3 | SPACE AND PLACE

'We are in a spatial moment' (ds4si 2011). Around the world, there has never been a time when the role and possibilities of public space have been so prominent in the news and on social media. From Tahrir Square to SlutWalks, new possibilities are opening up. New spaces are being created and used as fabulous sites of re-creation, such as New York City's High Line, once a disused elevated rail bed and now a highly used urban park running along the lower west side of Manhattan. Road spaces around the world are being reimagined. In Copenhagen, as in the Dutch *woonerven* and in streets such as London's Exhibition Road, the concept of 'shared space' removes the usual separation of cars, pedestrians, and other road users and devices so that curbs, road lines, signs, and signals are integrated into a 'cities for people' understanding of public space. In this way, walking, cycling, shopping, and driving cars are integral to the 'livable street.' Spaces are also being used, as they have for millennia, as sites of protest and resistance, such as the Occupy Wall Street movement's residency in Zuccotti Park,[1] New York City, and the subsequent and rapid spread of the Occupy movement to hundreds of other cities in the US, Europe, Australia, and Latin America, with smaller numbers in Asia and Africa. Between re-creation and resistance, relaxation and reflection, public spaces offer unlimited democratic possibilities in relation to achieving just sustainabilities.

In the first half of this chapter, I examine the history, contemporary trends, and use of public spaces, places, and place-making around the world. I do not attempt to classify spaces but rather to extract themes observed in their creation and inhabitation in a rapidly urbanizing and capitalist world: spaces as *security*, space as *resistance*, and space as *possibility*. These themes, especially the more hopeful, democratic, and democratizing ones, are seen in visionary projects, for example in Dudley Street, Boston, MA, and in Bogotá, Colombia. They can serve as models, to inform the creation of new places and spaces along more just and sustainable lines. In the second half of the chapter, I look at the street, the most widely used yet overlooked public space

of all. My interest here, from a just sustainabilities perspective, is in 'spatial justice' and in the 'democratization' of streets – that is, the growing success in reclaiming and reallocating space that has become allocated almost exclusively to private cars. The US narratives of 'complete streets,' 'transit-oriented development,' and 'livable streets' frame the message that streets are ultimately public spaces, and that everyone in the community should have equal rights to space within them, irrespective of whether they are in a car. Implicit in this is the recognition that those who have fewer rights are often those with lower incomes who do not own cars. However, as I will show, additional caution is needed because some low-income communities and neighborhoods of color worry that changes such as the introduction of bicycle lanes, street accessibility improvements, mass transit expansions and upgrades, and pedestrian zone placements will foster gentrification, further diminishing their rights and roles in the community.

Public spaces, places, and place-making

Introduction Historically, public spaces have been restricted by governments and reclaimed by citizens. Since the polis of ancient Greece, public spaces have been used as forums for democracy as well as organizing grounds for state repression. They were places of politics, commerce, and spectacle, where there was unmediated intermingling of strangers (Mitchell 1995). Today, in these spaces and urban areas generally, diversity has exploded, creating what Fincher and Jacobs (1998) productively call 'cities of difference.' Cities of difference are places where we are 'in the presence of otherness' (Sennett 1990, 123) – namely, our increasingly different, diverse, and culturally heterogeneous urban areas. Public spaces across the world embody this difference. They are simultaneously symbols of government, religion, culture, and economy. People around the world continue to fight for, create, and re-create public spaces. From pocket parks to PARK(ing) Day, they are carved from the commerce of urban centers, the abandoned industrial structures of yesteryear, and even the automobile-lined streets. These spaces are used for everything from people-watching to protest and political revolutions.

With Western colonization, local forms of public space in many areas of the world were lost to traditional European squares. For example, the parks and plazas valued by Europeans are not an important part

of West African culture. Instead, less formal spaces such as streets are the 'living tissue' offering the gathering spaces, shade, and forums for communication, affording a rich public sphere through 'oral history, verbal navigation and the now dominating mobile technologies' that are central to West African society (Passmore 2011). On the other hand, Latin Americans adopted colonial Spanish plazas. The urban grids developed around these plazas have been key in many Central and South American countries' retention of their public spaces (Rosenthal 2000). In Europe and America, public spaces have been cyclical in their accessibility. In the late 1800s, American public spaces catered exclusively to the wealthy, with open spaces reserved for elite neighborhoods (Cranz 1989). And in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England, Victorian-era public spaces were managed and controlled by the bourgeois, a dynamic that threatens once again to dominate (Minton 2006). In the early twentieth century, however, many parks and open spaces in cities were created for the poor in response to congested living conditions and resulting health concerns. The city of Derby has the first and oldest surviving public park in England, the Arboretum, which was donated to the city in 1840 by local mill owner and former mayor Joseph Strutt.

In the last century, the colonizing force has been Western capitalism, and cities have experienced the increasing privatization of public spaces, especially after the 1980s 'neoliberal onslaught,' which brought a 'trenchant reregulation and redaction of public space' (Low and Smith 2006, 1). Many theorists, designers, and activists lament the loss of public space. Parks, streets, squares, and markets, they fear, have been swallowed into the bloated belly of 'consumerism, the media and the intrusion of space into private life' (Crawford 1995, 4; see also Sorkin 1992). Zukin (2010, 31), however, is more reflective on the changes in her home city, New York:

> Though [Jane] Jacobs fought strenuously to preserve an ideal vision of the urban village, and [Robert] Moses just as strenuously fought to replace it with the ideal of the corporate city, their ideas have been joined to create the hybrid city that we consider authentic today: both hipster districts and luxury housing, immigrant food vendors and big box stores, community gardens and gentrification.

Indeed, the urban landscape, especially in the US, has been drastically transformed over the last 50 to 80 years by the rise of

the automobile and by the land-hungry development patterns it has sparked across urban space. As Flusty (1994), Banerjee (2001), Mitchell (1995; 2003), and many others have declared, public space in particular has suffered from these planning practices as more and more parks have been bisected by expressways, as markets and promenades have been lost to parking lots, and as people not inside an automobile have been squeezed to the edge of the street or out entirely. Nonetheless, it is these (public) spaces in a city that stand to offer the most value for community empowerment, and for social (Flusty 1994) and cultural inclusion (Agyeman 2010), all of which are essential to achieving the higher quality of life and wellbeing I described in detail in Chapter 1, and, through this, just sustainabilities.

The decline of public space is a symptom of a larger neoliberal pattern of expanding marketplaces and shrinking governments that has resulted in an unequal distribution of resources (Banerjee 2001). In some places, especially but not exclusively in developed regions, public space has been co-opted by private entities. Low (2006, 84) describes countless cases of gated communities that 'manipulate municipal and town planning laws and regulations to control public space and tax dollars.' This is part of a wider shift that has resulted in a perceived decline in demand for public space that then becomes 'empty space' (Sennett 1994 cited by Madanipour 2010, 174). In other places, development patterns are to blame. The creation of new public space in quickly growing cities, suburbs, and settlements is not keeping pace with population growth, and, in some instances, public spaces are replaced by development. In the case of Nairobi, Kenya, the city authorized high-density settlements over low-density areas that would have included parklands (Makworo and Mireri 2011).

Banerjee (2001) argues that changes in public space are a lens through which to look at broader transformations of the public realm. Low and Smith (2006, 6) concur, differentiating the public sphere (also called the public realm) from public space, while recognizing that 'an understanding of public space is an imperative for understanding the public sphere' and that:

> investigating the means of making and remaking public space provides a unique window on the politics of the public sphere, suggesting an even more powerful imperative to the focus on public space. (ibid., 7)

Space as security Shaftoe (2008, 16) talks of 'inclusive' and 'exclusive' urban spaces. Inclusive spaces, he argues, are the aim of 'the New Urbanists, Urban Villagers and 24 Hour City people who want to "crowd out crime" through mixed use and maximizing activity in public areas.' Exclusive spaces, in contrast, are the domain of 'the "designing out crime" proselytisers who seek closure and limitation of use of spaces.' Shaftoe's main concern is crime: both inclusive and exclusive approaches have at their heart either 'crowding out crime' or 'designing out crime.' This is sad, although understandable given the 'anti-social behavior' debates in the UK, which have led to a raft of government reports such as the 2005 report by Sir Richard Rogers, *Towards a Strong Urban Renaissance*, which favors inclusive space approaches; on the other hand, the 2004 publication by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Home Office, *Safer Places: The planning system and crime prevention*, tries to bring inclusive and exclusive space approaches together. Shaftoe (ibid.) frequently mentions terms such as 'urban security,' 'surveillance,' 'CCTV,' and 'public safety,' and he reluctantly concedes that 'on the ground, the default drift seems to be towards closure, fortification and exclusion' (ibid., 18).

Space as resistance Public spaces have been sites of the 'geographies of protest'[2] for centuries. Tiananmen Square, Beijing's largest public space, catalyzed one of the most infamous protests in modern history as Chinese students demonstrated and died for economic and political reform in 1989. The state-sponsored violence in Argentina in the late 1970s and early 1980s spurred another globally recognized act of public space protest. The mothers of disappeared family members gathered in the main plaza of Buenos Aires in an action of desperation and fear, demanding to know where their missing loved ones had gone. These women became internationally renowned as Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo (Rosenthal 2000). These stories are among many that not only have become ingrained in the public space narratives of their native countries but have also been imprinted on the collective memory of citizens internationally.

