Spatial Justice as Analytic Framework

by

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ABSTRACT

Political theorists have recently become interested in the role of nonhumans in politics, as evinced in the recent literature on "new materialism". This literature raises questions such as: how do nonhumans participate in politics as more than mere objects, and what implications might this suggest for normative concepts like justice? I explore this question by theorizing and analyzing the concept of spatial justice. The central claim of spatial justice is that the organization of space – a set of material and ideological relations that act on, yet are formed by, social relations – influences the fair ordering of human relations. As such, it provides one window onto the question of nonhumans and politics.

I argue that spatial justice is best understood as an analytic lens that illuminates the ways in which "space" - a term denoting the location of things relative to each other – participates in the formation of justice claims. Spatial justice is a concept already deployed in geography and urban planning, yet it is most frequently understood as a normative evaluation: that any particular space is just or unjust. I argue that such an understanding of spatial justice simply adds a not-particularly helpful adjective to some well-worn justice claims – in other words, calling an injustice spatial merely states that it happens "in space." I argue that when spatial justice is better instead understood as an analytic framework, it illuminates the representative effects of the urban planning process: spatial representations frame justice debates by making certain constituencies – both human and nonhuman – present in the political process. To make this argument, I engage authors in critical geography, political theory, and science and technology studies.

I argue that critical environmental scholars and political theorists have much to gain by incorporating spatial justice into their analyses. I examine the controversy around the policy document Detroit Future City (DFC), which literally maps a future for Detroit in which the city's widespread vacancy is transformed into sustainable uses. Against both critics and boosters of the plan, I argue that DFC's most important effect is to represent the city in its numerous maps, surveys, and data tables, all of which have already become the subject of debate in the city. DFC visualizes a Detroit where low density neighborhoods are part of a more just city, a marked departure from dominant approaches to urban planning that posit population increase as the solution to Detroit's planning problems. I argue that although DFC is unlikely to directly guide Detroit's master plan, development, and investment strategy, it has already influenced policy and activist debates with data and maps that inscribe vacancy into the city. I analyze DFC and its surrounding controversy to argue that only by understanding spatial justice as an analytic lens can DFC be appreciated in this productive light.

My theory of spatial justice informs new materialism by emphasizing the capacity for nonhumans to participate in politics. I differentiate this participatory approach from a tendency among new materialists to emphasize the innate capacities of nonhumans to transform human behavior. Against this latter analysis, in which nonhumans are said to disrupt humans' ethical and political commitments, I argue that nonhumans like spatial relations transform the political alliances that represent them. Thus spatial justice provides a language for analyzing nonhumans' emergent political power.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

In a 2017 Opinion piece for the New York Times, law professor Bernadette Atuahene observed a new form of what is by now a tragically familiar pattern for housing in Detroit: "African-Americans still face housing discrimination in the city and beyond. Another 50 years is too long to wait for justice." Atuahene argued that the city has for years levied unconstitutionally high property tax rates, which, in a city with a staggering proportion of residents living below the poverty line, led to widespread tax foreclosures in the city. In this context, rosy claims about Detroit's economic comeback, as made by Detroit's Mayor Mike Duggan and others, gloss over the geographically uneven character of redevelopment:

> "What this comeback story omits is that although Detroit is 143 square miles, only 7.2 square miles are part of the revival. The real story is a tale of two cities. In downtown and surrounding areas, developers receive tax breaks, incentives and subsidies to renovate the portion of the city inhabited by newcomers. Meanwhile, the neighborhoods peopled by the residents who have been holding the city together through its economic turmoil are subject to monumental tax injustice." (Atuahene 2017)

While downtown and midtown see massive investment in sports arenas and transit infrastructure, "the neighborhoods" suffer an ongoing foreclosure crisis that forces many longtime Detroiters out of their homes.

Similar critiques of concentrated development and its beneficiaries have occurred before in Detroit, and could easily be made about most other major urban centers in the country – the

fiery critique of gentrification in the San Francisco Bay Area, for example, elicits similar sentiments about geographically uneven development and its subsequent effects on residential patterns in that area. Beyond intra-city development, one might also encounter these sorts of claims along a rural-urban divide, as Kathy Cramer demonstrates in her study of rural Wisconsin politics (Cramer Walsh 2012). For the small-town residents of Cramer's study, "Madison" and "Milwaukee" are understood as the undeserving others who monopolized the state's resources because of elite political manipulation. Cramer's rural subjects, in turn, developed a "rural consciousness" that was in part founded on their social and physical distance from Wisconsin's metropolitan centers.

In the case of both Detroit and rural Wisconsin, location is made central to claims about distributive justice. But what is the role of location in these accounts? What political work is accomplished by locating actors in justice claims? On the one hand, we can interpret the role of geographic location as shorthand for well-worn problems of injustice. That is, there is a claim about the unequal distribution of resources that benefits one particular geographic group (downtown Detroit and metropolitan Wisconsin). In this sense, we can understand geography as a background concern for politics: the right policies might deliver the right goods to the right people and thus resolve the injustices critiqued above. Sufficiently fine-grained maps might reveal whether just arrangements have been achieved and when they have been violated.

On the other hand, we can interpret the role of geography above as doing something more than simply revealing distributive injustices: the location of actors relative to each other signifies differences that can bear justice claims in the first place. For example, in Cramer's account, distance from Wisconsin's metropolitan centers animates the rural consciousness that eventually

was mobilized into a resentment capable of electing Governor Scott Walker (Cramer 2016). Less explicitly in Atuahene, a difference between Detroit's newcomers and longtime residents is implicitly established geographically: those who suffered under the recession of 2008 and those who are there to take advantage of Detroit's supposed renaissance. To make a justice claim on behalf of the neighborhoods is to tacitly reinforce geographic differences as meaningful ones. And likewise, stating a geographic position in Detroit is to implicitly make a set of arguments about interests, history, and social position more generally: when one is from downtown, there is an implication that one is also new Detroit and relatively well off. Both Cramer and Atuahene recognize – sometimes explicitly and at other times only implicitly – that group differences and the justice problems they entail are generated spatially.

This dissertation asks: to what extent do spatial relationships act in politics, and in particular the politics of justice? To answer that question, I theorize the concept *spatial justice*, the guiding principle of which is "the idea that justice, however it might be defined, has a *consequential geography*, a spatial expression that is more than just a background reflection or set of physical attributes to be descriptively mapped" (Soja 2010, 1). In other words, the organization of space– a set of material and ideological relations that act on, yet are formed by, social relations – influences the fair ordering of political relations. My answer is that spatial relations very well can act on the politics of justice, but they do so in the way suggested by the two examples above: they structure what is knowable as issues of justice and injustice and render differences visible.

Spatial justice is likely an unfamiliar term to political theorists. Even in its natal discipline, geography, the term is something of a fringe concept. And yet, the individual

components – space and justice – are terms with rich histories in their respective disciplines. Space has long been a defining concern of geography; likewise, justice is a well-developed (if deeply contested) concept in political theory. Although rarely explicitly theorized together, the relationship between space and justice are frequently of great importance to both critical geographers and political theorists. Geographers and spatial theorists have taken an interest in justice since at least 1968, when Henri Lefebvre argued for a "right to the city" that empowered city inhabitants to control urban futures (Purcell 2002). Lefebvre extended this analysis in his landmark *Production of Space* (1992), in which he further argued that spatial transformation was a fundamental component of any social transformation (which implicitly includes those that aim toward social justice). David Harvey likewise made justice an explicit concern of his 1979 *Social Justice and the City*, in which he argued that urban problems – which, Harvey argued, urban planners overwhelmingly conceived as natural problems of the urban cycle – were in fact injustices produced through capitalist accumulation. In the late 1990s, Susan Fainstein invoked the concept of "just cities" to call attention to the need for planners to attend to the planning process itself as a site of justice problems (Fainstein 2000, 2011). Fainstein argues that planners are preoccupied with designing environments rather than on creating meaningful opportunities for political participation. Fainstein turned "just cities" toward an argument for more democratic planning. As the above examples show, spatial justice, is the latest incarnation of a longstanding concern in critical geography to address both the inherently political character of urban planning (as, for instance, in the just cities account of Susan Fainstein) and to argue for the inherently spatial character of politics (as it functions in, for instance, Lefebvre's *Production of Space*).

Despite the insistence of spatial theorists like Lefebvre and Soja that spatial relations have profound consequences for politics, political theorists have largely rendered space a silent partner in their accounts; nevertheless, I will argue in this dissertation that political theorists have an abiding, if usually only implicit, interest in space. John Rawls' original position is perhaps the best example: "Is that position a general assembly which includes at one moment everyone who lives at the same time? No. Is it a gathering of all actual or possible persons? Plainly not" (Rawls 2001, 81). As this quote exemplifies, Rawls purposefully de-spatializes justice. Yet, as I will argue more fully in Chapter 3, even while Rawls relegates spatial considerations to the background, space remains always a silent but critical partner in his account. The irony of the original position is that it requires us to believe in an everywhere and nowhere from which we could agree on fair principles of justice. This universal standpoint is a proposition that communitarians would subsequently critique, again without explicit attention to the spatial metaphors they would then take up. Although justice has long been an explicit concern for geographers, space has never occupied political theorists' attention in quite the same manner. Spatial justice offers an opportunity to study these two complementary disciplines together.

Why, though, bother to study spatial justice? What can it illuminate that existing theories of justice do not? The most prominent answer to this question is that it can offer a new vocabulary for thinking about injustice. Thus, much like "environmental justice" became a banner uniting diverse social movements fighting for clean air, water, food supplies, and park access in urban centers (to name just a few of its political uses), spatial justice might provide a vocabulary and consciousness for social movements committed to transportation access, housing equity, and democratic participation in planning. Spatial justice might therefore become a *type* of

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justice claim used by different political actors. One of the most visible examples of spatial justice being used this way appears in the Spatial and Land Use Management Act, a unified land use policy for South Africa, in which spatial justice figures as a central principle for making land use decisions. Spatial justice, urges the document, should direct planning toward just land use decisions and inclusive procedures (Republic of South Africa 2013). To the extent spatial justice continues to be incorporated into social movements and policy, it may provide a vocabulary for critiquing unjust planning practices.

Although spatial justice may in time prove to be an important tool for advocating and analyzing injustice, another way of thinking about spatial justice receives relatively little attention: spatial justice can be a theoretical and analytic orientation that investigates how spatial relations participate in justice claims. In other words, spatial justice is a concept that treats the material apparatus of space as an active participant in politics. This is the interpretive lens I bring to bear on the examples of Atuahene and Cramer, analyzing how justice claims there are contingent on spatial claims that mark out meaningful differences. In this dissertation, I theorize this insight and argue that, if treated as an animating principle, it can shed light on complex political events and the politics of justice.

In brief, thinking spatially about justice can call attention to how claims about justice become politically meaningful and legible: how justice claims are contingent on the arrangement of actors spatially. This concept of spatial justice as productive runs parallel to a recent strain in democratic theory that argues for the productive power of politics. As one example, consider Clarissa Hayward's work on the productive relationship between states and citizens. Hayward critiques political scientists who view the state as an entity that merely responds to race, class,

and other social differences. She argues that, instead, "states play a critical role in constructing social identities and differences. They help define, institutionalize, and order the categories and the relations that produce and maintain identity/difference" (2003, 501). Recognizing that states play an active role in making differences, Hayward also argues that those differences are more and less democratic:

> "They function more democratically when they sort in ways that are relatively nonhierarchical; when they are amenable to change by those they affect; and when they are permeable, so that the identities and differences they produce are made present to one another. Boundaries function less democratically when they sort in ways that define relations of privilege and deprivation, power and powerlessness, dominance and marginality; when they are relatively resistant to democratic contestation and change; and when they render difference invisible to identity, creating seemingly unbridgeable distances among interdependent persons and groups" (2003, 509).

States create communities that are more or less democratic based on the relations they create among citizens. Similarly, in my account of spatial justice, I argue that difference is made spatially by locating people and things in particular relationships to each other. Such a spatial proximity, I will argue, helps to arrange what is conceivable as a matter of justice. Spatial justice can thus provide another dimension for thinking about how political constituencies and subjectivities are made.

Thinking about spatial justice as productive also sheds light on one particular problem in contemporary political theory: what has become known as "the actancy of things" as expressed in the literature on "new materialism." New materialism takes as its starting point the claim that agency, a concept historically thought to be specific to human political action, is distributed across both human and nonhuman entities. Jane Bennett's *Vibrant Matter*, an influential touch-point in the literature, makes the case that nonhuman entities like microbes, fatty acids, garbage,

and power lines have a capacity for political action known as "actancy" (Bennett 2010). That is, such nonhuman entities are not just objects on which human policies act, but also themselves engage in politics. Bennett's book is primarily an ontological exploration of that claim, yet it is an ontological account with potentially vast political implications:

> "What would happen to our thinking about nature if we experienced materialities as actants, and how would the direction of public policy shift if it attended more carefully to their trajectories and powers?" (Bennett 2010, 62)

How would politics and policy change if we recognized that nonhumans have actancy, a capacity for shaping politics hitherto thought reserved for humans? What normative force, if any, do (or should) nonhumans exert on politics? Spatial justice is an apt site to address these questions because it calls attention to the interaction between the material and conceptual category "space" and the normative category "justice." Spatial justice directs new materialists to consider not how humans can be inspired to adopt more ethical policies by a greater attunement to the material world, but instead to how political problems are made present through the making of the material world. In other words, redrawing maps can rearrange both the issues of justice that can be articulated and the constituencies who can bear them.

Environmental Justice

In order to show both what spatial justice is and how it can enrich political theory and political analysis, in this section I contrast spatial justice with a close cousin: environmental justice. Two questions seem especially relevant: Is there a meaningful conceptual distinction between environmental justice and spatial justice? If so, how might spatial justice inform environmental justice?

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First, the question of their conceptual distinctness. Given that environmental justice is applied more and more expansively to encompass issues of transportation access, food security, democratic participation, wildlife, and nearly all other aspects of the built and unbuilt environments, one might reasonably think that the difference between EJ and SJ is merely semantic. What, if anything, makes them distinct? Although it might be tempting to imagine that they are distinct content areas - one concerns "the environment" while the other concerns "space" - they are better conceived as distinct theoretical orientations with different analytic emphases. There are two reasons for thinking of them analytically rather than as content areas. First EJ has shattered most boundaries around the notion of "environment," with its historical connotations of nature (Schlosberg 2013). Consequently, "environment" is a sufficiently broad category to include nearly any aspect of the built or unbuilt environment, including whatever flies under the banner of "space." Second, as I will argue further in Chapter 2, "space" is best conceived of as a set of relations among things, where and how things are placed relative to each other, not as a "realm" to which or through which justice and injustice can be done. Thus, thinking of "environment" and "space" as distinct content areas does some violence to both concepts.

There is, however, good reason to think of EJ and SJ as separate analytic traditions. Its academic theorists frame EJ as oriented around two poles: 1) distribution of environmental goods and bads, and; 2) participation in decision making about the environment. In an influential review article, Sze and London define the basic orientation of EJ as "a critical analysis of power as it plays out in the (mal)distribution of harms and opportunities related to the environment with special attention to race and class" (2008, 1348). Likewise, David Schlosberg argues that recent

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developments in EJ have pushed this analysis to an expanding set of concerns: the goods and bads in question are more global in scale, more varied in their scope. Although Schlosberg argues that EJ incorporates an ever-expanding set of goods and bads, Schlosberg has also consistently argued that EJ has always been about more than simply distribution: EJ analysis has always crucially included a claim about recognition and participation, about how voices are made to matter in the political process (2004, 2012). If, then, there is an analytic core to EJ, it concerns how environmental goods and bads are distributed and the means by which citizens and communities are enabled to participate in their distribution.

Those are valuable questions to ask, but my theory of spatial justice will ultimately not answer them. Instead, my account of spatial justice will call into question how claims about justice rely on particular spatial configurations like communities, neighborhoods, and environments, and furthermore how such spatial configurations become politically present. In Chapter 4, I do so by analyzing the way in which "vacancy" is transformed into "density" in a planning document in Detroit and specifying the particular justice arrangements supported by such a transformation. Environmental justice analyses have tended to focus on how particular goods and bads will be distributed as a consequence of that plan.

Spatial justice can inform environmental justice theory and practice by providing a vocabulary for analyzing the site and composition of justice. EJ movements, argues David Schlosberg, frequently challenge notions of justice that focus on individuals rather than communities: "these needs are not simply about individuals, but neighbourhoods, communities, and the city itself" (2013, 43). And it is here that spatial justice has further questions: how are those locations made relevant and politically meaningful? How are people and things arranged

relative to each other, and when are those arrangements made politically relevant? In the case of DFC, I will argue, spatial justice revealed how "vacancy" is made a salient political issue, and subsequently how "low density" was proposed as a solution to its problems. In this sense, spatial justice can enrich the claims of environmental justice advocates by providing a particular set of questions about how environmental goods and bads are made politically relevant, and how the communities in question are composed.

Spatial justice can make explicit what is already implicit in work in EJ: the importance of space in composing claims about justice. Gordon Walker (2009), for instance, argues that the "first wave" of environmental justice scholarship focused on proximity – how poor and minority residents were located close to toxic dumps – and the uneven distribution of pollutants. Walker argues that environmental justice activists have since broadened their conception of space to include considerations of responsibility (where pollutants come from, just as much as where they are sited), the production of toxic places (how certain locations become marked with "trash"), and mapping participation (how to draw boundaries around affected communities) (Walker 2009). Walker investigates how spatial analytic issues of territory, place, scale, and network inform, frustrate, and produce a politics of environmental justice. Scale, in particular, has been a fruitful conceptual tool for thinking spatially about environmental justice (Heynen 2003; Bickerstaff and Agyeman 2009; Sze et al. 2009). A spatial justice approach to the question of environmental justice provides a distinct set of analytic tools for problematizing environmental degradation.

Consider the question of climate change, which at its core requires a discussion of the multiple scales at which climate change is likely to be experienced. In the first place, climate

change is obviously a global phenomenon: it describes an aggregate rise in global temperatures. Yet the effects of climate change will be experienced differently across continents, ecosystems, watersheds, cities, and regions. Further, any mitigation of or adaptation to climate change will involve political action at different scales: international regulations on carbon emissions may or may not ever come to pass, but in the meantime, national, state, and municipal governments are all offering regulations of their own. Adaptation to climate change will certainly require policy action at all of those scales (Adger, Arnell, and Tompkins 2005). The relevant question for spatial justice is how those scales are made, deployed, circulated, and ground certain claims about inequality and not others. Climate change is one especially powerful example of how careful attention to scale – an analytic for which spatial thinkers have developed thoughtful conceptual vocabularies – will become increasingly important in assessing environmental politics.

Chapter Outline

Chapters 2 and 3 theorize spatial justice in some detail. In chapter 2, by interpreting the existing work on spatial justice, I specify what it means for space to act on social relations. I argue that there are basically two possible conceptions of spatial justice, only one of which do I find compelling: spatial justice can be a normative evaluation (this space is just or unjust) or it can be an analytic framework examining how spatial relations organize justice claims. I argue that the former simply adds a not-particularly helpful adjective to some well-worn justice claims – in other words, calling an injustice spatial merely states the that it happens "in space," a truism without much normative or analytic force. On the other hand, as an interpretive lens to

investigate how the location of things relative to each other modifies justice claims, spatial justice can offer a new angle on the politics of justice.

Such a position, however, requires theorizing what it would mean for spatial relations – a relationship of proximity composed of both humans and nonhumans - to modify anything at all. In the remainder of that chapter, following the cues of Actor-Network Theorists, I develop what I call a "geography of associations" to theorize that possibility. I argue that the "space" of spatial justice is best understood as an assemblage referring to particular locations and relationships of proximity. And, as with any other assemblage, these spaces can be understood to "act" on anything insofar as they undergo "translation," a process whereby they are problematized, represented, and either consent or refuse to become enlisted in their representation.

In the third chapter, I turn specifically to the question of how space so understood can intervene in justice. I argue that there are two ways in which that occurs. First, I argue that spatial representations are at the core of justice claims, both those of philosophers and those made by political actors. As I suggested earlier, even John Rawls' original position is a spatial representation that grounds his basic principles of justice: it would not be possible to imagine a universal theory of justice in the absence of his everywhere/nowhere spatial imaginary. Likewise, Michael Walzer's emplaced theory of justice as relies on discrete boundaries. In the absence of such teritorrially bound political communities, Walzer's pluralist justice would be empty. Thus, although a certain spatial imaginary is hardly sufficient for or directive of a particular theory of justice, all claims about justice will implicitly be grounded in spatial claims. I argue in the second place that spatial relations are the basis of justice claims in a stronger sense: spaces, understood as particular locations with the power to act in the way I theorize in Chapter 2, make

possible certain kinds of justice claims while foreclosing others. That is, "justice" is a claim that evaluates how different actors – hospitals, educational opportunity, race, toxins, household income - are placed relative to each other. Yet, as I argued in chapter 2, space is itself contingent, not merely a given of some abstract facts, but itself produced. Thus, changing the location of human and nonhuman actors relative to each other enables and constrains different sorts of justice claims.

In Chapter 4, I show how that unfolds via one case study: a policy document called *Detroit Future City*. I show how justice claims in it are organized around the specific set of spatial allies it enrolls, even while those spatial allies are themselves contested. That is, in DFC, part of the political contest over how to move toward a more just city concerns how to position people and things relative to each other. For DFC, the relevant actors are vacancy, service delivery, transportation networks, grocery stores, and employment opportunities, all of which placed in particular locations. For critics, on the other hand, it is instead vacancy translated into viability, services withdrawn from neighborhoods, the arrival of capital. One of the most trenchant controversies sparked by DFC concerns how, and whether, to represent vacancy and its transformation. Through what actors, materials, and distributions is vacancy made an issue of injustice? And does such an association of vacancy with these different actors change not only the principle of justice involved, but also Detroit, the location in question? The specific location of all these different materials makes a tremendous difference to the justice claims possible in DFC. I show in that chapter how spatial justice is imperative for understanding the controversy around DFC. In particular, the interpretive account I develop by engaging ANT in Chapter 2 allows me to argue for the *representative* role of DFC, a role that boosters and academic

observers are unlikely to see when they approach DFC as simply another document that resolves or reinforces injustices.

I chose to situate my analysis in Detroit because it is a city where themes of spatial relationships, justice, planning, and representation are deeply contested and highly visible. Detroit's history and present are replete with the worst sorts of planning and housing development disasters, including violent discrimination against African Americans, mass white flight, and ill-fated urban renewal projects. Moreover, Detroit is a city that is often made to mean something, to represent our American selves back to us. As I will show in Chapter 4, Detroit's residents are acutely aware of both the injustices heaped upon them and the role that representation plays in reproducing those injustices. Thus Detroit provides a setting where the themes of spatial justice are especially visible.

I chose to analyze DFC in particular because it makes those themes even more visible. DFC was released in January 2013, at the moment when a years-long debate about Detroit's insolvency was coming to a head. In March 2013, Governor Rick Snyder appointed an emergency manager to Detroit, an appointment that would eventually lead to the largest municipal bankruptcy in American history (The Detroit News 2014). Additionally, the 2009 foreclosure crisis led to mass evictions in the city, such that the 2000s saw some of the highest population loss rates in the city's history (Seelye 2011). Thus questions of democracy, justice, service provision, and vacancy were already actively debated in Detroit, and DFC tasked itself with discerning "how to move forward" in this context. DFC provided one of the most ambitious, yet deeply contested, answers to this question, which required associating spatial relationships like vacancy with claims about justice and injustice. Given the regular invocation of

"space" and "justice" in DFC and its surrounding controversy, DFC is a clear test case for spatial justice: if spatial justice is going to have anything to add to urban analysis, it ought to illuminate a document like DFC, where these themes are explicitly invoked. As I will argue in chapter 4, spatial justice helps to see the productive, representative role for DFC.

The body of this dissertation is concerned with the "what" of spatial justice: what is spatial justice, and what would it look like to use it? In Chapter 5, the concluding chapter, I will return to more explicitly to the "why" of spatial justice, offering some thoughts on political theory. That chapter will be primarily concerned with new materialism. I make more explicit a thread that runs through the dissertation: that redrawing maps can rearrange both the issues of justice that can be articulated and the constituencies who can bear them. Attending to spatial intervention is thus imperative for anyone interested in the politics of justice.

CHAPTER II

Spatial Production

Introduction

Detroit's recent bankruptcy proceedings call attention to the city's long slide into financial and infrastructural disrepair. As historians, urban planners, and city officials point out, bankruptcy is part of a much longer story about race, housing, capital flight, and the development of automobile infrastructure. For those paying attention to Detroit before the bankruptcy, an important question has long been how to deal with the city's bloated and deteriorating infrastructure, mass unemployment and poverty, and yearly losses of population. What can, and should, be done about Detroit?

One response to Detroit's financial woes is to accept, and perhaps lament, the city's shrinking. For example, significant media coverage of Detroit before the bankruptcy was careless "ruin pornography," so called for its sensational, glossy aesthetisization of Detroit's abandoned buildings. These glossy photo spreads often accompany stories about Detroit as symbol of the American Dream gone awry, about how the cost of consumerism, suburban sprawl, and a transformed economy are catching up with Americans. Although ruin porn has rightly been criticized for its various representational failures, this type of photojournalism is perhaps best understood as an expression of a perfectly reasonable tendency to worry about the material conditions of Detroit, and what those mean for Detroit's residents. In defense of ruin

photography, blogger Richy Piiparinen argues that the genre "outs the conditions of poverty, showing...not so much how the other half lives, but what the other half lives with" (Piiparinen 2012). Ruin pornography, at its best, expresses a concern about how the material conditions in which one lives – Detroit's sprawling streets, abandoned buildings, and razed lots – reflect and reproduce intense inequities between residents of the City of Detroit and the surrounding suburbs.

The deterioration of Detroit's physical infrastructure is a concern not only for photojournalists, but also the City government. Early in his term, Mayor Dave Bing pledged to demolish 10,000 vacant houses, claiming: "Abandoned and dilapidated buildings are hotspots for crime and a living reminder of a time when the City of Detroit turned a blind eye to owners who neglected their properties" (Associated Press 2010). Vacant houses are understood here as important components of Detroit's continued struggle: both an invitation to crime and reminder of disrepair. This concern for Detroit's physicality runs through Bing's further aspirations to consolidate city services and "rightsize" the city. Rightsizing is a planning ideal with transformation in mind, less interested in bringing Detroit and other postindurstrial cities back to their former glory than accepting depopulation as a permanent feature of cities. By razing houses and consolidating city services into the densest neighborhoods, a transformed Detroit might offer a new model of the American city, a city with large green belts and swaths of agricultural land peppered by pockets of dense residential and commercial activity. Through such rightsizing, Detroit might reinvent itself, grasping its unusual future and becoming a different kind of city. The proposal, in other words, concerns how a transformation in the built environment is necessary given Detroit's current reality.

As land vacancy increases and buildings are razed, some residents are turning the soil and planting crops. Organizations like the Greening of Detroit and the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network provide training, resources, land, and social networks to support these urban farmers. Although urban farming is, in part, understood to foster local economic opportunities, the practice also enables residents and organizations to develop networks and promote the goal of food security (Lawson and Miller 2013, 28). These urban farmers treat the transformation of Detroit's material landscape as a central part of remaking a more just Detroit with food security, revitalized communities, and a thriving local food economy. Urban farming is one of the most exciting, and vulnerable, set of practices in Detroit: real estate speculation might threaten the informal land use practices that many farmers rely on. Farming the land, producing a new set of relationships among food, work, and neighborhood control, will help to forge a more just, vibrant Detroit.

These related representations of Detroit – ruins, rightsize, farmland – are hardly the only ways of imagining the city. Yet they demonstrate a central point for me: claims about justice are tightly bound up with claims about *space* in Detroit. That is, they all take the reconfiguration of Detroit's geography to be a central component in either critiquing injustices or forging new justice relations. In this sense, they demonstrate the unavoidability of thinking about spatial justice in Detroit.

In this chapter, I elaborate on what it means to think spatially, and what is to be gained in doing so. In particular, I argue that if thinking spatially is to be useful for thinking about justice, it must be sufficiently *materialist*. Part of the trouble with existing literature on spatial justice is that it leaves space a perplexingly undefined category, which makes it difficult to know why

anyone should bother thinking about an explicitly spatial justice. So I argue, first of all, that existing literature on spatial justice has a poorly defined notion of space. Worse: too often, theorists of spatial justice implicitly deploy a concept of space that they would explicitly reject: space as a passive receptacle for social action. My first task below is to develop this critique of spatial justice theorists.

My critique of spatial justice theorists is ultimately sympathetic: I, like Soja and others, argue that thinking spatially is important for thinking about justice. My second task below is to lay the groundwork for an account of space that can make goods on the central insight of spatial justice: that spatial relations produce justice relations. Extending on the work of Bruno Latour, John Law, and Michel Callon, I argue for what I will call *a geography of assemblages*. A geography of assemblages focuses on how geographic entities are configured politically, and what specific materials – spatial allies, I'll call them – are enrolled in that configuration. In Detroit, this process of geographic production is especially visible because of the fiscal crisis it now faces. Bankruptcy attorneys, union pensioners, school teachers, a State-appointed emergency manager, urban farmers, tech entrepreneurs, activists, and residents are all struggling to figure out Detroit's spatial past, present, and future. That is, Detroit's identity is unstable at the moment, and different actors are vying to recompose it. Almost everyone seems to agree that Detroit is no longer what it once was: the epicenter of 20th century industrial manufacturing, with the comfortably middle-class workforce and vibrant infrastructure to prove it. But what Detroit is now – frontier for entrepreneurs and artists? Ready for an economic comeback? Lost to nature? Victim of an emergency manager? - is up for debate. That is, a materialist geography is a method for analyzing how Detroit, as a site of controversy, is held together by spokespeople who enlist

specific spatial allies: vacancy, ruins, fields, roads, suburbs, capital flows, public transportation, and a global economy, to name a few.

