The End of the Right to the City: A Radical-Cooperative View

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Abstract
Is the Right to the City (RTTC) still a useful framework for a transformative urban politics? Given recent scholarly criticism of its real-world applications and appropriations, in this paper, we argue that the transformative promise in the RTTC lies beyond its role as a framework for oppositional struggle, and in its normative ends. Building upon Henri Lefebvre's original writing on the subject, we develop a "radical-cooperative" conception of the RTTC. Such a view, which is grounded in the lived experiences of the current city, envisions an urban society in which inhabitants can pursue their material and social needs through self-governed cooperation across social difference. Growing and diversifying spaces and sectors of urban life that are decoupled from global capitalism are, we argue, necessary to create space for this inclusionary politics. While grassroots action is essential to this process, so is multi-scalar support from the state.

Introduction

The concept of the "right to the city" (RTTC), articulated by the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre more than fifty years ago, has come into widespread use both in academic circles and in the world of politics and policy. Strongly

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associated with urban-based calls for social justice and social change, it has become an umbrella term for many different demands (Mayer 2012, 63–64). It frames the goals of advocacy groups (such as the RTTC Alliance in the United States (Fisher et al. 2013)), the policy objectives of international organizations (UN HABITAT 2010), and even a piece of national legislation in Brazil (Fernandes 2007). Invocations of the RTTC generally share two core emphases: an insistence on the importance of the use value (as opposed to the capitalist exchange value) of urban space and resources; and the claim that the power to shape the city should belong equally to all its inhabitants (Purcell 2014; King 2020). The RTTC fuses a critique of the stark social inequalities that characterize cities under global capitalism, with a call to political mobilization framed through the language of rights. It is this synthetic character that gives the concept its broad appeal.

Yet, the empirical success of the RTTC as a mobilizing frame for a socially transformative politics has been limited. In concrete circumstances, "claims for a "right to the city" are often strikingly specific regarding their thematic focus and the groups they speak for" (Blokland et al. 2015, 656–657). In addition, some scholars suggest the urban focus of RTTC claims may itself be limiting, "once the right-to-the-city frame is adopted, claims for local democracy and rights come into view while claims articulated on a larger scale move into the background" (Uitermark, Nicholls, and Loopmans 2012, 2548). Quite often, especially in the Global North, the RTTC frame is deployed to save some small oasis of noncapitalist urbanity for the benefit of relatively privileged protagonists, without regard for the global dynamics of capital on which that relative privilege is built (Mayer 2012, 64). When the RTTC frame *has* been taken up at broader scales —most often by international development organizations—it tends to be used to promote and re-legitimate preexisting developmental aims, thereby losing its critical edge. The RTTC in practice thus appears to be caught in a vice between two problematic alternatives: deployment as a slogan for fragmented, localized movements, or co-optation into dominant policy discourses. Given these realities, some scholars have argued that the RTTC is not (or is no longer) a useful frame, and that those who are concerned with a socially transformative urban politics should look to alternatives (Merrifield 2011; Uitermark, Nicholls, and Loopmans 2012).

In this paper, we suggest that the limitations of the RTTC in practice should not lead us to declare its end as a useful framing concept for social transformation, but rather, to reconsider and clarify its *ends*—its ultimate normative purposes. We argue that there is unrealized power in the concept of the RTTC, a power located in a social vision that is grounded in Lefebvre's writings on the subject. This is a vision of a different urban society, in which inhabitants have the space to meet their needs through self-governed

cooperation across social difference. While this vision is radically different from currently dominant urban relations, we argue it is in the current city that its foundation can be found. Our approach is not an attempt at Lefebvrian exegesis, but instead a response to the call by Goonewardena (2018, 467) to "tak[e] Lefebvre beyond Lefebvre." We suggest that this view of the RTTC—as a call for a different sort of urban future—is both practical (since its potential is grounded in the realities of quotidian cooperation in today's cities) and inclusive (since it values heterogeneity and difference, and is open to all). As such, we suggest, it can serve as an integral basis for a broader urban-based politics of social transformation.

In the initial sections of this paper, we consider the normative foundations of the RTTC through a critical engagement with current applications and conceptualizations, and a re-engagement with the ideas that Lefebvre originally articulated in *Le droit à la ville* (located in Lefebvre 1996). We argue that the power of the RTTC is not realized through legal rights guaranteed by the state, nor is it grounded solely in the moral and material claims of the urban dispossessed. Rather, building upon Lefebvre's treatment of the concept, the RTTC as we conceptualize it is, first and foremost, a right to create, engage, and participate in a differently constituted urban society. This "radical-cooperative" RTTC, as we call it, emphasizes that human material and social needs can be met by realizing the potential of the urban as a ground for collective action across social difference.

Drawing on sociology and social theory, we suggest that despite the prevalence of inequality, hierarchy, and domination in contemporary cities, urban spaces—marked by the coincidence of social difference and physical closeness—can be a fertile ground for complex cooperation among inhabitants. The foundations for the positive vision of social cooperation across difference that underpins the RTTC, we argue, are found in the ubiquitous small-scale practices of cooperation that exist even in the highly unequal cities of today. While it can never *replace* state authority, self-managed cooperation has the potential to become a much stronger organizing principle in urban life than it is in today's cities. Part of the modus operandi of a transformative politics built upon the RTTC is to transform, through bottom-up practice, the current fleeting and discrete instances of collaboration into more stable and widespread patterns of self-managed cooperation, sustained by a "solidarity-in-difference," through which inhabitants recognize and value each other as co-participants in the collective project of urban life.

In the final sections of the paper, we turn to the question of what role to state might have, if any, in realizing this vision in the cities of today. We argue that pursuing a radical-cooperative RTTC involves expanding and diversifying spaces and sectors of urban life that are decoupled from global capitalism, in order for inhabitants to have the space to engage in self-

managed cooperation. While contemporary global capitalism—which privileges competitive and inequality-reinforcing social relations—is buttressed by the state, we argue that the power of the state could and should be turned toward other purposes.

By definition, self-managed cooperation cannot be brought into being by state action. However, if cooperative urban relations are going to expand beyond the margins of society—where they currently exist—and counterbalance the present dominance of social competition and exclusion in our cities, then they must be supported by the power of the state. Such state support, we argue, consists neither in legal "guarantees" of the RTTC, nor in a state-led redistribution of resources to the disadvantaged. Rather, what is required is a state whose policies and resources—at all state scales—constitute an enabling framework for grassroots practices of collective self-management, thereby allowing and encouraging a multitude of cooperative practices to flourish. Before elaborating on the radical-cooperative conception, we will critically review the two currently dominant applications of the RTTC that our conception responds to – what we call the "legalistic" and "radical-materialist" conceptions.

