible to make quick decisions; they also say that it is practically impossible for all decisions made by leaders to be popular and agreed by everybody, and that a more participatory democracy would consequently lead to what is known as the 'tyranny of the masses'.[46] But as far as the city is concerned, participatory democracy creates a vibrant, cared-for and political public realm. From this urban movement, the citizens of Porto Alegre have participated in creating one of the

greatest challenges to the world political order through hosting the World Social Forum.

I went to Porto Alegre for the third WSF in January 2003, an assembly where 100,000 people participated in the five-day forum. The city seemed to open up for the forum as the WSF appeared to take over every available public space. A layer of temporary infrastructure was provided that transformed the city into a world participatory assembly. Temporary buses transported people from one location to another; most of the activity, workshops and seminars took place at the Catholic University and there were also a number of different sites. The sports stadium was used for large meetings and the docks in the form of meeting rooms, food courts, information points, Internet cafés, press rooms and so on. The programme for the Forum was the size of a tabloid newspaper, with the discussion based on five themes: Democratic Sustainable Development – Principles and values, human rights, diversity and equality – Media, culture and counter-hegemony – Political power, civil society and democracy – Democratic world order, fight against militarism and promoting peace.[47] The city was covered in civil society stalls and many public spaces became themed civil society market places; for example, there was one space where Latin American farmers had stalls displaying organic produce combined with discussions on sustainable farming and food production. Without having a specific programme to follow, as at that time I was interested in the relationship of the WSF to the city, I ended up going to many of the big meetings of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the newly elected president of Brazil, who spoke to 75,000 people in one of the main parks. I wandered through the market places because they gave visibility to the participating civil society organisations, and I found informal discussion spaces. Some organisations had meeting tables or spaces. The market place was a space for informal discussions with participating organisations. The university tower blocks were packed with seminars and workshops. The docklands and the sports stadiums were all taken over for political meetings, which ranged in size from thousands of people in some of the big plenaries to workshops and seminars of various sizes that could be as small as five or ten people. Five warehouses in the docklands were used as discussion spaces for each of the five continents, creating in effect a temporary multi-polar world parliament.

One of the clearest voices emerging from the WSF came from the Youth Camp housed in Harmonia Park, stretching across the south of Porto Alegre. The Youth Camp started because young Brazilians wanted to attend the WSF but could not afford to pay for accommodation in Porto Alegre. The Youth Camp developed almost straight away from a campsite into an autonomous space. The camp started to house a forum called Intergalaktica, with many youth not even registering for the official forum. The Youth Camp was spatially themed into a number of smaller camps and in 2002 introduced the idea that the WSF should become a 'social territory'. This concept was implemented by the WSF in 2005 when OC and IC decided to democratise the forum by abandoning the plenaries and to focus on public spaces around the Guaiba Lake.[48]

The concept of the 'social territory' is that the production of space and the ways of practising are in line with the ideas of the forum. So the computers in a social territory are run on free software. Food is provided by organic producers and there is a solidarity with local enterprises; the temporary architecture and structures are environmentally sustainable in their impact.[49]

One of the main themes of the WSF 2003 was democracy. The former mayor of Porto Alegre, Raul Pont, gave a talk on 'representative' and 'participatory' democracy. He argued that the roots of representative political systems are found in the constitutional regimes of modern states and that the individual subjects of modern states only 'hold' rights but don't really exert them. This far from qualifies them as full citizens in the original sense of the word: 'This debate expresses the distinct interests of classes and fractions of classes in the passage of a society of small producers, artisans and farmers from the feudal yoke, to the consolidation of a new dominant elite typical of capitalism.'[50] One of the ongoing discussions of the WSF organised by Habitat International Coalition (HIC) and the National Forum of Urban Reform (FNRU) in Brazil concerns the realisation of a charter of principles on the Rights to the City, in which the first principle is the full exercise of citizenship.

As we saw in Chapter 1, in ancient Athens the democratic and participatory re-building of the city forms the foundations and democratic infrastructure for participatory democracy. Wainwright describes this as 'wiring' to allow democratic flows for a spatial manifestation of global participatory assembly. So while the social forums were conceived in Europe, the democratic infrastructure of Porto Alegre allowed for the manifestation. The next section looks at the European Social Forum and at how the social forum manifests in European cities.

European Social Forum

Florence 2002

The decision to hold continental social forums was made by the WSF International council in 2001, and it was agreed at the meeting of the social movements at the WSF in Porto Alegre in January 2002 that the first ESF would be held in Italy. The first ESF would take place before the next WSF in January 2003.[51] Worth and Buckley argue that where the ESF followed the WSF in terms of institutional openings, the WSF and the ESF grew out of the same process.[52] The WSF was backed by Western NGOs and the anti-Davos concept as a counter to neo-liberal economic globalisation originated in Europe and particularly France and Italy. As I have shown in the last section, the decision to hold the WSF in Porto Alegre was largely due to the Brazilian Workers Party (PT), whose formation through social movements and participatory methods of city governance provided both the finance and the city conditions – municipal support and public space for the forum. These elements have proved difficult in European cities that are far more hostile to participatory democracy. This section examines the ESF process from

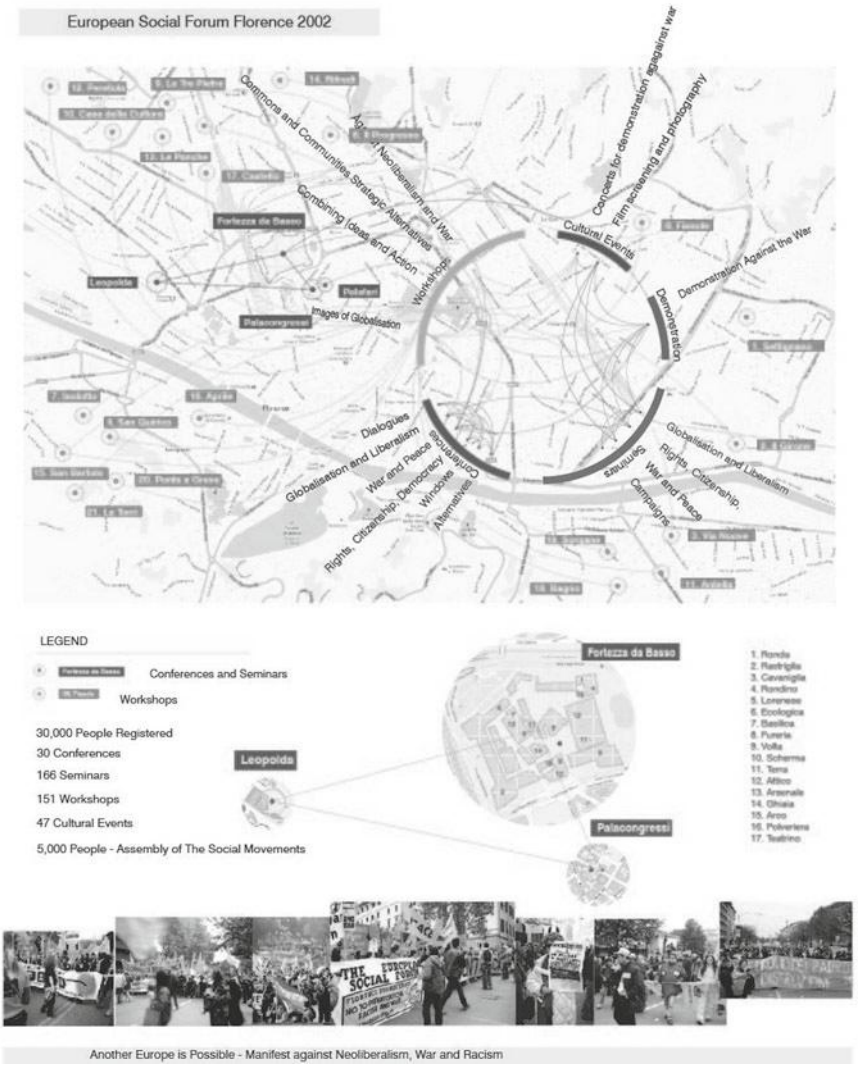

Figure 7.5 European Social Forum, Florence, 2002 (image by Marinela Pasca, 2012)

Florence 2002 to Athens 2006 in relation to the cities in which the social forum takes place.

The organisation of the Italian-founded ESF could be argued to be closer to expressing the democratic ideals of the social forum as an open space where civil society groups come together than the WSF. The social forum movement was at that time strong in Italy. The Italian Social Forum was founded in Genoa, 2001, when two thousand delegates met from ninety-two local forums and announced its formation. Eighteen months later there were approximately one hundred and seventy local social forums meeting regularly around the country. The forums

were able to mount significant mobilisations in different parts of the country.[53] The Genoa Social Forum had organised the demonstrations surrounding the G8 and coordinated more than eight hundred civil society organisations.[54]

Donatella Della Porta argues that Italy's sub-culture has grown in self-managed social centres, a movement that dates back to the 1970s.[55] Social centres are abandoned buildings, for example warehouses and factories, occupied and transformed into what Naomi Klein describes as 'cultural and political hubs'.[56] The social centres are particularly concerned with the treatment of refugees by fascists in Italy and provide a community space free from state control. They provide cultural space for meetings, events and alternative services such as day care and advocacy for refugees. Estimates give figures for hundreds of social centres in Italy.[57] For Paul Chatterton and Stuart Hodkinson, 'What sets social centres apart from residential squats or housing cooperatives is their simultaneous politicisation of the very act of reclaiming private space and opening it up to the public as part of a conscious refusal and confrontation to neo-liberalism and the enclosure of urban space, a common theme of city or town centre-based social centres is their opposition to gentrification.'[58]

The Italian working group set out the democratic principles for the organisation of the ESF aiming not to form a similar committee to the Brazilian Organising Committee (OC) of the WSF. The Italian working group decided that the organisation of the forum would be open. Like the WSF, organisation of the forum is by two working groups. The first group is the OC; this group is from the host country and meets regularly to organise the details of the forum. The second is the European Preparatory Assembly (EPA). The EPA meets approximately four times a year in different parts of Europe to allow as many people as possible to participate in the decision-making process. The Italian working group described the participation of the OC as 'open to all social movements, agreeing to the Porto Alegre Charter of Principles willing to take part'. Likewise for the EPA it was stated that 'social movements could take part simply by participating'.[59] However, problems arose later with the formation of logistics and programme sub-groups. The Program Committee was made up of two delegates from each country.

Florence was chosen to host the ESF because the president of the Tuscan region, Claudio Martini, a believer in a fairer and more humane globalisation, was interested in finding alternatives to neo-liberal globalisation and had been involved in the protests around the G8 in Genoa, organising a meeting 'Global to Glocal' on the eve of the summit.[60]

In contradiction to Porto Alegre, where the city opened up to the forum, Florence was closed. There was an element of fear in central Florence. The forum took place just one year after the protests in Genoa, and the Italian president, Silvio Berlusconi, and the right-wing press had formed a campaign promising violence against the monuments and important works of art in Florence. Works like Michelangelo's *David* (1504), were covered with a heavy-duty protective layer of padding.[61] The late Oriana Fallaci, a roght-wing journalist, advised the people of Florence to shut up every shop, pull down their shutters, stay in their houses and express their mourning. She compared the ESF to the Nazi occupation

of Florence.[62] But despite the campaign against Fallaci by the Florence Social Forum 'Firenze Citta Aperta' (Florence Open City),[63] when I arrived most of the shops were boarded up and riot police were roaming the streets. I went alone to the forum, and booked into a hotel in the centre of Florence. Tourists were in Florence for the art and architecture, and were unaware that a mass political meeting had been planned and would transport the historical city into the twenty-first century.[64] Rai Due, one of the main state television channels in Italy, broadcast continuous live coverage and debate around the ESF, unlike the following ESFs that received very little media coverage.

The forum was mainly based in two sites, both in the centre of Florence and within easy walking distance of each other. These were the Fortezza da Basso, built as a Medici fortress and restored as a conference centre, and the disused railway station Stazione Leopolda. The Fortezza, a walled citadel with a large courtyard in the middle and a number of small surrounding buildings, was chosen because of its enormous meeting capacity of thirty thousand people. Six rooms with the capacity for two thousand people to meet, and fifty-five rooms with the capacity for one to three hundred people to meet. The station was an art and culture space housing exhibitions and performances, and could host up to five thousand people, demonstrated at the meeting of the social movements on the last day of the forum (see Figure 7.6).