In Chapter 4, I will take up in depth how Detroit and justice are reconfigured together. In this chapter, I want to lay the groundwork for what it means to think spatially. My goal is to show why I prefer a sufficiently materialist conception of space; this materialist conception of space will, in turn, guide the rest of my thinking on spatial justice. As I demonstrate below, if spatial justice is to have any explanatory or normative power apart from any other notion of social justice, it is precisely in its ability to suggest that the the enrolment of the material world is an important component of justice claims.

The Geography of Spatial Justice

In this section, I argue that existing accounts of spatial justice are inadequate in two ways. First, accounts of spatial justice generally suffer from an inability to show why thinking through space matters in the context of social justice, despite their assertions of the concept's radical potential. Second and more importantly, I argue that this analytical poverty emerges, in no small measure, from the conception of geography that many spatial justice theorists implicitly deploy. In brief, these thinkers tacitly (and paradoxically) accept that "space" is a background condition to be filled with social justice (or, more frequently, social injustice). The upshot is strange: theorists of spatial justice misapprehend space as much as they do justice.

Spatial Justice is Afraid of Space

"This is a classic case of spatial injustice." (Agyeman 2013, 146)

Agyeman makes this claim as he observes patterns of racially uneven access to parklands and greenspaces. The above quotation is noteworthy for two reasons. On the one hand, it associates spatial injustice with a history; he refers to an event as indicative of a long history of spatially unjust practices, much as one might refer to a number of other sorts of well-defined injustices: a "classic case of sexual harassment" or a "classic case of redlining." On the other hand, Agyeman indicates that this is a *spatial* injustice: there is something spatial about this particular kind of injustice. The claim about history seems to be derived from the claim about this subset of injustices: spatial injustice is a normative evaluation that can be grafted onto particular events. One might immediately wonder: what is particularly *spatial* about this injustice? There is quite obviously a spatial, geographic component embedded in struggles over access to parklands, but what is to be gained in calling explicit attention to that spatial component?

Unfortunately, the existing literature on spatial justice offers little in the way of an answer. Despite offering an explicit invocation of space in the context of theories of justice, and despite arguing for the radical and transformative potential of justice so rethought, scholars who invoke spatial justice tend to offer little in the way of new analysis when it comes to spatial justice. Spatial justice most often becomes simply another version of social justice, where justice is to be achieved in the realm of practices which are labelled "geographic." Put simply: it's not clear why anybody – activist, academic, urban planner – would require the adjective "spatial" to make justice claims on behalf of racially unequal access to park lands. Although such an approach to spatial justice is valuable to the extent it unites diverse movements and catalyzes those seeking justice, it hardly offers the transformative and radical conceptual potential to political theorists, geographers, urban planners, and policy makers that its advocates suggest.

Legal scholar Andreas Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos has described this tendency among spatial justice thinkers as "social justice from a spatial perspective" (2010, 203). Or, to put it more bluntly, much of the existing literature on spatial justice is paradoxically "afraid of space" (A. Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos 2010).

The work of Edward Soja exemplifies this approach, and is useful to interpret both as a long-standing theorist of space and advocate for a spatial justice perspective. Soja has been a consistent and forceful voice in asserting the importance of thinking spatially about social theory (Soja 1999, 1989). Against so much critical theory, in which *time* and history are the relevant analytic categories and space is merely the context in which they play out, Soja insists that space is a fundamental aspect of social existence. Drawing on influential spatial theorist Henri Lefebvre (whom I briefly mention below), Soja argues that geographies – built form, the distribution of capital, the provision of services, the availability of public meeting grounds – are consequential for social relationships. For instance, it is a by-now well-worn postulate that industrial capitalism could not succeed without the intense geographic centralization of a workforce in large cities. Thus urban geographies are produced by, and also enable, certain kinds of economic relations. Soja has referred to this exchange between society and space – thought of as two different realms of human experience - as "the socio-spatial dialectic." When Soja turns to spatial justice, he likewise maintains two principles, consistent with his earlier work on the socio-spatial dialectic. First, space is a socially full dimension: "space is not an empty void. It is always filled with politics, ideology, and other forces shaping our lives" (2010, 19). Second, space is more than simply a background for social practice; space also intervenes in society: "the geographies in which we live can have both positive and negative effects on our lives" (2010,

19). These two principles are the most important components of Soja's socio-spatial dialectic: society and space constantly co-produce each other. Soja's space is elusive: he describes what space is not - "it is more than just a physical quality of the material world or an essential philosophical attribute..." (2010, 17) - and paints in broad (and circular) strokes when describing it - "a complex social product, a collectively created and purposeful configuration and socialization of space that defines our contextual habitat, the human and humanized geography in which we all live out our lives" (2010, 17–18). I take up the meaning of space in a later section of this chapter, trying to add specificity. For now, I want to point out that, if we are to take Soja seriously on the matter of space producing society, then we would also need to take seriously that justice has a spatial component: "everything on earth is spatial whether recognized or not" (2010, 53), justice included (2010, 5).

Given his longstanding commitment to the constitutive power of geography, the first thing to note about Soja's theorization of spatial justice is the difficulty of seeing what's particularly *spatial* about it. When Soja turns to the task of interpreting existing social movements in Los Angeles that implicitly make use of a spatial justice claim, that spatial component is observable, if not especially profound: the Bus Rider's Union engagement in struggles over provision of metropolitan bus routes, Justice for Janitors' recognition of the need to organize workers across a vast Los Angeles metropolitan area. That geography plays a role in these movements is clear (after all, everything on earth has a spatial component), yet the importance of taking that geography seriously is less apparent. Anguelovski and Roberts (2011) similarly invoke spatial justice to critique the unjust geography of climate change, in which the

Global South will suffer the disproportionate effects of rising sea levels and disrupted agricultures. In both cases, geography is evaluated as the expression of unjust social processes.

The trouble with this approach to spatial justice is that it simply adds the adjective "spatial" to existing claims about just transportation (Bullard and Johnson 1997) or climate justice (Schlosberg 2012). In this way, space is simply the dimension in which these sorts of injustices occur: climate justice "has" a spatial dimension; transportation justice, too. Theories of spatial justice are afraid of space in that there is nothing particularly spatial about justice so imagined: "the spatial remains an adjectival context, a background against which considerations of the surrounding space are thrown into relief" (A. Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos 2010, 204).

But if this spatial justice has failed to assert what was profound about spatial justice, its theorists have also implicitly deployed an understanding of space that Soja would reject. What is especially surprising about Soja's understanding of spatial justice is the theory of space that it implicitly deploys, a space that is at odds both with Soja's assertion of the socio-spatial dialectic and much contemporary work in geographic theory, a point that I now explore in more detail.

The Implicit Geography of Spatial Justice, or; the Geography of the Social

In the above accounts, spatial justice is treated as a normatively bad outcome, a state of affairs in the world. But this is just one of several ways that one might conceive of spatial justice: "spatial justice is a theoretical concept, a focal point for empirical analysis, and a target for social and political action" (2010, 1). To restate, spatial justice is a *normative evaluation, analytical framework,* and *political claim.* I will have relatively little to say about spatial justice as an explicit political claim, because political claims for spatial justice emerge mostly from

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academics[1]. As my discussion above suggests, spatial justice as a normative evaluation seems to be the most persistent meaning of the concept, and one that forces its theorists to misapprehend geography.

What would it mean to call a geography unjust, to evaluate space itself as unjust? There are basically three ways to answer this question: geographies *indicate*, *exacerbate*, or *produce* injustices. Soja follows each strand of unjust geographies at different moments, and I interpret him here as exemplary of approaches to theorizing unjust geographies. As I now argue, the first approach clearly fails to live up to Soja's socio-spatial dialectic. The second approach, although reaching toward the constitutive power of geography that Soja demands, still treats spatial justice as a *social* phenomenon. The final possibility is the most promising, but already gestures toward treating spatial justice as an analytical framework. To the extent spatial justice is thought of as a normative outcome, it will fail to take seriously the productive power of geographies[2].

To begin, geography might be thought to indicate injustice. Unjust geographies might signal unjust *distribution of goods and services in space*. One might think of the siting of grocery stores, bus routes, hospitals, and other goods deemed necessary for living a full life, or alternatively of the siting of incinerators and pollution sources that impede justice. Unjust geographies are those in which some principle of distribution has been violated[3]. The question

1 There are few existing calls for spatial justice outside the academy. Unlike theorizing environmental justice, which occurred as a response to a burgeoning unification of traditional environmental NGOs and grassroots social justice movements, spatial justice is a movement that is largely being *argued for* by legal scholars, geographers, and a limited number of activists. Theorizing an explicitly spatial justice politics will largely have to wait. To the extent those movements make demands for spatial justice, they will, I think, be making normative claims that are similar to those made by Soja and other academics (see Republic of South Africa 2013 on this count).

2 One important note: my argument concerns how geography is conceived in the examples below. I take no issue with the justice claims expressed. Racial residential segregation, access to transit, and military occupation are all instances where justice claims are rightly made. My critique is of those scholars wishing to paste the label "spatial" onto those justice claims.

3 The exact principle is often left unclear, but one can imagine any number of possible variations: Rawls' difference principle, utilitarians' greatest good for the greatest number, Marx's to each according to their needs.

here is how the important things are distributed on a map, and whether that siting is just according to a principle of equity. Space is understood as an indicator of some prior social injustice: "distributional inequalities are the more visible outcome of deeper processes of spatial discrimination set in place by a multitude of individual decisions made by many different, often competing actors" (Soja 2010, 47).

Soja speaks of unjust geographies as indicators of social injustice when he references Los Angeles' unjust transit geography that favors some transit users (notably, automobile drivers) and disadvantages others (bus riders):

> "I refer here to the pronounced investment gap between the building and maintenance of roads and freeways on the one hand, and the construction of all other means of mass transit on the other. The outcome of this socially and spatially discriminatory process was an unjust metropolitan transit geography, favoring the wealthier, multicar-owning population in the suburban rings over the massive agglomeration of the immigrant and more urgently transit-dependent working poor in the inner core of the urban region" (2010, x).

An unjust transit geography is the *outcome* of discriminatory practices, where highways are built and maintained in a way that disadvantages the working poor. To put this another way, access to transit is distributed unjustly; the built form indicates an unjust distribution of transit services.

When spatial justice is this kind of normative evaluation, the radical potential of Soja's socio-spatial dialectic is pretty clearly removed: sufficiently fine-grained mapping exercises can tell us whether or not the metropolis is just, but the landscape itself simply reflects that injustice. The injustice originates in planning decisions, transit geography reflects those injustices, and spatial justice assigns moral evaluation to that geography. Space doesn't act back on society in this respect, it is the passive receptacle of social intervention (including the scholar's evaluations). Space is understood precisely as that kind of background that Soja sought to

distance himself from: geography is a container in which unjust social relations occur, the mirror of unjust transit decisions. Soja's socio-spatial dialectic is meant to critique just this sort of "spatial expression of social forces" kind of claim, as if society could unproblematically fill the container of space with its injustices.

Second, unjust geographies might be those geographies that *exacerbate* injustices: "ingrained in the industrial capitalist city and, one might add, in many socialist cities as well, are deep and unquestioned *structures of privilege and spatial advantage* based on differential wealth and power" (2010, 48, emphasis original). If it is true that injustices are ingrained in the city and structure how city residents move and relate to each other, then racial inequalities will be especially hard to remove, because they are durably built into the residential patterns of American cities. One might say that the built form exacerbates injustices like racial and class segregation by making them durable over time, a plausible condition in postindustrial cities like Detroit. This seems to imply the radical capacity that Soja asserts in his socio-spatial dialectic: the built form acts back on society by structuring and extending social relations. Such an extension occurs, for example, in Soja's discussion of Palestine:

> "the occupied territories would essentially remain under the control of the Israeli military even with the creation of an independent Palestinian state. Almost invisible microgeographies of power, surveillance, and control, as well as the intentionally overt construction of barrier walls and guarded settlements, infuse the spaces in and around the state of Israel with an array of multilayered injustices...One lesson is clear: once spatial injustice is inscribed into the built environment, it is difficult to erase" (p41).

Soja points out that a geography of surveillance will persist even if the Israeli military were to remove itself entirely from Palestine. Geography reproduces injustice by durably extending it.

Focusing on how geography exacerbates injustices appears, on first glance, to take seriously the radical geography that Soja argues for: Palestine's built form acts back on society by materializing injustices, thereby extending them well beyond the Israeli military's withdrawal. Yet this initially radical-seeming spatiality treats space as what Bruno Latour calls an *intermediary*, an object that "transports meaning or force without transformation: defining its inputs is enough to define its outputs" (Latour 2007, 39). To return to the example of segregation, inequality is *ingrained* in the built form, which then structures social interaction. The actual emplacement of racial inequality into metropolitan geography is relevant only insofar as it is a stopping off point for injustices that emerge in the social realm:

> "Not all examples of residential segregation are entirely unjust. To some degree, residential segregation can be voluntary and beneficial, with people of similar background choosing to live together for many different purposes...Segregation becomes a problem, however, when it is rigidly imposed from above as a form of subjugation and control, as with apartheid and racial ghetto formation; or when it emerges less intentionally from below as an oppressive by-product of unregulated 'freedoms' of choice operating within persistent spatial structures of advantage" (2010, 55).

Soja argues that justice and injustice emerge from access to meaningful choices about where one lives. Space adds a brief extension, but the injustice itself occurs before it is ever emplaced, when it is "rigidly imposed from above." In Latour's language, the *input* to the built form is justice or injustice determined as a matter of meaningful choice; the *output* in this case is simply an unjust geography. To the extent that racial segregation adds anything to the injustice, it extends it more durably. Yet the injustice itself seems little changed by its emplacement: the metropolitan form is the stopping-off point for those socially produced injustices. When the built

form is unjust because it exacerbates or extends social injustices, spatial justice fails to take seriously the radical socio-spatial dialectic, that geographies produce injustice.

There is, however, a final possibility: geographies are unjust when they *produce injustices*. A claim about the production of injustices appears most visibly when Soja evaluates *access to public space*, a claim inspired by the "right to the city" literature[4]. For those making this claim, "the essential starting point in the search for spatial justice is the vigilant defense of public space against the forces of commodification, privatization, and state interference" (Soja 2010, 45). Spatial injustice emerges as cities are more and more cut up into privately owned parcels that replace publicly owned land, and as public spaces are increasingly made up of automotive thoroughfares. Claims about unjust access can take two different forms: either vanishing public space is a distributive claim, in which case it indicates an injustice as I argue above; or vanishing public space produces something new. I will focus here on the latter claim.

The critique of access to certain kinds of space might signal that certain kinds of geographic spaces – plazas, walkable streets, meeting places – enable us to live fully human lives. Such a claim is evident not only in the right to the city literature, but also in Martha Nussbaum's capabilities approach to justice, which counts, in a parallel fashion, access to the "world of nature" as an important component of being human (1992, 219). In both the right to the city and Nussbaum's capabilities approach, access to certain kinds of spaces constitute just relations among citizens. This is more than simply *indicating* or *exacerbating* an unjust set of

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4   Soja also treats residential segregation as having productive power that exceeds its social inputs, albeit only glancingly: "there are some positive advantages to ghetto formation, such as serving to create a shared consciousness of oppression that can generate concerted resistance; and there are negative effects that can occur in the most culturally adaptive enclave" (2010, 58). Even when segregation emerges from social injustice, certain "positives" and "negatives" can emerge, the unintended consequence of concentrating groups of people.

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arrangements: the material absence of those goods will actually make lives less just. It seems as if we have arrived at the productive power of geography that Soja has asserted.

What is noteworthy about this way of conceptualizing spatial justice is that it has moved away from a *normative evaluation* of geography and toward an *analysis* of the effect of spatial relations on justice relations. In the first two meanings of unjust geographies – as indication or exacerbation – geographies took on social injustices; society was the source of injustices that were grafted onto, for instance, transit geographies. In the capabilities account, on the other hand, geography is the source of that injustice, an active component in the production of injustice: public space is a necessary component of just social relations. But to make this claim is to make a primarily analytical claim about geography: the question is now *how does geography produce just and unjust relations*? Importantly, geography adds to the justice or injustice; changing geography changes the injustice.

To sum up the argument so far, conceptualizing spatial justice as a normative outcome – as a state of affairs in the world that we can achieve (or not) – will necessarily lead to thinking of geography as a receptacle for social relations, exactly the condition that spatial justice promises to transcend. To meet its radical promise, spatial justice must instead be an analytic framework that takes seriously the productive power of geography on justice relations. An important set of questions immediately follow: how and when do geographies influence justice relations? By what mechanisms? To answer these questions, I now develop what I will call a geography of associations.

Materialist Space, or a Geography of Associations

> "Though a *product* to be used, to be consumed, [space] is also a *means of production*; networks of exchange and flows of raw materials and energy fashion space and are determined by it" (Lefebvre 1992, 85).

The question of how space influences social relations has been an important one for geographers at least since Henri Lefebvre. For Lefebvre, space was a commodity in the Marxist sense, an artifact that was socially produced. We may be tempted to view commodities as products isolated from the processes that gave them form, but Marx urges us to think of commodities instead as both having social histories (the labor, materials, and coordination involved in producing a commodity) and as serving also as inputs to other productive processes (yarn – an output from the wool mill – is an input into production for the weaver). Much like any other commodity, space exhibits this twofold character of being both output of social processes and input into future production. This means, in effect, that just as the price of yarn influences the weaver's products, so, too, space structures what sorts of social relations are possible: "the spatiality of whatever subject you are looking at is viewed as shaping social relations and societal development just as much as social processes configure and give meaning to the human geographies or spatialities in which we live" (E. W. Soja 2010, 4). Spatial relations and social relations co-produce each other.

But how might space – understood as a product of social relations – influence society? How could "space" fashion anything, including justice relations? As we saw above, existing accounts of spatial justice are ill-equipped to answer these questions because "space" is most often a stand-in for "society." In this section, extending on John Law, Michel Callon, Bruno Latour, and a prominent strain of contemporary geographic theory, I contend: 1) space is best

understood as the set of locational relations made among entities. As a shorthand, we can say that space is "where things are in relation to each other"; 2) space can produce justice or injustice to the extent it is enrolled into political controversies. Understanding spatial justice this way requires shifting away from thinking of "space" as a realm that does or doesn't influence "society," another realm that's already assembled. Instead, spatial justice can most helpfully be conceived as analytical framework that investigates how *particular relations* that often go under the title "geographic" or "spatial" influence justice relations.

I turn to scholars in Actor-Network Theory – who variously go under the title of science and technology students or sociologists of associations – because of their explicit preoccupation with the role of nonhumans in fashioning political life. Spatial justice is most insightful when its practitioners focus on how nonhumans emerge in political life. Such a concern leads Soja, for instance, to focus on the manner in which the formation of US ghettos – a pattern of housing location, neighborhood disinvestment, and unequal policing – does more than simply reflect existing inequities. How things are arranged in the American metropolis – where they are – actively contributed to relations of injustice among citizens. My goal in this section is to offer some analytic precision to this intuition.

In brief, my account here asks how geographic entities emerge as actors: "Instead of starting with entities that are already components of the world, [a sociology of associations] focuses on the complex and controversial nature of what it is for an actor to come into existence" (Latour 1999, 303). How does Detroit emerge as a political actor that variously goes back to nature, or warns against a bleak capitalist future, or inspires entrepreneurs in the tech economy? Even more explicitly: "How are localisations produced? How are scale effects created? How are

things made absent or present?" (Callon and Law 2004, 3). That is, how are spatial relationships – where this is in relation to that - made? The starting point for answering these questions treats locations, much like any other entity in the world, as unstable. Yet crucially, it also treats *society* as unstable, a step that spatial justice theorists rarely take. In leaving both geographies and societies as undetermined, I open the possibility that geographies reconfigure justice relations.

The Instability of Geography

Like "society," space can be understood in at least two different ways. On the one hand, it can refer to a specific domain of human experience, action, and causality: "A given trait was said to be 'social' or to 'pertain to society' when it could be defined as possessing specific properties" (Latour 2007, 3). Bruno Latour calls this first way of understanding society "the sociology of the social," in which society is already formed and can be used to explain outcomes in the world. Similarly, I want to call the kind of geography that takes "space" to be already composed and capable of explaining events in the world "a geography of the social." On the other hand, both space and society can be understood as collectives whose holding together requires explanation. Latour calls this second mode of sociology "the sociology of associations," which I here transform into "the geography of associations."

The sociology of the social begins from a familiar premise: the social realm is distinct from other human domains like law, economics, politics, and the like. This unique realm of human activity then becomes a means of explaining these other realms of human action: "For instance, although it is recognized that law has its own strength, some aspects of it would be better understood if a 'social dimension' were added to it" (2007, 3). This understanding of society as a context in which other activities occur is, Latour claims, the misguided hallmark of

most contemporary sociology. The basic claim of a sociology of the social is that some factor is socially constructed or produced: a stable social substrate – often capitalism – produces law, or religion, or scientific knowledge.

Latour analyzes this tendency in the sociology of science, where, for instance, he laments the unfortunate tendency to explain Einstein's revolutionary physics by appealing to his turbulent youth, or else Pasteur's microbes by his adoration of the crown:

> "Yes, Einstein had a turbulent youth and called his theory 'revolutionary' and 'relativist', but that does not lead you all the way *through* his use of Maxwell's equations, only *in their vicinity*; yes, Pasteur was somewhat reactionary and adored the Empress Eugenie but that does not carry you very far through his bacteriology, even though 'it might not be unrelated' to his rejection, for instance, of spontaneous generation" (2007, 105).

In other words, Pasteur's microbes cannot be explained by his psychological attachments to the Second Empire in France. Yet Pasteur's microbes can themselves explain a good deal about what it meant to be socially connected in that very Empire: "contagious and uncontaminated people didn't establish the same solidarity as, say, the rich and the poor. The direction of causality between what is to be explained and what provides the explanation is not simply reversed, but thoroughly subverted: the contagion redraws the social maps" (2007, 107–8). Thus "the social" - in this case, what it means to be part of an economic class – is re-forged through the entourage of bacteria, Pasteur and his laboratory. Governance institutions emerge, medical practices change, sanitation starts to become a part of everyday life. What is important here is that scientific practice helps to remake social practice and connectedness: bacteria in Pasteur's lab are at the center of a network that ties together all these different practices, institutions, and actors.

This insight – that society, which has been understood as itself adding some explanatory power, is instead re-composed through the emergence in the laboratory of other material actors –

is the hallmark of a sociology of associations. For the sociology of associations, "society" concerns not some context or force that can explain other domains of human experience; society is instead produced through legal, economic, political, scientific, and religious (among other) associations:

> "law, for instance, should not be seen as what should be explained by 'social structure' in addition to its inner logic; on the contrary, its inner logic may explain some features of what makes an association last longer and extend wider...Whereas, in the first approach, every activity – law, science, technology, religion, organization, politics, management, etc. - could be related to and explained by the same social aggregates *behind* all of them, in the second version of sociology there exists *nothing* behind those activities even though they might be linked in a way that does produce a society – or *doesn't* produce one" (2007, 7–8).

Society is not a realm "behind" all the other types of human associations and institutions, a realm that subsequently explains their workings; society is composed through these very associations. In this version of society – what Latour refers to as the collective - one must not take for granted that some stable, social substrate unites all other realms of human activity. Instead, the stability of associations – how it is that relatively durable social patterns emerge and are maintained – is precisely what needs explaining.

So what renders certain social patterns durable? That is, because society is not a permanent substrate but instead an association among actors, the collective will not persist in the absence of its performance; it takes work to hold it together. The question then becomes "what is doing that work?" The answer to this question involves tracing all the connections among bacteria, medical institutions, the nobility, the production of lab glassware, and, to some small extent, Pasteur's adoration of the Empress.

Yet examining any one of these elements – bacteria, for instance – will likewise lead to a further question: how are "bacteria," as actors in our society, held together? Their appearance requires, notably, Louis Pasteur, and also glassware, writing instruments, cultures, and an Academy to spread the good word[5]. If one doesn't like "bacteria" as an example of a thing to be held together, we could just as readily ask this question of, for instance, guns: a whole host of things, from gun factories to tiny screwdrivers to a well-funded gun lobby and a few words in the US Constitution make possible the "gun" tucked responsibly in a gun safe. The point is that any given thing can itself be analyzed as being held together, in what John Law has called a "baroque" approach to complexity, "an imagination that looks down [to specificity] rather than up [to unifying order]" (2004, 19). A sociology of assocations traces these connections by looking at the particular connections among elements of society.

This, then, is the first conceptual point about a geography of associations: space, much like society, must be made and held together. Such a recognition is embedded in a an important strain of critical geography that investigates "the production of space" (Lefebvre 1992; Harvey 1973; Castells 1979), which has been influential for thinkers in spatial justice. Yet if spatial justice theorists and ANT scholars have tended to agree on the matter of geographies being produced, they have tended to diverge on the question of what is accomplishing that production and what, ultimately, is produced. Spatial justice theorists have tended to focus on the productive power of a relatively stable set of human relations – capitalism, globalization, the state – in producing society. An already configured social realm – made of "large scale" forces like class relations and the fluctuations of global capitalism – transforms the urban landscape, which we

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5   The question of whether "bacteria" actually exist, and whether anything at all is required to hold them together, receives a good deal of Latour's attention (see for instance Latour 1999, 145–73).

can observe as being just or unjust. In Soja's telling, Los Angeles is a stopping off point for social forces, and that geography then "structures" or "frames" further social action.

This focus on the *social* production of space rendered Soja incapable of asserting the radical potential of spatial justice, that geographies reconstitute justice relations. In other words, if Los Angeles' transit geography is the outcome of large-scale social forces like the transformation of the global economy, if residential segregation is the consequence of racial inequities, then space at most *extends* social injustice. If geographies are to produce justice relations, then social relations cannot be understood to be durable by themselves: the recomposition of geography implies the recomposition of those relations. The power of Latour's critique of the sociology of the social is to make possible and inevitable the reconfiguration of social relations, an insight shared but ultimately left unfinished by spatial justice theorists. Spatial justice is most meaningful when it explicitly acknowledges that social relations can be reconfigured as geographies that are reassembled in new ways, as the right to the city approach suggests. If there is to be room for space to influence social relations, society, as much as geography, will have to be left unconstituted.

If we ought not to take for granted the productive power of large scale social forces, we similarly ought to be cautious about how we conceive of the productive power of space, which brings me to the second point about a geography of associations: space acts on justice relations insofar as it is a field of inquiry, the object of geographic knowledge, and not a dimension or realm of human existence. Much as "social" is a "convenient shorthand to designate all the ingredients already *accepted* in the collective realm" (Latour 2007, 11), "spatial" is a convenient shorthand for all the elements already accepted into localities. So, for example, "public space"

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can be taken to describe particular entities and acts – plazas, walkable streets, densely packed housing stock, encounters among different people, furtive and revolutionary conversations.

What, then, of spatial justice? What elements are already accepted into localities, and how do they influence justice relations? Here, we would do well to follow geographers, whose primary occupation has been answering just this question about what holds particular locations together. A good starting point is a framework advanced by Jessop et al (2008), which argues that geographers have tended to focus on four components in how geographies are produced: territory, place, scale, and network. If one wanted to know about the geography of Detroit, for example, one could think about how Detroit's territorial boundaries are made, which at the very least requires maps that trace the City's boundaries filed with the State. Detroit is also an inhabited location, a place to which some residents feel especially strongly attached. How are those attachments made, and what sustains or transforms them? Detroit also operates within a nested hierarchy of power, or regional scale: as the State-appointed Emergency Manager makes painfully clear, the City is under considerable control of the State of Michigan, which also reports to the national government. At the very least, two Constitutions and Supreme Courts backed up by the National Guard make such arrangements possible. Detroit's geography is also an effect of its network connections: how money moves into and out of the City's boundaries, the movement of people across the border into Canada or into the City's sprawling suburbs. In the context of spatial justice, what I want to stress is that geographers tend to draw attention to some particular features of what it means to be an actor in the world, which we can call "spatial." The analytical power of spatial justice lies in taking seriously that the way in which geographies – understood as particular territories, places, scales, and networks held together by a multitude of

actors - influence justice relations. There are particular geographies, and sometimes, but not always, they produce relations of justice.

Spaces, like any actor, must be composed and held together. What's left to be shown is how elements of the world are assembled into these particular locations. That is, work is required to make "Detroit" a stable location in the world. But who and what is accomplishing that work? How is such a feat accomplished? If Detroit's bankruptcy is an inflection point where different Detroits are possible, then how will Detroit be recomposed? Without being able to lean on a stable social realm that produces Detroit, the answers will involve nonhumans, a topic that I now explore in more detail. A geography of associations can thus leave room for geographies to be *produced* without being exclusively *socially produced*.

The Actancy of Nonhumans

Because a sociology of associations begins by rejecting the claim that society holds political actors together (through, for instance, a process of "social construction" or else the laws of capital) and embracing the uncertain emergence of political actors, nonhumans come to occupy a central role. The reasons for this concern the relative durability of nonhumans: "It's the power exerted through entities that don't sleep and associations that don't break down that allow power to last longer and expand further..." (Latour 2007, 70). Nonhumans grant some durability to otherwise fleeting and impermanent entities. For the sake of a geography of associations, I am interested in how nonhumans help to hold together localities like Detroit.

