EQUALITY IN THE CITY

Imaginaries of the Smart Future

Edited by Susan Flynn
Series Editor Graham Cairns

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intellect

As a remedy to life in society I would suggest the big city. Nowadays, it is the only desert within our means.

– Albert Camus

What strange phenomena we find in a great city, all we need do is stroll about with our eyes open. Life swarms with innocent monsters.

– Charles Baudelaire

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Introduction

Susan Flynn

Equality in the city is an aspiration. Cities have never been equal, equitable or fair. Now, optimum efficiency is celebrated as progress, and reconfigurations of urban spaces are focused on the clean lines of punctual service delivery. Smart cites are controlled cities, where data is the fuel that pumps through the heart. The common denominator in smart city rhetoric is the assumption that organization, planning and programmability will provide optimum conditions for comfortable urban life. Yet some aspects of our cities and our lives within them will never be machine-readable (Mattern 2014) and there may be a growing disparity between the natural and the constructed; the vagaries and messiness versus the programmable and measurable life in cities. Giddens's theory of social structure suggested that spaces and buildings are what people do with them – spaces themselves structure social relations and practices, and therefore 'relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life' (Soja 1989: 6). If urban life is to be smart, digital and codified, then what becomes of the varied human experiences and how can we consider their relation to power? How can this be married to digital futures?

The smart city emerges from networked urbanism, propagated by the promises of efficiency, using technologies to deliver and manage services to city dwellers; embedded sensors, drone surveillance and real-time monitoring to give us more effective transportation, waste, security and energy systems. Within this discourse, people are sources of data that are fed into algorithms; their experience of the city is muted in favour of the foregrounding of digital efficiency. Much great work on the neo-liberal ideals that underpin smart discourse has already been done (Kitchin 2014; Mattern 2017; Cardullo et al. 2018; Kitchin et al. 2018; Cardullo and Kitchin 2019). The various essays in this collection consider the promises of the smart future and provide some new discussions and provocations, moving

beyond the field of human geography and urban planning to a social, personal and egalitarian approach.

By theorizing and interrogating various theoretical approaches to the promises of the smart city, we question how humans can feasibly have fair and equal access to those smart technologies that promise a better future. How can cities better support human life? What makes cities liveable in an era of growing urban inequality? While housing, service provision, health care, education and other important social needs are critical issues in imagining future cities, this collection looks more broadly at how we conceive of the city of the future and what sorts of steps can be taken to 'take back the city' in the digital future.

Smart futures and smart urbanism are situated in a paternalistic ethos rather than focused on human rights, citizenship and fair access to digital technologies that ostensibly improve human life. Such technologies are changing the places in which we live and the way we live in them. They also impact on our ideas about how and where we might live in the future. There is a reverence for what is called 'disruptive technologies' and the way in which disruption is deemed not just ok, but excellent, when it comes to how we live, work and exist in spaces. Disparate fields such as human geography, information and communications technology (ICT), engineering and social sciences have addressed many of the debates around the forms of (digitized) governance that smart cities propose. Here, we bring together scholars from across disciplines to consider ideas of active participation in the imagined smart cities of the future. The essays consider the ruptures in smart discourse, the spaces where we might envisage a more user-friendly and bottom-up version of the smart future and imagine participation in novel ways.

Equality

The aim of this book is to consider ways in which we can foreground and prioritize meaningful and impactful participation; vital in the unequal society we find ourselves in. Contemporary society, in which smart city discourses nestle, is wildly unequal, with gross inequalities of wealth, access to health care, digital skills, education and political power, as well as inequalities in people's access to and experience of respect, care and solidarity. Digital inequality, of particular importance here, has the potential to shape life chances in multiple ways. People's digital engagements and digital capital are critical to a wide range of outcomes: academic performance, employment, health services uptake and political engagement (Robinson et al. 2015). Social structures have maintained and buttressed inequalities and divisions, regularly failing to address the lived realities of huge swathes of people and thus a structural approach is critical. This collection uses

an equality studies lens to assess how we might conceive of a future smart city and what fissures need to be addressed to ensure the smart future is equitable. Equality studies as a field of enquiry seeks not just to describe patterns of inequality but to also develop principles of equality, design egalitarian institutions, form egalitarian policies and devise political strategies to bring these aims to fruition (Baker et al. 2006). A fairer, more equal future smart city would involve the participation of people in the stewardship and decision-making of the service control and provision, a democratic governance that would extend throughout the gamut of social systems and foster an inclusive and dynamic ethos that will deeply affect civil liberties for the better. In the project of envisaging this, we consider here various approaches and arguments for equality in the imagined future city, putting people at the forefront of our discussions, rather than technologies. In the smart discourse, hard data, technological solutions, global and national policy and macro issues tend to dominate. Here, we include ethnographic evidence, rather than rely on the perspectives of smart technologies experts, so that the arena for meaningful social development of the smart future can develop.

The work within this collection is broadly concerned with how the urban fabric of the future could provide the capacity to live equitably, and with the potential for inclusiveness that technologies and smart design could provide. While our work here acknowledges that true social citizenship will demand large-scale intervention, and the creation of non-market forms of production and ownership, we suggest that in our social citizenship perspective, technologies could be employed to mediate, to intervene or to reconcile the promises of the smart future with real and equal participation so that all citizens have 'the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society' (Marshall 1992: 8).

There is an assumption, often held in academia, that equality is a generic, self-explanatory term, however approaches to equality vary. What *sort* of equality do we aspire to? Equality of opportunity, where everyone has equal access to goods and services, is the main approach endorsed by state and society today. An 'equality of condition' approach goes beyond equality of opportunity and sets out to eliminate major inequalities altogether, or at least to massively reduce the current scale of inequality. It calls for members of different social groups to engage in critical dialogue from which everyone can learn, and therefore it envisages a world in which people's prospects for a good life are roughly similar. It aims for social conditions under which people would have ample prospects for caring relationships and access to forms of learning that contribute to their self-development (Baker et al. 2006). Invariably, this approach invokes a critique of neo-liberalism, which itself can be said to 'promote a strategic and reciprocal mistrust of others, due to the fear of being exploited for someone else's benefit' (Lynch and Kalaitzake

2020: 16), a concern that is rife in smart city debates. For the imagined smart city of the future, adaptability to new technologies will invariably be a concern. Within this paradigm, it is hard to imagine the technologically illiterate and the marginalized having equal access to services and supports. Neo-liberal approaches and the marketization of life itself has led to smart city agendas prioritizing corporations and the needs of the wealthy over the majority of inhabitants (Kempin Reuter 2020; Wastl-Walter et al. 2005). This collection and the case studies within it form an attempt to bridge the gap between normative and empirical enquiry, taking into account and critically addressing people's real lives, the social systems and institutions in which they live and the manner in which these operate together to form present society vis-à-vis the imagined future.

Much of the research in this collection foregrounds people and lived experiences, specific design approaches and ideas, voices and places that are more than urban spaces. As such, we move away from the alienating discourse of the smart city that houses our 'data doubles', the smart logic of abstracting human bodies from their territorial settings and separating them into a series of discrete flows (Hagerty and Ericson 2000). We take an empirical approach to living in the city and the assorted interactions, emotions and needs therein. As Giddens (1979: 207) notes, 'a setting is not just a spatial parameter, and physical environment, in which interaction occurs: it is these elements mobilized in interaction'. Cities are and have always been repositories of knowledge and experience. When Mumford wrote of the city, perhaps he rightly surmised that our present electronic mechanisms for storing and transmitting information are crude and limited compared to the complex human order of the city (Mumford 1961).

> (Mumford) would remind us that the processes of city-making are more complicated than writing parameters for rapid spatial optimization. He would inject history and happenstance. *The city is not a computer*. This seems an obvious truth, but it is being challenged now (again) by technologists (and political actors) who speak as if they could reduce urban planning to algorithms.
>
> (Mattern 2017: n.pag., original emphasis)

Deleuze (1992) foresaw the societies of control where there is no individual, only 'dividuals', masses for whom the language of control is made of codes that mark access to information. The society of control's unique machines are computers, with the passive danger of the threat of viruses, of jamming and of piracy. In this regime we are all coded figures, deformable and transformable, in a society where control is continuous. Deleuze references Felix Guattari's vision of a city where we would each be able to leave home thanks to our electronic card that raises a barrier in certain agreed hours. Now, however, Deleuze insists, what counts is not

the barrier but the computer that tracks us and 'effects a universal modulation'. Such considerations of surveillance, latent control and lack of autonomy haunt smart discourse and smart city planning.