In December 2010, with Tiananmen Square and Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo two decades past, Tunisia's uprising began against long-time president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, followed in January 2011 by events in Tahrir Square in Cairo. The seeds of the Arab

Spring were planted. Libya, Bahrain, Syria, and Yemen, among other Middle Eastern countries, followed in Tunisia's and Egypt's footsteps. Citizens took to the streets, plazas, and squares to protest against long-standing repressive regimes. Although most of these countries are still in the throes of civil disputes, and the end result of the Arab Spring has yet to manifest itself, the role of public spaces in this movement is evident. The Arab Spring employed an entirely new public realm – social media – but the attention given to Twitter and Facebook largely overshadowed the role of the physical places in which these protests were grounded (Beaumont 2011). In fact, the Arab Spring was a reminder of the crucial role of public space in an age of social media and digital communication. Although there is some dispute over the necessity of social media in facilitating the Arab Spring (Gladwell 2011; Kravets 2011), no one has questioned the need for Tahrir Square in Egypt or the streets of Sana'a in Yemen. Residents needed these spaces to stand their ground and to press forward despite the violence of the regimes they were facing.

In Cairo, the uprising revitalized public spaces. Although Tahrir Square was at the front and center of the protests, the lasting effect of the demonstrations on Cairo's public spaces may be the transformation of neighborhood streets. During the uprising, Egyptians came down to their streets to protect their neighborhoods and homes. The streets became places of organization and participation (Goodyear 2011). With the initial protests behind them, Egyptians expressed a desire to preserve the sense of community they developed during the uprising. After the protests, Egyptian citizens are looking for ways to counter decades of privatization, traffic, and lack of funding to create better public spaces in Cairo (Viney 2011).

In Fall 2011, the Occupy Wall Street movement burgeoned in protest at the increasing inequality and wealth disparity in the US. Protestors occupied highly visible urban spaces, from Zuccotti Park in New York City to Civic Center Park in Berkeley, California. The movement didn't take long to spread to other cities in the US, Europe, Australia, and Latin America, with smaller numbers of protestors in Asia and Africa. The squares and parks selected by occupiers gave rise to organized communities. The spaces became poleis, small cities organized by general assemblies, working groups, and the vernacular of protest – 'mic checks' and hand signals (Kimmelman 2011). The Occupy movement as an act of public space reclamation was especially

pertinent in New York, where the protestors occupied Zuccotti Park, a privately owned public space (POPS). The tension around Zuccotti Park helped to foreground the issue of declining public spaces (and public spheres) in America, an issue poignantly connected to the movement's central issues. Major cities such as New York, San Francisco, Portland, and Boston have used zoning laws to allow developers to break zoning codes in order to create more square footage, in exchange for the creation of public–private space. In addition to many of these spaces being inadequate and inaccessible, POPS owners have the legal prerogative to enforce their own rules in these semi-public spaces (Kayden 2011; Banerjee 2011, 12). The Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street are reminders of the enduring 'political power of physical space' (Kimmelman 2011).

Since the 1990s, feminist geographers (McDowell 1993; Bondi 1991) and transgendered urban planners (Doan 2010) have problematized the fact that 'the majority of women have more spatially restricted lives than men' (McDowell 1993, 166), and that transgendered and gender-variant people:

> experience the gendered division of space as a special kind of tyranny – the tyranny of gender – that arises when people dare to challenge the hegemonic expectations for appropriately gendered behavior in Western society. (Doan 2010, 632)

In 2011, gendered usage of public space came to the fore. Arising from a speech by Constable Michael Sanguinetti on crime prevention to York University students in Toronto, the SlutWalk movement quickly spread around the world, aided by Facebook and Twitter. Sanguinetti argued that women dressing as 'sluts' was a key ingredient in the victimization and rape of women. A few months later, on 3 April 2011 in Queen's Park, organizers expected 100 but over 3,000 people gathered to hear speeches, before moving to the Toronto Police Headquarters. Women were requested to dress in ordinary, everyday wear, but many women dressed as 'sluts' in provocative clothing. While being problematized on a variety of fronts, from within the movement to black feminists who accused it of being exclusionary, the SlutWalk has raised the issues of rights, access to public space, safety, and personal choices to a new generation.

Space as possibility: loose and insurgent space Some public spaces

are carefully planned and delineated while others emerge from the everyday space, wherein users become the architects of the space through both scripted activities (Hou 2010) and everyday uses.

Planned and unplanned public spaces alike are recognized as indicators of a healthy built environment. They are considered marks of good neighborhoods, lively cities, and healthy democracies, and are essential in fostering a high quality of life and wellbeing, and a healthy local economy. Franck and Stevens (2007) use the term 'loose space' for spaces that are most conducive to being activated by the public. These spaces are varied in their structures, diverse in their uses, and programmed by citizens rather than by authorities. Loose space can be adapted, manipulated, reimagined, and reshaped. Often they are spaces that have been abandoned by their original users and where expressive activities are common. For decades, loose spaces have been identified, in different terms, as successful public spaces. They are the spaces that Whyte (1980) famously describes in *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*. With a focus on New York City plazas, Whyte describes good public spaces by identifying many of the characteristics of loose spaces. Where sitting space is concerned, for example, he notes that the most popular public spaces are those that feature various levels of seating where people can lean, sit, and sprawl. Connectivity between the street and the plaza is essential to inspire pedestrians to enter. Franck and Stevens (2007) note that niches, stairs, and recesses located at the edges of public spaces encourage people to linger. These design elements allow spaces to be easily traversable; one can straddle the border of a plaza and interact in both realms. The space 'in between' is the loose space.

In the past decade, new evolutions in the appropriation and reclamation of public space have capitalized on these loose spaces and the creativity of the citizens who expose their potential. Hou (2010, 1) defines the 'small yet persistent challenges against the increasingly regulated, privatized and diminishing forms of public space' as 'insurgent acts' and the spaces these acts create as 'insurgent public spaces.' There is a growing variety of actions and practices that address the use and production of public space as a highly contested process. Hou (ibid.) continues to posit that 'the presence and making of insurgent public space serves as a barometer of the democratic well-being and inclusiveness of our present society.' Sennett (1970) captured the sentiments of contemporary public space movements

in his book *The Uses of Disorder*, in which he advocates for more communal urban lives through increased disorder in cities.

It is both the disorder and the community that create vibrant, distinct, and livable cities. A sense of place results from people's interactions, and place may be measured by physical activity (Illich 2000). Through various methods of urbanism – guerilla, DIY, tactical, pop-up, and open-source to name a few – city dwellers are redefining their environments. Rather than accepting places as they 'are,' they are redefining what they can 'become' (Massey 1995b). Some of these 'insurgent tactics' are centuries old, and some brand new. Physical activities that create public space include digging, dancing, selling, building, and sitting, among many others. These movements are embodied in Jacobs's (1961, 50) description of the 'sidewalk ballet,' wherein people shape the street through a choreographed chaos. Tactical urbanism is working to revitalize the art of the public sidewalk ballet, which has been lost in many places throughout the world to private automobiles, suburbs, indoor malls, and restrictive laws. Jacobs (1958) wrote: 'Designing a dream city is easy, rebuilding a living one takes imagination.'

And it is with this imagination, this sense of possibility, that self-proclaimed urbanists and neighborhood elders are erecting parks from parking spaces, benches from shipping pallets, and gardens from rubble. Acts of 'insurgent public space' can be fleeting. Some, like the now closed Union Street Urban Orchard in London, are intended to challenge people's conceptions of their built environments. Other actions are everyday occurrences that loosen the constraints of public space. These actions include skateboarders who take advantage of the curvatures of a freeway underpass, or who have (re)claimed parts of London's South Bank, and Yangee dancers who use the streets of Beijing on a daily basis to practice their dance ritual (Chen 2010). Although not their intention, these everyday performances and actions may also shift the meaning of public spaces.

In 2005, San Francisco-based design collective Rebar transformed a downtown parking space into a park, an act of experimental public space creation that laid the foundation for many of the insurgent public space projects that have followed. Working within the existing landscape, the collective reprogrammed the space by adding street furniture, trees, and grass – fixtures denoting a traditional Western park. A small park island in a sea of concrete, the installation attracted

curious passersby and promoted social interactions that a parking space fulfilling its intended purpose would not have done. Photographs of the parking space were released online and Rebar subsequently received hundreds of emails from interested people. The concept tapped into a far-reaching discontent, or curiosity, or excitement, among fellow urbanites seeking to challenge their auto-dominated concrete cities. Rebar launched an annual event, called PARK(ing) Day, which is now celebrated internationally, and made a *PARK(ing) Day Manual* available on their website (Merker 2010).

New forms of public space intervention, such as Rebar's PARK(ing) Space, have been enabled, in part, by communication technology. While technology has threatened the importance of place-based public space, it has also allowed mass mobilization and the open-source dispersion of new urbanist tactics. As part of this dispersion, the originators or users often codify their approaches in the form of how-to guides. The Streets Plans Collaborative, a planning, design, and advocacy firm based in the US, released a guide entitled *Tactical Urbanism*, which includes urban gardens, informal street furniture, and food vendors, among other methods (streetplans.org). Most of the tactics in this guide advise or necessitate the involvement of local government, which points to a trend of cities sanctioning actions that were formally left to grassroots activists. The guide calls tactical urbanism interventions a 'laboratory for experimentation,' and proposes that 'there is real merit in a municipality spending $30,000 on temporary material changes before investing $3,000,000 in those that are permanent.' Indeed, with decline of government-funded projects in a faltering economy, the responsibility for public space creation may fall increasingly on the public.

Place-making When does space become place? There are many different ways of looking at this. At the conceptual level, Tuan (1974) sees space as freedom and place as security. Massey (1995a, 188) sees places as having no fixed meaning; rather, they are 'constantly shifting articulations of social relations through time.' On the practical level, place-making seeks to shift the focus of development away from auto-centric planning (wide, high-speed streets, expansive surface parking lots between buildings, signs, and lighting that are scaled for moving cars, etc.) toward community-based places that inspire civic engagement. Kent (2008, 60) describes place-making as 'a set of

ideas about creating cities in ways that result in high-quality spaces where people naturally want to live, work, and play.'

