SPACE AND CONTENTIOUS POLITICS

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Drawing upon the work of McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, Lefebvre, and others, we argue that analysis of political contention dynamics can benefit from attention to the spatial constitution and context of social, political, and economic processes, and the ways in which these processes are spatially experienced and contested. We contend that spatial processes are inseparable from, and constitutive of, social processes. Starting from the central geographic concepts of space, place, and scale, we discuss how a spatial perspective can produce more illuminating understandings of how people perceive, shape, and act upon grievances and opportunities. We demonstrate the utility of a spatial perspective through an examination of ways in which space is implicated in the operation of several mechanisms identified by McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly. Finally, we introduce the papers included in this special issue on space and contentious politics, discussing the ways each author finds place, space, and scale to be bound up in the dynamics of political contention.

Spatial perspectives illuminate the connections between daily life experiences and broader social, political, and economic processes. They also demonstrate how the spatial constitution and context of such processes shape collective action. According to Foucault (1986), the twentieth century began the "epoch of space," an epoch in which scholars came to see location, "simultaneity," "juxtaposition," and networks of relationships as central to the explanation of social phenomena. Certainly, scholars across the social sciences and humanities have grappled with the role and meaning of space and spatial processes for human action (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]; Harvey 1982, 1989a, 1989b, 1996; Giddens 1984; Foucault 1986; Soja 1989, 1996). In research on social movements—or, more broadly, contentious politics (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001)—too, scholars have investigated the role of space in contention (Routledge 1993; Pile and Keith 1997; Miller 2000; Tilly 2000; Sewell 2001).

But where the "spatial turn" has transformed many areas of social and economic scholarship, research on social movements and contentious politics has generally downplayed the spatial constitution and context of its central concepts such as identity, grievances, political opportunities, and resources. As a result, this body of scholarship remains by and large aspatial (Miller 2000; Tilly 2000), although spatial concerns increasingly flavor the literature and a handful of studies emphasize the spatial constitution of contention (e.g., Castells 1983; Routledge 1993; Miller 2000). Spatial perspectives can illuminate a wide range of issues in contentious politics including how and why groups make claims to territory, the relationship between the spatial constitution of daily life and collective identity formation, the means by which transnational social movement organizations negotiate tensions between locally based

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constituencies and global institutions, the alliance-building implications of geographically uneven landscapes of political and economic opportunity, and many more issues too numerous to mention.

The recent publication of McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly's *Dynamics of Contention* (2001) provides an opportunity to revisit space and its role in constituting contention,[1] a project to which the authors in this special issue of *Mobilization* contribute. McAdam et al. call for new approaches to studies of contention, arguing that existing theories leave many of the processes of contention unexamined or undertheorized (2001: 22-24). Stressing the *mechanisms and processes* that influence and drive unfolding episodes of contention, they advocate the study of how groups *shape, perceive and act upon* structurally based opportunities, rather than seeing opportunities for activism as structurally given. They argue that key processes such as *attribution of an opportunity or threat* must be situated; their analysis brings the *relational* elements of contention to the fore. The mechanisms and processes approach McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly describe shift the focus of contentious politics scholarship towards contextualized understandings of how individuals and groups come to engage in contentious politics. Context and contingency—historical as well as spatial—become more important to understanding the operation of mechanisms and processes.

McAdam et al. focus on a wide range of social processes and forms of contention reflecting a deliberately interdisciinary and broad-ranging approach (McAdam et al. 2001). This openness to multiple approaches mirrors the setting in which much of the book was developed: the Center for the Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (CASBS) at Stanford University. We, and many of the authors of the articles in this special issue, were fortunate to participate in an institute on contentious politics at CASBS in the summer of 2000, where we discussed the various mechanisms and analytical approaches identified by McAdam et al. (2001).[2] While from diverse academic backgrounds—anthropology, geography, history, political science, and sociology—many of us came away from these discussions convinced that a relational and contextual approach to the study of contentious politics can provide nuanced and rigorous explanations of the processes and mechanisms driving contention. Such an approach, we believe, requires attention to spatial relations.

GEOGRAPHIES OF CONTENTION

It is certainly a truism that all social processes occur in space, just as they necessarily occur over time. It may seem somewhat surprising, then, that there are many ways space might be conceptualized in studies of contention, each with certain epistemic implications. Should space be thought of as a variable—distance, for instance—to be added on to an otherwise aspatial analysis? Should space be thought of in terms of place-specific forms of identity, e.g., neighborhood identity or nationalism, separate from "non-spatial" forms of identity such as gender, race, and class? Should space be conceived in terms of distinct spatial systems with their own laws of operation and development? There is precedent for the adoption of each of these conceptualizations, and in certain instances each may yield important insights. Yet these are very narrow notions that assume "the spatial" is something separate from "the social." In the discipline of geography, which takes space as its foundational concept, such "spatial separatist" notions have come to be widely rejected (Smith 1983). Instead, there is widespread agreement that the social and the spatial are mutually constituting and inseparable (Soja 1989, 1996). Indeed, the notion that there can be "non-spatial" processes is viewed as skeptically as the notion that there can be "non-historical" processes.