Technological solutionism

In the smart city discourse, consumerism and the needs of citizens merge to form 'the market'. 'Beyond making the city a market in and of itself, the neoliberal smart city is an explicitly economic project, aiming to attract foreign direct investment, fostering innovative indigenous start-up sectors or digital hubs, and attracting mobile creative elites' (Kitchin et al. 2018: n.pag.). The privatization of city services has emerged in part due to austerity, and some of the work in this book examines the critical link between austerity, neo-liberal governmentality and the imagined smart spaces of the future. During the 2000s the smart city has gained traction

> driven by companies rapidly seeking new markets for their technologies in the wake of the global financial crash, and in part, by city administrations simultaneously seeking ways to do more with less through technical solutions given austerity cuts, and to attract investment and boost local economies. This was aided by an already well-established neoliberal political economy that promoted the marketisation and privatisation of city services.
>
> (Kitchin et al. 2018: n.pag.)

As Karvonen (2020) observes, there is palpable enthusiasm to increase our knowledge of cities through the application of big data, ubiquitous sensing, geospatial and social network analyses, algorithms, machine learning and artificial intelligence. Here, though, is a space for different approaches, for other fields and perspectives to address smart city debates, such as considerations of citizens' own notions of the future city, design for inclusivity, how the internet may facilitate or challenge belonging, how education will deal with the city of the future, the power of walking the city, the concerns of austerity and various projects that address place, space and citizenship – deeply person-centred questions. As Mattern (2014: n.pag., original emphasis) writes:

> assuming that greater populations will find themselves residing in networked, intelligent megalopolises, we need to give more serious consideration to designing urban interfaces for urban *citizens*, who have a right to know what's going on inside those black boxes – a right to engage with the operating system as more than mere reporters-of-potholes-and-power-outages.

Of course, detractors of smart technologies have often discussed smart technologies as gargantuan, eternally battling with their nemesis, civil liberty. The term 'digital' offers the illusion of information extracted from reason, of competence and fairness, just as the 'smart' moniker dares us to question the innate wisdom of these technologies. The smart city, then, is the imagined future where data is extracted and used for insurantial, predictive modelling, where patterns facilitate management and impose a system of rational control on to the chaotic reality of everyday life. The urban space, as such, would be modelled on precision. In the smart city, then, urban life would be transformed; no longer messy but programmable and subject to order (Mattern 2017). The actions and movement of people within the city space, would be codified and ordered; it would be known.

> Spaces, and the masses which pass through them, are the subject of surveillance, and both are animated and given form by remaking the city, through the addition of sensorial capacities, into a data extraction machine. Surveillance is not interested in uncovering personal secrets, but in the ability to track movements in space en masse – like soldiers and enemy combatants in a theater of war – and then to turn that collective activity into decipherable patterns.
>
> (Rogan 2020; n.pag.)

Such changes would raise multiple ethical issues such as the erosion of privacy through mass surveillance, lack of consent, lack of clarity concerning ownership, use, repurposing and privatization of data, the marketization of infrastructure and services, and differential access to services and biases in data, resulting in differential treatment, governmentality and stewardship of data. Of course some cities are already being built from the ground up in Asian and Middle Eastern countries, where Cisco, Siemens and IBM have partnered with real-estate developers and governments; these cities are projects in the making, always 'versioning' toward an ideal future model (Mattern 2017).

This collection acknowledges that knowledge silos do not and cannot attend to the questions that smart futures bring to cites and spaces. The contributors, who work across a variety of disciplines, purposefully respond to the smart imperative, to the disruptive potential of smart technologies in our cities; issues of change, design, austerity, ownership, citizenship and equality. The collection is heavily focused on methods attuned to the pull between equality and engagement in smart futures. Conversations about method are crucial in this area as empirical realities are shifting so much. We seek here to open new discussions about what a smart future could do to bridge divides, to look at governmentality in the context of (in)equality in the city. The chapters here seek to imagine a truly egalitarian city of the future and to ponder on how that might come about.

Citizens

Smart city discourses are glamorized by notions of technological urban revitalization, community well-being and active citizens. However, this rhetoric is haunted by the acknowledgement that corporate interests are imperative to smart urban governance; traditional neo-liberal top-down management. Future smart cities can thus be seen to reinscribe urban social and spatial inequalities by privileging free-market, technology-centric governance, where data is commodified and citizens consequently disempowered. Citizens' data is already widely used to drive social policy (termed 'data-driven social policy') without their knowledge, consent or involvement. As such, the so-called digital welfare state takes place out of political and social view, and escapes democratic decision-making (van Zoonan 2020).

While I mention citizens of (future) cities, I refer to the persons who do or would live within cities and urban areas. I acknowledge that the word is an often-contested term and am acutely aware of the resonances of citizenship in this unequal and often unfair world. One of the criticisms of smart cities is the framing of the city as a set of systems rather than a lived-in and living entity, layered with history, cultures and rituals. The technological solutionist approach that smart technologies offer does not allow for the vagaries of human difference and indeed many studies show that digital solutions serve to further exclude the already marginalized. For example, Eubanks (2018) has discussed the 'careless automation and datafication' in US social policy, which saw millions of people wrongly accused of fraud and consequently denied benefits. Her work concludes that data technologies have created a 'digital poorhouse' in which already marginalized and disadvantaged groups are subject to more control and surveillance than ever. Furthermore, many other studies have shown that software-based and computational forms of participation do not have the same implications on quality of life, community-building and belonging as face-to-face interactions (Lee and Kim 2011). In terms of digital communication, virtual interaction is limiting, as it establishes communication in a specific path that does not allow for flexible reactions or changing circumstances. Online interactions cannot replace face-to-face community building (Kempin Reuter 2020).

The right to the city, of which Lefebvre spoke, is a right 'to urban life, to renewed centrality, to places of encounter and exchange, to life rhythms and time uses, enabling the full and complete usage of these moments and places' (Lefebvre [1967] 1996: 179). In a very real sense, the digital future is a contested terrain. This collection seeks to claw back some of the discussions of the smart future from the realm of ICT, digital media and urban studies, and call for methodological innovations and new discourses of the digital divide. We seek here to make discussions accessible to all people; we cannot claim to enable or to be inclusive if citizens

of potential smart cities are not informed, consulted or involved in smart city developments. We wish to move away from the traditional and dominant tropes of stewardship. Instead, consideration should be given to what Harvey (2008) termed 'a genuinely humanizing urbanism'. Addressing the ideals of the public good and the shared ownership or right to the city inevitably means addressing neo-liberal governmentality and the sometimes-oversimplified policy responses to changing social and physical landscapes. There is a need for more sustained enquiry using exploratory methodologies, in order to tease out the many ways in which smart futures might impact wider society, to examine the needs and wants of the general populace in terms of digital technologies and to gain a deeper understanding of spatiality. As Richardson and Bissell (2019) point out, digital skills are discretely located in particular bodies and in particular geographical locations. Going digital or going smart is not an act that is or will be open to everyone. Lefebvre (1991: 34) suggested that our rights should include

> the right to information, the rights to use of multiple services, the right of users to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in urban areas; it would also cover the right to the use of the center.

What possibilities remain for citizens to defy or resist the 'necessary' upskill to be part of a smart city? The compulsory drive toward digital citizenship is mired in social, cultural and material difficulties. The digital citizen is one who belongs in the smart city, thus asking the citizen to be colonized in yet another regime of power. The social construction of future smart cities therefore is spattered with controversies over the products, services and (unintended) consequences these smart technologies introduce to society. As such, smart technologies, when used for city governance, are more complex than technological, disembodied and dematerialized accounts.

Lefebvre's work was often concerned with such a 'colonization of everyday life' by the market and by the state. In his three volumes of *Critique of Everyday Life* ([1947, 1961, 1981] 2014) he maintains that everyday life is a key domain of alienation and is simultaneously the locus of developing resistance against the forces of organized capitalism and the state.

> The right to the city is like a cry and a demand. This right slowly meanders through the surprising detours of nostalgia and tourism, the return to the heart of the traditional city, and the call of existent or recently developed centralities.
>
> (Lefebvre [1967] 1996: 158)

Following Lefebvre, Harvey (2008: n.pag.) points out that

The right to the city is an active right to make the city different, to shape it more in accord with our collective needs and desires and so re-make our desires and to re-shape our architectural practices (as it were), and to define an alternative way of simply being human.

Harvey is clear that this effort will require social mobilization and collective political/social struggle and must be about conflict. Such a conflict may be a contestation of spatial administration, which seeks to erase the layers of history in any given place. We could say that the drive to smart cities is an act of what Bauman and Donskis (2013) called 'soft totalitarianism', stripping us of our most personal and intimate information, from banking to travel, education to health, as the individual is invaded by the state and deprived of privacy.

In our age of technocracy walking in the guise of democracy, liberals betray a human being every time they treat him or her just in terms of the workforce, as a statistical unit, or merely as part of a majority and 'the electorate'.

(Bauman and Donskis 2013: 76)

As Rouvroy (2012: 11) has written, algorithmic governance no longer addresses the subject as a moral agent. Instead, the individual becomes a bundle of data, needed for the production of profiles – what we term 'data behaviourism' – which is evocative of Deleuze's society of control.