As a banal but useful example of how nonhumans can hold associations together, consider the speed bump. In important ways, this concrete hump has been given the task of a

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police officer: both are tasked with slowing down drivers. Although the speed bump and the police officer do similar things (tell a driver to slow down), they do so through entirely different means. Instead of a patrol car, a threat of fines and inflated insurance rates, a gun, a badge, a sour and sinking stomach as the blue and white lights flash in a rearview mirror, there is a hump of concrete, a broken suspension, the unpleasant sensation of bouncing out of the driver's seat and jamming a collarbone into the seatbelt, until it locks with a definite "clack."

The important point to keep in mind is that these different ways of slowing people down make a tremendous difference to what actors, both human and nonhuman, our driver encounters and is associated with. The speed bump brings the driver into contact with different kinds of far flung actors than does the police officer, so a traffic engineer instead of a police chief is the brains behind the operation; a gravel pit instead of a gun factory produces the credible threat. The network assembled by the speed bump is distinct from the one assembled by the police officer; these two collectives require different experts, different kinds of knowledge, different manufacturers, among other notable differences. What's relevant here is that the cast of characters changes according to the material used to influence the driver. State power does not simply "flow through" the police officer nor the speed bump; both measures enlist the driver in different kinds of motivations (fear of a speeding ticket vs. a trip to the auto mechanic), bring into play different employees' unions (police officers' vs. traffic engineers'), invite different strategies for evasion (radar scanners and a keen eye for patrol cars vs. a robust suspension), and credibly threaten our driver over different time periods (only so long as the patrol car is there vs. as long as it simply sits there). In effect, the police officer and the speed bump have the potential

to produce a different kind of driver with different intentions, connected to different actants in different times and places.

If geographies are but one form of political actor, then the speed bump can constitute not only a new driver, but new geographies. Such a production occurs, first of all, at the site of the speed bump: a heavily speed-bumped street might influence drivers to seek travel on arterial routes, where they are less likely to ruin their suspension. A busy neighborhood thoroughfare may become a sleepy residential street, which itself invites new uses for neighborhood children. And this transformation will be different than the kind wrought by the presence of a police officer, whose presence may imply observation, or human contact, or safety. Second, such a transformation implies a different network geography in the sense that distant locations are connected to the bump: the geography of asphalt production – gravel mines and oil fields; the geography of our officer – precinct house, training academy, a long commute to the city from her home in the suburbs. Locations are connected differently depending on the actants involved.

But not only do these two different actants enroll the driver in different geographies, they do so over different time periods. The speed bump makes the instructions "slow down" more durable. When the police officer goes home at the end of her shift, our speed demon no longer has a reason to slow down. It is certainly the case that our driver might fear a speeding ticket, and so slow down even in the absence of a patrol car. But it might also be true that our speed demon has a radar scanner that gives him some assurance that no officers are about, and so proceeds along his hasty travels. The speed bump, on the other hand, doesn't end its shift. By simply existing along the driver's path and credibly threatening to break the driver's suspension, the driver will slow down. Of course, if our speed demon drives a robust SUV, he will likely roll

with impunity over the concrete hump. Or if the driver doesn't see the bump, then it will only articulate its meaning after the fact. Still, the officer and the bump operate over different timeframes.

The objects with which we are enrolled transform not only our driver's plans for speedy travel: objects can also transform political practice. Noortje Marres, for instance, demonstrates how devices of carbon accounting, like an orb-shaped light placed next to a tea kettle, can enroll tea-drinkers into global climate politics. The light is connected to the internet, and polls the national power grid to determine whether it's under heavy use. If demand on the power grid is high, the orb glows red; if demand is low, the orb glows green. In so doing, this device "foregrounds an everyday material action (tea making), and frames it as a form of action upon the environment" (Marres 2012, 65). That is, this tea light brings its user into contact with the power grid and carbon emissions through the act of making tea, and in so doing recasts a mundane act as a form of political participation. To acknowledge this much is not to say that tea making is a robust or especially meaningful mode of political participation, but rather to argue that objects can link us to other actors (the grid, the environment) in durable ways (the microcomputer inside the orb hums along while the user, bored of watching the power grid statistics, has long ago taken a nap). Objects are a fundamental part of our politics, and our politics are regularly remade through our associations with nonhumans.

What objects accomplish for a sociology of associations is to both enroll actants in different networks – and thus assemble them differently – and to do so over different time periods – also assembling them differently. Our driver is a different driver in each instance: the one, wary of a speeding ticket and higher insurance rates; the other, protective of his automobile.

Each of those drivers consequently moves differently – a rebel without a cause will flout the police, but perhaps not his undercarriage. How the driver moves, where he drives, what kind of car he purchases, his relationship to an observational state – when nonhumans like the speed bump are admitted to have actancy, these questions about what we tend to think of as *social* relations are unsettled. The driver is reconstituted through his engagement with the bump.

To put all this in terms of spatial justice, geographies will be assembled depending on the nonhumans involved. Detroit might be a postindustrial ruin-scape filled with vacant Art Deco skyscraping masterpieces and burning houses; Detroit might be a vibrant, thriving, hard-scrabble union town that never quits; Detroit might be a model for urban agriculture. All of these different Detroits rely on certain nonhumans: skyscrapers, union halls, farms. Once these nonhumans are understood as *mediators* that "transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry" (Latour 2007, 39), then it becomes possible for geography to influence social relations. A more just Detroit might involve the preservation of beautiful buildings and a world-class art collection; it might involve a government bailout of a struggling auto manufacturer; it might involve the development of a land trust to protect the hard work of some industrious urban farmers. In all cases, a specific geography – composed of particular nonhuman elements – is assembled and then enrolled in those controversies. The point I want to make here is that those justice claims require certain nonhumans to prop them up. Spatial justice recognizes that geographies like Detroit are assembled, and that assembly is consequential for justice relations.

Although I want to focus on how objects like the tea light, the speed bump, and the geography of Detroit help to hold together a certain kinds of justice claims, I don't want to argue

that such a process is straightforward and deterministically written into the object. Rather, this approach demands that we look seriously at exactly *how* social relations are formed and maintained, and how localities are central actors in political controversies about justice. "Detroit" is not automatically composed based on the existence of certain entities; nor is "justice" automatically composed owing to the existence of a certain kind of Detroit. Yet if it is not the mere existence of things that produces geographies, then what does?

The answer involves a process of what Michel Callon calls *translation*: "the identity of actors, the possibility of interaction and the margins of manoueuvre are negotiated and delimited" (Callon 1986, 203). There are four components to this process. First, problematization: identities of various actors in controversies must be assigned. In Detroit, "gentrification" is a phenomenon that has been identified, such that it is an "obligatory passage point," a necessary component of Detroit's politics. One cannot talk about renewal in Detroit without at least recognizing that the gentrifiers might be arriving. We know that it has happened in other cities, but is it happening here, in Detroit? Second, these roles – the identities that have been assigned - are tested through "trials of strength," a process that Callon calls "interessement" (1986, 206). Although there is a growing sense that gentrifiers are a threat to the city's housing market and Whole Foods is enlisted as evidence that the process is already underway, others contend that buildings remain vacant, property values low. Is gentrification even possible in such a sprawling city with so much vacancy? Will the gentrifiers anchor here in Detroit? Third, if successful, interessement will lead to enrollment. This stage of translation makes solid the identities ascribed at the outset. If the gentrifiers anchor themselves to a neighborhood and longtime residents move out, then the question has been settled: gentrification can occur. The

gentrifiers, however, are not so easily enrolled: buildings in much of the city remain empty. But in specific neighborhoods, rents are rising, new construction is occurring, high end boutique retailers are moving in. Some residents and bloggers agree that gentrification is occurring in some neighborhoods. Finally, once allies are enrolled, they must be mobilized. Mobilization refers to the process of making certain neighborhoods speak for the city. To make them thus speak, representatives are required who translate them into photographs of grocery stores and narrative pieces about development in Midtown. The gentrifiers are mobilized in these accounts. Detroit has been tenuously assembled as a site of gentrification[6].

Yet this solidification of Detroit is only temporary. Ongoing tests of strength – among them, a sheer disbelief that a city of this size with such high vacancy rates could ever be gentrified – lead to ongoing contests over what Detroit is. Furthermore, the very identity of gentrifiers is challenged: do they displace residents, or do they move in alongside residents? Callon's analysis offers a way to understand the process by which locations are held together, and the controversies that inevitably emerge around such a settling. The sociology of assocations does not require us to think that the identity of Detroit – gentrified or not? - is settled upon the arrival of boutique watch-maker Shinola, Whole Foods, or more white residents into Midtown; instead, much depends on which components of Detroit are assembled. Whole Foods, Shinola, rising rents, and young white people? Or size, vacancy, magnitude? There will be maps drawn, newspaper articles and blogs written, pictures taken to mobilize some elements, not others. Detroit's identity is unstable, and certain nonhumans, not others, will be enrolled in an attempt to settle its identity.

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6   Margaret Kohn provides the only sustained analysis of gentrification in political theory. In her account, as in the spatial justice literature, the question is how gentrification qualifies as an injustice (Kohn 2016).

Yet Whole Foods – or at least the building that currently houses it – is durable in a way that its present surrounding controversy may or may not be. A certain kind of cynic might argue that the Whole Foods Corporation's presence is fickle and fleeting, just as the presence of so many of Detroit's past white residents, who moved to the suburbs since the 1960s. In Detroit, perhaps more than in other cities, the durability of houses, streets, warehouses, skyscrapers is haunting and promising all at once; they are considerable allies enrolled in the Detroit assembled by ruin pornographers and rightsizers both. But while some of these buildings and infrastructure remain (others have been torn down by bulldozers commissioned by the Mayor), they are different than the ones built and inhabited when Detroit was the "Arsenal of Democracy," the epicenter of a booming middle class. Other actants have transformed these buildings – years of rain, snow, wind; sledgehammers applied and copper removed by industrious scrappers; encroaching trees and ivy; broken windows. Buildings may be durable, but their identities, too, are also constantly undergoing tests of strength as other actants modify them. The power of nonhumans is that they both remain relatively durable over time and modify each other. And the identity of geographic entities like Detroit are remade as houses are transformed. There could be no ruin pornography without ruins: imagine glossy pictures of perfectly unchanged, early-20th century rowhouses on streets. It's hard to view such a photo spread as a warning against white flight and American consumption. The identity of Detroit is contingent on the mobilization of relatively durable actants whose identities are themselves unstable.

The main question for a geography of associations concerns how and whether the actor "Detroit" emerges in the world, and further how it is held together. To answer these questions involves examining the actants that compose Detroit. But one understands these actants not

simply by counting them (although that is one way to hold Detroit's geography together); the point of a geography of associations is to understand which allies are enrolled into controversies over Detroit's identity. And, as should not be surprising at this point, some especially durable features of Detroit's infrastructure are often enrolled: the wide lanes of Grand River Ave and Woodward Dr, the vast political boundaries of the city, the crowded Ambassador Bridge that crosses into Canada, the abandoned factories, the half-occupied Belle Isle Aquarium, the iconic Michigan Central Station, a bright new stadium for Detroit's NFL team, a brand new Whole Foods, a Diego Rivera Mural that anchors an art museum, a razed lot, a working art exhibit composed of abandoned houses and found objects. As Detroit is being reassembled at this moment, all these things persist, being enrolled into certain Detroits, not in others. They, like the tea light, draw in other actors. Geography is unstable, but it is rendered durable through tests of strength that involve actants that don't sleep: the things that make up Detroit don't simply disappear.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined a theory of spatial justice. I argue that existing accounts of spatial justice often treat the concept as a normative outcome, which leads its proponents into some treacherous waters. Notably, such an assessment requires theorists like Soja to adopt a notion of space that he himself explicitly rejects: space as a background condition, or extension of, social processes. I argued that, instead of understanding spatial justice as a normative outcome, *spatial justice is better understood as an analytic framework that investigates the role of particular geographies in producing justice and injustice*. To understand how such an

influence is possible, I interpreted literature in science and technology studies to argue that locations are political actors that must be assembled and held together at the same time that they undergo tests of strength. Crucially, such an assembly may change as the actors – the humans and nonhumans – that compose them change. That is, nonhumans play an important role in constituting justice relations.

The upshot is that we're now well on the way toward spatial justice: I've shown how it's possible for geographies to influence political relations. The task now is to wrestle more systematically with justice. In other words, although I have so far argued that geographies can act; I now need to show how they act on justice. In the next chapter, I take up this task.

CHAPTER III

How to Produce Justice

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I argued that spatial justice should be understood not as a normative evaluation – as an ethical state in which "space" is just or unjust – but instead as an analytic framework that investigates how spatial relations produce justice. To begin filling out that framework, I offered an account of how space produces anything, much less justice. I argued that the most fruitful way to understand spatial production is to conceive of both space and society as collectives that require assembling. Space refers to particular locations that are held together through human and nonhuman actors – territories, places, scales, networks, maps, as well as bureaucrats, police officers, store owners, and urban planners. Yet not only space is made and held together, but those locations help to hold together all those other actors. The gentrifiers we encountered in the previous chapter are assembled through their relationship to rising rents, a history of white flight, their movement from suburbs to the city center, how and whether other city residents are displaced, whether they work in the Cass Corridor or Downtown, and what bars and restaurants they frequent. Spatiality – where the gentry are - is one important factor in what it means to be "the gentry."

In the remainder of this dissertation, I use the spatial framework developed in the previous chapter to analyze justice claims. The guiding question for the rest of this dissertation is "how does space produce *justice*?" In this chapter, I provide the conceptual answer to this

question, which has two parts. First, space is the foundation for justice claims. Although space might explicitly serve as the foundation for justice claims – as when we say "segregation is unjust" – my claim here is that spatial relations are the foundation of justice claims whatever their explicit endorsement. Second, spatial relations help to produce social collectives who make justice claims. Recall from the previous chapter that, for space to be an actant, it must "redraw social maps." That is, space must be understood to bring new social collectives into existence. Those new collectives can, in turn, make justice claims. Thus, spatial relations can produce justice relations in 1) modifying the terms of justice claims; and 2) creating social collectives who make justice claims.

To make my case, I proceed in two sections, following the two principles outlined above. First, I show how spatial relations are the foundation of justice claims among theorists of justice. I analyze theorists of justice because they offer systematic accounts of justice, and thus might make visible how space does or doesn't ground justice claims. My goal is not to offer an exhaustive survey of theories of justice, but rather to carefully analyze some prominent theories of the interrelationship of space and justice. To that end, I analyze two pivotal figures in contemporary justice theory: John Rawls and Michael Walzer. I argue that, even when they seek to eviscerate space from their theories, justice theorists like John Rawls implicitly enroll space to prop up their theories of justice. Moreover, much of the disagreement between Rawls and Walzer can and should be understood in spatial terms. Despite the implicit importance of space in their accounts of justice, space remains a silent partner for both Rawls and Walzer; space is merely a background condition for justice (albeit a conceptually important one). Thus, space is always a foundation for justice claims.

In the second and third parts of this chapter, I outline what it means for spatial relations to produce social collectives who make justice claims. I do so in the second section, "Justice as Encounter," by analyzing one prominent way in which political theorists have brought spatial relations to the forefront of justice theory: the encounter. When people encounter each other, the argument goes, they learn to tolerate cultural, racial, class and ethnic differences, and thus increased encounters among citizens can promote justice. Although theorists of the encounter explicitly endorse the productive power of spatial relations, I argue that they do so by treating social relations as static.

In the third section, I begin to elaborate an alternative model for analyzing the spatial production of collectives who make justice claims. I extend some recent work in the production of race literature, which argues that shifting metropolitan forms make race durable in America. I argue that this literature provides a foundation for thinking about how social collectives are spatially produced, a foundation that I will continue to elaborate in Chapter 4.

What follows, then, is both an argument about spatial justice and an argument about political theory as a discipline. The argument about spatial justice is that we need to understand it as an analytic framework that investigates how spatial relations can produce political and social collectives who are marked with and take up certain kinds of justice claims. The argument about political theory is that space is a fundamental, if usually only silent, participant in making justice claims.

I. Space as a silent partner

Political theorists frequently deploy spatial metaphors to make their arguments: public space, the private realm, the landscape of modernity, Arendt's table and chair, the place where theory meets action, and on and on. Most plausibly, the authors using these spatial metaphors intend them as metaphors alone. Whatever their intentions, alongside spatial justice scholar Mustafa Dikeç, I argue in this section that, for political theorists, "'space' is not employed merely for the sake of simplicity or convenience. It does a good deal of theoretical work..." (Dikeç 2012, 669)**.** In particular, I argue that space implicitly does some heavy lifting for both John Rawls and Michael Walzer in that it provides the very foundation of their arguments about justice. Yet even as space is enrolled into their theories of justice – indeed is woven into the very fabric of the disagreement between them – space remains a silent partner. Thus, Rawls and Walzer are instructive for thinking about spatial justice because they show two different ways for rendering space merely a backdrop for considerations of justice, *even while they both implicitly rely on space to construct their theories*. The argument here is that space is always enrolled in theories of justice, and thus an important participant in nearly any claim about justice.

Rawls and the View from Nowhere

There is something striking about how John Rawls talks about justice: there are so few spatial metaphors. Given the frequency of spatial metaphors in political writings, John Rawls seems almost systematic in his evisceration of them from *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement* (2001), his late-career restatement of many of the ideas he originally presented in *Theory of Justice*. Even his discussion of the public, perhaps the most frequently spatialized concept in political theory, remains an ideal and not a realm: Rawls speaks of "public reason," defined by a

specific mode of justification among equals, wherever it may occur (89). So, too with the private realm, about which Rawls is even more explicitly aspatial: "A domain is not a kind of space, or place, but rather is simply the result, or upshot, of how the principles of political justice are applied...The principles defining the equal basic liberties and fair opportunities of citizens always hold in and through all so-called domains" (166). Although Rawls is here describing a view of public and private that I think is commonplace (one can have certain rights to privacy even while outside of the home, a point consistent with Rawls here), Rawls is noticeable in his removal of, even antipathy to, spatial language in his account. He dissolves the physical boundaries around the home. Such an absence has led Mustafa Dikec, whom I mention in the introduction to this section, to comment explicitly on Rawls' inattention to space (Dikeç 2001; Harvey 1973).

That Rawls is so systematic in avoiding spatial metaphors makes his few appeals to them are all the more striking. One such metaphor stands prominent among all others: the original position. Rawls' original position is the means by which Rawls arrives at his principles of justice. Famously, the original position is a point of view by which we can arrive at fair principles of social cooperation:

> "In the original position, the parties are not allowed to know the social positions or the particular comprehensive doctrines of the persons they represent. They also do not know persons' race and ethnic group, sex, or various native endowments such as strength and intelligence, all within the normal range. We express these limits on information figuratively by saying the parties are behind a veil of ignorance" (2001, 15).

The original position and the veil of ignorance are means for discovering what people would agree to without knowing how they might end up in life. Such a position, according to Rawls, should give a strong indication of a just ordering of society.

On the one hand, the original position simply reinforces what I've already said about Rawls' space above: even Rawls' original position attempts to avoid any particular geography. The original position is simply a heuristic for figuring out legitimate public justification, a mode of public reasoning and not actually a place, a point Rawls consistently maintains: if people were free and equal and without attachment to any particular social position, what model of justice would they select (Rawls 2001, 83)? This is not a question for empirical debate (there never was nor is there such a condition of total equality, freedom, and radical social contingency), but a thought experiment, a device of representation (Rawls 2001, 17–18, 81). There is no *where* in the original position; it is a means for discovering what we hold, here and now, to be the legitimate conditions for and restrictions on public agreement (2001, 80, 86), and consequently what we ought to hold to be the legitimate principles of justice.

Although Rawls does not mean to call forth an actual location, he cannot help but enroll a space for the original position, and it is everywhere and nowhere all at once. Rawls is attempting to construct universal principles of justice, applicable across all locations, independent of one's particular distance (both physical and emotional) from others, and independent of territorial boundaries. To do so, he detaches us from our workaday social attachments and asks us to enter a *mode of public reasoning,* a disembodied self in the ether, present at no actual location. And what I want to stress is that Rawls requires just this unplaced everywhere and nowhere to make the original position work.

As a counter-factual, imagine that Rawls were required to actually assign a particular geographic location for the meeting place of the Original Position. For the sake of making our hypothetical manageable, we'll limit the Convention to one nation, a significant territorial

limitation on the principles of justice that Rawls seems ready to cede (Rawls 2001, 80,86). Because I know it better than other countries, let's assume that we're limiting the Justice Convention to the US. To make this easier on ourselves, we'll also assume that all 50 states, plus all the US territories and protectorates, will be involved in the Convention. We'll also assume (the assumptions are stacking up now) that all protectorates, territories, and States are not coerced into participation. Further, the participants actually want to engage each other as free and equal and behind a veil of ignorance.

The selection of a site for an event of such importance raises a variety of questions. First and perhaps most obviously, it raises logistical questions: how will the delegates arrive? Will some – but not others – be jet-lagged on their arrival? Will some – but not others – wither in the heat or suffer in the arctic chill? Some Alaskan delegates will, no doubt, be selected from deep in the Alaskan bush, which will require a jarring flight on a single propeller plane to arrive at either Fairbanks or Anchorage, still another several hours from a lower 48 US location. Guamanian delegates, too, will likely have a long travel day ahead of them to any location in the mainland US. Perhaps we should select somewhere on the West Coast – Los Angeles has a major international airport – or perhaps San Francisco? Such a location would imply the least severe jet-lag for the most far-flung delegates (already we are following Rawls' maximin rule – inequalities in travel time must come at the benefit of the least advantaged). Beyond the logistical question, there is also a question of regional hostility: certain of our delegates – drawn from elsewhere in the country – may well find the relaxed and groovy Los Angeles vibrations jarring. They may feel judged for their provincialism, or hostile to encountering a certain kind of person on the West Coast. And there's also the problem of the symbolic importance (not to

mention future economic benefits in the form of tourism) attached to hosting such an event –

Washington DC is the most obvious actual beneficiary of just this sort of pride. The question of

where we should hold the Convention to the Original Position is a difficult one to answer, with

all sorts of implications for its attendees. Even if those attendees mean to approach the

Convention as free and equal and without their particular social attachments, their material and

spatial attachments will no doubt become exceedingly apparent as they travel great distances

across time zones into different climates. And those spatial attachments may well influence the

delegates' abilities to judge without considering their own positions, as they travel from the

Alaskan bush to LA, from a coastal Maine summer to sweltering Los Angeles August.

Rawls, of course, actually cares not at all that these sorts of material difficulties beset the

actual project of the Original Position:

> "Is that position a general assembly which includes at one moment everyone who
> lives at the same time? No. Is it a gathering of all actual or possible persons?
> Plainly not. Can we enter it, so to speak, and if so when? We can enter it at any
> time. How? Simply by reasoning in accordance with the modeled constraints,
> citing only reasons those constraints allow" (2001, 86)

Rawls could not be clearer: the original position is not an actual gathering; it is simply a

mode of justification that we enter by deploying a certain kind of reasoning (with whom

one deploys that reasoning is also irrelevant; the original position models what counts as

legitimate grounds for establishing the principles of justice).

If my hypothetical Original Position were a critique of Rawls, then I would be hard-

pressed to offer a rejoinder here. Thankfully, I've given myself no such task. What I want to point

out is that Rawls requires that we are able to imagine just such an abstract spatial existence,

detached not only from our particular friends, families, and material goods, but also from where

we live, the borders we must cross, the degree to which we feel attached to particular places. If Rawls had to assign an actual meeting place for the original position, if we were actually embodied with particular spatial attachments, Rawls' claim about justice would require a different sort of political justification. We would be dealing not only with a largely (though hardly exclusively) deductive exercise which starts from the premise of free and equal people without knowledge of their particular social position, because finding an actual location for the Original Position already points to our embeddedness in particular locations. In order for Rawls' original position – one of the most characteristic and interesting justifications for a theory of justice – to successfully operate, we *cannot* expect to inhabit an actual location, or else that attachment is simply irrelevant to justice.

In the context of spatial justice, what interests me is the degree to which Rawls – who is criticized for being "weak" on the sociospatial front (Dikeç 2001) – is actually devilishly consistent and strategic, however unintentionally, when it comes to thinking about space. The original position becomes preposterous exactly when we try to imagine it as an actual convention: it must remain an exercise possible only in the space of the mind, in reason, tucked away in the philosopher's brain[7]. In other words, Rawls is not aspatial nor "weak" on the sociospatial front; rather, Rawls reveals the extent to which theories of justice always rely on and enroll space: without a view from everywhere and nowhere, applicable across all places, Rawls' justification for his theory of justice would have to look different.

To note this much is only to state the obvious: our existence necessarily has a spatial component, and even normative theorizing about the good life must implicitly acknowledge as much. Although Rawls clearly does enroll geography into his theory of justice, his analysis

7   This is what Henri Lefebvre called mental space (1992, 5).

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leaves little ability for particular places to produce or influence justice relations among citizens. As the original position makes plain, Rawls ultimately considers justice apart from geography. Justice is a set of principles arrived at from nowhere.

It is possible, at least, that Rawls' theory of justice might accommodate the productive spatial claim that spatial justice requires, that justice relations are reconfigured through shifting spatial relations. Could, for instance, distributions of certain social goods be refigured – and thus distributive justice upset or reconfigured - through changing geographic relations among citizens? For example, might income-based residential segregation result in an unfair distribution of educational opportunities to many low income Americans? If so, might this count as a version of geography refashioning distributive shares, and thus justice relations?

My answer is a tentative "yes," and I will have more to say on this subject in the concluding chapter. Although Rawls' theory of justice is capacious enough to allow for a productive account of geography, Rawls ultimately leaves much geography unattended. My interest in this chapter, however, is to more fully flesh out what it means for space to produce justice, and Rawls will not be a useful guide for this task.

Walzer and the Territorially Encumbered Self

Rawls was, of course, critiqued by communitarians for his inattention to the fact of social embeddedness. Much ink has been spilled commenting on, defending, and moving political theorists past the individualist-communitarian debate in political philosophy and political theory. I do not wish to intervene in this dormant debate. I do, however, wish to point out the degree to which the communitarian critiques of Rawls implicitly critiqued Rawls' geography. In that sense,

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communitarian critics of Rawls again demonstrate the degree to which claims about justice and geography are implicitly bound together in political theory.

Communitarians were a diverse set of critics of not only Rawls, but also an entire strain of individualist, Anglo-American liberal philosophy. Communitarians often critiqued Rawls and others along methodological lines (Avineri and De-Shalit 1992, 2). In its bare-bones form, the methodological critique argued that Rawls and other so-called individualists detached us in an ontologically impossible way from our constitutive attachments. In short, Rawls' original position asked us to imagine ourselves as kinds of persons that we patently cannot be: individuals without communities (Sandel 1984). We are socially embedded beings, and Rawls makes a mistake in asking us to abstract from that fact.

To say that we are social beings is not, by itself, a very strong claim about space. To construct that claim, we need a more robust account of how we are not only socially, but also materially and geographically, embedded. In other words, the fact of constitutive attachment to a particular social world may imply a certain spatial embeddedness, but does not, by itself, offer any more robust a claim about spatial production. For that, we need a more strongly spatial critique of Rawls in the communitarian spirit.

Michael Walzer's *Spheres of Justice* offers just such a critique. In the remainder of this section, I argue that although Walzer more strongly grounds justice in space, space remains a background condition for justice in the sense that space is a fixed entity, itself relatively determinate. Space, in other words, though an implicit ground for disagreement between Walzer and Rawls, never becomes an actant in producing justice – it is, instead, an indicator of

legitimate political community. Two spatial metaphors guide my discussion, both of which are concerned with the boundaries of justice claims - spheres and territories.

Before I interpret these metaphors, I want to take a moment to demonstrate how Walzer's disagreement with Rawls, though explicit, is only ever implicitly spatial in character. In the first place, the spatiality of their disagreement is evident in Walzer's method. Walzer describes the motivation for *Spheres* through an extended metaphor that evokes the different position inhabited by himself and Rawls:

> "One way to begin the philosophical enterprise – perhaps the original way – is to walk out of the cave, leave the city, climb the mountain, fashion for oneself (what can never be fashioned for ordinary men and women) an objective and universal standpoint. Then one describes the terrain of everyday life from far away so that it loses its particular contours and takes on a general shape. But I mean to stand in the cave, in the city, on the ground. Another way of doing philosophy is to interpret to one's fellow citizens the world of meanings that we share. Justice and equality can conceivably be worked out as philosophical artifacts, but a just or an egalitarian society cannot be. If such a society isn't already here – hidden, as it were, in our concepts and categories – we will never know it concretely or realize it in fact" (1983, 14)

The universal, Rawlsian project begins by leaving the place that one inhabits, taking a distant view of the landscape, assessing humanity from the top of a mountain. Walzer, on the other hand, means to stand here among us. And he expects to find the principles of justice here in this place. Walzer's account is, at the outset, embedded in particular places.

To say this much is only to point out that Walzer offers a pluralist critique of Rawls. Such a pluralist critique might take any number of forms. What interests me here is the extent to which Walzer draws on space to make his pluralist argument. Much as Rawls attempted to detach us entirely from any particular place in his universalist account of justice and thereby implicitly enlisted space in his account of justice, Walzer seeks to situate us in particular places, and

thereby implicitly enlists the antidote to Rawls' everywhere and nowhere. Although it would be too strong to claim that Walzer's disagreement with Rawls is fundamentally or primarily spatial, it is clear that Walzer draws on a different geography than Rawls. Space is implicitly embedded in their disagreement over justice.