Rights in the City: A Legalistic Conception

Among governments, NGOs, and policy activists at all scales, the RTTC is often conceived in a *legalistic* sense. In this conception, the RTTC consists of a bundle of distinct rights to urban resources and services—shelter, public space, clean water, education—that should be available to all, irrespective of social or economic position. The bearers of such rights are individual urban inhabitants; their guarantor is the state. This legalistic conception of the RTTC reflects the emphasis placed on universal and individual rights in the global liberal institutional order. The ultimate normative aim of a legalistic RTTC is that the state legally codifies and enforces the bundle of rights that constitute the RTTC. In this way, marginalized and impoverished city residents will have guaranteed access to urban spaces, resources, and services from which they have previously been excluded. For instance, the UN-Habitat Forum's main emphasis is on encouraging states to bridge the "urban divide" by legislating the "right to the city" through initiatives such as improving the conditions of slums, and enhancing access to water, health services, housing, and educational opportunities (UN HABITAT 2010, 2–3). The right to democratic participation does sometimes feature in this conception of the RTTC, but it is primarily seen as an instrument in service of the goal of state-guaranteed rights.

While alignment with the liberal conception of rights makes the legalistic RTTC attractive in policy circles, it rests—in two senses—on incoherent

normative foundations. First, the notion of rights as universal claims sits uncomfortably with the RTTC, which focuses on urban inhabitants. Clearly, denying rights to rural inhabitants is not the aim of RTTC initiatives. To square the circle, then, we must recognize that a legalistic RTTC is ultimately concerned with (universal) rights *in* the city, rather than a conceptually distinct right *to* the city. Second, and relatedly, the legalistic conception does not articulate clear principles, nor does it have the ability to determine such principles, that can identify which particular rights should be included. This then shifts disagreement over the substantive content of the RTTC to the (unequal) arena of state-centered politics. The appeal of the RTTC as an external normative standard against which the conditions of contemporary cities can be measured falls away, leaving the RTTC as nothing more than a new rhetorical framing for preexisting political demands.

In practical terms, as many authors have pointed out, the socially transformative potential of a legalistic RTTC is limited by its reliance on the state as both object and guarantor of rights claims. Guaranteeing universal access to shelter, education, health care, and so on through the state involves a massive redistribution of resources. In a world where global capitalism structurally and politically constrains state redistribution, substantive realization of urban use value rights through the state is difficult at best. As Uitermark, Nicholls, and Loopmans (2012, 2548) note, the situation is one in which "the poor and weak articulate demands to the rich and powerful and wish to see those demands enshrined in law." Ultimately, then, the transformative potential of a legalistic RTTC is circumscribed by the political limits of state action under conditions of global capitalism. As Margit Mayer (2009, 369) puts it, it "boils down to claims for inclusion in the current system as it exists, it does not aim at transforming the existing system."

The Right of the Dispossessed: a Radical-Materialist Conception

The legalistic conception of the RTTC is a far cry from anything resembling Lefebvre's original formulation, which was rooted in the twentieth-century continental European tradition of critical social theory. For contemporary critical urban theorists, Lefebvre's writing on the RTTC remains a touchstone, the intellectual foundation for *radical* approaches to the RTTC.[1] Radical conceptualizations of the RTTC vary, but they tend to share some common core elements, grounded in readings of Lefebvre's work. First, drawing on Lefebvre's (1996, p. 158) characterization of the RTTC as a "cry and a demand," radical approaches see the RTTC primarily as a morally grounded

political claim, rather than a legal claim. As Mayer (2009, 367) puts it, "the right to the city is less a juridical right, but rather an oppositional demand." Second, the RTTC is seen as "a common rather than an individual right since [it] inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization" (Harvey 2008, 23). Finally, the ultimate goal of the RTTC is not the legal codification of rights, but a wholesale transformation of the urban condition, such that exchange value and global capitalism no longer dominate urban life, and all city inhabitants can voluntarily participate in governing and shaping a "city for people, not profit" (Brenner, Marcuse, and Mayer 2012). Radical approaches to the RTTC thus see it as a project of social transformation in which inhabitants have appropriate control over urban space and resources to manage these for themselves (Purcell 2014, 149).

A radical approach to the RTTC then involves both a moral and a political claim against capitalism and the state, and a vision of a transformed urban future, in which inhabitants self-govern the city free from the oppressive forces of capitalist exchange value. There is thus a duality to radical conceptions of the RTTC—they contain both an oppositional element, and a positive alternative. Given the moral urgency of political mobilization against the inequality-producing machinery of global capitalism, most critical urban scholars have focused on theorizing the oppositional element. In these accounts, the RTTC is usually portrayed as a claim by dispossessed urban populations to spaces and material resources that can be appropriated for non-capitalist use. The oppositional element is a necessary component of any conception of the RTTC that aims for social transformation. However, it is our contention that oppositional theorizations of the RTTC do not provide a clear account of the ultimate aims—the normative ends—of the RTTC. As such, they inadvertently yoke the RTTC to capitalist social relations, obscuring Lefebvre's emphasis on a different kind of city—whose practical potential and normative appeal can help to ground and support oppositional demands in the first place.

The dominant oppositional theorization of the RTTC is a *radical-materialist* one. It is perhaps most clearly articulated in the work of David Harvey. In his 2008 article on the RTTC, Harvey (2008, 23) begins by noting that the RTTC is "a right to change ourselves by changing the city," suggesting that the ultimate goal of the RTTC is much more than the reorganization of material resources. But Harvey follows this opening claim with a strict materialist line of argument. The RTTC, Harvey (ibid., p. 40) argues, is not everyone's to claim. It belongs to—and must be claimed by—the dispossessed, such that they may "take back the control which they have for so long been denied."[2] Harvey is likewise clear on what the dispossessed should demand. Drawing on past pioneering work on the urban as a venue for surplus

accumulation under capitalism, Harvey (ibid., p. 37) argues that the dispossessed should demand "greater democratic control over the production and utilization of the surplus. Since the urban process is a major channel of surplus use, establishing democratic management over its urban deployment constitutes the right to the city." For Harvey, then, the goal of the RTTC as a political claim and demand is democratic management over the urban production and deployment of capitalist surplus.