Sixty thousand people registered for the forum, thirty thousand more than expected, and one million people went to the demonstration.[65] Before the demonstration I sat at Florence station and watched trains queuing nose to tail to come into the station from all over Italy. The demonstration started three hours early due to the number of people. Former Italian President of the Parliament, Pietro Ingrao, spoke to the march before it left the Fortezza. He congratulated the new movement for 'creating a power which has never existed before – the power of peace'. He challenged the movement 'to bring this power of peace and new politics which you have created from the streets to the Parliaments to conquer the power of the current national and international institutions'. For Brid Brennan, the Florence ESF was so dynamic because the Italian movement was on the rise after Genoa and opposition to the war on Iraq was coming to boiling point. She states: 'Whatever the technicalities, people will remember the forum for its call for action against the war.'[66]

The meeting of the social movements takes place at the end of each ESF and demonstrates how the forum works as a movement. Decisions of mass participation can be made by the ESF at this meeting. In Florence the meeting was the final event of the forum taking place on the Sunday morning following the demonstration on the Saturday afternoon, when at least 5,000 people gathered at the Stazione Leopolda. A group of anti-war campaigners had prepared a proposal during the forum's seminars and workshops for a global demonstration and they presented the proposal to the assembly. Delegates from various civil society organisations and each European country stood up to speak in support of the proposal, committing to mobilise people for the demonstration in their respective countries. Nobody spoke against, so the proposal was agreed by at least 5,000

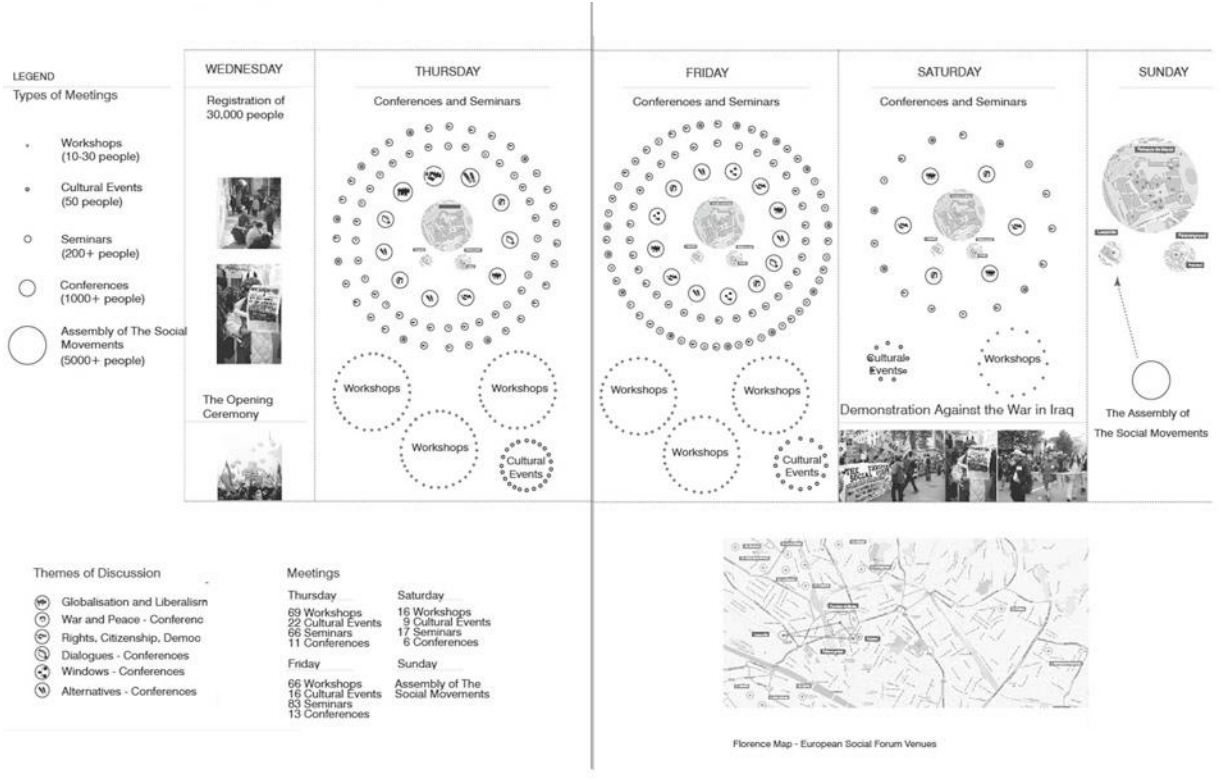

Figure 7.6 Structure of the European Social Forum, Florence, 2002

people. The proposal was for the demonstration on 15 February 2003, when some 11 million people demonstrated against the proposed war in Iraq, in approximately 800 cities all around the world.[67] This decision made by an assembly of 5,000 people, led to the largest act of mass participation in the world.

However, while the first ESF was based on the principles of democracy and political diversity stemming from the Italian left, other countries, particularly the British, with a larger proportion of participants from left political parties were less concerned with democracy as the empty place between diverse groups and more concerned with the social forum as a platform for forwarding their own political cause. A United Nations survey of the political orientation of the participants shows that a disproportionate amount, 68.1 per cent, of British attending the ESF described themselves as from radical left organisations; this compares to 24.9 per cent in Italy and 37.3 per cent in France, where the majority of participants described themselves as left or centre left. Of the British, 78.5 per cent also had some affiliation to political parties; this compared to 30.3 per cent in Italy and 32.1 per cent in France.[68]

The London Social Forum (LSF) started in 2003 after a group of people, including myself, got together after attending the European Social Forum in Florence in 2002 and World Social Forum in Porto Alegre 2003 with the aim of creating a politically diverse space and a space for civil society in London. A meeting was called by Marleis Glasius from the Centre for Civil Society at the London School of Economics and she invited as many civil society organisations and NGOs as she could find.

The LSF was seen as very important by European members of the EPA for two reasons: first, because London is the city that Doreen Massey describes as having invented neo-liberalism[69] and at that time the British were playing a major role in the support for the war in Iraq; and second, because the British left were seen as sectarian – there was not only a larger proportion of participants from Britain from radical left political parties than from other European countries but an intolerance for different left positions. Globalise Resistance (GR), the front organisation for the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), were claiming to represent the British position; both British members of the programme committee were from GR and this directly translated into speakers for the plenary sessions and seminars.

The idea of the LSF was that it would take the principles of the WSF against neo-liberalism and racism, and the forum would attempt to create a space for political diversity. There was much discussion in the first meetings concerning what the social forum is, as those who had not attended Florence or Porto Alegre did not really understand. It was eventually decided that the social forum is a forum – an open meeting space – and we could not call ourselves a forum until we had organised a social forum.

The first LSF took place at the London School of Economics in October 2003, a month before the second ESF in Paris. At this point the LSF could be described to be aiming to create a space of 'the political', in which diverse political positions and organisations could meet. In his reflection 'The First London Social Forum:

What Did We Achieve?', Massimo De Angelis suggests that this was the first meeting in London for more than a decade where a spectrum of movements could meet with the openness towards 'contamination'.[70] He defines 'contamination' as a process in which the 'interchange of ideas begins to develop into corresponding ideas and actions'. There was no voting, no VIP speakers, no rallies, and people were not asked to adopt slogans. He states that all that happened was we talked and talked. This was also the first meeting where difference was not subordinated to a particular priority and therefore there was an equivalence between both struggles and political positions.[71] The participants included civil society organisations, London Greens, NGOs, alternative media, trade unions, philosophers and academics, anarchists, ATTAC UK and the Communist Party of Great Britain. The forum was also endorsed by the attendance of Bernard Cassen from ATTAC France and delegates from the Italian and Greek social forums.

Paris 2003

The Paris ESF took place in November 2003, one month after the first LSF. Paris was completely different to both Florence and Porto Alegre which although in opposite ways, dominated the city. While the city of Porto Alegre opened to the forum and Florence was closed, in Paris, the forum could be seen to be geographically dispersed and marginalised, taking place in Parc de La Villette and three suburbs whose communist mayors supported and provided finance for the ESF, in Bobigney, Ivry-sur-Seine and Saint-Denis. 51,000 people attended the Paris ESF, 1,800 groups, 270 seminars, 260 working groups, 55 plenaries with 1,500 participants at each, but the suburban nature of the forum meant that Paris centre was relatively unaffected.

In 'The Urban Question', an interview with La Société Française in 1989, Henri Lefebvre describes the transformation of Paris. He argues that whereas city centres used to be places of decision-making, the last thirty years have seen a transformation in European cities: 'only a few years ago Paris was virtually abandoned and then reoccupied in an elitist fashion'. He describes Paris city centre as 'museumified' and managerial, in a financial and not political sense, with the centre full of French and foreign tourists who come to look at the museums and recently built buildings. Lefebvre states that the city appears to be lively but he asks the question whether it is 'lively in urbanistic terms'.[72]

The museumification of the centre of Paris that Lefebvre describes appears to have had the effect of pushing politics to the suburbs of Paris, and the 2003 ESF and later the Paris riots in 2005 reflect this. However, the Forum's smallest but most central location, Parc de la Villette, became the central hub of the Paris ESF. The park hosted literally thousands of people in a multiplicity of spaces and activities. The distance between the sites proved logistically difficult to move around. I spent my time between two sites, La Villette and Bobigny. In Bobigny the forum was based in the Mairie and the Jardin de la Mairie where a number of marquees were erected in the gardens. I had been asked to moderate the cities seminar; the speakers included Hilary Wainwright, Cesare Ottelini

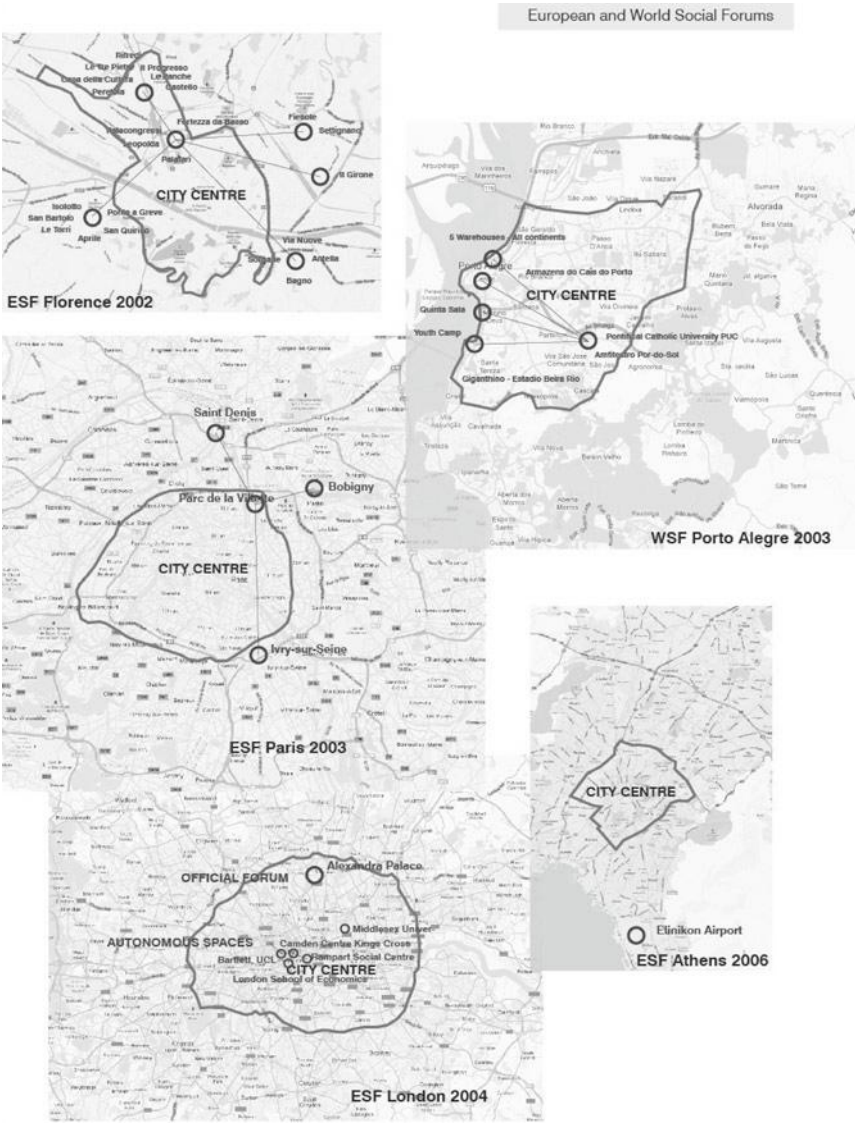

Figure 7.7 European and World Social Forums

from the HIC, Eleni Portaliou from the technical University in Athens – all re-iterating the damaging effects of neo-liberalism on the city both for the public sphere and for democracy. I also attended a workshop of radical theory which started a network called the radical theory forum, a forum that still exists today in the form of an email discussion list, meetings and events, and a trip to La Chapelle to speak at an autonomous event they had organised to coincide with the forum. I spent most of my time in La Villette. The big events were the debate

between Tony Negri and Alex Calinicos, which was so popular that the meeting spread out of the meeting room in the science building to take over one of the follies, and the session 'World Social Forum from Porto Alegre to Mumbai: Dynamics and Ambitions for the Social Forums movement'. Bernard Cassen made a speech about why the movement needs to be transformed into a political movement with a manifesto, political representatives and permanent offices.[73]

The success of the Paris ESF can be partly attributed to architect Bernard Tschumi, who has written extensively on the power of architecture to change society. For Tschumi architecture poses the possibility of constructing the conditions that make it possible for non-hierarchical, non-traditional society to occur within the relationships between spaces and events. Architects cannot, however, design a new definition of society or determine the use of space.

Unlike Florence, which dominated the Italian media, the Paris ESF was marginalised not only in the city but also in the press. One of the major speakers, George Monbiot, asked why journalists have not attended the Paris ESF compared with an event like the Conservative Party conference, where all leave is cancelled for the duration of the event.