Many of the chapters included here work against such a disappearance of the individual into the algorithm and into the smart city of the future. The multidimensionality of the city calls for a multidisciplinary approach, so the chapters take a variety of approaches to articulate the ways in which the algorithm cannot facilitate the nuance of history, place and the lived realities of disparate people. Though the contributors come from a variety of scholarly traditions, they are united in the goal of providing fair representations of our situated historical location. There are three sections that address three dimensions of equality in the city of the future: Section 1 considers the urban crisis that is symptomatic of the smart city's promise; Section 2 examines the design of cities and some of the mediated solutions trialled in various cities; and Section 3 offers a more humanistic approach to the spatial, and a reconsideration of terms.

Urban crisis

Chapters 1 to 4 employ various modes of theorization and challenge methodologies, investigating some of the failings of smart technology and its lack of

accountability. In Chapter 1, 'Locked Down in the Neo-Liberal Smart City: A-Systemic Technologies in Crisis', Eleanor Dare analyses the failure of the neo-liberal smart city during the 2020–21 COVID-19 pandemic. Examining the COVID-19 crisis in the city of London and beyond, the chapter considers the failings of smart ideology, asking how might we formulate alternative imaginaries for technology and its relationship to wealth and resource distribution to support a lasting reimagination of cities and of 'smartness'. Dare considers the More-cambe Bay Poverty Truth Commission, the Design Justice Network, Data for Black Lives and Our Data Bodies, highlighting alternative constructions of smartness and smart subjectivity. She asks whether we can trust the smart city concept that is driven by free-market ideologies and imperatives, downgrading the value of human lives, since the optimization at the heart of the smart city concept is above all financial, premised on the laissez-faire rhetoric of free-market capitalism.

This seeming impartiality of smartness is further considered by Delfina Fantini van Ditmar in Chapter 2, 'If (Equality)', examining power asymmetry and lack of accountability in smart city rhetoric. Considering 'surveillance capitalism' and the collection of data, this chapter exposes smart incongruences and the passive acceptance of 'smartness'. Through an examination of Toronto (Google urbanism), Xinjiang ('smart' prison) and Amaravati (the concrete on halt farm), this work illustrates how 'smartness' can perpetuate or increase inequality and therefore calls for global ethical oversight.

Further considering citizens within cities, Chapter 3, 'Reading Lefebvre's Right to the City in the Age of the Internet', by Alan Reeve, utilizes a Lefebvrian lens to examine the nature of citizens in the internet age. The proliferation of the internet as a medium has transformed distinctions between public and private, between the space of representation and representational space, the symbolic and the lived. The internet may now be seen to occupy a 'third space' where private and public are brought together and public rights are privately negotiated. Considering Mouffe's view of the potential of the internet as a site of agonistic pluralism, Reeve draws parallels with Lefebvre's city as a space of 'practice'. Reeve here challenges the simplified view of the internet as a neutral medium; the despatialized nature of the web is exposed as failing to provide an exit from spatial discrimination. Reeve's discussion of the attempts to regulate the internet exposes how smart rhetoric posits the individual as a consumer and a service user, contrary to the Lefebvrian notion of the 'citaden' as a creative agent.

Following on from the Lefebvrian lens, in Chapter 4 Richard Hayes considers Harvey's notion of the right to the city in terms of the strategic development of universities in his chapter 'Universities, Equality and the Neo-Liberal City'. Examining how policy and strategy have co-opted the term 'equality' in tandem with the neo-liberal drive to 'efficient' smart cities, this chapter investigates the threads

that bind the concepts of the university of the future, its locale and the rights of its people, asking if as well as 'the right to the city' there is a 'right to the university city'. The university, as a landmark and an anchor, can be seen as a neo-liberal tool, implicated in the creation of 'human capital' and this chapter questions how such a tool can be further implicated in potential inequalities.

City design

Chapters 5 to 8 examine interventions (and disruptions) at the design level, considering some of the ways in which design in the city can mitigate alienation and exclusion of citizens. An ethical approach to design for future cities is explored by Eoghan Conor O'Shea in Chapter 5, 'Universal Smart City Design'. This chapter considers how design has always been a negotiation between past and present and how smart technologies can have a tangible effect on how built spaces are produced, and the consequences for end users/citizens. Critical of technocratic approaches to smart city design, this chapter offers a nuanced understanding of universal design principles.

Continuing the discussion on design, in Chapter 6, 'The Design and Public Imaginaries of Smart Street Furniture', Justine Humphry, Sophia Maalsen, Justine Gangneux, Chris Chesher et al. query the inclusivity of smart futures as they investigate the design of smart street furniture and its end users. Examining the smart kiosk and smart bench projects in Glasgow and London, this chapter considers the differences and similarities between the imaginaries and realities of smart technologies. Considering the needs of citizens and non-citizens, the authors address unequal levels of access to resources and capital, and the perceived needs and uses of smart technologies.

In Chapter 7, 'Co-Creating Place and Creativity Through Media Architecture: The InstaBooth', Glenda Caldwell considers how the need for connection to information and devices is affecting how we experience urban environments and interact with local communities. Examining a design intervention, the InstaBooth, deployed in 2015 in Queensland, Australia, Caldwell looks at the possibility of creating citizen agency. Interviews with InstaBooth users indicated that engaging with the InstaBooth provided an opportunity for reflection and learning, which in turn helped to foster better understanding of diverse perspectives and people in the community. The chapter illustrates the possibility of providing new communication channels for citizen engagement, fostering expression, openness and empowerment and facilitating the co-creation of place.

In Chapter 8, 'Narratives, Inequalities and Civic Participation: A Case for "More-Than-Technological" Approaches to Smart City Development', Carla Maria

Kayanan, Niamh Moore-Cherry and Alma Clavin investigate three site-specific incidences of disinvestment and urban regeneration projects: Smart Docklands, 'A Playful City' and 'Mapping Green Dublin'. Examining the remit and challenges of these projects in the context of the neo-liberal forces that shaped them, this chapter illustrates the exclusionary nature of smart initiatives and exposes the manner in which they can ignore the complexity of urban living. This chapter establishes the need for a broader conceptualization of the smart city that recognizes the value of multiple and diverse intelligences, privilege lived experience and place-based knowledges and that becomes comfortable with slower, more iterative and longer-run approaches to urban development in order for different imaginaries to evolve and be inscribed.

Spatial humanism

'Life stories' have a geography too; they have milieux, immediate locales, provocative emplacements that affect thought and action (Soja 1989: 14). Chapters 9 and 10 consider spatiality and offer a renegotiation of spatial disciplinary approaches, considering new modes of theorization. Citizen initiatives and participation are critical for Carl Smith, Fred Garnet and Manuel Laranja in Chapter 9, 'Building Participatory City 2.0: Folksonomy, Taxonomy, Hyperhumanism'. Here the authors acknowledge some of the many authors who suggest that the twentieth-century city was shaped by the rise of popular culture and its impact on identity, social behaviour and neighbourhood developments. The authors have worked on a number of projects where citizen initiatives have created original ways of thinking about and designing for the city. Such participatory behaviours offer an alternative 'playbook' of new popular culture, which the authors here term a 'Folksonomy of the Participatory City'. The authors argue for an alternative taxonomy for the emerging networked city that arises from citizen behaviours rather than smart city protocols. Finally, this chapter argues for a values-based approach to 'rights to the city' based on hyperhumanism, a design approach that enables the human to emerge from developing technology platforms.

Finally, placing humanism as a possible intervention into 'smart' rhetoric, in Chapter 10, 'Psychogeography: Reimagining and Re-Enchanting the Smart City', Adrian Sledmere gives a psychogeographic account of 'his' London. Acknowledging the assumptions and imperatives upon which our ideas of the modern city are based, Sledmere argues for an alternative geography, suggesting that psychogeography can be used to critique the smart city and the philosophical assumptions that underpin it. Offering a reimagining of what a city might look like, Sledmere offers a personalized version of one particular locale: Burgess Park

in London. Such an approach may be an act of resistance in the smart future, working against the power structures of future cities. This chapter explores how our relationship with the space in which we live is contingent, organic and mutually constitutive, in ways that are neither recognized nor valued by smart discourses.

In the afterword, Rob Kitchin acknowledges that in the smart city discourse, citizens are often cast as consumers, data points, or subjects to be steered or controlled. The chapters in this book critique this imagined future, seeking instead to imagine alternatives, radical ideas that might intervene in more humanistic ways. Together, the authors in this collection provocate for an alternative future, one which is centred on fairness, equity and inclusion.

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3

Reading Lefebvre's *Right to the City* in the Age of the Internet

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Introduction

Taking as its starting point Henri Lefebvre's apparently innocent concept of 'the right to the city' (Lefebvre 1968), this chapter speculates on how citizenship in relation to both access to and control over civic space is becoming nuanced and philosophically challenging with the insertion of the adjective 'smart', as a qualifier of the city. In particular, I am interested in the agency of individuals and communities as appropriators of the city when the space of the city moves online – how this may be both a threat to the historical autonomy of groups and individuals and also an opportunity for such autonomy. Central to the analysis offered here is Chantal Mouffe's (2000) notion of agonism, as a way of conceptualizing how agency may be negotiable both between communities of interest and with controlling authorities – either in the form of the state, or the market.