He illustrates this definition with examples from Europe, Asia, and the United Arab Emirates where cities have engaged in urban development that emphasizes the appealing qualities of a place and then builds on those qualities to create both an economically successful project and a socially successful community. Such projects have taken the form of sweeping traffic-calming measures, regenerated public spaces (parks, plazas, and markets), increased or improved transit connections, and community visioning processes (ibid.). In Masdar, south-east of Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, a planned sustainable city that will rely on solar and renewable energy and house a clean technology cluster is emerging. In Seoul, South Korea, as in Boston, space once occupied by an elevated highway was transformed into a public greenway. Boston's Rose Kennedy Greenway effectively (re)links Chinatown to North Station, Faneuil Hall to the Italian North End. Even cities that have become dominated by auto-centric planning over the last century (such as Paris, Dubai, and Hong Kong) have successfully engaged in place-making.

In most cases, the leaders of these projects – usually politicians or non-profit organizations – are driven by a common desire to increase the livability of their city and create wellbeing and an improved quality of life. Mayor Bertrand Delanoë of Paris recognized that clogged streets, muddled parking, and perilous cycling and walking conditions were detrimental to Paris's position as an international business and cultural capital and aggressively implemented a range of traffic-calming measures and public space and transit expansions that welcomed both tourists and residents back into the city. Perhaps most bravely, he changed an expressway along the River Seine into a pedestrian walkway and beach (Paris Plage). The Czech Environmental Partnership, a non-governmental organization (NGO) and partner of the US-based Project for Public Spaces, has formed a consortium of groups in Central and Eastern Europe to restore public life and public spaces that help build democracy and heal war wounds.

In Chapter 2, I developed a just sustainabilities critique of the food movement's valorization of 'the local' in which 'ecological' arguments are adduced to tell us that we should be growing only native food plants, especially plants local to a given (bio)region. I argued that this can drown out an emergent, culturally focused narrative surrounding

the growth and celebration of culturally appropriate foods. Similarly, a common and not unwarranted criticism of place-making, especially in the developed world, is that it is based on middle-class visions, values, and narratives of place, and leads to gentrification. Blokland (2009), through her study of New Haven, Connecticut, builds on Massey's (1995a) 'shifting articulations' point noted above by showing how place-making can be seen as a struggle between residents' different historical narratives (which thereby define 'the community'); if any of the historical narratives are absent from the dominant picture of who the community is, that picture will therefore be distorted. I want to show two city case studies – one from the developed world (Boston) and one from the developing world (Bogotá) – where place-making was explicitly focused on shared and hopeful narratives of equity, justice, and, ultimately, just sustainabilities.

Dudley Street, Boston, Massachusetts One of the classic cases of urban place-making from a low-income, minority perspective is the redevelopment of Dudley Street by the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI). Dudley Street straddles the Roxbury–Dorchester line in Boston. DSNI is an excellent example of what can happen when non-profit organizations understand that the framing of their activism should be proactive and based on a vision of place as potential – social, economic, and environmental. This is a vision that sees not 'community deficits' but rather 'community assets.' Medoff and Sklar (1994), who chronicled the DSNI effort in their book *Streets of Hope*, call this 'holistic development': a combination of human, economic, and environmental development. I would call it just sustainabilities.

DSNI's 34-member board of directors is diverse, with equal representation of the community's four major cultures (and therefore historical narratives of place): African American, Cape Verdean, Latino, and white. It works to implement resident-driven plans with partners including community development corporations (CDCs), other non-profit organizations and religious institutions serving the neighborhood, banks, government agencies, businesses and foundations. DSNI's approach to place-making is comprehensive (physical, environmental, economic, and human). It was formed in 1984 when residents of the Dudley Street area came together out of fear and anger to revive their neighborhood, which was nearly devastated by arson, disinvestment, neglect, and redlining practices,[3] and to protect

it from outside speculators. DSNI is the only community-based non-profit organization in the US that has been granted eminent domain authority over abandoned land within its boundaries.

DSNI's strategic focus is in three key and related areas: sustainable and economic development, community empowerment, and youth opportunities and development. Its vision was to create an 'urban village' with mixed-rate[4] housing. However, it soon realized that retaining community-driven development would not be sufficient to halt the kind of gentrification that now displaces residents in other parts of Boston. DSNI's solution was the creation of a community land trust, Dudley Neighbors, Inc. (DNI), which uses a 99-year ground lease that restricts resale prices in order to keep the land available for affordable housing. To date, a total of 155 new homes and two community spaces or micro-centers have been built on DNI land. Within the next decade, approximately 200 new homes will have been built on DNI land.

Bogotá, Colombia

In public spaces, people meet as equals. (Enrique Peñalosa)

Among the most celebrated of urban cultural and space/place transformations, Bogotá, Colombia, underwent something of a revolution in the late 1990s when first Antanas Mockus and then Enrique Peñalosa, and then Mockus again, became mayor. Where Mockus looked to change the civic culture and citizenship by using bold social experiments (hiring 420 mime artists to control traffic, launching a 'Night for Women' and asking the city's men to stay at home and care for the children, and appearing on TV during a water shortage taking a shower and turning off the water as he soaped), both invested in public space and urban access and mobility, and revolutionized the quality of life of people living in the city. By reclaiming public space, improving public transport, promoting non-motorized transport, and implementing measures for auto-restriction (Wright and Montezuma 2004), Bogotá became a model of just sustainabilities in action. In a matter of just a few years, the city largely transformed itself from a typically gridlocked and crime-ridden third-world city in a developing country to a magnet for planners from across the world seeking examples of successful urban renewal. Mockus's concentration on the social and political features of city culture created a platform cultur-

ally and financially for Peñalosa, who focused on public space and physically altering the streetscape as a tangible means of displacing the car and further shifting behavior (Berney 2010). The main reason for these emphases was the opportunity for greater equality that public space offers (Parks and Recreation 2008).

Peñalosa strove to transform the street from a conduit for cars into shared public space because of his deep-seated belief that public spaces are a great equalizer. While those with higher incomes can afford leisure activities and retreats, all people can enjoy the space of the street or park, which is accessible, safe, and enjoyable for them (Berney 2010; Parks and Recreation 2008). Thus, Bogotá underwent an influx of public works during his tenure from 1998 to 2000 that installed a robust bus rapid transit (BRT) system called the TransMilenio (based on the lessons of Curitiba, Brazil), the addition of more park space, and the expansion of cycle lanes and pedestrianized spaces. Though controversial at times – including criticism for heavy-handed policy implementation, clearing of street vendors, and demolitions of city markets (Hunt 2009; Skinner 2004) – the benefits have generally been lauded (Berney 2010; Parks and Recreation 2008; Skinner 2004).

The Mockus administration following Peñalosa's and other elected officials in subsequent years have primarily continued efforts to promote streetscape sharing that is consistent with Colombia's history of inclusive use of public spaces (Berney 2010; Hunt 2009). Berney (2010, 540) refers to public space as the 'normative element of city form' in Latin America, and states that it is:

> related to … the right of each resident to have equal access to the city and its resources, to exercise full citizenship, and to be provided the capacity to construct his or her life and to participate in the equitable development of the city.

Not surprisingly, residents have demanded more input into public works projects via municipal plans, non-profit organizations, and universities (ibid.). Responding to one need, during the 1990s Guillermo Peñalosa, the brother of Enrique who served as Bogotá's Commissioner of Parks, Sport, and Recreation, greatly expanded Ciclovía, a weekly event since the 1970s that opens car-free streets to cyclists and pedestrians on Sundays and holidays (Watson 2009). The event has since grown to 70 miles of roadway and involves over

1.5 million participants on a weekly basis largely walking and cycling, thereby improving levels of physical activity (Rydin et al. 2012). Civic participation was integral in the success of these endeavors and the continuation of public satisfaction with the use of space.

Some of Bogotá's most notable improvements have included:

- formalizing water, electricity, and paved road service to 316 mostly low-income neighborhoods (slums);
- creating 1,200 new parks and planting 70,000 new trees;
- building a 17-kilometer bicycle and pedestrian corridor (Ciclovía) connecting lower-income communities to shops, jobs, and public services; and
- dedicating road lanes to the now famous BRT system TransMilenio (Montezuma 2005).

While all of these improvements were characterized by changes in physical space, they were simultaneously reflected in Bogotá's social conditions. Referring to the TransMilenio and adjacent Ciclovía, Peñalosa explained: 'This is not a transit system, this is an urban improvement' (Peñalosa 2009). He also said of the new network of pedestrian greenways connecting rich and poor neighborhoods: 'This is not an experiment in urban infrastructure, this is an experiment in urban social relations' (ibid.). Some of these societal 'experiments' have already been quantified and attributed to the transformations implemented by the Peñalosa and Mockus administrations (Wright and Montezuma 2004; Montezuma 2005):

- Education: school enrollment rose by 30 percent (140,000 more students).
- Safety: the murder rate fell by 42 percent and traffic deaths fell by nearly 50 percent.
- Economy: tax revenue doubled and property values rose up to 22 percent.
- Environment: ambient air emissions decreased by over 10 percent in TransMilenio's first year of service.

By linking what he calls 'urban happiness' to urban design and placing this at the forefront of his political agenda as mayor, Peñalosa successfully ushered in what appears to be a much happier Bogotá (Montgomery 2007). Ricardo Montezuma, an urbanist at the National University of Colombia, confirms with Gallup poll results that the

perception of the city has indeed changed since Peñalosa's time in office (1998–2000): 'Twelve years ago, 80% of us were completely pessimistic about our future. Now, it's the opposite. Most of us are optimistic' (ibid.). However, at the time of writing, the *New York Times* was more sanguine, carrying an article: 'Past its golden moment, Bogotá clings to hope' (5 July 2012).

