

The right to the city:  
Redefining multiculturalism in the modern global

by

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B.A., Queen's University, 2007

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**Supervisory Committee**

Dr. Warren Magnusson, Supervisor  
(Political Science)

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## Abstract

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Global capital is transforming the spaces in which we live, thereby transforming culture: this thesis challenges a set of liberal assumptions about culture and cultural transformation by elaborating upon this very hypothesis. Specifically, it argues that cultural identities are being formed in global cities, where disjunctive *global flows* of cultural, financial, technological, ideological, and human capital intersect. These global flows are creating cultural contexts of choice that can be as central to individual and group identities as national institutions or inherited or native cultural norms. And as these modern contexts of choice emancipate the *imagination* from the influence of national institutions, they enable peculiar new forms of agency. I use Arjun Appadurai's notion of *imagination* and his model of "*scapes*"—cultural landscapes formed by intersecting flows of capital—to explain how the global is becoming the decisive framework for social life. In contrast, I use Will Kymlicka's model of multicultural citizenship and Jeremy Waldron's model of cosmopolitanism *primarily* to demonstrate the limits of a class of liberal theories of cultural accommodation that oversimplify the relationship of the individual to culture, and of culture to modernity, and which ignore the role of "*scapes*" in constituting cultural identities. To conclude, I propose an alternative, three-dimensional and ultimately non-comparative treatment of culture inspired by Henri Lefebvre's concept of *the right to the city*.

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*Each of us is a kind of crossroads where things happen.*

—Claude Lévi-Strauss

### **Introduction: Agency and Imagination in the Modern Global**

On or around October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008, when markets wiped out billions of dollars of value worldwide, a uniquely modern question fell over the professional class: What am I going to be when this is all over? And even: *who* am I going to be? The sheer scale of the recession exposed how vulnerable world markets were to Wall Street's ballooning debt-crisis—what, indeed, would the throngs of jobless become? But *who*? In what sense is it meaningful to say that identities, like personal fortunes, are subject to volatilities in our emerging global marketplace? What, specifically, set the stage for the uniquely modern identity crises of the so-called Great Recession: the thousands of professional casualties brought on by ensuing waves of corporate “fat-trimming”? As I argue in this thesis, culture and economy are not mutually exclusive forces. Cultural identities are now being constituted in global cities, which are the intersections of disjunctive global flows of cultural, financial, technological, ideological, and human capital. In global cities, these forms of capital influence the manner in which individuals construct their personal identities, understand and articulate their cultural beliefs, and mobilize others to form into cultural and political communities of difference, resistance, and exchange. As Engin Isin wrote: “The city is a *difference machine* insofar as it is... constituted by the dialogical encounter of groups formed and generated immanently in the process of taking up positions, orienting themselves for and against each other, inventing and assembling

strategies and technologies, mobilizing various forms of capital, and making claims to that space that is objectified as ‘the city’” (Isin 2002, 283, my emphasis).

That the future of humanity tilts toward an urban future is, by itself, a compelling proposition, but it does not explain *how* global cities continue to produce new cultural forms—or, for that matter, what this spells for nation-states, which try ever harder to manage their growing internal diversity. With roughly 95 percent of Canadian immigrants now settled in Census Metropolitan Areas<sup>1</sup> (66 percent in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal), multiculturalism has become a distinctive feature of the social and political experience in Canadian cities (Good 2008, 11). But mass international migration is only one half of the picture. The flow of global capital through cities—not only products of international corporations, but also those of international social, political and cultural organizations—is shifting the decisive framework of social life from the nation-state to the modern global. As a result, immigrants of global cities confront utterly novel choices: they not only face the socializing demands of the nation-state, but also the influence of modernity through their city’s fast moving capital. Poised between these conflicting forces, global cities have become laboratories for “diversity management.” This is why understanding the structure of the urban political economy—and by extension the nature of modern urban life—is now critical to discussions of multiculturalism. Canadian cities have become a staging ground for the negotiation and creation of unique cultural forms. If theories of multiculturalism are to proceed apace, then theorists must refine their notions of cultural belonging to include the now trans-national, semi-autonomous, and culture-changing force of global capital.

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<sup>1</sup> According to Statistics Canada, a census metropolitan area (CMA) must have a population of at least 100,000, of which no fewer than 50,000 must live in a downtown, or urban, core.

In Chapter 2, I propose an elementary framework for understanding the movement of disjunctive global flows of capital through and between global cities. I argue that these capital flows are emancipating the *imagination* from the influence of the nation-state and also enabling new forms of *agency*. As globalization presses states to open borders to commodities and spectacles of the global economy, this openness exposes the nation within to the influence of global capital. Adopting the core theory of *Modernity at Large*, written by socio-cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, I defend the assertion that the “imagination has become an organized field of social practices, a form of work (in the sense of both labor and culturally organized practice), and a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility” (Appadurai 1996, 31). In particular, it is the rapid flow of mass-mediated images, scripts, and sensations, coupled with demographic changes due to mass migration (multiculturalism) that has turned the imagination into a social practice, creating a new order of instability in the production of modern subjectivities (Appadurai 1996, 4). For Appadurai, mass-mediated events and migratory audiences form the central link between globalization and the modern—the *imagination*, he argues, is a new space of contestation where groups seek to appropriate the global into their practices of the modern.

In Chapter 3, I examine the affect of disorganized capital flows on the *imagination* by placing it specifically within the changing socio-economic structure of the global city (thus beginning what I call a phenomenology of the city). As nodes within a network of cities across the world, global cities derive their power by controlling markets for professional expertise and services. Global cities are home to new professional classes and cosmopolitan associations that attract and repel global capital flows according to

their relative power. These new forms of professional association have, for some, assumed the socializing functions of traditional cultural groups, supplanting them as primary sites of loyalty and identification. Synthesizing the work of Bourdieu, Featherstone, Florida, Brooks, Isin and Wood, I argue that these professional groups *produce* a set of socialized tendencies (a habitus) of their own, which they control through membership in their cultural and economic activities (thus setting the stage for the professional identity crises of the so-called Great Recession). The growing hegemony of professional groups has perpetuated in cities a transnational and cosmopolitan class that forms as its opposite a permanent underclass—which has sweeping consequences for the mobilization of groups, particularly minority groups, who have limited access to the new social hierarchies. By dominating capital flows, these professional groups, described variously as “third cultures,” the “information elite” or the “knowledge class,” are transforming both the labour and political decision-making structures of global cities and intensifying the city as a place for production, consumption and exchange.

At the crux of this thesis, however, is not the sociology of the professions, nor is it the new sense in which the city has become global. Crucial though they are, I use these lines of research primarily to show that, certainly in liberal political theory, we can transform fundamental assumptions about cultural identity—about “groupness”—by *spatializing* them. There are strands in geographic and sociological research that allow us to place cultural difference within the modern structural and material conditions of its making; conditions under which, I show, spatial assumptions implicit in the concepts of “culture” and “community,” “agency” and “constraint,” come undone. These concepts are central to multiculturalism and liberal cosmopolitanism. In Chapter 1, I represent these

discourses using Will Kymlicka and Jeremy Waldron respectively. Kymlicka and Waldron disagree on precisely what “culture” denotes, but also on the extent to which it is possible for individuals to “move between cultures” (Kymlicka 1995; Waldron 2000). By contrasting liberal notions of culture with the new role of *imagination* in modern life, I show throughout this thesis that these influential liberal political theorists harbour problematic assumptions about the relationship of the individual to culture, and of culture to modernity. As I argue, the movement of disjunctive global capital has created new cultural landscapes, expanding the cultural “context of choice” (Kymlickian short-hand for “culture”) beyond the allowable dimensions of an enduring liberal debate. By contrasting a new approach to culture (which I articulate in Chapter 3) with Kymlicka and Waldron’s theories of cultural difference, I answer the following questions: What, exactly, do popular multiculturalism and neo-liberal discourses mean by “culture”? How do popular multiculturalism and neo-liberal discourses use the term, and to what end? What, in the modern global, does it mean to “move between cultures” if culture is now riven by disjunctive global flows of capital and stratified along a new social continuum? Once we have overcome the epistemological errors associated with the culture talk of these liberal theorists, we still have left to answer, how can we recognize minority rights under disorganized capitalism? In the modern global, what alternatives are there to group differentiated, or national minority, rights? How and to what extent do the geo-politics of the modern global complicate the notion of a national minority?

I conclude by suggesting that so-called “rights to culture” (minority rights, or group-differentiated rights) ought to be reframed using the concept of the right to the city (Lefebvre 1996). Rights to the city more suitably address the dimensionality of culture—

culture as situated in time and space, and either in the sense of what we absorb, what provides a framework for our activity, or what we practice day-to-day. Furthermore, rights to the city can offer cultural particularities (narratives, practices, symbols, beliefs, etc.) representation without reifying them as the possessions of minimally permeable and ontologically discrete cultural entities. Rights to the city open to us new aspects of culture, which “rights to culture” deny. The right to the city focuses on claims rooted in *specific* experiences of individuals vis-à-vis social groups in contemporary urban life. Rights to the city, I argue, can allow all citizens to become active producers of meaning and representation, and knowledgeable consumers under advanced capitalism (Isin and Wood 152), with access to the means of production and consumption of culture. And, finally, rights to the city can indigenize cultural particularities in local cultures, leading to an overall increased diversification of meaning (cultural particularities can thus be reinterpreted, universalized, eliminated, or merely enjoyed by all members of the city). I take the individual agent (the “situated citizen,” as I call him), and not the collective, as my principal unit of analysis, for it is his *loyalty* (to use Albert Hirschman’s expression) that endures the cultural possibilities of the modern global.

The *production* of difference within the landscapes of the modern global, formed by intersecting global flows, has thus far eluded mainstream multiculturalism (Kymlicka) and liberal cosmopolitanism (Waldron), making apparent the need for a spatialized theory of difference and a sociologically accurate definition of culture. To put the term “culture” within the context of these global flows, and to treat it as a deeply phenomenological aspect of socio-economic relations (as subjectivities acting, and being acted upon, within the context of the global city), is to locate both the source and content of many rights

claims within *specific* patterns of human interaction under multiple fields of power. The effect is to open the fundamental concepts of multiculturalism, as well socio-cultural relations impacted by globalization and the hidden labour structure of cities, to clearer analysis, and to new and underdeveloped strategies for redress.

The movement of this thesis, then, is from “cultures” and “cosmopolitans” (specific liberal delimitations of difference), to an alternative understanding of difference as something *situated in* and *produced by* modern contexts of choice, against which efforts to define and delimit the content of “culture” *a priori* fail to find traction. Social experience is too varied, too complex, and ultimately too fractured by cultural landscapes of the modern global to continue measuring cultural difference between the polarities of an essentialist notion of culture (Kymlicka) and a freewheeling cosmopolitanism (Waldron). Thinking about culture in this way limits research on difference to two-dimensions. To set “cultures” and “cosmopolitans” as our only parameters for research obscures the fundamentally disjunctive and non-isomorphic nature of culture, which possesses no strict or measurable boundaries, structures, or regularities. Debates around multiculturalism inspired by two-dimensional, dichotomous notions of difference, inherited from a rigorously analytic strain of liberal philosophy, misleads us into simplistic comparisons; comparisons that threaten the three-dimensionality of culture by focusing our attention on questions about entities which do not exist (or, to use the language of analytic philosophy itself, entities which do not denote). Culture “A” does not—cannot—interact with culture “B”; though congeries of cultural particularities may from time-to-time collide, only to be unified by narrative or a fleeting collective consciousness, often only to be harnessed as a resource in contests for political power.

With respect to “cultural rights”—or any human rights scheme that would attach itself in any way to a “culture”—it becomes important to frame rights as they are situated in space; in a way that addresses needs and entitlements and the fulfillment of those needs and entitlements spatio-temporally and not just theoretically (not primarily with reference to any one theory of difference, notion of group freedom or autonomy, or belief in the uniform ability of individuals everywhere to overcome culturally reinforced behaviour with reason, and reason alone). This is why we need to understand “cultural rights” in the context of the city. The fundamental right to participate as a full citizen must be claimed as *the right to the city*, and all other rights can be understood in relation to this one right. In global cities, for example, there are new resources and new disciplines that influence individuals to construct imagined selves and imagined worlds, and against which, and because of which, individuals are denied and granted rights. At bottom, this thesis aims to redirect questions of difference away from the terms of liberal multiculturalism toward a more subtle vocabulary that allows us to better understand what cultural rights claims consist of, how they relate to one another, and what they ultimately require of us.

## Chapter 1: Cultures and Cosmopolitans: Categories of Difference, Terms of Integration

*The utopian, immanent, and continually frustrated goal of the modern state is to reduce the chaotic, disorderly, constantly changing social reality beneath it to something more closely resembling the administrative grid of its observations.*

—James Scott, *Seeing Like a State*

### *Liberal Categories of Difference, Kymlicka and Waldron*

As Will Kymlicka and Jeremy Waldron tell it, the modern story of cultural politics in the West—of late, a story about the expanding and quickening mobility of people, combined with their refusal to abandon the cultural identities and practices of their “native lands”—is driven by three protagonists: ethnic and national groups (Kymlicka), and cosmopolitans (Waldron). “Since the end of the cold war,” Kymlicka writes, “the demands of ethnic and national groups have taken centre stage in political life, both domestically and internationally” (Kymlicka 1995). Here, the words “ethnic” and “national” conceptualize key players in what is often called the politics of difference. But for Kymlicka, they also make an ontological claim: cultural differences *do* exist in our modern (or post-modern), supposedly globalized, homogeneous world, and social theorists can, in the interests of political representation, discern meaningful separations between these differences. The assertion that culture is coterminous with geographic territories or philosophical categories is, I argue, simply dubious. This raises the question of Kymlicka’s and Waldron’s considerable influence on multiculturalism; and, in

particular, on multiculturalism's underlying assumptions about the relationship of the individual to culture, and of culture to modernity.

For Kymlicka, "societal culture," which he uses synonymously with "a culture," "a nation," or "a people," refers to "an intergenerational community, more or less institutionally complete, occupying a given territory or homeland, sharing a distinct language and history" (18). A societal culture provides its members with "meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities, including social, educational religious, recreational, and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres," and is "institutionally embodied—in schools, media, economy, government, etc." (76).

A "multination state" includes several distinct societal cultures. Kymlicka defines national minorities, the "smaller" of these cultures, as previously self-governing, territorially concentrated groups that seek to "maintain themselves as distinct societies alongside the majority culture, and demand various forms of autonomy or self-government to ensure their survival as distinct societies" (Kymlicka 1995). With this category, Kymlicka calls to mind the First Nations and the Quebecois of his native Canada. For national minorities in a multi-nation state, a pre-existing societal culture is the basis for, and is what expresses the content of, self-government rights, which Kymlicka's liberal theory of multiculturalism attempts to defend. Cultural diversity arising from individual and familial immigration comprises a second category of "ethnic groups," who, unlike national minorities, historically wish to integrate into and be fully accepted members of the societal culture into which they have immigrated (11). For ethnic groups, Kymlicka proposes polyethnic rights, which can facilitate integration by redressing political disadvantages in the decision-making processes of the majority

culture (he advocates affirmative action, proportional representation, and inclusiveness within political parties, among other policies).