'Smartness' in the form of social media, big data, the technology of the virtual and the new technology is a double-edged phenomenon when set against the historically understood rights and powers of citizens. On the one hand, it is seen as a threat to the very notion of the individual (acting alone or collectively) in the invisibility, embeddedness and extensiveness of its reach; and, on the other hand, it is often regarded as an opportunity for a new sort of Habermasian communicative efficiency (i.e. merely a tool for better and more deliberatively democratic forms of dialogue). While the management and purpose of such technology (facilitating the interests of one state over another, or the promotion of commodified lifestyles) can be spatially, politically and temporally located, the technology exists in a sense outside of these dimensions. This means that while historically citizenship was citizenship of somewhere, it now occupies a global or non-locatable
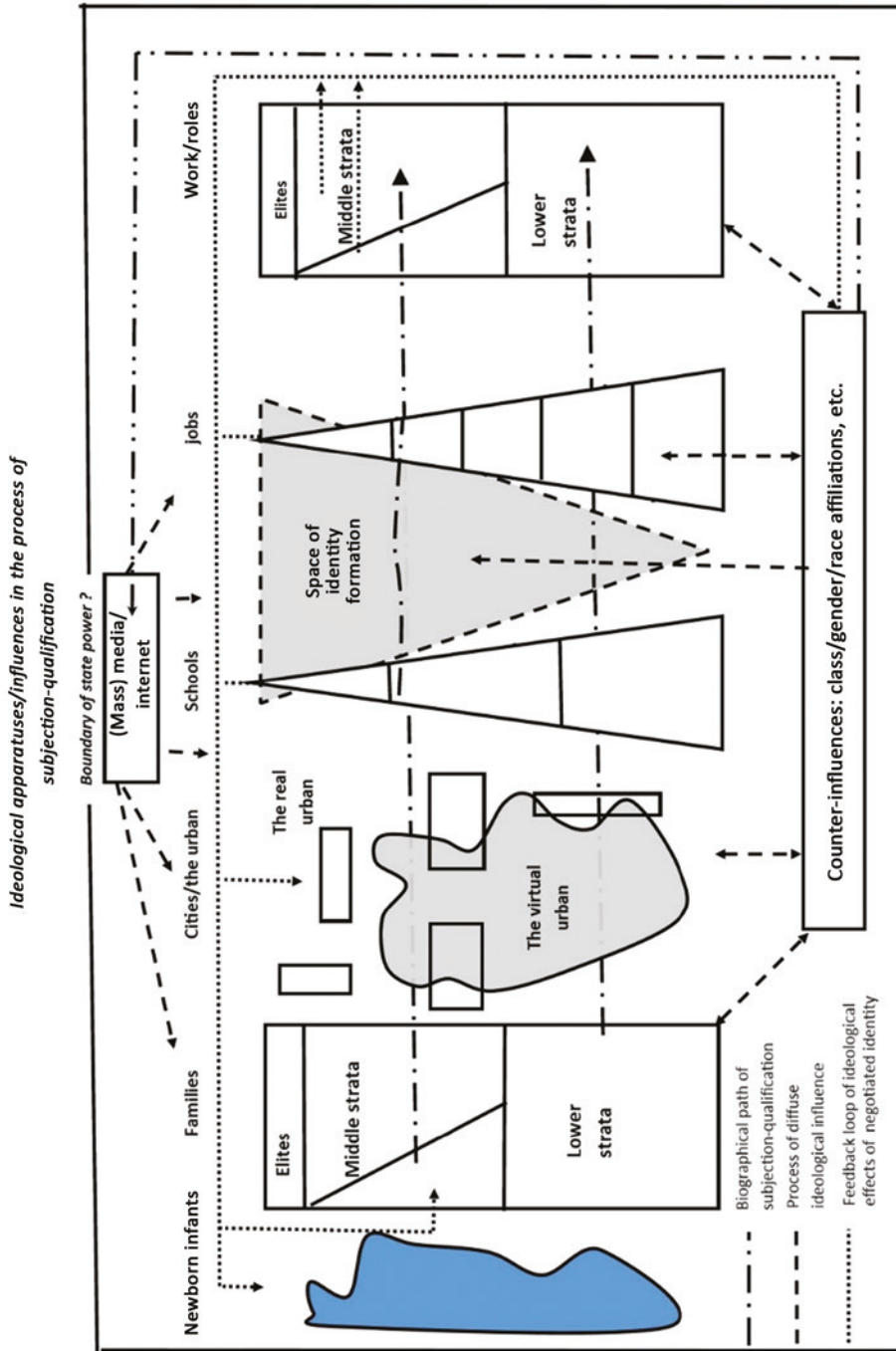
FIGURE 3.1: Modified modal of the process of subjection-qualification, based on Therborn (1980).
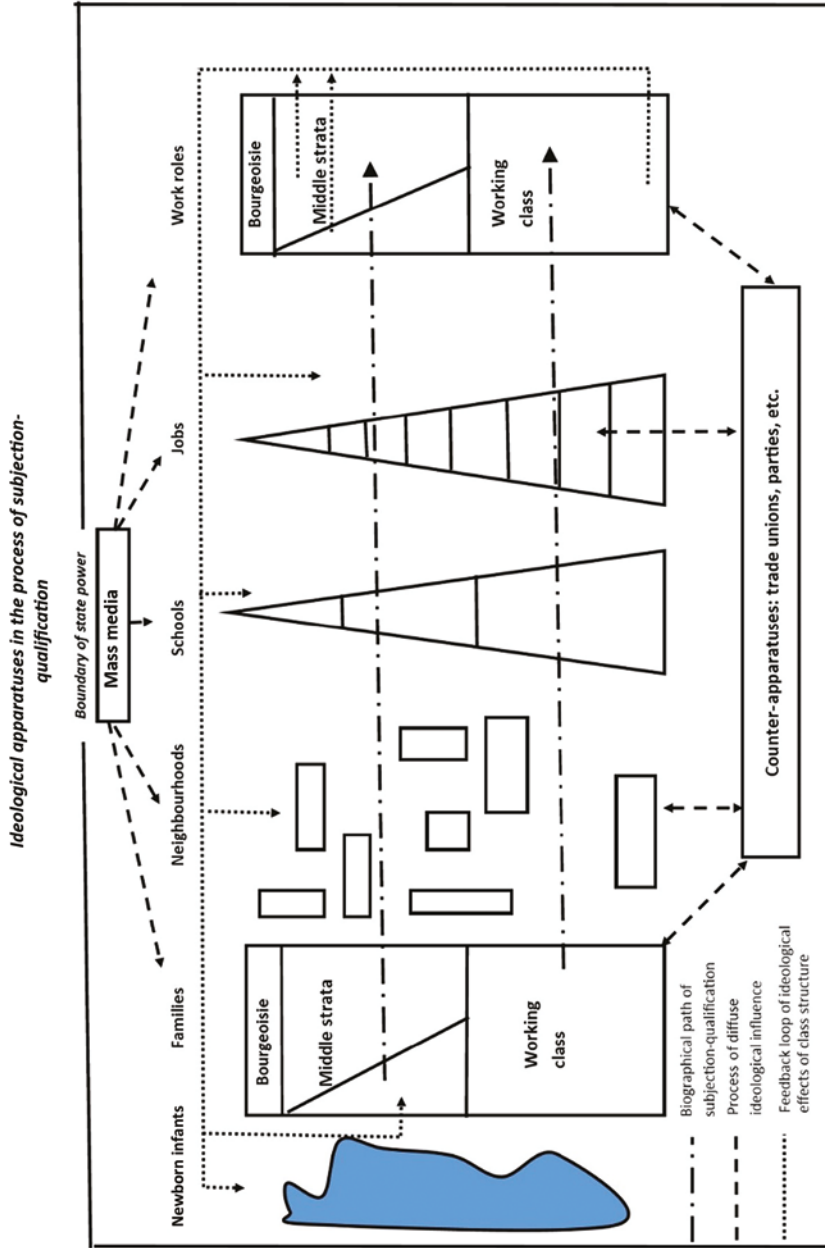
FIGURE 3.2: Ideological apparatuses in the process of subjection-qualification, from Therborn (1980).

space. The question arises, then, in what sense can citizenship have agency when detached from the contingent political and real conditions of the city or place, except through some sort of dialectical process of reflection or reaction, where global 'values' are translated into local and specific acts or perspectives – what Sassen (2007), has called 'glocalization'?