In seeking to return private spaces to the public, to provide both men and women with access to public space and mobility within the city, and to support the fulfillment of human potential, Peñalosa's and Mockus's political legacies distinguish themselves by a principle of equity and justice that is realized in civic cultural transformation, through urban space- and place-making. In this sense, the spirit of just sustainabilities – though absent in name from the city narrative – is the theme of the Bogotá story.

Streets and streetscapes

Introduction The street is one of the most basic elements of society. Since the early organization of modern humanity, roadways have been conduits, connecting people to their government, places of business, commerce, agriculture, leisure activities, and each other. The particular type of user best suited to traverse these roadways has evolved over time, but has generally included a mix (Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucht 2009). Streets accommodated pedestrians on sidewalks as early as 2000 BC, though some subsequent civilizations, such as Medieval Europe, lacked sidewalks so all users were mixed together (ibid.). Soon after the mass production of the automobile in the twentieth century, car domination claimed a stranglehold over the street, and government and industry embraced this revolution.

Once the era of highways and suburbia took shape in the US in the 1950s, the default street user unquestionably became the automobile (see, for example, ibid.; Flink 1972; Flint 2006; Hess 2009; Macdonald 2008; Mohl 2004; Rae 2001). This newly dominant norm was promoted by the industries that profited from it, organized and standardized by all levels of government, and accepted by most individuals, often without any awareness of other possibilities (Rabinovitch and Leitman 1996; Flint 2006; Rae 2001). The road became synonymous with the car, and other users were squeezed out. The factors of speed, convenience, design, comfort, and safety as they relate to use of the street have been molded for the car driver

(Featherstone 2004). Bluntly, as the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) notes, the purpose of street design is to ensure 'operational efficiency, comfort, safety, and convenience for the motorist.'

The paradigm of autonormativity, where the default is the car, was the norm in planning, and in some places it still is. Rather than being simply a tool to get from A to B in 'comfort, safety, and convenience' as AASHTO would have us believe, Henderson (2006, 304) explains the darker side in his study of Atlanta:

> Automobility embodies deeper social conflicts. One of these embodiments is secessionist automobility, or automobility as a medium for physical separation and physical expression of racialized, anti-urban ideologies. While some secessionists are both racist and anti-urban, not all secessionists are racist. Nevertheless the shared vision is one of secession from urban space, resistance to the compact patterns that support transit, and abhorrence to resolving difficult urban problems through cooperation and consensus – secession by car is easier.

Pucher and Renne (2003, 67) point out that:

> Walking is lower for whites (8.6%) than for the other three groups [Asian, Black, Hispanic], who make 12%–13% of their trips by walking. The largest differences among racial and ethnic groups are in their use of transit. Blacks are almost six times as likely as whites to take their trips by transit in general (5.3% vs. 0.9%), and they are eight times as likely to take the bus (4.2% vs. 0.5%).

It could be argued that the points made by Henderson, and Pucher and Renne, suggest that the move away from autonormativity and automobility toward walkable, 'complete streets,' 'transit-oriented/transit just,' and 'livable streets' has an implicit anti-racist and social justice/inclusion element. I do not think this was ever part of the activists' overall strategy but it is interesting to ponder nevertheless.

Even Copenhagen residents, when they had the choice in the early 1960s, wanted the car and American-style streets. Visionary planners, such as Jan Gehl, and a succession of progressive mayors and management/leadership teams in the city's services showed that a different way was possible. The Dutch love affair with the bicycle and designing streets for people is a relatively recent development

spurred by the 1973 oil crisis and a series of child road deaths. In the US, the regulation, maintenance, and oversight of the roadways have fallen to a patchwork of agencies, municipalities, and commercial interests that seek to consolidate their piece of the status quo (Hess 2009; Flint 2006). An individual's right to the street as public space is sacrificed within a default system that prioritizes automobiles and automobile traffic over any other form of mobility.

But change is afoot (please excuse the pun). Realtors (real estate agents) in the US frequently use the Walk Score as an index of the walkability of any given address and, according to Christopher Leinberger in the *New York Times* (25 May 2012): 'Walking isn't just good for you. It has become an indicator of your socioeconomic status.' The US narratives of 'complete streets,' 'transit justice,' and 'livable streets' frame the message that streets are, ultimately, democratic public spaces, and that everyone in the community should have equal rights to space within them. Implicit in this is the recognition that those who currently have fewer rights are those people, often with lower incomes, who do not own cars.

Democratizing the streets Research into the social fabric of urban neighborhoods has uncovered how livability relates to the street and the importance of taking streets back from cars, for people. Much of the literature on these topics stems from visionary voices that struck chords at a time when the autonormative paradigm was peaking, at least in terms of its widespread acceptance. Jane Jacobs's seminal work, *The Death and Life of American Cities*, published in 1961, criticized the modernist, Le Corbusier-inspired, form-over-function understanding of cities. Donald Appleyard's *Livable Streets*, though not published until 1981, was based on seminal research he conducted in the early 1970s in San Francisco, in which he found that traffic volume on streets correlated with livability and social inclusion. He looked at three streets that had different traffic volumes. One had 2,000 vehicles per day, the other two had 8,000 and 16,000 vehicles per day respectively. He showed that residents on the street with lower traffic volume had three times the number of friends and twice the number of acquaintances than those living on the street with high traffic volume. In other words, higher traffic volumes lead to less livable and socially inclusive neighborhoods, and vice versa. Subsequent research has updated Appleyard's findings and has explored other

places, such as Basel, Switzerland (Sauter and Huettenmoser 2008) and Bristol, UK (Hart 2008), with very similar conclusions.

The existence, significance, and enhancement of the social fabric of streets and neighborhoods are now commonly perceived as accepted and appropriate goals in urban planning. This acceptance is reflected in current literature on streetscapes. For instance, Rogers et al. (2011) found that more walkable neighborhoods and streets correlated with happier people who were more socially involved and connected. Research conducted by Putnam (2000) and others showed diminishing social capital as a result of 'isolating' technologies and habits, such as person-to-person communication and social interaction via the internet. A generational shift may alleviate this problem, however. A tech-savvy cohort of individuals under 35 (the so-called 'Millennial Generation') is experiencing the public realm differently through personal and digital technologies, increasingly preferring public transit as a means through which to remain plugged in both technologically and socially (Schwieterman 2011). Fewer own cars: more car-share, take public transit, walk, or cycle. More perceive the experience of the street as one in which they have rights as individual users to interact in myriad ways. This generational shift will further aid in the transition from car domination of the streets to streetscapes that are more democratized and just.

A tale of two streets: Södra Vägen in Göteborg, Sweden and Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge, US Södra Vägen and Massachusetts Avenue are roughly the same width, but the streetscapes are very different. On Södra Vägen, I watched pedestrians on the broad sidewalk, non-helmeted (and elderly) cyclists on the dedicated cycle way (not a painted lane in the road), and transit users in the two-way streetcars flowing freely and regularly. The few trucks and private vehicles were relegated to a minor role in this streetscape. The streetcars came in both directions every minute or so and appeared to be full. Basically, Göteborg has completed a modal shift in which people on Södra Vägen and other streets are using modes other than the private car to get around, unlike Massachusetts Avenue. Cambridge does have a generous arrangement of bike lanes, but the bike lanes are only painted white lines on the road: they are not, for the most part, separated from the potential and actual harms of vehicular traffic. Cambridge has electric buses, and its share of the Massachusetts

Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) subway (the Red and Green Lines), but these are not as frequent as the Göteborg streetcars.

In Göteborg, politicians and planners have (re)allocated rights to the street. These rights are in favor of the pedestrian, the cyclist, and the public transit user. On Södra Vägen, I would say that these users get priority rights over about 80 percent of the streetscape. On Massachusetts Avenue, private vehicles easily get 80 percent. Three thoughts come to mind. First, while the Swedish politicians, planners, and public do not mention this exact phrase, what has happened is that 'spatial justice'[5] has been imposed on Södra Vägen by (re)allocating rights to space in favor of the least powerful users (i.e. pedestrians, public transit users, and cyclists). Given my earlier arguments about the gendered nature of public space, this (re)allocation will disproportionately benefit women who 'are more spatially restricted' (McDowell 1993, 166) and therefore tend to use cars less. If this were to happen in the US, it would also disproportionately benefit low-income and minority groups as they walk more, are more likely to use public transit (especially buses), and cycle most for work purposes (Latino) (Pucher and Renne 2003). Second, this inverts the typical US prioritization of 'street rights,' where the bigger your vehicle, the more 'rights' you have (don't try arguing your street rights with an MBTA bus driver). Third, and probably the least researched, this street-level spatial justice, this 'democratization of the street' through the redistribution of rights to (and in) public space, may make the street look physically different, but I think it also fundamentally rewires our brains, affecting the way we think. If the street is our most commonly used public space, the one we use each day, and it has been democratized in the way Södra Vägen has, and Massachusetts Avenue hasn't, what does this say to the public who use these streets and spaces daily and become acculturated to spatial justice on Södra Vägen or spatial injustice on Massachusetts Avenue? How does the daily use of a democratized or an undemocratized street affect our behavior? How does a child growing up in a Swedish city, who encounters the more democratic, spatially just environment of a street such as Södra Vägen, differ from his or her counterpart in a US city who has experienced the complete opposite?