Like time, space is not merely a variable or "container" of activism: it constitutes and structures relationships and networks (including the processes that produce gender, race, and class identities); situates social and cultural life including repertoires of contention; is integral to the attribution of threats and opportunities; is implicit in many types of category formation; and is central to scale-jumping strategies that aim to alter discrepancies in power among

political contestants. In short, social relations are spatial as well as historical, and altering the spatial or historical constitution of social processes will likely alter how they play out.

Like McAdam et al. (2001), we strongly prefer mechanism and process-based forms of explanation to those that derive from covering laws or empiricist generalization. We argue that only a mechanism and process approach provides adequate scope for examining the contingencies of real-world conflict. The operation of specific mechanisms or processes—or variables, for that matter—will not always result in the same outcomes. How mechanisms and processes engage each other, and the outcomes such relations produce, is a spatially and historically contingent matter. We make no specific claims for the added explanatory power to be gained in the analysis of contentious politics through the adoption of spatial frameworks or "variables." Such a claim would necessarily assume frameworks and variables have constant and additive effects regardless of context—a proposition we reject. Instead, we favor case study and comparative case study approaches that facilitate detailed attention to the spatial and historical constitution and context of contentious politics.

While there are several spatial concepts that could be usefully employed in the analysis of contentious politics, an exhaustive review is beyond our present scope. Instead, we concentrate on the general concepts of space, place, and scale,[3] relating them to Henri Lefebvre's (1991 [1974]) notion of space as socially produced. Lefebvre's work has had a major role in shaping much contemporary thinking about space, including the work of David Harvey, Derek Gregory, Ed Soja, Frederic Jameson, Mark Gottdiener, Neil Smith, Neil Brenner, and Rob Shields. We believe Lefebvre's work can also enhance our understandings of contentious politics.

SPACE

One way to think about space is to compare it to what is often posed as its counterpart, time (Kern 1983; Giddens 1984; Harvey 1989a, 1996; May and Thrift 2001). Scholars have long stressed and demonstrated how historical circumstances and events shape episodes of conten-tion. But the influence and role of formal structures of time are relatively recent phenomena: time as a schedule, hours and minutes ticked on a work clock, was established in industrial society (Thompson 1966; Kern 1983; Cronon 1991:79). It was not until the establishment of the factory system and competitive markets that clock time became part and parcel of social regulation (Thompson 1966).

If time is a concept that has evolved and changed in social life, so too is space. Space has an ontological reality, yet its relevance in contemporary social and political life is also a product of the modern era. Contemporary economic organization, with its ever-greater loca-tional flexibility of firms and people, exemplifies the importance of space: profit-seeking firms may relocate or sub-contract to take advantage of place-specific labor skills, lower wages, or access to markets (Harvey 1982; Webber and Rigby 1996); unions and domestic workers concerned with job security and wages battle to reign in the footloose tendencies of international capital (Herod 2001; Hudson 2001); individuals and communities concerned with the integrity of traditional cultural spaces may resist economic restructuring (Cosgrove 1985; Markusen 1987; Massey 1994; Pile and Keith 1997; Harvey 1996); and social regula-tion is increasingly managed through institutions of the state that organize, regulate, and sur-veil a variety of spaces, such as local labor markets, shopping malls, and the information flows of the Internet (Jessop 1994; Peck 1996, 2001; Dodge and Kitchen 2001).

Space may have ontological reality, but it is *produced* through social relations and structures (Lefebvre 1991). The notion of space as socially produced rests on an acknow-ledgement that space is an integral part of all social life, both affecting and affected by social action. As Massey (1994: 251) puts it, space is "one of the axes along which we experience and conceptualize the world."[4]

Focusing on the multiple ways that space is experienced, Lefebvre (1991) identifies three types of socially produced space: (1) *perceived*, (2) *conceived*, and (3) *lived*. *Perceived space*, or spatial practice, encompasses the material spaces of daily life where social production and reproduction occurs. Everyday life in the city, with its shops and factories, neighborhoods and houses, parks and places of worship, walls and fences, etc., exemplifies perceived space. This is a tangible form of space that provides a degree of continuity and cohesion to each social formation. It is also shot through with power relations, as many aspects of social control and contention rest upon the ability to control the spaces of specific social activities. As Lefebvre (1991: 35) notes, "…the ultimate foundation of social space is *prohibition*." For example, the effectiveness of private property as a basis for allocating and controlling resources ultimately rests upon the ability to exclude others from the occupation and use of property they do not own. *Conceived space*, or representations of space, refers to the socially constructed discourses, signs, and meanings of space. Conceived space is "tied to the relations of production [and reproduction] and to the 'order' which those relationships impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes…" (Lefebvre 1991: 33). It is the "space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers" (Lefebvre 1991: 38), and thus strongly related to social control and regulation (Merrifield 1993). But to the extent that the production of knowledge, signs, and codes is guided by emancipatory rather than instrumental reason, conceived space may also be an alternative realm of "utopian thought and vision, of the semiotician or decoder, and of the purely creative imagination of some artists and poets" (Soja 1996: 67). *Lived space*, or representational space, encompasses the coexistence and interaction of the first two types of space. According to Lefebvre, this is "space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'… This is the dominated—and hence passively experienced—space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects" (1991: 39). As the space of actually lived material and symbolic experience, it can be "terrain for the generation of 'counterspaces,' spaces of resistance to the dominant order…" (Soja 1996: 68), where alternative orders of material and symbolic space are imagined and struggled over.