The internet as a new form of *dialogic* media also raises interesting questions about its role in both part of what Goran Therborn (1980) called the 'apparatus' of ideology, and of its counter-apparatus (see Figure 3.1). This model is revisited in the conclusions to the chapter as a possible way of conceptualizing the function of the web as a mechanism for articulating state power for spatialized/despatialized citizens, and countering that power, while at the same time informing and giving agency to identity formation and expression – identity as practice (Figure 3.4).

This chapter assumes that the reader has some familiarity with the basic concepts central to Lefebvre's work covered elsewhere in this text – including *lived* space, *spaces of representation* and *representations of space* and so on. They are diagrammatically summarized (in Figures 3.2 and 3.3), but also see Purcell's (2002) very helpful if committed explanation of the right to the city. He reminds us that Lefebvre uses the term 'citadens' in *Le Droit a la Ville* (instead of the term 'citizens'), in which he 'fuses the notion of citizen with that of denizen/inhabitant' (Purcell 2002: 102). Purcell (2002) goes on to argue that Lefebvre thereby implies that the 'right' to the city is more than simply an abstract legal entitlement, in the sense understood in terms of liberal democracy, but that it has to be *practised* (i.e. through the individual and collective actions of individuals in making use of, appropriating and occupying urban space):

> It would affirm, on the one hand, the right of users to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in the urban area; it would also cover the right to the use of the center, a privileged place, instead of being dispersed and stuck into ghettos (for workers, immigrants, the 'marginal' and even for the 'privileged').
>
> (Lefebvre cited in Purcell 2002: 102)

This core idea is also nicely captured in its essence by David Harvey (2008: 23):

> The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights.
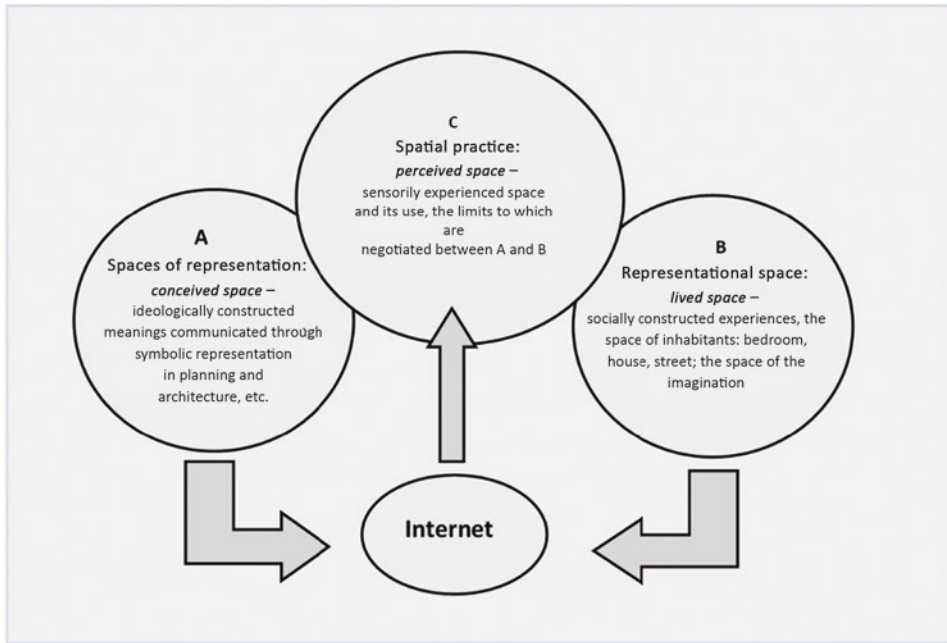
FIGURE 3.3: Diagrammatic representation of Lefebvre's triad of spatial practice, spaces of representation and representational space.

So, particularly through the lens of the notion of *agonism*, the chapter is concerned with how the agency of the citizen is empowered and constrained or limited through the technology of the internet – specifically in exercising power over the city. Finally, the chapter speculates on 'smartness' (i.e. the provision of the infrastructure of the internet) as an assumed good or necessity for the future of the city, and its implications for existing cities, future cities and embedded rights, equalities and inequalities of citizens.

Negotiating rights to the city in virtual space: The panopticon, agonism and the echo chamber

Lefebvre's notion of the city/the urban was first and foremost as real, sensorily apprehended, spatially and temporally located and experienced place. Exercise of the right to the city through acts of appropriation, and in terms of representational space for Lefebvre, in the pre-internet age, were always in the context of what real space, (the space of 'extension' in Descartes's terms; see Anscombe and Geach [1970]) in this

sense, made possible: a distinction between the public and public culture and interests, and the private – specifically of the family and the home. The individual as an appropriator of the public or urban realm – as de Certeau has demonstrated in his seminal work *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1994), and in Lefebvre's *The Critique of Everyday Life* (1991a) – was always an actor/agent within a real setting, locatable in time and space and verifiable in its irreducible and specific qualities of place (whether as *flâneur* or terrorist, and everything in between).

When we consider the *real* as opposed to the *virtual* space of the city (see Figure 3.3), rights with (as *lived* space) or over it (as bureaucratically sanctioned) to the city has to be seen, therefore, in terms of the power and capacity, as well as the legitimacy of the exercise of that power in relation to a particular urban context and moment. The invention and then proliferation of the internet as a 'medium' has radically transformed and problematized conceptions of the urban and the city as real place, as it has problematized distinctions between the public and the private. We have to see the internet as providing a new and original interface between the *space of representation* and *representational space* – the symbolic and the lived in Lefebvre's sense (Lefebvre 1991b); and therefore something that opens up the possibility of the exercise of rights to the city both in the liberal sense (as challenging dominant interests in their own terms), and in the sense in which the individual has the right to *produce* space through their own actions and experiences – in the exercise of what might be called the micropolitics of appropriation.

The remainder of this section focuses on a number of themes related to the nature and powers of the internet as virtual urban and public realm, and the implications for citizenship/citadenship: the internet as a two way panopticon; popular culture as citizen agency and of dissensus; and it concludes with a brief discourse on agonism and the internet as a way of conceptualizing the negotiation of rights to the city through this evolving 'medium'.

The internet as two-way panopticon

There is an extensive literature on the panopticon, as a metaphor for surveillance culture, which there is not space to detail here (see Foucault 1973; Markus 1993; Reeve 1998). The term, of course, referred originally to the novel design by the eighteenth-century philosopher, Jeremy Bentham – for a prison organized around a central observation tower. Prisoners could be observed by their warders, but not themselves see who was observing them. In *Discipline and Punish* (1973) Foucault explores the nature of relations of power within bureaucratic institutions of the state by applying the panopticon as a symbol for the exercise of the power and therefore the violence of the state over the individual.

Spaces of representation:
Ideologically imposed and articulated representations, meanings and experiences

Virtual/
internet space

Lived space

Representational space:
individually and collectively experienced
in real time – the 'real'
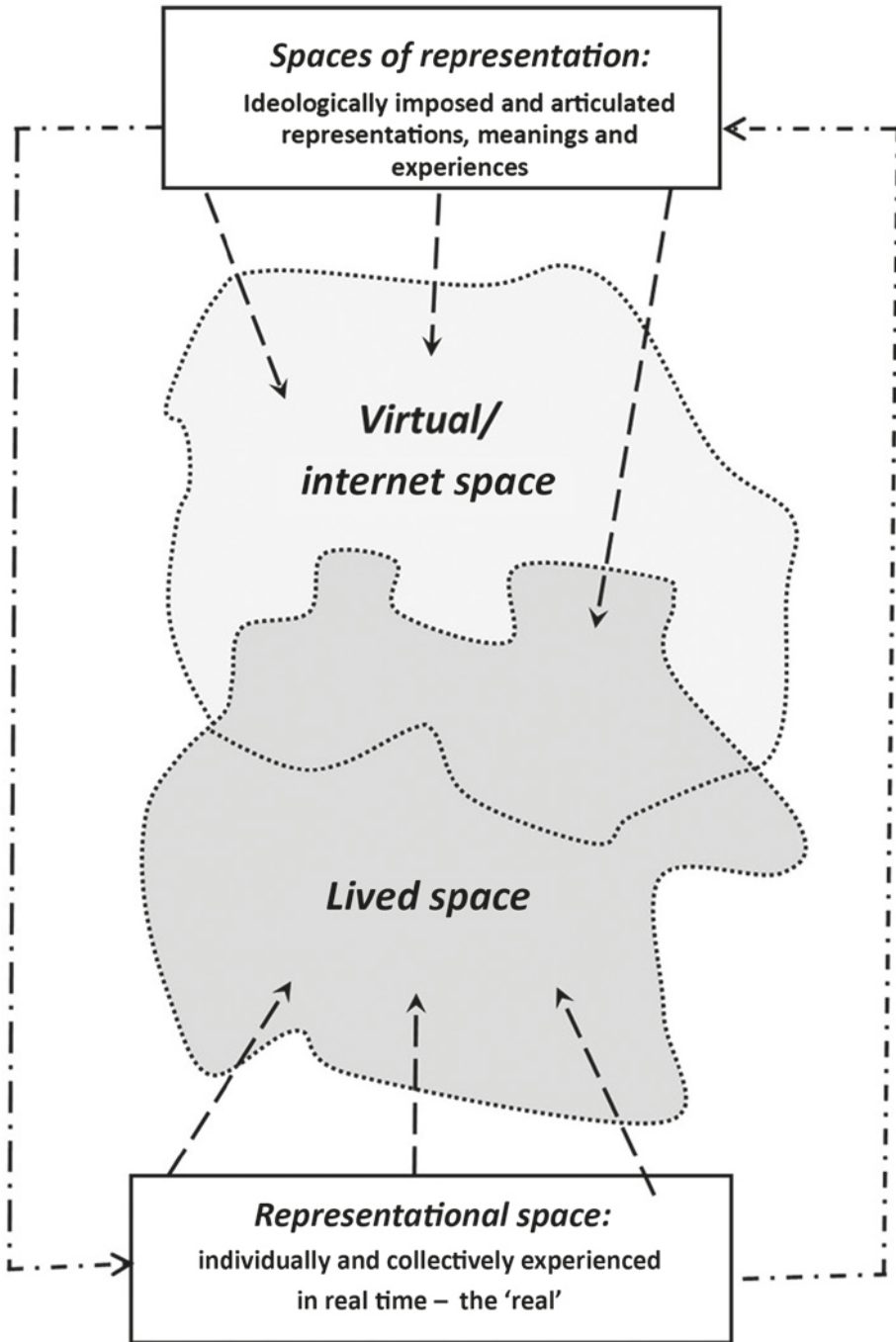
FIGURE 3.4: The intersection of lived and virtual space using Lefebvre's distinction between representational of representation.