The complete streets movement Arguably, the most prolific and persistent product of the unfolding vision of livable streets and of its related social capital and inclusion research and practice has been the

genesis and growth of the complete streets movement. Developing as part of, and related to, the wider narrative around place-making, the movement has transformed the frames of livable, walkable streets and social inclusion into a mobilizing effort that has led to coalition-building and activism, has influenced legislation and policy, and has provided the average citizen with a tangible vision of the potential of their streets beyond that of automobile conduit.

Organizations such as Streetsblog, Transportation Alternatives, 8-80 Cities, and the National Complete Streets Coalition have aided the formation and growth of the complete streets movement in North America, while Living Streets in the UK, the Bicycling Empowerment Network in South Africa, and Walk 21 and EMBARQ are international examples. Moreover, city governments are starting to lead, pioneering the integration of complete streets or similar methodology into their street design manuals and regulatory structures.

To progress beyond the narrow diktats of the AASHTO *Green Book*, which mandates standards on a federal level in the US, cities have to employ innovative strategies. San Francisco has incorporated its Better Streets Plan into its regulatory framework, for example, and New York has established its Active Design Guidelines through an interagency effort to encourage healthier participation on a complete street (Hawkes and Sheridan 2011). Legislative strategies are increasingly valid tools for promoting more complete streets. This approach helps to actualize the pressure of organizations, citizens' groups, and planning and sustainability literature into enforceable – or at least guidance – doctrines. Some examples of legislative or policy remedy include the bipartisan Safe and Complete Streets Act of 2011 (H.R. 1780), introduced by US Representatives Doris Matsui (D-CA) and Steven LaTourette (R-OH) on 5 May 2011, and, at the time of writing, referred to the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit; the City of Vancouver Transportation Plan, which integrates bike paths, pedestrian zones, and traffic-calming measures; and the Crimes Amendment (Road Accidents) (Brendan's Law) Act 2005 No. 74 in New South Wales, Australia, which increased protection for pedestrians from motor vehicles.

Health and safety One of the most salient arguments for both livability and complete streets strategies, from a just sustainabilities perspective, is the binary of the positive impacts of walking and cycling, and the

negative health impacts of being in a car for long periods of time. Literature is dense with the importance of walking and with neighborhood walkability as a means of tackling physical health problems (for instance, Pucher et al. 2010; Alfonzo et al. 2008; Gordon-Larsen et al. 2006; Johnston 2008; de Nazelle and Rodríguez 2009; Dumbaugh and Li 2011), such as obesity, especially among children, and the illnesses associated with it (Gordon-Larsen et al. 2006; Johnston 2008), all of which are greater in low-income and minority residents. Health concerns come as well from the pollution emanating from vehicles and the safety issues that correspond to rising volumes of traffic (Bell et al. 2006; de Nazelle and Rodríguez 2009; Morabia et al. 2010; Mohan and Tiwari 1999). Issues of race[6] and class, although contested and complex (Kawachi et al. 2005), permeate environmental justice studies, which generally show that poorer people and people of color tend to bear a disproportionate burden of air and noise pollution and other safety and health hazards compared with more wealthy neighborhoods.

Driving can have a negative impact on one's physical and psychological health, particularly in terms of aggression and stress. Exacerbating this condition, an auto-focused built environment can lead to accidents between vehicles and more vulnerable road users, usually due to high speeds and traffic issues (Dumbaugh and Li 2011). 'Road rage' is an informal phrase used to describe aggressive behavior that many drivers exhibit when confronted with traffic, slow driving, or other hindrances (Rowden et al. 2011; Harris and Houston 2010; Dahlen and Ragan 2004). Anecdotally, most people will comment that their 'driving personality' tends to differ from their ordinary personality; it can be more aggressive, agitated, and stressed. Rowden et al. (2011, 1333) show that a 'frustration-aggression link to stress [exists] within the traffic environment' in which 'time urgency significantly influenced driver stress in both high and low congestion conditions.' These levels of agitation certainly cannot be healthy, and are likely to play a role in bad behavior on the street and beyond. The safety of other types of road users, such as pedestrians, cyclists, and mass transit riders, are also endangered in this equation since aggressive driving is more likely to injure or at least frighten them due to their relative vulnerability (Harris and Houston 2010). A setting conducive to less, and calmer, driving – that is, a democratized streetscape, especially with shared streets – might therefore have a positive effect on behavior.

Happiness Is a democratized streetscape a happier streetscape? Are the good people of Södra Vägen in Göteborg, Sweden, happier than those on Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge, US? Even if we could answer this question, it would be difficult if not impossible to ascribe it solely to streetscape conditions. Similarly, happier people could choose to live in more democratized and walkable neighborhoods. However, perhaps we can extrapolate. In happiness studies in which happiness is a metric used to measure wellbeing and quality of life, other issues such as economic affluence (particularly in terms of income) matter only to a point. After that threshold, education, health, and community play a more influential role (for example, Veenhoven 1996; Schor 2005; Rogers et al. 2011; Dorn et al. 2007; Engelbrecht 2009; Zidansek 2007; Stiglitz et al. 2011; Frey and Stutzer 2002; Jackson 2009).

Walkability has been connected to happiness in many studies (O'Brien 2008; Rogers et al. 2011; Leyden et al. 2011). On a city-specific level, Leyden (2003) shows that happiness is associated with daily interaction within one's built environment, and significantly correlates with the convenience of public transit as well as easy access (presumably along the streetscape) to amenities such as parks, leisure activities, shopping, and dining. The cleanliness of streets and sidewalks, safety while walking at night, and safety from car accidents also correlate positively and significantly with happiness (ibid.). Social capital enters into the equation as well, since social involvement and relationships are connected to the perception of a high quality of life (Putnam 2000; Frey and Stutzer 2002; Dolan et al. 2008; O'Connell 2004; Engelbrecht 2009; Leyden et al. 2011).

Rogers et al. (2011, 202) have explicitly attached social capital to the coupling of walkability and quality of life, finding that 'levels of social capital are higher in more walkable neighborhoods.' They specifically link quality of life not only to how walkable one's community is, but also to the social inclusion benefits that result. Leyden et al. (2011, 885) find that:

> A relationship [between traditional mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented urban designs rather than car-dependent single-use areas and happiness] exists because of the importance of social connections that appear to be found in more walkable, mixed-use places.

This perceived correlation between happiness and more complete, socially inclusive streets relates to Putnam's work (2000) in which he

proposes that more time spent in the car commuting from disconnected suburbs degrades community life and involvement.

Democracy has been shown to correlate explicitly with happiness and quality of life as well (Veenhoven 1996; Dorn et al. 2007; Haller and Hadler 2006; O'Connell 2004; Frey and Stutzer 2002), as has social equality. Haller and Hadler (2006, 203) point to the importance of the 'feeling of being free.' Dorn et al. (2007) further find that greater amounts of time spent in a more democratic society may lead to a greater level of happiness. These results suggest that a democratized streetscape may have a positive effect on the behavioral outlook of a person who grows up in that environment. This impact may be felt to an even larger degree than it is by the person who moves into that environment from a non-democratized one, or for whom the streetscape becomes more equally allocated during their lifetime. Intuitively, it does not seem surprising that an individual who feels that he or she has a right to the street space, whatever type of user he or she is, may possess a greater sense of wellbeing, happiness, and empowerment (and might behave differently as a consequence) than does the individual who feels excluded from that space.

(In)complete streets? Low-income and minority communities in the US and around the world have been disproportionally utilized as the loci for industrial or unwanted development and as transportation corridors that often pass through but do not stop in their neighborhoods. There are, of course, health risks and impacts associated with these developments. Interestingly, however, other just sustainabilities issues have arisen recently that ask some fundamental questions about the complete streets movement's ideas, actions, and processes, and about their practical effects.

Massey's (1995a) and Blokland's (2009) point, that places are 'shifting articulations' that represent struggles over residents' different historical narratives, thereby defining 'the community,' is as pertinent to the complete streets vision as it is to place-making. Decisions to construct or locate what might be considered by some as 'beneficial amenities' in traditionally disadvantaged neighborhoods can be seen as part of a privileged narrative. As I mentioned in Chapter 2 in relation to food, the privileged narrative of 'the local' is being challenged, and the decision to locate urban farms in Boston's Dorchester neighborhood was not greeted with unanimous applause; similarly,

some low-income communities and neighborhoods of color worry that changes such as the addition of bicycle lane, street accessibility improvements, mass transit expansions and upgrades, and pedestrian zone placements will foster gentrification and further diminish their rights and roles in the community (Henderson 2006; Preston 2011; Community Cycling Center 2010).

In Portland, OR, there are two strands to a growing (in)complete streets-related controversy. One relates to cycle lanes as gentrification highways; the other to cycling as an elite activity. In terms of cycle lanes and gentrification, proposed traffic changes to increase bicycle safety along North Williams Avenue have met with resistance from locals. There is a fight against what is seen as the imposition by the city of bike lanes as an instrument of gentrification, as Debora Leopold Hutchins, who chairs an advisory committee, argues:

> The issues of gentrification and race and bicycles have kind of met right here at this location, at this intersection, but one is not cause of the other. (Preston 2011)

More searing, however, in her critique is resident Donna Maxey, who explained the frustration of people of color with Portland's bicycle support efforts:

> What is causing the anger and resentment is that it's only an issue of safety now that whites are the ones who are riding bicycles and walking on the streets. Because we have been in this community for years and it has not been an issue and now it's an issue. So that's the resentment you're hearing … years of people being told, you don't count, you don't matter … but now that there's a group of people who's coming in that look like the people who are the power brokers – now it's important. That's the anger. That's the hurt. (Shareable 2011)

Maxey's comment needs to be seen in the wider context of the gentrification of North East Portland neighborhoods, which followed 'the historical process of segregation and neighborhood disinvestment that preceded gentrification in Portland's Black community, Albina' (Gibson 2007, 3). Indeed, in a *Portland Mercury* article called 'It's not about the bikes,' Mirk (2012) argues that 'pinning the North Williams uproar over bikes misses the point – and the history.' The real point, according to Midge Purcell, policy director of the Urban League of

Portland, is that 'The City of Portland's policies want to encourage increased cycling and environmental friendliness.' She continues:

> That's all very well and good. But when people feel that those values are imposed upon them, especially when there's been all the other historic impositions on the community, then it really does become about a lot more than just putting in a bicycle lane. In a lot of ways, this is a real test. To see whether some of the lessons have been learned from previous projects where the outcomes have been really, really poor. (ibid.)