Not only in his method, but also in the substance of his disagreement with Rawls, Walzer implicitly enlists space in his theory of justice. Because Walzer seeks emplaced theories of justice, boundaries become a prominent problem and feature of Walzer's theory of justice. Two spatial features – spheres and territories - with corresponding features of political life - social goods and political communities, respectively – demonstrate the implicit importance of space for Walzer.

In the context of social goods, the importance of boundedness can be summed up briefly: "No social good x should be distributed to men and women who possess some other good y merely because they possess y and without regard to the meaning of x" (1983, 20). That is, each social good – dignity, political participation, wealth, respect, love - has its own set of distributive rules that govern it, and those rules don't necessarily work within the boundaries of other social goods. In the US, for instance, wealth and political power are usually understood to be distributed according to very different principles: wealth is either earned or inherited, and political participation should be distributed equally by virtue of citizenship. The meritocratic or inheritance principle should operate in the sphere of wealth, not political participation. Injustice occurs when distributions of social goods aren't made according to the relevant distributive principle. Most frequently, such injustice is a product of "domination" (10), a condition where having some given good "x" entitles its possessor to "y." Domination occurs when, in the United

States, the rich exert disproportionate influence on politics simply because they are rich (Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 2013). We call this "domination" because one set of legitimate inequalities (wealth) bleeds into another sphere of social life (political participation). So in the first place, the maintenance of bounded spheres of social goods is the very meaning of justice.

Second, not only are social goods bound, but so, too, are political communities bound within territories. For Walzer, justice is plural in its character: there are many different meanings of justice situated in particular political communities with shared social meanings. Yet how are socially shared meanings determined?

The answer is, in no small measure, that political communities are bound by territory: "politics is always territorially based" (1983, 225). To make his case about the necessity of territory, Walzer rejects both the desirability and possibility of political community without territorial boundaries. The dissolution of territory is undesirable both because territorial boundaries promote good governance by demarcating the community to which state actors are obliged (1983, 38) and because individual claims to territory form the basis of legitimate government: "the state's claim to territorial jurisdiction derives ultimately from this individual right to place" (1983, 43). A political community's legitimacy and state obligations to political communities are derived from the protection of its members' right to place.

Territory and legitimate political community are so strongly co-dependent that "if the community is so radically divided that a single citizenship is impossible, then its territory must be divided, too, before the rights of admission and exclusion can be exercised" (1983, 62). As an example, Walzer considers the historical doctrine of "White Australia," by which British colonialists claimed the entire continent of Australia for Britain. The British wanted to create a

homogeneous (in other words, white) continent; yet that desire and the territory it occupied did not rest on the right to place. Aboriginals were excluded from the political community of White Australia, so territory and political community did not align. Walzer demands a revision: "Its members could yield land for the sake of homogeneity, or they could give up homogeneity (agree to the creation of a multiracial society) for the sake of the land. And those would be their only choices" (1983, 47). In other words, the claim to territory is coextensive with political legitimacy; a community's membership must be coextensive with its borders. Territory is the first fact of political community, and it determines who must be included in political life[8].

It should be no surprise that, for Walzer, territory is both necessary and desirable. Rawls gave us the space of everywhere and nowhere: a universalist theory of justice. In response, communitarians critiqued the social impossibility of that universalist project, that detachment from particular places. To avoid falling into an empty relativism where justice is simply the expression of individual want, justice has to be a set of shared norms. In Walzer's account, territory is the experiential basis for that shared conception of justice.

Walzer's emphasis on bounded social goods and political communities demonstrates how space plays a more active role in Walzer's theory of justice than in does in Rawls. And in a limited sense, Walzer accomplishes what I seek in a theory of spatial justice: to incorporate the productive power of space for justice relations. Most noticeably, Walzer foregrounds the role of

8   Not only is the dissolution of territorial boundaries dangerous to governance, it is also unlikely. If political boundaries were to be dissolved, the free movement of people into and out of political communities "is almost certain to be resisted at the local level...Their members will organize to defend the local politics and culture against strangers" (1983, 38). Without enforceable territorial boundaries that define a sense of "us," parochially defined communities are likely to erect boundaries of their own. A world without teritorially defined communities is thus a pipe dream: "The distinctiveness of cultures and groups depends upon closure and, without it, cannot be conceived as a stable feature of human life. If this distinctiveness is a value, as most people...seem to believe, then closure must be permitted somewhere" (1983, 39).

territory in legitimating and demarcating political community, a political community that sets the norms of justice that guide it. The maintenance of borders – of distributing membership to others – is both an issue of justice (how borders are erected can be more and less tyrannical) and a constitutive component of making justice relations: borders help us define who we are as a political community and what "our" shared values are. Territorial boundaries profoundly influence justice relations by setting the very terms and boundaries of justice claims.

Yet the particular way in which Walzer understands the spatial production of justice makes his a poor model for spatial justice: space is a static recipient of social action. In the previous chapter, I argued that space – understood as particular locations – is itself produced, albeit not exclusively socially produced. Space, like society, is unstable and must be held together by various actants, sometimes pulling in different directions. In Walzer's case, territory is taken to be a relatively unproblematic and settled actant, and hence the space that Walzer enrolls is ultimately a static one. For Walzer, territory is simply a background condition, something that is set by people at one point or another, most often by military conquest, that does its work rather unproblematically until the next conquest comes along. There are then rules of justice that must be followed once those territorial borders have been set. The only relevant action for territory, in this account, is that the size of the political community must match the size of territorial borders.

But the point of a spatial justice analysis as I have framed it is precisely to take seriously that *both* space and society are constantly recomposed, and that each is complicit in the reproduction of the other. Walzer, on the other hand, makes both space and justice relatively static entities whose composition requires little explanation. Although there is a relevant

interrelationship between territory and the size of the political community, that interrelationship is direct and unproblematic: the expansion of territory demands the inclusion of formerly excluded others. Aside from a simple addition of some number of new citizens, the composition of the political community itself changes little. That is, the "shared values" of a given political community need not change in order for a political community to accommodate newly acquired members. The expansion of territory is simply the expansion – but not the remaking – of the political community. To use Latour's language, territory simply intermediates and reflects changes in political community.

In the preceding two sections, I argued that Rawls' and Walzer's disagreement is implicitly spatial in character. Even when we might not expect it, space is enrolled into how political theorists assemble abstract principles of justice. I argued that even Rawls, who is often criticized as spatially unaware, is enrolling a particular space – characterized by a relationship between a cosmopolitan scale and an everywhere present subject – to construct his theory of justice.

Yet even though both Rawls and Walzer rely on space to construct their theories of justice, they treat space as precisely that kind of background container that spatial justice theorists wish to revise. Neither Rawls nor Walzer enables space to be an active participant in their theories of justice. Although they implicitly rely on space to do much to prop up their theories, they both treat it as a background condition. For Rawls, space is simply transcended; for Walzer, space appears as a bounded territorial political community. Theorizing the spatial production of justice will require more explicit attention to the productive power of space, and I now evaluate a common way of theorizing just that.

II. Encounter and the Spatial Production of Difference

> "...literally bringing people together in a variety of ways through their daily experience makes a difference in how they think politically – not in terms of the content of opinions, but in terms of the awareness of different perspectives that must be taken into account in forming opinions...we ought to explore the possibility that just as the construction of social space makes certain interactions rare, so can it create and foster better interactions - ones better for a democratic polity" (Bickford 2000, 370–71)

Without using the word, Susan Bickford theorizes one prominent way that political theorists figure the relationship between space and justice: the encounter. Encounters – momentary meetings among strangers who would never otherwise cross paths – help diverse citizens to broaden their perspectives and promote understanding across difference. Importantly, spatial reconfiguration will help to cultivate this understanding – Bickford focuses in this essay on the detrimental effect of mass suburbanization on public life, and how a revised spatiality can reinvigorate it. Not just Bickford, but a whole spate of political theorists and spatial theorists argue that rearranging the city can cultivate encounters – the coming together, often by chance, of citizens – that might enhance democracy and justice. Encounters are sometimes appealed to explicitly – as they are in the case of Iris Young, whom I discuss at length below[9] – and at other times implicitly – as it is in the work of Peggy Kohn, who argues that public space is necessary because it facilitates explicitly political contact among the polis' many citizens (Kohn 2004).

This way of thinking about encounters among diverse citizens thus reflects one common way of thinking about the relationship between space and justice. Space might foster justice relations in two related ways in these accounts: reconfiguring spatial relations will lead to more

9   See also (Merrifield 2011)., who argues that the encounter is a fundamental part of "the urban" and possible foundation for anticapitalist politics.

encounters (for example, desegregation will increase encounters across different types of citizens), and; the encounter itself is a kind of spatial relationship that transforms justice relations (as citizens come together in one place, it influences how they understand others).

In what ways might these theorizations of the encounter, often touted by political theorists, imply the productive power of spatial relations? In other words, the above authors argue that the city's built form can promote or limit the kinds of encounters necessary for just relations; to what extent does that argument deploy a spatial justice analysis? I argue below that, when understood in the first way (reconfiguring space can lead to more encounters), space is understood, in a limited sense, to "act back" on justice relations when citizens meet. When figured in the second way (encounters will help people negotiate their differences), people are implicitly understood to carry pre-established differences to their encounters with others, and space is consequently not understood to "redraw the social maps." In other words, in the encounter itself, social differences are implicitly figured as static, and space is figured as the realm in which those differences meet each other without being transformed. Thus, this line of argument about the cultivation of encounters has spatial justice intuitions, but the encounter is ultimately a static event.

To put this in the ANT language from the previous chapter, in these theories where encounters will cultivate justice, space and social difference are both figured as *intermediaries* for social structure. Recall from the previous chapter the distinction between intermediaries – objects that transport "meaning or force without transformation: defining its inputs is enough to define its outputs" (Latour 2007, 39) – and mediators, which "transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry" (Latour 2007, 39). As I argue

below, spatial relations should be understood not as a passive receptacle for group differences (and therefore an intermediary), but instead as mediating group difference. More directly, if American cities were marked by more encounters among diverse others, the very "diverse others" in question may change substantially. Theorists of encounters frequently focus only on the way in which remaking space can increase toleration for pre-existing differences, not the way in which those differences can be reconfigured spatially.

To make this argument, I analyze one especially prominent example of this figuring of the encounter: Iris Young's justice as city life and her critique of segregation. I interpret Young both because she frequently deployed the encounter in theorizing justice relations and because, throughout her career, she attended to the relationship between space and oppression more generally. For example, in one of her earliest published works, "Throwing Like a Girl," Young analyzed the space of femininity, arguing that a distinct feminine kind of bodily movement characterizes being a woman under patriarchal oppression (Young 1980, 153). Young directly engaged influential spatial thinkers like David Harvey and Doreen Massey, and was in turn taken up directly by geographers (See Callard 2011). Thus, Young offers one of the most thorough engagements with the relationship between space, justice, and the encounter[10]. Any account of spatial justice ought to account for Young's treatment of those concepts.

This section proceeds in two parts. First, I analyze Iris Young's discussion of the encounter and city life. My aim in this first subsection is to trace the role of spatial relations in Young's account of justice, and in particular how Young argues for the imperative for creating encounters that promote justice. In so doing, Young and similar theorists of the encounter, more

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10 "Encounter" is a term that Young sometimes expressly uses, but at other times is implied. Yet the spirit of the encounter – the coming together and meeting of people – is quite clearly central to Young's justice.

than Rawls or Walzer, make an argument that implicitly accords an active role for space in producing justice relations. Second, I argue that although Young insists that the right kind of spatial relations are imperative for managing justice relations among diverse citizens, the encounter she has in mind ultimately renders space inert. Consequently, when Young discusses space and justice, space simply becomes the realm for managing social differences that are already established before emplaced.

Encounters and the Just City

By focusing on the encounter in Young's work, I limit myself to one of many possible treatments of space in relation to Young's political theory. Even within *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, arguably Young's most influential work, the relationship between space and justice takes a variety of forms. Each of Young's "five faces of oppression" - the different ways in which injustice occurs – has a corollary spatial expression. So, for example, one face of oppression is a familiar sort of Marxist exploitation: "the energies of the have-nots are continuously expended to maintain and augment the power, status, and wealth of the haves" (Young 2011, 50). One form of such exploitation occurs in the relationship between central city residents and suburbanites, as suburban dwellers "work in the city, use the city's services, and enjoy its life but, except in those rare cases where there is a city income or sales tax, pay no taxes to the city" (Young 2011, 247).

I won't recount each of those faces of oppression here, nor list the myriad ways in which space is enrolled into Young's account of justice. I refrain from doing so both for the sake of brevity and, more importantly, because many of Young's spatial analyses ultimately treat space as a realm in which social injustice happens, and thus cannot ground spatial justice as I define it.

The suburban exploitation described above undoubtedly counts as an injustice, but Young simply states that exploitation – the extraction of resources without reciprocal contribution – happens across municipal boundaries. Exploitation, in other words, happens in space. Because I am developing a theory of justice wherein space is an actant, I will not rehash the ways in which the figuration of space in these terms – as a container in which social relations play out - brings me no closer. Furthermore, I am interested here in how Young understands and develops the encounter because of its resonances with other political theorists.

In the encounter, Young does suggest the productive power of spatial relations. The encounter is most prominent when Young discusses an idealized form of city life that will promote chance meetings among citizens, what she calls "justice as city life"[11]. In an extended metaphor, Young compares justice to an imagined, Utopian form of city life, "a form of social relations which I define as the being together of strangers. In the city persons and groups interact within spaces and institutions they all experience themselves as belonging to, but without those interactions dissolving into unity or commonness" (2011, 237). Different citizens can feel a sense of belonging in a city without needing to exclude others. The city is, for Young, a place where differences can flourish, citizens can meet and interact across those differences, and where we can climb "up towers to see the glitter of lights and sampl[e] the fare at the best ethnic restaurants" (Young 2011, 237). In short, the city is the site where different types of people encounter each other.

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11 Given Young's critiques of rural, agrarian communitarianism, it is unsurprising that Young turns to the city as the model built environment for justice relations. It is noteworthy that, in doing so, Young explicitly takes issue with the spatial form often advocated by communitarian scholars. Young took issue with the spatial basis of communitarianism, much as Walzer critiqued Rawls' spatiality. This further suggests the necessary embeddedness of spatial claims in political theory.

The city promotes encounters, in the first place, because it supports diverse activities that draw people into the world: "When stores, restaurants, bars, clubs, parks and offices are sprinkled among residences, people have a neighborly feeling about their neighborhood, they go out and encounter one another on the streets and chat" (2011, 239). Because city neighborhoods offer a variety of experiences, people are more likely to meet each other on their way to the neighborhood grocery store, cafe, and dry cleaner. The city also promotes encounters through its erotic qualities: "City life also instantiates difference as the erotic, in the wide sense of an attraction to the other, the pleasure and excitement of being drawn out of one's secure routine to encounter the novel, strange, and surprising" (2011, 239). Promises of food from all corners of the world and park performances draw us into contact with others from diverse backgrounds. Eroticism is a product not only of variety in the city, but also the "aesthetics of [the city's] material being: the bright and colored lights, the grandeur of its buildings, the juxtaposition of architecture of different times, styles, and purposes. City space offers delights and surprises" (2011, 240). Finally, cities create opportunities for encounters in public space: "city life provides public places and forums where anyone can speak and anyone can listen" (Young 2011, 240). Public spaces are meeting spots for strangers, locations where diverse citizens can witness each other. Although it would be a stretch to say that the encounter is the most important or only element of justice in the city, it is clearly an important part of what makes the city just.

Encounters not only cultivate justice in an idealized city, but they also produce contemporary injustice in the city. Young acknowledges that cities often fail to live up to the ideal of tolerant cosmopolitanism, and the city's practical failures include some sinister kinds of encounters: "homeless people lying in doorways, rape in parks, and cold-blooded racist murder"

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(ibid.). Sinister encounters might be unjust, but the absence of encounters – represented most visibly in the segregation so prevalent in American cities - also creates injustice. In her critique of segregation, the absence of encounters plays a central role in producing the "structures of privilege and disadvantage" (Young 2002, 205) that mark injustice[12]. For example, because members of privileged families do not see true disadvantage, they can think of their lives as average. The things they take for granted – city services and readily accessible groceries – are rendered normal: "by conveniently keeping the situation of the relatively disadvantaged out of sight, it thereby renders the situation of the privileged average" (Young 2002, 208). Segregation thereby hides privilege from view. And encounters with diverse others might substantially undermine that sense of averageness: "Many of these people who think of themselves as average, good, and decent could be made uncomfortable by frequent everyday human encounters with those excluded from these benefits, within their daily living environment. Their sense of justice might even be pricked..." (Young 2002, 208). Further, regular segregation means that, when encounters do occur, they can easily result in marginalization: "Since the privileged allow themselves to construct their lives as average, when they learn of the difference between their lives and those less privileged, this encounter may as likely feed stereotypes and deprecating judgments as much as it may produce sympathetic understanding" (Young 2002, 210).

As encounters are necessary for the just city, it is clear that one major problem with segregation is that it undermines the kinds of regular encounters necessary for the cultivation of justice. The harm is that the privileged do not share environments, do not share a life, with the

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12 My position here is not that Young critiques segregation solely because of its relationship to the encounter. Young clearly argues that one substantial harm of segregation is that it limits the housing choices of marginalized groups like African Americans (Young 2002, 205). However, Young also states that "most importantly, processes of segregation produce and reinforce serious structures of privilege and disadvantage" (2002, 205). The question, then, is how those structures of privilege and disadvantage are produced, and the encounter provides much of the answer.

oppressed. Without such encounters, privileged groups are more likely to understand their privilege as natural, and unlikely to hear, understand, or advance the political claims of the disadvantaged.

In this account of justice and city life, we quite clearly see that rearranging spatial relations is imperative for cultivating different kinds of justice relations. The spatiality of the city can promote encounters among citizens and allow people to meet in public. In that sense, Young implicitly offers an account, much more than either Walzer or Rawls, where spatial relations can configure social relations. Cities enable the kinds of encounters that will lead diverse citizens to forge solidarity with similarly positioned people, expose all citizens to diverse others, and provide opportunities to negotiate those differences in public places. And in that limited sense, Young enrolls space as an actant in her theory of justice: density, mixed use zoning, bright lights, and plazas will foster encounters that reduce oppression and domination.

The Differences Encounters Don't Make

Although Young implicitly argues that spatial relations can produce justice relations by arranging citizens so that they encounter each other, the encounter she has in mind – at least when she turns to examples of justice and injustice – is an event that simply occurs in space among already constituted groups. Consequently, in thinking about the role of the encounter in promoting justice, Young ultimately treats both space and social collectives as inert. Such a treatment of the encounter is sympathetic with broad trends in thinking about encounter in political theory (as, for instance, in the case of Susan Bickford). I argue in this section that such an understanding of the encounter cannot serve as a model for spatial justice.

Young's discussion of two solutions to segregation – integration and her own theory of differentiated solidarity – most visibly suggests the static character so often ascribed to encounters. First, although Young is deeply critical of segregation, she also rejects integration as the proper solution to it, arguing that integration tends to "focus on patterns of group clustering while ignoring more central issues of privilege and disadvantage" (Young 2002, 216). That is, Young argues that integration's boosters needlessly focus on spatial distribution of people, when in fact the main issue of segregation concerns the disadvantage it produces. Segregation causes its harms because of its thoroughness – in spheres of work, play, life, and political institutions – such that encounters necessary to cultivate respect across difference are precluded. Integration is a misguided solution to the problem of segregation, though, because it seeks to level differences through residential redistribution rather than the cultivation of mutual understanding and respect. Encounters may be necessary to foster the encounters that will help citizens cultivate that respect, but certainly are not sufficient.

Young's implicit point is that groups may be residentially clustered and differentiated *because they precede their spatialization*. For Young, although encounters can interrupt or facilitate the just management of group difference, and in that sense have a hand in the normative quality of those differences, space is pretty clearly not involved in producing those differences – and hence the relevant basis of injustice. That is why group differences may remain residentially differentiated in Young's just city: spatial differentiation will simply follow existing ethnic, cultural, and class affinities that have already been established and will be stable across spatial configuration. Encounters – represented most visibly in the public spaces of Young's just city – will then help people negotiate these differences by allowing diverse citizens to foster

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understanding across residential affinities. In the encounter, social differences are stable before spatialized, and then meet each other in public.

The same stability of group difference is apparent in Young's own proposed solution to segregation, which she calls "differentiated solidarity." Under differentiated solidarity, the city has "some neighborhoods and communities generally recognized as group-differentiated – as characteristically Jewish, or African American, or gay, or Maori, or straight white European neighborhoods" (Young 2002, 226). Yet these neighborhoods are not homogeneous, and other neighborhoods in the city will be more mixed. Further, there are no clear borders, and people can travel freely around the region without fear of hostility or being out of place. And the differentiated city also has much cross-region contact: people are traveling to other districts and neighborhoods for work, shopping, leisure, and residence. Finally, the differentiated city has many public spaces, where citizens can encounter each other.

Perhaps paradoxically, differentiated solidarity is manifest in a city where space is made irrelevant to group difference, where group differences can move freely. Residential clustering may occur, but that clustering is simply the effect of established social identities and the preference to be around similar others. Clustering in the newly differentiated city has little effect on what it means to be African American, gay, Maori, or straight white European. Borders are almost non-existent. People in the differentiated city are highly mobile, and they are free to encounter others in public spaces. Nearly everyone and everything are moving through a basically frictionless space, where friendly faces welcome diverse others into diverse neighborhoods. Strangely enough, space is almost as ineffectual in this account as it is in Rawls': citizens move across neighborhoods and encounter each other as equals. The fact that some

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people live together here, and others together there, is simply a reflection of a desire to live with like others. In differentiated solidarity, space has been rendered just because it is powerless: we bring ourselves to encounters with others, already carrying along the identities and differences that we assert to them.

As an example of how Young de-spatializes difference, consider again one particular aspect of Young's critique of segregation: segregation normalizes privilege and hides it from the view of the privileged. It might seem as though Young is suggesting that the privileged are reconfigured through spatial relations: after all, they come to understand themselves as *not privileged* because of the few encounters that transpire between themselves and the disadvantaged. But on the other hand, Young assumes that "privileged" is given in structural relations that are then *reflected* in their spatiality. The privileged are relatively solid, a product of their structural position relative to "the oppressed."

The problem with this view of privilege is that it understands groups as prior to their emplacement; it omits that part of the very meaning of "privileged" is precisely spatial, that one inhabits and moves in particular kinds of locations, and has certain kinds of spatial relations to others. "Privileged," is not just a fact to be managed by encounters across stable group differences; rather, shifting spatial relations will inevitably reconfigure who is and is not privileged, what the social collective "privileged" comes to mean in the first place.

We see just this sort of reconfiguration of privilege in discussions of gentrification, a process that requires a different way of thinking about who is privileged than does white flight. One way of thinking about gentrification is that privilege remains durable across spatiality – that there is a privileged group who once moved to the suburbs and now is moving back to the city.

Yet the existence of privilege is precisely what has to be rethought when one talks about gentrification rather than white flight: the whole point of talking about gentrification is that white flight made privilege a primarily suburban phenomenon. "Gentrification" means to reconfigure the group "privileged" to include those wealthy residents who return to the city. It is no longer only that one had the resources and racial privilege to leave the city that makes for privilege, but that one can return to the city and remake it as one pleases. And the spatiality of the gentrifiers is central to determining both whether gentrification is occurring and who might be part of it.

The oppressed, too, are figured around shifting mobility patterns. Much of the academic debate on gentrification has revolved around displacement, the process whereby residents of a neighborhood move to a different neighborhood even though they would have preferred to stay (see Lees, Slater, and Wyly 2007). The concern centers around who moved, why they moved, where they moved, all in an attempt to cleanly link gentrification to displacement. Scholars of displacement understand it to signal proof that gentrification is both unjust and occurring. In the process of charting displacement, they also tacitly refigure the oppressed, arguing that they have certain mobility patterns in relation to the newly revised privileged.

"Gentrification" not only remakes the privileged and oppressed; it makes "gentrifiers" an actant that matters, and the geography of that actant makes all the difference. That someone comes from outside the neighborhood and brings privilege in is what makes gentrification a meaningful analysis and critique. A Whole Foods in the suburbs hardly signals the arrival of gentrifiers; a Whole Foods on Woodward Avenue in Detroit starts a firestorm of speculation about whether the gentrifiers are arriving and what that means for social justice in the Motor City. And those changing spatial relations have constituted an entirely new group – the gentry –

whose identity must be debated and solidified. Who are the gentry? Where do they come from? What does that mean for Detroit's neighborhoods? All of these questions are simultaneously questions of space and social position, and a justice claim emerged from that co-production. It is not simply that gentrification is a critique of who controls space (although it clearly does involve that), and thus a critique of powerlessness and marginalization in Young's terms. Inherent to the critique of gentrification is a claim about where people are from and *how that makes them privileged*. What it means to be privileged in this debate is, in part, to move from an out-of-town suburban retreat and to colonize a poor neighborhood.

My argument here is that Young's differentiated solidarity, and the kinds of encounters it advocates as necessary for justice, implicitly adopts an understanding of social groups as already formed before being emplaced, and thus space as simply the realm in which social action happens. Crucially for thinking about spatial justice, understanding the encounter in this manner – as the site where pre-established differences meet – underestimates the degree to which spatial relations can reforge the very differences that come to matter in political life.

In making this argument about a static encounter, I parallel Chantal Mouffe's criticism of Young. Mouffe argued that, for Young, "there are groups with their interests and identities already given, and politics is not about the construction of new identities but about finding ways to satisfy the demands of the various parts in a manner acceptable to all" (Mouffe 2005, 86). The problem with such a view of political identity as stable is that a truly democratic politics may require the "transformation of existing social differences" (Mouffe 2005, 86). Rather than expanding politics to accommodate and accept differences that are themselves taken to be stable, Mouffe argues that social differences must be refigured through politics (Mouffe 2005, 70, 86).

For example, one prominent response to masculinized models of citizenship is to argue that women and men – as the stable categories "women" and "men" – must be incorporated equally into politics, as Carole Pateman's work has done. Such a model, argues Mouffe, unnecessarily takes for granted the stability of the binary woman/man (Mouffe 2005, 81). Instead of incorporating stable differences into democratic politics, Mouffe seeks to "construct a new conception of citizenship where sexual difference would become effectively irrelevant" (Mouffe 2005, 82). Politics might substantially reconfigure what counts as "difference," not simply provide a forum for managing those differences.

Young's politics tended to treat social difference as static and politics as the mechanism for managing it; Young's critique of segregation does the same to space. In Young's city, group difference – itself already given - is managed spatially via encounters, much as group interests might be managed in the realm of politics. What is not at stake in Young's account of segregation is that space is crucial to the formation and maintenance of group difference. Imagined this way, the encounter is thus an insufficient model for spatial justice, because it renders social relations – and in particular group formation – relatively impervious to space.

To be fair, Young did, at moments, figure the encounter – and spatial relations more broadly – as actants in forging social difference. I am not arguing that Young never did, nor could, account for the spatial production of group difference. To the contrary, at moments, Young explicitly argued that encounters can be the foundation of group difference: "As long as they associated solely among themselves, for example, an American Indian group thought of themselves only as 'the people.' The encounter with other American Indians created an awareness of difference" (2011, 43)[13]. Young also suggested the productive power of spatial relations in

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13   See also (Young 2002, 88–91).

"Gender as Seriality," in which she argues that social collectives are the product of material-structural facts (what Young calls a "series"). Those collectives can, under certain circumstances, develop a group consciousness organized around a political demand (at which point they become, according to Young, "a group"). So, for example, people who wait together for a bus are a series "united only by their desire to ride on that bus" (Young 1994, 725). Thus, we are assembled in some limited sense by virtue of material and social structures – riding the bus together, waiting on the bus corner – before we develop the consciousness of a group capable of political change – the bus rider's union. In these examples, Young did explicitly theorize some version of the spatial production of group difference, one where spatial relations produced differences that became politically meaningful.

When Young turned to segregation, she figured space as a realm in which diverse citizens would manage their difference. In so doing, Young was in good company with many political theorists and spatial thinkers, who tacitly treat the city as a site where differences will be managed, and justice will be the condition in which those differences meet. Such a figuring of space as static is all the more surprising given Young's acknowledgment that encounters play a role in producing those very differences. Although Young understood that spatial relations were an important feature of what it meant to be related and might have a role in redrawing the relevant social maps, she nonetheless did not incorporate that insight into her analysis of segregation. What might explain such an inconsistency by Young when she turns to segregation?

In part, this inconsistency suggests the real difficulty in thinking of space and justice together – how can we hold both spatial relations and social relations in motion, such that neither is rendered static, and both are enrolled into the production of the other? Further, how can that

co-production shed light on justice claims? In a similar context, Jane Bennett noted that accounting for the actancy of things required a radical rewriting of "the default grammar of agency, a grammar that assigns activity to people and passivity to things" (Bennett 2010, 119). Accounting for the actancy of space is a departure from some well-established ways of thinking about justice; such an accounting was hardly Young's aim, so it should not be surprising that she did not consistently think those elements in dynamic co-production.

Whatever the reasons for Young's static treatment of space and group difference in the context of segregation, that understanding of space as the site where differences are managed is not a sufficient model for spatial justice. What is required is a more active analysis in which space might figure group differences. In the next section, I provide a model for exactly that. By thinking of spatial relations in terms of the social collectives they reconfigure, the spatial production of justice becomes visible.