It is hard to disagree with the idea that realizing the RTTC requires more equitable and democratic control of both the production and deployment of urban resources. We agree with Harvey that those who are dispossessed have both moral entitlement and material reason to claim this. But taken on its own, the radical-materialist conception locks the RTTC project into an oppositional frame, for two reasons. First, if the claim behind the RTTC is for greater democratic control over the production and distribution of capitalist surplus, this appears to make the RTTC dependent on capitalism itself and the relations it incubates. A city whose inhabitants have more democratic control over the production and deployment of resources will not necessarily be free from the harsh dynamics of competition, exclusion, and exploitation—be it because such dynamics are immanent in competitive market relations (which democratic control in and of itself will not necessarily eliminate), or because they exist in areas of life outside the sphere of production. Second, if the moral and motivational foundations for claiming the RTTC lie in the experience of dispossession, what remains of these foundations if and when the dispossessed appropriate what is rightfully theirs? The radical-materialist perspective, with its focus on the RTTC as an oppositional tool, does not provide an answer to this question; the normative foundations of the new city of the future—the transformed social order that the RTTC demands—remain obscure.

The radical-materialist conception thus views the RTTC as an instrument of oppositional political struggle, a purely prefigurative political claim (Purcell 2014). Its power is, ironically, derived from the very system of unequal social relations that it challenges. We end up once again—as with the legalistic conception of RTTC—in a situation where the poor and weak are making demands of the rich and powerful. Moreover, as Harvey (2008, 37) acknowledges, the urban dispossessed face a daunting collective action problem, since "[t]he urban and peri-urban social movements of opposition … are not tightly coupled; indeed most have no connection to each other." While Harvey (ibid., pp. 39–40) expresses hope that these movements may be able to come together, in later work Harvey (2012, p. xviii) makes it clear that, even if this happens, the RTTC "can never be an end in itself"; rather, "claiming the right to the city is a way-station" on the road to overthrowing capitalism. Just as the legalistic conception uses the RTTC as

justification for the extension of the liberal order of rights, the radical-materialist conception thus appears to use the RTTC as a rhetorical device in service of a different set of normative claims. Absent a clear positive vision, the RTTC itself ultimately seems superfluous.

In our view, we can only articulate the full power of the RTTC concept if we move beyond its oppositional elements—important as these are in current conditions—and attempt to unpack its claim for a distinct urban social order, one that gives urban inhabitants space to participate in relations based on cooperation. In this sense, we differ from Harvey in that we believe that the RTTC can, and should, be conceived of as an end in itself. Of course, this insistence does not mean that our conception of the RTTC, which focuses on the positive vision, should be seen as entirely separate from the project of making oppositional demands. On the contrary, clarifying the outlines and normative foundations of this positive vision ultimately strengthens the practical promise of the RTTC as a political claim in the cities of today, just as oppositional demands and critiques also affect the nature and feasibility of any potential alternative to the contemporary city. Negative critique and positive vision are two sides of the same coin.

The Right to Urban Life: a Radical-Cooperative Conception

> "the *right to the city* is like a cry and a demand … The right to the city cannot be conceived of as a simple visiting right or as a return to traditional cities. It can only be formulated as a transformed and renewed *right to urban life*" (Lefebvre 1996, 158, emphasis in original).

How can we understand Lefebvre's conceptualization of the RTTC as a demand for, and a right to, "urban life"? In this section, we outline and defend our own view of this vision, which we call a "radical-cooperative conception" of the RTTC. While we would not go so far as to call our view distinctly "Lefebvrian," it is inspired by, and we believe well-grounded in, certain elements of Lefebvre's writing. Lefebvre's insistence that the RTTC is "like a cry and a demand" is often taken up to emphasize the oppositional element of the RTTC. But Lefebvre here is also clearly articulating a positive purpose of this cry and demand—and it is neither the codification of rights by the state, nor the reorganization of capitalist surplus, but the right to a distinct set of relations constituting urban life. This is the fundamental claim made by Lefebvre—that there is something distinctive and valuable about such urban life that gives it normative weighting.

Lefebvre (ibid., p. 117) suggests that as urban life predates capitalism, it is erroneous to simply view the urban as a reflection of larger systems that

impose themselves onto inhabitants. As Mark Purcell (2014, 150) notes, Lefebvre makes a distinction between the capitalist city, dominated by exchange value, and urban life. This distinction between capitalist city and "the urban" is best understood not in binary terms, but dialectically. Indeed, for Lefebvre (1996, 65) this urban life is a continuing creative process, an *oeuvre*. This *oeuvre* is located in, while still challenging the logic of, the capitalist city, where it is the culmination of "meetings, the confrontation of differences, reciprocal knowledge and acknowledgement … ways of living, "patterns" which coexist in the city" (ibid., p. 75). It is the notion of urban life as a collective *oeuvre* that lies at the heart of what we call the *radical-cooperative* conception of the RTTC.

For Lefebvre, the *oeuvre* of urban life is realized through the interactions that permeate the city as a social space, a space of "inhabiting", of simultaneity and encounter among inhabitants across heterogeneity and difference. While certainly not ignoring material underpinnings, the social encounters and interactions of daily urban life, Lefebvre (ibid., pp. 67–68, 129–131, 213) suggests, have a normative weight of their own in part because they allow urban inhabitants to meet human social needs beyond the material— needs for creativity, encounter, play, surprise, and connection across difference. As Purcell (2014, 149) puts it, "the urban involves inhabitants engaging each other in meaningful interactions, interactions through which they overcome their separation, come to learn about each other, and deliberate together about the meaning and future of the city." It is in providing a space for interaction and cooperation that meets human needs, both material and nonmaterial, that the use value of urban life ultimately resides. This understanding of urban life as having fundamental value explains why it then makes sense to talk of a "right" to the "city." The radical-cooperative conception of the RTTC is a moral claim for distinct urban relations based on the social needs of urban inhabitants.

In our reading of Lefebvre, this conception of the RTTC—unlike the legalist or radical-materialist conceptions—is thus built on an understanding of the urban as a distinct social space which, unlike the contemporary city, is constituted not primarily by relations of exclusion, domination, and inequality, but also by relations of encounter and cooperation. In contemporary cities, this potential side of urban life remains largely unrealized. As Lefebvre suggests, the logic of exchange value structures urban space in the service of profit, thereby undermining the production of a collective social *oeuvre* by producing a "habitat" that becomes increasingly difficult to "inhabit" (Lefebvre 2003, 109). It is precisely this shutting out of the potential urban from the reality of the capitalist city that justifies and underpins the cry and demand for the RTTC, which calls for a restructuring of the material foundations of urban social life such that the members of the urban can "inhabit" the

city and engage and participate in the *oeuvre* of urban life (Lefebvre 1996, 158).