However, Flyvbjerg and Richardson (2002) show the panopticon, as a real space and building of penal coercion, as a space of the oppositional culture of the incarcerated, who, despite the apparently omniscient surveillance of their warders, found ways of avoiding the controlling gaze and communicating between themselves – albeit in a setting of profound power inequality. Applied to the internet, the metaphor of the panopticon illustrates the fact that the technology is controlled and provided from the centre, institutionally and legally governed and organized and directed predominantly for the interests of the state and the market (thus a *space of representation*), but that it also provides opportunities for appropriation (a representational space) in which communities of interest as well as individual tastes can be fostered and communicated.

Popular culture, citizen power and the internet

Flyvbjerg (1998) is also critical of liberal notions in the work of Habermas and others, of rationality as a neutral competence, or facilitator of the negotiation of interests between otherwise unequal parties – for instance, the dominant class and the working class; or men over women. Instead, he sees rationality as a fundamentally weak tool for equal communication between unequal interests, because it is itself dominated by the powerful (although it could be argued that *irrationality* can also be exercised as a form of control by the powerful, as in the case of Donald Trump as president of the United States[1]). This being the case, Flyvbjerg (1998: 236) advocates 'forms of participation that are practical, committed and ready for conflict, over ones that are discursive, detached and consensus dependent – that is rational'. This is a view ultimately derived from Gramsci's political theory of *cultural hegemony*, a theory about the means through which power is gained by class groups that effectively control moral, political and cultural values in their own interest, represented and disseminated through the media as well as in everyday life, in Lefebvre's sense. Popular culture – the culture 'of the masses' according to Adorno (1991), can be both collaborative in the hegemonic interests of the dominant class, but also subversive of it. Rather like the panopticon, forms of popular culture colonizing the space of the internet can be both self-oppressing and progressive at the same time. As Bennett (1986: xv–xvi) put it,

> [popular culture is] an area of negotiation between an imposed mass culture that is coincident with dominant ideology, and spontaneously oppositional culture […] within which […] dominant, subordinate and oppositional cultural and ideological values and elements are 'mixed' in different permutations.

In cultural theory, the study of popular culture really only began in any seriousness in the 1970s and 1980s; and led, in Bennett's (1986: 14) view, to a 'new sense of the popular, as the site of critical and speculative intelligence'.[2] At the same time, it is well recognized that significant social and technological changes were occurring, both driving the claims of legitimacy of 'countercultures', as well as their mediated reach. According to Alex Niven (2011: 17), this period 'saw the popular take on an active role as a progressive force in political and societal change, largely independent of mainstream politics, "the voiceless finally finding a voice"'. So, for example, these decades saw the emergence of the gay liberation movement, feminism, environmentalism and other forerunners to identity-based political crusades, as a precursor to the expressions of both micro and collective positions, interests and narratives in part enabled by the internet over the last 25 years.

However, Fiske (1989) acknowledges that popular culture should not be reified into a fixed category in which there is a simple opposition between the/a dominant culture and a counterculture. He sees the history of western society as being characterized by 'constant conflict', in which cultural authority and voice is continuously being readjusted and negotiated; and in which popular culture needs to be understood as a shifting set of allegiances underpinned by both competing and complementary narratives of interest – some real (e.g. class based) and some illusionary. A key function of the popular – at least analogous to Lefebvre's notion of the appropriation of space for representation – in Fiske's terms is what he calls 'excorporation': 'a process by which the subordinate make their own culture out of the resources and commodities provided by the dominant system' (Fiske 1989: 15). Given or handed down and commodified components of consumer culture are reappropriated and imbued with new meanings and authenticity, and emerge transformed. This is a complex dynamic that at one level resembles the polysemous (and facile and merely decorative) plundering of styles for new effects, which was a characteristic of postmodernism in architecture in the 1980s and 1990s. In addition, and often in response, the excorporated become reappropriated and recommodified – represented as a lifestyle 'choice' or brand. Perhaps the most often cited example of this being the punk movement, whose anti-style became itself merely a style, an emasculated surface referent. Likewise, excorporation resembles a much older concept developed by Levi Strauss, in relation particularly to artistic practice – that of *bricolage*. However, in the context of the internet and social media, and of popular access to a technology that allows instant appropriation and excorporation of images and identities, and their immediate reproduction and dissemination to markets, audiences and constituencies, these practices range in their reach from the micropolitics of the everyday negotiations of individual identity, to something more collective in which a notion of the urban (albeit a virtual one) with its

possibilities of engaged citizenship take on a much larger and collective political force. This is evident, for instance, in recent movements focused around the environment – in which Extinction Rebellion, without a hierarchy of leadership, has taken full advantage of the apparently unmediated power of the internet to organize the appropriation of urban space as a place of political protest. In Fiske's terms, such a movement might be seen to illustrate the 'guerrilla tactics' made possible through appropriation of the media of the internet, as well as the technological competencies of its users.

Agonism and the risk of the 'echo chamber'

The work of Chantal Mouffe, as a political theorist, is of significant value in thinking about the nature of democracy, citizenship and the internet as a medium for expressing and negotiating the political. Central to her contribution to theories of democracy and its practice is the concept of 'agonism'. *Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism* (Mouffe 2000) provides a dense, and helpful, introduction to this concept. In it, she presents a critique of what has been termed 'deliberative democracy', which has underpinned liberal conceptualizations of the relationship between the public and the democratic state and political accountability, based on an assumption of normative rationality, and an equality of discourse between different interests. She argues that such conceptualizations assume that consensus between interests is both possible and desirable, and that such consensus is achieved through rational discourse in which 'participation in deliberation is grounded by norms of equality and symmetry and all have the same claims to initiate speech acts' (Mouffe 2000: 5). However, she also argues that there is a fundamental dichotomy buried within deliberative democracy and its expression in the conventionally understood political democracies. This dichotomy exists between 'the liberal emphasis on individual rights and liberties, and democratic emphasis on collective formation and will-formation' (Mouffe 2000: 4).

In addition, Mouffe (2000: 10) argues that

> the failure of democratic theory to tackle the question of citizenship is the consequence of their operating with a conception of the subject, which sees the individual as prior to society. As bearers of natural rights, and either as utility maximising agents or as rational subjects. In all cases they are abstracted from social and power relations, language, culture and a whole set of practices that make individuality possible.

She goes on to claim that the consequence of this is a rise in 'extreme forms of individualism', in which 'collective identification' threatens the civic, and even 'the possibility of identifying with citizenship' (Mouffe 2000: 11).