III. The Spatial Production of Difference

How, then, does space produce social collectives and their justice claims? In this final section, I draw on some work in the production of race to show how to think of both space and social difference as emerging together. In doing so, the spatial production of justice comes into view. In short, shifting spatial relations can produce the very differences that matter for politics, and furthermore can become the very grounds for justice claims. What follows is a first attempt at how to think of space, social difference, and justice together; I will continue to deploy and develop this framework in Chapter 4.

Space can produce difference by helping to make it legible. In *How Americans Make Race*, Clarissa Rile Hayward offers an account of this sort in the context of race. Hayward's starting point is the following puzzle: how can it be the case that race as a social category persists even though "race" was long ago – and continues to be – debunked as a meaningful biological category? In other words, where does the durability of race come from? Hayward's answer is that racial identity categories persist for two reasons: "it was institutionalized in rules and in laws and eventually objectified in spatial forms, which enabled it to live on as a kind of collective 'common sense'" (Hayward 2013, 58). Race is institutionalized, effective in bureaucracies like Federal Housing Administration and Home Owner's Loan Corporation, and objectified, built into the very form of the city[14]. In other words, segregation is an important component of making race knowable in America.

One of Hayward's interview respondents provides an example of how race is reproduced in the built form:

> "'[Race] was installed in my mind as a child...You know, there are certain places you don't go, certain people you don't socialize with.' He characterizes the Birmingham neighborhood in which he grew up as ' an all-black neighborhood.' He tells me the school he attended was 'an all-black school.' He identifies by name what he refers to as 'white' neighborhoods in and around the city of Birmingham: neighborhoods he says he was taught at an early age to avoid." (46).

Hayward draws the following conclusion: "If [the respondent's] racial identity is 'embedded in his mind,' his responses to my questions suggest, this is the case in significant part because he learned his race through place." (46). In other words, this respondent learned race in part through the places he inhabited and where they were in relation to white residents. Segregation, in this

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14 Hayward argues for the prioritization neither institutionalization nor objectification, and the relationship between them is clearly important to her. I focus solely on objectification's role in producing racial categories because of her explicit spatialization of the concept.

account, does far more than reflect and reproduce structural inequalities; segregation is an important means by which race is made knowable at all as a collective identity.

Contrast Hayward's account of the spatial production of race with Young's. For Young, racial, cultural, and ethnic differences exist relatively independently of their spatial forms. Changing the form of the city so that more encounters are possible across difference leaves those differences intact: the point of a just city is to manage the normative quality of those differences which persist because of their structural origins, whatever their spatialization. On the other hand, Hayward argues that the very persistence of racial categories is in part spatial: changing the form of the city, adjusting who encounters whom, could change much about narratives of race and social difference. Racial narratives persist because they have spatial and institutional forms that reproduces them. "Race" is not something prior to structural relations, but rather something that is materially reproduced[15].

This is not to say, of course, that the city's built form is the only relevant mediator enrolled in the maintenance of racial categories – movies that retell the Civil Rights movement, histories of slavery, and institutional inequities come readily to mind. And forced integration – requiring spatial relations to change by forcing the movement of oppressed communities – would not necessarily eliminate (and would likely exacerbate) racial injustices in the United States. But it does suggest, in a way that Young does not, that those very racial categories might be transformed if their spatialization changed. Not only do changing spatial relations make race relations more or less just, but they change how social actors understand themselves as members

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15 The closest that Hayward gets to an explicit endorsement of the role that spatial relations might play in remaking race comes at the conclusion of the book: "Changing the institutions and the spaces that frame the ordinary stories of the racially privileged is a crucial step toward changing how Americans make and remake racial identity" (Hayward 2013, 202).

of political communities. And it is thinkable, at least, that spatial relations would change so profoundly as to make new racial relations.

One striking example of just this sort of reconfiguration occurred in the 1920s, as changing migratory patterns fundamentally reshaped racial politics in the United States. According to historian Matthew Frye Jacobson (1999), whiteness has been a category of national political relevance at least since the Revolutionary period, when "free white person" was made a prerequisite of citizenship. Yet the particular character of that whiteness – who is included and who is not – has been contentious for just as long. Saliently for my purposes here, Jacobson traces how, from the 1840s until the Immigration Act of 1924, as immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe accelerated, whiteness was fragmented into a distinct biological hierarchy: Anglo-Saxons, Celts, Hebrews, and Slavs, to name a few, were ordered according to phenotypical traits taken to be biological markers of race. And while these white races were understood as provisionally white, they were nevertheless understood as sufficiently different that the arrival of more immigrants marked a threat to racial purity and social harmony in the United States.

Yet in the period of the 1920s-1960s, these plural white races were made into a monolithic Caucasian race, in part through a shifting spatiality. Two migratory changes were, according to Jacobson, largely responsible for this shift in racial relations. First, new European migration significantly slowed following the passage of the Johnson Act in 1924. Consequently, some of the threat supposedly presented by these white races began to dissipate. Second, massive migrations of African Americans from the South to the North and West "nationalized Jim Crow as *the* racial issue of American political discourse" (Jacobson 1999, 95). During the 1920s

-1940s, the relevant distinction among races was drawn increasingly along Black/White lines. Divisions among Europeans were less and less salient. Racial narratives in the United States began to de-emphasize the differences among Caucasians, instead emphasizing the racial differences between that newly formed Caucasian race and blacks.

Although it would be a mistake to say that these shifting migration patterns alone allowed Caucasian to be a salient political actor, the emergence of Caucasian does suggest the importance of shifting spatial relations for creating collectives who matter. Jacobson's own analysis is that "Immigration restriction, along with internal black migrations, altered the nation's racial alchemy and redrew the dominant racial configuration along the strict, binary line of white and black, creating Caucasians where before had been so many Celts, Hebrews, Teutons, Mediterraneans, and Slavs" (1999, 14). Before the 1920s, European-Americans were understood as fundamentally different at the level of biology, yet in short order were transformed into one monolithic race of Caucasians.

In Jacobson's telling, this Caucasian emerges in the postwar period in part produced by shifting migration patterns. It is not simply the case that previously known racial groups were coming into contact with one another and needed to be managed, but the encounter among diverse racial groups in fact remade how those races were knowable. And it was at this moment that black/white segregation began to take hold in northern cities: prior to the 1930s, African Americans and whites were far more likely to live together (Hayward 2013, 50). This newly-minted Caucasian came to inhabit increasingly segregated neighborhoods. Hebrews, Celts, and Mediterraneans – heretofore meaningful biological categories – were condensed into one Caucasian race whose members sought to protect the value of their property against African

Americans (Freund 2010). This newly emergent white race was transported to far-flung suburban neighborhoods, where its distance from African Americans was made quite literal.

Not only do spatial relations help to make group differences like race knowable, but they can also serve as the very foundation of justice claims associated with those shifting differences. As an example, consider that Hayward argues that "disinvestment in America's black ghettos exacerbated nontrivial collective problems and it effectively localized those problems in 'black places.'" (Hayward 2013, 71). The collective problems of living in American cities in the mid 20th century – unemployment and crumbling housing stock, for example – were, in the postwar period, disproportionately made the problems of African Americans. These issues thus became issues of a specifically racialized injustice through a segregated spatiality. As institutions like the FHA and HOLC incentivized the creation of new and affordable housing stock in the suburbs available almost exclusively to white Americans, the problems of the city – old infrastructure, poor housing stock – became the problems of those residents who could not or did not leave city borders. In the postwar period, it was African Americans, many of whom traveled north during the 1910s-1960s, who inherited these problems.

Segregation – a form of spatial relations - is the very foundation of the possibility for a whole host of racial justice claims in the contemporary United States: segregation creates the terms of debate about social justice issues like access to affordable housing stock. Hayward suggests that "black problems" became black problems through their spatiality – what had been collective problems were abandoned by a newly emergent pan-ethnic white middle class, and African American residents inherited those problems, which were subsequently identified with African American communities. Well-known debates about poverty-alleviation measures ensued

that racialized poverty. Subsequent critique of the injustice of distributional inequities is thus premised on that inheritance. Segregation is more than an indicator of deeply held systemic injustices in the United States; it is a precondition of those inequities becoming racial inequities.

Here, then, we have a first crack at a spatial justice analysis: I have charted both how particular geographies reproduce social collectives like Caucasian and African American, making them durable without being determined; and I have shown how specific social injustices become social injustices because of their spatiality, as "collective problems" become "black problems" in the wake of white flight.

Consequently, making justice claims against racism requires grappling with the city's shifting spatiality. For example, critiques of gentrification enroll a different spatiality than does segregation: displacement instead of exclusion. And the enrollment of that spatial ally has so far proved elusive: are the gentrifiers arriving? And what does it mean for gentrification to occur in Detroit, where vacancy is such a prominent piece of how the city is assembled? Changing spatial relations help to redefine what it means to be white, to be racist, to be African American, to be a homeowner, to be a true Detroiter. Both spatial and social collectives remake each other. Spatial justice is the framework that foregrounds the connection between those two elements.

Conclusion

This chapter has brought me closer to developing a framework for spatial justice. In my previous chapter, I defined spatial justice as an analytic framework that investigates the role of particular geographies in producing justice and injustice. In this chapter, I offered a framework for thinking about how space can produce justice and injustice. First, space is enrolled directly

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into claims about justice and injustice. In the first half of this chapter, I demonstrated that point in the case of Rawls and Walzer, who enroll geographies into their theories of justice. So, too, is space directly enrolled into justice claims when we discuss the controversies of gentrification and segregation: particular geographies are central to understanding contemporary class and racial injustice.

The second way in which space produces justice is by producing the actants who make justice claims. That is, space is one of the actants that produces group difference. As spatial relations change, so, too, might the relevant social groups, and with them, their justice claims will shift. And vice versa: as social groups change, so, too, might their relevant spatiality. This is, perhaps, the most forceful reading of Henri Lefebvre's well-worn dictum:

> "Change life! Change Society! These ideas lose completely their meaning without producing an appropriate space. A lesson to be learned from soviet constructivists from the 1920s and 30s, and of their failure, is that new social relations demand a new space, and vice-versa" (Lefebvre 1992, 59)

Spatial relations and social relations are enrolled into each others' production, and as social relations shift, so too will spatial relations. Given my analysis in this chapter, we can now say that space produces justice in the following sense: spatial justice is an analytic framework that investigates the role of particular geographies in producing the actants enrolled into justice relations.

CHAPTER IV

Detroit Future City

Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I theorized spatial justice as an analytic framework that investigates how spatial relations enable, constrain, and otherwise constitute claims about in/justice and the groups who articulate them. In this chapter, I put that theory to work by analyzing one particular policy document: *Detroit Future City Strategic Framework* (DFC). I argue that spatial justice can illuminate what its current critics tend to ignore: that DFC is a document that represents where things are in Detroit, and in so doing makes an argument about justice that is not easily understood as a distributive or procedural matter.

DFC is an ambitious planning document that was initially published in January 2013. The sprawling document is a vision for the city's zoning and infrastructure over the next 50 years. DFC began as a mayoral planning initiative in 2009, when acting and soon-to-be-re-elected Mayor Dave Bing made "shrinking" and "right-sizing" the city a central talking point of his 2009 re-election campaign. Planning began in earnest in early 2010, after the announcement by the Kresge Foundation – a suburban philanthropic organization – that it would fund such a plan to shrink the city. After several months of surveying the city and assessing the market value of neighborhoods, Bing's office rolled out the initial public engagement stages of the "Detroit Works Project" (DWP) in September 2010, with much public fanfare.

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From the outset, DWP was conceived as an immediate stopgap to the city's impending financial woes, and in July 2011, the first short-term policy action of the plan was put into place. In Dec 2011, amid mounting criticism that DWP was ineffective in meeting its ambitious goals and hopelessly out of touch with the needs of Detroiters, Detroit Works was split into a "short term" and "long-term" planning office. The long-term planning office was tasked with turning the short-term intervention strategies into a long-term vision for the city, which it released as *Detroit Future City* in January 2013.

In the context of urban planning more broadly, DFC proposes an unorthodox strategy for Detroit's well-known and myriad problems. Following the "shrinking cities" approach, it seeks to make *depopulation* a permanent feature of Detroit. Most urban planning outside of shrinking cities thinks that cities like Detroit need to attract population and development to rescue the city. In that standard scheme, increased population will transform vacant land into occupied land. DFC is unorthodox precisely because it does not treat *population* as the solution to Detroit's woes. Instead, DFC thinks that Detroit can be a better place by planning for the population that currently exists in the city. Detroit needs to rethink what kinds of services it provides, how to deliver services to the existing population, and what kinds of alternative land uses might be possible, all while increasing the quality of life for all of Detroit's residents. In so doing, DFC implicitly argues for the transformation of neighborhoods with a high concentration of vacant land into *lower density* neighborhoods. As I will argue throughout this chapter, such a transformation requires institutional, material, and discursive modifications to Detroit's landscape.

The document has, perhaps not surprisingly in a city marked by outrageous poverty rates, poor service delivery, and a struggling school system alongside a history of racially uneven access to services, attracted a fair amount of scrutiny, criticism, and boosterism by Detroit residents, academics, planners, and national media outlets. I argue in this chapter, first of all, that the two most prominent modes of criticism fail to treat DFC in a manner consistent with the spatial justice framework I've developed. In these critiques, DFC is read as procedurally illegitimate or as an unjust distribution of resources. In the first place, critics argue that the process by which DFC was created was insufficiently participatory; in the second place, critics argue that DFC is a policy instrument that will likely lead to either displacement or further isolation of Detroit's already marginalized residents. These are both powerful critiques that have forced DFC to adjust its public outreach strategies and its overt relationship to some of urban planning's most egregious injustices.

Although both these critiques have appropriately placed leverage on the process guiding DFC and its slow political adoption, they also have tended to overshadow a third possibility illuminated by spatial justice: that DFC is a representative strategy that sets an agenda for justice debates in Detroit. That is, DFC wants to argue that Detroit has a problem, vacancy, that can be resolved not by attracting population but instead by transforming land use. Echoing the argument I made in chapters 2 and 3, I argue that both the procedural and distributive critiques of DFC overlook this productive capacity of DFC. DFC cannot simply be read as failing to engage the public, nor can it simply be read as a map of distributions that are just or unjust; DFC poses questions of justice around which a public might coalesce.

My second task in this chapter is to analyze the Detroit that DFC envisions. As I suggest above, that version of Detroit is one where present vacancy patterns guide development of green infrastructure, open space, larger lots, housing construction, transit routes, industrial siting, and commercial districts. Implicit in DFC is that although widespread vacancy – with its set of durable injustices – ought not to remain a feature of Detroit, neither should the city pursue mass population increase and widespread development. DFC systematically imagines and represents a less dense future for the city, and in so doing presents an alternative argument about what a just Detroit might be.

Whether DFC is ultimately right in its utopian vision is, I will argue in the final section of this chapter, a matter that, quite reasonable criticisms notwithstanding, we cannot possibly know ahead of time. While my aim in this chapter is neither to defend DFC's vision nor to criticize it, I will argue that it is a document with many potential trajectories, a potential that will be realized as it becomes associated with other actors in political, development, and sustainability circles. DFC presents a claim about justice and vacancy; whether it will achieve that vision or something else entirely will be up to the political actors who take it up.

DFC without Spatial Justice

In this section, I analyze the two main critiques of DFC: 1) that DFC was insufficiently democratic in its planning process; 2) that DFC is a covert instrument of mass displacement. Although I am sympathetic to both critiques as political strategies to publicize and influence the planning process, I argue here that they both tend to overlook a set of questions about DFC as a representative strategy. That is, I will later argue that one of DFC's primary interventions is to

represent a transformation of Detroit, and both the democratic critique and the distributive critique would benefit from attention to that representation. In the first place, spatial justice can amend the procedural critique by drawing attention to the public organized around DFC that refused to be engaged in the agenda that DFC set. In the second place, spatial justice can inform distributive critiques by focusing their attention on the potential trajectories of DFC.

In analyzing these critiques, I return to the discussion of spatial justice in the preceding two chapters: deploying spatial justice will provide insight captured neither by the procedural nor distributive critiques so often raised by critical geographers. To some extent, I am asking the above two critiques of DFC to stand in for the ways that justice is often conceived in relation to the planning process: in the one instance, justice is composed of adequate participation; in the other instance, justice is concerned with how goods and services are doled out. Both these versions of critique look for an external criteria by which to judge plans – whether in the guise of democratic procedures that will legitimate (or, more frequently, make illegitimate) a policy or to frame it as engaged in austerity or neoliberalism to demonstrate its failures. Both critiques, I argue, would be more robust and accurate if they treated DFC as a spatial representation that calls a public to participate in its vision of justice.

In the previous chapter, I used the example of segregation to make a first pass at spatial justice. I argued that spatial justice iluminates how collectives are made and the justice claims that they are subesequently marked with. In that example, it was the movement of people that quite literally redistributed problems of the city. It would seem, on first glance, that the approach I am taking here is quite different: rather than an actual redistribuition, I am proposing to analyze a vision for the city, a vision that may never come to pass. Are we not looking at an entirely

different example, an entirely different set of concerns, an entirely different understanding of space: actual residential movement in one case, representation of Detroit's future in the other?

What I will be able to show about DFC because of my theory of spatial justice derived from ANT is that these two spatial relationships – segregation on the one hand, vacancy on the other – require the same kind of analysis. Vacancy, like segregation, is a spatial relationship that must be produced and then is enrolled into competing political claims about justice. ANT will help me to show how vacancy (and DFC's representations of it), like segregation, might be enrolled into any number of possible futures. What I want to stress is that both "actual movement" and "vacancy" are spatial relationships that must become political actors through a process of translation. Perhaps the analysis of white flight seems so different from DFC because segregation is already an established spatial pattern, a spatial relationship that has already become an actor. It is important to keep in mind, though, that segregation had to *become* an issue of injustice: both through the establishment of segregation in its contemporary form as described in chapter 3, but also in court cases and national legislation that set limits on segregation and then likewise in contemporary accounts that map the staggering inequalities among black and white neighborhoods (Sharkey 2013; Farley et al. 1994; Wilson 2012). What we want, in both the case of segregation and in DFC, is an analytic framework for seeing how spatial relations emerge and are then translated into political actors. We can do this whether we are examining urban residential segregation or, as we will see in this chapter, a hotly contested map of vacancy and service provision.

Procedures

What I am calling the "democracy" critique targets the legitimacy of the process by which DFC was created. The charge is, simply, that the planning process was illegitimate because it was insufficiently participatory. A similar critique, I argue in Chapter 2, has been incorporated into much of the discussion of justice in urban planning and spatial justice: spatial justice means granting access to meaningful participation in planning. In the context of DFC, Shea Howell, an activist and consistent critic of DFC, expresses one version of this critique. Discussing Mayor Bing's efforts to engage Detroiters in the planning process, Howell asks wryly:

> "This is the heart of the problem. In a city that is noted for its local and national organizing efforts, that has more block clubs than most cities in Michigan have people, countless community organizations, churches on virtually every corner, schools engaged in community rebuilding and political organizations of all persuasions, why do we need a community engagement process that bypasses these existing structures?" (Howell 2010b)

A robust network of community organizations already existed in the city, and the Mayor should facilitate discussion among those organizations and their leaders to foster democratic discussion about Detroit's future. But instead of doing so, the Mayor has hired consultants with out-of-town credentials: a Harvard urban planner named Toni Griffin was the project's lead (Howell 2011b), and an Arlington, VA consulting firm was hired to lead community outreach. Additionally, suburban philanthropic organizations were heavily financially invested in the DWP process. All of these invested parties were viewed as outsiders in control of determining Detroit's destiny via DWP. Howell instead argues that a truly democratic process would involve more direct input by Detroit residents.

Not just outside interests, but also Mayor Dave Bing was frequently a target of criticism. For instance, longtime Detroit activist Ron Scott, commenting on Mayor Bing's visit to Northern

Italy to observe urban planning initiatives there, "said the mayor seems to value the opinion of European academics more than nearly 5,000 residents who attended public hearings about the plans this fall. 'An attempt to coerce people by suggesting that services that are rendered are going to be diminished is not good public policy nor humane,' Scott said. 'It's clear we have to rebuild the city, but it has to happen by the ground up'" (Nichols 2010). Bing was notorious for holing up downtown at City Hall. He failed to appear in "the neighborhoods," the large area of Detroit outside downtown and the small area known as Midtown. For example, Bing was criticized for his failure to attend a community meeting about DWP held on the city's periphery, at which more than 200 pastors were present.

Second, DFC was criticized not only for its failures to facilitate participation, but also for the kind of participation it did facilitate. The public engagement during the first and second rounds of DWP (Sept 2010 and Jan 2011) produced some intense critiques of its anti-democratic character. The first meeting was, by most accounts, poorly organized for the nearly 1000 residents that attended. Residents had to shout to be heard, and Mayor Bing didn't speak until nearly the end of the event (MacDonald 2010b; Neavling 2010; Nichols 2010). After the first round of disastrous public engagement meetings, DFC infamously introduced another misguided public engagement measure into its planning: electronic clickers. These clickers gauge citizen opinion by allowing real-time response to questions listed on a PowerPoint slide. A slide would pose a question, like "what is most important to you?," and then list a set of multiple choice questions that participants could respond to by pressing the appropriate button on the clicker.

If handled carefully, one could imagine such a survey response measure to facilitate meaningful, if limited, citizen input into the planning process. Unfortunately, DFC presented respondents with a ludicrous set of options, detailed in an ethnography of DWP:

> "Some attendees protested the clicker questions. When asked, 'which .. . is most critical to your quality of life ... education ... healthcare ... grocery stores ... ', people called out: 'We need them all!' 'I want schools and food!' They muttered that other questions had obvious answers ('How important is it for Detroiters to have access to jobs in Detroit?'). One person called out that whoever thought of the clickers should be fired" (Montgomery 2015, 15)

Clearly, asking residents to rank order the importance of education, healthcare, and grocery stores is a ludicrous endeavor – all of them are necessary, and it was insulting to ask Detroiters to order them.

These sorts of procedural critiques were instrumental in shaping DFC's outreach strategy, and should be understood as effective bulwarks against the worst sorts of procedural abuses. Notably, DWP extended its outreach efforts into the neighborhoods with a "roving table" that set up and sought feedback on what Detroiters wanted for the future of their city. Without question, it is inspiring that some Detroiters demanded a more active role for participation in DFC. There is good reason for planning to be attentive to procedural issues, as the profession has often been criticized as woefully paternalistic for much of its existence.

Whatever the effect of these procedural critiques on DFC's planning process, I want to argue that adequately understanding the procedural critique of DFC will require implicitly deploying a spatial justice analysis. Spatial justice, I argue in the previous two chapters, asks both how spatial relationships are made and how those relations are then translated into justice claims. Some of the most forceful procedural critiques implicitly take issue with precisely this question of spatial representation and its power to organize justice claims. The point of this

critique is that democratic practice does not start with "the people" as actors with solidified interests that its representatives – in this case, planners – must dutifully map. Instead, democracy is a representative process wherein spokespeople cultivate interest groups (Disch 2011). DFC (and planning more generally) is more than simply a process that responds to interests held by citizens or establishes the right format in which residents can discuss their interests: it helps to make those interests. Given this constitutive role of the policy process, spatial justice illuminates one powerful way in which those interests are made: in literally mapping the agenda to which residents are asked to respond. In that sense, even if we begin by assuming that DFC has failed to meet some democratic standard, then spatial justice can help us to understand how that failure occurred.

The criticism of how DFC constituted the public in question concerned both the mechanism of participation and the agenda around which that public was formed. Consider the clickers from another perspective I have already raised: the concern over the particular set of tradeoffs that planners asked citizens to make. One could interpret this critique as being remedied by asking Detroiters to choose between a more realistic set of tradeoffs: would you rather spend the city budget on improving downtown or economic development in the neighborhoods? In this model, DFC would simply need to find the right interests to be negotiated, preferences that residents already had when they arrived at the community meeting. Yet there is another, deeper objection to the clickers, raised by local activist Shea Howell, about the very character of agenda-setting in this context:

> "[C]itizens are forced to endure a presentation designed to push the rationale for the foundation-driven plan to shrink the city. Then the citizen engagement comes in the form of little electronic clickers intended to gather information from individuals on a series of nearly meaningless multiple choice questions loaded

with assumptions that require discussion. But instead of engaging in conversation about the assumptions and the ideas behind the questions, people are told to click their "answers" in isolation from one another. This is not a process of community engagement. It is an insult to democratic discussion." (Howell 2011)

With Maarten Hajer, we can say that Howell is making two related criticisms of the clickers: "not merely...the content of policymaking but the practices of policymaking as well" (Hajer 2003, 95). Publics do not necessarily arrive to community meetings with well-formed preferences about schools and grocery stores; they form opinions on issues in response to policies like DFC. Howell's criticism is not simply that citizens were asked to rank order an impossible set of tradeoffs, but also that citizens are isolated from each other and not allowed to discuss the very basis of the questions being asked. Democracy, she claims, would require a meaningful engagement with the policy's assumptions. This public being formed around DFC was not given the opportunity to "reflect on what they actually valued, who they were, where they came from and where (if anywhere) they wanted to go collectively" (Hajer 2003, 95). Howell argues that the community called forward here was made instrumental to a pre-determined plan, not allowed to cultivate its own set of preferences and interests. As such, Howell objects to the way that the public was formed.

Part of her objection concerns the inherent limitations of the "clicker" for citizen participation. That is, the clicker is a "participatory object" (Marres and Lezaun 2011) imbued with specific political capacities to organize the meeting's attendees. In this case, it enrolls citizens at the meeting as individual interest-bearers responding to a set of questions, that DWP assumes a trajectory for Detroit's future, rather than as a community or public that would participate in defining and debating Detroit's possible futures. Howell is well aware that this

technology is being deployed in the service of keeping citizens from talking to each other and to keep them well-behaved.

But the other part of Howell's critique is what happened before this town meeting was called: the assumptions embedded in the clicker session. There is a particular representation of Detroit imbued in these questions, one that makes vacancy and blight its primary features and therefore orients questions of justice and politics and tradeoffs around those terms. This representation assumes away much of what Detroiters would want to discuss: what Detroit's problems are and therefore how they might be solved (Callon 1980). Other problematizations are effectively made silent by DFC's framing (Callon 1980, 213) and clickers make that that silence quite literal. Howell resists not just the particular questions being asked in this session, but the entire way of understanding DFC's research program (Callon 1980, 214). Howell is offering a critique of how DFC imagines the Detroit that might serve as a subject of discussion among a public, the way in which Detroit is figured as vacant and that citizens would not emerge with their own understanding of what Detroit might become.

The most glaring omission from DWP's clicker sessions concerns the question of regionalism. DWP's – and later DFC's – focus on the city of Detroit allows its boosters to ignore the regional, national, and global context that made Detroit a site of vacancy, and furthermore the ways in which the metropolitan region and State of Michigan have relieved themselves of responsibility for the social issues that DFC raises. As historian Thomas Sugrue argued in his landmark *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, many of Detroit's social and economic problems can be traced to white flight and uneven access to union-protected jobs. As white flight proceeded in the region and sprawling suburbs emerged on Detroit's periphery, Detroit steadily lost its population.

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That loss of population then led to the widespread vacancy patterns and a decrease in revenue that became the fodder for DWP's clicker sessions. Yet DWP's focus on the city's problems as concerning tradeoffs between schools and healthy environments, for instance, completely disregards that regional context. In an op-ed unrelated to the clicker sessions, Howell put the problem this way:

> "By any ecological or rational standard, suburban living is by far the most damaging to the earth and to the psyches of those who live there. Moreover, if any of those foundations had encouraged building within the boundaries of the city, including their own offices, we might be facing a very different question today" (Howell 2010a)

Howell here points out the hypocrisy of the supposed philanthropic do-gooders supporting DFC: if suburban interests were sincere about sustainability, they would demand change in their suburban communities. Of course, they do not; instead, they look to the city, the site of persistent meddling by suburban outsiders.

Howell's critique implicitly raises questions about spatial justice: how it is that Detroit is represented spatially, and how might that representation enable certain tradeoffs and questions of justice and remove others from consideration? In the absence of an implicit spatial justice framework, we would be led to focus on the inadequacy of the clickers as a mechanism of participation. But – and this is the critical part – her critique concerns not simply the clicker as a mechanism that thwarts discussion but also the political claims that are made possible by certain representations of Detroit's future. This is a question about how Detroit is represented, by what means, and what alternatives are possible. Democracy is not necessarily the process whereby the already-formed interest group of residents living in Detroit neighborhoods duke it out with

planners; justice is not the outcome of "the people's" interests winning in that battle. Rather, interests are made and transformed, residents are brought into or out of interest groups by the political process surrounding DFC; justice claims are the means by which democratic actors engage in and contest the representative process of urban planning. Spatial justice allows us to see Howell's critique as concerning agenda, concerning how DFC enables certain kinds of justice claims by representing Detroit in particular ways. Understanding procedural justice in the context of DFC will require understanding how actors are made representatives of various justice issues, and furthermore whether they consent to be so represented.

Displacement

DFC is read not only as a failure of procedural justice, but also as a failure of distributive justice. The claim is that DFC covertly recommends distributions of resources that will lead to the displacement of thousands of citizens. DFC explicitly states – repeatedly – that no residents will be required to move out of any neighborhoods. Despite its official position, DFC cannot shake displacement. Much of this difficulty no doubt owes to some early and unsavory comments by Mayor Bing that Detroit's future would involve "winners and losers" and insisting that Detroit needed to consider the use of eminent domain to correct its service delivery problems(MacDonald 2010a). Bing's comments, combined with a general distrust among citizens accustomed to well-meaning but disastrous urban planning, meant that displacement would continue to be a problem for DFC years after eminent domain was officially dropped from the planning stages of DFC.