In Lefebvre's conceptualization of space as produced by, rather than as a container for, social life, "human practice and space are integrated" (Smith 1983: 77). Yet space, it must be stressed, is more than a mere residual of social action, with no independent influence of its own. As Massey (1984: 4) argues, "There is more to it than that. Spatial distributions and geographical differentiation may be the result of social processes, but they also affect how those processes work. 'The spatial' is not just an outcome; it is also part of the explanation." This mutual constitution of "the social" and "the spatial" underlies Lefebvre's understanding of contention:

> Sociopolitical contradictions are realized spatially. The contradictions of space thus make the contradictions of social relations operative. In other words, spatial contradictions 'express' conflicts between sociopolitical interests and forces; it is only in space that such conflicts come effectively into play, and in doing so they become contradictions of space (1991: 365).

Lefebvre's conceptual triad of conceived, perceived, and lived space can be a useful lens for the analysis of contentious politics as it recognizes the material spatial dimensions of social life, the symbolic meanings of space, and the imposition of, and resistance to, dominant socio-spatial orders. People can see inequality inscribed in the landscapes of their daily lives, for example, in the inadequate housing and public infrastructure of poorer city neighborhoods, juxtaposed against the grand housing, immaculate landscaping, and security apparatuses of privileged neighborhoods (see Davis 1992). The systems of allocation and control in these lived spaces—for instance, the ways neighborhoods are constituted and inscribed as planning

units with particular allocations of schools, police, parks, and other services— provide a basis for understanding how spatial inequalities are produced and reproduced, as well as clues to the sites and dynamics of potential contestation. Challengers to the existing spatial order may offer new imagined spatial orders conceptualized in art, graffiti, alternative plans, or other representational forms.

We suggest that Lefebvre's complex view of socially produced space can significantly enhance our understanding of the dynamics of contention because it recognizes simultaneous, yet potentially contradictory, experiences of space. It calls attention to landscapes of inequality and difference in ways that abstract aspatial approaches cannot. Contemporary global capitalism, for example, creates geographies of unevenness, of haves and have-nots, of investment and disinvestment (Harvey 1989b). Contention arises out of the perceptions and conceptions of such inequality, as well as through lived experience. The potential for contention is often greatest where there are disjunctures among different types of space, e.g., when conceived spaces of order and equal opportunity are contradicted by material geographies of crumbling tenements, graffiti, pot-holed streets, dangerous parks, and resource-strapped schools.[5]

Our understandings and experiences of space are shaped by the dominant mode of production—we cannot conceptualize space outside of its social production, other than as mere abstract container. Space is socially produced and constituted as it, in turn, dialectically constitutes social production and reproduction. Lefebvre's notions of space help clarify the relationships between social life and spatiality. These notions, however, can be usefully supplemented by two additional spatial concepts: place and scale. The concept of place illustrates social life as situated in discreet, yet interconnected locations, while the concept of scale highlights the spatial "telescoping" of sociopolitical arrangements.

PLACE

Lefebvre's (1991) triad of spatial production focuses on processes operating *over space* in varying spatial and temporal contexts (Merrifield 1993). His acknowledgement of "lived" experiences of space alludes to the ways in which socio-spatial processes have a degree of fixity *in place*. If, according to Lefebvre, space is created through the flows, networks, and movements in the operation of capital, then place represents the interaction, interruption, or settling (however temporary) of flows in specific nodes (Merrifield 1993). Place "is the terrain where basic social practices … are lived out. Place is where everyday life is *situated*." (Merrifield 1993: 522, emphasis in original).

But places are not shaped only by the processes of capital. Places are also shaped through flows of signs and meanings that interact and are negotiated in specific locations. One of the most crucial components of contentious politics, identity, is bound up in place. Smith (1999: 139) considers place to be essential to any lived form of identity:

> It may only be meaningful to consider identity, and therefore also difference, with reference to particular places at particular times. Place matters if we want to understand the way social identities are formed, reproduced and marked off from one another. *Where* identities are made is likely to have a bearing on which markers of difference—class, gender, and 'race' and so on—are salient, and which are veiled.