“Societal culture” is Kymlicka’s master category; it circumscribes the boundaries of cultural membership for both national minorities and ethnic groups, and is, Kymlicka argues, essential to human freedom. “Cultures are valuable,” he says, “not in and of themselves, but because it is only through having a societal culture that people have access to a range of meaningful options” (Kymlicka 1995, 83). To be clear, Kymlicka uses “culture” synonymously with “a nation” or “a people”—that is, “an intergenerational community, more or less institutionally complete, occupying a given territory of homeland, sharing a distinct language and history” (Kymlicka 1995, 18). This is in contrast with more localized uses of the term, as when one talks about, to use Kymlicka’s examples, “gay culture,” “bureaucratic culture,” or other non-historical, non-geographic forms of identification and association (Kymlicka 1995, 18). Kymlicka isolates “culture” arising specifically from national and ethnic differences, asking us to accept this as a merely ‘stipulative’ definition.’ “What matters is not the terminology we use, but that we keep these distinctions in mind,” he contends—an odd admission indeed for a theorist who anchors human freedom and the possibility for self-determination on the “existence” of “culture” thus defined (Kymlicka 1995, 19).

Culture is seen as a structure of authority and participation, a meaningful *context of choice*, and does not (as communitarians contend) rest on shared values—culture itself has no intrinsic value—but supports the core liberal principle of individual autonomy (Kymlicka 1995, 101). As Bhikhu Parekh describes it, culture defines and structures our world, offers spectacles through which to see ourselves and others, and helps us make

intelligent judgments about what is valuable and worthwhile—it grounds our capacity for choice, it is the inescapable *context of our autonomy* (Parekh 1997, 56). This is the groundwork for Kymlicka’s subtle liberal defense of institutionalized multiculturalism (i.e., an official or state-based collection of cultural categories used first to recognize and then administer differentiated rights to ethnic and national minority groups).

But even if we accept that societal culture is important as an autonomy-enhancing context of choice, Kymlicka has yet to tell us why members of a national minority group are entitled to their *own* societal culture. Why, for example, is Aboriginal self-determination *in principle* superior to polyethnic and/or special representation rights for indigenous groups seeking to interact with larger nations on a more equitable basis? Jeremy Waldron argues that one’s ability to move seamlessly between cultures, as cosmopolitans are thought to do, disproves the claim that people are “connected to their own culture in any deep way” (Kymlicka 1995, 85). His cosmopolitan approach to difference rejects the notion that the world divides itself among separate and distinct cultures. The cosmopolitan does not “take his identity as anything definitive, as anything homogeneous that might be muddied or compromised when he studied Greek, ate Chinese, wore clothes made in Korea, worshipped with the Book of Common Prayer... or practiced Buddhist mediation techniques” (Waldron 2000). As long as one can maintain a multiplicity of allegiances,

It is evident that people do not need what the proponents of cultural identity politics claim they do need, claim in fact that they are entitled to as a matter of right, namely, immersion in the secure framework of a single culture to which, in some deep sense, they belong (Waldron 2000, 228).

Waldron, for whom the entire project seems an affront to cultural particularity, is out to save abstract moral universalism from “practitioners of identity politics.” Culture is inherently negotiable because beneath every norm or practice is a *reason*, and though it makes a powerful claim on us, it is not an irremovable aspect of our identity, but a solution, or purported solution, to the problems we face and to which cultures emerge principally as a response. On this view, the capacity to *reason* about one’s norms is what is universal about cosmopolitanism and, perhaps, misleading about Kymlicka’s theory of minority rights. And this capacity, Waldron emphasizes in later iterations of this argument, is as available to cosmopolitans as to those immersed in the traditions, languages and practices of local cultures, which are themselves open to the cultural interchange of customs, practices, languages, forms of social and political organization, etc. (Waldron 2000, 228).

Kymlicka thinks this “vastly overestimates” the extent to which people move between cultures. Waldron’s freewheeling cosmopolitan does not move between “societal cultures,” he merely enjoys the opportunities afforded by the “diverse societal culture which characterizes the Anglophone society of the United States” (Kymlicka 1995, 85). Though successful integration is possible, he argues, it is rarely easy, and whether access to one’s culture ought to be protected is therefore a legitimate question. Without actually measuring, or much elaborating on what makes integration itself so difficult (this would perhaps require experiments in neuroscience, neuro-anatomy, cognitive science, psychoanalysis, and perhaps also phenomenology)<sup>2</sup>, Kymlicka dismisses Waldron’s

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<sup>2</sup> Social Cognitive Neuroscience, an amalgam of these disciplines, has begun to produce promising results. Jonathan B. Freeman of Tufts, for example, peered into the reward centers of the brain such as the caudate

cosmopolitanism as the cultural consumerism of privileged citizens: relatively insignificant where measures of deep cultural difference are concerned, and so illegitimate as a basis for abandoning group-differentiated rights.

To be clear, Kymlicka does not support the preservation of *kultur*—a German Romantic variant of culture inherited from Herder, whereby the term is understood to mean a unified and homogenous entity. Kymlicka likewise attempts to distance himself from communitarian notions of culture, which argue that group members have a “constitutive” bond to their group’s values. He does this by differentiating between the “existence” of a culture and its “character.” The former represents the cultural institutions and languages of a societal culture, to which native citizens have a rightful claim; the latter, the changing content of a societal culture, steered by the choices of its individual members. For example, a culture can modernize, even liberalize (as the Quebecois have done in Canada), without undermining the distinctive cultural meanings and options it offers its members—it can, in other words, continue to provide “a secure foundation for individual autonomy and self-identity” through change, and thereby continue to “exist,” though in altered form (Kymlicka 1995, 105). In this way, Kymlicka attempts to overcome the problem of cultural essentialism—to move beyond the Herderian view of culture—and present cultures as sites of pure choice, as well as differentiation.

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nucleus. He found that among Americans, that region was likely to be activated by dominant behaviour, whereas among Japanese, it was more likely to be activated by subordinate behaviour—the same region rewarding different patterns of behaviour depending on culture. It will be left to the social sciences, however, to explore and articulate the social and political implications of these and other similar findings.

*Liberal Terms of Integration, “Organic Intellectuals of Society”*

The striking feature of these arguments is their need to define or refine (or simply eliminate) some unit of analysis appropriate for delineating between forms of cultural membership. For Kymlicka, “societal culture” serves as the basis upon which minorities may be incorporated into a secure framework of rights. In liberal political philosophy, the traditional unit of analysis has long been the nation (Kymlicka 1995, 93), which Kymlicka has, in searching for a liberal theory of minority rights, amended to core liberal principles and called “societal culture.” But if the new categories of difference on offer—societal culture, national minority, ethnic group, and cosmopolitan—seem inadequate to discern, never mind fairly arbitrate between, the cultural differences that currently exercise Western democracies, that is partly because they extend from a liberal dialogue that negotiates these cultural differences on ideological terms. Kymlicka’s theory of minority rights is unapologetically liberal, but what he presents as its underlying, philosophically neutral account of difference, is actually, as with his more general account of the demands of ethnocultural minorities, politically partisan; normativity slips in undetected, like the proverbial wolf in sheep’s clothing.

Yet societal cultures and cosmopolitans are concepts that have embedded themselves in influential North American discourses of mainstream multiculturalism. These discourses have emerged in response to cultural pluralism, but from predominantly elite circles—from what Gramsci would call “organic intellectuals” of bourgeois society. These intellectuals hold an elite point of view and their reasoning reaffirms the ruling relations and ideologies of the state; in this case, by consolidating the nation-state as a

locus of political organization and symbolic power. For example, we can read Kymlicka's work on minority rights as a straightforward philosophical exercise. Or, we can interpret it as a political exchange that favours a particular state agenda. *Finding Our Way*, Kymlicka's book on "Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada," was originally five short papers written for the Department of Canadian Heritage. And in the preface to *Multicultural Citizenship*, he writes candidly about his "peripatetic" life between academic and government employment, which he enjoys "in small doses" (Kymlicka 1995, *Preface*). Pierre Bourdieu coined the term "classification struggles" to show that attempts to represent groups symbolically can make or unmake groups, and that these attempts essentialize the properties of individuals. The official practice and discourse of multiculturalism in Canada—what Himani Bannerji calls an "ideological apparatus" of state—represents one side of one such struggle. Its interpellation of cultural groups under state categories of difference has had the following effect, she observes:

Politically constructed homogenized communities, with their increasingly fundamentalist boundaries of cultures, traditions and religions, emerged from where there were immigrants from different parts of the world with different cultures and values. They developed leaders and spokespersons, usually men, who liaised with the state on their behalf, and their organizational behaviour fulfilled the expectations of the Canadian state. New political agents and constituencies thus came to life, as people sought to be politically active in these new cultural identity terms (Bannerji 2000, 48).

Through government bureaucracies, Kymlicka implicates himself in the making and unmaking of groups and thus in the production of languages and forms of knowledge amenable to a liberal strategy of "diversity management." Indeed, struggles by

subordinated groups to appropriate languages of recognition—of nationhood, rights, and entitlements—have been a central feature of the politics of difference. Yet multiculturalism as discourse, ideology, and practice, vests the state with power to consecrate certain group identities over others and subsume cultural differences into the framework of a monocultural national identity. As no such monocultural (single and homogenous) national identity exists, in Canada or elsewhere, the consolidation of cultural differences under the imaginary banner of a “common culture” privileges already politically dominant groups (Isin and Wood 1996, 63). As Said warns in *Culture and Imperialism*, “The capacity to represent, portray, characterize and depict is not easily available to just any member of just any society; moreover the “what” and “how” in the representation of “things,” while allowing for considerable individual freedom, are circumscribed and socially regulated” (Said 1993, 80).

In his introduction to *Multicultural Citizenship*, Kymlicka rails against notions of cultural homogeneity, institutionally embodied in a government policy of “benign neglect”—a separation of state and ethnicity that treats as private all cultural affairs, and “precludes any legal or governmental recognition of ethnic groups” whatsoever (Kymlicka 1995, 4). From his socially and historically situated position in society, the traditional liberal account of difference robs the citizen of his particularity by abstracting him to the level of a universal subject. Traditional liberal individualism grants primacy to this universal subject as rights-bearer and to the nation-state as guarantor of his rights, and defines citizenship as a straightforward legal relationship between universal subject and state. However, in practice, the state “cannot help but take an active role in the reproduction of cultures” (Kymlicka 1997). Kymlicka therefore attempts to deepen

liberalism's commitment to cultural pluralism by theorizing more robust categories of difference. Unfortunately, he essentializes these differences against a fictitious, monocultural notion of the nation, "societal culture"—as if, from Western democracies themselves, geographically concentrated identities arose as untrammelled expressions of a General Will. The cultural identities of national minorities—Aboriginal or Quebecois, Puerto Rican or American Indian, or of any group involuntarily incorporated into a larger society through conquest or colonization—are characterized as a deviation from this imaginary norm. Kymlicka fails to appreciate minority cultures in their "authentic otherness." Non-liberals, Bhikhu Parekh observes, "might find Kymlicka a dangerous ally, and wonder if he does not defend them in terms that subtly subvert their cultural structures and transform them in to something they are not" (Parekh 1997, 59).

"Any complex human society," writes Seyla Benhabib, is at any given time "composed of multiple material and symbolic practices with a history. This history is the sedimented repository of struggles for power, symbolization, and signification—in short, for cultural and political hegemony carried out among groups, classes, and genders" (Benhabib 2002, 60). (It would, for example, be dangerous to confuse Canadian political culture with Canadian nationalism—the latter, narrative yarn spun to, among other things, protect the country from creeping U.S. Republicanism. Canadian nationalism, which informs much of Kymlicka's theorizing about the nature of minority groups, did not emerge organically from the shared ethnic lineage of its early inhabitants.) Yet Kymlicka takes as a basis for his liberal theory of minority rights the possibility that minority cultures coalesce to form a single coherent system of beliefs that extend "across the full range of human activities"; as is, apparently, the case for societal cultures. "Societal

culture” misrepresents the lived experiences and internal heterogeneity of majority, as much as minority, cultures. A more sophisticated political ontology is necessary if the “politics of difference” is to proceed beyond analytic philosophy; beyond sociologically, anthropologically, and economically simplistic categories used to emancipate the “Other”—if only to re-imagine “Us,” and imprison “Them.”

*Difference: Toward A Modern Conceptual Framework*

“We cannot begin to understand and evaluate the politics of multiculturalism,” Kymlicka writes, “unless we see how the historical incorporation of minority groups shapes their collective institutions, identities, and aspirations” (Kymlicka 1995). Few lines in *Multicultural Citizenship* capture Kymlicka’s approach to the politics of multiculturalism so succinctly. For Kymlicka, group rights exist to correct certain historical injustices. In order to determine where group-differentiated rights are legitimate, the group in question must be drawn from a specific chain of significant historical events—that is, a particular historical context. Kymlicka contends that liberal democracy’s commitment to the freedom and equality of all already sufficiently protects many forms of diversity. Immigrants, for example, who are willing newcomers to a “societal culture,” are not entitled to self-government rights. In these cases, “polyethnic” rights can better facilitate integration by redressing political disadvantages in the decision-making processes of the majority culture, through, for example, affirmative action programs. But group-differentiated or “self-government rights,” on the other hand,

are nevertheless consistent with liberal principles of freedom and equality where, as Kymlicka writes, “national minorities are regionally concentrated,” and where “the boundaries of federal subunits can be drawn so that the national minority forms a majority in one of the subunits” (27-28). Kymlicka goes on to give examples of self-government rights, polyethnic rights, and special representation rights (guaranteed seats for ethnic or national groups within representative state bodies) in “various countries” (Kymlicka 1995, 7).

The protagonists of Canadian multiculturalism pervade Kymlicka’s thinking—here you have Quebec and Aboriginal groups, with long-standing cultural institutions of their own, operating in the background of a supposedly universal theory of minority rights. Speaking in the abstract, Kymlicka argues that this theory does indeed defend “special legal or constitutional measures, above and beyond the common rights of citizenship” (26). For Kymlicka, context and historical injustice are clearly central in determining how and when to apply such measures.

One problem, however, is that despite offering a compelling theoretical and historical treatment of Quebec and Aboriginal self-government in Canada, Kymlicka leaves us without a practical decision-making model for determining what constitutes a “national minority” or when to apply self-government rights elsewhere. Which minorities should benefit from self-government rights through territorial adjustments? By what process, or processes, can states legitimately determine size, concentration, historical claim or territory? Kymlicka makes no such provisions. The US Supreme Court has tackled this issue, but it remains without any such guidelines, and so could not find a way to justify redrawing districts or defending group rights as such (Isin and Wood 1999, 61). In

Canada, the story of self-government rights has been much the same since Confederation, where provisions more in line with polyethnic rights have emerged.<sup>3</sup>

Kymlicka maintains that no single formula can be applied to all groups, and that the needs and aspirations of immigrants are very different from those of national minorities. And he cautions that a further distinction should be made between various national minorities themselves. However, his theory of minority rights ultimately depends upon the claim that the recognition of “societal cultures” is universally consistent with the underlying principles of liberal democracy—hence Kymlicka’s emphasis on exporting liberal multiculturalism to non-Western states (Kymlicka 2007). As an unintended consequence of this approach, a de-contextualized version of Kymlicka’s argument has gone into wide circulation in the Anglo-American world that continues to influence multiculturalism discourses today. By Kymlicka’s own admission:

Those states that are prepared to adopt a model of multicultural citizenship will find an array of international organizations willing to provide support, expertise, and funding. Those states that cling to older assimilationist or exclusionary models find themselves subject to international monitoring, criticism, and sanction. In short, we are witnessing the ‘internationalization’ of state-minority relations, and the global diffusion of multiculturalism as a new framework for reforming those relations (Kymlicka 2007, 2).