DFC kept the concern over relocation alive with its most prominent representation strategy: mapping. DFC contains scores of maps of the city, ranging in scale from several blocks to the entire three counties that comprise the metropolitan Detroit region and even to the scale of the Great Lakes region. These maps chart present industrial uses, suggested employment districts, transit routes, potential park sites, and vacancy rates. The most controversial of these is DFC's map of future service provision (Figure 1). In that image, DFC states that some of the highest vacancy areas of the city – which are also overwhelmingly the poorest areas of the city – will have its services "replaced, repurposed, or decommissioned" over the next 20 years. DFC tells us that such a transition will still ensure basic service delivery, at the same time it tells us that it will eventually retire existing city systems.

Lucas Kirkpatrick (2015) interprets this map as the smoking gun that reveals that DFC will require forcible, state-sponsored displacement. In his recent article in *The Journal of Urban History,* Kirkpatrick plots a narrative of displacement by the suspension of infrastructure and services. If this proves insufficient incentive for people to leave, so that residents in service-poor neighborhoods choose to stay put, he imagines that state violence may then be required to meet DFC's goals. Kirkpatrick speculates on a mechanism by which this state violence might occur: he imagines that the governor could exercise his power to appoint an Emergency Manager, a power recently deployed to file bankruptcy on the City's behalf, to carry out forcible displacement. Even if this worst-case state force scenario did not come into play, it would be bad enough of the residents of these neighborhoods were to stay put and find themselves with even worse services than they currently have. DFC might "shut off the tap," and in so doing effectively force residents to move or tolerate deteriorating quality of life.

In the scholarly imagination as in the popular mind, DFC is so tethered to problems of relocation and displacement at this point that it even gets tied to the mass foreclosure crisis still wracking Detroit. Consider an article appearing online at the Atlantic, which narrates a tragically common occurrence in Detroit: Esters, a longtime resident and poor pensioner has a water leak in her basement that, in a city with unusually high water bills, eventually costs her $4000. As her fixed pension income cannot cover the cost, she falls behind on her water bill; the balance is transferred to her property tax bill. This process escalates until Esters' house – which she owns outright – enters foreclosure, which forces her to bid at auction for a house she already owns. Then, a strange connection to DFC:

> "Regardless of whether she manages to keep her house, the future of Esters's neighborhood may not be in her hands...Detroit Future City's maps show that Esters's and Brown's neighborhoods are set to be emptied out, with the recommendation that they be "steadily depopulated." (Hackman 2014)

This article presents the "steady depopulation" sought by DFC alongside foreclosures carried out by the County and City for back taxes. The article, in other words, articulates DFC alongside foreclosure, water bills, the Land Bank, and struggling pensioners in Detroit's East Side, all of which seem to add up to a grand displacement problem for Detroit. DFC is pretty durably connected to those problems, which will likely always leave it with doubts about whether it can produce its more just city.

Analyses like Kirkpatrick's and that which appear in the Atlantic participate in a particular genre of critique: they frame DFC and plans like it as an instrument of systemic violence that casts it as a new incarnation of a familiar injustice. Among urban scholars, this mode of violence is framed in three ways: urban triage, urban renewal, and austerity urbanism. "Urban triage" is an urban planning strategy popular in the 1970s modeled on battlefield

medicine. Urban triage figures the city in terms of a body system and distressed cities as requiring strategic intervention. The idea is that the most troubled neighborhoods will be effectively amputated – resources will be withdrawn and channeled into other neighborhoods that still have the opportunity for recovery. Alternatively, plans like DFC are branded as models of "urban renewal," an epithet for the 1950s planning that cleared slums and erected high-rise buildings and modern highways in city centers. Finally, this systemic violence is characterized as participating in a particularly neoliberal form of governance, austerity urbanism: "At the most basic level, austerity urbanism is a reduction in government resources linked to tax revenues that evaporated in the wake of the 2007–08 global economic crash...taxes and social expenditures were out; belt tightening and 'realistic' spending were in" (Hackworth 2015, 769). In other words, DFC should be understood as a belt-tightening measure consistent with restricted access to credit and tax revenue for most major American cities.

Each of these critiques focuses on DFC as a distributive mechanism, as a way of doling out goods and services. They all treat DFC, in other words, as a policy document with discrete plans, or at the very least likely distributive tendencies that are uncovered by reference to some historical pattern. In the case of triage, the objection is that DFC targets some neighborhoods for "amputation" and thereby leaves behind the city's most vulnerable residents. In the case of urban renewal, the critique is that resources and development incentives will be targeted downtown and in the pockets of entertainment moguls. In the case of austerity, much like triage, in the absence of credit to rebuild the city, DFC will knock down buildings in Detroit's poorest neighborhoods and produce a landscape much like that of urban triage.

In treating DFC as a distributive document, these critiques read injustice out of a map, and thereby proclaim "this space is unjust." I argued in Chapter 2 that, in the context of a theory of spatial justice, such a proclamation provided little insight into theories of justice. Here, though, we are faced with a different application of these critiques: these distributive critiques instead argue that certain injustices can be read out of the maps that DFC produces. Maps of service provision can provide insight into the likely injustices of DFC, so long as we can place DFC in the right theoretical framework for diagnosing its ills. Isn't there good reason to take these distributive critiques seriously, even if they don't add up to a theory of spatial justice?

Although it is certainly worthwhile to think of the possible ways that DFC might be used to intervene in Detroit's development politics, what I object to in these analyses is that they treat such distributive outcomes as a foregone conclusion owing to some external criteria. Doing so, I argue below, does some amount of interpretive disservice to DFC, as one of DFC's most central aims is to represent Detroit as it is now and suggest a future for it in which population growth is not a central figure, rather than dictate the specific distributions of resources along discrete and well-known lines. In so analyzing DFC, I treat DFC as a representative strategy that seeks to shift conceptions about the preconditions for just relations in Detroit. I will argue that whether this Detroit is an instrument of distributive injustice is ultimately a matter that will be settled by actors well outside DFC. Whatever the outcome of that political process, rather than starting with an external framing of DFC as an instrument of some other kind of spatial logic and patterning that will dictate its injustice, I now analyze how DFC urges the transformation of Detroit.

Detroit the Vacant City

Whatever else DFC might be – policy intervention, object of scorn, instrument of displacement, saving grace of the city – it is also quite clearly a representation of Detroit. It is, in other words, a spatial bid for the city: an argument about where things are located relative to each other. DFC is concerned at the outset and throughout its document with the problem not only of how to plan for the future, but also of how to help us see Detroit anew. DFC tells us at the very beginning of the document:

> "To transform Detroit into a new, healthier, safer, more prosperous, and socially just city requires a new understanding of the city as it is right now, an imperative to share information and decision-making power, and a willingness to abandon fixed ideas and old approaches, in favor of fresh, clear-eyed understanding." (Detroit Works Project 2012, 15)

DFC wants to transform Detroit, and doing so will both require some new ways of thinking and the circulation of those ideas among political and philanthropic institutions. Again:

> "...everyone who cares about Detroit [must] set aside what they *think* they know about the city, and cultivate a deep, mutual understanding of what the city really is right now." (10, emphasis original).

DFC must represent the city as it is right now, must show us where things are relative to each other.

Although DFC positions itself as quite clearly intervening in how we know the city, DFC's critics have overwhelmingly treated it not as a representative document, but instead as a plan with distributive outcomes. To the contrary, here I argue that understanding DFC's relationship to justice and injustice also requires understanding it as engaged in transforming how we understand and envision Detroit. DFC – and the "shrinking cities" literature with which it shares important similarities – aims to shift our thinking about quality of life in contemporary

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cities like Detroit. Specifically, DFC represents a transition in Detroit from high vacancy to low

density not via moving population, but by transforming land use.

Framework Zones: From High Vacancy to Low Density

So what is the Detroit that must be grasped with clear eyes? Although there are various

facts that DFC would like us to know, the most central one concerns vacancy, and we know this

because of a representative strategy that DFC calls "framework zones." These framework zones

categorize the city's present conditions according to physical and market characteristics (see

Figure 2). They accomplish two things: they both map the city as it is now and, in so doing, self-

consciously seek to guide "public, private nonprofit, and philanthropic decision makers" as they

plan the city. The framework zones map is the "fundamental tool" for these decision makers

(Detroit Works Project 2012, 107). These framework zones will, DFC hopes, direct development

funds, guide infrastructure like water line maintenance and street lights, and assign new land uses

for the city over the next 50 years. Although DFC quite clearly seeks to be part of a policy

conversation, it does so by categorizing areas of the city.

DFC's ambition is to envision the city as a whole by using these framework zones to

direct future development and planning:

> "The boundaries of the Framework Zones were determined not only by vacancy
> conditions, but also by neighborhood identity and physical separation created by
> major pieces of infrastructure or variations in land use. The goal was to analyze
> districts and neighborhoods in their entirety, not on the basis of parcel-level or
> block-level conditions." (Detroit Works Project 2012, 107)

Thus, the framework zones are more than simply maps of vacancy at the block level; instead,

they represent entire areas of the city as they relate to infrastructure, land use, and market value,

with continuity among blocks in mind. They are the largest scale from which DFC sorts the area of the city.

However holistic in its criteria for determining the framework zones, it is *vacancy* that dominates DFC's vision of Detroit as it is now[16]. The vast majority of Detroit's land is bounded in framework zones sorted according to vacancy characteristics, and only a small amount of the city's land is categorized "cemetery," "major park," or "industrial." The one major exception is "greater downtown," which has its own framework zone because of its unique combination of high vacancy but high market value potential. And DFC tells us that there is an important reason to represent the city this way: "Land is Detroit's greatest liability and its greatest asset" (DFC 93). Specifically, *vacant* land marks both this challenge and opportunity: "Today, approximately 20 square miles of Detroit's occupiable land are vacant. Within this context, the City of Detroit finds itself insolvent and struggling to provide the core services Detroiters need" (99). Likewise, in describing the challenging market conditions of Detroit real estate, DFC explains that "...vacancy quickly becomes abandonment, blight, and a public safety risk. These realities represent real, physical hurdles to Detroit's redevelopment, and demonstrate a diminished quality of life" (99). Although there are other challenges to just land use in Detroit – toxic sites, sewer overflow – vacancy is among the biggest problems and holds the biggest opportunity for Detroit's salvation. So whatever else the framework zones mean to convey, they quite importantly mean to represent vacancy in the city. Detroit is a city with a vacancy problem.

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16   DFC addresses and represents other problems, as well: joblessness, lack of access to transportation, failing schools. Yet the framework zones, the self-proclaimed fundamental tool of DFC, organize themselves according to vacancy. Thus my analysis will focus on this measure.

Vacancy may be prevalent, but why is it a problem for Detroit? And in what ways is vacancy an issue of justice? In answering this question, it is important to keep in mind that vacancy is not necessarily nor always conceived as a problem. (Bowman and Pagano 2004) argue that vacancy can be understood either a problem or an opportunity for cities, and perhaps even both at once. That is, they argue that vacant land is a necessary condition for development and land reuse. Vacant land might be transformed into a City park, or developed into housing, or made into a recreation center. They argue that in a healthy real estate market, there will be few parcels that remain vacant for long periods of time, but there will likely always be some baseline level of vacancy in the city. It is not every form of vacancy that is harmful, but widespread and persistent vacancy, that is a problem for cities. My discussion below will concern the effects of widespread vacancy.

So: what's the problem with widespread vacancy? There are some general problems of vacancy that produce some injustices noted by DFC. First, widespread vacancy leads to the loss of city tax revenue. In cities in the US, revenue is raised in large measure through the collection of property taxes. Tax revenue decline is a function of not only fewer households who pay property taxes as they leave for different cities, but also falling property values within shrinking cities. As residents move to the suburbs or far-flung locations, or as residents fall behind on city taxes or mortgage payments and lose their homes to foreclosure, the city loses sources of tax revenue.

Second, increased vacancy creates some unique service delivery problems in the city, related to but distinct from revenue problems. The story goes like this: when cities are depopulated, there are fewer people to pay for services, but the area over which those services

must be distributed does not necessarily change. This is because, in Detroit, vacancy is unevenly dispersed throughout the city, and in many cases unevenly within neighborhoods. The city does not decommission services to any given neighborhood or block, because only some houses are vacant (and thus do not require services). In other words, Detroit still has 140 square miles of land area, and there are, generally speaking, residents who require trash pickup and water delivery in even the most abandoned blocks. Thus, the city must still deliver services to all of its land area, despite fewer households and residents requiring those services. This is a problem of efficiency rather than simply revenue loss – the city must provide roughly the same service per acre, even though there are half as many people using and paying for those services (Dewar and Weber 2012).

A third problem frequently associated with vacancy is blight, itself a heavily freighted concept. Unoccupied buildings, if left unoccupied, are often transformed. Scrappers strip buildings for copper, light fixtures, and anything else of value. Arsonists set fire to the building in order to collect insurance money, or else for entertainment. Rain and snow cave in roofs. In all these cases, vacant buildings can become blight. With that blight is said to come danger, most often for children who play next door. That danger comes in the form of structural damage – holes in floors, crumbling ceiling joists, crime, or fire. Fires can spread from a vacant house to an occupied one all too easily, especially in a city finding it difficult to provide functioning fire hydrants or adequate firefighter response time to many neighborhoods.

Fourth, but less often noted, vacancy and population loss might also lead to social and economic isolation. The vastness of Detroit makes it difficult to get around except by automobile. Yet 25.2% of Detroit's households do not own vehicles, and it is likely that they live

in the neighborhoods with the highest vacancy rates. Thus, residents of these areas are effectively cut off from much of the rest of the city. Likewise, because not only residents but also jobs have largely left for the suburbs, people may find it difficult to get to work. For example, ABC's "Person of the Week" James Robertson, walked 21 miles per day in order to travel from his Detroit home to his $10.55 per hour job in the suburbs (Laitner 2015).[17]

DFC enrolls these features of widespread vacancy into justice claims about Detroit. In brief, DFC recognizes that the city contains many inequitable distributions, concerning not only vacancy, but also environmental hazards like regular sewer overflow and air pollution. The distribution of these harms is, according to DFC, an issue of justice: "Not everyone in Detroit bears the burden equally. Past decisions, policies, and practices placed disproportionate environmental and health burdens on poorer neighborhoods" (Detroit Works Project 2012, 99). Given these inequities, DFC hopes to prove to you, throughout its 300 pages, that "a new approach to land use must now correct these inequities" (Detroit Works Project 2012, 99). In other words, DFC argues that the right form of planning can contribute to a more just city.

I interviewed the project leader for DFC, who was responsible for much of the document's design. Without prompting, he noted the fundamental injustice marking so much of the city of Detroit. I asked him to say more, at which point he noted that some of Detroit's most entrenched quality of life problems were most pronounced in the most vacant areas, and furthermore that the residents of those areas were disproportionately elderly, black, women,

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17 The story of James Robertson is both telling and tragic. Robertson, after a decade of walking 21 miles to and from work, was catapulted to momentary national fame when a local newspaper caught wind of his long daily march. A Detroit college student, touched by Robertson's story, raised over $300,000 to help Robertson with commuting expenses. Not long after Robertson received both the money and a brand new car donated by a local auto dealer, he moved to an apartment in the well-to-do suburb of Troy, saying "I may have been born [in Detroit], but God knows I don't belong there anymore" (Laitner 2015). Robertson reported being aggressively pursued for a share of his windfall profits by other residents and the landlady of the apartment where he lived. Rob

and/or not participating in the official labor market. In short, Detroit's past had already produced the conditions of injustice in the city by depriving structurally disadvantaged groups of necessary services, and vacancy was the marker of this injustice. He put it more bluntly: "People with the least are traveling the farthest to get groceries." DFC, he told me, tried to imagine a future for the city in which residents of these areas would receive the services they needed. This, he said, would require realigning services in some pretty radical ways, because the city could not afford to provide services in their present form. That DFC engages in some form of belt-tightening should not be surprising given that its development was prompted by Detroit's impending bankruptcy. It would be easy to interpret DFC's professed inability to afford more traditional service delivery models as an indictment of its austerity or triage tendencies: DFC is simply trying to rid Detroit of its least efficient services and neighborhoods. Although it is without question the case that DFC is engaged in some degree of belt-tightening, it is also the case that DFC advocates more than simply enhanced service delivery efficiency. For example, DFC focuses on numerous quality of life issues like pollution remediation and transportation delivery to all areas of the city[18].

Such an emphasis on quality of life was evident during my interview with Dan Kinkead. He put the problem to me this way: "how do you direct development strategically without letting the market rip the city apart?" There is a sincere aim in DFC to enhance the quality of life for Detroit's poorest residents by ridding the city of vacancy's greatest harms: long travel times, poor service delivery, lack of greenspace. Furthermore, he stressed repeatedly that Detroit's older model of development and service provision was itself never sustainable, that the sprawling, single-family detached housing that marked Detroit's postwar boom created infrastructure

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18 For an extended discussion of the ways in which DFC is not simply an austerity measure, see (Schindler 2014).

burdens that the city could not meet, and furthermore effectively made all Detroiters dependent on automobiles that not all could afford. As the city depopulated and subsequently had less money for service provision, these most vulnerable populations were left behind.

That Detroit's past and present – in particular issues of racialized access to housing and employment – are littered with injustices that are now literally built into Detroit's landscape is hardly a controversial claim. The spatial distribution of vacancy is, in important ways, the product of racially uneven access to housing that was overwhelmingly built in Detroit's suburbs and jobs that fled for the suburbs. DFC takes a structural distributive approach to these injustices, arguing for the provision of modified services (more on that soon) and goods to residents who are most effected by this legacy. Doing so will, according to DFC, require a new type of urban landscape, where green-space is integrated into the city, and density is incentivized in some distinct areas of the city.

Kinkead's hope is that a re-imagined city, informed but not determined by DFC, could bring those services to the people living in the most vacant neighborhoods. In effect, DFC wants quality of life relative to race, gender, age, and class disparities to be the measure of justice and injustice in Dertroit. This claim concerns the injustice of the present, widespread and unevenly felt vacancy in Detroit, and the ability for a differently imagined city to re-position services, shops, and parkland relative to its most marginalized citizens. This is a model of justice and injustice animated by widespread vacancy: quality of life for those who are most persistently disadvantaged.

In short, for DFC, some of the most pressing problems of vacancy pertain to neglect: neglect by the city, state, and region to adequately provide for people made vulnerable through

white flight. DFC positions itself as attending to that neglect through strategic intervention into Detroit's housing, business, transit, and infrastructure development. For DFC, Detroit is a city with a vacancy problem that must be solved.

How to Make and Unmake Vacancy

DFC does more than simply argue that vacancy is a problem, however. DFC was at the center of one of the most extensive efforts to map vacant residential land in Detroit. This is important to note because vacancy is a condition that becomes a potential site of intervention for policy makers; yet vacancy had to be *made* an issue of injustice in Detroit. And DFC was at the center of an effort to represent that condition in Detroit, to make its patterns and distributions known. DFC not only argued about injustice of vacancy, but needed to establish it as a problem that could be solved.

Although this may seem like a pedestrian point – that DFC had to represent the vacancy that could become an issue of injustice – the importance of this representative strategy becomes especially clear when reflecting on vacancy's precarious conceptual status. Despite neat figures declaring that Detroit has 20 square miles of vacant property, vacancy is hardly a straightforward category of analysis. There are different kinds of vacancy: the vacancy of the derelict building, the momentary vacancy of the temporarily unoccupied apartment. Further, there is emptiness that never counts as vacancy. The rural lot, or the large front yard of a suburban mansion, will perhaps never count as vacant.

One might think that a more strictly legal definition could solve this problem: vacancy is the absence of legal occupation. Yet "occupation" is by itself a sufficient, but not necessary,

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condition for eliminating vacancy. Take, for example, Detroit's side-lot program. Let's imagine a house in Detroit which, for any number of reasons, the owner ceases to occupy. After the owner leaves, that house becomes unoccupied. After some years, many storms and burst pipes, that unoccupied house becomes "blight," a status that very well might doom it to demolition. Once knocked down, the lot remains unoccupied, even though the house is gone. That lot may languish under city ownership for some period of years, at which point nearly everyone would agree that it is vacant. Recently, it became possible for neighbors on adjacent lots to purchase these vacant lots from the city for a small fee. The deed is then transferred to the new owner, at which point the lot is no longer vacant. Nothing about the status of the lot's occupation changes in this scenario – before, the city owned a vacant lot; now, a next-door neighbor owns it. Neither occupies it; yet it has changed from vacant to not. Occupancy is not what makes this lot vacant – the next door neighbor who comes to own this lot doesn't occupy it in any more real way than she did before. Instead, there is a relationship between use, ownership, and proximity that has been transformed.

Recognizing the breadth of types of vacancy, one group of authors define vacancy as "unused or abandoned land," a definition that has expansiveness on its side but opens two conceptual problems just as it settles the problem of occupation (Bowman and Pagano 2004, 7). First: what counts as use? After all, a building may be considered "vacant" even though sheltering unsanctioned residents or trees that take up a more permanent residence. Alternately, vacancy will pertain even when "used" for the purpose of speculation: in Detroit, for example, some major portion of "vacant" land is owned by speculators, whose sole use is to extract future

value from the land.[19] Vacancy, too, might refer to land that was never previously developed: in the rapidly developing city of Phoenix, for example, vacancy comprises the undeveloped, city-owned desert north. Such undeveloped land might constitute a park or greenbelt in other cities, not "vacant" land. Second, what is the relevant scale at which "land" will be considered unused or abandoned? Given that there must be emptiness – and thus potentially non-use - between all bodies, at what point does that relationship constitute unused land? Here, legal boundaries will be absolutely central: land has to become a lot before you can even conceive of emptiness. The reason why a suburban lawn, although consisting of perfectly "usable" land, is not considered "vacant" is because of the legal boundary for that lot. That is, vacancy is a characteristic of use assigned at various scales – the lot, the building, the apartment, the bedroom, the bed.

My intention in this brief discussion is not simply to frustrate the reader in the conceptual vagueness of vacancy; yet neither is my aim to provide a strict definition for the term. Instead, my point is that vacancy is a condition that must be made, argued for, negotiated, and represented for it to become an injustice that DFC is charged with resolving. The question is, then, how did vacancy become a problem for Detroit?

In the first place, widespread vacancy is a historical problem made by suburban flight: since the 1950s, over half the city's population left, and nobody took their place. There are many reasons why such a process occurred: racially uneven access to housing and employment were

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19 One might be tempted to draw a hard line here between "use value" and "exchange value," and thereby to define speculated land as vacant in a straightforward way, because speculated land is simply the container of exchange value and not use value. Although such a distinction is no doubt important in policy battles over speculation, I see no good reason to refuse to consider speculation a "use" in determining if land is vacant. If, for example, we consider "storing totaled automobiles" to be a use and thus a local junkyard is not "vacant" property, or if we consider a city dump to not be vacant but instead a location where garbage is stored, then it seems that "speculation" (wherein abstract exchange value is stored) should also, on its face, count as a use. This is not an argument about legitimate use – it seems to me that widespread speculation is an especially harmful use that ought to be heavily regulated. The point of the argument here is that "use" is itself an insufficient criteria for determining when land is vacant.

among the most significant forces (Sugrue 2005). For purposes of thinking about vacancy, we could say that the federal government subsidized white flight in Detroit by providing low interest, and therefore inexpensive, loans to new homeowners, the terms of which were overwhelmingly favorable to white homeowners in Detroit's suburbs and excluded would-be Black homeowners. If we have found the origins of white flight, then we have also found one of the origins of widespread vacancy (at least insofar as we here describe Detroit's particular variety of vacancy, which is the widespread vacancy owing to depopulation in the city's borders): many of Detroit's white homeowners left for the suburbs and there were not commensurate incentives for new home occupation in the city. More recently, attention to widespread vacancy has shifted to another supply-side mechanism: mass eviction precipitated by the 2009 foreclosure crisis (Hackworth and Nowakowski 2015). The reasons for suburban flight are also likely demand-side: Reynolds Farley has spent considerable time arguing that white flight was driven in no small measure by whites' aversion to living in mixed-race neighborhoods (Farley, Krysan, and Fielding 1997; Farley et al. 1994).

In the second place, vacancy is a representative problem. While white flight and its motivators were a crucial part of making widespread vacancy, vacancy also required spokespeople before it could become an issue of injustice. In other words, widespread vacancy is a problem insofar as its particular distribution became politically present and salient. Who or what made vacancy present? Where did such spokespeople emerge? As a starting point, we can say that DFC positions itself as a spokesperson for vacancy, insofar as it establishes facts like Detroit's 20 miles of vacant property and establishes framework zones with variable levels of vacancy. On what grounds do they speak for vacancy? The answer to this question involves the

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Detroit Residential Parcel Survey (DRPS), an organized survey of volunteers who, in the summer of 2009, drove nearly every street in Detroit to chart the vacancy characteristics and physical condition of every residential lot in the city.

Vacancy's representatives were also on the very lots themselves. We get a sense for this when we examine the definitions that surveyors used in conducting the survey (Figure 3). Surveyors are asked to evaluate the properties by reference to some specific criteria and cues: a tarp placed over the roof to keep out the rain signals that someone lives in this place, that it is cared for. A punched-in window makes a house not simply vacant, but "vacant, open and dangerous," a new category demanding its own remedies.

The importance of these materials in representing vacancy becomes especially clear when we consider the alternative survey that mapped vacancy, the Motor City Mapping survey conducted in winter 2014. According to one organizer of DRPS, because MCM conducted its survey in the winter, surveyors relied on different measures to assess vacancy (Lewinski 2016). The same tarp that in the summer protected the inside of the house from rain kept out the winter's snow. Although summer rain sheds off the roof, snow simply covers the tarp, renders it invisible to the surveyor. Yet other indicators for vacancy become more visible in the winter: a shoveled driveway or sidewalk indicates non-vacancy. Tamped down boot-prints might signal regular walking over the walkway to the home. In all cases, surveyors are asked to enlist different materials to determine the vacancy of a property.

To say that DFC, in collaboration with DRPS, produced vacancy is not to say that vacancy is somehow "not real" or "constructed" or some-such. It is instead to say that "vacancy" as it is known in Detroit is in part a product of DFC. In that sense, DFC helped to set the agenda

of injustice in Detroit: we now know the particular contours of vacancy geographically, and with sufficient Census data, we can layer those contours on top of each other until we emerge with a particular picture of injustice in Detroit.

This is the basis of DFC's claim that Detroit has a vacancy problem: mapping the contours of that vacancy, translating features of the housing stock into questions of injustice. DFC is hardly alone in arguing that the distribution of widespread vacancy is unjust: nearly everyone agrees that vacant land is a problem for Detroit that needs to be addressed. To be sure, a fringe set of proposals wish to see vacancy remain in Detroit. One author infamously proposed that Detroit's vacant downtown skyscrapers should be allowed to slowly crumble and a theme park should be erected around them (Vergara 1999, 1995). An out-of-town artist took a similar idea on the road, shipping a foreclosed home to Europe to display in an art gallery (Stryker 2016). Fortunately, much more common than these memorial proposals is to turn vacancy into something else. For DFC, vacancy can be transformed from an agent of injustice into a solution to Detroit's inequities. Doing so will require rethinking vacancy's trajectory and possible solutions.

Transforming Vacancy

What, then, should be done? DFC's own answer to this question involves transforming high vacancy neighborhoods into low density neighborhoods. The framework zones represent Detroit as it is now, and are coded primarily according to vacancy rate. It is that "clear-eyed understanding," given to us by the framework zones, that DFC hopes will guide future land use decisions in Detroit. And within those framework zones, that future land use is established by

"land use typologies" (some of which are listed on the left hand column of Figure 4) which designate the specific land use that can be pursued within any given framework zone. Each block and neighborhood within each framework zone will be identified along one of the following land use typologies: neighborhood, industrial, or landscape. Each broad land use is then broken into more specific land uses, shown in the right hand columns. Using a development matrix (Figure 5), decision makers will plan each neighborhood in the city. The framework zones are thus the descriptive, and macro-level context that guides the potential land uses for individual, block and neighborhood-level planning.

To visualize how this process of framework zones and land use works, consider two very different, but adjacent, neighborhoods in northwest Detroit: Grandmont-Rosedale and Brightmoor. Grandmont-Rosedale, according to DFC, is entirely encompassed by a "Low-Vacancy 1" framework zone. According to DFC, roughly 26% of the city's land area is similarly "low-vacancy" (108). Following the matrix of land use typologies in Figure 5, there are now several choices to make about block-by-block planning within this 2.5 square mile neighborhood: development may proceed along traditional low density residential, traditional medium density residential, green mixed rise (a form of development incorporating vacant lots alongside residential properties), neighborhood center, or district center. In point of fact, DFC suggests land uses for the framework zone, coding the part of Grandmont-Rosedale that straddles Grand River Ave (a major traffic and commercial thoroughfare) as "neighborhood center," a form of mixed-use commercial and high density housing development. The rest of Grandmont-Rosedale is slated as traditional low density or traditional medium density. The framework zones propose few development changes in neighborhoods like Grandmont-Rosedale, Detroit's

historically low-vacancy neighborhoods with persistent property values. There is little vacancy to transform, and Grandmont-Rosedale's density patterns will remain more or less the same.