The idea of place as a social setting, a structure of feeling, and a node of interaction among multiple processes and places is detailed in Agnew's (1987) work. He defines place along three dimensions: (1) locale, or the site of daily life; (2) location, expressing geographical relationships and connections among places, including social, economic, and political pro-

cesses; and (3) sense of place, or the affective bonds people have to their life settings. In this conceptualization Agnew highlights the complexity of place, drawing together ideas about social processes, daily life experiences, and the values and meanings associated with communities in particular settings.

Agnew's three-dimensional conception of place can be useful in helping us to think through the spatial constitution and situatedness of contention. If place operates as a moment of intersecting spatial flows—including investment and disinvestment, conflicting meanings and values, and the exertion of political control—then place will frequently become the site of social and political conflict (Merrifield 1993, Cresswell 1996). If spatial flow gives rise to grievances in particular places, then such places are likely to be where grievances are aired and addressed. In the absence of resolution, these places will be sites from which grievances are further transmitted across space. Of course, the places where grievances are identified and aired are not necessarily the same places where contentious politics eventually play out. Depending upon the geography of political opportunity, contestants may attempt to shift conflict to different "spaces of engagement" (Cox 1998)—either different places or different scales.

Analyses of contention can be greatly enriched by consideration of how place is meaningfully constructed. The meaningful construction of place by capitalists, planners, communities, social groups, religious institutions, and media shape place-specific notions of fear, safety, comfort, and belonging (Tuan 1974; Cosgrove 1985; Cresswell 1996). Of particular importance are the symbolic cues embedded in place, signaling appropriate and inappropriate forms of social behavior (Cresswell 1996). Notions of behaviors that are "in-place"[6] shape everyday social behavior, while "out-of-place" behavior that calls attention to the unspoken social order or disrupts everyday social activity is central to social protest (Cresswell 1996). Repertoires of contention, for example, are forged in the context of place-specific social norms, e.g., notions of place-appropriate social behavior (to be violated), and place-based symbolism (to appeal to).

SCALE

While places are formed through socio-spatial practice, specific places derive their salience from some definition, or boundedness, of their extent. Geographical scale clarifies the scope or extent of places, and in turn, a variety of social and political relations. One of the most common conceptualizations of scale is as jurisdictional hierarchy such as the nested relationships of city, county, state, national, and transnational governance. This hierarchy and others like it have implications for contentious politics, as each jurisdictional scale represents a semi-cohesive political territory with institutional powers to coerce, regulate, tax, and invest. Yet scales of governance also overlap, with institutions at various scales affecting each other. Likewise contentious politics, even when semi-fixed within jurisdictional boundaries, may exhibit dynamic relationships across scalar boundaries. Further, although the scales of political jurisdiction are perhaps most obviously relevant to contention, (specifying appropriate powers and capacities of institutions and citizens at different scales), they too are socially constructed (Brenner 1997; Marston 2000). Scale is not permanently fixed or static in predetermined regions. Even jurisdictional scales, and the powers granted to state institutions at various scales, can be altered through political action.

Focusing on scale as a question of jurisdictional territory tends to hinder recognition of the scalar construction of a wide range of processes and the underlying instability of scale. Scale is an inextricable component of the production of perceived, conceived, and lived space.[7] It is "a way of framing conceptions of reality" (Delaney and Leitner 1997: 95), as well as a product of material processes, e.g., uneven patterns of development. For example, protests in Europe against genetically modified (GM) foods involve scalar conceptions of the issue, as well as scales of a variety of material processes. Considered locally or regionally, GM inputs from transnational agribusiness firms are seen as a threat to the economic viability

of traditional European crops. The tenuous viability of traditional forms of crop production gives rise to more global concerns: GM seeds alter the relationship of farmers to crops and intensify corporate control (through seed patents) of agriculture. The local and global, moreover, exist in dialectical relationship. GM technology, for instance, represents an attempt to finesse an uneasy relationship between a bourgeoning global population, intense hunger in specific regions of the world, the economic survival issues of small farmers, and an increasingly hegemonic global capitalism with its own geographies of control, production, and surplus value extraction. Each of these conceptualizations of the GM food conflict represent different—albeit equally plausible—scalar framings.

The GM food conflict does not necessarily correspond to established jurisdictional hierarchies or state boundaries, but scalar framings are nonetheless central. Indeed, scale "demarcates the sites of social contest" (Smith 1993: 101). That is, defining a social conflict involves conceptualizing its spatial scale, and this attribution itself may be a significant point of contention. For example, is the use of GM seed a legitimate concern only for the farmers who use it, for those who eat its products, for countries where it is introduced, or for every person in the world? Perhaps it is a conflict that humans cannot adequately address or mediate, given that much of the impact is as yet unknown on the natural environment. Shifts in the scalar definition of the conflict inevitably entail changes in the resonance of particular framings, as well as the relative power and standing of contestants. Thus scalar definitions of a conflict may themselves be a locus of contention.