> One of the reasons why events like last week's conference are not reported is that they do not exist inside a capsule, so they cannot be easily encapsulated. The forum was a vast, messy, rambling affair, spread out over four distant suburbs and some 300 meetings. There was no leader whose speech could be dissected, no party whose splits could be anatomised, no single manifesto whose implications could be discussed. It was messy and rambling because it reflected the messy and rambling realities of the lives of its participants.[74]

During the Paris ESF, discussions took place among the organising committee to decide the host city of the third ESF, and while the Greek Social Forum had put forward a strong proposal for Athens, a group mainly consisting of the Socialist Workers Party's front organisation, Globalise Resistance, supported by Ken Livingstone's Mayor's office, proposed London. Many in the ESF opposed the ESF forum coming to London, including the newly formed London Social Forum, as we thought that the British movement was sectarian and incapable of understanding political diversity and the London Social Forum needed to develop before it could host a large event.

London 2004

Florence was heralded as a great success; Paris was also a success, although marginalised compared to Florence or Porto Alegre. The London ESF proved to be one of the most difficult forums and this was largely due to the inability of the British OC to operate in the way proposed by the Italian working group as 'open to the different organisations and traditions, willing to take part, that agree with the charter of principles'. For Wainwright the idea of the OC is that different

organisations, with different traditions and capacities, share their skills, resources and ideas, and in the process learn how to work with each other, 'contaminate' each other, and new cultures and perspectives emerge.[75]

The two principal organisers of the London ESF were the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and Socialist Action, a small group of about twelve people acting for the office of the London Mayor Ken Livingstone, the main funder of the London ESF. Socialist Action had supported the Mayor's independent campaign for London mayor and were advisers in his administration.[76] The working methods of the two organisations enabled them to keep a tight hold on the OC and its sub-groups, the logistics and programme groups. This was seen as anti-democratic and created a tension not only within the British movement but on a European level. Dave Timms from the NGO World Development Movement described the process of the London ESF as a play between the OC and the EPA:

> I've been in plenty of meetings where at least a third of those present are SWP members, in various different guises … It's always the same people, and they consistently packed meetings and voted their own people in as chairs, speakers and organisers. Often we would have meetings in the UK which would be stitched up by the SWP. Then we would take it to the EPA and European activists would overturn all of the decisions and complain about the lack of democracy in British activism.[77]

For Wainwright the organisational problems stemmed from the working methods of Socialist Action who work according to a managerial philosophy and have an opposite interpretation of democracy to the participatory democracy of Porto Alegre. She described Socialist Action as 'a group of political managers who had disproportionate power because, although Livingstone was formally a member of the Labour Party, he was not under any live democratic party pressure like the mayors of Florence, Paris and Porto Alegre'.[78]

During the organising process tensions grew, and eventually a split occurred between the SWP–Mayor alliance and the autonomous civil society organisations linked to the London Social Forum. One of the members of the LSF, Massimo De Angelis, defined the differences between the two groups as horizontal and vertical: 'Verticality and horizontality do not define states of being, but *modes of doing*, that is modes of *relating* within *processes* of social production.'[79]

For Della Porta, the tensions between the horizontals and verticals are between different conceptions of democracy and began in Paris when the anarchist networks People's Global Action (PGA)[80] and No-Vox[81] formed autonomous spaces apart from the official forum. The tension was to do with the institutional ways of 'doing politics', or as Nunes describes 'political cultures',[82] and was between the more autonomous libertarian groups, the local social forums and the more structured institutionalised groups such as trade unions and Marxist, Trotskyite groups who were accused of imposing a hierarchical structure to the OC.[83]

Here the different conceptions of democracy produced different ways of practising politics, both in terms of the organisation of the spaces and the way that the sessions were conducted. For the horizontals, participation in the production of the forum was seen as important and the horizontals were concerned with creating a space of discussion through participatory means akin to the beliefs of the forum. Avoiding corporate companies, the horizontals developed proposals for implementation of the forum through the use of local networks which stemmed from the breadth of the skills of the members. For example, as Les Levidow shows, web designers proposed websites to facilitate interaction. Indymedia proposed NOMAD, a low-cost technology to replace the very high cost for the ESF of technology for simultaneous translation. Levidow writes that the production of the official ESF by the GLA staff or Socialist Action on the other hand was a 'managerial and entrepreneurial task'; they managed contacts at the same time as demobilising potential resources.[84]

The official forum rented Alexandra Palace, as the Mayor's limited powers, following the abolition of the Greater London Council (GLC) and continuous privatisations in the 1980s meant that the Greater London Authority (GLA) did not have access to any public space to offer the forum. The organisers contracted an event company to produce the forum and a catering company to supply the food. A black cloth to form the seminar spaces divided the great halls of Alexandra Palace and a series of marquees were placed in the park outside. The capacity was drastically reduced from the previous ESF in Paris. Paul Kingsnorth, who attended the London ESF at Alexandra Palace, wrote: 'The whole event seemed commercial, centrally-organised and strangely antithetical to what much of this movement has always been about. It had, overall, more of the feel of a large trade-fair.'[85]

The verticals saw the democratic assembly as a competitive arena to promote their political positions, concerned with getting big name speakers onto the podiums of the plenary sessions. For ATTAC France, the attitude towards the plenary sessions by the large organisations in London lost its purpose as a space for reflection and debate: 'The plenary sessions are reduced to speeches designed to enhance the organization which fought their way to the podiums.'[86]

This eventual split in London between the London Social Forum and the OC came after many attempts, particularly by the EPA, to reconcile the tensions. A statement by the Italian Working Group shows how the EPA was unable to resolve the conflicts:

> The organizing of the ESF resulted in the opening of the English Organizing Committee to the unions and large coalitions, but it wasn't able to overcome the conflicts and tensions that surfaced during the whole process, in particular the difficult relationships between the political organizations and the unions and grassroots organizations in Great Britain, while an official institutional representation was added under the leadership of the Greater London Authority … As the ESF's Italian Working Group we tried during these months to make a positive contribution. And our experience confirmed that the practice of democratic inclusiveness is a fundamental precondition for the

> movement of movements and must be the essential starting block on the road that will take us to Athens in the spring of 2006.[87]

A document issued by people participating in the UK Local Social Forum Network declared:

> The British process to build for the ESF has been, from the proposal to have it in London onwards, organized without an open, democratic, inclusive process … local social forums had an inadequate part in the official program. Local social forums had to make their own arrangements in the 'alternative' spaces apart from one seminar at Alexandra Palace.[88]

An autonomous forum was organised at the same time as the official ESF; a network called the Autonomous Spaces was formed, based mainly in universities, social centres and community centres. However, unlike the Paris ESF, the costs of setting up networking 'spaces' or venue-finding arrangements were not covered by the London ESF ticket price. So the autonomous forum was made without a budget.

The Autonomous Spaces formed a parallel forum and each of the autonomous spaces in London could be seen to be different threads of the London Social Forum: Radical Theory Forum, started as a workshop in Paris ESF 2003; Urban Forum at the Bartlett, University College London; Beyond the ESF in Middlesex University; Solidarity Village at the London School of Economics, which explored a solidarity economy; and Life Despite Capitalism at Rampart social centre. The Camden Centre in King's Cross was the site for the Communications forum led by Indymedia (see Figure 7.8).

The structure of the autonomous forum was also very different to the official forum. Nunes writes that the groups in London did not work together only to the extent to ensure good communication, they were connected in a loose sense. Nunes defines this structure as a 'hub' – a space with an empty centre that facilitates a 'plugging in'; he also describes the structure of the autonomous spaces as 'manifest architecture':

> The autonomous spaces of the London ESF … are architectural manifestations of an underlying cultural logic of networking … the spaces themselves simply express in their actual functioning practices that are common to those using and/or organising them; these constitute a repertoire of organisational knowledge and practices that do not have to be created anew for these spaces, or looked for elsewhere. This is what I call here 'manifest architecture'.[89]

Taking the position that the success of the forum was based on political diversity and the division into two forums represented a failure, I decided to participate in both events. I joined in the fight for seminars in the official process and managed to win a seminar slot for the cities seminar at Alexandra Palace. I also organised a two-day event as part of the Autonomous spaces with Jane Rendell, Michael Edwards and Doreen Massey.

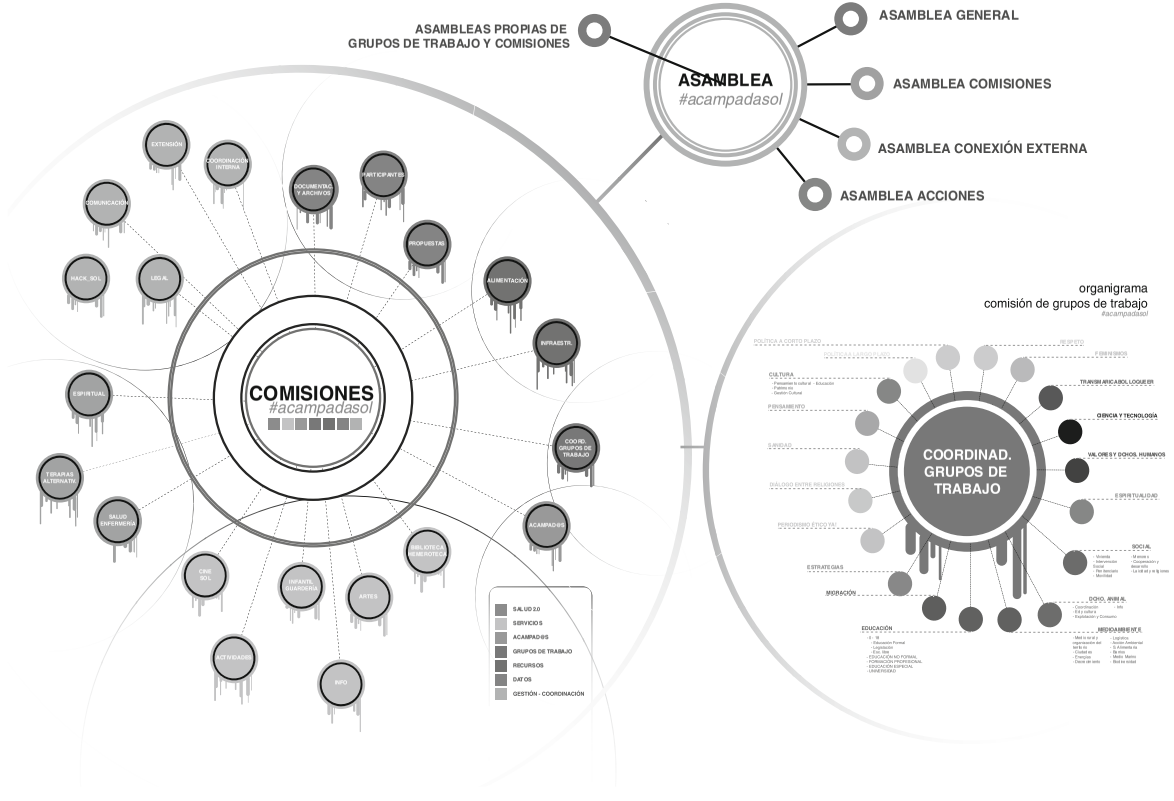

Figure 7.8 Map of Puerta del Sol

The Right to the City urban forum focused on particular issues around the city such as public art and public space; what is a community architectural practice? Michael Edwards invited the network INURA[90] to do a session. The space was influential to the organisation of the following Greek Social Forum whose members started a Right to the City network when they returned to Greece and organised an urban space and an urban theme as part of the Athens ESF in 2006.

The tensions developed into open conflict at the final events of the ESF:activists disrupted the stage and prevented Ken Livingstone from speaking at the final plenary session[91] and arrests were made at the final demonstration. A statement from ATTAC France concluded that:

> London, is ideological drift. Preceding Forums had successfully avoided this but there were expressions of intolerance, exchanges of insults, and pseudo debates without democratic contradiction in London. Responsibility for this lies with some sectarian political groups and religious organisations, as highlighted during the seminars on Iraq or in debates over the French law on religious signs in schools. These drifts threaten the ESF's existence and cannot be allowed to continue.[92]

And from ATTAC Denmark:

> In democratic terms, I will have to say that we failed. And that is serious. We claim to want to create another world, and even that it is possible. But if we can't even create a trustworthy democratic alternative within our own ranks, how can we expect people from outside to trust us to create the conditions for a more democratic world.[93]

The autonomous spaces in London were seen as a positive contribution to the ESF process, and became part of the official forum in Athens 2006 and Malmö 2008, the Urban Forum becoming an Urban Space in both. But there were also many negative outcomes from the process. The movement in the UK was very young and fragile and the effect of the ESF was to disperse the movement.

The autonomous spaces of the London ESF largely came from the different interests of members of the London Social Forum. However the London Social Forum never really re-formed in the same diverse way again. The London Social Forum continued along the lines of the Urban Forum and started to focus on the urban issues and urban spaces in London.