To try to build bridges, the city's Office of Neighborhood Involvement since 2008 has been running a program called the Restorative Listening Project (RLP). Based on the principles of restorative justice,[7] the RLP (now named the Restorative Action Project) uses:

> dialogue as a strategy for community formation and 'antiracist place-making' … by (1) positioning people of color as knowledge producers about the institutional and interpersonal effects of racism in the neighborhood; (2) confronting the tactics of white denial; and (3) promoting consciousness about systemic racism. (Drew 2012, 1)

Race Talks is Multnomah County's version of the RLP, and an event was held on 8 November 2011 on North Williams Avenue under the title 'Coming together on North Williams Avenue: reconciling neighborhood's past with proposed bike lane.'

The event featured speakers as well as facilitated dialogue moderated by trained volunteers from the non-profit group Uniting to Understand Racism and from Portland's Intergroup Dialogue program. However, a friend of mine who was there noted that the majority of attendees were from outside the local area so she was unsure of the value of the dialogue in relation to North Williams Avenue. In June 2012, after 17 months of deliberation, the ethnically diverse Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) for the North Williams Traffic Operations Safety Project concluded its work and approved option 4B, which in technical terms is 'left-side buffered bike lane with one motor vehicle travel lane and turn lanes (segments 2 to 5) and shared left-turn lane/bikeway in segment 4.'

In terms of cycling as an elite activity, Portland's Community Cycling Center (2010) admits:

> We could do better to understand the needs of our program participants, which are predominantly low-income and communities of color. We could do better to increase and improve programs serving a culturally diverse community. We could do better at creating employment pathways into our organization. So we developed the 'Understanding Barriers to Bicycling Project,' a community needs assessment, to better understand what were people interested in and concerned about as it related to bicycling. Since we completed the needs assessment, we have been collaborating with our community partners in north and northeast Portland to develop programs and support community leaders to broaden access to bicycling and its benefits – and to ensure that those benefits are accessible to all.

The Community Cycling Center received an Oregon Metro grant in 2010 to reach out to Portland's diverse constituencies to better understand how it could support cycling in different communities. To do this the Center partnered with Hacienda Community Development Corporation (CDC) and New Columbia, a HOPE VI[8] revitalized community in North Portland. In its report, *Understanding Barriers to Bicycling*, the Center concluded that the organization needs to:

> Increase the cultural competency of the Community Cycling Center staff;
>
> Pilot tailored programs for specific cultural groups and neighborhoods;
>
> Continue investing in community partnerships; include leadership development in our bicycle programs and shop operations to build capacity within community partner organizations;
>
> Develop strategies to influence policies that address the environmental changes and other social determinants of health that ensure equitable access to bicycling for recreation and transportation. (ibid., 10)

Similar challenges to both bicycle lanes as gentrification tools and cycling as an elite activity are being made in other cities. Chicago resident and founder of the African American Pioneers Bicycle Club, Oboi Reed, criticized Chicago's priorities in a *New York Times* article, 'City bike plan is accused of a neighborhood bias' (15 October 2011). According to Reed, 'the lion's share of the resources' of the city's $150 million bike plan 'are going to go [to the wealthier neighborhoods]

downtown and to the North Side – the South and West will only see a sprinkling.' In New York City, a report by graduate students from the Urban Affairs and Planning Program at Hunter College, *Beyond the Backlash: Equity and participation in bicycle planning*, concluded that:

> Traditionally underserved areas outside of the core of Manhattan and northwest Brooklyn have inadequate bicycle infrastructure. These areas have many cyclists and residents who are largely new immigrants and people of color. (Hunter College 2011)

Clearly, there is growing alarm that bike lanes – uber-narrative and key to the infrastructure of complete streets – may be the 'new gentrification.' But I think it goes deeper, along the lines suggested by Donna Maxey in Portland, OR (above): 'It's only an issue of safety now that whites are the ones who are riding bicycles.' Consider that in the US 'bicycling is the highest among whites and Hispanics (0.9% of all trips). For whites, cycling is mostly for *recreation*, while for Hispanics, it is to reach the *workplace*' (Pucher and Renne 2003, 67, emphasis added). This is a significant point: whites are choosing to cycle and are adopting an identity as cyclists, whereas Hispanic (and black) people have no other option; they simply cycle to get to work because it is cheap. Kidder's (2005) study of cycle messengers in New York City showed that, despite the fact that the majority were male and black or Hispanic, those who built a 'lifestyle' and identity around it were often female and largely white. Steinbach et al. (2011, 1130), albeit in a study of London, make an argument that works more generally:

> In cities where cycling uptake is low, the challenge … is perhaps to de-couple cycling from the rather narrow range of healthy associations it currently has, and provide an infrastructure in which anyone can cycle, rather than just those whose social identities are commensurate with being 'a cyclist'.

Planning and technical analyses and critiques There is a more traditional technical design, engineering, and planning literature that addresses current designs, standards, and agency protocols for street planning. Yet, a growing literature discusses the standards in order to demonstrate how streets can be made more livable. How the street is governed, organized, and managed constructs the context in which people and cars interact.

Critical literature questions the continued design of the streetscape

to harness or support the travel of vehicles at the highest speeds possible (CABE 2002; Dumbaugh 2005; Southworth and Ben-Joseph 1995). Hess (2009, 2) argues that current street-building practices in North America encourage conflict between road design and engineering standards, naming 'standards for lane widths, turning radii, sight lines etc. which are employed by the engineers that design streets' as the 'most common explanation for the difficulty of making more walkable streets.' He outlines Toronto's attempt to navigate this bureaucracy of competing agencies and the status quo to accommodate more complete streets as representative of the friction presently occurring in many cities.

Aside from leadership and vision, the tension among and within different municipal and state agencies, official design, safety standards and regulations, and shifting values and goals is probably the greatest tangible obstacle to a democratized streetscape (Southworth and Ben-Joseph 1995; CABE 2002). NGOs and community groups often seek either to bypass or to guide these government entities in order to enact change (Newman et al. 2008). In addition to lobbying officials, nonprofit organizations have produced a range of instructional manuals (such as CLF 1998) and participatory projects to stimulate a focus on shared streets, to inform and educate, and to guide decision-making. Topics range from how to share street space, pedestrianize public spaces, reclaim pavement from the automobile, and calm traffic to the encouragement of broader definitions of the streetscape as part of a larger strategy to mobilize and build momentum for complete streets. Examples include: the American Planning Association's Great Places in America program; Living Streets' report *Making the Case for Investment in the Walking Environment*; the National Complete Streets Coalition fact sheet 'Create livable communities'; Transport and Environment's report *Q&A: Funding for transport infrastructure in the new EU budget*; Transportation Alternatives' handbook *Streets for People: Your guide to winning safer and quieter streets*; the Conservation Law Foundation's *City Routes, City Rights*; and EMBARQ's report *From Here to There: A creative guide to making public transport the way to go*.

A democratized streetscape in form Although a democratized streetscape can take many forms, an ideal complete streets policy, according to the National Complete Streets Coalition (2010), includes the following elements: community input regarding a vision for the

streetscape, a broad and diverse definition of 'all users,' connectivity between transit modes, understanding that all agencies must apply the policy to all roads for all new and retrofit projects, and the measurement and monitoring of outcomes.

On the street level, a classic design for a democratized streetscape would enable one or two travel lanes for single-user vehicles as well as one or two for mass transit, such as BRT or light rail. A bicycle lane that is physically separated from these travel lanes would be included and well marked. In many of the most successful practices, this lane is separated by more than simply a line of paint (Kodransky and Hermann 2011). In Copenhagen, the cycle track is often elevated from street level and can be separated by concrete, bollards, or parked cars. In New York City, a concrete curb and row of parked cars accompany its most successful bike lanes to date, such as those along Ninth Avenue in Manhattan. Pedestrians are typically incorporated either through a designated car-free section, as in the Sunday Streets (Ciclovía) initiative in Bogotá and on Sundays on Memorial Drive in Cambridge, Massachusetts, or through safe, separate spaces along spacious sidewalks and frequent, well-marked crosswalks (Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucht 2009; Transportation Alternatives 2004). According to Gehl Architects of Copenhagen, it is important to 'start from the building out … [and put] pedestrians first – if you get that right there's nothing to hinder priority and good quality for people on bikes' (Grassov 2008, 32).

Democratized streetscapes in practice Regardless of the many leadership, technical, and gentrification issues regarding democratized streets, they are increasingly common in cityscapes – even in countries in North America, where many thought it would be impossible to break the stranglehold of the car. The following vignettes of Copenhagen, Curitiba, Toronto, and New York City illustrate some of the challenges and opportunities.