Canadian approaches to multiculturalism have enjoyed considerable influence around the world (Abu-Laban and Gabriel 2002). ‘Multicultural citizenship,’ a term coined by Kymlicka himself, has been transmitted as a hegemonic discourse just as it has been

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<sup>3</sup> Aboriginals: Section 35, *Constitution Act (1982)*; Official Language minorities: *Official Languages Act*; Visible minorities: *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*; *Employment Equity Act*, *Canadian Human Rights Act*, Section 27 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*

codified into law by international legal and quasi-judicial bodies.<sup>4</sup> Kymlicka's writing insists on sharp delineations within a universal conceptual framework for minority rights. *Finding Our Way* (1998) and *Multicultural Odysseys* (2007) both rearticulate the distinction between national minorities and immigrants, forcefully making the case for policy based on these categories of difference (despite at first offering these distinctions as merely 'stipulative' definitions). In *Multicultural Odysseys*, written approximately 12 years after the seminal *Multicultural Citizenship*, which laid the ethical and theoretical foundations for subsequent work, Kymlicka continues to answer to a perceived Western bias. Liberal multiculturalism in Western states, he argues, has been facilitated by 'increasing rights consciousness, demographic changes, multiple access points for safe political mobilization,' 'the de-securitization of ethnic relations and a consensus on human rights' (Kymlicka 2007, 122). Clearly, the Canadian state is central to Kymlicka's case: states elsewhere should address national minority groups according to their particular histories of incorporation.

*Multicultural Odysseys* is, like much written by Kymlicka, a partial defense and elaboration of *Multicultural Citizenship*. But as Kymlicka continues to elaborate his purportedly universal theory of minority rights, popular discourses on multiculturalism, and policy-making, continue to obscure more relevant dimensions of culture. A universal conceptual framework for multiculturalism as minority rights, derived predominantly from the Canadian political experience, and under the Kymlickian banner of 'multicultural citizenship,' has no doubt contributed to the myopia. Beyond conflating

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<sup>4</sup> See: UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, 1992; Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; Council of Europe's 1995 Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. In most cases, these declarations are not in fact judicially enforceable, but carry the influence and censure of their international bodies.

liberal multiculturalism with Western cultural norms, the theory of minority rights operates at a level of abstraction that makes it appealing in all contexts without resolving or helping achieve consensus about substantive policy questions on the ground. In its generality, persuasive appeal to the status quo, conflation of liberal multiculturalism with Western cultural norms, and deceptively straightforward analytic categories, Kymlicka's theory of minority rights—intentionally or not—strengthens the predominant multiculturalist paradigm while undermining the potential for non-culturalist theories of difference.

Indeed, historical context is important to a just politics of multiculturalism. But one of the central arguments in subsequent chapters is that Kymlicka's theory of minority rights adheres to context in a superficial way. What is necessary is a new groundwork for understanding the mobilization of group identities, as well as the historical incorporation of these identities—not only into nation-states, where state monopolies on definitions of nationhood have become tenuous of late, but also into the varied and fractured cultural landscapes (“scapes”) that now crisscross the modern nation-state, and especially the expanding global urban. As I demonstrate in the next few chapters, Kymlicka and Waldron pay insufficient attention to the cultural implications of globalization and modernity. These studies place cultural difference within the modern structural and material conditions of its making; conditions under which, I will show, discrete analytic categories of difference come undone. Furthermore, these studies offer a compelling basis for understanding cultural identity and difference as *spatially* produced. In the next chapter I offer a framework for exploring globalization's impact on the city, and I examine its subsequent impact on the integration of minorities, showing how a model of

globalization processes—one that traces intersecting global capital flows of people, information, technology, economic capital, and ideologies—can ground a more sophisticated theory of difference by setting the groundwork for understanding the mobilization of group identities in *specific* contexts of human interaction and choice. Clearly, multicultural theories “from above”—from states, operating according to state-sponsored ideologies—obfuscate important cultural differences that exist beyond the politics of representation.

But what about the cosmopolitan alternative to multiculturalism? Waldron maintains that the radical dispersal of cultural influences today has smashed the so-called “cultural mosaic” into so much swirling dust. “Bits of culture come into our lives from different sources,” with “no guarantees that they will all fit together,” he insists (Waldron 1992, 788). This is fundamentally true; however, certain landscapes of the modern global disable much hope of maintaining an easy critical scrutiny to or distance from one’s culture. North Korea, for example, shelters its citizens from the World Wide Web using a countrywide Internet firewall; and China places similar restrictions on its citizens’ access to online information. A more abhorrent example is of West African teenaged-women who accept FGC, female genital cutting, as a necessary part of marriage and an honourable and virtuous life, and without which they would face certain marginalization.<sup>5</sup> That cosmopolitan reason is possible does not always make it a likely or even viable alternative to group norms. Certain spaces of the modern global simply foster greater opportunities for normative reflexivity than others. Waldron neglects the role of space—

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<sup>5</sup> See Gerry Mackie: “Female Genital Cutting: The Beginning of the End,” 2000, in Bettina Shell-Duncan and Ylva Hernlund, eds, *Female Circumcision: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers).

the economic, social and political production of space—when he assures us of our cosmopolitan future.

Furthermore, certain cultural groups and certain social and cultural milieus, including social classes, are more conducive than others to the kind of critical reflection of one's habits and assumptions that cosmopolitans prescribe. It is, for example, anathema in certain faith groups to question laws that are thought, and taught, to be divinely revealed. Essentialist multiculturalism may go too far by treating cultures as discrete and purified wholes, but at the other extreme, cosmopolitanism reverts to a form of cultural imperialism that ignores differences in the ability of individuals to adopt a reflexive attitude toward fundamental sources of value and meaning in their lives. Cosmopolitanism is universalistic in intent, but by design, or through the mostly Western elites who have articulated it, cosmopolitanism can enact the very same parochialism it decries (Mehta 2000).

As the title of this chapter implies, “societal culture” and “cosmopolitan” nevertheless represent two sides of the same liberal vision. Ultimately, both attempt to reconcile the complex and changing reality of culture to the administrative operations of the Western nation-state, framing multiculturalism as a policy problem with a liberal policy solution. The result is a heavy-handed focus on “social structure” over “social signification” (Benhabib 2002, 61). But the sources of social signification are complex and significantly influence the meaning and legitimacy of cultural institutions, or social structures, themselves (an issue which I discuss in greater detail throughout Chapter 3). Yet Kymlicka, Waldron, certain international organizations and rights groups, and many of their contemporary interlocutors frame multiculturalism in terms of liberal *institutions*

under which *universal citizens*, or *immigrants* and *national minorities*, do or do not have certain rights. This blurring of ontology and advocacy can be quite subtle—and it comes at the cost of a more rigorous empiricism.

What major sources of cultural signification are missing from this liberal vision of multiculturalism? How do we achieve a more rigorous, but ultimately less rigid, account of cultural difference? Is it nevertheless possible to maintain a normative framework for assessing cultural claims? Or is this a counter-productive place to begin? The gap between influential discourses of liberal multiculturalism and liberal cosmopolitanism on the one hand, and hybrid, fluid and still emerging cultural identities on the other, is already immense—and in the modern global, it continues to grow. A better account of difference will attend to the role of space (spaces of the modern global) in constituting group identities, cultural particularities, and social attitudes, while also avoiding essentialist notions of culture that impose upon the fragmented social reality of our lives a false universality. “We need an account of ethnicity that explores its modernity,” writes anthropologist Arjun Appadurai—so too with official multiculturalism, the popular state response to the changing cultural demands of ethnocultural minorities.

## Chapter 2: “Imagined Worlds”: Globalization, Space, and the Production of Difference

*Dharmasala, the Dalai Lama seemed to be saying, would be the center of a new kind of experiment. So long as Tibetans could not enjoy freedom of worship or speech or movement in Tibet itself, they would create a new Tibet around the world... Creating new forms as he went along, he was building up, out of necessity, a kind of virtual Tibet, a new global settlement in which people would be gathered not around a single campfire or village green but around shared hopes and a linked sense of responsibility... In a way, propelled by calamity—having had to run out of the burning house that was his homeland—the Dalai Lama was suggesting that community and neighbourhood could, even should, be constructed inwardly.*

—Pico Iyer, *The Open Road*

### *A New Role for the Imagination in Social Life*

Whereas warfare and religions of conversion were the two main forces driving cultural interaction before this century, sometime in the past few centuries the spread of commercial interests and technology around the globe began to open previously closed, small-scale systems of religious, commercial, and political organization to a new form of expansion. Anthropologists often point to Western Maritime interests after 1500 as the catalyst for this process, as well as to the ripening of non-Maritime social formations to trade: in the Americas (the Aztecs and the Incas), in Eurasia (the Mongols and their descendants, the Mughals and Ottomans), in island South-east Asia (the Buginese), and in the kingdom of pre-colonial Africa. Among these relatively autonomous developments

“an overlapping set of ecumenes began to emerge, in which congeries of money, commerce, conquest, and migration began to create durable cross-societal bonds” (Appadurai, 28). Eighteenth and nineteenth century technological innovations further accelerated cross-cultural interaction, creating the complex colonial orders of the European World; first Spanish and Portuguese, later English, French and Dutch (Appadurai 1996, 28).

These migrations of capital set the basis for a permanent traffic in ideas of peoplehood and selfhood, which created what Benedict Anderson famously called “imagined communities”—communities imagined as limited, sovereign entities, sharing a deep new horizontal comradeship (Anderson 1983). Emphasizing the accent on the socio-economic origins of our national consciousness, “print capitalism,” as Anderson called it, reinforced these imagined communities by enabling mass literacy—and mass literacy, in turn, enabled large scale cultural projects of ethnic affinity absent face-to-face communication. In what Appadurai calls the “post-electronic” world, the imagination, with the help of electronically produced images, has begun to emancipate itself from “imagined communities” as Anderson conceived them.

The world we live in today is characterized by a new role for the imagination in social life. Though mass migration is now as familiar to us as international trade (these were arguably concomitant effects of commerce), it is the rapid flow of mass-mediated images, scripts, and sensations, coupled with the demographic fact of multiculturalism that has created a new order of instability in the production of modern subjectivities (Appadurai 1996, 4). For Appadurai, mass-mediated events and migratory audiences form the central link between globalization and the modern—the *imagination* itself is, he argues, a new

space of contestation where groups seek to appropriate the global into their own practices of the modern (Appadurai 1996, 4). Appadurai writes:

The image, the imagined, the imaginary—these are all terms that direct us to something critical and new in global cultural processes: the imagination as a social practice. No longer mere fantasy (opium for the masses whose real work is somewhere else), no longer simple escape (from a world defined principally by more concrete purposes and structures), no longer elite pastime (thus not relevant to the lives of ordinary people), and no longer mere contemplation (irrelevant for new forms of desire and subjectivity), the imagination has become an organized field of social practices, a form of work (in the sense of both labor and culturally organized practice), and a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility (Appadurai 1996, 31).

This notion of imagination comes from the French term *imaginaire*: a constructed landscape of collective aspirations, now mediated through the complex prism of modern media (Appadurai 1996). In short, groups have begun to mobilize themselves by constructing collective notions of selfhood. They have begun to articulate *imagined worlds*, which exist outside the nation-state, and to which only they belong.

In order to grasp this change, we need to understand that the imagination has become nothing less than a *social practice*. “It is imagination, in its collective forms, that creates ideas of neighbourhood and nationhood, of moral economies, and unjust rule, of higher wages and foreign labour prospects... the imagination is a staging ground for action” (Appadurai 1996). These imaginings do, Appadurai argues, take the form of real collective representations of the world. This helps explain the complex and disjunctive nature of the global cultural economy. In light of the receding influence of the nation-state, this helpfully frames the resurgence of and rising indifference toward national

sovereignty, even as individuals become active, prosperous members of majority cultures. This complicates migration models of push and pull, where wages, work and national politics are used to make migration seem predictable. And this leaves us uncertain about who is consuming and who is producing culture—and how. In global cities, multiculturalism is susceptible to a new sociology of culture-formation, where *imagined worlds* incite individuals who may never meet to action. Now, multiple worlds exist which are “constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe” (Appadurai 1996, 33). Appadurai wants to devise a master framework of global flows, so as to explain this and other surprising social behaviour.

Interestingly, a polarizing debate persists over which of *homogenization* and *heterogenization* has become the dominant global culture-changing force. As we saw with Kymlicka and Waldron, the difficulty with which people move between “cultures” is central to justifying those cultures’ protection. Some scholars have argued that globalization processes open polities to homogenizing forces. Armaments, advertising techniques, language hegemonies, and clothing styles, absorbed into local political and cultural economies, are the often cited vehicles of the process of *homogenization*, sometimes also referred to as “Americanization” or “Westernization.” It is true, for example, that the collective experience of media has opened members of disparate nations to common patterns of thought and behaviour, and to a reservoir of self-reflective vocabulary. For example, Appadurai observes how global cultural flows are capable of creating a “community of sentiment,” where groups begin to “imagine and feel things together,” because of “conditions of collective reading, criticism, and pleasure”

(Appadurai 1996). (The *Rushdie Affair*, which provoked international debate about the freedom of speech, the politics of reading, the cultural relevance of censorship, and the dignity of religion, is a salient example.)

But Appadurai reinterprets evidence of homogenization with a nullifying twist: the “post-electronic world” of shared information and media, he argues, emancipates the collective *imagination* from the “special expressive space of art, myth, and ritual,” reserved for traditional nation-states (in Anderson’s sense of nations as “imagined communities”). Filling the vacuum of this bounded cultural space are “diasporic public spheres.” Diasporic public spheres exist where “mass-mediation” meets “transnational mobilization” to create spaces of resistance, irony, selectivity and agency.

As Turkish guest workers in Germany watch Turkish films in their German flats, as Koreans in Philadelphia watch the 1988 Olympics in Seoul through satellite feeds from Korea, and as Pakistani cabdrivers in Chicago listen to cassettes of sermons recorded in mosques in Pakistan or Iran, we see moving images meet deterritorialized viewers. These create diasporic public spheres, phenomena that confound theories that depend on the continued salience of the nation-state as the key arbiter of important social changes (Appadurai 1996, 4).

With respect to nationalism, this represents one special “diacritic”—a relatively recent and distinguishing fact—of the global modern.

What homogenization arguments fail to consider is that foreign cultural forms are also being indigenized. It is true that various homogenizing influences from global cities are brought into new societies, but these influences tend to come under local control, dominance or influence—which is as true of music and housing styles as it is of science and terrorism, spectacles and constitutions (Appadurai 1996, 32). The indigenization of

foreign cultural forms indicates, despite widespread fears of global homogenization, and contrary to the “death of the nation-state” thesis, that nation-states continue to use hegemonic discourses to interpret and suppress global cultural influences. In *Modernity at Large*, Appadurai centrally argues that the imagination does not fully defy the nation-state, but nor does the nation-state discipline nationalist sentiment in ways that historians and political theorists typically understand it to do. Indeed, nation and state have “become each other’s projects.” The central tension of today’s global interactions is the mutual forces of homogenization and heterogenization operating at state and sub-state levels (Appadurai 1996, 32); and, subsequently, of different groups struggling to establish their particularisms as universal (Isin and Wood 1999, 35). Human rights proliferation and political Islam are opposing examples of this trend.