Notwithstanding this critique of the capitalist city, Lefebvre is very much a heterodox Marxist. The RTTC is not solely the preserve of the dispossessed, since even those who are ostensibly "doing well" in the contemporary city do not necessarily have access to this cooperative side of urban life; there is what Lefebvre (ibid., p. 159) calls a certain "untragic misery" of the wealthy suburban inhabitant. One can see the influence of the early Marx here, insofar as the critique of capitalism goes beyond the conditions of deprivation and want, but also invokes the particular mode of social life—exclusion and zero-sum competition—required by it, and its occlusion of a more cooperative and communal alternative (Marx 2000; Lefebvre 2014, 330; King 2020). The RTTC, then, belongs also to—"those superficially integrated into the system and sharing in its material benefits, but constrained in their opportunities for creative activity, oppressed in their social relationships, guilty perhaps for an undeserved prosperity, unfulfilled in their lives' hopes" (Marcuse 2009, 190). Building on Lefebvre, then, our conception of the RTTC emphasizes that the right to inhabit a city that makes space for cooperative social relations belongs not just to some, but equally to all inhabitants.

In addition, Lefebvre is highly suspicious of the state and "[w]hat emerges in Lefebvre's work," Purcell (2014, 145) writes, "is a Marxism that rejects the state, that maintains itself as an open and evolving project, and that comes to understand itself as more than anything a democratic project, as a struggle by people to shake off the control of capital and the state to manage their affairs for themselves." For Lefebvre, the route to realizing the RTTC lies not (or at least not primarily) in making demands of the state. Rather, urban inhabitants are called on to actively appropriate urban space for their own use. Lefebvre (1996, 143) views such appropriation as a means of increasing the capacity of inhabitants for *autogestion*—collective self-management. The RTTC can only be realized as the capacity for *autogestion* grows through practice—culminating, for Lefebvre, in a withering away of the state as urban inhabitants realize the potentiality of the urban as a site for self-managed social life.

Scholars often interpret Lefebvre's emphasis on *autogestion* as a call for a radical democratization of urban life (e.g., Mitchell 2003; Harvey 2008; Purcell 2013a, 2014). And indeed, Lefebvre does sometimes characterize *autogestion* as a practice of radical democracy (cf. Brenner 2008, 239–241). However, while the concept of *autogestion* has clear affinities with theories of radical democratic practice, we argue that characterizing Lefebvre's vision as solely a "democratic" one is unduly procedural and misses the emphasis on the RTTC as a distinct alternative vision of urban social

relations. We characterize this vision as "cooperative" not because it holds no place for, or replaces, disagreement or confrontation of difference (both of which are, in fact, central in Lefebvre's work), but because it emphasizes the potential of inhabitants to transform aspects of urban life into a collectively self-managed project that meets their needs through cooperation across difference. This is a substantive vision that, we argue, gives the RTTC as a concept its distinct value, and justifies it being an end in itself as part of a socially transformative politics. This vision behind the RTTC aligns with Loren King's claim that Lefebvre invokes the RTTC as more than simply a political struggle, but as a certain moral entitlement to a new form of urban relations that responds to our needs as social beings (2020, 77). As we noted in discussing the radical-materialist conception of the RTTC, simply calling for "democratic control" leaves many questions unanswered. It is the normative vision behind the RTTC that guides the form of such democratization, and the ends that it could realize. As Kanishka Goonewardena and Stefan Kipfer (2005, 676) put it, it is "only in a disalienated city produced by citizens in their everyday life can we as creative human beings hope to find our true identity amidst real difference."

With this cooperative vision of the RTTC before us, the obvious question is: How much real-world potential does it hold? If it is hopelessly utopian, reflecting an idealized state of affairs that has no empirical grounding, then it is of little use to actual political struggles with transformative aims. Clearly, Lefebvre's urban life of cooperation beyond state and capitalism is an inversion of currently dominant conditions. But as David Pinder (2015, 36–37) points out, Lefebvre (1996, 151) was self-consciously describing an "experimental utopianism" that continually resurfaces in various ways in the actual dynamics of urban life, but never stabilizes. This is precisely the kind of utopianism that Harvey (2000, 196) insists we need: one that "is rooted in our present possibilities at the same time as it points toward different trajectories." Like Lefebvre's account, our conception of a radical-cooperative RTTC is based less in a rigid binary between the capitalist city and the cooperative urban, but in locating the potentiality of the cooperative urban *in* the contemporary city, and in how the urban mobilizes difference and heterogeneity as a source of social transformation. Lefebvre (1996, 129) claims the seeds of the radical-cooperative urban society exist today in "[t]he form of the urban, its supreme reason, namely simultaneity and encounter, [which] cannot disappear." Politically speaking, its real-world roots can give the RTTC the power to motivate oppositional struggle through the expression of a positive alternative vision of the urban. But we should not simply take Lefebvre's word—we need to actually *look and see*. We do this in the next section by further considering the real-world potential of a cooperative urban, and its implications for *autogestion*.

The Urban and the Possibility of *Autogestion*

Lefebvre (ibid., p. 103) describes the urban as a level of "social reality" that is situated in between the "near order" of microlevel individual and group relations, and the "far order" of macro-level institutions such as the state (see also Goonewardena 2018, 468). The city, Lefebvre (ibid., p. 101) writes, "mediates" between the near order social relations that it contains, and the far order institutions within which it exists—it constitutes, in other words, an intermediate level of social organization. What, exactly, is distinctive about the urban for Lefebvre? Clearly, it is not the inequality, exploitation, and strife that mark the capitalist city. Rather, Lefebvre's characterization in *Le droit à la ville* focuses on simultaneity, difference, heterogeneity, and encounter in daily social relations. In contrast to a conception of "the urban" as constituted by a dynamic planetary web of processes and flows (emphasized in some current urban theory (e.g., Merrifield 2013; Brenner 2018)), the focus here is on the urban as a physical space for quotidian social interaction. This physical urban space is indeed constituted by flows of capital, ideas, and people that pulse through it; but spaces and flows exist in a dialectical relationship, one never erasing the other since they are mutually constitutive. What Lefebvre (1991) elsewhere calls "concrete space" is an essential foundation for a radical-cooperative RTTC, one that—in our view—remains vital as ever to any socially transformative politics.