'Whose London', supported by the GLA members from the London Green Party, was held in the basement of City Hall in October 2005. A day-long event allowed action groups, local campaigns, unions, left and green organisations to engage in critical debate and constructive action for a better London. The forum provided an umbrella space for discussions on housing, low pay, transport, Olympics, gender issues, racism, challenges to corporate dominance and the lack of a space where people can come together. City workshops discussed alternatives

to the London Plan, democracy and participatory budgets. One of the issues that started to emerge was around the attempt to reclaim and open City Hall for the purpose of citizens discussion about London. Some members of the LSF opposed the 'Whose London' event. They felt that the forum should be a parallel event and not engage with local authorities, particularly following the experience of the London ESF.

The experience of the ESF in London shows the problems of participation for the social forums when the social infrastructure of cities is eroded. Massey describes how the battle between the new left and the new right was fought within the city in the 1980s. The battle took place over the docklands area in London and the Greater London Council (GLC), and through the miners' strike – she claims that just as the left started to join forces and formulate an alternative future, the left was defeated. The GLC was abolished, coal mines were closed. The global city of London, as we know it today with its centre in the docklands, emerged from this defeat. London became the world's biggest financial and business centre, with 250 foreign banks and 550 foreign companies on the London stock exchange.[94] Wainwright remembers that Thatcher abolished the GLC because of its socialist position. She argues that with this experience in the background, struggles against privatisation today combine a call for reinventing the state with the creation of new forms of democracy:[95]

Paradoxically, the weakness of local government in London became a source of undue local authority control over important aspects of the ESF process. The peculiar politics of London and its relation to national politics is another essential part of any guide to the London ESF.[96]

Athens 2006

The Greek organising committee announced at the first EPA that their main aim was to reduce the mistakes of London and, supported by the EPA, aimed to renew the principles of democracy defined at the first ESF in Florence.

The Athens ESF took place one year after the Greek Olympics on 4–7 May 2006 in the abandoned airport next to the abandoned Olympic village, again on the outskirts of the city. A new airport was built for the Olympics and the old airport was a suitable size for the forum. The Greek OC was unable to find a large enough venue in the centre of Athens.

The main organiser of the ESF was the Greek Social Forum, so this time there was more focus on social movements and less on large organisations, and the OC's policy was to involve as many movements, networks, organisations and individuals as possible.[97] For this they implemented a number of ideas into the ESF process. They abolished plenaries as they were seen as platforms for big name speakers and concentrated instead on focused discussions in the seminars and workshops. The Greek OC decided to give particular attention to the themes and subjects whose roots had developed within the ESF and continued with the autonomous spaces but this time as part of the official forum. The OC decided to organise the forum along similar lines to the autonomous spaces in London. They

decided to organise the forum as a 'social territory', a way of organising space that started in the youth camp of the WSF. The 'social territory' would embody the contents and aims of the ESF linking the political decisions with the cultural practices. The space of the forum would be produced in a participatory way that draws on the skills of the members and does not engage corporate contracts or sponsorship. This meant that only free software was used on the computers, free knowledge, solidarity economy, environmentally friendly building materials for the structures and so on.[98] The entrance fee was low; they also provided a subsidy fund so that 1,000 activists from Turkey and 3,000 from Eastern Europe could attend.[99]

Around 25,000 people attended the Athens ESF and the demonstration at the end attracted 80,000 people. The forum was about the same size as the London ESF and smaller than Florence or Paris.

The next ESF in Malmö 2008 was smaller again, with just 12,000 attending, and held in the suburbs of the city.

The last ESF was in Istanbul in 2010 and was described by *RedPepper* magazine as a social failure.[100] A report by Matyas Benyik from the Hungarian Social Forum states:

> All together only about 2000 people registered at the Istanbul European Social Forum, but half of them were foreigners. In the mass demonstration of 3rd July only 3000–5000 people showed up. With this 'result' the 6th ESF was by far the weakest in the history of ESF's.[101]

Cities in Latin America are far more able to accommodate the forum than European cities. Whereas the city of Porto Alegre opened to the forum, European cities, on the other hand, were hostile, and the ESF was continually marginalised both spatially and through publicity. For this the neo-liberal production of public space and the public realm in European cities can be seen as inadequate and antagonistic towards the forms of participatory democratic practice that the social forums produce. Cities in Latin America are also far more able to respond to the forum: in some Latin American countries such as Bolivia, Venezuela and Brazil, the WSF is coinciding with or following a democratic restructuring on a local level, social programmes favouring the poor, or taking control of key economic sectors. In all the cases I have examined, the social forum is dependent on local mayors for the provision of public space and municipal support. This gives a disproportionate power to the mayor over the forum.

The social forum's success is to provide an assembly that gives citizens the opportunity to re-imagine and practice democracy at a local, continental and global scale. The tensions within the World Social Forum and the European Social Forum, expressed in discussions over the space or movement in the WSF and verticals and horizontals in the ESF, can be seen as tensions between different participatory democratic practices. After more than a decade of practice in both cases a particular physical structure of the forum emerged, responding to the democratic tensions between autonomous, libertarian and communitarian political

positions. This is a centralised programme of seminars and workshops combined with autonomous and themed spaces.

At a political level, I would argue that the European Social Forum had some success. Politicians and national governments, looking for alternatives to neo-liberalism, took some campaigns seriously, for example the Tobin Tax and climate change. However, after the inspiring highs of Florence, the European Social Forum did not take institutional power and the movement was left fragile and vulnerable.[102] This questions whether the concept of the forum as a parallel structure for deliberation, as argued by Glasius, could succeed in Europe as a long-term proposition.[103] The failure of government institutions to connect with participatory forms of politics in Europe calls for a radical rethinking of those institutions and a reintroduction of a social and democratic framework into the public realm of the city.

Occupy

As the social forums found success in some parts of the world but failed to take root in Europe and the United States, another more confrontational movement emerged. The new movement did not attempt to participate in the city but formed an antagonism against the current system. Directly addressing the hegemonic structure of market capitalism, economic disparity and democracy by camping, occupying public space, in the centre of financial districts, rather than negotiating space with sympathetic mayors as we have seen with the social forums; or even renting space as we have seen for the London ESF. Occupy sought out the public spaces of the city, empty places, spaces that had democratic rights or spaces that are ambiguous, negotiable in some way.

Occupy was inspired by the Arab Spring, events in Tunisia and Tahrir Square in Cairo, and the Indignados in Spain, also known as 5/15, who occupied Madrid's central square, Puerta del Sol on 15 May 2011. The Indignados protest was about political corruption, government austerity measures, the economic crisis and high unemployment. Like Tahrir Square, the Indignados camp at Puerta del Sol became a mass space for participatory democracy and the 5/15 movement. Puerta del Sol held the main people's assembly but the movement was organised into local and city-wide assemblies throughout Spain, commissions and working groups[104] (see Figure 7.9). The Indignants engaged in parallel strategies of civil disobedience and education to build the critical mass needed for their movement.

The occupation of Madrid's central square was closely followed by an occupation in Athens in Syntagma Square directly outside the parliament building. The first people's assembly was on 25 May 2011, following more than a year of mass demonstrations and strikes against austerity in Greece.

Syntagma Square was organised into an upper square and a lower square. Protestors occupied the upper square, facing the parliament; the lower square housed the camp and assembly. One protestor, Elias Theodoropoulos, who stayed in Syntagma Square for three months, wrote:

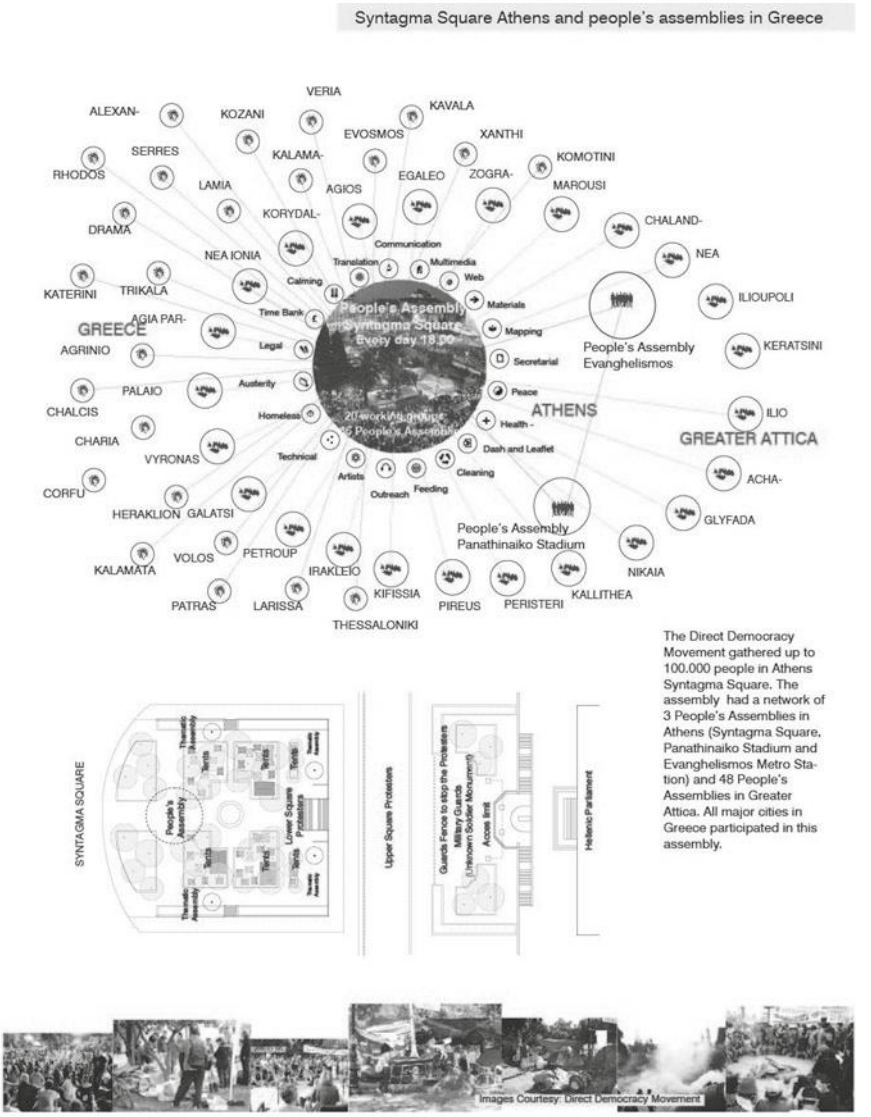

Figure 7.9 Syntagma Square, map by Marinela Pasca

Nowadays, people have no other solution than to do what we did in the occupy movement
For three months the square was ours
Hundreds of people lived in the Square
Mostly the homeless and poor …
We demanded direct democracy …
We got organized
And took our lives back …

We decided all together
And we took actions
We had computers, cameras and microphones
The assembly was live
Livestreaming …
We were sometimes over 3000 people talking
For hours
It was an *Eclesia tou Dimou*
That's what they called it in ancient Athens
All the citizens in a general assembly
Dimou
Democracy
Eclesia
Is the assembly[105]

The assembly in Syntagma Square had a similar structure to Puerta del Sol, being the central focus of a network of people's assemblies, three major assembles in Athens and people's assemblies taking place throughout Greece. Syntagma Square also had a number of working groups, both political and practical to maintain the camp, for example a social kitchen group, a healthcare group and a cleaning group. The cleaning group was responsible for cleaning Syntagma Square after tear gas attacks (see Figure 7.10).

Occupy Wall St started on 17 September 2011 and spread to over 100 cities in the United States and more than 1,500 actions throughout the world. Occupy Wall St states that people came together to protest about the 'blatant injustices of our times perpetuated by economic elites … political disenfranchisement and social and economic injustice … We are daring to imagine a new socio-political and economic alternative that offers greater possibility of equality'.[106] Like Puerta del Sol, Occupy Wall St had a daily general assembly, in which anyone could participate and put forward motions. For the motions to be accepted they needed to be agreed by the general assembly through a process of consensus. A set of principles of solidarity and unity was agreed, and the first principle was engaging in direct and transparent participatory democracy.[107]

Richard Sennett argues that protestors managed to occupy Zuccotti Park or Liberty Plaza (restored to its historic name by protestors) in the heart of New York's financial district because of an ambiguity between public and private.[108] Zuccotti Park is owned and managed by a commercial real estate company but accessible to the public under city law.[109] Following the New York City's 1961 'city's incentive zoning program', developers would receive planning permission to build tall buildings if they provided public space.[110] This meant that the space must be open twenty-four hours per day and seven days per week. Sennett argues that the camp revealed a discrepancy between the buildings' owners and police as to who controls the space and this led to the negotiations, the ambiguous quality necessary for democratic public space.