The concepts of space, place, and scale illustrate the spatial nature of human life and the ways in which social relations are spatially organized and constituted. They are useful for analyzing a host of human actions and relations, including conflict and contestation. Scholars have focused on the ways that space, place, and scale constitute social action by examining representations of place and place identities in protest (Cresswell 1996; Martin 2000), the spatial grounding of social identities in new social movements (Castells 1983; Routledge 1993), and the influence of scalar differences in political opportunity on social movement strategies (Keck and Sikkink 1999; Miller 2000; Herod 2001).

SPATIAL DYNAMICS OF CONTENTION

The publication of McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly's (2001) *Dynamics of Contention* provides new impetus for examining the *spatial* dynamics of contention. Two of their central arguments concern the need to: (1) redefine our conceptions of contention, and (2) shift scholarly attention from "episodes [of contention] to mechanisms and processes" (2001: 309). They argue that by drawing distinctions among types of contention, such as a protest, revolution, industrial conflict, or global social movements, we obscure the commonalities—for example, the processes of recognizing grievances, building coalitions, and challenging opponents—among them. Further, by focusing on these common processes, scholars can better understand the reasons why episodes of contention vary in their forms and outcomes.

According to McAdam et al., "similar mechanisms and processes play significant parts in quite disparate episodes, but produce varying overall outcomes, *depending on their sequence, combination, and context*" (306, emphasis added). Scholars would be well advised, therefore, to focus attention on the *mechanisms* and *processes* of contention, as they play out in specific *historical and spatial contexts*, in order to understand particular episodes of contentious politics. We argue that the spatial dimension of context—e.g., how key actors, organizations, and institutions relate to and affect other actors, organizations, and institutions across space—plays a crucial role in shaping the operation of mechanisms and processes. Moreover, spatiality is both context for and constitutive of dynamic processes of contention. The mechanisms and processes that McAdam et al. consider relate to the formation or expression of collective identities, the mobilization of groups and movements, and the

trajectories of contention. Much of the substance of *Dynamics* focuses on defining and clarifying the operation of twelve specific mechanisms of contention identified by the authors. We do not wish to replicate that work here. Instead, we give a brief introduction to three broad categories of mechanisms: environmental, cognitive, and relational (or what we prefer to call linking mechanisms). Then focusing on two of the most important mechanisms—*certification* and *brokerage*—we illustrate some of the ways in which the spatial context and constitution of mechanisms affect their operation.

Environmental mechanisms shape the broad context of contention including "people's capacity to engage in contentious politics" (McCarthy and Zald 1987, cited in McAdam et. al. 2001). Environmental mechanisms are experienced as external change, such as the depletion of resources or the increasing indebtedness of a national government. Such change is spatially constituted: resource depletion, for instance, entails site-specific drawdown made significant by a declining ability to buy or sell resources in distant markets; increasing national indebtedness implies an increasing transfer of value outside the national space. The spatial constitution of such environmental mechanisms is significant in that it implies a capacity for spatial manipulation. Indeed, many forms of contentious politics involve struggle over the spatial constitution of social, political, and economic relations. Spatial strategies involving the blocking or enhancing of access to resources, markets, information, or political allies may dramatically alter the context and dynamics of contention. Environmental organizations, for instance, may attempt to meaningfully regulate a resource extraction industry by shifting the scale of struggle from one that favors the industry to one that offers a more favorable constellation of political opportunities. Or countries of the global South may attempt to staunch the outward flow of value by defying the free trade agenda of global regulatory institutions and reorganizing economic space through the use of capital flight tariffs, import substitution strategies, and the creation of new regional trade alliances. None of this is to suggest that space is somehow an independent "variable" of contention that needs to be addressed as such. Rather, the mechanisms and processes of contention are innately and necessarily spatial; altering their spatial constitution alters their operation.

Cognitive mechanisms shape people's perceptions and understandings and are grounded in individual cognition. As internal and individually situated, cognitive mechanisms may seem to be the most removed from spatial considerations. Nonetheless, they too are spatially constituted. Cognition always occurs in a socio-spatial context in which symbolic frameworks, values, and ideologies guide recognition, interpretation, and understanding. Through place-specific histories of social relations, struggles, and events, landscapes become imbued with meanings that shape a variety of place-specific discourses. The site of the World Trade Center in New York City, for example, has come to symbolize a new American vulnerability, Muslims as terrorist threats, the devaluation of civil liberties, and justification for war. The meaningful construction of this landscape of tragedy is certainly contested, yet the dominant symbolism of the site is clear, at least within America. Outside America, the World Trade Center site takes on diverse meanings in diverse places. In many countries sites symbolizing terrible national loss and suffering in war move to the fore of cognitive and interpretive frameworks and contribute to a very different discourse on appropriate responses to the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. The meaningful construction of place operates alongside the time-space structuring of everyday life that determines what individuals are and are not exposed to. Indeed, altering the sorts of places people are exposed to can have a significant impact on how individuals view and understand the world, in turn affecting processes of contention.