In some ways, Lefebvre's socio-spatial conception of the urban has affinities to that developed by classical sociologists. In both cases, the combination of physical proximity and heterogeneity is seen as shaping distinctly urban patterns of social life. According to classical sociologists, physical proximity deepens functional interdependence among inhabitants (Durkheim 1960). Urban dwellers rely in multiple ways on the actions, skills, and labors of each other to carry out their daily lives and pursue their life projects. At the same time, heterogeneity means that social ties tend to be specialized and segmented. "Urbanites," Louis Wirth (1938, 12) argues, "meet one another in highly segmental roles. They are, to be sure, dependent upon more people for the satisfactions of their life-needs than are rural people […] but they are less dependent upon particular persons, and their dependence upon others is confined to a highly fractionalized aspect of the other's round of activity." According to Wirth (ibid., p. 1), this produces a predominant pattern of "distant social relations" in cities, and the "coincidence of close physical contact and distant social relations" defines "urbanism as a way of life."

Subsequent empirical work has significantly amended this one-sided portrait of the social character of urban life. Far from being uniformly marked by "distant" relations, urban life in different parts of the world also features widely varying conjunctures of "strong" social ties (those that bind a group

together with deeply shared norms and purposes), and "weak" ties (those that connect people in more ephemeral and limited ways) (Nicholls 2008; Robinson 2016). The complexity and dynamism of urban social ties, the tendency for inhabitants to be embedded in a varied and shifting patchwork of (strong and weak) networks, appear to also be an enduring feature of urban social life. The question then is: What do these tendencies in urban social life mean for the prospects of self-managed cooperative action along the lines of what we have suggested the RTTC demands?

Many social theorists—including both classical sociologists and communitarian political theorists—are pessimistic in this regard. Stable patterns of self-managed cooperation, the argument goes, require an overarching sense of group identity based on shared norms (e.g., Bellah et al. 1996; Etzioni 1996; for critical discussion see Harvey 2000, 238–241; Blokland 2017). The social complexity and dynamism characteristic of cities means that such ties cannot exist at the intermediate level of the urban, and in their absence, urban societies will tend toward chronic social instability and material inequality as social groups compete for positional advantage. Such dynamics can only be checked by macro-institutions such as the state, which can impose order by instituting binding rules that organize collective action. In this view, then, the urban is a socio-spatial form that is inimical to the development of *autogestion*, and that instead requires intense regulation by the far order of the state.

This view is not entirely wrong. Indeed, there are strong reasons to believe that some degree of far order political authority is necessary for urbanized societies. First, cities have never been, nor will they ever be, a self-contained form of socio-spatial organization. On the contrary, they are given life by the continual flow of people, resources, and ideas in and out of them; they always and necessarily exist in relation to each other, and to nonurban spaces. It is difficult to imagine how these broader constitutive relationships might be managed absent some political authority that operates beyond the scale of the local. Internally, cities require large-scale collective goods—transportation systems, water infrastructures, public health systems—whose provision has, historically, always relied on some degree of binding political authority. Finally, it certainly seems unlikely that relations of exclusion and competition could ever be entirely removed from urban life. To claim, then, that urban society could be solely constituted by relations of *autogestion* which replace far orders entirely would be to engage in a utopianism that is built on a fundamental mischaracterization of the urban as a form of social organization. It is this sort of utopian theorizing we aim to avoid by locating the potentiality of the urban in the contemporary city.

But the idea that urban social life is *completely* inimical to self-governing collective action is also unconvincing. On the contrary, we see evidence that

the urban milieu has a strong potential to support spaces of self-governing collective action. While critical urban scholars often focus on self-conscious experiments in *autogestion*—such as squatters' movements, DIY urbanism, and guerrilla gardening (Brenner, Marcuse, and Mayer 2012, 1–2; Purcell 2014), a wide range of social cooperation is, in fact, a ubiquitous feature of daily urban life.

Cities—even today's highly unequal capitalist cities—reproduce social cooperation from the ground up. Building on Jane Jacobs (1961), Richard Sennett (1990), and others, Warren Magnusson (2011) argues that city dwellers continuously engage in a myriad of "self-governing" activities through which they negotiate the terms of their existence with each other, and collectively pursue a wide variety of use value aims. These range from seemingly mundane cooperation such as forming lines and riding the bus, to more elaborate instances of collective action such as community gardens, recreational associations, and housing coops (Wilson 2011; Eizenberg 2012). Ash Amin (2008) notes how city spaces that are busy, lightly or not at all regulated, and open to all (such as libraries and parks), are often marked by a certain "ethos of studied trust" by the inhabitants toward each other. This is not to deny that public space can be (and often is) a site of exclusion, as the literature on the privatization of public space has made clear (Weaver 2019), but merely to claim that present glimpses can be found which express the potential of such spaces being constituted by very different relations. Being somewhat ubiquitous to urban life, it is easy to forget that such quotidian experiences are a social achievement of sorts, in light of the potential for opportunism, self-interest, and division to develop in response to the inequalities in the contemporary city. Social theorists emphasize the way unmediated physical interactions, encounters, and relations can serve as transitions into new possibilities of experience and realities (Massumi 2015), and how the city can function as a space of complex direct interaction, where heterogenous elements are brought together through encounter, engendering the possibility and the practice of self-governing cooperation (Amin 2008; Sennett 2017).

But how might the urban facilitate cooperation across difference and heterogeneity, which we emphasized as central to our vision of the RTTC? After all, cooperation is about the pursuit of shared ends—be they fleeting, such as maintaining order in a line-up, or more extensive and enduring, such as managing a cooperative enterprise. The key here, again, lies in the character of urban social ties. While classical sociologists emphasized how partial and limited social ties can produce centrifugal tendencies in urban society, the opposite effect is also possible. In his work on the "strength of weak ties", Mark S. Granovetter (1973, 1367–1373) argues that when people engage with multiple different groups for differing purposes, the aggregate capacity for autonomous social organization grows. Partial, limited cooperation can lower the stakes in

any one instance (Amin 2002), while cooperation with different groups for different purposes situates individuals within a broad and diverse network of cooperative relations. In this manner, cooperation across difference is an emergent property, one that in turn enables the development of more complex and extensive forms of *autogestion*, while allowing individuals to meet shared noninstrumental needs, such as the need for social connection.