Where liberal political theory is concerned, this debate can be rearticulated as an effort to reconcile citizenship, universally conceived, with particularistic cultural identities. The homogenization/heterogenization dichotomy therefore informs theoretical debates that seek to balance the intellectual legacies of universalism and particularism—of universal citizenship rights, for example, against the “primordial loyalties” of ethnicity, race, local community, and language, which have been newly emancipated from the nation-state by the twin processes of modernity and globalization.

In the cultural economy of the modern global, these trends at first strike us as paradoxical. As globalization allows individuals to join the global economy as players, we witness a resurgence of and rising indifference toward national sovereignty; on the one hand, the broad sweep of homogenization, and the other, reactionary separatist movements. Of course, the dichotomy between fervent nationalism (as a particular) and

worldly cosmopolitanism (universal) is insufficiently complex to describe why this might be; or, more specifically, what role, if any, the global cultural economy plays in producing these and other differences. With respect to the impact of globalization on nationalism, it is important to note that the “global village” simply has not become the communitarian, borderless space that Marshall McLuhan predicted. With respect to cultural identity, technologies have not just shrunk the sense of space between people, in many instances they have eroded that sense of place (hence the characterization by social theorists of modern life as rootless—a place of alienation and anomie, where all traditions and particular histories are irrelevant<sup>6</sup>—and the persistent struggle of nation-states the world over to establish solidarity amongst increasingly fractious minorities). Unlike national consciousness, imagination—the new space of contestation and identity-formation—is no longer corralled exclusively in the direction of state interests. Not even the U.S., that once great “puppeteer of a world-system of images,” can control the construction of the global imaginary landscape. It is only one node in a complex system of images (Appadurai 1996).<sup>7</sup> And this creates increasingly fluid and volatile cultural affiliations—which, under disorganized capitalism, the notions of “societal culture” and “cosmopolitan,” and the overarching theories these ontological categories support, are ill equipped to explain.

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<sup>6</sup> Edward Said once said of modernity that it leaves us in “a generalized condition of homelessness,” where identities are constantly being deterritorialized and remade. See *Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims*, 1979. The term “anomie”—an absence or breakdown of norms in society—is most commonly associated with Emile Durkheim and Robert Merton. For Durkheim, see *The Division of Labour in Society* and *Suicide*.

<sup>7</sup> What Ernest Geller called “high culture” is being desegregated from nation-states: mainstream media, newspapers, magazines, television, books, etc., are now able to provide us with common frames of reference, a common conversation, and the dissemination of common values.

*“Disorganized Capitalism”: A Model of Global Capital Flows*

The term “disorganized capitalism” describes the complex, circuitous, and ultimately disjunctive movement of capital flows between nodes in the modern global economy. Generally speaking, “disorganized capitalism” entails the de-monopolization of economic structures with the deregulation and globalization of markets, trade, and labour (Lash and Urry). Disorganized capitalism is also sometimes referred to as advanced capitalism, postfordism, and flexible or reflexive accumulation, with minor differences in scope between them. With disorganized capitalism in mind, it becomes easier to see how fundamental disjunctures emerge between economy, culture, and politics. An elementary framework is useful for exploring these disjunctures and their impact on the construction of imagined selves and imagined worlds.

Appadurai devises a framework for understanding disorganized capitalism by looking at the relationship between five dimensions of global capital flows: (a) *ethnoscapes*, (b) *mediascapes*, (c) *technoscapes*, (d) *financescapes*, and (e) *Ideoscapes*. The suffix “scape” has a two-fold significance: First, it highlights the tangibility of these landscapes; second, it connotes a subjective point of view, a situatedness within global flows that is “deeply perspectival”, “inflected by the historical, linguistic, and political situatedness,” of “nation-states, multinationals, diasporic communities, as well as subnational groupings and movements (whether religious, political, or economic), and even intimate face-to-face groups, such as villages, neighbourhoods, and families” (33). The individual agent, not the collective, is the principal unit of analysis here, for it is his *loyalty* (to use Albert Hirschman’s expression) that endures the possibilities of these unpredictable and

interconnected landscapes. These landscapes are, importantly, the building blocks not of “imagined communities”, but of “imagined worlds”—worlds constituted by the “historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe” (Appadurai 33)

*Ethnoscapes* refer to landscapes of ethnicities produced by flows of people: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other moving groups and individuals whose migrations make up the very fact of multiculturalism in the modern world. As international capital shifts its needs, as production and technology create labour diasporas, as nation-states shift their policies on refugee populations, these moving groups move within and between shifting, imaginary worlds (Appadurai).

*Technoscapes* are landscapes of technology flows, comprising high and low, mechanical and informational technologies produced by multinational and national corporations and government agencies. These flows move at high speeds across previously closed borders. (Appadurai, 34).

*Financescapes* are produced by global capital flows that follow rapid and unpredictable incentives and constraints: currency markets, national stock exchanges and commodity speculations move billions and trillions of dollars through regional economies at breakneck speed. The critical point with respect to finance is that the global relationship among *ethnoscapes*, *technoscapes* and *financescapes* is deeply disjunctive and unpredictable, subject to political, informational, and techno-environmental constraints.

*Mediascapes* are closely connected to *Ideoscapes*. They refer to the repertoires of images and information produced and distributed electronically, which are now available

to a growing number of public and private interests (newspapers, magazines, television and film). Mediascapes provide large and complex repertoires of images, narratives, and *ethnoscapes* to viewers throughout the world, in which the world of commodities and the world of news and politics are profoundly mixed. *Mediascapes*, whether produced by private or state interests, tend to be image-centered, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality—out of these scripts can be formed imagined lives. “These scripts get disaggregated into complex sets of metaphors by which people live as they help to constitute narratives of the Other and protonarratives of possible lives, fantasies that could be a staging for the acquisition and movement into other lives” (Appadurai).

*Ideoscapes*, like *mediascapes*, are also a series of interconnected images, but often directly political, and comprised of elements of the Western Enlightenment worldview—images of *rights, freedom, sovereignty, representation*, and the master term, *democracy*. Of course, non-Western *ideoscapes* have also gained prominence around the world. As evidenced in the U.S. on September 11<sup>th</sup>, political Islam is a developing world ideology with the ability to mobilize fundamentalist interests and maintain legitimacy to devastating effect. And these incendiary interests have the potential to incite terrorism in virtually any city anywhere in the world. Buddhism, to offer a more promising example, is being celebrated by cognitive scientists and adopted—and ultimately indigenized—by consumers in North America. Marketing departments of major corporations have helped indigenize various Buddhist tenets by promoting them with their products. LuLu Lemon, Vancouver-based purveyor of “yoga-inspired athletic apparel,” is perhaps the quintessential example.

As states struggle with their uniquely modern sovereignty issues, disorganized capitalism and its unpredictable capital flows make minority struggles less predictable and more volatile. States feel pressed to open borders to commodities and spectacles of the global economy, though this openness exposes the nation within to ethnoscaples, mediascapes, and, eventually, ideoscapes, which threaten the state's control over ideas of nationhood and peoplehood (as between South Korea, its impenetrable internet firewall, and Western democracy, for example). Other radical disjunctures exist which augment nationalist movements, exacerbating state-minority relations: Between ideoscapes and technoscapes (as in small countries that lack contemporary technologies of production and information), between ideoscapes and financescapes (as in Mexico or Brazil, where international lending influences national politics to a large degree), between ideoscapes and ethnoscapes (as in Beirut, where diasporic, local, and translocal affiliations are at battle), or between ideoscapes and mediascapes (as in the Middle East or Asia, where popular representations of modern life in the West, via television, cinema, or internet, completely overwhelm and undermine the rhetoric of national politics (Appadurai 1996, 40). Each of these landscapes are subject to their own incentives and constraints—people, money, machinery, images, and ideas following increasingly non-isomorphic paths—at the same time that each acts to constrain and enable the movement of other such flows. The sheer speed, scale and volume of these flows are now central to the politics of global culture (Appadurai 1996).

*“Third Cultures”*: *The Non-Isomorphism of Place, Space, and Identity*

Given the role of the imagination in constituting modern identities, it is necessary to understand cultural transformation as situated within, and enabled by, these interconnected *scapes*. Anthropology, among related disciplines, has always been acutely aware that space is socially constructed. The goal here, however, is to politicize this observation by exploring modern processes that *produce* difference in a world of culturally, socially, and economically interdependent spaces (Gupta 1992, 14). Elaborating a model of global flows is a necessary first step in politicizing this process because it enables us to see how corporations, various organizations, states and other institutions manipulate or channel (close or open up) the cultural boundaries of others to these flows by leveraging their relative power resources (Featherstone 1990). To what extent, for example, are “diasporic public spheres” truly public, given the control by producers of mass culture over representations circulated globally—films, television and radio programs, newspapers and wire services, books, live concerts, etc.? It is also important to consider how minorities themselves harness these resources in contests for political power.

To begin with, acknowledging and understanding the influence of *scapes* on individual identity allows us to analyze homogenization and heterogenization processes in a new way. Globalization processes extend global cultural interrelatedness by creating global ecumenes, or “regions of persistent cultural interaction and exchange” (Featherstone 1990). By linking together previously isolated pockets of relatively homogenous culture, the disorganized series of cultural flows described above produce

cultural homogeneity, and these, in turn, produce more images—more representations—of the other, which can generate identity-reinforcing reactions. In the modern global, it is becoming more and more common for the nationalistic zeal of displaced cultural communities to in fact exceed that of counterparts in their home countries; hence the preponderance of invented homelands among deterritorialized groups (Iyer 2008).

But disorganized capitalism also produces transnational cultures, which can be understood as genuine “third cultures” oriented beyond national boundaries (Featherstone 1990, 7). It is in global cities, among professional cultures, that the prototypical cosmopolitan attitude prevails. As Featherstone notes, the globalization of capital flows and the de-regulation of local markets has created a new form for the market and a new category of transnational professionals (Featherstone 1990, 7). Take the globalization of legal services, for example:

International lawyers, corporate tax accountants, financial advisors and management consultants were required as the various business and financial interests sought to chart and formalize the newly globalized economic space. The breaking down of barriers favoured the strongest performer: The North American law firms which had already experienced the emergence of “mega-law firms” and the creation of “law factories”. *In this sense the globalization of the market for legal services was in many ways an Americanization.* A similar process of deregulation and globalization occurred within related professional activities such as architecture and advertising. To these we could add a range of specialists in the film, video, television, music, image and consumer industries. *This coterie of new specialists and professionals not only work outside the traditional professional and organization cultures of the nation-state, they experience the problem of intercultural communication first-hand.*<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Lately, a profusion of literature, journalistic and academic, has appeared on the culture of professionalization—from Featherstone and Richard Sennett on the impact of professionalization on character and community, to Richard Florida and David Brooks, who have written popular books on work-life, creativity, class and taste.

As this trend suggests, cosmopolitanism is largely a property of social situatedness—of class and place, not, or not primarily, of a cosmopolitan proclivity, as Waldron contends in the argument laid out in Chapter 1. *Reason* may well represent an innate ability of our species; “cosmopolitan reason,” however, demands certain socio-economic conditions in order to flourish. It is within an increasingly dense web of cosmopolitan-local encounters, made possible by transnational capital, that this new category of professionals form “third cultures” of relatively tolerant workers. A textbook case of the “third culture” phenomenon can be found in Montreal, where, in a 1995 referendum, the francophone separatist elite in Quebec tried to separate from Canada. But as Isin and Wood assert, an ascendant cosmopolitan culture in Montreal blocked separation, demonstrating that post-national political subjectivities (and cultural preferences) had coalesced in the city (Isin and Wood 1999, 103). According to Mike Featherstone “third cultures” do, in effect, represent a new type of habitus (a tacit realm of reproducible practices and dispositions), and these “third cultures” (professional cultures, or the new professional class, as I will call them) engender new normative possibilities (Featherstone 1990). (Unclear, however, is the extent to which the “habitus” of these professional cultures remains true to Pierre Bourdieu’s intended meaning of the term. As Appadurai has shown us, the imagination has become a spatially dislocated source of agency, selectivity, and justification; less, perhaps, a habitus, and more a deterritorialized space of conscious choice. Much of Appadurai’s work seems to insist that globalization, particularly at overlapping “scapes,” has defeated the “structuring structure” of Bourdieu’s habitus. I briefly return to this debate in Chapter 3.)

The fundamental point is that the distinction between culture and economy is merely analytical—a distinction that social movements do not make in their everyday struggles (Isin and Wood 1999). Ironically, the same forces of globalization that concentrate cosmopolitan attitudes in global cities have enabled “diasporic public spheres,” which provide nationalists with a desire for power (or a disdain for the trappings of modernity<sup>9</sup>) with tools of rebellion—technologies that can be converted into, and used to enhance, reactionary social movements. It is important not to confuse cause and effect on this point: modern technologies enable, but do not necessarily cause dissidence, irredentism, or factionalism. Underlying social movements are still cultural isolation (and reactivism), marginalization (and revolt), and the kind of nostalgia for one’s homeland that can only be sustained in isolation from that homeland, often by a vivid and discontent imagination. It is theoretically significant that these images and narratives do not represent primordial loyalties reenacting themselves on the world stage, calling for official recognition by state appointed authorities. These loyalties are not bound to occupy a “given territory or homeland” (Kymlicka 1995). As Gupta notes, “*imagined communities*,” become attached to “imagined places as displaced peoples cluster around remembered or imagined homelands... in a world that seems to increasingly deny such firm territorialized anchors in their actuality” (Gupta 1992, 11). Through migration, or their own conceptual and political acts of re-imagination, people can confound established spatial orders. The profusion of “diasporic public spheres” is, Appadurai would insist, a testament to this fact. Place and space can never be “given”; efforts to do so often indicate the socio-political construction of space by governments and elites. At bottom, the foregoing

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<sup>9</sup> In *Notes on Nationalism*, George Orwell uses the term “negative nationalism” to refer to a class of social solidarity which, absent any positive source of group identification, forms simply to oppose an undesirable power threat.

section has sought to point out this non-isomorphism of place, space and identity, and to situate difference within the newly spatialized terms of the global capitalist economy; between *ethno-*, *media-*, *techno-*, *finance-*, and *ideo-* “scapes”.