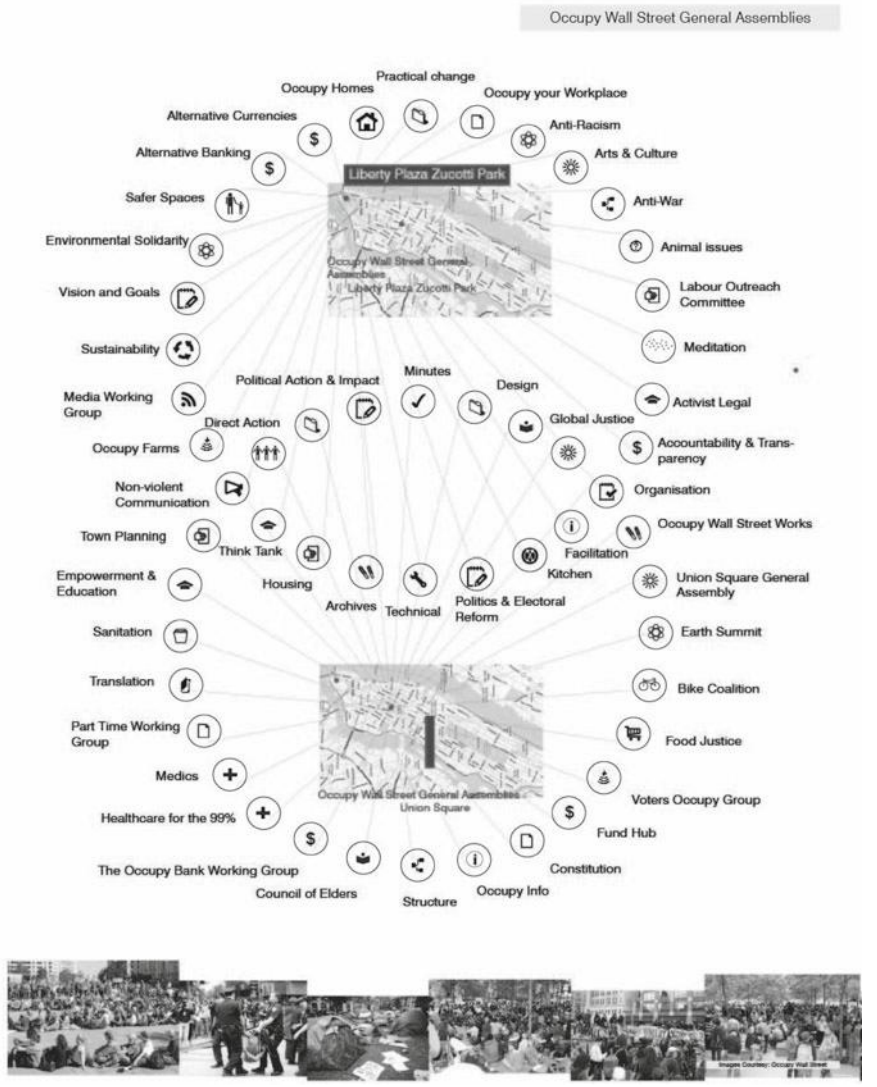

Figure 7.10 Occupy Wall St, map by Marinela Pasca

Occupy London started on 15 October 2011. Protestors originally wanted to occupy the privatised Paternoster Square outside the London Stock Exchange, owned by the Mitsubishi Estate Company, but the square immediately closed to the general public, who were denied access to the space for the duration of the camp. Instead the protestors occupied the adjacent space, one of the few spaces in the City of London where public rights still exist. The camp was based in the space outside St Paul's Cathedral that has the border between the Corporation of London and Church of England land running through the cobbled central part where the tents

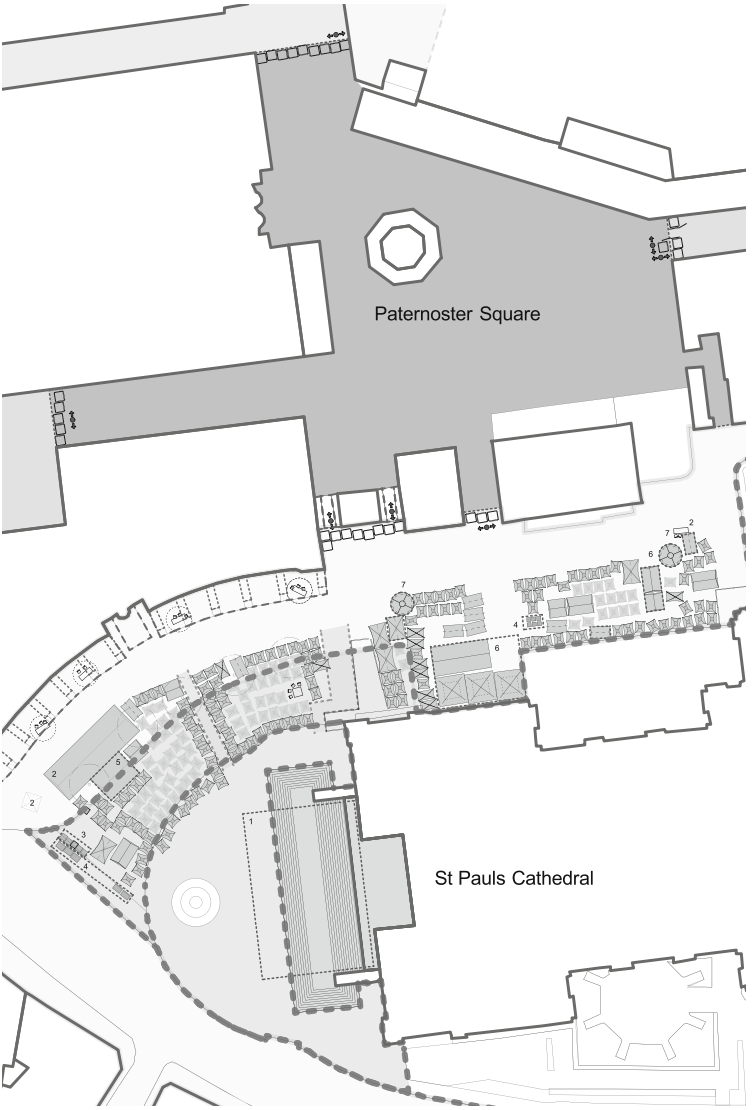

Figure 7.11 Occupy London, map 2, by Carl Fraser

were erected (see Figures 7.11 and 7.12). There was also some uncertainty as to exactly where the border lies. Therefore, in order to evict the camp, negotiations had to take place between the Church of England and the Corporation of London. The Church was divided as to whether to support the camp as evictions would violate a tradition established in the Middle Ages that 'a church should provide sanctuary in the city, offering refuge in cloister gardens for the poor and outcast'.[111]

Occupy London was organised as a village comprising residential areas, an information tent, a kitchen tent and a public toilet area. One of the most

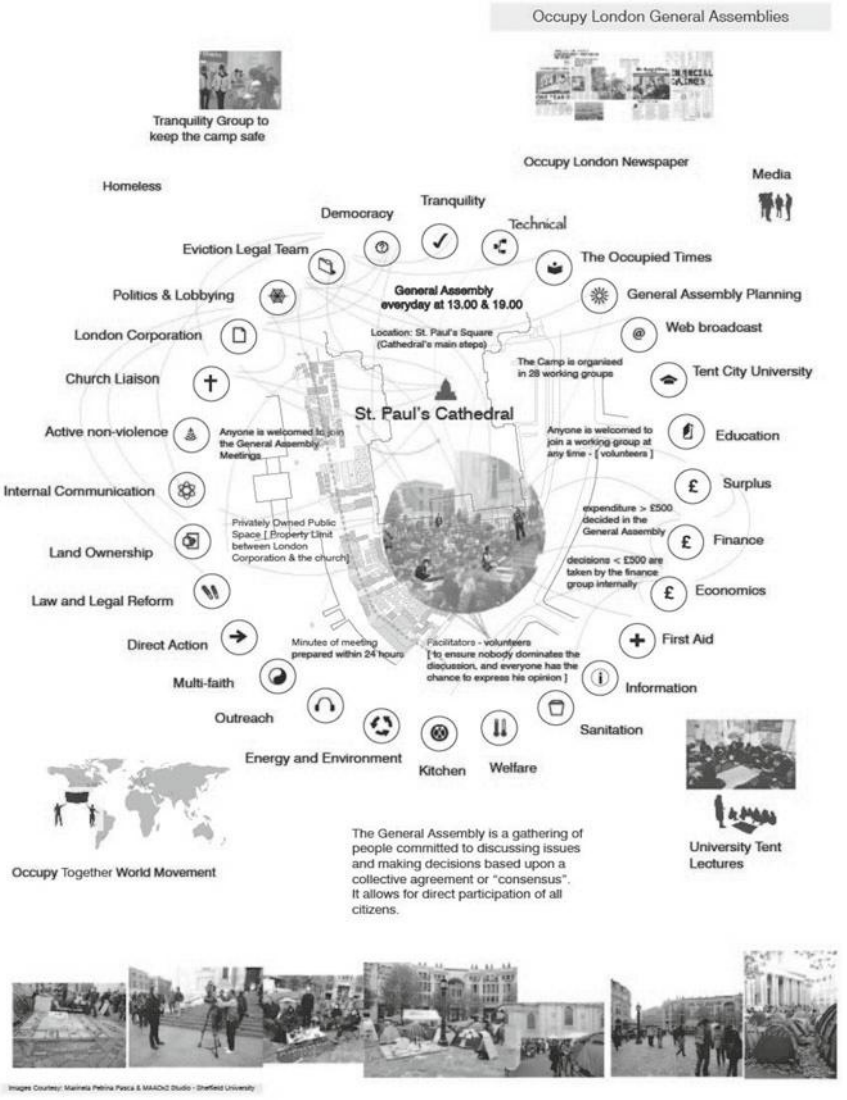

Figure 7.12 Occupy London map 1, by Marinela Pasca

successful aspects of Occupy London was Tent City University, which attracted leading academics on subjects as diverse as international banking, philosophy and the Arab Spring.[112] Talks were live-streamed over the Internet. The university expanded when the protestors occupied another nearby building, which they named the Bank of Ideas. Another big success was *The Occupied Times of London*, a newspaper that started on the Occupy London site at the start of the occupation ,and became an independent newspaper for journalists, writers, activists, and so on.[113] Like the other Occupy sites mentioned in this chapter, Occupy London was

formed of working groups and a general assembly that took place on the steps of St Pauls every day at 6pm.

Occupy created a new type of democratic space of participation, an open space that gave citizens access to organize and engage in democratic practice. However, for Doreen Massey, Occupy's claim that it forms an alternative type of democracy is problematic as she argues that the consensus required in assemblies implies that agreement, rather than different political positions, is necessary for democracy:

> This mode of direct democracy leading to consensus makes one of two assumptions: either it assumes the exclusion of those with whom we could never agree or it assumes – if it is taken to be the *only* form of democracy – that in the end there can be universal consensus. But this implies both the possibility of a full totality and an essentialist immanentism.[114]

Occupy provides a space of deliberation that allows for an alternative voice to emerge. The political occurs between the Occupy camp and its surroundings in the financial centres of cities, around subjects like international banking, economics and the use of public space. Without methods for making agreements, Occupy becomes a cacophony of voices.

Richard Sennett argues that it was only due to an ambiguity in ownership or management of public space that Occupy London and Occupy Wall St managed to find sites at all. For Anna Minton, in late capitalist neo-liberal cities, 'Political protest is banned in the vast majority of the City's public places', and democratic practice is therefore not a right. This calls for a re-thinking of public space and democracy.

Notes

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Conclusion

The empty place

Public space is intertwined with the democratic structure of society in a complex dialectic. First, democratic relations produce public space, and I have shown throughout this research that the democratic relations (and therefore the spaces we inhabit as citizens) are radically different depending on the prevailing power structures and models of democracy. Second, public space produces democratic relations as public space is where citizenship is acted out, either in the liberal representative sense, as a set of rights, or in a participatory sense as an active citizen; but these are very different, and the latter offers a multitude of possibilities for the politicisation of space and the spatialisation of politics.

Through this research I have found that there is a lack of a clear definition of the role of public space in democracy in the democratic and urban fields, and this leaves public space vulnerable, open to privatisations and de-politicisations. An example of this is the proposal to privatise the market spaces in London and the campaign to save Queen's Market. The New Labour leaders of Newham Council thought that the private investment benefits from a transfer of Queens Market to the private sector would outweigh the benefits to the community of an associational democratic space, run through negotiations between market associations and the local council.[1] The London Social Forum became involved in the campaigns to save the market spaces in London from privatisation, but found that it was difficult to contest the privatisation plans on the grounds of democracy.

In the twenty-first century we are experiencing a unique moment for democracy, influenced by circumstances of globalisation, new forms of communication such as the Internet, political thinking and activism. New and participatory democratic practices are rising up throughout the world, transforming public space and resulting in the need to reformulate both democracy and public space. I have argued that there are multiple models of democracy and therefore multiple types of public space, varying in democraticness. However, I have also found that there is one common theme that defines democratic public space from spaces of identity and that is the theory of the empty place.

Artist Krzysztof Wodiczko argues that 'democracy is founded on public space that should be, essentially empty'.[2] Here Wodiczko is referring to Claude Lefort's theory of 'the empty place'. Lefort maintains that in order to have democracy, the site of power must be empty.[3] He argues that modern democracy is by nature

indeterminate; it differs from other forms of organisation, such as monarchy, as it abolishes an external image of power: 'power is not identified with any one body but is linked to the image of the empty place'. He states that the empty place is 'impossible to occupy so that those who exercise public authority can never claim to appropriate it'.[4]

Rosalyn Deutsche links Lefort's theory to physical public space.[5] For Lefort democracy holds a contradiction. He states: 'on the one hand power emanates from the people and on the other hand it is the power of nobody'.[6] Deutsche argues that the lack of an external image created by the intervention of democracy in society, discussed by Lefort, produces public space. She states that 'public space is the social space where in the absence of meaning and unity, social space is negotiated … it is the unknowability of the social that generates public space.'[7] Democracy therefore concerns future possibilities, indeterminate and un-finished, and the empty place is the site of power.