An urban society fully constituted by *autogestion* is a utopian dream. But there is convincing evidence to suggest that a significant space for *autogestion*, where urban inhabitants can engage in cooperative relations across difference, could be realizable. Indeed, recent sociobiological work notes that humans have a highly developed capacity for fission–fusion behavior—that is, for identifying with different social groups for different purposes (Aureli et al. 2008), and social psychologists draw attention to the fact that as individuals, we simultaneously identify with multiple groups of others in different aspects of our lives (Brewer and Pierce 2005). Both of these features of human social organization point to the potentiality of complex group ties on which the notion of *autogestion* relies. The distinct socio-spatial character of the urban can activate and nurture these capacities for complex group identification and flexible cooperation. Indeed, in our view, the enduring fertility of the urban as a venue for social, cultural, and political innovation cannot fully be understood without reference to these capacities.

There is thus reason to believe that urban social organization need not be dominated by competitive social dynamics, exclusionary tendencies, and endemic social conflict. The prevalence of these phenomena in today's cities is as much a product of material and power inequalities produced by the operation of capitalism, supported in multiple ways by the legal authority and resources of the state, as it is the result of any inherent tendencies of urban social organization. Competition and cooperation, exclusion and inclusion, segregation and encounter—all are constitutive elements of urban social life. But as they are currently constituted, the very far orders of state and market that mainstream social theory deems essential to the stabilization of urban societies often marginalize the space for self-managed cooperation. Nonetheless, in a myriad of small ways, cooperation across difference is ubiquitous in contemporary cities, providing a foundation for a transformative politics aimed at radically expanding the space for cooperative social relations.

How, then, might this transformative politics be built? While we do not pretend to offer a full answer to this question, in the rest of this paper we sketch out two complementary lines of response. In the next section, we argue that complex cooperation is grounded in and supported by an inclusive form of social solidarity that we call "solidarity-in-difference". As we suggest in the final sections of the paper; however, the self-sustaining growth of cooperative relations can only occur in spaces and sectors of urban social life that

are decoupled from global capital, and this can only be achieved through a multi-scalar redeployment of the power of the state.

Solidarity-in-Difference

Lefebvre said that *autogestion* grows in the doing, an argument that is echoed by Purcell. "In *autogestion*," Purcell (2013*b*, 41) writes, "we do not smash the state and then begin managing our own affairs. Rather we manage our own affairs, we work hard at it, and we get to the point where it is evident that we can truly govern ourselves." Building on this argument, we suggest that self-managed cooperation across difference is likewise developed experientially, and that solidarity is central to this process. In a broad sense, we take solidarity to refer to a behaviorally expressed sense of group identification, built upon relationships and practices that link members of groups together (Hunt and Benford 2004, 439). Our concern here however is with the particular form of solidarity that might be associated with a radical-cooperative RTTC, and how by encouraging cooperative behavior beyond what is in the immediate instrumental self-interest of individuals, solidarity can serve as a "glue" that strengthens cooperative ties.

The solidarity that is most often invoked in relation to the RTTC is a solidarity of (and with) the dispossessed, who are bound together through their common experience of dispossession. The experience of dispossession is a powerful motivator and moral justification for claims to redistribution (Marcuse 2009). But from the radical-cooperative perspective, redistribution—while an essential prerequisite to realizing the RTTC in a world riven by material inequality—is ultimately a means to a different end: the meeting of needs through cooperation across social difference. Seen in this light, the solidarity of the dispossessed is an instrumental solidarity of oppositional struggle. Growing and stabilizing a radical-cooperative RTTC, by contrast, involves another kind of solidarity—what we will call *solidarity-in-difference*.

At the first glance solidarity and difference might (like cooperation and difference) appear to be in tension, insofar as solidarity relies on shared sympathies or a common cause, which tend toward ideas of commonality and unity. Yet, at the same time solidarity seems to presuppose and require difference, insofar as acts of "solidarity" within completely homogenous social groups seem superfluous. Indeed, the historical origin of the term solidarity is based on the claim that it is often our very differences that allow us to cooperate fully with each other (Heyd 2007, 118–122). Sennett (1998, 143) argues that it is a mistake to look for unity as the source of social bonds and solidarity, but that solidarity instead results from people engaging their differences over time. Indeed, as feminist scholars (among others) point out, given that

human identities are complex and multifaceted, a focus on solidarity as defined by a singular identity or set of common interests marginalizes legitimate and valuable in-group differences (Weinbaum 1978; Phillips 1994, 237–239). Our account of solidarity-in-difference then has affinities to Iris Marion Young's (2000, 221–228) concept of "differentiated solidarity," whereby among inhabitants there is a sense of commitment and justice that does not presuppose some single identity or community but is instead consistent with diversity and difference. The irreducibility of certain social differences in the urban, and their role in a transformative urban politics, is well expressed by Lefebvre (1996, 143–144):

> "We have here therefore before us, projected separately on the ground, groups, ethnic groups, ages and sexes, activities, tasks and functions, knowledge. Here is all that is necessary to create a world, an urban society, or the developed urban."

For the radical-cooperative conception of the RTTC, with its emphasis on the urban as a place where needs can be met through encounter across difference, the importance of difference goes all the way down; there cannot be a proper urban solidarity without it. The RTTC movement can only live up to its emancipatory potential – instead of reinscribing new forms of domination through a homogenizing politics of unity—if it is grounded in a commitment to the value of diversity and multiplicity, since it is only by accepting the irreducibility of certain social differences that the potential of self-managed urban life could ever be realized. In turn, solidarity-in-difference, which involves a positive behavioral predisposition toward socially different others, can serve as a social "glue" that supports the growth of self-managed social cooperation.

Where does solidarity-in-difference come from? It emerges from the patchwork of commonalities that exist—the partial, limited, and diverse interactions that define the urban condition. Urban inhabitants find themselves involved in a multitude of encounters and interactions with an array of different persons and groups. To the extent that such interactions are characterized by interdependence, rather than domination, they can collectively foster a larger sense of solidarity-in-difference, one that neither subsumes the individual or individual groups, nor represents solely a unified community (Scholz 2015, 725). Empirical evidence from a variety of works lends support to this idea. Sociological research, for instance, has found that interaction with socially different others can lead to a stronger recognition of the needs of others and encourage the development of social bonds and cooperation (Walks 2008; Galanakis 2013; Valentine and Sadgrove 2014), while studies of social identity suggest that the less individuals have a single dominant social identity, the more tolerant and open they are toward those who

they see as socially different (Brewer and Pierce 2005). Furthermore research on "urban citizenship"—where citizenship is understood more as a social practice than as a legal status—similarly finds that difference and heterogeneity need not undermine inhabitants' identification with others, but can actively support collective action and calls for justice at the scale of the urban (Staeheli 2008; Hochschild 2016, 209–210; DeFilippis 2020).