### Chapter 3: Contexts of Choice: Minority Rights For Global Cities?

*My parents had chosen to come to this country, but they had also chosen to hold on to as much of India as possible. They lived among other Sikhs, followed closely the tenets of their religion, and taught me the value of obedience. What to eat, wear, study, and later on, where to work and whom to marry—I was to allow these to be determined by the rules of Sikhism and by my family’s wishes. But in public school I learned that it was not only natural but desirable that I should make my own decisions... For a blind Sikh girl otherwise subject to so many restrictions, this was a very powerful idea. I could have thought of my life as already written, which would have been more in line with my parents’ views. Or I could have thought of it as a series of accidents beyond my control, which was one way to account for my blindness and my father’s death. However, it seemed much more promising to think of it in terms of choice, in terms of what was still possible and what I could make happen.*

—Sheena S. Iyengar, *The Art of Choosing*

#### *The “Context of Choice”: Kymlicka, Culture, and Agency*

It is now time to probe the notion of “culture” inherent in Kymlicka’s liberal defense of multiculturalism, as well as his implicit notion of *agency*, which carries the unresolved tension of an earlier debate between liberal individualists and communitarians—namely, about the extent to which individuals are embedded in their social and historical context: in their “community” or “culture”. Afterward, I will explore the relationship between Kymlicka’s notions of culture and agency (which are at the center of his idea of culture as a “context of choice”) and the emerging global capitalist economy of *disjunctive “scapes”*. *This meeting of political theory and sociology* will, I argue, demonstrate a weakness of Kymlicka’s theory, forcing us to broaden the so called “context of choice” to

include and account for differences as they exist *within*, as opposed to *between*, culture(s); that is, *within* culture understood as a medium, a specific field in which symbols, ideas, knowledge, images and sounds are produced, exchanged and consumed (Isin, Wood, 1999). If Appadurai's "scapes" are the "building blocks" of contemporary imagined worlds, and if the imagination is now "central to all forms of agency", then "the individual actor is the last locus of this perspectival set of landscapes, for these landscapes are eventually navigated by agents who both experience and constitute larger formations, in part from their own sense of what these landscapes offer" (Appadurai 33). In other words, the hold of disjunctive global economic flows (of *scapes*) on the imagination elevates the cultural "context of choice" beyond the dimensions of Kymlicka's relatively tidy geographic grid. Cultural activity under disorganized capitalism betrays certain sociological assumptions implicit in Kymlicka's work. Kymlicka indeed acknowledges that economic institutions can support cultural infrastructure, but he does not account for the affect of semi-autonomous flows of global capital on *individuals* living within sub-national communities. In order to appreciate this, we first needed to understand that culture and global capital flows are not mutually exclusive forces; not if disorganized capitalism and its corresponding "scapes" have had a unique and indelible impact on the global imaginary landscape—on nationalist aspirations, identity, and social movements themselves. The role of agency in discussions of difference must be recast amidst these globalized landscapes, as well as the new structural inequalities these landscapes have produced.

The liberal-communitarian debates of the 1980s wavered between two basic conceptions of individual autonomy. In response to liberal political theory,

communitarians argued that individuals are constituted by *unchosen* attachments and ends, given by their social and historical context; or, as it was called at the time, their “community”. Liberal political theory was, by contrast, committed to a belief in the ultimate revisability of human ends and the context-transcending power of individuals.<sup>10</sup> In the 1990s, a renewed interest in forms of pluralism brought with it the terms “identity” and “culture,” which displaced “community” as a synonym for social and historical context, shifting the liberal-communitarian debate into a new register. Proponents of liberalism had, with questionable sincerity, acknowledged the situatedness of individuals within historical and intersubjective horizons, while nevertheless granting ultimate authority to individual freedom. The new debate centered on two contradictory views about the relationship between culture and agency. Either culture is an unjust constraint, at best morally neutral for impinging upon agency and autonomy (which are synonymous according to this view), or culture itself *enables* agency; agency no longer conceived of as autonomy or choice, but as the “realization and expression in action of an antecedently given identity, which an agent possesses by virtue of his or her membership in a larger cultural community” (Markell 2003). Agency is either sheer autonomy—“the ability to make our choices and actions our *own*”, as Anne Phillips put it—or it is bound up in, and enabled by, ends given by one’s “culture”.

Kymlicka attempts to reconcile these opposing positions with the “context of choice,” a concept he designed with precisely these debates in mind. As he put it, “freedom involves making choices amongst various options, and our *societal culture* not only

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<sup>10</sup> Here, I treat Sandel and Rawls as spokesmen for communitarianism and individualism respectively. For Sandel, see “The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self”, in *Communitarianism and Individualism*; for Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical*.

provides these options, but also makes them meaningful to us” (Kymlicka 83, 1995, my emphasis). This represents a rethinking of culture at the ontological level. Kymlicka acknowledges the openness of culture, describing its fluidity using several important cases, and since he situates agency within culture, he suggests that people are in some sense products of a history they did not choose, and that the principle of absolute autonomy (agency) is therefore a non-starter. Dynamic and open to change, societal cultures both enable and constrain. The relation between culture and agency is dialectical—they are “reciprocally constitutive” forces. Absolute sovereignty for any minority group, it would seem to follow, is an untenable political aim (Markell 158, 2003).

Though these conclusions follow sensibly from Kymlicka’s concept of a “context of choice,” they are difficult to reconcile with his framework for minority rights. As we saw in Chapter 1, Waldron seized upon a troubling question that Kymlicka himself anticipated: Why are minority groups entitled not just to a culture in general, but to “their *own* culture?” (Kymlicka 1995). As Patchen Markell observed, this way of posing the question “subtly but decisively” shifts questions of cultural justice and injustice away from culture as a medium, toward encounters “*among* the representatives of individuated cultures,” in which the challenge for a theory of minority rights is to justify “access” to one’s own culture. Here, agency exists outside, not *within*, a medium of culture. “This way of thinking about culture” Markell writes, “is an unstable amalgamation of the liberal language of property and possessive individualism and the communitarian language of encumbrance” (Markell 2003). Underlying Kymlicka’s theory of minority

rights are two irreconcilable concepts of culture: culture as an external good to which we have access *and* culture as the inescapable background of our decisions.

In light of this tension, it is difficult to say what in fact people have rights to, if they have rights to “cultures” thus conceived. Recall Kymlicka’s response to Waldron: People have a right to their own “societal culture” because “even where successful integration is possible, it is rarely easy. It is a costly process, and there is a legitimate question about whether people should be required to pay the costs unless they voluntarily choose to do so” (Kymlicka 85, 1995). What these costs are, exactly, Kymlicka does not say, though he tells us they are proportional to the degree of *difference* between one culture and another—between two cultures’ languages, histories, forms of social organization, and levels of technological development, for example (Kymlicka 85, 1995). Certain cultures rule out certain definitive options for their members, Kymlicka suggests, and a comparison between cultures can determine where these options do and do not overlap. Here, cultures do not serve as “contexts of choice” but—crucially—as discrete entities that offer a definite range of options, ruling out certain choices. It is on this basis that Kymlicka asserts the right of national minorities to their *own* societal cultures.

Kymlicka’s second defense of the right to one’s own culture turns on “the role of cultural membership in people’s self-identity” (Kymlicka 89-90, 1995). Kymlicka highlights the resilience of nationalism through the Quiet Revolution in Quebec during the 1960s (a period of both liberalization and rising nationalist fervor among the Quebecois). Because Quebecois national identity persisted after this period of liberalization and widespread social change, Kymlicka concludes that one’s cultural bonds can, indeed, be too strong to compromise (Kymlicka 90, 1995). A similar point

could be made of “Turkish guest workers in Germany” who “watch Turkish films in their German flats,” or “Pakistani cabdrivers in Chicago” who “listen to cassettes of sermons recorded in Mosques in Pakistan or Iran”—at least in so far as these individuals defy the homogenizing forces of “Americanization” to preserve cultural “bonds” to their homelands; technologically equipped, as they are, to mobilize into *political* communities of interest and resistance. But Kymlicka shifts our attention away from the choices a culture enables to the options it rules out, from its internal diversity to its hard edges (Markell 160, 2003). The crucial point is that Kymlicka defends culture as an autonomy-enhancing medium of choice, but when making the case for minority rights, he reasserts a view of culture as a determining force, as something similar to the discrete, constraining entity described by his communitarian opponents.

Kymlicka’s ingenious response to this problem is to introduce a distinction between “the existence of a culture” and “its ‘character’ at any given moment” (Kymlicka 1995). The “existence” of a culture is what people have a legitimate right to preserve; it is its source of differentiation from other cultures, and is associated with a culture’s dominant institutions. The “character” of a culture, by contrast, is its changing content, steered by the choices of its individual members. The “existence” of a culture does the necessary business of differentiating between cultures worthy of recognition, subsidization, and legal exemption; whatever the case may be. The “character” of a culture acts as a site of autonomy for actors. This distinction, however, is artificial. It understands the “existence” of a culture and its “character” to be separate things, rather than aspects of “a single dynamic movement of mutual constitution” (Johnson 2000). It is unclear how the “character” of a culture could ever be a thing worthy of respect, ever a basis for deep

cultural allegiance. Because it exists separately from the content of culture—separated from its diverse, shifting range of options—the “existence” of a culture loses its connection to human agency, which is what, according to Kymlicka, is supposed to make it an object worthy of protection in the first place. Furthermore, it is difficult to see how something as ill-defined as the “existence” of a culture could ever serve as an acceptable “context of choice”. It is therefore misleading to speak of a right to culture when cultures are taken as ontologically discrete objects; identity, a *fait accompli*. (Given the instability of modern subjectivities, and the new role of imagination in constituting these subjectivities, the dangers of this trap should now be apparent.) In devising a liberal framework for minority rights, Kymlicka’s attempt to reconcile his theory of culture as a “context of choice” with culture as a site of constraint owes its failure precisely to this tendency.

One important consequence of this error is that injustice is misidentified as something that occurs among members of individuated cultures, as opposed to within a medium of culture itself. As a result, basic questions regarding justice in ethnocultural relations are lost. It is in a sense meaningless to ask how societal cultures can be recognized and protected, or how access to one’s *own* culture can be enhanced. With a clearer image of culture’s dimensionality in mind, we can begin to ask questions that have more to do with how culture becomes a *medium* of injustice. What, for example, distinguishes decent from indecent patterns of interaction in relation to changing global capital, and changing sites of production and reproduction? What possibilities remain for group-differentiated rights under disorganized capitalism? Indeed, the presence of various “scapes” demands an alternative spatial rendering of the present, one whose disjunctive sizes and rapid,

unpredictable flows acknowledge that our “context of choice” is in fact a multidimensional landscape.

With respect to what in politics is cultural, the foregoing emphasis has been on culture as situated difference—“difference in relation to something local, embodied, and significant.” Culture is not a substance, but a “dimension of phenomena” (Appadurai 1996). This emphasis shifts thinking away from Kymlickian notions of culture as a property of individuals and groups toward cultures’ more fluid, disconnected particularities—narratives, symbols, ideas, practices, images—which, in the modern global, vie for acceptance, interdependence, and superiority among uneven global flows of other such disconnected cultural particularities. In the modern global, these interdependencies exist across national minority cultures as well as immigrant cultures, as Kymlicka defines these. And the application of “societal culture” to immigrants of global cities—the application of the model of Quebec and indigenous peoples—is bound to be unsuccessful; not least of all because it is unfaithful to Quebec and indigenous groups themselves. The “existence” of a culture and the “character” of a culture would need, in fact, to be different things for societal culture to be an ontologically defensible category. Let us instead focus on cultural citizenship, defining it as “a field in which the rights to access to production, distribution and consumption of culture become a field of struggle and conflict” (Isin & Wood 1999). This conceptualization challenges basic assumptions about social relations in the modern global and expands the cultural context of choice, reconciling it to the multiple, ever-shifting allegiances, associations, and sites of power and production negotiated by individuals in modern life. By drawing our attention toward the situated citizen, and toward deeper relations of power and injustice affecting

processes of social transformation, we may come closer to asking—and subsequently answering—the right questions about justice in ethnocultural relations.

*Globalization of the City: The “Context of Choice,” Take Two*

The global city is an excellent place to ground discussions of difference, agency, and justice, and also in which to envision what is meant by “culture as situated difference.” The global city is where local meets global (at the “glocal,” to use a popular blending of terms), and where, if Appadurai is correct, *agency* abounds amid cross-currents of global flows of information and technology. The global city is a node within a network of cities across the world, and differs from the modern city in that it derives its power by organizing markets for professional expertise and services (Isin and Wood 1999, 98). New forms of capital (financial, cultural, social and symbolic) flow through these nodes, giving rise to a new urban economy that empowers new classes to profit disproportionately from the spoils. In Canada, roughly 95 percent of immigrants have chosen to settle in cities<sup>11</sup>; a trend consistent across western democratic states. (In March 2010, for example, for the first time in its history, Toronto’s immigrant population overtook its native population<sup>12</sup>.) Yet despite the concentration of immigrants in global and increasingly multicultural cities like Toronto, the city remains an immensely fractious and fractured place. For economic, as well as social and political reasons, global

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<sup>11</sup> See Canada, Statistics Canada, 1996, *Census: Immigration and Citizenship* <<http://www.statcan.ca/english/census96/nove4/naliss.htm> 2-13>

<sup>12</sup> According to Statistics Canada by 2031 up to 14.4 million “white” people in Canada could be a visible minority, with so-called minorities becoming the majority in Toronto and Vancouver. See *Canadian Press*, March 9, 2010.

cities control access to production, distribution and consumption of culture, thus limiting meaningful citizenship while masking hegemonic liberal and neoliberal market logics over which governments disclaim control<sup>13</sup>. When we say that global cities are multicultural we often assert a merely demographic fact, but one with strong normative overtones.

Recall Kymlicka's injunction that "We cannot begin to understand and evaluate the politics of multiculturalism unless we see how the historical incorporation of minority groups shapes their collective institutions, identities, and aspirations" (Kymlicka 1995). Understanding the structure of the urban political economy—and by extension the nature of urban life—is now critical to discussions of cultural integration and transformation. With respect to immigration, we can no longer speak exclusively of the nation-state as the relevant unit of incorporation for ethnocultural minorities. As people world-wide are forced to confront modernity—as governments seek out new land in a resource scarce world, as "exotic" tours mirror circuitous, far-flung routes traveled by foreign interests and paved by foreign capital, and as urbanization reaches farther in virtually every direction—research must strive after a model of incorporation into modernity. It is by now a truism to say that globalization has undermined the sovereignty of nation-states—"diasporic public spheres" offer compelling proof of a legitimacy crisis at this level of government. With state control over modernization in question, it becomes important to offer an account of culture that does not explore merely its place within the nation-building projects of states. Returning to the global city is important because globalization

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<sup>13</sup> In *Selling Diversity*, Yasmeen Au-Laban and Christina Gabriel argue that the discourse of globalization has been used to manage, package, and sell a shallow notion of Canadian multiculturalism (diversity) to the highest foreign bidder. Immigration, multiculturalism, employment equity policies are all, the authors argue, subservient to global competitiveness.

has intensified the urban environment as a place for the production, consumption, and exchange of culture itself.

This final chapter will use the city to re-conceptualize the idea of a right to culture. It aims to do so in contrast to Kymlicka (to conceive of access to culture in a way that does not essentialize culture) and Waldron (to grasp cultural differences without papering over culture's relatively fine edges, and to not conflate cosmopolitan reason with the class situatedness of professionals in transnational business networks concentrated in global cities). Waldron, as discussed in Chapter 2, fails to see that cosmopolitanism is deeply embedded in a context of global flows which create habituses, and, in general, agency—about which I will say more in a moment. The class situatedness of “organic intellectuals,” who exert power over minorities by representing them using “expert” discourses, was duly taken up in Chapter 1.) In the section that concludes this chapter, I argue that we can be more sensitive to the role of culture in daily life by adopting a new conception of rights—“rights to the city” (Lefebvre 1996). But first, a word on the restructuring of global cities.

### *Rise of the Professions: Citizenship and the Structure of Global Cities*

The centrifugal forces of global capital have precipitated a new global demographic realignment [“clustering force” (Lucas 1988), “spatial sorting” (Brooks 2004), and “means migration” (Florida 2008, 93)]. In Richard Florida's words, we are witnessing a means migration: “The mass relocation of highly skilled, highly educated, and highly

paid people to a relatively small number of metropolitan regions, and a corresponding exodus of traditional lower and middle classes from the same places” (Florida 2008, 93). This process has antecedents in economic globalization, which allows countries to outsource routine economic functions such as simple manufacturing or service work, while clustering high-level economic activities such as innovation, design, finance and media in a relatively small number of cities (or urban mega-regions), where the largest share of economic output and innovation is being generated.