As I found in the study of the open spaces in Regent's Park Estate, the empty place is not literally empty as in a void space. For Ernesto Laclau, in order to have democracy we need particular forces which occupy the empty place of power but do not identify with it: 'democracy requires the constant recreation of the gap between the empty place of power and the transient forces occupying it'.[8] Laclau states that Lefort's argument that the place of power is empty should be supplemented with the concept that 'democracy requires the constant and active production of that emptiness'.[9] In my understanding, the empty place, as a democratic public space, is produced by multiple subject positions and can be appropriated but not dominated, a space for the political, conflict and passion, for politics and association and for public discourse.[10] Democracy inhabits 'the political', open, plural and composed of differentiated spheres of activity, rather than inhabiting 'politics', which argues for one political position.[11]

My research into the practice of participatory democracy in the conception and planning of social space reveals that participatory local governance produces a particularly high quality of open public space. In Porto Alegre, as in ancient Athens, the re-building of the city was a participatory practice and planning decisions involved mass public meetings. This is illustrated by the United Nations' description of Porto Alegre as 'the most liveable city in Latin America', with the highest standard of living of any Brazilian city,[12] and Mary Beard's comment that the Parthenon was 'the triumph of the citizens' assembly'.[13]

In contrast to this, the conception and planning of Regent's Park Estate can be understood through Giancarlo de Carlo's criticism of post-war architectural practice and the conference of CIAM. De Carlo critiques the modern movement in terms of participation and argues that the intentions of the modern movement were good, but the elitist architectural process had the effect of suppressing difference, and resolving architecture and planning to universal values.[14] In this case, these decisions led to a quality of void (absence of subject positions) and antagonistic public space.

However, the work of West Euston Partnership in building a democratic framework within the estate based on projects centred around the antagonistic

relations of young people shows how democracy can enter public space through use, or in Jane Rendell's words 'critical spatial practice'.[15] Art, image and performance played a key role in making cultural connections to the built environment and opening a space of participation. These projects started to develop an architectural practice based on action in public space that influenced the re-building of the Samuel Lithgow Youth Club and architectural developments in the surrounding area, connecting Regent's Park Estate to the wider community. Here critical spatial practice opened a space for participation in the conception of future buildings.

In this book I have argued that participation is necessary for a spatialisation of democratic practice, the construction of political identity and for a politicisation of public space. However, I have found that democratic public space is better understood as the empty place (constructed by differentiated areas of the social) and the relationship of participatory democracy to Lefort's empty place is not straightforward. Miessen shows that participation can often describe pseudo forms of democracy, both in communist and in liberal states, participation is proposed by existing power structures rather than hegemonically constructed.[16] Lefort uses the empty place to define democracy and in order to critique what he sees as totalising forms of society such as communism and fascism. Lefort argues that in communist states the participatory practice of democratic centralism was in fact totalitarian. Participation was presented by the Communist Party as the expression of social power, but because the Communist Party was the only party, power was constructed without a discursive outside. It was not possible to replace the party through elections as in representative democracy, power becomes 'concretised' and this fills the empty place.[17] This critique of participation can sometimes be seen to be the case in the social forums, for example, the Organising Committee (OC) of the World Social Forum (WSF) in Brazil is mostly composed of the non-elected Brazilian founders of the WSF. The empty place of democracy comes with the transient nature of the WSF; as it moves the OC changes. For me, therefore, it is important not to think that participation can replace representative democracy, as the act of electing and replacing seats of power maintains the empty place. For Laclau, 'democracy can only flourish in a hegemonically constructed space … democracy requires representation as representation is constitutive of the hegemonic relations necessary to maintain the indeterminacy required for the empty place'.[18] But it is also important to think beyond representative democracy. Lefort also argues that liberalised globalisation is a totalising utopian force in the world today.[19]

Therefore in order for democracy to be spatial and for power not to become 'concretised' or embedded, democracy requires a coexistence of different democratic forms, both representative and participatory. Participation is central to politicisation of public space, as it is through active citizenship that public space becomes democratic, but representation is necessary to prevent power becoming embedded or concretised and to maintain the image of the empty place. The empty place as a public space therefore occupies the space between democratic positions like liberal democracy and participatory democracy. I have found that Chantal

Mouffe's model of agonistic democracy is closest to a democratic model of public space as this model puts 'the political' or difference at the centre. For Mouffe, liberal democracy is just one position in an agonistic model of democracy that also includes other views.[20]

In developing a design methodology for architectural practice in the production of democratic public space, I discussed the practice-led methodologies of architects, planners, designers and artists. The architect cannot create democratic space through formal design with representational methods alone. Instead, in this book I have developed a bottom-up design methodology, which focuses on 'the political' by engaging and participating with the different spheres of activity, points of contestation and differences present in each of the projects through which my design research operated.

A problem for the architect in adopting a bottom-up approach in the design of public space is that the client, who may want a particular outcome, engages the architect. For Lefebvre, the neo-capitalist system is dynamic and highly expansionary. While this is always contested, and although the production of space is carried out through state intervention, the state acts in accordance with capital.[21] Democracy enters space through social relations, resistances and alternative visions and the architect risks eliminating democracy if he/she takes a position on the side of the dominant partner, for example a client or the state.

In each of the projects I attempted to take an in-between position rather than one of a particular political affiliation.

In Chapter 5, Regent's Park Estate, the public spaces were dominated by two groups of young men gang-fighting. While we worked with each group equally, the project also involved identifying and imagining ways of working with groups not present on the open spaces of the estate and I made a particular effort to include young women in the projects.

In Chapter 6, the projects organised by *taking place* in architecture schools created a public space of discourse through the feminist appropriation of a traditionally male-dominated space. But I found that in Homerton Hospital and the delivery room, the point of contestation was around the role of fathers in childbirth, and the project became about bringing the father's voice into a predominately female space. This caused some controversy within the *taking place* group as some of the members believed that a feminist position should defend a predominately female space.

In Chapter 7, for the first London Social Forum in 2003 the organising group made a particular effort to invite groups of different political affiliation, for example anarchist, socialist, liberal and so on, and this created a vibrant democratic space. But during the European Social Forum (ESF) in London in 2004 there was a split arising from a tension between the more autonomous and more organised and traditional socialist visions of democratic practice. The split ended with two separate forums: the official forum and a set of self-organised autonomous spaces. Most people took a position on one side or the other, but I organised events in both an urban forum as an autonomous space and the cities seminar in the main forum at Alexandra Palace.

Democracy can enter public space in a multitude of ways, in its conception and planning, or its use and practice, through contaminations or disruptions. They also show how the conception and use of spaces are connected and dialectical.

The social forum movement provides a structure for participatory democracy, which connects forums worldwide into a democratic framework, and allows for participation by civil society groups and individuals on issues from a global to the most local scale. However, the accessibility of public space for social forums and participatory democratic practices varies enormously in different cities. The forum's ability to plug in or not depends on the democratic framework of the city. This can be seen with the example of the WSF and the ESF. The idea for the WSF came largely from Europe but the city of Porto Alegre offered the conditions for the mass meeting when the city opened to the first WSF in 2001. This contrasts with the first ESF in Florence in 2002, when the city closed and shops were boarded up. Paris ESF took place mainly in the suburbs in 2003, and for the London ESF in 2004 the Greater London Authority did not have any space to offer the forum. The opposite studies of Porto Alegre and London show the importance of democratic infrastructure for the public sphere. In Porto Alegre, participation in the production of public space led to a democratic city infrastructure which provided the spatial relations for the spatial manifestation of rising global participatory practises of democracy. In contrast, in European cities and New York we have seen the rise of the Occupy movement which occupies ambiguous space rather than participating in the city.

The next conclusion I want to put forward concerns universal or differentiated identity and its relationship to public space. Doreen Massey argues that identities/entities are spatially constituted.[22] In all three of the spatial practices I have examined, the construction of identity is central, and identities develop out of the practices. This can be seen with the tension between the autonomous and organised positions in the social forum or with the project work of West Euston where group identities were constructed through filmmaking and montage, but particularly from feminist practice where there has been a continuous and sustained body of work by feminist architects and artists which focuses on public space and women's place within the public realm.

Chapter 6 'Taking the empty place' describes shifts in practice that I argue are from equality (for example campaigns around crèches) to representation,(which involved architect–artist collaborations) to participation, and *taking place*, which involved appropriation of space through performance. The latter two shifts challenge a universal notion of public space, putting forward diverse alternatives and at the same time start to develop and discuss female identity within architecture.

Thinking of democracy in terms of models has proved very useful in democracy and this is also the case with understanding public space. If we are to think beyond the neo-liberal model of democracy then one must imagine alternatives to the consumer spaces neo-liberalism produces. The social forum shows us that in participatory democracy, activities and discussions take place simultaneously and different models of democracy can coexist. This follows: Massey's argument that a spatialisation of political thinking is the recognition of

simultaneous coexistence. Multiplicity depends on recognition of space.[23] If we combine Massey's argument with Mouffe's model for agonistic democracy, the space between different conceptions of democracy and citizenship,[24] and Laclau and Mouffe's call for a multiplication of democratic spaces,[25] the city opens to a multiplicity of new spaces.

Throughout the work, I have described a number of models of public space, and identified and focused in particular on two models, both of which have formed a major critique of Western democracy in political philosophy, discussed in Chapter 2. The agonistic and the associational models are particularly important for spatial democracy as they produce spaces for the expression of conflict and reflection and deliberation on society. There are also many other models, including the community model being developed in La Chapelle by aaa in Paris. I have described an indeterminate and universal model with the example of Tschumi's Parc de la Villette, also in Paris. We have seen spaces expressing different concepts of democracy within the social forums, where the tension between the organised groups and the more anarchist groups, or the concept of the social forum as a 'movement' or a 'space', has led to the formation of the central forum and the autonomous spaces. If democracy is thought of spatially then different models can coexist.

This research has focused on participatory democracy and public space, but, as Hilary Wainwright shows in her description of the WSF, while the WSF has become established in the city, this is not the case in global power.[26] The challenge now for global democracy is to connect the spatial practices of democracy with global institutions. Likewise in Regent's Park Estate, the head of West Euston Partnership, Helen Sevilla Peacock, commented that the project work on the estate had produced a participatory framework, which was being undermined by the relationship with Camden Council.[27] Proposals emerging from Regent's Park Estate would find a wall of bureaucracy where none of the council officials were empowered to act, and proposals like the youth shelter project described in Chapter 4 were abandoned. This shows us that representative institutions are not open to participatory practices of democracy and calls for a radical reform to representative institutions to create formal spaces of discourse between civil society and governance to form participatory spaces of action.

Notes

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Appendix A

World Charter for the Right to the City

Social Forum of the Americas – Quito – July 2004
World Urban Forum – Barcelona – October 2004
World Social Forum – Porto Alegre – January 2005
Revision in preparation for Barcelona – September 2005

Preamble

The new millennium dawned with half of the world's population living in cities, and experts forecast that by 2050 the world's urbanization rate will reach 65%. Cities are potentially territories with vast economic, environmental, political and cultural wealth and diversity. The urban way of life influences the way in which we link with our fellow human beings and with the territory.

However, contrary to these potentials, the development models implemented in the majority of impoverished countries are characterized by the tendency to concentrate income and power, generating poverty and exclusion, contributing to environmental degradation, and accelerating migration and urbanization processes, social and spatial segregation, and privatization of common goods and public spaces. These processes favor proliferation of vast urban areas marked by poverty, precarious conditions, and vulnerability to natural disasters.

Today's cities are far from offering equitable conditions and opportunities to their inhabitants. The majority of the urban population is deprived or limited – in virtue of their economic, social, cultural, ethnic, gender or age characteristics – in the satisfaction of their most elemental needs and rights. Public policies that contribute to this by ignoring the contributions of the popular inhabiting processes to the construction of the city and citizenship, are only detrimental to urban life. The grave consequences of this situation include massive evictions, segregation, and resulting deterioration of social coexistence.

This context favors the emergence of urban struggles that remain fragmented and incapable of producing transcendental changes in the current development model, despite their social and political importance.

In the face of this reality, and the need to counter its trends, urban organizations and movements linking together since the First World Social Forum (2001) have discussed and assumed the challenge to build a sustainable model of society and

urban life, based on the principles of solidarity, freedom, equity, dignity, and social justice, and founded in respect for different urban cultures and balance between the urban and the rural. Since then, an integrated group of popular movements, nongovernmental organizations, professional associations, forums, and national and international civil society networks, committed to the social struggles for just, democratic, humane and sustainable cities, has worked to build a World Charter for the Right to the City. The Charter aims to gather the commitments and measures that must be assumed by civil society, local and national governments, members of parliament, and international organizations, so that all people may live with dignity in our cities.