Streetscape as beacon: Copenhagen – the gold standard

> You have to start with people. You can't add the people after you have made the cars happy. (Jan Gehl)

In the transformation of urban landscapes, there is always a leader, a visionary, a change agent. In Copenhagen, that figure was, and still is, Jan Gehl, an urban design consultant and Professor of Urban Design

at Copenhagen's School of Architecture. His work as an outspoken proponent of the social importance of public space and its use as a vehicle for how people live has strongly influenced urban planners and designers around the world. In his own city of Copenhagen, his architecture firm, his research and publications, and his professor's pulpit have facilitated a shift in the priorities of the streetscape. As the Gehl Architects' website (2011) states about his philosophy:

> Our approach to design extends beyond … advocating walking, cycling and alternative transport … [to] prioritize life quality, health, safety and an inclusive environment for all … regardless of ethnic background, age, socio-economic class, disability, religion, or the like.

The transformation of Copenhagen took hold in 1962 with the pedestrianization of the Strøget, a district in the city center that still represents the longest pedestrianized street in the world. Many other roads followed, until the network of pedestrianized streets was completed in 1992, and efforts moved onto squares and other spaces. Whereas residents previously sat at home to drink coffee and rarely socialized in public before the streets were democratized, the city became a much more robust, vigorous, functional, and social scene in the decades following 1962 (Tan 2006). Due at least in part to this transformation, the city has witnessed elevated commercial income, improved air and noise pollution, enhanced quality of life and health outcomes, and heightened popularity as a destination (Tan 2006; Gemzøe 2001; Grassov 2008; Bosselmann 2002).

Between 1968 and 1995, the year when pedestrian activity grew to 80 percent of transit in the city center, the number of people who gathered in the public spaces of the city center increased more than threefold. As of 2007, bikes accounted for more than one-third of all transit in Copenhagen (City of Copenhagen 2007). According to Gehl and his colleagues' research, a one-to-one relation existed between the creation of pedestrian space in the city center's streets and the increase in the number of people spending time on them:

> From 1968 to 1995 the number of people who spent time in the public space of the city centre increased three and a half times. Over the same period, the total area of car-free streets and squares increased three and a half times. (Tan 2006, 33)

Public transit has replaced a good deal of car use as well, and traffic calming and parking elimination have further dissuaded drivers from dominating the city (Kodransky and Hermann 2011; CABE 2002). The streets in Copenhagen's center represent a peak in efforts to create a spatially just streetscape in which all users are afforded access, priority, and rights to the road.

As Gehl and his colleagues have been called in to help many other cities around the world, including Melbourne and New York City, Copenhagen has also refused to be complacent, continuing to improve its public spaces and create even more livable, shared landscapes. In 2007, the city officially publicized its goal to become an Eco-Metropolis by 2015, a target determined unanimously by the Copenhagen City Council (City of Copenhagen 2007). The city claims that Copenhagen will move beyond its status as one of Europe's most environmental cities to one of the world's by 2015. The plan promotes some just sustainabilities aspects: world-class biking facilities, including path expansion and enhancement and safety initiatives; promotion of public transit and reduction of auto emissions; continued reduction of parking spaces; greater walkable access to parks, beaches, and swimming pools; and traffic calming.

In using happiness as a metric for quality of life (Veenhoven 1996), Denmark consistently ranks highly (see the World Database of Happiness and the World Map of Happiness). As happiness tends to correlate with high levels of walkability (Rogers et al. 2011), the democratization of Copenhagen's streetscape and high levels of happiness in the country could suggest that an individual's right to the street could positively affect his or her outlook. As of 2007, 36 percent of Copenhageners traveled for work or leisure via bicycle, and the Eco-Metropolis plan aspires for that number to reach 50 percent by 2015. In a relatively dark and cold country, the popularity of cycling probably reflects not only its convenience, but also the freedom one feels to claim one's own space and share the street safely with cars and many other users.

Streetscape as laboratory: Curitiba

> A car is like your mother-in-law. You want to have a good relationship with her, but you can't let her conduct your life. When a city has good public transportation, it becomes for people and for cars. (Jaime Lerner)

Curitiba, like Bogotá, was the site of substantial transformations in public space – especially as related to the space of the street and transportation – that heightened its capacity to provide for the majority of its citizens, specifically the poor. The Curitiba narrative highlights the power of the individual leader as well as the role that democratized streets play in shifting entire cities toward just sustainabilities.

Jaime Lerner, an architect, urban planner, and three-time mayor of Curitiba, Brazil, was a visionary not only for the concept of BRT that he introduced and the pedestrianization and street-sharing that accompanied it, but also for his vision of the city as an integrated system. During his administrations, he helped to produce a city that is healthier and more inclusive of and attuned to its citizens. The city's transformation began through a focus on first two then four main corridors that included car-free streets, bicycle path expansion, progressive density zoning, affordable housing construction, recycling initiatives, programs for low-income adults and children, and extensive park creation (Rabinovitch and Leitman 1996).

Even though car ownership is high in Curitiba, more than 25 percent of car owners ride the BRT. Daily ridership increased from 25,000 in 1974 to 2.4 million in 2008; twice as many trips in the city are taken via bus than by car, and BRT ridership is still growing (Fox 2008). The Curitiba Master Plan was approved in 1966 but did not begin implementation until Lerner's first mayoral administration in 1971. The first pedestrian area opened in 1972. The plan initially succeeded and has ebbed and flowed with public participation and changing demographics in the years since (Rabinovitch 1996; Fox 2008; East 2009). As Rabinovitch and Leitman (1996, 47) describe:

> Progressive city administrations turned Curitiba into a living laboratory for a style of urban development based on a preference for public transportation over the private automobile, working with the environment instead of against it … [and including] citizen participation in place of master planning.

Within the last decade, Curitiba has continued its leadership in streetscape democratization, transforming a highway that cut through the city and averaged 45,000 vehicles a day into a new transit corridor called the Green Line. Explicit goals for the new axis include increased pedestrian safety, the inclusion of bike paths and sidewalks, and status as a mixed-use area (Institute for Research and Urban Planning of

Curitiba 2009). Long-term participatory planning, innovative investment in public interest projects, and democratized streetscapes have cultivated an urban setting in which residents of all socio-economic levels take pride.

Streetscape and governance reimagined and reorganized: Toronto

> An urban environment that encourages and facilitates walking … will increase use of public transit; decrease car dependence; reduce conflict between vehicles and pedestrians; lead to cleaner air; green public space; and support green tourism. (Toronto Pedestrian Charter)

Toronto is a typical North American city in which engineering and urban planning design and street safety standards clash with popular movements to democratize the streetscape for a greater variety of users. Like many other cities around the world, Toronto has supported a number of public transit options for many years and has been increasingly incorporating initiatives friendlier to pedestrians and cyclists (Hess 2009). Yet, it also has encountered several hindrances in following this path, from bureaucratic decentralization and protocol inertia to grassroots limitations.

Toronto boasts not only the first pedestrian charter in North America, but also the first approved by a municipality in the world. Although the charter was adopted in May 2002, it is not statutory. It possesses no legally binding mechanism. Instead, the charter aims to influence government and other municipal organizations to create a more pedestrian-friendly and livable landscape. For instance, it encourages the city to promote, among other initiatives, 'infrastructure that gives pedestrians safe and convenient passage while walking along and crossing streets' and 'policies that reduce conflict between pedestrians and other users of the public right-of-way' (City of Toronto 2002, 1). On paper, these ideals correlate with the notion of a democratized streetscape. In reality, the movement corresponded with and served to formalize Pedestrian Sundays, an endeavor originated by citizens in the Kensington Market neighborhood of Toronto.

In July 2002, four friends and co-workers in Kensington Market decided to work to create a car-free zone to counteract the pollution and safety hazards that the large amount of traffic in the neighborhood generated (Newman et al. 2008). Through grassroots efforts,

this energy grew into Streets Are for People!, a celebration of bikes, pedestrians, and the idea of a car-free Kensington Market; this later morphed into PS Kensington and Pedestrian Sundays (ibid.). Even though the pedestrian charter had been adopted two months before the community group formed, the City of Toronto's involvement in Pedestrian Sundays was limited, especially at first, and rather hands-off. The city did, however, provide some funding and staff to support the first summer of Sundays. When the city sponsored a community survey following that first summer, its role shifted from supportive to obstructive (ibid.). The survey was lengthy and complicated, and was conducted by a third party, which lacked a history in and knowledge of the community. Unsurprisingly, few returned it, and, among respondents, feedback was mixed. The community organizers persisted to overcome the disconnect between the city's outreach and the neighborhood's true perception of the street-sharing.

Another obstacle the organizers encountered was the set of entrenched regulations, which did not include provisions for pedestrian zones. As a result, the car-free zone created did not allow for cyclists or any commercial deliveries (ibid.). At the time of writing, cyclists are still asked to walk their bikes through the space and deliveries are requested before or after the hours of the event, rather than during it. However, pedestrian Sundays have expanded to the neighborhoods of Mirvish and Baldwin. According to the initiative's website (www.pskensington.ca), the car-free events facilitate the community's attempt to voice its role within the larger city. It states: 'By regularly reclaiming our streets from the mess of traffic and parking, our neighbourhood enjoys the opportunity to express its character … our community's diverse ethnicity, age and interests' (2012).