This concentration of capital in global cities has led to their restructuring. Of particular interest is the way in which the concentration of specialized economic activity has given rise to new professions that control flows of global capital (Isin and Wood 1999; Featherstone 1990; Brooks 2001; Florida 2008). The new professions dominate the global city with major fields of production such as business, advertisements, arts, science, media, journalism, politics, religion and medicine, to name a few. Unlike the aristocracy (land), labour (wage), or bourgeoisie (economic capital), these new *professional groups* are made up of career hierarchies of specialized members selected by merit based on credentials, expertise, competence and skills (cultural capital). This has given rise to a “new class,” variously called the “professional managerial class,” “information elite” or “knowledge class.” In the global economy, and under advanced capitalism, the only legitimate avenue open to wealth, status and power, except for those with inherited capital or land, is membership in one of these new professional groups (Gouldner 1979). Summarizing Featherstone, Florida, Brooks, Isin and Wood, we can say that the professional class produces a set of socialized tendencies (a habitus) of its own, which

self-regulates membership in its cultural and economic activities (an exercise in power often referred to as “social closure”).

In consequence, non-professional groups are neither active producers of “knowledge products” nor participants in their use (Isin and Wood 1999). Rather, the citizen is increasingly constituted only as a consumer who makes choices among various knowledge products. Professionals—journalists, lawyers and consultants, among others—in turn offer their *paid* services to excluded groups to make these choices and to help them become conscientious opinion consumers. As Bourdieu observed, various newcomers and marginalized people become caught in a spiral: While the social world becomes less accessible as a sphere of power, minorities become increasingly dependent upon the professionals and their language to interpret the very social world slipping from their grasp. Legal and immigration services, for example, proliferate, while newcomers face more technical and difficult to understand barriers to inclusion within their own communities.

With respect to minorities, we can draw at least two important lessons from this restructuring process. The first is empirical: various groups in global cities, such as ethnic and racial minorities, immigrants, youth, unskilled workers, semi-skilled clerical workers and technicians, and a permanent underclass, constitute the other side of professional-cosmopolitan groups. Immigrants, particularly those arriving through familial as opposed to individual immigration, are often relegated to the lower class sectors and spaces of wealthy societies. Alternatively, they take up work in ethnic economies run by networks of all ethnic-owned business firms which, a growing body of literature has shown, can inhibit the social integration of these individuals by enclosing them in a social

environment that has less interaction with individuals outside<sup>14</sup>. The fundamental point is that marginalization and exclusion of these groups from professional networks have become structural aspects of the modern global and its mediators, global cities. The hegemony of professional groups is the new urban reality; and they too, represent the hegemony of global capital, regulated by multinational corporations and international financial and political institutions. But how has this affected cultural identity? As some theorists have noted, the process of deterritorialization (which brings labouring populations into the lower-class sectors and spaces of relatively wealthy societies) can instigate violent class resistance in the name of ethnicity (Appadurai 1996, Fraser 1995, Ignatieff 1993). Rights claims based on cultural identities are sometimes played as convenient political trump cards, at least when no other avenue to equal opportunity is available. Deterritorialization has also supported mediascapes—travel agencies, film companies, art, all which seek to reconnect people to their imagined homelands—which can become sufficiently one-sided and reactionary to foment new ideoscapes (Appadurai 1996, 38).

A second more relevant lesson to draw from processes restructuring global cities is that the consumer has been transformed through commodity flows. “The real seat of agency,” writes Appadurai, “is not the consumer but the producer and the many forces that constitute production” (Appadurai 1996, 42). Elaborating on Marx’s view of the fetishism of the commodity, Appadurai calls this hidden reality the *fetishism of the consumer*, whereby “images of agency are increasingly distortions of a world of merchandising so subtle that the consumer is consistently helped to believe that he or she is an actor, where in fact he or she is at best a chooser” (Appadurai 1996, 42). Production,

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<sup>14</sup> See Research on Immigration and Integration in the Metropolis (RIIM) Project.

too, becomes a fetish, distorting and concealing the globally dispersed forces driving capital around the globe. According to Appadurai, this is a form of alienation (in Marx's sense) "twice-intensified" because the illusion of national productivity, territorial sovereignty, and local control mask translocal capital, transnational earning flows, global management, and real national production loci (Appadurai 1996). "The locality," indicative of both local workers and, in an extended sense, the nation-state, becomes a fetish that disguises actual production processes.

As Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson put it, urban life exists within "multiple fields of power"—"fields" which open and close opportunities for the meaningful articulation of differences, with the power to limit *voice*<sup>15</sup> (in Albert Hirschman's sense of the word) and leave meaningful citizenship in the lurch.

Physical location and physical territory, for so long the *only* grid on which cultural difference could be mapped, need to be replaced by multiple grids that enable us to see that connection and contiguity—more generally the representation of territory—vary considerably by factors such as class, gender, race, sexuality, and are differentially available to those in different locations in the field of power (Gupta and Ferguson 1992).

It is clear those minority frameworks which treat culture as a "context of choice"—that defend cultures as bounded sites of agency and autonomy—are, by design, insufficiently complex to capture the power dynamics that augment individual bonds to culture. To refine Gupta and Ferguson's argument, we are, as consumers and producers, each one of us, financially constrained or enabled to the degree that we can navigate the emerging professional structure of global cities—those nodes of concentrated power that

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<sup>15</sup> As Albert Hirschman noted in his seminal "Exit, Voice and Loyalty", the presence of the *exit* alternative can tend to *atrophy the development of the art of voice*, defined as any attempt at all to change, rather than escape from, an "objectionable state of affairs".

corral capital between global markets. “We need to account sociologically for the fact that the ‘distance’ between the rich in Bombay and the rich in London may be much shorter than that between different classes in ‘the same’ city,” Gupta and Ferguson continue. Far from espousing robust and universal norms, professional class-membership demands a degree of social and cultural capital unknown to most newcomers. Social integration will often precede economic stability, while economic stability underpins belonging, trapping newcomers who are unable to fully integrate in endless cycles of poverty and alienation. This is one reason why cultural politics are deeply implicated in city life, and why, if discussions of justice in ethnocultural relations are to proceed productively, a sufficiently modern theory of rights will need to be devised.

Although Appadurai carefully differentiates his notion of “imagination” as a social practice from mere “fantasy” or “escape”, it is important, finally, to comment on his general optimism about the opportunities imagination provides for real *agency*. Given the structural dynamic of the city under disorganized capitalism, it is difficult to say how far imagination can take us or exactly what it can do to transcend the *fetishism of the consumer*. To be sure, deterritorialized workers must navigate more than the hidden labour structure of global cities. Because research suggests that consumption patterns are constitutive of identity (Isin and Wood 1999; Lash and Urry 1994), the inability of minorities to access the means of production and symbolic and cultural resources of cities can amount to loss of cultural influence. It can also prevent the individual from constructing a consistent and meaningful identity for himself as he grapples with second-hand identities fed to him through mainstream media and consumer and advertising culture. Does it follow, then, that imagination, in its collective sense, is able to generate a

free and authentic “arena for conscious choice, justification, and representation?” (Appadurai 1996, 44). Has globalization truly set us free? Some of Appadurai’s own examples immediately come to mind: Hong Kong and Hollywood martial arts films generating cultures of masculinity and violence among L.A city gangs. Or young women, seduced by Hindi videos depicting the fortunes of bustling Bombay, becoming sex workers in the city’s cabarets. Globalization is not simply a Pandora’s Box from which conscious consumers *freely*, if desperately, assemble their identities. Promises of untold fortune only imaginary, in imagined lands, can be a lure for deterritorialized (and menial, if not demeaning) labour. By suggesting globalization has “defeated” Bourdieu’s habitus—his “structuring structure”—Appadurai has somewhat overstated his case.

“Conscious choice,” a notion so close to Appadurai’s use of the term imagination, is influenced by too many restrictions to say that we are always conscious choosers and autonomous agents. To say we are always “conscious choosers” is to ascribe to each of us the status of a *superman* (in Nietzsche’s sense of being able to transcend the conventions of social life and overcome human nature itself<sup>16</sup>). In the first place, the erasure of difference in the modern global is real—of spoken languages, for example, and the unique symbolic representations of the world these languages embody—and so we are limited to some extent by diminishing cultural particularities. But the imagination—consciousness, to delve a layer deeper—is also beholden to the subtler patterns of stimuli before it. Input processing is limited, attentional habits determined by social instructions. And all are structured by environments patterned by border-crossing, and in the case of social media and sophisticated communications technologies, border-transcending

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<sup>16</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

stimuli, where the 24-hour news-cycle has made “information overload” the norm<sup>17</sup>. We must remember that the individual’s “context of choice” is therefore also a context of limited cognition and attention. Nevertheless, where an individual is able to see himself as he is, see the world as it is presented to him, and overcome any cognitive dissonance that may exist between the former and the latter, *imagination* may provide novel opportunities for real agency. Culture as a field of conflict and struggle may, with great and continued effort, become a field of objective possibility in the modern global. How to secure access to this field of possibility for all in a just manner, however, remains an open question.

### *The Right to the City*

We can now enhance our definition of cultural citizenship as follows: Cultural citizenship is about allowing all citizens to become active producers of meaning and representation, and knowledgeable consumers under advanced capitalism (Isin 152), with access to the means of production and consumption of culture. Henri Lefebvre’s concept of the right to the city is useful in framing the conditions under which this form of citizenship may be possible: “The right to the city manifests itself as a superior form of rights: rights to freedom, to individualization and socialization, to habitat and to inhabit”

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<sup>17</sup> At this point in our scientific knowledge we are on the verge of being able to estimate how much information the central nervous system is capable of processing. It seems we can manage at most seven bits of information—such as differentiated sounds, or visual stimuli, or recognizable nuances of emotion or thought—at any one time, and that the shortest time it takes to discriminate between one set of bits and another is about 1/18 of a second. See Mikhail Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*.

(Lefebvre 1996, 173). “The right to the *oeuvre* [as a collective product], to participation and *appropriation* (clearly distinct from the right to property), are implied in the right to the city” (Lefebvre 1996, 174). In so far as it would protect access to resources of self-expression, representation, socialization and learning, the right to the city is a right to less restricted agency, and so also a call to renegotiate the use and control of space; in this case, urban space. But the right to the city is neither natural nor contractual. The right to the city “signifies the rights of citizens and city dwellers, and of groups they (on the basis of social relations) constitute, to appear on all networks and circuits of communication, information, and exchange” (Lefebvre 1996, 194-195). Furthermore, “to exclude the *urban* from groups, classes, individuals, is also to exclude them from civilization, if from not society itself. The *right* to the city legitimates the refusal to allow oneself to be removed from urban reality by a discriminatory and segregative organization. The right of the citizen...proclaims the inevitable crisis of city centres based upon segregation and establishing it: centres of decision-making, wealth, power, of information and knowledge, which reject towards peripheral spaces all those who do not participate in political privileges. Equally, it stipulates that right to meetings and gathering...” (Lefebvre 1996, 195).

Lefebvre was a committed Marxist—and the right to the city is a Marxist doctrine. In the 1960s, Lefebvre saw a form of gentrification taking root in Paris with antecedents in Second Empire Paris (1848) and major U.S. cities throughout the 1940s: harbingers of a global phenomenon of urbanization that would only grow in scale and accelerate in pace over time. In Paris, debt-financed infrastructural improvements like the Left Bank Expressway, the Place d’Italie, and Tour Montparnasse animated popular uprisings by

discontented white middle-class students and marginalized groups against not only the reconfiguration of urban infrastructure but also the growing power of the ruling bourgeoisie. It was in this context of gentrification and revolt that Lefebvre released *The Urban Revolution*, which predicted that urbanization would be “central to the survival of capitalism” and “therefore bound to become a crucial focus of political and class struggle” (Harvey 2008, 28). Lefebvre also argued that urbanization was “obliterating step by step the distinctions between town and country through the production of integrated spaces across national territory, if not beyond” (Harvey 2008, 28).

Lefebvre’s understanding of urbanization’s underlying process is fundamental. Cities arise by geographically and socially concentrating a surplus product. In David Harvey’s words:

The perpetual need to find profitable terrains for capital-surplus production and absorption shapes the politics of capitalism. Urbanization has always been a class phenomenon, since surpluses are extracted from somewhere and from somebody, while control over their disbursement typically lies in a few hands (Harvey 2008, 24).

Urbanization plays a central role in absorbing the surplus product capitalists invariably produce in their search for profits. By embracing a spatialized view of the world, Lefebvre was able trace a long historical shift from an agricultural to an industrial to the now urban form of existence and production, or globalized urban, in which we live. It is critical to note that this phase in the process of capital accumulation has gone global. Now highly mobile, *global* capital is being used to shape and remake urban centers, making collaboration among property capital, the state, retail capital and financial capital more seamless than ever before (Smith 2003, xxi).

As capitalist accumulation intensifies, space and the location of urban activities become increasingly commodified. The division of labour typical of early capitalism has changed to incorporate national and international interests, transforming the city itself into a patchwork of commercial districts, upper-class enclaves and underprivileged ghettos, adding still newer spatial forms to our cities: gated communities and privatized public spaces kept under constant surveillance (Harvey 2008). This fragmentation of the urban is nowhere more apparent than in the developing world. “The city is splitting into different separated parts,” writes Marcello Balbo, “with the apparent formation of many ‘microstates.’”

Wealthy neighbourhoods provided with all kinds of services, such as exclusive schools, golf courses, tennis courts and private police patrolling the area around the clock intertwine with illegal settlements where water is available only at public fountains, no sanitation system exists, electricity is pirated by a privileged few, the roads become mud streams whenever it rains, and where house-sharing is the norm. Each fragment appears to live and function autonomously, sticking firmly to what it has been able to grab in the daily fight for survival (Balbo 1993).

The result in some cities has been nothing short of political withdrawal from collective forms of public action and a new ‘template for human socialization’ (Harvey 2008, 32). In Marxist terms, basic human rights are being subordinated to the requirements of capital accumulation—to the interests of a *global* bourgeoisie—which are deeply transforming capitalist relations of production in cities. The city, not the factory, is now the primary site of capitalist production and reproduction.

The process of global urbanization foretold by Lefebvre is making it difficult to sustain ideals of urban identity, citizenship and belonging. As corporate and state

interests align to further fragment the city, the drawbacks of a purely statist framework for understanding multiculturalism should become apparent. Liberal cosmopolitanism, and liberal multiculturalism in particular, frame multiculturalism in terms of liberal *institutions* under which *immigrants* and *national minorities* do or do not have certain rights. Furthermore, both defer to a model of universal citizenship in conflict with and ultimately blind to many different forms of identity. It is impossible to establish what people's rights are without a proper understanding of the urban process, which fundamentally transforms social relations by undermining forms of collective action, cultural or otherwise, while further privatizing control of the body politic. It is likewise difficult to establish a theory of multiculturalism. The right to the city is not simply a right to consume in what Lefebvre called 'a bureaucratic society of controlled consumption' (Lefebvre 1984). The right to the city underlines the 'need for creative activity,' 'for the *oeuvre* (not only of products and material goods),' 'of the need for information, symbolism, the imaginary and play' (Lefebvre 1984). The right to the city implies a right to participate in the whole urban process—and to democratize that process as best we can. Without predicting the future of political struggles still unfolding, it frames social justice in terms of effective claims to the right to the city for all. It frames social justice in terms of citizenship as yet unmade.