"Relational" mechanisms are the third broad type of mechanism McAdam et al. identify. They are defined by "the linking of two or more previously unconnected social sites by a unit that moderates their relations with one another and/or with yet other sites" (26). Because all of the mechanisms identified by McAdam et al. involve various types of relationships among groups, institutions, and individuals, we prefer to think of this particular

set of mechanisms as "linking" mechanisms. Linking mechanisms establish relationships among people and groups operating in quite different perceived, conceived, and lived spaces. Creating connections among disparate social sites often requires an ability to understand, translate, and bridge different socio-spatial orders. In some cases it may simply involve linking similar groups separated by distance, such as cosmopolitan peace activists' use of the internet to build an extensive global anti-war network. In other cases linking may be a far more daunting task: the geographic differentiation of social groups, the differential accessibility of various individuals or groups to particular places, and the problems inherent in translating, communicating, and negotiating among different place-based interests and cultural orders can greatly inhibit the establishment of new avenues of interaction. The Zapatistas' framing of Chiapas peasant issues to resonate with diverse audiences around the world, combined with their direct linkages to a wide range of organizations outside Mexico, represents one of the more successful and extensive linking projects. In all cases the process of building new relationships is simultaneously social and spatial.

Within each of these three broad categories of mechanisms are several specific mechanisms. Two mechanisms that McAdam et al. address in considerable depth are certification and brokerage. Certification is an environmental mechanism referring "to the validation of actors, their performances, and their claims by external authorities … The process occurs in every polity, whether international, national, or local in scale. Every polity … [recognizes] actors that have rights to exist, to act, to make claims" (McAdam et al. 2001: 145-146). Certification processes play out in the conceived spaces of territorially defined politics. Certification processes are necessarily bound up with the discourses and symbolism of such spaces. The question of the spatial practices of a group seeking certification is a related, yet analytically distinct one. Some spatial practices may be permissible only when not publicly visible, such as physical displays of affection. Groups may be certified in terms of participation in the labor market—a specific type of spatial practice—and thereby have claim to protection from employment discrimination, but lack standing in other realms. Whether a group reinforces, complements, or challenges a polity's dominant practices through its public performances is central to the certification process; groups making certification claims must do so in the context of a polity's socio-spatial order. Many American states, for example, proscribe age, race, and/or gender discrimination, yet allow discrimination based on sexuality. Under New York law, for example, gays and lesbians were not able to claim sexual discrimination in the courts when barred from participating in New York City's St. Patrick's Day parade because they did not have certified legal standing.[8] Unable to contest their exclusion from the parade in the New York courts on the basis of their sexual identities, Irish-American gays and lesbians have contested discrimination through other means, including pre-parade street protests (Marston 2001).[9]

The geographic differentiation of legal and political opportunity may lead a given social group to actively seek full certification in some places, e.g., gays and lesbians in Vermont, and maintain a very low profile in other places, e.g., in the Bible belt. In a geographically differentiated polity such as the U.S., groups seeking but not obtaining certification in one place have the option of seeking certification in other places or at different scales. In the U.S. context, certification at the national scale would be optimal for most groups (i.e., protection under civil rights legislation), but certification in a multiplicity of states, or even municipalities, is still a viable option for some purposes. Certification in select places can serve to shift public opinion as well as put pressure on the national polity to reexamine its certification/recognition policies. It may also trigger a backlash in some places. Certification is a spatial and historical process and not necessarily a smooth one. It may occur in a geographically uneven fashion, and in fits and starts.

The dynamics of certification run in both directions, i.e., between the polity and its citizens/residents and back again. While the polity has the authority to recognize groups for

the purpose of granting rights and access to resources, the polity also requires legitimation from citizens and residents within its borders. The polity requires the consent or acquiescence of its citizens and residents in a wide range of tasks it undertakes: fixing social organization at various scales, within boundaries that facilitate materially functional *spatial practices*; propagating *conceptions of space* that define a common place-based identity, order, and authority; and ultimately, the production of a *lived space* through the symbolic colonization of territory, achieved using symbolic events, clothing, architecture, monuments, signs, and actions that represent and reinforce the dominant socio-spatial order. Struggles for certification must be viewed not only from the standpoint of groups seeking certification/recognition, but also from the standpoint of the polity's need for legitimation in a given socio-spatial context. In some cases group certification may undermine the legitimacy of a polity (e.g., policies promoting massive immigration to a country suffering high unemployment), in other cases failure to certify may undermine legitimacy (e.g., policies promoting racial or ethnic apartheid in most of the contemporary world). Crises of certification may be resolved in a variety of ways ranging from the granting of certification, to shifting scales of authority to deflect political pressures over certification issues, to, in the extreme case, the dissolution of the state and its reterritorializationm, producing new bases for certification in new states.