While a democratized streetscape need not be a car-free one, Toronto's segregated bureaucratic mechanisms have made it difficult to integrate shared uses (Hess 2009). Standardization of engineering conduct, street design, and maintenance codes grew out of the automobilization that occurred from the 1930s to the 1950s (Southworth and Ben-Joseph 1995). The standards constitute long-standing codes for convenience, speed, safety, and efficient vehicle flow (ibid.), such as the right of way as apportioned by the curb line, for which 'many of the geometric dimensions provided are very narrowly if not precisely defined' (Hess 2009, 25). In Toronto, like in many cities, this standardization has increasingly conflicted with communities' desire

for more livable, shared spaces, thus creating 'competing rationalities of "flow and place"' (Patton 2007, quoted in Hess 2009). To add to the complexity, Hess (ibid.) lists the many different municipal agencies, departments, officials, and divisions that claim a piece of the streetscape pie in terms of design, construction, operation, maintenance, and oversight. The transportation department competes with the city council, planning divisions, and parks and other departments, among other entities, all of whom possess tight budgets and specific mandates, for time, money, energy, and project control (ibid.; Newman et al. 2008). The process of changing entrenched standards and overcoming inertia has proven a substantial challenge in Toronto (especially during the turbulent years under Mayor Ford from 2010 to 2012), and around the globe.

Streetscape as intersection of the top-down and bottom-up: New York City

> Our mission is to reclaim New York City's streets from the automobile, and to advocate for bicycling, walking and public transit as the best transportation alternatives. (Transportation Alternatives)

New York City has long hosted a large array of transit alternatives. Until recently, however, automobiles had remained dominant. As Kidder (2005, 351–2) noted:

> Cyclists are denied access to sidewalks and are refused equal rights to the roadway. As such, bicycles must ride in a liminal space – the shoulder of the road – a space suitable for neither car nor pedestrian.

In addition:

> Pedestrians crossed the street relatively freely, but the risk of avoiding traffic remained their burden. Little space was reserved for them on the streetscape, and the space they claimed was often more dangerous than streets in similar cities. (Transportation Alternatives 2004)

Beginning in 2007, however, this landscape began to change. Mayor Michael Bloomberg's administration released its PlaNYC 2030, a master plan involving numerous municipal agencies aimed at making the city more sustainable and livable. Though top-down in nature, the projects that have resulted have gained acclaim, including receipt

of the US Environmental Protection Agency's 2010 National Award for Smart Growth Achievement for Overall Excellence. The city has implemented popular pedestrianizations of major streets, including Broadway at Times Square and Herald Square, has initiated a select bus service similar to BRT, and has instigated a large number of bike lanes. According to the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP 2011, 12), the pedestrianization of Broadway, in addition to creating a more livable, complete street, has succeeded in calming traffic on adjacent streets as well, 'despite reclaiming nearly 500,000 square feet (45,000 m^2) of public space from traffic.' Community involvement has reacted in diverse ways, praising the administration's progressive understanding of the streetscape while also criticizing the lack of public participation in a city bursting with organizations and citizen groups existing for that very purpose (Shaer 2011).

The alternative transport movement in New York is led by Transportation Alternatives, Streetsblog, and New York Bicycling Coalition, among others. These groups lobby legislators, meet with citizens and public officials, research and write reports, release press items, and broaden awareness of the need for greater street-sharing in the city. At times, the groups will partner with the city to support an initiative that both favor. An example of this in 2011 was the 'Show Your Support for Bike Share in the Big Apple' campaign, in which Transportation Alternatives encouraged its members to voice support for the Department of Transportation-led bike share program slated to launch in the summer of 2012. However, residents have also voiced disfavor regarding the city's streetscape redesign. The furor over the installation of bike lanes in Brooklyn's Prospect Park attests to the intense debate. On 16 August 2011, a judge dismissed a suit brought by two groups of Brooklyn residents, Seniors for Safety and Neighbors for Better Bike Lanes, in which they claimed that the two-way protected bike lanes installed were 'arbitrary and capricious' (Dunham 2011, 8). At the core of their objection lay their contention that car drivers were being deprived of their rights to additional lanes, more convenient traffic flow, and parking spots (Shaer 2011).

Changing perspectives on moving through space: fewer cars, more sharing?

Younger generations exhibit a preference for fewer cars as well as lifestyles that allow for convenient access to public transit, cycle, and

pedestrian infrastructure. According to the Earth Policy Institute, the car fleet in the US declined for the first time ever in 2009, decreasing by 4 million, or nearly 2 percent, in one year (Brown 2010). Among factors in this decline, Brown includes 'ongoing urbanization … frustration with traffic congestion, mounting concerns about climate change, and a declining interest in cars among young people.' Brown also points to a 9 percent uptick in transit ridership in the US between 2005 and 2008.

Similar trends are also occurring in other developed countries (Litman 2012). For instance, trips taken by car as a percentage of all trips decreased from approximately 64 percent in the mid-1990s to 57 percent in 2009 in Perth, Australia (Falconer and Richardson 2010, referencing the Western Australian State Department for Planning and Infrastructure). These declines appear greatest among the younger population. Based on the US Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration's Licensed Total Drivers by Age statistics from 1963 to 1995 and 2000 to 2007, and the United Nations Population Division's *World Population Prospects: The 2008 revision*, the Earth Policy Institute (2010) demonstrated that teenage drivers as a share of the entire US teenage population dropped from 71.2 percent in 1983 to 56 percent in 2007. Within the last decade, average annual vehicle miles traveled was about 20 percent less in 2008 than in 2001 for those younger than 40 years old (Litman 2012).

Greater preference for alternative transportation, from mass transit to walking, plays a role in this shift (ibid.). The drop in public transit ridership that the US encountered throughout the twentieth century paralleled a rise in automobility, which peaked in 1996. Transit ridership has climbed in subsequent years as urban governments reinvest in their cores (ibid.). The planning field has recognized this shift, placing more emphasis on transit-oriented development (TOD) in which residential and commercial growth – primarily in a mixed-use form – is encouraged adjacent to a transit hub in order to promote the development, functionality, connectivity, and popularity of both. According to Cervero and Sullivan (2011, 210), TOD 'has gained popularity worldwide as a sustainable form of urbanism.' Their work highlights the even newer model of 'green TOD,' in which the car-sprawl relationship is replaced by a transit-connected development that is explicitly more ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable. While TODs can function as a prescriptive policy tool, they

also attest to a movement within the planning field in which the increasing demand for more walkable, transit-diverse communities has been recognized.

The immediacy and access of technological developments, primarily wireless internet and handheld devices, are cited as a significant contributing factor to the younger generation's ease with alternative transit and walkable communities (Linn 2010; Schwieterman 2011). Due to this shift's recent emergence, the topic tends to be discussed more frequently in popular media than in academic research. Linn (2010) describes a confluence of environmental awareness, economic uncertainty, and a preference for the convenience and interaction that accompanies technological gadgets and urban lifestyles. Younger people are also generally more reluctant to deal with rush-hour congestion, insurance costs, and fuel costs (Litman 2012). Referred to as 'techno-travelers' by Schwieterman (2011), many millennials (under age 35) feel less attached to a consistent place or travel mode – such as one's car – because they can be connected via the internet, carry their work computers with them, watch or listen to entertainment or read a book, make plans, chat with colleagues, and take calls or meetings flexibly, conveniently, and (most importantly) remotely on their handheld devices and smart phones.

Many techno-travelers of this generation often prefer to use car shares (ibid.), such as Zipcar or car2go, which are available throughout much of North America, Europe, and Australia, rather than owning a car (ibid.). This model has recently extended to peer-to-peer car-sharing, including RelayRides in the US, Buzzcar in France and SnappCar in the Netherlands. Bicycle-sharing has also entered the mainstream because of a preference for both cycling and sharing. Numerous cities around the world operate successful bike-sharing programs, including BIXI in Montreal, Vélib' in Paris, Bicing in Barcelona, Hubway in Boston, Capital Bikeshare in Washington D.C., and Guangzhou Public Bike in China, which attest to the shift in generational priority and public policy.

Conclusions

Space and place are at the top of political agendas on many scales. Whether we are talking about space as security (inclusive and exclusive space), space as resistance (the Arab Spring uprisings or SlutWalks), or space as possibility (loose or insurgent space, guerilla, DIY, tactical

or pop-up urbanism), the spatial turn in the social sciences has hit the streets and the media. The visions of 'complete streets' and 'livable streets' are part of the wider discourse around place-making: the point at which urban planning tools and techniques are honed and focused by community knowledge and vision. Place-making can be guided by brave politicians such as Mockus and Peñalosa in Bogotá, Colombia, or it can be genuinely bottom-up in the case of Dudley Street, Boston, MA.

However, municipal structures, codes, lack of political vision, capacity for community input, and bureaucratic hindrances all play a role in the creation, or not, of democratized or more spatially just streets. Likewise, the involvement of grassroots voices and the ability of concerned citizens to mobilize within a neighborhood (such as those worried about the gentrifying effects of bike lanes in Portland, OR) influence the degree to which a community facilitates, resists, or advances the status quo of equality and democracy on its streets.

Pilot projects, such as Toronto's Kensington Market and Broadway/Times Square in New York, or long-term successes such as Södra Vägen in Göteborg, Sweden, or Copenhagen, Denmark, have helped in advancing the case for more spatially just streets worldwide. It is no coincidence that Mayor Bloomberg of New York hired Jan Gehl Architects when conceptualizing PlaNYC. These successes, together with London's congestion charge, demonstrate to shopkeepers that reductions in car traffic will not lead sales to suffer. Along with the increase in foot and bicycle traffic, a calmer, more pleasant, and laid-back atmosphere has tended to follow, leading to greater recreational and commercial activity, as the popularity of cafes in Copenhagen's city center following its transformation demonstrates (CABE 2002; Gemzøe 2001). However, in the US, transport is heavily racialized, as evidenced by Henderson's (2006, 304) study of 'secession by car' in Atlanta, and the debates around North Williams Avenue in Portland, OR. This, coupled with Pucher and Renne's (2003, 67) point that 'blacks are … eight times as likely [as whites] to take the bus (4.2% vs. 0.5%),' shows that there is a long way to go if the US truly wants to democratize its streets.