This is precisely why thinking in terms of "scapes" is so useful—because it reveals possibilities for making rights claims based on collective notions of belonging that confound "societal cultures," and that exist outside the nation-state, and beyond what dominant neoliberal institutions recognize to be legitimate sources of identification. Just as "scapes" allow us to theorize global processes of social inequality, they also reveal

new resources for making effective claims to the right to the city. The boundaries and existence of groups are not fixed or given, but are always emerging as social struggles for recognition and rights. Where do rights claims come from? Rights claims are posed by inhabitants of the streets in relation to capital, in relation to patterns of consumption, in relation to urbanization and a marginalizing process of global gentrification. Rights claims consist fundamentally in a struggle to *be* oneself, to live the way one chooses, to access land and resources, to freely form associations, relationships, and so on. Many of the elusive “claims to culture” being advanced in global cities are being formulated within these disjunctive “scapes.” And the ‘imagination,’ as Appadurai uses the term, increasingly relies upon these “scapes”—on the global—to create and enact new ‘ideas of neighbourhood and *nationhood*, of moral economies and unjust rule, of higher wages and foreign labour prospects’ (Appadurai 1996, my emphasis).

Examples abound. The so-called “Arab Spring” has come to represent a wave of citizen revolts that have either toppled or seriously challenged the legitimacy of authoritarian regimes throughout the Middle East. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to determine the exact causes of and conditions for these revolts, suffice to say that Arab demonstrators are demanding fuller citizenship rights with appropriate constitutional guarantees. What is interesting, however, is *how* these movements have been conducted. According to Western media—*Reuters*, *CNN*, *The Globe and Mail*, and *the New York Times*, to name a few—the “Arab Spring” was a revolution promulgated by social media. A now famous photograph from Reuters shows “Twitter” and “Facebook” sprayed and encircled in silver graffiti in a Middle Eastern public square. According to news sources,

the most popular Twitter hashtags<sup>18</sup> in the Arab region between January and March of 2011 were “Egypt,” “Jan25,” “Libya,” “Bahrain” and “protest”—and nearly 9 in 10 Egyptians and Tunisians surveyed in March said they had used Facebook to effectively organize protests. (All but one of the protests organized on Facebook during this period materialized into activity on the streets.)<sup>19</sup> The evidence suggests that migratory Arab audiences, influenced by *ideo-*, *techno-* and *media-scapes*, leveraged Silicon Valley technology to incite new rights claims to cities throughout the Middle East; a tactic made necessary in Egypt when military police, under orders from President Mubarak, cut off all public communication services.

The so-called Arab Spring did not depend on Facebook for its success: the Internet is still a tool, and the revolution is still the people’s. But it is plain to see that global cultural flows did help citizens create alternative public spaces from which to establish subversive notions of community and belonging. Global cultural flows, and the *scapes* used to concretize their movements and influence, point us not only toward communities in flux, but also to the new and emerging *publics* that facilitate their creation. Authoritative institutions cannot easily penetrate these new *publics*, offering online citizens an unusual degree of autonomy. Today it was Tahrir Square. In the near future, the right to the city could very well be the impetus for establishing a right to the Internet and, equally, the extension of the right to free speech and to a new *public space*, thus enhancing future access to the city itself. The reality is that culture is changing much more quickly than we realize, and the processes enabling it are fundamentally global in nature.

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<sup>18</sup> A “hashtag” (“#”) is an online, community-driven device with which Twitter users mark keywords and organize messages.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/facebook-and-twitter-key-to-arab-spring-uprisings-report>

That many Western states are hesitant to fully acknowledge the implications of the citizen revolts exposes yet another interesting aspect of the global urban process. Despite the colonial legacy of Western economic dominance, the much-taken-for-granted power of Western states to shape policy in the Arab world may now be under threat. This is a reality that Western political leaders are not necessarily ready to accept as Arabs struggle to define control of their countries (and of the redistribution of the surplus product).<sup>20</sup> These social-media-fueled revolts challenge not only the legitimacy of the nation but also the validity of the concept itself. How disharmonious have state narratives of nationhood been with the lived experiences of citizens on the streets? Recent revolts in the Middle East have been leveled against a global urban process that pushes an accessible future farther and farther from grasp. The fundamental desire of the protestors is consistent with the underlying spirit of the right to the city: to have a say in how global capital is utilized, so as to construct the future in a just and equitable way. This fact furthers the case for thinking in terms of “scapes” and framing group struggles in terms of the right to the city.

The politics of urban youth is also illuminated by the concept of “scapes.” Consider Saudi Arabia, where the United States-funded Al Hurra TV news channel struggles to compete with satellite broadcasts of US primetime TV shows and film, demand for which has begun to overwhelm Saudi cable stations. In offices and classrooms throughout the country, Saudis openly discuss memorable American movie themes: heroic honesty in the face of corruption (for them exemplified by George Clooney in *Michael Clayton*), supportive behaviour in equal partner relationships (demonstrated in a number of popular American sitcoms), and respect for the law over self-interest (portrayed by Al Pacino and

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<sup>20</sup> Rami Khouri: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/opinions/opinion/arab-spring-or-revolution/article2132994/>

Robin Williams in *Insomnia*). US film has penetrated everyday Saudi popular culture. And Saudi youth draw on the movie world of US social, and particularly sexual, relations to test the boundaries of their own culture. Hybridity. Syncretism. Creolization. Cultural translation.<sup>21</sup> Whatever the name, among many urban youth, facets of culture are self-consciously selected from multiple heritages. Whether the urban youth in question are Saudi or Quebecois or Aboriginal<sup>22</sup> should not fundamentally make a difference. In this case, the question remains what youth recognize to be legitimate sources of cultural authority and identification. The very desire of these youth to participate in the politics of reconciliation—to advance or not advance rights claims in terms of historical injustice—is tied to this process of hybridization, which may produce an entirely new *ethos* of resistance, as well as different beliefs and aspirations.

This does not make organic demands for recognition by indigenous groups and the Quebecois unjustifiable—I very much believe such demands can be justified. It is just that the statist assumptions of liberal multiculturalism do not help much to see where, why, or how this could be. Waldron’s cosmopolitan alternative, which celebrates the fiction of the *universal citizen* and the unencumbered self over situated difference, blinds us to transnational cultures, entrenched group norms, and power hierarchies responsible for real forms of inequality and marginalization. It ignores the matrices—the “scapes”—through which urban indigenous youth seek to appropriate the global into their practices of the modern. Kymlicka’s model simplifies cultural activity to the false categories of

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<sup>21</sup> These terms come from different disciplines—English, sociology, geography and philosophy—but all describe a fusing of existing cultural elements and the transformation or translation of these elements into new cultural forms. The concept of “hybridity” is perhaps most thoroughly articulated by Homi K. Bhabhi in *The Location of Culture*, 1994.

<sup>22</sup> The term “Aboriginal,” imposed by the Canadian state on myriad indigenous groups, demonstrates the simple fact of hybridity even among national sub-groups taken as a whole.

“societal culture” and the apparently more fluid form of “culture”—“gay” or “bureaucratic” culture, for example—which he casts aside. Put simply, neither framework sufficiently explains the fractured sources or content of cultural rights claims being advanced in modern cities; neither approaches the true variety of claims being made in the name of culture.

The result is that the liberal paradigm ends up complicating and confusing the *rationale* for accepting group rights. Kymlicka grounds his moral argument for group-differentiated rights on a sharp distinction between national minorities and immigrants. The recognition of national minorities can be justified because these groups must protect their “societal cultures”—their cultural ‘contexts of choice’—because only then can they achieve the freedom they deserve. However, this undercuts the *principled* case for group-differentiated rights for immigrants. Since immigrants have waived rights to maintain their original societal culture in order to access a new societal culture, it is not clear why they are morally entitled to special rights to maintain the distinctive cultural commitments of their homelands (Carens 1997, 44). Kymlicka fails to provide a systematic account as to why cultural commitments matter outside the societal culture of their origin. It is inadequate for Kymlicka to invoke “equality,” which is certainly a just goal, when limiting immigrants to polyethnic or special representation rights. Why, for example, would the *principle* of equality take distinctive language and religious rights for immigrants off the table? Kymlicka’s reason for curtailing religious and linguistic rights for immigrants, it seems, is because they are immigrants (i.e., they agreed to accept new institutions)—which is circular. Kymlicka has defended immigrant rights to culture in an *ad hoc*, albeit intuitive, manner (this is, he rightly observes, how Western policies of

immigration have always operated). The line between “societal culture” and “culture” is remarkably more fluid than Kymlicka allows, and this exposes contradictions in a form of binary thinking. Of course, there are myriad sub-national cultures that share aspects of their cultural distinctiveness with the larger nations of which they are a part, especially given the growing inter-cultural dependencies of the modern global. But *a priori* moral arguments of this sort prevent us from recognizing rights through existing social relations, focusing not on the sort of relations that might further the right to the city, but instead on the question of what distinctive groups are entitled to—which is significant, given the fact that we have reached a new stage in the evolution of capitalist relations of production.

The status quo for inhabitants of the city is that citizens are losing control over production and reproduction, and by extension cultural production and reproduction, to global forces of capital. Lefebvre himself decried the death of what he called the ‘historic city,’ by which he meant urban space is constantly being reassembled without any fixed or historically rooted identity. “As social text,” he wrote, “this historic city no longer has a coherent set of prescriptions, of use time linked to symbols and to a style... The city historically constructed is no longer lived and is no longer understood practically” (Lefebvre in Kofman and Lebas 1996). Appadurai echoes this sentiment by reflecting upon the many people who now struggle to relate to and produce ‘locality’—a “structure of feeling, a property of life and an ideology of situated community” (Appadurai 1995, 213). The forces of globalization and urbanization make ‘locality’ difficult for virtually all inhabitants of the city to create and sustain. It is perhaps unsurprising that displacement from the ‘historic city’ is creating a new transnationalism, which forms

associations between actors across multiple countries, tweeting freedom and dissent across the Middle East (if these revolts are indeed connected), or mobilizing fellow students into urban counter-cultures (as in the case of anarcho-indigenous reading groups<sup>23</sup>), and still many other forms of group struggles—linguistic, sexual, environmental, spiritual, etc.—asserting the right to the city. The global urban process is subordinating all rights to the requirements of capital accumulation, and all rights claimants will need to address this fact in order to adequately further their cause. Lest we see multiculturalism as a merely consumable commodity in a ‘bureaucratic society of controlled consumption’—as festivals and cuisine, and local heritage projects, which depend for their existence on impermanent government funding. There are much deeper forms of difference at stake, owing to more complex sources than liberal theory seems willing to allow. The future of the city as both a physical and imaginary construct will define the kind of social groups we form, our relationship to nature, and our lifestyles, technologies and aesthetic values—which, indeed, is the true content of any acceptable definition of culture. In this way, it is the right to the city that should be seen as integral to cultural freedom.

We have yet to witness coherent opposition to the forces privatizing public power in cities, but we can be sure that, in order to be effective, any successful claim to the right to the city would have to orient itself against urbanization (the control of space) and surplus production and distribution. Harvey cites successful examples from India and Brazil to China, Spain, Argentina and the United States. In 2001, after pressure from social movements, a City Statute was inserted into the Brazilian Constitution to recognize the

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<sup>23</sup> For a provocative treatise on this movement, see Taiaiake Alfred, *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2005).

collective right to the city. In the U.S., there have been calls for much of the \$700 billion bailout for financial institutions to be diverted into a Reconstruction Bank, which would help prevent foreclosures and fund efforts at neighbourhood revitalization and infrastructural renewal at the municipal level. “Unfortunately,” Harvey writes, “the social movements are not strong enough or sufficiently mobilized to force through this solution. Nor have these movements yet converged on the singular aim of gaining greater control over the uses of the surplus—let alone over the conditions of its production” (Harvey 2008). Only by acknowledging the global sources of inequality, can theorists, planners, politicians, policy-makers, and citizens themselves mobilize effective struggles.

Presently, the influence of the professions over discourse and representation is one of the more troubling obstacles to realizing the right to the city. With a monopoly on both expertise and its vocabulary, the professions have shifted the primary locus of power and debate from parliaments as public spheres to other forums, such as the mass media, symposia, conferences and other spectacles (Isin and Wood 1999, 103). Isin and Wood write: “The shift of power in the global age is from the modern public sphere centered on state assemblies to a new sphere dominated by consumption, production and exchange of knowledge centered on professional assemblages, the majority of which takes place in global cities” (Isin and Wood 1999, 103). The “classification struggles” introduced in Chapter 1—attempts to represent groups symbolically, which essentialize the properties of individuals—have been dominated by the new professional groups. (Recall Kymlicka’s role at the Department of Canadian Heritage, and the resulting definitions of “polyethnic” and “self-government rights,” which tenuously shift our focus from ontology to advocacy.) Opportunities to confront power in a genuinely public sphere

have diminished. Interestingly, a small but growing number of professionals have begun to decry the corporatism of modern democracy, acknowledging that participation in society is now limited by a new class system that integrates state and corporate interests, wherein professional groups have become the primary vehicles for influencing political decision-making<sup>24</sup>. Without the ability to set the agenda, so to speak, it is exceedingly difficult for already marginalized citizens to democratize the urban experience, let alone determine how a city's surplus wealth should be invested and distributed; which leads us to further concerns over the growing gentrification within and displacement of lower classes from the city itself. As David Harvey has argued, "The right to the city, as it is now constituted, is too narrowly confined, restricted in most cases to a small political and economic elite who are in a position to shape cities more and more after their own desires" (Harvey 2008).

For Lefebvre, the solution to these woes is an experimental utopia, realized by establishing a process for arriving at a theoretical object (such as a new city). The experimental city would be based on the facts of current urban reality as well as the problematic posed by existing urban realities elsewhere. Lefebvre envisioned the mechanism for establishing a more just city as an endless loop of speculation-investigation-critique-implementation, whereby projections of a more equitable city are built upon the observations of projects past (Parker 2004, 21). The underlying assumption is that citizens could collectivize the process, or, at least, that planning professionals, architects, and other technocrats of urban construction could begin to think like

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<sup>24</sup> In *The Unconscious Civilization*, John Ralston Saul argues that power, self-protection, and advancement of corporations depend on the ability to control knowledge. As professions assume a greater share in the dissemination of knowledge in society, we are "discouraged from engaging fully as citizens" (Ralston Saul, xiii).

sociologists and philosophers, so as to develop a proper understanding of the urban system and adopt a *holistic* approach to its construction. The city's architects, in an all-encompassing sense of the word, must appreciate the scale of the urban problematic in its full spatial and historical dimensions, following the common relations and shared problems of different urban environments connected throughout the globe. Lefebvre, in other words, prescribed for the city's new architects a plan that would trace and respond to the influence of "scapes" while undertaking a plan of speculation-investigation-critique-implementation. Built into new modes of urbanization would be reclamations of the city by marginalized groups—and therefore nothing less than new possibilities for human diversity and nothing short of a process for recreating and redefining the fluid boundaries between groups.