  Certification struggles may involve attempts to bring new parties into the conflict; this often occurs through *brokerage*. Brokerage is a specific linking mechanism, defined as the "linking of two or more currently unconnected social sites by a unit that mediates their relations with each other and/or with yet another site" (McAdam et al. 2001: 142). Brokers may represent the claims or positions of one group to another and in so doing may shape the subsequent interpretations of the conflict by the parties involved. Brokers may be mediators, but they may also communicate claims or positions that inflame tensions—intentionally or not. In the case of the conflict surrounding New York City's St. Patrick's Day parade, brokers—both legal advisors and city officials—linked gay and lesbian activist groups with other groups, such as human rights and civil rights organizations. They also facilitated cross-scale alliances, fostering connections among local gay rights groups and a variety of national political organizations. Brokers may not necessarily be aware of their role as intermediaries; they nonetheless create important linkages among social groups or claimants, creating new alliances and collective actors (McAdam et al. 2001: 142-143).

  Brokers are people or organizations who can break down a variety of everyday spatial barriers and build new connections across space. They are able to do so because of their ability to physically and communicatively link unconnected social sites and connect them in a variety of ways. Often it is brokers' *spatial practices* that allow them to foster communication among a variety of social sites, bridging place-specific cultures and ideologies. Brokers' spatial practices—and those of the individuals or groups they connect together—operate within *conceptions of space* that influence and regulate where people live or travel, how they get from place to place, and with whom they interact. Not surprisingly, one of the surest ways to halt the brokerage process is to interrupt brokers' patterns of spatial interaction. In most American cities, for example, activists must confront geographies of inequality that include racially and class-segregated housing, uneven infrastructure accessibility, and dramatically uneven employment and educational opportunity. These lived spatial characteristics serve to separate people who might otherwise find common cause. Brokers who can transcend socio-spatial barriers play an extremely important role in alliance building, for example bringing together white suburban and inner-city minority housing activists to work for metropolitan-wide affordable housing programs (see Orfield 1997).

  The focus that McAdam et al. (2001) place on recurring *mechanisms and processes* common to various forms of contention represents a significant advance over more fragmented and compartmentalized approaches to the study of contention. Their identification of recurring mechanisms and processes, however, does not imply common effects and

outcomes for given mechanisms and processes. *Sequence, combination, and context* are seen to shape the effects and outcomes of mechanisms and processes in fundamental and important ways. This reconceptualization of contentious politics represents a dramatic shift away static and empiricist notions of social science, toward one that emphasizes the *dynamic* and contingent nature of our objects of study. This important shift suggests the need for further exploration of the ways in which historical and spatial constitution and context shape a range of contentious processes. Differences in context and constitution may result in quite different dynamics, even where cases may share superficial similarities.

SPACE AND THE ANALYSIS OF CONTENTION

The authors of the articles in this special issue take space as a starting point in their analyses, examining how space, place, and scale are bound up in the dynamics of contention. While not all of the authors adopt a mechanisms framework, all share a common attention to process. In particular, they examine the spatiality of the processes shaping political contention. The articles vary significantly by scale—some are focused at a very local level, while others examine national-level or transnational contention. The authors all share awareness, however, of the interaction and intertwining of the processes building networks, relationships, and identities across places and scales.

Wendy Wolford presents a comparative analysis of how differing social and economic practices in two regions of Brazil foster very different reasons for participating in the national movement for land reform. In the south many farmers readily responded to the lack of available land and population pressures by joining the Movement of Rural Landless Workers (MST). Southern farmers' geographically extensive communities rely upon spatial mobility and land inheritance, spatial practices that resonate strongly with the MST land occupation strategy. In the northeastern region of Brazil, however, Wolford finds that the reasons for participating in land occupations derive more from severe economic crisis. Northeastern farmers typically have considerably weaker and less extensive social networks, view agriculture merely as an income-producing activity, and have a land ethic that emphasizes property ownership over productive use. While the macro explanations of the MST—based in agricultural restructuring, greater political opportunity, and the support of religious organizations—may be broadly correct, they cannot explain who participates in the MST and why. Wolford's analysis shows that place-specific conditions and differences in spatial practice are related to movement participation.

Contradictions between the national-scale conceived spaces of government planners and the place-specific lived spaces of maquila workers are apparent in Joe Bandy's and Jennifer Mendez's comparative study of maquila organizing in Mexico and Nicaragua. They demonstrate how the maquila export-processing districts inscribe and reproduce gender and class divisions that exist outside of those districts, in turn affecting the ability of workers to resist oppressive central state and corporate practices. Women in Nicaragua and Mexico find broad-scale patriarchal and class hostilities constrain their efforts to promote labor democracy and workers' rights at the plants where they work. Their efforts at organizing across national boundaries are hindered, moreover, by workers' differing experiences of gender and class. These differences are not merely a case of contrasting political structures. Rather, they represent varying class and gender relations that are spatially uneven within nations as well as across them. This article highlights intersecting relationships of scale and place, as transnational coalitions of unions and maquila workers confront specific local relations and challenge neoliberal globalization at a variety of scales.