The Right to the City broadens the traditional focus on improvement of peoples' quality of life based on housing and the neighborhood, to encompass quality of life at the scale of the city and its rural surroundings, as a mechanism of protection of the population that lives in cities or regions with rapid urbanization processes. This implies initiating a new way of promotion, respect, defense and fulfillment of the civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights guaranteed in regional and international human rights instruments.

In the city and its rural surroundings, the correlation between these rights and their necessary counterpart of duties can be demanded in accordance with the different responsibilities and socio-economic conditions of its inhabitants, as a form of promotion of: just distribution of the benefits and responsibilities resulting from the urbanization process; fulfillment of the social functions of the city and of property; distribution of urban income; and democratization of access to land and public services for all citizens, especially those with less economic resources and in situations of vulnerability.

For its origin and social meaning, the World Charter for the Right to the City is, above all, an instrument oriented to strengthen urban processes, vindications, and struggles. We call on the Charter to be constituted as a platform capable of linking the efforts of all those actors – public, social and private – interested in allocating full validity and effectiveness to this new human right through its promotion, legal recognition, implementation, regulation, and placement in practice.

Part I – General Provisions

Article I. The right to the city

1. All persons have the Right to the City free of discrimination based on gender, age, health status, income, nationality, ethnicity, migratory condition, or political, religious or sexual orientation, and to preserve cultural memory and identity in conformity with the principles and norms established in this Charter.

2. The Right to the City is defined as the equitable usufruct of cities within the principles of sustainability, democracy, equity, and social justice. It is the collective right of the inhabitants of cities, in particular of the vulnerable and marginalized groups, that confers upon them legitimacy of action and organization, based on

their uses and customs, with the objective to achieve full exercise of the right to free self-determination and an adequate standard of living. The Right to the City is interdependent of all internationally recognized and integrally conceived human rights, and therefore includes all the civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights which are already regulated in the international human rights treaties.

This assumes the inclusion of the rights to work in equitable and satisfactory conditions; to establish and affiliate with unions; to social security, public health, clean drinking water, energy, public transportation, and other social services; to food, clothing, and adequate shelter; to quality public education and to culture; to information, political participation, peaceful coexistence, and access to justice; and the right to organize, gather, and manifest one's opinion. It also includes respect for minorities; ethnic, racial, sexual and cultural plurality; and respect for migrants.

Urban territories and their rural surroundings are also spaces and locations of the exercise and fulfillment of collective rights as a way of assuring equitable, universal, just, democratic, and sustainable distribution and enjoyment of the resources, wealth, services, goods, and opportunities that cities offer. The Right to the City therefore also includes the right to development, to a healthy environment, to the enjoyment and preservation of natural resources, to participation in urban planning and management, and to historical and cultural heritage.

3. The city is a culturally rich and diversified collective space that pertains to all of its inhabitants.

4. For the effects of this Charter, the meaning of the concept of city is two-fold. For its physical character, the city is every metropolis, village, or town that is institutionally organized as local governmental unit with municipal or metropolitan character. It includes the urban space as well as the rural or semi-rural surroundings that form part of its territory. As public space, the city is the whole of institutions and actors who intervene in its management, such as governmental authorities, legislative and judicial bodies, institutionalized social participation entities, social movements and organizations, and the community in general.

5. For the effects of this Charter, all the persons who inhabit a city, whether permanently or transitionally, are considered its citizens.

6. Cities, in co-responsibility with national authorities, should adopt all necessary measures – to the maximum allowed by the resources available to them – to progressively achieve, by all appropriate means and with the adoption of legislative and regulatory measures, the full realization of economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights. Furthermore, cities in accordance with their legal framework and the international treaties, should dictate legislative or other appropriate provisions so they fully reflect the civil and political rights gathered in this Charter.

Article II. Principles and strategic foundations of the right to the city

1. Full exercise of citizenship and democratic managment of the city:

1.1. Cities should constitute an environment of full realization of all human rights and fundamental liberties, assuring the dignity and collective well-being of all persons, in conditions of equality, equity, and justice. All persons have the right to find in the city the necessary conditions for their political, economic, cultural, social, and ecological realization, assuming the duty of solidarity.

1.2. All persons have the right to participate through direct and representative forms in the elaboration, definition, implementation, and fiscal distribution and management of public policies and municipal budgets, in order to strengthen the transparency, effectiveness, and autonomy of local public administrations and of popular organizations.

2. Social function of the city and of urban property:

2.1. As its primary purpose, the city should exercise a social function, guaranteeing for all its inhabitants full usufruct of the resources offered by the city. In other words, the city must assume the realization of projects and investments to the benefit of the urban community as a whole, within criteria of distributive equity, economic complementarity, respect for culture, and ecological sustainability, to guarantee the well-being of all its inhabitants, in harmony with nature, for the present and for future generations.

2.2. The public and private spaces and goods of the city and its citizens should be used prioritizing social, cultural, and environmental interests. All the citizens have the right to participate in the ownership of the urban territory within democratic parameters, with social justice and within sustainable environmental conditions. The formulation and implementation of public policies should promote socially just and environmentally balanced uses of urban space and soil, in conditions of security and gender equity.

2.3. Cities should promulgate adequate legislation and establish mechanisms and sanctions designed to guarantee full advantage of urban soil and public and private properties which are deserted, unused, underused, or unoccupied, for fulfillment of the social function of property.

2.4. In the formulation and implementation of urban policies, the collective social and cultural interest should prevail above individual property rights and speculative interests.

2.5. Cities should inhibit real estate speculation through adoption of urban norms for just distribution of the burdens and benefits generated by the urbanization process, and the adaptation of economic, tributary, financial, and public expenditure policy

instruments to the objectives of equitable and sustainable urban development. The extraordinary income (appreciation) generated by public investment – currently captured by real estate and private sector businesses – should be redirected in favor of social programs that guarantee the right to housing and a dignified life for the sectors living in precarious conditions and risk situations.

3. Equality, no-discrimination:

3.1. The rights enounced in this Charter should be guaranteed for all the persons who inhabit cities, either permanently or temporarily, with no discrimination of any kind.

3.2 Cities should assume commitments acquired in regard to implementation of public policies that guarantee equal opportunities for women in cities, expressed in the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and in the Environment (Rio de Janeiro 1992), Women's (Beijing 1995), and Habitat II (Istanbul 1996) Conferences, among others. The necessary resources should be allocated from governmental budgets to assure the effectiveness of said policies, and the necessary mechanisms and quantitative and qualitative indicators should be established to monitor their fulfillment over time.

4. Special protection of groups and persons in vulnerable situations

4.1. Groups and persons in vulnerable situations have the right to special measures for protection and integration, resource distribution, access to essential services, and protection from discrimination. For the effects of this Charter, the following groups are considered vulnerable: persons or groups living in poverty or situations of environmental risk (threatened by natural disasters), victims of violence, persons with disabilities, forced migrants (displaced), refugees, and all groups living in disadvantaged situations with respect to the rest of the inhabitants, in accordance with each city's reality. In turn, priority attention should be addressed within these groups to the elderly, women (in particular female household heads), and children.

4.2. Cities, through affirmative action policies in favor of the vulnerable groups, should suppress the political, economic, social, and cultural obstacles that limit the freedom, equity, and equality of citizens and impede the full development of the person and his or her effective political, economic, social, and cultural participation in the city.

5. Social commitment of the private sector:

Cities should promote the participation of private sector agents in social programs and economic endeavors with the purpose to develop solidarity and full equality among inhabitants, in accordance with the guiding principles established in this Charter.

6. Promotion of the solidary economy and progressive taxation policies:

Cities should promote and value the political and economic conditions necessary to guarantee social-solidarity economic programs and progressive taxation systems that assure just distribution of the resources and funds necessary for implementation of social policies.

Part II. Rights Relative to the Exercise of Citizenship and to Participation in the Planning, Production and Management of the City

Article III. Planning and management of the city

1. Cities should open institutionalized forms and spaces for broad, direct, equitable and democratic participation by male and female citizens in the processes of planning, elaboration, approval, management and evaluation of public policies and budgets. Guarantees should be in place for the operation of collegiate bodies, audiences, conferences, and public consultations and debates, and to allow and recognize popular initiative processes in legislative proposals and urban development planning.

2. In conformance with the fundamental principles of their legal organization, cities should formulate and apply coordinated and effective policies against corruption; in promotion of the participation of society; and that reflect the principles of the force of law, dutiful management of public affairs and goods, integrity, transparency, and accountability.

3. To safeguard the principle of transparency, cities should organize their administrative structures in a way that guarantees the effective responsibility of their functionaries vis-à-vis their citizens, as well as the responsibility of the municipal administration in its relations with other levels of government and regional and international human rights bodies and entities.

Article IV. Social production of habitat

Cities should establish institutional mechanisms and develop the necessary legal, financial, administrative, programmatic, fiscal, technological, and training instruments to support the diverse modalities of social production of habitat and housing, with special emphasis on self-managed processes, whether they be individual, family, or organized collective efforts.

Article V. Equitable and sustainable urban development

1. Cities should develop urban-environmental planning, regulation, and management that guarantees equilibrium between urban development and protection of natural, historic, architectural, cultural and artistic heritage; that

impedes segregation and territorial exclusion; that prioritizes social production of habitat, and that guarantees the social function of the city and property. For that purpose, cities should adopt measures that foster an integrated and equitable city.

2. City planning and the sectoral programs and projects should integrate the theme of urban security as an attribute of the public space.

Article VI. Right to public information

1. All persons have the right to solicit and receive complete, reliable, adequate and timely information in relation to the administrative and financial activity of any entity pertaining to city administration, the legislative and judicial branches, and the businesses and private or mixed societies that deliver public services.

2. The respective governmental or private sector functionaries should produce the information required of their area of competence within a minimum time period if they do not have the information at the moment of the request. The only limit on access to public information is respect for the right of individuals to privacy.

3. Cities should guarantee mechanisms so that all persons have access to effective and transparent public information. For that purpose, actions should be developed to promote access for all population sectors to the new information technologies, their use, and their periodic up-dating.

4. All persons or organized groups, and especially those who self-produce their housing and other habitat components, have the right to obtain information on the availability and location of adequate land, housing programs developed in the city, and support instruments available.

Article VII. Freedom and integrity

All persons have the right to freedom and integrity, both physical and spiritual. Cities should commit to establish protection guarantees that assure that these rights are not violated by individuals or institutions of any nature.

Article VIII. Political participation

1. All citizens have the right to participate in local political life through the free and democratic election of their local representatives, as well as in all the decisions that affect local policies of urban planning, production, renovation, improvement, and management.

2. Cities should guarantee the right to free and democratic election of local representatives, the realization of plebiscites and popular legislative initiatives, and equitable access to public debates and audiences on issues relevant to the city.

3. Cities should implement affirmative action policies for the representation and political participation of women and minorities in all local elective posts and positions responsible for the city's public policy, budget, and program definition.

Article IX. Right to associate, gather, manifest, and to democratic use of urban public space

All persons have the right to associate, meet, and manifest themselves. Cities should provide and guarantee public spaces for this effect.

Article X. Right to justice

1. Cities should adopt measures designed to improve the access of all persons to the law and to justice.

2. Cities should foment the resolution of civil, penal, administrative, and labor conflicts through implementation of public mechanisms of conciliation, transaction, mediation, and arbitration.

3. Cities should guarantee access to justice services, establishing special policies in favor of the vulnerable population groups, and strengthening free public defense systems.

Article XI. Right to public security and peaceful, solidary and multicultural coexistence

1. Cities should create conditions for public security, peaceful coexistence, collective development, and the exercise of solidarity. For that they should guarantee the full usufruct of the city, respecting diversity and preserving the cultural memory and identity of all citizens free of discrimination of any kind.

2. The primary missions of the security forces include respect for and protection of the rights of citizens. Cities should guarantee that the security forces under their jurisdiction apply the use of force strictly within the previsions of the law and with democratic control.

3. Cities should guarantee the participation of all their citizens in the control and evaluation of the security forces.

Part III. Rights to Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Development of the City

Article XII. Right to water and to access and supply of domestic and urban public services

1. Cities should guarantee for all their citizens permanent access to public services of potable water, sanitation, waste removal, energy and telecommunications services, and facilities for health care, education, basic-goods supply, and recreation, in co-responsibility with other public or private bodies, in accordance with the legal framework established in international rights and by each country.

2. In regard to public services, cities should guarantee accessible social fees and adequate service for all persons including vulnerable persons or groups and the unemployed – even in the case of privatization of public services predating adoption of this Charter.

3. Cities should commit to guarantee that public services depend on the administrative level closest to the population, with citizen participation in their management and fiscal oversight. These services should remain under a legal regimen as public goods, impeding their privatization.

4. Cities should establish systems of social control over the quality of the services provided by public or private entities, in particular relative to quality control, cost determination, and attention to the public.

Article XIII. Right to public transportation and urban mobility

1. Cities should guarantee for all persons the right to mobility and circulation in the city, in accordance with an urban and interurban circulation plan and through an accessible public transportation system, provided at a reasonable cost and adequate for different environmental and social needs (gender, age, capacity, etc.).

2. Cities should stimulate use of non-polluting vehicles and establish areas reserved for foot traffic, permanently or during certain times of the day.