It is Detroit's high-vacancy framework zones where the most radical changes are proposed. Just west of Grandmont-Rosedale, across Evergreen Road, lies one of Detroit's most photographed and discussed neighborhoods, Brightmoor. Although a small portion of the neighborhood is accorded a "low vacancy 2" framework zone, most of it is coded either high vacancy or moderate vacancy 2. In the moderate vacancy 2 areas, the matrix tells us that "green residential," "innovation productive" and "innovation ecological" are the available options. DFC recommends that much of Brightmoor be transformed into "innovation ecological," wherein ecological features are integrated into neighborhoods within the city (see Figure 6). Innovation ecological land use will incorporate forest and farm land, stormwater runoff settling ponds, and large park areas. Green residential is a similar, if less radical, version of land use, with room for scattered houses alongside these innovative ecological features. Those areas of the city, like Brightmoor, will not be developed with more houses, but transformed into new and reputedly sustainable uses. DFC's recommended land use strategies for the entire city are shown in Figure 7.

This map is the basis of Kirkpatrick's assertion that DFC will ultimately involve either displacement or cessation of city services, a point to which I will return shortly. Here, though, I want to stress that DFC also urges another kind of transformation in how we think about Detroit: if DFC is successful in its representational strategy, then low-vacancy areas will remain low-vacancy; high-vacancy framework zones will become "innovation ecological" or "green residential" or "productive ecological." Gone from this land use map is any mention of vacancy,

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and with it the old-fashioned zoning categories of residential, commercial, industrial, and the like. Instead, this map specifies new categories and uses for areas of the city, like Brightmoor, which are presently encompassed by "high-vacancy" and "moderate-vacancy" framework zones. Vacancy, in the new map, is transformed into innovation ecological, green residential, blue-green infrastructure, and a smattering of low and moderate density traditional residential zones. All of these land uses effectively transform the vacancy of the framework zone into residential areas according to a different condition to which vacancy is closely and often confusingly related: density. Grandmont-Rosedale will retain its moderate density residential and commercial character; Brightmoor, on the other hand, will be transformed from vacant to low density.

Density and vacancy might be, but are not necessarily, related conditions. Consider a few different hypothetical (and admittedly unrealistic) scenarios:

- Decreased density; unchanged vacancy: A city of 1.6 million residents contain 800,000 households, each of which contains exactly two residents. One day, a single person from each household in the city leaves. The city's population would decrease by 50%, yet its vacancy rate would remain unchanged, as the remaining residents would continue to occupy all available housing.

- Increased vacancy; unchanged density: A city of 1.6 million residents contains 800,000 households, each of which contains exactly two residents. One day, every household in the city decides to consolidate, such that 1.6 million people now live in 400,000 housing units. The remaining households are at least temporarily vacant. The city's population density remains unchanged, yet its vacancy rates rise to an astonishing 50%.

- Increased vacancy and decreased density: A city of 1.6 million residents loses half its households. The housing vacancy rate is now 50% of all available units; density is now 50% of its former figure.

The third scenario describes Detroit's most vacant neighborhoods like Brightmoor. So, whatever the potential conceptual distinction between vacancy and density rates, in practice they have proceeded in tandem, as Detroit's vacancy rate increased while its overall population decreased during the period of the 1950s-present.

Perhaps because of their historical co-development, density and vacancy are often used interchangeably. DFC, for example, often elides vacancy, blight, abandonment, depopulation, and low density, often without noticing that it is doing so:

> "Density directly impacts the financial condition of the city. Areas of the city with high land vacancy only generate a fraction of the tax revenue that higher density areas produce. The problem is compounded when city systems, originally sized for a higher density, must be maintained and renewed for a population that is significantly smaller" (94).

In this passage, DFC moves between density, vacancy, back to density, and finally to depopulation (which, again, need not be related to vacancy). So these related problems travel together and are presently difficult to parse, both within DFC and outside it.

Although density and vacancy have proceeded together historically, and although DFC often uses those terms interchangeably, DFC's most radical intervention is to invite its readers to imagine that those conditions are separable when thinking about Detroit's future. The healthier Detroit that DFC imagines is one where vacant property, whose contours are well known because of DRPS, is transformed not into occupied property but into property that is put to use. It does so by shifting from neighborhoods with high vacancy to neighborhoods with low density. It is this

difference between density and vacancy that DFC employs in its representations of the city, even while it does not parse them conceptually in its descriptions of Detroit's land use.

This is DFC's great spatial bid: DFC aims to re-envision Detroit such that the problems and materials of vacancy are remade into new networks and associations with density and use at their center. Density and vacancy are in this sense different assemblages, with different materials and discourses. Vacancy, as we have seen, enlists lost residents, lack of occupation, blight, dumping, and inadequate service provision; density, on the other hand, is a point on a continuum, from less to more dense, which still has land use and maintenance as one of its central elements. DFC transforms neighborhoods with a high concentration of vacancy into less dense neighborhoods. Blight is torn down, lots are mowed to make dumping less possible, vacant lots are made into infrastructure delivery assets, transportation networks are reformed to put Detroit's residents in new connection with downtown, the suburbs, and cross-town traffic.

Adapting to depopulation – and allowing low density to be the marker of this transformation - requires not simply a discursive shift or simple re-branding, but also knocking down buildings, planning for green-space, changing legal codes to allow for alternative land uses, establishing a land trust. In other words, adapting to vacancy is a material and discursive bid to place actors in new social and spatial relationships to each other. But DFC is not a bid to move population; rather, certain neighborhoods will be transformed from "vacant" to "low density" as a permanent feature of the city. For example, houses that are "blighted" must be torn down or given over to different uses, whether demolished and shipped to a landfill or turned into a house decorated with flowers ("Flower House Detroit" n.d.). Vacant land might host any number of temporary cultural, recreational, or economic activities. Often, it is hoped that these

uses will be entrepreneurial in character, emerging from residents' desires for particular goods or services. A vacant lot might become an erstwhile skate park; an empty house might become an art installation. All these uses can be planned for and managed, rather than simply tolerated until some development project is found to take their place.

DFC's demonstrates its commitment to transforming vacancy via land use and low density in its *Field Guide to Working With Lots*, a supplementary, 72-page document produced by the DFC implementation office in 2015 (Detroit Future City 2015). The *Field Guide* is a workbook, filled with worksheets, pages for notes, and instructions on how to connect with neighbors and identify potential sites for neighborhood transformation. At the end of the document, there are 36 ideas for how to transform vacant lots into stormwater management, urban agriculture, shade cover, or park space. It is a guide for transforming Detroit's vacant lots into used lots.

Residents of those neighborhoods are positioned as the initiators of these vacant lot transformations. As a workbook, it is quite clearly addressed to the "you" who might fill out worksheets that takes responsibility for "what happens in your neighborhood." The reader and will, first of all, gather their neighbors and start a conversation about what vacant lots might do in the neighborhood, assess available lot soil composition and stormwater holding potential, develop a budget, and ultimately transform a lot. It is an ambitious, if perhaps overly hopeful, attempt to enlist Detroit's citizens to organize and implement city transformation. To be successful, this field guide will rely on entrepreneurs who can organize, plan, budget for, and implement land management in the city. And it is these residents who will create value –

understood more expansively than simply exchange value or economic value – in Detroit's least dense neighborhoods[20].

Likewise, the problem of inadequate infrastructure delivery needs to be shed from these high-vacancy framework zones for them to become low density neighborhoods. Infrastructure delivery can be managed and planned for with pockets of lower density in mind, both by transforming infrastructure and cultivating so-called "green infrastructure" in its wake. Kinkead's "alternative service provision" might provide one means for shedding service delivery problems; then again, Kirkpatrick's "decomissioning" might provide another, a point I will return to in the final section.

What makes DFC's approach radical is that it seeks to accomplish all this not by managing the location of population, which has been the typical target of vacancy transformation strategies, but instead by transforming land use. To see why this is a break from past planning, consider the 1998 Community Reinvestment Strategy (CRS), developed under Mayor Dennis Archer (1997). Like DFC, the CRS was a framework for redeveloping the city. The CRS, too, made frequent mention of vacancy, blight, and abandonment as major obstacles for Detroit. But unlike DFC, the CRS proposed a transformation of vacant spaces in only two limited ways: either vacant property was to be knocked down and then redeveloped, or else it became green-space and parkland. Yet the CRS proposed to redevelop and repopulate all areas of the city. In other words, CRS hoped to solve the problem of vacancy with population, to transform vacancy into occupation.

DFC, however, embodies an alternative planning ideal that often goes under the name "shrinking cities" planning. Shrinking cities can usefully be thought of as "adaptation to

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20 DFC's reliance on a volunteer labor force to transform vacant lots is not without its critics. See (Kinder 2016).

depopulation"[21]. That is, shrinking cities takes as its starting point the understanding that populations may not increase in heavily depopulated cities like Detroit. Consequently, widespread vacancy and its attendant problems will not be resolved by attracting more population and thereby increasing market demand for housing; planners must, instead carefully manage land and service delivery (Rybczynski and Linneman 1999; Blanco et al. 2009; Hollander 2011; Popper and Popper 2002). These authors are not simply pessimistic or resigned to a city's decline. On the contrary, they begin with a conceptual shift to recognize that population decline is at the very least benign on its own terms, that it does not represent a necessary threat to the health of cities, that it need not be countered. Depopulation may be here to stay in cities like Detroit, and the question for adherents of shrinking cities planning is "what ought the city do with all its vacant land?"

This stance toward population puts DFC at direct odds with the history of urban planning and documents like CRS. Advocates of shrinking cities frequently tell a story about the history of planning and the radicalness of the new planning ideal. The story goes like this: since its inception, urban planning was a discipline tasked with the management and promotion of urban growth. Growth was a characteristic of both population – mass immigration to urban centers from rural areas coupled with increasing birth rates for much of the 20th century – and the actual land area of the city: as city populations grew, so too, did the borders of cities. Cities as diverse as Detroit, Boston, Miami, and Topeka all increased both their population and land area during

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21 I am inspired in this definition by planner Margaret Dewar, who described shrinking cities planning as "adaptation to vacancy" (Krohe 2011, 12) . While pithy and helpful in pointing our attention to making do with existing infrastructure and urban conditions, this characterization implies that vacancy will become a durable feature of the landscape, when in fact nearly all versions of shrinking cities planning would like to see vacancy transformed into something else. In other words, this definition risks eliding the very terms of the debates active in DFC and plans like it: vacancy, population, and density.

this period.   With that urban growth came a whole catalog of social problems related to sanitation, transportation, housing and more.

Urban planning as a professional discipline emerges in the United States at exactly this moment of explosive urban growth, and the management of growth's attendant social problems has been the profession's fundamental challenge. Given that growth was at once its enabling condition and fundamental challenge, the story goes that shrinking cities present some problems that urban planners are ill-equipped to manage. For a long time, say some advocates of shrinking cities, urban planners have tried to encourage growth in cities with declining population. Instead, the time has come to adapt to depopulation. Adapting to depopulation means that planners and city officials will *not* attempt to reverse depopulation and treat it as a disease to be cured, a sign of the faltering health of a city. Instead, depopulation is conceptually equivalent to growth, and permanent depopulation is an imaginable feature of cities. Thus, the permanently shrunk city, one where population declined over some time period and there is no plan to increase population, becomes a conceivable urban planning strategy.

To put this all more directly, shrinking cities, and DFC with it, understand differently the relationships among population, vacancy, and urban systems. Where standard approaches like the CRS attempt to solve some of the problems attendant to urban depopulation with increased population, DFC will dis-aggregate depopulation from vacancy, and instead of managing population will attempt to manage land use. The movement, properties, and perturbations of population are neither the primary concern of DFC, nor the point of intervention for its strategies. Instead, DFC makes the transformation of vacancy its primary target. The particular character of that transformation is from vacant neighborhoods into low density neighborhoods.

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This depopulated city must be actively planned for *not* by directly managing a population, but instead by transforming land use itself. This is not to say that DFC has no relationship to managing population, as it quite clearly seeks to stabilize population numbers in the city and thereby not increase vacancy rates in the city. But the solution to Detroit's present vacancy problems will not be located in the management of population. DFC wants to convince us that a less dense city might be a healthy one with a high quality of life for all residents.

This point about DFC and its desire to represent the problem of vacancy and the low density solution to it is precisely what is left out of the distributive critiques of DFC. By focusing on the distributive outcomes of DFC and the analytical context that will direct it, critics have tended to overlook one of DFC's primary interventions: that it makes an argument about what a healthy and just city might be, and therefore to introduce a way of thinking about Detroit that does not rely on markets or population movement to resolve its planning problems. My argument in the preceding section showed this interpretive failure on the part of critics like Kirkpatrick: they misread what DFC does.

Such an ambition on DFC's part does not, of course, obviate the need to think about how it will be deployed and what that means in real terms for Detroit's citizens. How might this problematically vacant city become a simply less dense one? How does the conceptual distinction materialize into city space and services? This is not simply a discursive problem: vacancy isn't transformed simply by looking at it a different way. Rather, those lots must become parts of new networks and associations. What might vacant properties become associated with to transform them? I take up these questions in the next, final section of this chapter, in which I

argue that the interpretive miscalculation I identify above leads to a set of analytic and political problems.

Conclusion

So: will DFC ultimately end up in displacing Detroit's most vulnerable residents? There are basically two ways of answering this question. The first examines DFC as a policy document that advocates or at the very least allows – either covertly or overtly – displacement or not. This approach focuses on the intentions of DFC, about what it plans to distribute where: does it advocate displacement? Or, in the absence of covert advocacy, do its recommendations create the possibility for displacement? The second approach, and the one I want to endorse here, argues not for uncovering DFC's intentions, but instead concerns the question of how DFC is enrolled into political networks.

The difficulty of the approach that seeks to uncover DFC's intentions is that DFC itself makes very few statements about how, where, or whether people living in its lower density neighborhoods will move, and in fact explicitly disavows forcible displacement. When DFC does explicitly mention the possibility of population movement, it is equivocal:

> "The Detroit Strategic Framework recommends a gradual depopulation of these areas, but recognizes that there will be residents still living in these areas for years, if not decades, to come. These areas are comprised of both residents who feel strongly attached to their neighborhoods and do not want to leave, and others who would gladly relocate to a more traditional neighborhood if they had the means or opportunity. For those who would choose to relocate, programs should be developed to allow them to do so. For those who choose to stay, it is imperative to ensure that their basic levels of service are met, including provisions for safety and security. New alternative land uses provide jobs opportunities for residents around agriculture, aquaculture, energy fields/ forests and research plots. Pilot projects around alternative city services such as waste collection, recycling, and non-fixed route transit ("transit on demand," available to residents by appointment or by diverting nearby routes on request) should be developed in

these areas while vacant commercial corridors should be repurposed for blue infrastructure. While the long-term identity of these neighborhoods should not be residential in character, they still must sustain and support the people who live within them" (DFC 257)

So here we have DFC gesturing toward some "alternative land uses" and advocating for "programs to be developed." Some residents of high vacancy neighborhoods will choose to stay for decades; others will choose to relocate if given the means (and DFC vaguely advocates providing the means). For those that remain, services should be provided. If we are looking for what DFC advocates, all we are given are some vague endorsements.

Given the ambiguity of the above statement and despite DFC's own claims to the contrary, it is tempting to imagine that the document implicitly advocates population movement. This is, for example, Kirkpatrick's assessment: under DFC these neighborhoods will, in the long term, become "not residential." In Kirkpatrick's words, this is an "oddly delivered assurance," that services could be "replaced, repurposed, or decommissioned," at the same time that DFC promises to deliver services to those same neighborhoods. Given this statement about "not residential" and DFC's maps of neighborhoods like Brightmoor that leave out representations of houses, one might well argue that DFC is either naive or intentionally deceitful in its only brief figuration of movement and, with Kirkpatrick, make the assessment that DFC will require the relocation of some 88,000 people.

I asked DFC's project leader to comment specifically on whether DFC would require the displacement of residents or, alternatively, their forced independence from standard city services. He denied it, and then said the following to me:

> "One of the things that I would have done differently is to emphasize that traditional infrastructure might be decommissioned, but that people will still receive services in a different model. We spent too much time talking about

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decommissioning without spending a commensurate amount of time on their replacement" (Kinkead 2016).

In other words, DFC didn't make its intentions clear, and this has led critics like Kirkpatrick to speculate on the document's ability to produce mass displacement. Critics claims that DFC is an instrument of injustice; DFC itself denies its participation in displacement. How do we resolve this conflict? One way might be to compare DFC to other shrinking cities plans; another might be to place DFC in the context of urban planning more generally.

The trouble with any answer to this question is that it asks us to speculate on a matter whose answer we cannot possibly know in advance. DFC is purposely vague, less a policy prescription than a framework, a vision for what the city might become. Thinking about it as a policy document that implies displacement supposes that we can read out of it a set of distributions, that DFC is a map that either resolves injustices (as a certain kind of booster might be tempted to think) or reveals injustices (as its critics suppose). Although DFC may in the end do either of these things, DFC asserts quite plainly that it is a framework meant to guide a decision-making process and not a set of policy prescriptions. DFC states it, as does the document's initial lead planner, Toni Griffin:

> "We did not want to leave the city with static illustrative pictures of what their city could look like...There were already lots of those around. We wanted to leave the city with a tool that would enable people to manage change, because as you know Detroit is still very much in flux in terms of its governance, fiscal structures, city services, population loss, and ever-changing composition of land vacancy." (Gallagher 2015)

DFC is a tool that first and foremost represents Detroit, a representation that invites certain justice claims about vacancy and quality of life. This, I think, is how we need to interpret DFC: not as document of distributive certainty whose intentions we can uncover, but instead an

impetus for potential political formations around population, land use, vacancy, and urban sustainability. It is a document of potential rather than certainty.

Given these radically divergent potential uses for DFC, the most sensible political strategy is to attempt to understand its likely trajectories and guard against them: what kinds of arrangements could DFC be enrolled into, which of them are more or less likely, and what kinds of material, discursive, and political allies would need to likewise be enrolled for justice or injustice to come into existence? Thinking about DFC this way entails understanding it as a document whose future involves something of a controversy that can only be settled politically – DFC might be an instrument of displacement; it might an instrument of austerity; it might transform the city's relationship to population; it might become just another dusty and utopian planning document on the shelves of city archives. It also might become more than one of these – both an instrument of austerity and a radical refashioning of the relationship between vacancy and density in American cities. The important point is that whether it will result in displacement or any other form of injustice depends less on what DFC itself advocates and more on the way in which its representations are enrolled politically.

In a sense, this question about likely outcomes is what critics like Kirkpatrick and Hackworth speculate on: they attempt to uncover the logic of triage or austerity in which DFC participates. These critics initially acknowledge the potential for DFC to become any number of things, but then immediately settle the question of DFC's likely outcomes by using external frameworks like triage and austerity: because DFC is a triage document, it is likely to produce displacement, as do all other triage documents.

What would be required for DFC to become an instrument of triage? Kirkpatrick defines triage as "any plan or policy that spatially targets expenditures on the basis of viability, such that the ways in which the flow of public resources to 'non-viable' neighborhoods is constricted" (263). It was a strategy explicitly pursued in the 1970s, but has since fallen out of favor as an explicit strategy. The basic strategy of urban triage, modeled after wartime medical practice, was to codify and save the areas of the city that were still viable, while directing resources away from those areas that were at risk of death. Roger Starr, who became associated with slum clearance in 1970s New York, was its most infamous practitioner. If DFC is in fact an urban triage plan masquerading as sustainable planning, then it will almost certainly require the displacement of residents.

So how likely is this scenario? What other actors would DFC need to be associated with for DFC to become an instrument of triage? Prominently, DFC's representations of vacancy would have to be translated into *viability*: "Like all triage-based policy, the plan sorts neighborhoods by viability" (266). Such a transformation is possible given the contingent character of DFC, but not particularly supported by DFC's own statements and maps. DFC itself makes only a handful of references to viability, most often in the context of the viability (in other words effectiveness) of different land management solutions. When it does reference neighborhood viability, it does so to argue for the importance of *maintaining* viability of neighborhoods (in what Kirkpatrick might call a "classic triage" approach). In any case, at no point does DFC explicitly link "viability" to vacancy characteristics. DFC is more likely to use viability as a defensive strategy against encroachments of planning strategies rather than as a tool

to diagnose distribution patterns in the city.[22] It is beyond doubt that DFC does in fact codify the city according to *vacancy* rates, yet DFC does not associate that vacancy with viability, insofar as "viability" stands in for ability or need to be saved. Whether or not it's a promotional stunt, DFC explicitly states that there is a future for all neighborhoods in Detroit. It is an open question, of course, and one that I won't try to settle here, whether DFC will, in the end, be durably associated with triage. Much like whether it will be an instrument of displacement, resolving this question requires political intervention by DFC's critics, commentors, and boosters, and the actors that do or don't consent to DFC's own recommendations[23].

Another possibility into which DFC might be enrolled is austerity. Where Kirkpatrick assesses DFC by translating vacancy into viability, Hackworth translates vacancy into opportunity for private investment, and thereby into austerity. Erasure and demolition are the means by which he associates DFC with austerity. Hackworth argues that DFC cannot possibly reduce the infrastructure costs in Detroit while also providing services to citizens in the high-

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22 See the following pages for a discussion of viability: 107, longterm strength and viability, seemingly of the city; 167, overall viability of the city; 172, viability of management solutions; 201, viability of deployment solutions; 208, viability of strategies; 208, viability of neighborhoods undermined to the benefit of other neighborhoods; 277, in reference to how demolition will affect neighborhood viability; 339, the viability of different solutions.

23 I do, however, want to draw one important distinction in thinking about triage: it's important to keep in mind the difference between and actor and an analyst when talking about enrollment. An actor will attempt to enroll DFC into a political project, and will require allies to translate DFC into either a document of displacement or not. An analyst, on the other hand, shows what allies are associated with DFC. These two categories are, of course, fluid to some extent – all analysts are in the business of translating allies into networks – but they do different things. As an actor, Kirkpatrick would be concerned with actually turning DFC into an instrument of triage, in his case by discursively transforming vacancy into viability. His article in the Journal of Urban History might, if circulated widely and made part of other networks critical of triage, play some part in that. So in that sense, whether DFC is an instrument of triage is something we cannot yet know – we will have to see whether other actors agree, and Kirkpatrick provides some clues about which actors will be necessary.
As an analyst, on the other hand, I think Kirkpatrick's assessment of DFC leaves out precisely that DFC transforms vacancy not into viability, but instead into sustainable density. And the analytic point is that Kirkpatrick treats DFC as if the justice problems were already well known and captured in the historical pattern of triage. That analysis falls flat because he treats DFC as a document that distributes, not as a document concerned with creating spatial representations that will be picked up by other actors. The point is simply that we can read Kirkpatrick as engaged in a recognizable political position whose analytical position misses some of the most important elements of DFC, and in fact grafts terms onto DFC that do not fit.

vacancy framework zones. Likewise, he argues that DFC provides no plan for building affordable housing, a state of affairs that will likely mean that DFC is just undertaking demolition. Finally, once the existing infrastructure and buildings are knocked down, DFC does not have a vision of what will replace demolished properties, and in the context of funding sources, private investment is the likely outcome. That is, he argues that there are an existing set of networks into which DFC, whatever its intentions, might be enrolled. There are well-defined networks for funding blight-busting, but fewer such networks for building affordable housing and alternative infrastructure. Thus, he translates DFC into austerity by moving from demolition through what is absent in DFC: a clear plan and funding for how to proceed. This allows him to argue that rightsizing plans like DFC are only superficially committed to greenspace and instead want to create investment and development by erasing what is present.
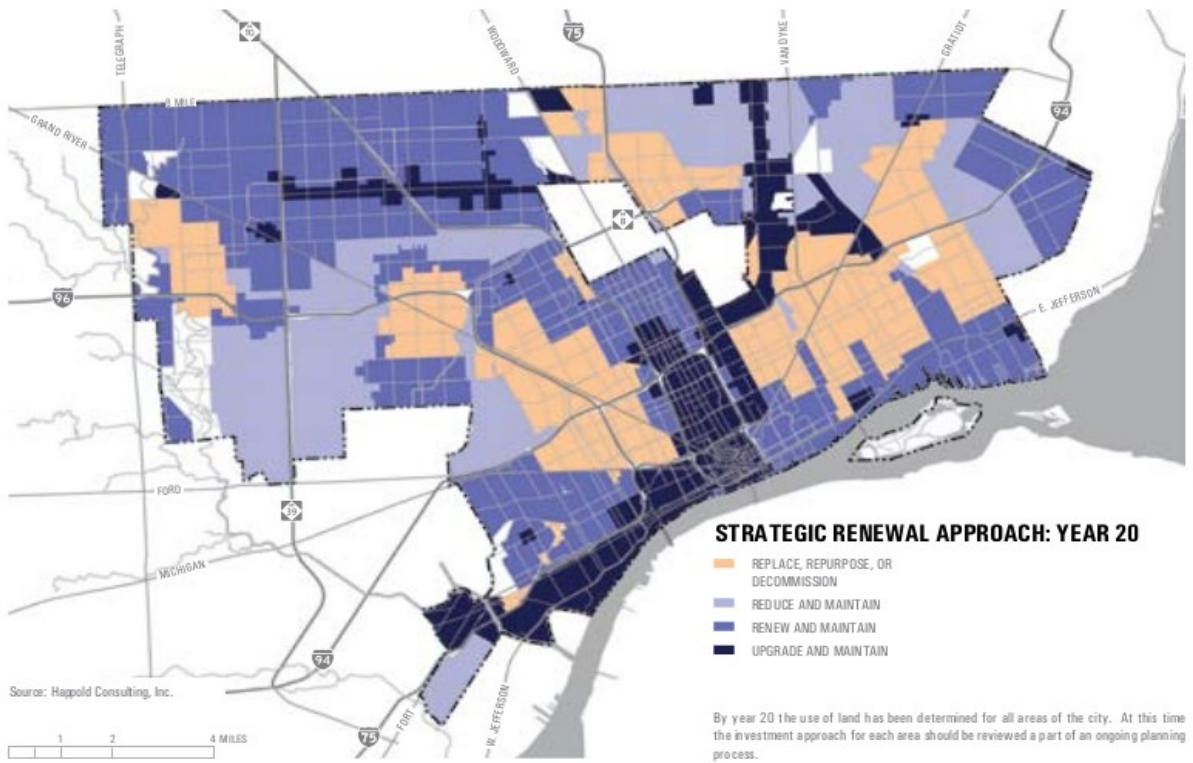
As I argued above with Kirkpatrick, whether DFC will be enrolled in such a way is largely a political matter in which DFC will play some part. To date, DFC has done little, beyond some explicit denials, to assure residents that they will not be required to move. That, I think, is the failure to which Kinkead pointed in my interview: DFC should have spent more time discussing how, exactly, services in high-vacancy neighborhoods would be "replaced or repurposed," rather than creating the impression that they would simply be "decommissioned" and thus neighborhoods erased as Hackworth speculates. In any case, it is clear that whether DFC is an instrument of displacement, austerity, or erasure is dependent on how actors well outside of DFC implement it.

There is some indication that although DFC could be enlisted in mass blight busting efforts, its status in Detroit planning politics is more benign. Although this would take another

chapter to determine, I did receive some insight on DFC's status within the planning and development department from a former employee (2017). At the city level, it seems as though DFC is being used mostly as a source of data. This informant said that when Mike Duggan was elected Mayor in 2013, he quickly distanced himself from the widely unpopular DFC. There have since been some efforts to determine how and whether DFC might figure in city planning: this informant was involved in a process to determine if there were any parts of DFC that aligned with the visions of some of Detroit's strongest community organizations. She said there was some overlap, mainly on questions of green infrastructure and industrial siting. Likewise, one staff member of DFC has joined the planning department. But more than these planning and policy implications, it seems that DFC has been a source of data: "For the most part, I now see it as a wealth of information in terms of the surveying that was done in that organization." Unfortunately, I have not yet received a response from this informant to find out exactly what data is being used and in what ways. But her statement does suggest that DFC's most durable contribution to Detroit planning is its status as a database.

This informant's evaluation of DFC's data and assessment of DFC is a good place to close this chapter: "Of course the city has all sorts of problems, but I don't consider DFC one of them." She may, in the long-run, be right or wrong. But in any case, this chapter showed that DFC has to be read as a representation of Detroit and alternative version of a just city. Whether DFC can ultimately cultivate that vision remains to be seen. I do think it's important, however, to understand DFC and the process around it not as simply arguing for distributions that can be called just or unjust, but as instead engaged in a representation of Detroit that argues for a particular configuration of justice: a city where high quality of life is decoupled from a promise

of population increase. Recognizing as much requires withholding judgment about DFC as a distributive document and instead assuming that it is a tool that might be enrolled into any number of potential political alliances. Such an analysis requires approaching DFC from the spatial justice framework I have been advocating.

STRATEGIC RENEWAL APPROACH: YEAR 20

- REPLACE, REPURPOSE, OR DECOMMISSION
- REDUCE AND MAINTAIN
- RENEW AND MAINTAIN
- UPGRADE AND MAINTAIN

Source: Happold Consulting, Inc.

By year 20 the use of land has been determined for all areas of the city. At this time the investment approach for each area should be reviewed as part of an ongoing planning process.

STRATEGIC RENEWAL APPROACHES SUMMARY				
UPGRADE AND MAINTAIN	**RENEW AND MAINTAIN**	**REDUCE AND MAINTAIN**	**MAINTAIN ONLY**	**REPLACE, REPURPOSE, OR DECOMMISSION**
▪ Service Level: Improved service level maintained at better quality ▪ Actions: Fully maintain and undertake renewal or upgrade as required ▪ Outcomes: Improved neighborhood with increase capacity and resilience	▪ Service Level: Core service level at the same or better quality ▪ Actions: Fully maintain and renew at current level or upgrade if required ▪ Outcomes: Viable neighborhood with same or increased capacity	▪ Service Level: Core service level but for a smaller number of residents as they will likely not regain their original number of residents in the future ▪ Actions: Maintain and undertake scheduled renewal at lower capacity ▪ Outcomes: Area continues as viable neighborhood with lower capacity	▪ Service Level: Basic service level but quality declining over time ▪ Actions: Planned maintenance extending current systems life ▪ Outcomes: By 20 year horizon, systems are either renewed at full or reduced capacity	▪ Service Level: Basic service level but quality declining over time ▪ Actions: Planned maintenance to extend current systems life ▪ Outcomes: Area transitions from current use in 20-25 years. Systems eventually retired.