John Guidry's paper comparing the Aura neighborhood movement with the movement for the rights of children and adolescents in Belem, Brazil, stresses the spatial grounding of contention. Drawing on the egalitarian representations of space found in the

Brazilian constitution, organizers of the poor have effectively used neighborhood-level discrepancies in spatial practices and daily life experiences to mobilize the residents of Aura and nearby communities. Guidry demonstrates how contradictions of spatial practice and representations of space are embodied in the physical landscape and can be challenged as such by citizen movements. In this analysis, the local scale of contention interacts with the broader political economy. The activists in Belém challenge a political economy that favors some spaces of the city and neglects others. The movement for the rights of children and adolescents is not nearly as place-based as the movement of the squatter neighborhoods, but is nonetheless concerned with issues of space. Identifying the home and the street as spaces where children most likely face abuse and deprivation, the movement alters the meaning of citizenship by bringing social practice in those spaces in line with rights guaranteed under the Brazilian constitution—instead of where constitutional guarantees do not fully hold. Guidry persuasively argues that aspatial constitutional rights mean little unless they are translated into spatial practice: struggles for full citizenship can are simultaneously be struggles over space.

Neal Carter's paper on ethno-territorial conflict in Belgium recognizes the significance of national-scale political opportunities and policies, but problematizes that scale by highlighting the lived experiences of ethnic and linguistic groups playing out in sub-national spaces. His contrast of the approaches Flemish and Walloon communities have taken in defining their identity, culturally and territorially, emphasizes the interactions between the spatial practices of daily life and the conceptions of space imposed by the state, such as the coding of specific spaces in favor of one linguistic group over another. The lived contradictions between the state's formal ethno-territorial boundaries and the realities of cultural and linguistic practice challenge the notion of a strict territorial delineation of ethnic identity. Carter's analysis demonstrates how a spatially sensitive approach can enhance our understanding of political opportunity and ethnic conflict.

All of the articles in this special issue take space as a central feature of the dynamics of social life and, therefore, of contention. They employ a range of theoretical frameworks, empirical case studies, and methodological approaches to illustrate how space shapes, and is shaped by, diverse social practices, political structures, and economic processes. While the authors' approaches differ, all call attention to the spatial constitution and context of social life and the ways in which social struggle is simultaneously spatial struggle. In so doing, they provide fresh insight into the dynamics of contention.

ENDNOTES

[1] We follow Tilly (2000) and McAdam et al. (2001) in referring to social movement activity, rebellions, protests, and other non-formal activism in the polity as "contention."

[2] We would like to thank both the Center for the Study in the Behavioral Sciences, and the Carnegie Mellon Foundation for the opportunity and funding to discuss and study contentious politics during the summer of 2000. Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Chuck Tilly deserve special thanks for providing draft versions of their book as a basis for common conversation among the participants in the seminar, some of whom contributed papers to this issue. This special issue of *Mobilization* was conceived and spurred to fruition as a result of the face-to-face discussions among most of the participating authors.

[3] See Miller and Martin (2000) for a detailed discussion of space, place, and scale as they relate to the dominant paradigms of social movements theory.

[4] In other words, the relationship between the social and the spatial functions as a "socio-spatial dialectic" (Massey 1984; Soja 1989).

[5] Melucci (1996: 8-9) makes a parallel argument when he suggests that social conflict is most likely to occur where people are confronted with intense flows of contradictory information.

[6] The terms "in-place" and "out-of-place" indicate that appropriate or inappropriate behavior is a function of where that behavior occurs (Cresswell 1996). For instance, we lecture in class and engage in intimate relations in private. These behaviors are socially condoned in their appropriate place, but would be considered odd or offensive in other places. That the place-based coding of behavior is rarely discussed is indicative of the degree to which the spatial

constitution of social life is taken for granted.

[7] Spatial scale is also implied in seemingly non-spatial references such as numbers of people involved in contention, say 100 people at a rally, versus 1,000 or 100,000. This difference in scale, however, is simultaneously numerical and spatial. One hundred people occupy space very differently than 1,000 or 100,000. The difference is meaningful in terms of demonstrating support for a cause and in terms of the types of reactions—such as police behavior—it may instigate. The scale of a demonstration signifies the extent of contestation in a multitude of lived spaces and the network connections among those spaces. Thus numbers of people, or of organizations supporting a cause, have significance for and impact upon contention. We owe thanks to conversations with Chuck Tilly while at CASBS during summer 2000 for this example, though we differ with him on the relevance of geography to the case.

[8] Gays and lesbians claimed discrimination in New York on the basis of their exclusion from a public thoroughfare. These claims were trumped in legal decisions, however, by counter-claims of a right to unimpeded free speech for the parade organizers (Marston 2001).

9 Attention to issues of certification helps clarify why certain groups may opt for one kind of social protest, while another group may make similar claim of discrimination via a different process, such as litigation.

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