3. Cities should promote removal of architectural barriers, installation of the necessary facilities in the mobility and circulation system, and adaptation of all public or public-use buildings and work and leisure facilities to guarantee access for persons with disabilities.

Article XIV. Right to housing

1. Cities, within the framework of the respective competences, should adopt measures to guarantee for all citizens that housing expenses be accessible in accordance with incomes, that it fulfill adequate living conditions, that it be

adequately located, and that it adapt to the cultural and ethnic characteristics of those who inhabit it.

2. Cities should facilitate adequate housing supply and urban facilities for all citizens and establish subsidy and finance programs for land and housing acquisition, tenure regularization, and improvement of precarious neighborhoods and informal settlements.

3. Cities should guarantee priority for vulnerable groups in housing laws, policies, and programs, and assure finance and services specifically designated for children and the elderly.

4. Cities should include women in the possession and ownership documents issued and registered, regardless of their civil status, in all public policies developed related to land and housing distribution and titles.

5. Cities should promote the installation of shelters and social rental housing for female victims of domestic violence.

6. All homeless citizens, individually, as couples, or as family groups, have the right to demand of the authorities effective implementation of their right to adequate housing in a progressive manner and through application of all available resources. Shelters and bed-and-breakfast facilities may be adopted as provisional emergency measures, without obviating the obligation to provide definitive housing solutions.

7. All persons have the right to security of housing tenure through legal instruments that guarantee it, and the right to protection from eviction, expropriation, or forced or arbitrary displacement. Cities should protect tenants from profiteering and from arbitrary evictions, regulating housing rents in accordance with General Comment No. 7 of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

8. Cities should recognize as direct interlocutors the social organizations and movements that defend and work to fulfill the rights linked to the right to housing contained in this Charter. Very special attention, promotion and support should be directed to organizations of vulnerable and excluded persons, guaranteeing in all cases preservation of their autonomy.

9. This article is applicable to all persons, including families, groups, untitled occupants, the homeless, and those persons or groups whose housing circumstances vary, including in particular nomads, travelers, and romanies.

Article XV. Right to work

1. Cities, in co-responsibility with national authorities, should contribute, to the degree of their possibilities, to the achievement of full employment in the city. Cities should also promote continued education and retraining for workers, employed or unemployed, through permanent formation programs.

2. Cities should promote the creation of conditions to prevent child labor so that boys and girls may enjoy their childhoods and acquire an education.

3. Cities, in collaboration with other public administrations and the private sector, should develop mechanisms to guarantee equality for all persons in labor matters, impeding any discrimination.

4. Cities should promote women's equal access to employment through the creation of day care centers and other measures, and of disabled persons through implementation of appropriate facilities. To improve work conditions, cities should establish programs to improve the urban housing used by female household heads and vulnerable groups as work spaces.

5. Cities should promote progressive integration of the informal commerce carried out by low-income and unemployed persons, avoiding their elimination and repression toward informal merchants. Spaces adapted for informal commerce should be provided and adequate policies should be developed for their incorporation within the urban economy.

Article XVI. Right to a healthy and sustainable environment

1. Cities should adopt prevention measures against pollution, unordered occupation of the territory, and occupation of environmental protection areas, as well as measures in favor of energy conservation, waste management and reuse, recycling, recovery of slopes, and expansion and protection of green areas.

2. Cities should respect natural, historic, architectural, cultural, and artistic heritage, and promote the recovery and rehabilitation of degraded areas and urban facilities.

Part IV. Final Provisions

Article XVII. Obligations and responsibilities of the state in the promotion, protection, and implementation of the right to the city

1. The international bodies and the national, provincial, regional, metropolitan, municipal and local governments are responsible for the effective application and defense of the rights enunciated in this Charter, as well as all the civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental human rights of all citizens, based

on the international human rights system and the system of competences valid in the respective country.

2. The no-implementation by the responsible governments of the rights contained in this Charter, or their application in disagreement with the guiding principles and directives or with the international and national human rights norms applicable in the country, will constitute violation of the Right to the City, which may only be rectified through implementation of the necessary measures for the reparation/reversal of the act or omission originating the violation. Said corrective measures should assure that the negative effects or damages derived from the violation be repaired/reverted in such a way as to guarantee for all citizens effective promotion, respect, protection, and fulfillment of the human rights contained in this Charter.

Article XVIII. Measures for implementation and monitoring of the right to the city

1. Cities should adopt all the necessary regulatory measures, in an adequate and immediate manner, to assure the Right to the City for all persons, in conformance with this Charter. Cities should guarantee the participation of citizens and civil society organizations in the regulatory review process. Cities are obligated to use up to the maximum of the resources available to them to fulfill the legal obligations established in this Charter.

2. Cities should provide training and education in human rights for all the public agents related to the implementation of the Right to the City and corresponding obligations, in particular for functionaries employed by the public bodies whose policies influence in any way the full realization of the Right to the City.

3. Cities should promote the teaching and socialization of the Right to the City in all educational centers, universities, and through the communications media.

4. Cities should establish, together with their inhabitants, evaluation and monitoring mechanisms through an effective system of *right to the city indicators*, with gender differentiation, to assure the Right to the City based on the principles and norms of this Charter.

5. Cities should regularly and thoroughly monitor the degree of respect upheld for the obligations and rights enunciated in this Charter.

Article XIX. Violations of the right to the city

1. Violations of the Right to the City are constituted by the actions and omissions, legislative, administrative and legal measures, and social practices that result in impediment, rejection, difficulty, or impossibility in the:

- implementation of the rights established in this Charter;
- collective political participation of all inhabitants, including in particular women and social groups, in city management;
- fulfillment of the decisions and priorities defined in the participative processes that form part of city management;
- conservation of cultural identities, forms of peaceful coexistence, social production of habitat, and the forms of manifestation and action of social and citizen groups, especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged, based on their uses and customs.

2. Actions and omissions may be incurred in the administrative field in the elaboration and execution of projects, programs and plans; in the legislative sphere through law enactment and control of public resources and governmental actions; and in the legal sphere in trials and decisions on collective conflicts and court decisions in relation to issues of urban interest.

Article XX. Demandability of the right to the city

All persons have the right to access to and use of effective and complete administrative and legal resources related to the rights and duties enunciated in the present Charter, including the non-enjoyment of said rights.

Article XXI. Commitments in relation to the charter for the right to the city

I – The social networks and organizations commit to:

1. Broadly disseminate this Charter and promote international articulation in favor of the Right to the City within the context of the World Social Forum, as well as in other conferences and international forums, with the objective to contribute to advance the struggle of the social movements and nongovernmental networks in the construction of dignified life in the cities;

2. Build platforms with which to demand the Right to the City, and document and disseminate national and local experiences that contribute to the construction of this right;

3. Present this World Charter for the Right to the City to the distinct bodies and agencies of the United Nations System and regional bodies to initiate a process whose objective is the recognition of the Right to the City as a human right.

II – The national and local governments commit to:

1. Elaborate and promote institutional frameworks that consecrate the Right to the City, and urgently formulate plans of action for a model of sustainable

development applied to cities, in accordance with the principles enunciated in this Charter;

2. Build partnership platforms, with broad civil society participation, to promote sustainable development in cities;

3. Promote the ratification and application of the human rights treaties and other international and regional instruments that contribute to the construction of the Right to the City.

III – The members of Parliament commit to:

1. Promote citizen consultations and undertake lobby activities with the objective to enrich the contents of the Right to the City and advance their recognition and adoption by the international and regional human rights bodies and by the national and local governments;

2. Elaborate and enact laws that recognize and consecrate the human Right to the City, in accordance with the contents enunciated in this Charter and with the international human rights instruments;

3. Appropriately adapt the national and local legal frameworks to incorporate the international obligations assumed by the States in human rights matters, with special attention to those contained in this Charter.

IV – The international bodies commit to:

1. Undertake all possible efforts to sensitize, stimulate, and support governments in the promotion of campaigns, seminars and conferences, and to facilitate appropriate technical publications that support governmental adherence to the commitments contained in this Charter;

2. Monitor and promote the application of the human rights treaties and other international and regional instruments that contribute to the construction of the Right to the City;

3. Open spaces of participation in the consultative and decision-making bodies of the United Nations system that facilitate discussion of this initiative.

All persons, civil society organizations, local governments, members of parliament, and international organizations are invited to actively participate at the local, national, regional and global levels in the process of integration, adoption, dissemination and implementation of the World Charter for the Right to the City as one of the paradigms for a better world in this millennium.

Translation: Jodi Grahl, May 2005

Appendix B

World Social Forum – Charter of Principles

The committee of Brazilian organizations that conceived of, and organized, the first World Social Forum, held in Porto Alegre from January 25th to 30th, 2001, after evaluating the results of that Forum and the expectations it raised, consider it necessary and legitimate to draw up a Charter of Principles to guide the continued pursuit of that initiative. While the principles contained in this Charter – to be respected by all those who wish to take part in the process and to organize new editions of the World Social Forum – are a consolidation of the decisions that presided over the holding of the Porto Alegre Forum and ensured its success, they extend the reach of those decisions and define orientations that flow from their logic.

1 The World Social Forum is an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences and interlinking for effective action, by groups and movements of civil society that are opposed to neoliberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism, and are committed to building a planetary society directed towards fruitful relationships among Humankind and between it and the Earth.
2 The World Social Forum at Porto Alegre was an event localized in time and place. From now on, in the certainty proclaimed at Porto Alegre that 'another world is possible', it becomes a permanent process of seeking and building alternatives, which cannot be reduced to the events supporting it.
3 The World Social Forum is a world process. All the meetings that are held as part of this process have an international dimension.
4 The alternatives proposed at the World Social Forum stand in opposition to a process of globalization commanded by the large multinational corporations and by the governments and international institutions at the service of those corporations' interests, with the complicity of national governments. They are designed to ensure that globalization in solidarity will prevail as a new stage in world history. This will respect universal human rights, and those of all citizens – men and women – of all nations and the environment and will rest on democratic international systems and institutions at the service of social justice, equality and the sovereignty of peoples.

5 The World Social Forum brings together and interlinks only organizations and movements of civil society from all the countries in the world, but it does not intend to be a body representing world civil society.

6 The meetings of the World Social Forum do not deliberate on behalf of the World Social Forum as a body. No-one, therefore, will be authorized, on behalf of any of the editions of the Forum, to express positions claiming to be those of all its participants. The participants in the Forum shall not be called on to take decisions as a body, whether by vote or acclamation, on declarations or proposals for action that would commit all, or the majority, of them and that propose to be taken as establishing positions of the Forum as a body. It thus does not constitute a locus of power to be disputed by the participants in its meetings, nor does it intend to constitute the only option for interrelation and action by the organizations and movements that participate in it.

7 Nonetheless, organizations or groups of organizations that participate in the Forum's meetings must be assured the right, during such meetings, to deliberate on declarations or actions they may decide on, whether singly or in coordination with other participants. The World Social Forum undertakes to circulate such decisions widely by the means at its disposal, without directing, hierarchizing, censuring or restricting them, but as deliberations of the organizations or groups of organizations that made the decisions.

8 The World Social Forum is a plural, diversified, non-confessional, non-governmental and non-party context that, in a decentralized fashion, interrelates organizations and movements engaged in concrete action at levels from the local to the international to build another world.

9 The World Social Forum will always be a forum open to pluralism and to the diversity of activities and ways of engaging of the organizations and movements that decide to participate in it, as well as the diversity of genders, ethnicities, cultures, generations and physical capacities, providing they abide by this Charter of Principles. Neither party representations nor military organizations shall participate in the Forum. Government leaders and members of legislatures who accept the commitments of this Charter may be invited to participate in a personal capacity.

10 The World Social Forum is opposed to all totalitarian and reductionist views of economy, development and history and to the use of violence as a means of social control by the State. It upholds respect for Human Rights, the practices of real democracy, participatory democracy, peaceful relations, in equality and solidarity, among people, ethnicities, genders and peoples, and condemns all forms of domination and all subjection of one person by another.

11 As a forum for debate, the World Social Forum is a movement of ideas that prompts reflection, and the transparent circulation of the results of that reflection, on the mechanisms and instruments of domination by capital, on means and actions to resist and overcome that domination, and on the alternatives proposed to solve the problems of exclusion and social inequality that the process of capitalist globalization with its racist, sexist

and environmentally destructive dimensions is creating internationally and within countries.

12 As a framework for the exchange of experiences, the World Social Forum encourages understanding and mutual recognition among its participant organizations and movements, and places special value on the exchange among them, particularly on all that society is building to centre economic activity and political action on meeting the needs of people and respecting nature, in the present and for future generations.

13 As a context for interrelations, the World Social Forum seeks to strengthen and create new national and international links among organizations and movements of society, that – in both public and private life – will increase the capacity for non-violent social resistance to the process of dehumanization the world is undergoing and to the violence used by the State, and reinforce the humanizing measures being taken by the action of these movements and organizations.

14 The World Social Forum is a process that encourages its participant organizations and movements to situate their actions, from the local level to the national level and seeking active participation in international contexts, as issues of planetary citizenship, and to introduce onto the global agenda the change-inducing practices that they are experimenting in building a new world in solidarity.

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