The solidarity-in-difference at the heart of a radical-cooperative RTTC is thus practice-based. It is not built upon a single idea of "the urban" that somehow exists outside of quotidian experiences but is, instead, grounded in the lived experiences of encounter and cooperation across difference. These lead urban inhabitants to recognize and value their mutual interdependence, to be open and inclusive of others in their daily interactions and social outlooks, and to seek out further connection and common ground. Solidarity-in-difference, then, emerges *from* urban space, but it is not *of* any particular space or city. Rather, emerging from the urban milieu, it reflects and supports an open and dynamic practice of social organization that gradually expands the space for self-governing social relations in complex, heterogeneous contemporary societies.

It is important to note that the solidarity-in-difference we outline here does not valorize and celebrate *all* differences, regardless of their social origin or function. As Lefebvre (2014, 787) recognizes, insofar as social differences are entwined with structures of inequality, and are used to reinforce forms of domination, they are inimical to self-governed cooperation. Gross inequalities in wealth, intersecting with systems of hierarchy such as racism and sexism, undermine the promise of cooperation across difference by allowing some to dominate or live without regard for others, while dispossessing others of those elements necessary for the pursuit of their well-being. Indeed, as we will discuss below, as a real-world project of social transformation, the radical-cooperative RTTC must necessarily involve action by both urban inhabitants and the state to foster conditions in which opportunities for domination and disregard are minimized.

Toward the RTTC: Spaces and Sectors

We began this paper by noting that the RTTC appears caught between two problematic alternatives: Existence as a slogan for a series of marginal prefigurative projects, and incorporation within the language and practices of dominant far orders. We have argued that an emphasis on a distinctly positive vision behind the RTTC can perhaps help chart a course beyond this dilemma. Building our argument on some of Lefebvre's comments on the urban as *autogestion*, we put forward a vision of a transformed urban order, in which urban inhabitants have space to participate in and shape self-

managed cooperation, in and across the irreducible differences and heterogeneity that constitute the urban as a form of social organization. The power of this radical-cooperative conception, in our view, stems from its dialectical articulation of a distinct positive vision of the urban that is both a fundamental challenge to the contemporary city and a call for its reordering, while also being deeply rooted in everyday practices and "inhabitations" found in the cities of today, which express the potentialities lying latent in the urban.

Yet the question remains of how to move the RTTC, as a real-world project of social transformation, out of the margins. In one important sense at least our view on this aligns with the radical-materialist view, in that advancing the RTTC must involve expanding those elements of urban life that stand apart from global capitalism. This is, of course, exactly what many self-consciously radical initiatives—such as squatters' movements and guerrilla gardening—aim to do (Foster and Iaione 2016). But these are, almost by definition, marginal: They are organized by the ideologically committed, and they appropriate the detritus of urban capitalism—the abandoned buildings, vacant lots, and other material discarded by the forces of creative destruction. The analysis presented earlier, however, suggests that the already-existing foundations for a radical-cooperative RTTC are broader than we may recognize.

Following Peter Marcuse (2009, 195), we can conceive of these foundations in terms of spaces and sectors. If we accept that the potential for cooperation across difference is in part grounded in the coincidence of spatial proximity and social diversity, then the organization of urban space is of obvious importance. Open-access spaces—streets, sidewalks, public transit, public parks—are the venues for chance encounter and casual interaction that make difference and heterogeneity visible to urban inhabitants, that necessitate interaction across difference, and that reveal new possibilities for mutual relations, laying a foundation for a space within the urban to be constituted by more complex and structured forms of cooperation. Defending and expanding open-access spaces in the face of exclusionary and privatizing efforts are thus one element of pursuing a radical-cooperative RTTC. Yet, Marcuse cautions against a fetishization of space since a transformative politics is ultimately about social relations, which the organization of space mediates, but does not determine. Thus, Marcuse continues (ibid.):

> "It might be better to see the seeds of the future as sectors. It is clearly possible to have sectors of everyday life that are free of capitalist forms … sectors of the economy and of daily life that are not operated on the profit system, that are within it but not of it, that are not motivated by profit but rely on solidarity, humanity, the flexing of muscles and the development of creative impulses,

for their own sake. … [S]uch areas of activity, already exist, are well known, are sought after"

Together, open-access spaces and noncapitalist sectors anchor cooperation across difference. Expanding these spaces and sectors, making them more plentiful and varied, is thus at the heart of realizing a radical-cooperative RTTC. While full consideration of the nature of such spaces and sectors is beyond our present scope, two points on material foundations are in order. First, they must include productive noncapitalist sectors, since insofar as productive activities such as agriculture and manufacturing remain dominated by global capital systems, urban life continues to depend on capitalism for its material base. Fostering noncapitalist, non-state forms of production—ranging from community gardens to worker-owned and producer cooperatives—is thus critical for advancing the RTTC. Second, since the RTTC as a project of urban cooperation is grounded in direct interdependence among inhabitants, advancing it requires a progressive re-localization of economic relations (Imbroscio 2010, 2013).

None of these processes can be sudden nor total. Paths toward them will inevitably differ from place to place, since existing economic structures, social bases, and political opportunities differ widely across local and national contexts. However, the argument that we have articulated in this paper suggests that there are two fundamental pillars upon which the transformative project of a radical-cooperative RTTC must be built across different contexts: Grassroots practices of cooperation across social difference; and multi-scalar support from the state. We have discussed the practice-based character of autonomous cooperation and solidarity-in-difference earlier, so in the final section of this paper, we turn our attention to the role of the state.

The State and the RTTC: A Multi-Scalar Transformation

In a world dominated by global capitalism, pursuing a RTTC that reclaims a central place for cooperation in urban life means engaging the power of the state. The state is not only the most powerful social instrument for regulating capitalism; it is, as Polanyi (2001) long ago argued, what makes capitalism possible in the first place. For Polanyi, the modern nation-state and market capitalism were two facets of a single form of social organization—the market society. In our current historical juncture, when both the contemporary state and capitalism face mounting crises of legitimacy in the face of socially unsustainable levels of inequality and a global environmental crisis, it is time to imagine how we might turn the state toward other purposes.