Figure 1 Strategic Renewal Approach (DFC, 175)

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FRAMEWORK ZONES

- GREATER DOWNTOWN
- LOW-VACANCY 1
- LOW-VACANCY 2
- MODERATE-VACANCY 1
- MODERATE-VACANCY 2
- HIGH-VACANCY
- INDUSTRIAL LAND USE STRENGTH
- INDUSTRIAL LAND USE CHANGE
- MAJOR PARKS
- CEMETERY

Source: DWPLTP Planning Team

The Framework Zones map was developed from thorough research and analysis of the city's physical and market conditions. The composite mapping is framed around degrees of existing and anticipated vacancy throughout the city. The Detroit Works Project Short Term Actions used similar criteria in the development of their city-wide mapping.

ANALYSES THAT INFLUENCED THE FRAMEWORK FOR DECISION-MAKING		
RESIDENTIAL PHYSICAL CONDITION ANALYSIS	MARKET VALUE ANALYSIS	DWP SHORT TERM ACTIONS INTEGRATED ANALYSIS
DESCRIPTION Evaluation of prevailing physical conditions and household occupancy trends in residential areas across the city, identifying areas sharing common characteristics to inform decision making and strategy.	Evaluation of market factors and trends across the city, identifying areas sharing common market value characteristics to inform decision making and strategy.	Designation of general market types by the City of Detroit based on physical conditions and market value characteristics, articulating specific short-term governmental roles for intervention.
INDICATORS Percent change in households 2000-2010; vacant land; vacant housing; housing condition	Median housing unit sales price 2009-2010; sales price coefficient of variance; percent residential properties in REO; subsidized rental stock; vacant lots; vacant, open, and dangerous buildings; foreclosures; commercial/residential ratio; owner occupancy	Residential Physical Condition Analysis; Market Value Analysis
SOURCES Hamilton Anderson Associates; Data Driven Detroit; US Census 2000-2010	The Reinvestment Fund; Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG); US Census 2010; Data Driven Detroit; US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); Wayne County Assessor's Office	Detroit Planning and Development Department; The Reinvestment Fund; Hamilton Anderson Associates

Figure 2 Framework Zones (DFC, 106)

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Figure 3 Detroit Residential Parcel Survey Definitions ("Detroit Residential Parcel Survey: Survey Overview Presentation" 2010, 15)

HOUSING TYPE:	
Single Family	1 unit in dwelling
Duplex	2 units in dwelling
Multi Family	3 or 4 units in dwelling
Apartment*	More than 4 units in dwelling
Commercial*	Non-residential structure; Catch all for any parcel not captured in other categories
	* Partial data collected not utilized in this report.)
CONDITION:	
Good	Well maintained; structurally sound; no more than 2 minor repairs
Fair	Maintained; structurally sound; minor exterior damage; 3+ repairs needed; up to 1 major repair; property can still be rehabilitated fairly inexpensively
Poor	May not be structurally sound; major exterior damage, major repairs needed
Demolish	Not structurally sound
Vacancy Probable	Structure appears to be uninhabited, indicated by several factors such as: foreclosure sign, lack of maintenance, accumulation of mail
Vacancy Possible	Structure appears to be possibly uninhabited, indicated by one of the following: foreclosure sign, lack of maintenance, accumulation of mail
Vacant, Open & Dangerous (VOD):	Structure has open point of entry, meaning a broken or missing window or door
Fire Damage:	Structure has fire damage visible from exterior of structure
VACANT PARCEL:	
Un-Improved	Parcel with no structure and no improvement such as a paved lot, accessory structure, fence, park
Improved	Parcel with no structure, but was improved with a paved lot, accessory structure, fence, or park

Detroit Residential Parcel Survey – 2/2010
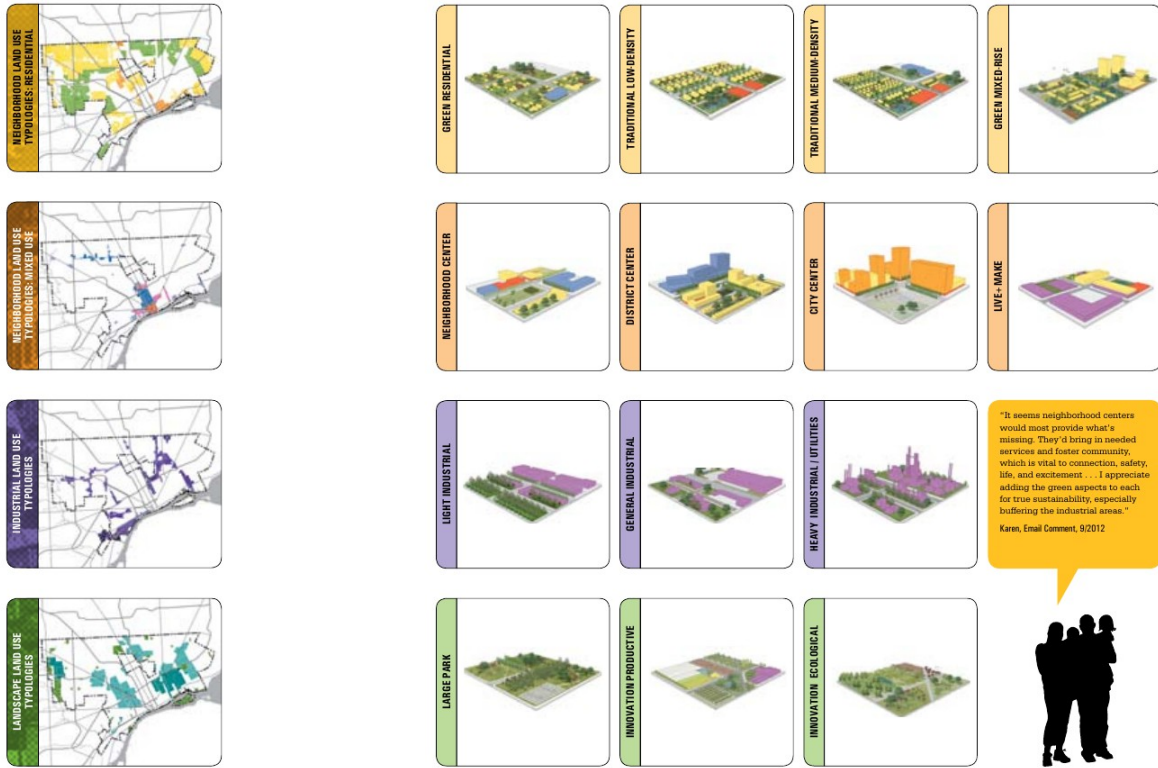
Figure 4 Strategic Framework Zones (DFC, 113)

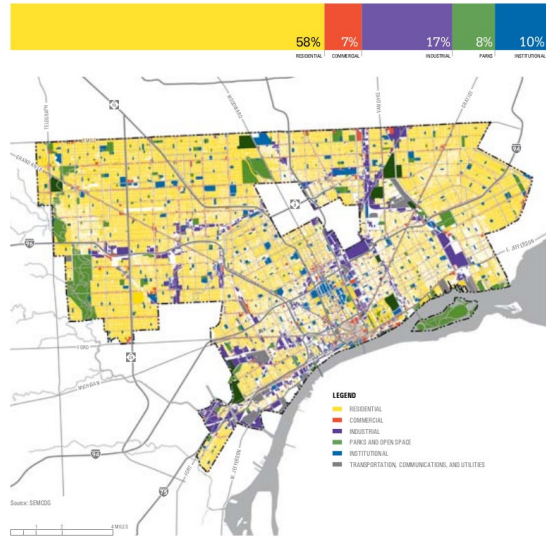*Figure 5 Development Matrix (DFC, 122-123)*

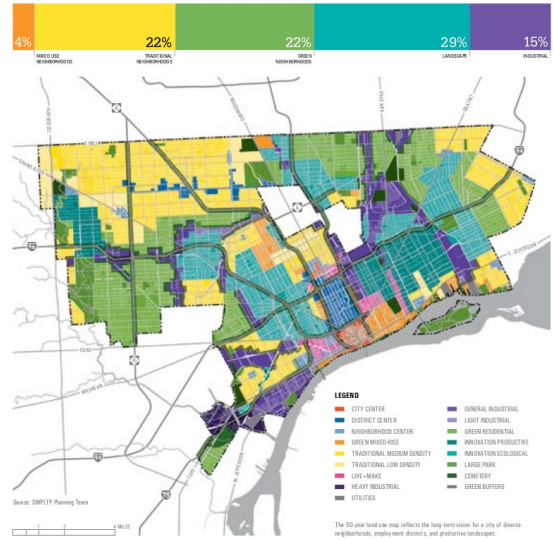*Figure 6 Innovation Ecological Land Use (DFC, 117)*

INNOVATION ECOLOGICAL areas are landscapes of innovation, where ecological development types predominate. Here forests, meadows, and other landscapes develop gradually over time and cost very little (or nothing!) to "construct" and maintain. Flowering meadows gradually give way to forests, and the changing landscape supports a variety of plant and animal life, including birds like pheasants. These landscapes can develop on their own, or can be guided to different types of desirable landscapes, which may be especially suitable for a particular species, or more appropriate for stormwater management, or a quick-growing forest that shades out tall grasses and prevents them from growing, improving visibility and eliminating need for mowing. A portion of these areas is devoted to blue infrastructures to manage stormwater, and working+productive landscape development types are also found here as a tertiary use, occupying no more than 10% of the land area not allocated to blue infrastructure.

Figure 7 Before and After, (DFC, 118-119)

EXISTING: CURRENT LAND USE

58%	7%	17%	8%	10%
RESIDENTIAL	COMMERCIAL	INDUSTRIAL	PARKS	INSTITUTIONAL

Source: SEMCOG

LEGEND
- RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- PARKS AND OPEN SPACE
- INSTITUTIONAL
- TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATIONS, AND UTILITIES

PROPOSED: 50-YEAR LAND USE SCENARIO

4%	22%	22%	29%	15%
MIXED USE NEIGHBORHOODS	TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS	GREEN NEIGHBORHOODS	LANDSCAPE	INDUSTRIAL

Source: DWPLTP Planning Team

LEGEND
- CITY CENTER
- DISTRICT CENTER
- NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER
- GREEN MIXED-RISE
- TRADITIONAL MEDIUM DENSITY
- TRADITIONAL LOW DENSITY
- LIVE+MAKE
- HEAVY INDUSTRIAL
- UTILITIES
- GENERAL INDUSTRIAL
- LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
- GREEN RESIDENTIAL
- INNOVATION PRODUCTIVE
- INNOVATION ECOLOGICAL
- LARGE PARK
- CEMETERY
- GREEN BUFFERS

The 50-year land use map reflects the long-term vision for a city of diverse neighborhoods, employment districts, and productive landscapes.

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CHAPTER V

Conclusion

Political theorists have recently become interested in the role of things in politics, most visibly by the proliferation of "new materialism" as a conceptual frame. Perhaps most prominent among these accounts has been Jane Bennett's *Vibrant Matter*, which Bennett calls an "onto-story" about the actancy of things. Bennett hopes that attunement to the "actancy of things" – an efficacy similar to "agency" – might have far-ranging political consequences:

> "What would happen to our thinking about nature if we experienced materialities as actants, and how would the direction of public policy shift if it attended more carefully to their trajectories and powers?" (Bennett 2010, 62)

Bennett here asks about the politics of nature, but the literature on new materialism extends this question more broadly: how might policy and politics be transformed by the insight that things are active participants in politics?

In this conclusion, I demonstrate the value of spatial justice for thinking about new materialism. Without quite offering a direct answer to Bennett's question, I argue that my theory of spatial justice suggests a particular way of answering it: *participation* rather than *innate capacity to act* should be the focus of new materialists who analyze the role of things in politics. I will argue that new materialists like Bennett have left themselves open to the critique of mysticism because they have tended to analyze things as acting independently of the assemblages within which they operate. Yet I will also argue that there is another analytic possibility latent in these accounts, one that investigates the specific materials and alliances by

which things become political actors. This latter analytic possibility better carries forward the mission of new materialists to take seriously the actancy of things.

The core of this argument is my spatial justice analysis of vacancy. I will argue that there are ways of understanding vacancy that treat it as imbued with innate capacities to enchant us, namely, in the debate around ruin photography. Spatial justice can help us see the liabilities of this approach – that this argument renders invisible the multiple meanings and possibilities for ruins, possibilities that will only unfold as ruins are enrolled into particular political alliances. I contrast that account of ruins with my own analysis of vacancy that I began in Chapter 4 and will continue here. Spatial justice directs us to the ways in which vacancy is itself an actor enrolled into various political alliances, and thus is a spatial relationship of potential. My theory of spatial justice thus urges new materialists to de-emphasize that things are acting and instead to trace the alliances that humans and nonhumans find themselves in.

Innate Capacities

There is a tendency among new materialists to hope for the possibility that a deeper appreciation of the power of things can give us a new and better politics: "[enchantment with things] will enhance receptivity to the impersonal life that surrounds and infuses us, will generate a more subtle awareness of the complicated web of dissonant connections between bodies, *and will enable wiser interventions into that ecology*" (Bennett 2010, 4, emphasis mine). Roman Coles has suggested that *sympathy,* a psychological and affective transformation, will be the instrument that motivates us toward different policies (Coles 2016).[24] Kathy Ferguson, too, locates a transformative – and arguably liberating – power in printing presses of 19th century

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24 Bennett has also explored sympathy as a political concept, arguing that it is itself a "vital force" that connects us with the material world (2016)

anarchists, which she argues provided an object around which anarchists developed a durable politics in the face of active state oppression (Ferguson 2014). Gay Hawkins argues that thinking through the multiple effects of plastic bags might unsettle our too-quick ethics of bag banning (Hawkins 2010). The point, in all cases, is that things have the power to rearrange our politics, should we only have eyes to see them and a sympathetic disposition.

These accounts implicitly treat things as actors with innate qualities that move relatively autonomously and exert their capacities on the world. Such an innateness is evident in Gay Hawkins' account of the "thing-power" of a plastic bag whose two layers are stuck together:

> "in this ordinary moment, the bag does not simply perform utility; it also presents its materiality as something to be experienced and negotiated. The sticky plastic makes a polite request to the human to be patient and persistent, to rub her thumb and finger together and get a better grip. When the bag opens, panic is converted into appreciation" (2010, 127).

That the bag is not performing utility at that moment seems clear enough: it resists the attempt of Hawkins to open it. What is striking is that Hawkins renders that performance independent of her own participation in making "utility," contingent as that concept is on Hawkins' own designs and performances. In so doing, she has imbued the bag itself with action, and seemingly removed it from the assemblage that includes the author. Although Hawkins explicitly acknowledges the importance of thinking in assemblages at various other moments in her account, the bag nonetheless appears to have some innate ability to act. This capacity is then thought to effect Hawkins' political commitments: the bag "disrupts knowledges of it as dangerous and destructive. Its mundane practicality challenges the circuits of guilt and conscience that drive command moralities: *say no to plastic bags!*" (2010, 127). Here we have an example of how

things act in politics: they exert tedencies that are already formed, and in so doing challenge ethical commitments.

There are two related problems with this understanding of things acting in politics. First, it implicitly relies on a notion of agency that its authors seek to displace. As Abrahammson et al. (2015) argue in relation to Bennett, that things don't act on their own. Rather, the point of actancy as it developed in Science and Technology Studies, the literature to which new materialism so frequently traces its intellectual lineage, is to distribute action among the collectives within which they operate. Abrahammson et al. argue that Bennett, like Hawkins, takes for granted the thing-power of omega 3 fatty acids, which Bennett argues can cause people to behave in certain ways by altering their moods. Yet Bennett, in her search for the vitality of matter, glosses over the very scientific findings on which she relies: fatty acids only influence the moods of some very specific prisoners who lack fatty acids in their diets. In other words, whatever vitality fatty acids might have emerges in particular contexts, interacting with myriad other acids, translated into scientific findings and broadcast in medical journals; there is no blanket statement available about what omega 3 acids are or do, as Bennett implies. Nothing (humans included) acts in isolation, and it is a mistake to derive a political mandate from those things isolated from their assemblages.

The second problem, related to the first, is that because things may act in any number of ways depending on the allies with which they are enrolled, there is no obvious politics that emerges from enchantment with any given thing. Consider the example of vacancy. Although I am not aware of any analyses of vacancy that explicitly endorse account of actancy outlined above, there is one especially prominent treatment of vacancy that implicitly relies on its

enchanting qualities: ruin photography and its surrounding literature. As a photographic genre, "ruin pornography," as it is often derisively called, captures the vacant buildings and lots of cities in a state of decay. Ruins photographers and their defenders argue that these physical landscapes of vacancy affect us with an appreciation of the failures of capitalism. Ruins do so by participating in multiple time scales, quite literally making the past present. For example, Marchand and Meffre, in a description of their project *The Ruins of Detroit*, say

> "Detroit presents all archetypal buildings of an American city in a state of mummification. Its splendid decaying monuments are, no less than the Pyramids of Egypt, the Coliseum of Rome, or the Acropolis in Athens, remnants of the passing of a great Empire" ("Yves Marchand & Romain Meffre Photography" n.d.)

That is, these ruins tell the tale of explosive boom and subsequent bust of the Fordist fantasy of Detroit. In a recent review article on ruins, Desilvey and Edensor (2013) argued that ruins are often portrayed in these photographs as "memory traces – in the form of ruined factories and abandoned infrastructure – contain[ing] within them the potential to counter the passive acceptance of economic decline" (468). Ruins, if we have the eyes to see them, can instruct us on the violence of global capitalism, which built and then abandoned countless cities like Detroit. I think the connection between ruins and the above conception of matter is stronger than just a mere parallel: at moments, Jane Bennett is invoked explicitly by those who tout the ability of ruins to enchant us with the past and impose on our designs (Göbel 2014, 52; DeSilvey and Edensor 2013, 476).

The problem with such an approach to vacancy, as numerous critics have noted, is that ruin photography implicitly detaches vacancy from the networks and assemblages in which they are enrolled. So, on the one hand, ruins photographers are critiqued for their decision to quite

literally leave citizens out of the picture, thereby participating in a genre of frontier-making (Safransky 2014). Yet even at its best, say its critics, ruin photography removes those buildings from their particular histories, and places them instead on museum walls or in coffee table books where viewers can imagine whatever nostalgic history they prefer. One critic has called such nostalgia a "war on memory, dislocating the political dynamics of ruin in favor of momentary sensations and lurid plots" (Finoki 2009). As Jerry Herron argues, the former Hudson's department store in Detroit was often understood as an emblem of the golden era of American cities, where one could shop in a bustling downtown. But, he argue, such a vision of Hudson's is "...a kind of screen upon which we can replay an idealized past — a past without any of the problems that made the utopian promise of suburbia seem worth abandoning the city to fulfill" (Herron 2012). Hudson's mission was in part to create a consuming class, a class that eventually left downtown for suburban shopping malls (where they could find more Hudson's stores, of course). Ruin photography removes ruins from the assemblages in which they existed, and translates an empty building into an aesthetic spectacle that can bear any meaning whatsoever. In other words, ruin photography has relied on the innate aesthetic quality of ruins to be transform our ethics.

Ruin photography carries in it both possibilities: to enchant us with a critique of capitalism; to enchant us with revulsion at insensitive gawking. As the ruin travels from the assemblages within which it is embedded, it goes through the translation of the photographer, the publisher, the museum wall; or perhaps the ruin tourist; or perhaps the resident looking for shelter. In any case, we can't know what a ruin will inspire, not in a photograph and not standing in context.

What this suggests is that there is nothing automatic about the particular constituencies, justice claims, or social networks that will emerge from an encounter with ruins; vacancy has no actancy that is intrinsic to it. The capacity for ruins to act politically will be shaped by the allies with which they travel. And I think that ruins-gazing, at its best, manages to distance itself from some particularly unsavory allies – notable among them, openly racist white suburbanites who lament the city's decline as a function of its becoming increasing black (Steinmetz 2008). The point is that we just don't get to a better politics by imagining that ruins or vacancy acts on us in some mystical way. What matters is how those materials ally with certain actors and not others.

Although there is a tendency among new materialists to understand actancy in the above manner, it is also possible to read them as advocating for a different kind of perspective on the actancy of things. I think the better way to read new materialists is that they are working toward, but sometimes not articulating, a view of things participating in politics. Spatial justice, I argue, can provide a vocabulary for this intuition.

Vacancy the Participant

So, if the role of things in politics is not simply to transform the worldview of willing human participants, how do things participate in politics? The answer is precisely that things *participate*: any actor is one of many allies moving toward a political goal, all of whom are working in alliances. The methodological implication is "...instead of seeking to resolve once and for all whether non-humans qualify as participants in social and political life, we must ask how these entities *acquire and lose* such powers in specific circumstances" (Marres 2012, 106, emphasis mine). It is a question of the particular allies with which different materials are assembled, and the collective capacities of those constantly evolving assemblages. For example,

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when Noortje Marres analyzes carbon accounting technologies like the tealight mentioned in Chapter 1, she does so by tracing the specific ways in which its user is enrolled into electricity markets, climate politics, and an environmental ethic. The effect of that tea light is not simply to network an environmentally concerned citizen in new ways, but also to "encourage the bifurcation of the public sphere into two separate domains of professional and lay participation" (Marres 2012, 76) by rendering engagement with these networks effortless and automatic. The tea light might enable participation, but not necessarily by transforming users' worldviews about climate politics. Andrew Barry demonstrated something similar in his analysis of an international oil pipeline. This pipeline called into existence "affected communities," publics who "could be informed and consulted, and the impacts on them assessed" (2013, 102) concerning the pipeline's placement and operation. These affected communities were brought into a political process through the circulation of information about the pipeline, central to which was a map of a corridor of affected communities. The question of who was a properly affected community was, of course, contested in the first place. Yet the arrival of another set of materials and people – construction crews and heavy equipment – raised new questions and disputes about who was affected by the pipeline's construction, operation, and maintenance. The pipeline acts in politics as it is assembled with environmental activists, corporate social responsibility, and map-makers.

As things are represented in the political process, they become allies in controversies. Bruno Latour's *The Pasteurization of France* (1993) analyzed such a process in the context of late 19th century medicine. Latour argued that Pasteur needed to do more than simply discover microbes, as a matter of good science, in order to help prevent diseases. Additionally, Pasteur and his followers had to ingratiate themselves with the existing medical establishment, and then

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to convince physicians to treat disease in a manner consistent with Pasteurian science (144). Furthermore, the very act of "discovering" microbes was a laboratory practice, a practice that required enlisting microbes themselves as allies. The laboratory created favorable conditions for microbes, but conditions that were very tightly controlled in a way that allowed the scientists to observe them (39). In this way, treating disease was, through and through, a process of enlisting allies as diverse as microbes and army doctors.

When we turn to the question of vacancy, we want to know: how is vacancy enrolled into politics? And how does its enrollment organize, complicate, and otherwise transform the political landscape into which it is enrolled? Vacancy is an assemblage composed of buildings, surveyors, tarps, and broken windows, all compiled into maps that travel among policy makers and in DFC's document. "Vacancy" does not simply appear in debates about Detroit and DFC; rather, tarps, footprints, broken windows must be documented, transformed into maps of vacancy, made into framework zones that encompass particular neighborhoods and future trajectories, and then made to travel to public forums where they can become issues of injustice for DFC and its publics. It is only when vacancy goes through these sorts of transformations that it can participate in politics. Vacancy acts in politics insofar as it travels with allies who make it matter.

There are potential allies and obstacles all along the way, and vacancy's political capacities depend on the alliances made. In Chapter 4, vacancy became an ally with DFC, and in so doing, both became a political actors. The interesting thing about DFC, I argued in Chapter 4, is that it seeks to codify the city according to vacancy rates, and then to transform that vacancy not by increasing population, but instead by translating widespread vacancy into low density. In so doing, DFC effectively forges an alliance between itself and vacant land which, heretofore,

was the enemy of urban planning in Detroit. Instead, says DFC, we ought to accept that vacant land, while not exactly here to stay, nonetheless might occupy a different and more prominent role in Detroit's future. In that sense, DFC is a resigned advocate for vacancy in the political process. So, by representing vacancy, recruiting blue-green infrastructure, urban farming, wildlife corrdidors, and recreational greenspace, DFC assists in making a home for low density, which is really a new form for vacant land. Remember that DFC is not going to propose radical new changes in low-vacancy areas; rather, it wants to rethink vacant residential land and transform it with low density uses in mind. Meanwhile, by not advocating for piecemeal housing development in all parts of the city, DFC hopes that it will secure a brighter and more realistic future for Detroit. So DFC and vacancy have become allies, they both become stronger by allying with the other, but they both have to give something up in the process, too: vacancy has to become low density; DFC has to take on the charge of urban triage and austerity.

Whether DFC will ultimately succeed as vacancy's spokesperson is going to depend on other alliances DFC makes. So, for instance, that DFC has made its maps of vacancy available to city planners may suggest an alliance with the city, but that alliance that may ultimately undermine DFC's proposed transformation of vacancy. That is, DFC ultimately cannot control how city officials are going to approach the problem of vacancy in the city – they may, in fact, take up their old war against vacancy via population increase (and, indeed, Mayor Duggan seems to be happy with that possibility). On the other hand, DFC may ultimately end up like so many other urban planning documents: dusty tomes on bookshelves with little policy impact, its only allies the shelves on which it sits or the server that hosts its website.

So we can say that vacancy *participates* in politics, but not because it has innate qualities that force an ethical or intellectual shift. What I want to signal with the term participation is that all capacities for action emerge as things – human and nonhuman alike – are enrolled into particular assemblages, a process that itself is contingent. Spatial justice illuminated this in the context of spatial relations. What I showed is that spatial relations like vacancy are contingently related to political problems like justice – they will not "produce" justice or injustice by enchanting us with responsibility; instead, vacancy might be enrolled into any number of alliances that render it just or not.

Spatial Justice and New Materialism

This discussion of vacancy suggests an answer to the question about how spatial justice might inform new materialism: spatial justice gives us a framework for understanding the different ways that one might understand the role of things like vacancy in politics. On the one hand, we might follow ruin photographers and analyze the role of ruins in enchanting us with the past. On the other hand, we can follow assemblages and place ruins in their assemblages and thereby uncover how such ruins are quite literally made and continually reproduced, and how such ruins then participate in political arguments (or are made absent from them). In the first place, spatial justice can offer this debate, and political theory's interest in new materialism, a way of seeing these two discrete possibilities, and furthermore a warning against fetishizing the innate qualities of things.

What I have done with spatial justice is to offer a way of thinking about things participating in politics, but without taking sides in their capacities or their politics. When we do

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that, we see that vacancy requires the participation of things – tarps, snow tracks, cars, survey measures, etc. – to become vacancy. And that collective of things is then enrolled into the story that DFC wants to tell, into critical academic articles about the frontier, into debates about the future of American cities. Vacancy may or may not enchant us, and that enchantment may or may not lead to a better politics. But spatial justice can help us trace the way that debates about justice in Detroit unfold.

Spatial justice offers new materialists a shift from thinking about things as having innate capacities to thinking about how things participate in politics. At the heart of this account is an insistence that the capacities of things cannot be known in advance of the specific materials and politics in question; instead, the appearance of things in politics is itself a political act. In my analysis of DFC, I argue that although vacancy and density can intervene in justice debates in particular ways, their existence is far from guaranteed. Because these representations were associated with DFC – an assemblage of private philanthropy organizations, an out-of-town planning firm, and a Mayor's clumsy statements about eminent domain, they were enrolled into a critique of top-down planning, urban triage, and business-as-usual urban development; they were *not* enrolled in the justice arrangements that DFC would have preferred (that DFC could rectify Detroit's longstanding injustices by planning a better future). There is no politics nor an ethics innate to vacancy; rather, vacancy becomes an issue of justice only as it is enrolled in assemblages with other actors. Experiencing vacancy as an actant – as Bennett would have us do – requires experiencing it in context as it is enlisted into DFC, with the Mayor, with eminent domain and displacement, with citizens opposed to Bing's planning intervention in the city.

Much like Marres and Barry, spatial justice calls attention to how objects, processes, and material relations are translated into issues of politics and justice. While normative claims and political demands are always already being shaped by the literal rearrangement of the actors in question, neither the rearrangement of those actors nor the ethics within which they are enrolled are predetermined. Rather, spatial justice treats the material transformation of normative claims as an analytic proposition, as a way of thinking about how justice relations are transformed, and not as a way of prescribing those relations or uncovering the qualities of things which might inspire a different politics. The question I ask is "how do things enable certain justice claims, and not others?" Spatial justice is one site to begin to answer this question.

My argument in this dissertation thus provides a table at which these two different versions of new materialism might meet. That is, if justice is a political concept and not simply a universal ethic to be discovered in advance (and even Rawls, one of the most universalizing theorists of justice, argues that certain aspects of justice must be worked out politically), and materials are acting on politics as an analytic matter, then it seems likely that these STS theorists have something to say about how justice debates are configured. Spatial justice as I present it in this dissertation is an attempt to open the conversation between these two different ways of understanding the role of things in politics.

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