These are complex and highly nuanced arguments, but Mouffe presents a solution to this threat to the civic that foregrounds what she calls 'practices' (reminiscent of Lefebvre's use of the term, and the idea of the 'lived'), as against 'argumentation'. Our experience of the moment by moment, but reflexive practice of living within a political setting, provides the legitimacy for our values and justifies us as individual agents. In this, she posits a distinction between the *political* and *politics*:

> By 'the political' I refer to the dimension of antagonism that is inherent in human relations, antagonism that can take many different forms and emerge in different types of social relations; 'politics', on the other hand, indicates the ensemble of practices, discourses and institutions which seek to establish a certain order and organize human coexistence in conditions that are always potentially conflictual because they are affected by the dimension of 'the political'.
>
> (Mouffe 2000: 15)

Politics, as a situated and contingent experience of agency, is thus, in her view, necessarily pluralistic – as opposed to simply reducible to a defined set of oppositional interests or allegiances that require consensus for their legitimacy and power (see Ploger 2004). In addition, she argues that given this immense and immanent pluralism, rather than antagonism (where the other is the enemy to be overcome), we should think of relations between interests as *agonistic* (i.e. conflictual and characterized by dissensus) conflictual consensus. The term she uses for this is 'agonistic pluralism' – a state in which identities and interests, while grounded in collective experiences, traditions and histories, are also constantly negotiated and reformed through essentially conflictual practice *with*, rather than *against* others. She makes it clear, however, that such agonistic pluralism is a dynamic condition of the lived, and while the experience of the subject is at the heart of it, should not be taken as an argument in support of identity politics, which will always be antagonistic – because reifying – rather than agonistic.

Finally, Mouffe asserts that agonism is a struggle between adversaries that 'requires providing channels through which the collective passions will be given ways to express themselves over issues which, while allowing rough possibility for identification will not construct the opponent as an enemy but as an adversary' (Mouffe 2000: 16). The question here is in what ways might the internet and social media – particularly in relation to the expression of the citizen/citaden and rights to the city – be seen as such a channel?

In response to this, it is useful to consider Mouffe's own view of the potential of the internet as a site of agonistic pluralism. Citing an interview in Carpentier and Cammaerts (2006), Knight (2018: 59), suggests that she had particular doubts about the

potential of the new media to realise 'direct democracy', on the basis that the definition of democracy as defined by proponents of new media as a site of political transformation is too restrictive, and for Mouffe too close to the expression of a vote […] or to go beyond the individual and self-expressive.

The difficulty with respect to the power of the internet as a medium for agonism, is the anonymity and remoteness/virtuality of the adversary, and therefore their affective legitimacy and sincerity or authenticity, is always in doubt. The absence of the genuinely adversarial as a characteristic of much social media, has led to it being referred to as an 'echo chamber' (Ratto and Boler 2014): 'an environment in which somebody encounters only opinions and beliefs similar to their own, and does not have to consider alternatives' (Oxford Learner's Dictionary n.d.). That is, much social media, and particularly sites of political discourse, merely reinforce views already held rather than challenging these. This is, clearly, because unlike the public sphere of the city, the user exercises discretion and choice as an active participant – rarely seeking out opinions or experiences that run counter to their own assumptions, narratives and values. The real city, on the other hand, is a space in which encounters with the other are not always voluntary, but often incidental and in an important sense unmediated, except and ironically via the internet (see Reeve 2019). However, that cities themselves are organized along class and often ethnic and economic lines – with poor, often Black neighbourhoods, and more affluent and often generally White districts – territories or turfs, occupied through different forms of symbolic capital; and within city centres, spaces of spectacle – such as shopping centres and gated communities – are by their very nature exclusive enclaves. To this degree, the despatialized nature of the internet is seen by some as an opportunity for overcoming spatially based forms of discrimination.

However, the internet is not one monolithic entity and contains the possibility for public debate within a kind of third space – both and neither public nor private. According to Ratto and Boler (2014: 15), Rancier, for example, argues that the new media can build what he calls 'DIY citizenship combining "modalities of political participation" with "critical making"'. This latter phrase is crucial in understanding the potential of the internet as a mode of the lived and the real as much in public life as in other spheres. As Knight (2018: 43) suggests, such making 'carries with it critical-infused reflection', and can be seen as an aspect not just of the creation of new ideas, physical environments, cultural products, etc., but also of communities, via the established platforms such as Facebook, or emerging forms such as discussion forums. The internet exists both as a *space of representation* (reinforcing and imposing identities and values from outside) and *representational space* (a support for *agonism*), in which conflictual participation as critical making can flourish.

Finally, here, it is important to acknowledge that the internet is in some limited and highly qualified sense a neutral technology, and therefore capable of being both a form of the panopticon and a host for oppositional cultures and expression. Swartz and Driscoll (cited in Ratto and Boler 2014), articulate the obvious difference between message boards and online forums with their potential for voicing the particular, and the conformist, externally disciplined and centralized structures of corporate entities such as Facebook, with their algorithms designed to anticipate commodifiable interests and needs. They also see much forum discourse and DIY citizenship (as Knight [2018] puts it) as 'post-political' (Swartz and Driscoll cited in Ratto and Boler 2014: 298), where historically understood political organization – for example in political parties or other organized and state-sanctioned forms – has been displaced by 'social network markets'. The notion of the social network – exercised or expressed through the marketplace of the internet as a new kind of agora, illustrates Bauman's (2000) conception of what he has called 'liquid modernity'; an aspect of which is the overlaying of one type of interest and experience (e.g. economic struggle) with another (e.g. sexual identity), but where these interests and experiences while having some foundation (e.g. in terms of class and economic relations) are constantly renegotiated and practised in relation to the interests of others and the other, in real time.

The spatially independent or detached nature of the internet means that as a medium of citizenship it can be both local and global at the same time; as Miller (2016) argues, able to give voice to locally specific cultural and other practices and identities, at the scale of both the community and the nation, and even beyond. In this sense, the urban or the city as a real space of the exercise of rights and the practice of the lived is framed or qualified by its inherent lack of being in a specific urban or city setting, although its content may refer to real and local issues and concerns. Likewise, as a medium without a place, it blurs the distinction between the public and the private domains, and even makes them in themselves redundant or interchangeable categories, as discussed earlier.

At a very deep level, agonism as an experience of conflictual encounter with the world and with others, experienced within the moment, foregrounds the gaps and voids between different interests groups: in this sense it is at the heart of what Lefebvre terms 'lived space'. It parallels – as Gunder and Hillier (2009) have pointed out – Lacan's theory of the real, or the void, which exists beyond or prior to representation. The limits to the internet as a site of agonism lies in the fact that, as a medium, it requires acts of representation (assembling and giving content), although as in social media such as Tinder in a way that dangerously and/or joyously facilitates experiences that may go beyond mere representation.

The form and the management of the smart city: Justice and the right to the city

Turning from the internet as a medium for the expression of rights and identities; this chapter now considers how cities have been conceptualized by geographers and others in relation to the internet as techne – technology or instrument for political action and control.

Susan Fainstein (2014) asserts that Lefebvre's conceptualization of the right to the city had a profound influence on the way cities were thought about by urban geographers such as David Harvey and Manuel Castells, from the 1960s and in subsequent decades. Historically, Fainstein (2014) argues, urbanists saw cities (e.g. in terms of the distribution of land use and of class- and race-based or characterized neighbourhoods), as capable of analysis and explanation simply in terms of these objective characteristics; and, by implication, geography as a principally descriptive and empirical activity, in a positivist sense. If they were concerned with questions of justice and equality, this was through an analysis of 'spatial manipulation' (Fainstein 2014: 1), seeing space as a 'container of buildings, populations and production'. Injustice – and justice, as its corollary – were matters of how space was organized to the benefit of some groups and the detriment of others, measured against normative standards of access to resources, and, essentially, the means of production in Marxist terms.

Fainstein argues that, with Lefebvre, this way of understanding the relationship between cities as simple facts, and their relationship to the by-product of inequality, gave way to a more complex and politically committed understanding in which 'space […] became a constituent of the relations of production and reproduction and a contributing source of inequality and by implication injustice' (Fainstein 2014: 1–2). Foregrounded here, and in line with Lefebvre's idea of the city as lived, is the city as composed of social relations rather than economic or class relations and class struggle based on competition for control over resources, including property and its location within the city.

Fainstein (2014) goes on to argue that this shift meant that the city could now be seen – in the work of Castells (1983), for example – as a site of social reproduction, in which the social situation of residents and urban space became central to understanding how social injustice and inequality might in some sense be rectified. For Castells, the exercise of control and influence over the city was conditioned or constrained by the relative power of different social interests. He advocated for a 'grass-roots', bottom-up struggle, from the very local and community led level, to articulate and express interests of hitherto disenfranchised groups, but groups whose interests he very much identified in terms of real and lived place, using their own experience of exclusion and inequality as the affective driver of change. The obvious

question is what role might the internet and social media have in 'grass-roots', place-based struggle to achieve greater urban justice; and how, in practice, is this being facilitated or hindered through the provision of internet infrastructure and its regulation? In addition, Castells's (1989) notion of the city as a 'space of flows', in which interests are not permanently tied or fixed to spatial qualities (such as property), is at least metaphorically helpful in understanding the nature of the internet as a fluid medium that touches real places and the interrelations between people and place.