As a conceptual framework, the right to the city also expels certain misleading ontological categories from the way we talk about rights. Stressing again the centrality of situated difference (of the situated citizen, to be more precise), I follow Appadurai's preference for the use of the adjectival "cultural" over "culture," and propose that we regard as "cultural" only those differences that either express, or serve as a basis for, the mobilization of group identities (Appadurai 1996, 13). This treatment of culture is, I argue, consistent with the foregoing criticisms of Kymlicka and Waldron, with the global city, conceived as a distinctly new political space, with my definition of cultural citizenship, and, especially, with Lefebvre's notion of rights to the city. In short, beginning with what is "cultural," as opposed to what constitutes "culture," allows us to theorize an inclusive form of urban citizenship that focuses primarily on the situated citizen and multiple group identities under the new global process of capital

accumulation. Chapter 2 made clear that the production of modern subjectivities is unstable (mass mediated events are meeting migratory audiences to emancipate the *imagination* from the nation-state). As our position in a space of global flows alters the way we perceive ourselves and our relationship to the world, rights claims themselves are raising *new* claims at the level of the nation-state; claims that express both differences within and overlapping interests between various social groups. By acknowledging claims to *culture* that express, or serve as a basis for, the mobilization of group identities, we can treat cultural claims as not simply “the possession of certain attributes (material, linguistic, or territorial) but the consciousness of these attributes and their naturalization as essential to group identities” (Appadurai, 14). As Appadurai writes, “this takes the conscious and imaginative construction and mobilization of differences as its core” (Appadurai 1996, 14). Mere difference, expressed through political opinion or taste, for example, differs from *cultural* difference in so far as the latter establishes the “naturalized organization” of certain group differences in the interests of group identity, “through and in the historical process, and through the tensions between agents and structures” (Appadurai 1996, 14). Thus conceived, culture is the process of naturalizing a subset of differences that have been mobilized to articulate group identity, though not principally, nor even necessarily, to further national or transnational political interests. Group identity is “natural” if it does not emerge merely in response to that which is political and contingent, not simply in an effort to exploit identity politics.

We now have a measure of cultural rights claims that does not reify “culture” or “community” but takes seriously the position of citizens within spaces characterized by competing cultural particularities and power hierarchies. On this view, some rights to the

city may be *cultural* in nature without in any way constituting a right *to* culture per se (rights to the city, remember, are at once cultural, social, economic, and political). Among the disjunctive landscapes of the modern global, identities are in rapid flux, and diasporic public spheres manifest themselves in myriad ways, from violent cultural movements demanding recognition to relatively benign marches and ethnic festivals. By training a social-scientific eye on that which is *cultural*, as opposed to that which *is* culture (thus avoiding the creeping nounism of the term itself), rights to the city can enhance justice in ethnocultural relations by addressing claims rooted in *specific* experiences of individuals vis-à-vis social groups in contemporary urban life. In particular, this includes that subset of cultural rights claims—or claims to the city—that reflect efforts to be incorporated into the modern global; or, which address social inequalities *produced* by life in the modern global, such as racist and sexist practices that exclude minorities from cosmopolitan associations. As a result, we may come to better understand the conditions likely to mobilize minority rights claims understood in a spatial context (within a space of global flows) and as a phenomenology (as imagination acting, and being acted upon, within the context of these disjunctive global flows). Unjust patterns of cultural interaction within global cities thus become clearer for purposes of analysis, discussion, and redress.

This new theoretical and political perspective has the advantage of promoting cultural particularities that enhance social justice without protecting those coercive and repressive practices deployed by group leaders to enforce internal homogeneity. This perspective should also encourage citizens to indigenize norms that represent themselves as universal. (In China, for example, human rights discourses have been criticized by some national

scholars for being ethnocentric. Nevertheless, *ideoscapes* have been a conduit for a rights idiom in China used by some groups to further localized rights claims.<sup>25</sup>) Promoting rights to the city would help citizens negotiate the impact of modernity through the everyday experience of urbanism, or urbanism as a way of life (Wirth 1938). Situating these negotiations within the urban moves the politics of difference away from the bounded and somewhat anachronistic nation-state of the recent past. It also moves the politics of difference away from the assumption of loyal citizens and their relatively containable differences. Civic groups, identity groups, even identities themselves are now constituted at the intersection of uneven flows of global capital—primarily in global cities, where *new* groups, using *new* technologies, assume their identities from a patchwork of available (or unavailable) cultural material. The freedom to access and adopt this material in a democratic fashion is entailed by the concept of the right to the city. “The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves,” David Harvey has argued, “is one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights (Harvey 2008, 23).

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<sup>25</sup> For example, in Hong Kong in the spring of 1994, a group of rural indigenous women joined forces with Hong Kong women’s groups—urban groups—to demand legal change to patriarchal inheritance laws. Conservative groups representing rural elite interests gathered in large numbers to protest female inheritance on the grounds that it would undermine tradition and “kill culture.”

### Conclusion: Contributions and Reflections on Further Scholarship

*What can the England of 1940 have in common with the England of 1840? But then, what have you in common with the child of five whose photograph your mother keeps on the mantelpiece? Nothing, except that you happen to be the same person.*

—George Orwell, *England Your England*

The preceding chapters imply that *imagination* is one of humanity's greatest forces for social change. The transition from the "imagined communities" of Benedict Anderson into Appadurai's "imagined worlds" marks, in two broad phases, the imagination's expansion beyond local and national boundaries into the geography of the global. Put simply, the global is now the decisive framework for social life. This is a framework in which global *flows*—in mediascapes, ethnoscapes, financescapes, and technoscapes—are coming to create cultural landscapes that are more central to individual and group identities than national institutions. International social, political and cultural (for example the media) organizations are standing alongside and beginning to replace their national counterparts (Appadurai 1996; Featherstone 1990). It has been my goal to explain several critical consequences of this shift, not only for cultural minorities themselves, but also for those organic intellectuals of society, technocrats, and outright policymakers who have made the role of space in constituting cultural identities an afterthought, or else ignored its increasing significance. Hence my insistence that out of globalization—as theory, discourse, and practice—has arisen a number of challenges for

social and cultural theory that demand the *spatialization* of the concepts *culture* and *difference*. In the modern global, we can understand more about what motivates claims to culture, as well as the content of those claims, if we first grasp empirically how those claims came to be constituted in a particular space.

The emergence of new cultural forms is nowhere more apparent than in global cities, where, more and more, hybrid identities are being formed as groups incorporate global influences into their practices of the modern. I devoted a section of this thesis to the new structure of cities—several to the global city—in order to emphasize the degree to which space can open and close opportunities for the socialization, participation, and inclusion of all citizens. There are processes that *produce* difference in our culturally, socially and economically interdependent world—any serious effort to include ethnocultural minorities in the activity of the modern economy, or acknowledge their unique cultural contributions, will have to consider these processes, especially as they shape the labour structures of emerging global cities. I have argued that an economy of symbols underlies the modern economy of goods and services. Increasingly, citizens are being constituted only as the consumers of prefabricated symbols, left to choose between knowledge products beyond their understanding, dependent on professionals and their vocabularies to interpret and navigate the modern social world. Through commodity flows, globalization has transformed citizens into passive choosers. Meanwhile, the availability of consumer products in global cities, produced offshore, but given “added value” by a minority of professionals at home, masks global production processes, compounding the alienation citizens endure with respect to their labour. The labour structure of global cities reflects not only hidden globalization processes at work but also the corporatism of

modern democracy: the domination of global flows of capital by corporate interests—indeed, by a new class system.

In contrast to studies that represent globalization as an immanent process, I have also sought to show that professional groups have been instrumental in controlling the movement of global flows through the city. The right to the city addresses the nature of access to this control, while also implying that globalization is not the ubiquitous master force its proponents foretold. (To be sure, the hegemony of the professional class and its equally hegemonic discourse of “immanent” globalization go hand-in-hand.) The globalization of the city continues to provide the new professional class with resources to control social policy (or policy with externalities that deeply affect the freedom to pursue certain cultural practices), as well as, but not only, access to the control, development and use of space. In global cities, meaningful democratic participation is being undermined as a result. The implication here is not only that access to the professions should be improved for minorities—through rights to the city, employment equity programs, improved foreign credential recognition, education, language training, etc.—but also that there is a structural democratic deficit which governments must rectify. With respect to ethnocultural minorities, democratizing the urban experience would entail sharing an ethos of engagement and resistance—of transformation. The democratic health of cities does not lie in the premature celebration of a plurality of actually existing differences given under the categories of institutionalized multiculturalism (or “societal culture,” “national minority,” “immigrant group”). Governments, NGOs, and other social enterprises should advance a politics that empowers ethnocultural minorities to participate and appropriate the symbolic resources of the city by creating bridges between

new citizens and centres of decision-making, information and knowledge—and, not least of all, by making public the social and political realities faced by new citizens of the global city (Isin and Wood 1999). The reconceptualization of urban planning as an interdisciplinary and deeply democratic exercise is also central to this outcome (Parker 2004).

The advantages for normative democratic theory of starting from the situated experiences of citizens are enormous. In the first place, much in the foregoing chapters has addressed the perniciousness of concepts like “societal culture,” which necessarily reduce identity politics to a zero-sum game: to a battle for recognition among geographically or dialogically distinct cultures. The imagination may allow us to mentally divide cultures into warring camps, but it is also a function of the imagination to explore discontinuities and permit contradictions. “Aboriginal,” for example, now covers not only the obvious diversity of Indian, Inuit, and Métis, but multiple internal distinctions—men and women, traditionalists and modernizers, urban and reserve Aboriginals. It would be better if discussions about the accommodation of Aboriginal culture in cities were to proceed according to points of cultural divergence in relation to that which is local, embodied, and significant. Which dimensions of culture, in other words, are made *political* as this group encounters the *scapes* of the modern globalized world? Which of its cultural particularities ought we to (further) *universalize*, *eliminate*, or *enjoy*? Cultural critique could gain greater nuance and complexity if only it grounded its assessments of culture within broader contexts of choice, grounding agency not *within* cultures, but within a *medium of culture*, wherein real *choices* are made and the line between the strange and familiar, permissible and forbidden, righteous and wicked, is

often determined. As I argued at the beginning of Chapter 3, culture is not an external good to which we have access (as Kymlicka cannot resist implying), but the inescapable background of our decisions and our imaginations.

I believe that future scholarship must continue to grapple with fundamental assumptions about the nature of culture itself. Culture is in fact fundamentally disjunctive and non-isomorphic, possessing no Euclidian boundaries, structures, or regularities (as I demonstrated in Chapter 2). As Appadurai suggests, we should represent cultural forms as “fully fractal, but also overlapping in ways that have been discussed in pure mathematics (in set theory, for example) and in biology (in the language of polythetic classifications).” He continues: “Thus we need to combine a fractal<sup>26</sup> metaphor for the shape of cultures (in the plural) with a polythetic<sup>27</sup> account of their overlaps and resemblances” (Appadurai 1996, 47). Without a model that incorporates both overlapping and resemblances, we “shall remain mired in comparative work that relies on the clear separation of the entities to be completed before serious comparison can begin” (Appadurai). From which other disciplines can theorists find the concepts necessary to confront culture in its full complexity? Might biology, psychology, neuroscience, neuro-anatomy, psychoanalysis, and discoveries that occur between these disciplines, help us map the politically significant minutiae of our neuroplastic and therefore culturally adaptable brains? What have these disciplines to say about the ways that our choices are conditioned? And what relevance might they have to questions of intercultural conflict,

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<sup>26</sup> A fractal is a curve or geometric figure, each part of which has the same statistical character as the whole. Fractals are useful in modeling structures (such as eroded coastlines or snowflakes) in which similar patterns recur at progressively smaller scales, and in describing partly random or chaotic phenomena such as crystal growth, fluid turbulence, and galaxy formation.

<sup>27</sup> (Of a class of things) having many, but not all properties in common. Important here is the way this term describes a group that cannot be defined on the basis of any single character, but only on a combination of characters.

faith, and reconciliation? I think the notion of a “phenomenology of the city” could be used to centralize future research on how the constitution of space affects individual perceptions of culture and self, and how these self-perceptions affect participation within civil society. A phenomenology of the city recognizes under a single heading the ability of space to ignite intimacy and identity into political action and social change, thus capturing the interrelated spatial and phenomenological aspects of cultural transformation.

In the *Corrosion of Character*, a perspicacious account of work-life under disorganized capitalism, Richard Sennett asks, “What sort of sharing is required to resist, rather than to run from, the new political economy? What kind of sustained personal relations in time can be contained in the use of “we”?” (Sennett 1998). The pessimistic response is that only the weakest bonds define interpersonal relationships in the modern global, and that no significant notion of “we” can long be sustained under a nation-state open to global flows. (Too much openness to global flows and the nation-state is threatened by revolt; too little and the state exits the international stage<sup>28</sup>.) More optimistic accounts offer evidence of a kind of “magical urbanism<sup>29</sup>” happening in global cities: a cultural renaissance of global decentralization, whereby that fictive “we” proliferates across multiple overlapping affiliations and identities. It has been my aim—perhaps my principal aim—to rethink the idea of citizenship in this light and to reconceptualize the structures of political participation and cultural membership as traditional citizenship practices withdraw from the nation into the fetishism of the

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<sup>28</sup> See Appadurai in “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy,” pg. 307, in *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*—which later formed the basis for *Modernity At Large*.

<sup>29</sup> See Mike Davis, “Magical Urbanism,” on how Latinos in the United States have reinvented the political culture of big cities.

consumer, the instrumental power of corporatist groups, or the solidarities of segregated classes within global cities. Part of the answer to Sennett's question is that this is how the new communities of the modern global are configured: divided as much by ethnic affiliations as emerging economic structures, as much by culture as class, even as promising forms of inclusive transnational citizenship take hold. Around the world, indigenous groups apply the language of human rights—the idiom of their colonizers—in Supreme Court cases over self-determination. At a Honda plant in Zhongshan, *democratically* organized labour movements demand fair wages from the Chinese Communist Party<sup>30</sup>. Or, more innocuously, and perhaps more innocently, teenage girls gyrate to love ballads sung by small town Canadian pop sensation Justin Bieber in Azrieli mall in Jerusalem.

The right to the city implies a right for all to participate in these aspects of social life, and to democratize the future of the global city as an imaginary *and* physical construct. The right to the city is a conceptual framework *and* a political schema for democratizing the way in which city dwellers form social groups and define the nature of their relationship to modernity. It, to use Lefebvre's words, signifies the right of citizens and of groups, on the basis of social relations, to “appear on all networks of communication, information and exchange” (Lefebvre 1996). And it does so by deeply respecting that citizenship, like the right to the city, is not fixed or given, but bound up in a fluid and continual process of contestation.

Undeniable is the fact that hybrid identities and mutating cultures are now the backdrop to substantive citizenship claims. Undeniable is the *new* role of citizenship in

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<sup>30</sup> <<http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2010/06/25/stanley-lubman-are-strikes-the-beginning-of-a-new-challenge/>>

the global framework of social life, which must be to sustain just and democratic societies where old ideas of civic membership fail to answer our needs. Citizenship is one of our deepest needs. As Mark Kingwell wrote, “it gives voice and structure to the yearning to be part of something larger”—and may I add greater—“than ourselves” (Kingwell 2000). There are rich opportunities here for democratic theory, and for political theory in general; indeed, for any theoretical discipline that relies on systematic acts of imagination to operate in that blank space between “is” and “is not.” By recognizing the borderline between both—or the arbitrariness of both—the theorist helps us find freedom from false choices. He helps us see that it is not a contradiction to belong and to dissent; or to experience both belonging and alienation; or for something to be at once foreign and familiar. Take, for example, the contradiction of having to belong in a fractured new world without ever leaving home. In the modern global, it is a contradiction made intelligible. It is the new global reality.

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