Just as the state provides the legal and regulatory foundation for global capitalism, so can it provide a foundation for localized spaces and sectors of autonomous cooperation. For accounts of the RTTC that see *autogestion* as the dominant and singular principle of urban organization, the state and radical-cooperative urbanity are incommensurable. But for reasons articulated earlier, we believe that an urban society in which *autogestion* becomes the dominant organizing principle and the state withers away is unachievable, and that this aspiration is built on a mischaracterization of the urban as a form of social organization. As such, we see localized *autogestion* and the state as mutually constitutive, much like the state and the 'free' market are in Polanyi's account of the market society. The argument we have developed in this paper suggests that, supported by a redeployment of state power, practices of self-governed cooperation across difference could come to play a much greater role in urban life than they do today, thereby catalyzing a broader social transformation in which cooperative principles and practices gradually come to counterbalance those that underpin the market society.

If realizing a radical-cooperative RTTC necessitates a redeployment of state power, what kind of redeployment is required? Currently, dominant framings of the RTTC tend to call on the state to guarantee certain use value rights by redistributing resources toward the disadvantaged, and/or by directly managing certain sectors of urban life (such as housing or infrastructure). While such action may be useful and necessary in specific circumstances, our argument draws attention to the possibility of a different kind of redeployment of state authority, one in which the power and resources controlled by the state are used to create spaces within the urban that enable the development of cooperative self-governing capacities.

This redeployment of state authority can involve many different kinds of interventions: planning and policy support for open-access urban space; stabilization of property tenure for informal settlements; legal and financial support for community land trusts and for the cooperative provision of neighborhood services; a shift from financial support for home ownership to support for cooperative housing; support for grassroots anti-racism initiatives; a legal framework and regulatory support for worker-owned productive enterprises; differential taxation of products based on means and/or ownership structure of production; a shift from rentier finance to cooperative banks emphasizing local money recirculation; and so on. No single intervention can produce transformative social change on its own (DeFilippis et al. 2019), but a multitude of intersecting interventions, together, can enable and nurture transformative social change by creating conditions under which increasing numbers of inhabitants are drawn into complex cooperative relations with each other.

Some of the interventions we have just listed are highlighted in the Anglo-American literature on "community wealth building", which advocates for a localization of economic relations anchored in local cooperative ownership of sectors of the economy (Alperowitz and Dubb 2015; Guinan and O'Neill 2019). This literature tends to emphasize the policy levers at the local government scale, ranging from local land-use policies that support nonmarket development initiatives to local government investment in cooperative financial institutions and worker-owned enterprises (Alperowitz 2005; Imbroscio 2013). Correspondingly, this literature also tends to emphasize the virtues of political localization—a decentralization of political authority to local governments that can empower them to respond to grassroots demands for economic localization (Imbroscio 2013; see also Schragger 2016). However, while we agree with "new municipalists" such as Russell (2019) that municipalities can be an important strategic front for a transformative politics, we do not see a decentralization of political authority to local governments—at least in and of itself—as a viable means of securing state support for a transformative urban politics.

The contemporary state is multi-scalar, with different state scales performing distinct functions and responding to different political and economic pressures. As Purcell (2006) argues, we should not assume that the local state is more open to demands for radical social change than state institutions at other scales. Among the thousands of local governments in cities worldwide, there are certainly some that are at the leading edge of supporting a socially transformative politics (Russell 2019); yet there are many more—both in the Global North and the Global South—that actively contribute to processes of dispossession and marginalization (Samara, He, and Chen 2013). As long as local governments in cities operate in a context where broader state policies privilege global capitalism, they will face structural pressure to do the same, and political decentralization is more likely to advance neoliberal than socially transformative ends (Harmes 2006).

Expanding the space for social cooperation in our cities thus requires a *multi-scalar* redeployment of state power. Many important policy competencies—ranging from labor and housing policy to tax policy and property rights regimes—are exercised at broader state scales than the local. Moreover, in a context where capitalism operates globally, supported by state action at multiple spatial scales, only the multi-scalar exercise of state power can effectively expand and stabilize local spaces of social cooperation. The foundation of a radical-cooperative RTTC lies in local spaces of urban interaction, but its realization involves both a commitment to local cooperative practice, *and* multi-scalar political mobilization aimed at reorienting the uses of state authority.

The strategy and tactics of such a political mobilization are beyond the scope of the present paper. Clearly, these will be context-dependent, since the social structure of urban societies, the relationship between localized economies and global capital, and the permeability of the state to transformative political demands, all vary greatly across different national and local contexts (Robinson 2016). Unless the specificities of particular contexts are taken into account—which a single paper simply cannot do—it is impossible, and likely counterproductive, to outline particular strategies. There is no doubt that all journeys along this path will be challenging. Yet we believe that the foundation of ideas established in this paper can help to ground and sustain such a political mobilization.

A radical-cooperative RTTC does not belong to the dispossessed alone; rather, it is the collective right of *all* inhabitants, together, to actualize the full potential of the urban as a social space. Pursuing the RTTC, then, is not a matter of the poor and weak articulating demands to the rich and powerful; it is a matter of all those who seek a more fulfilling mode of urban life working together to bring it into existence. While realizing a radical-cooperative RTTC necessitates multi-scalar state support, it does not require an expanded redistributive state; rather, it requires a redeployed state, one that can enable the presently existing seeds of social cooperation to grow and develop into more widespread patterns of social relations through which urban inhabitants can meet their material and social needs in ways distinct from those that are presently available.

There is both theoretical and political power in a radical-cooperative conception of the RTTC. It is grounded in the space of the urban but is not *of* any one city or place. It is a vision that is open to all. It is a vision of transformed social relations which is built on the potentialities for complex social identification and cooperation across difference, potentialities that have deep empirical roots in the lived experiences of the contemporary city. We believe, then, that Lefebvre (1996, 151) was right to call the RTTC a form of "experimental utopianism," as it grounds a radical and far-reaching critique of contemporary urban relations in those very relations themselves. We find the outlines of the vision of a future right here before us in the present.

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Notes

1. It is worth noting that much scholarship uses but does not explicitly theorize the RTTC. Empirical case studies, for example, often use the concept to frame analysis of grassroots urban activism—even in cases where activists themselves do not use it (Uitermark, Nicholls, and Loopmans 2012, 2548).
2. Similarly, Mayer (2009, 367) argues that the RTTC "is a right to redistribution … not for all humans, but for those deprived of it and in need of it."

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