Fainstein's (2014) discussion of justice and the city in relation to Lefebvre speaks to the other component of the rights to the city, the question of *whose* rights? Using the work of Young (1990), Fainstein (2014) offers a critique of the inadequacy of liberalism in which individuals are seen atomistically (i.e. as separate, but equal agencies, abstracted from their lived realities). Instead, Fainstein, with Young,

> considers that a social group is defined by a sense of shared identity and that a liberal contract model of social relations only conceives of associations based on common interests and fails to take account of groups arising from shared identity […] Liberal democratic theory […] ignores the rootedness of people in class, gender, cultural and familial relations. In doing so, and by placing liberty at the top pf its pantheon of values, it fails to recognise the ties of obligation that necessarily bind people to each other and also the structurally based antagonisms that separate them.
>
> (Fainstein 2014: 9)

So, we can begin to say that the practice of the right to the city, in Lefebvre's terms, has necessarily to be exercised by individuals who are not political abstractions, but real people whose existential and therefore experiential and affective reality is inseparable from and dependent on their contingent (class, gender, race, ableist, place-based community and history, etc.) qualities and histories. We can also say that the practice of everyday life (and therefore the *practice* of identity), in so far as it takes place within the urban, is an exercise of citizenship, since it is always in relation to the other. In this sense, justice in the city may be about the capacity and limits to the exercise of the right to the city; and how it is agonistically negotiated moment by moment with the other. The question for this chapter, finally, is how does the internet connect with, add to or in some sense create a virtual urban space for representation of the citaden?

Reproducing inequalities: The real and the virtual city

The final section of this chapter considers the relationship between the real city and the virtual space of the internet, and the effects of the one on the other: first, in terms of how the city of bricks and mortar is changing and adapting and what this might

mean for how it is experienced as a space of rights; and, second, in terms of the persistence of spatial inequalities and the reinforcing or reproduction of such inequalities as a characteristic of internet provision and access in the contemporary city.

The smart city is also the real city – not simply a virtual entity that has to be managed and regulated. The smart city as a real place, however, has distinct qualities produced by smartness, and on which its smartness depends, that sets it aside from cities prior to the proliferation of the web.

A considerable amount of academic writing has speculated on the new characteristics of smart cities – and there is not space to explore in detail much of it here (e.g. Castells 1989; Graham 2016; Mitchell 1996). However, central to the debates about the nature of the 'connected' city, is the question of whether, to what degree and in what ways the virtual is displacing the real – particularly in terms of face-to-face encounters and therefore the need for urban space for these. As William Mitchell, in his highly influential text, *City of Bits* (1996) put it:

> Indirect, anonymous, electronically enabled relationships are proliferating in our daily lives, while certain kinds of face-to-face transactions (and the secondary relationships with familiar intermediaries that these have fostered) are correspondingly being reduced. Society as a whole is becoming more dependent on a vast, complex web of automated, electronic intermediation.
>
> (Mitchell 1996: 120)

Others have argued that the shifting of some activities online – including work – in fact frees up (for some) time and opportunities for real-time and in-the-flesh encounters. There is also evidence that the digitalization of the city has increased rather than decreased the amount of time spent by people in public settings (see Haas 2008). The relationship between the social and the digital is complex, and not a matter of either/or: as Sassen (2007) has noted, there is a kind of 'imbrication' between the two in which the nature of social (the range of possible encounters with others, and how these are defined) is changed by the internet, but not displaced by it (see also Reeve 2019). There is also little evidence that activities such as work have moved to the home to the scale once anticipated.

In essence, the internet has not killed public space, or the urban, but has changed how it is experienced and has influenced how planners and the state in the interest (largely) of investment and local, regional and national competitiveness conceive of it. This has had consequences both for the form of the contemporary city, as well as for the nature of inequality within it.

The growing range of terms in use over the last twenty years, to define or describe cities with (enhanced) digital characteristics or ambitions speaks to the complexity of the nature of the contemporary city and its incorporation of the

web. But, in a sense, this complexity can be simplified by thinking about the centrality of digitization as a variable within the vision that states and regions have for the future city. This is also and again bound up with questions of whose city? And of social and economic equality and justice.

Under the smart city umbrella term, then, a plethora of types exist, defined by the scale and reach of the investment intention and vision. So, as adjuncts, but spatially discrete districts or neighbourhoods, are science parks, or digital hubs and incubators, as well as identifiable quarters within existing cities where, say, creative industries cluster. At the other extreme, whole new cities are constructed and designed around digital competence – digital media cities. And, finally, technopoles and the 'intelligent city', where the technology is dispersed across a city or even subregion, where the virtual network is overlaid on to an already existing physical network.

Smart cities are not smart simply because they have the digital infrastructure of smartness, of course. As Castells and Hall (1994: 237) noted two decades ago:

> All technopoles, in order to deserve that title at all, must articulate certain key features; some form of generation of – or access to – new, valuable technological information; a highly skilled labour force; and (a production factor that cannot be taken for granted) capital ready to take the risk of investing in innovation.

Clearly there are implications here for understanding the differences between smart and not so smart cities, particularly in terms of future prospects, but also in relation to their citizen composition. It is therefore possible to postulate a scale of 'smartness', and to begin to interrogate different cities on the basis of the characteristics of the urban, in Purcell's (2002) terms, that follow. At the one end, would be the truly smart city, where investment has been aimed at digitalization, marketing or branding the city to encourage technological and entrepreneurial investment; and, at the other, the digitally poor or left-behind cities, with little investment in digital dependent industries or service sectors; and, in the middle, 'normal' or ordinary cities where digital investment is seen as necessary for ongoing competitiveness, but not the core function.

Under certain political circumstances, there is at least an association between the smartness of a city and its civic qualities – at least in the public sphere. The theory includes a possibility that smart cities express their privilege through a more commodified public realm, which becomes part of their brand. At the same time, they exhibit highly polarized communities: on the one hand, an elite of well-paid workers with secure employment, directly or indirectly supporting digital industries; and, on the other – and generally at the periphery – the digital and economic poor, with precarious employment, servicing the interests and needs of the elite. These inequalities are not, of course, a product of smart cities – any city under

neo-liberal forms of government will exhibit this tendency, but smart cities may exhibit it to its full extent.

There is research evidence that there is a correlation between digital poverty and spatial inequality; and that because of reasons of cost, primarily, but also because of unequal infrastructure investments across the city, internet poverty can be mapped alongside other forms of disadvantage. That is, poor neighbourhoods are poor in terms of web access and provision in addition to everything else (see Wilson et al. 2019).

As Mitchell (1996: 81) put it,

> Urban areas could well continue to congeal into introverted, affluent, gated communities intermixed with 'black holes' of disinvestment, neglect and poverty – particularly if, as the unrestrained logic of the market seems to suggest, low-income communities turn out to be the last to get digital telecommunications infrastructure and the skills to use it effectively.

Conclusion

This chapter has taken as its focus Henri Lefebvre's theory of the right to the city as a starting point for a consideration of the effect of the internet and the smart city as an influence or modifier of citizenship. The chapter began with a diagrammatic review of some basic, if complex, concepts in Lefebvre's work, specifically the triad of spaces of representation, representational space and spatial practice; as well as the fundamental position that the right to the city is not primarily for him about liberal rights (although he did not dismiss these as irrelevant), but the rights of the subjective individual to appropriate the city as a lived space with which the practice of identity/interest could be negotiated. This was based on the other fundamental proposition in Lefebvre's work that urban space is both manufactured and created. The citizen is seen here as both a political entity, with legal rights, but also as a personal project in relation to the other.

The chapter then examined Chantel Mouffe's concept of agonism, as a way of seeing – in line with Lefebvre – the city as a space of 'practice', in which everyday life provides the context for the negotiation of identities and interests through conflictual consensus, or dissensus.

Underpinning this discussion, we have been concerned with the internet as both a medium through which ideological constructs of representation are communicated, but also as a reflexive medium that can appropriated in real time by individuals to articulate, express and negotiate with other interests and identities, and with

the powers that be – whether the state or the market through the excorporation of images and meanings.

To conclude, I want to propose a revised version of Goran Therborn's model (Figure 3.1) of social and class reproduction, where I have attempted to set out a possible conceptualization of the place of the internet as a medium for both replicating existing and historic class/social structures and hegemonic interests and provide a mechanism (Therborn's 'apparatus') to challenge these (Figure 3.4).

If citizenship exists in a political reality, part of which is the maintenance of economic interests, part of it is also, and increasingly, the affordance provided by the internet as a means of giving voice to counter-interests through creative engagement with place and others. However, while the expression of such citizenship, and its experience by individuals as *citadens*, can be given greater agility and reach, as a function of the World Wide Web and therefore affordance to individuals as an end for themselves, it can equally be used to treat citizens as a means in the ideological, institutional and commercial ends of other interests and powers. It is a contested space, but one without physical walls.

NOTES

1. As I write, in early November 2020, Donald Trump is deploying his access to Twitter to challenge the legitimacy of the ballot in the presidential elections in the United States – a prime example of how the very personal medium of the internet is used to challenge the most obvious instance of civic and public rights in a democratic society.
2. Having said this, the work of Richard Hoggart should not be forgotten, particularly his seminal study *The Uses of Literacy* (2009), first published in the 1950s.

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