



Protest and the scale politics of telecommunications

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ABSTRACT. Telecommunications do not simply rearrange information and ideas in space, they also alter the balance of power in social struggles. Although it supports centralization of power and capital, subordinated groups can achieve certain goals by exploiting the existing telecommunication infrastructure. This tactic is geographical in that it refuses to accept the territorial boundaries fundamental to established systems of domination. Protest is therefore a politics of scale. Examination of these scale politics in China, the Philippines and the USA indicates that distant bystanders may or may not be of assistance to protesters, and that the media affect but do not determine the course of events. The protest in China does not yet appear to have succeeded; that in the Philippines did not solve long-term problems; while the US protest brought political but not economic power to a racial minority. Regardless of their success, these protests show new terrains of struggle not yet acknowledged by geography. Copyright © 1996 Elsevier Science Ltd.

In the spring of 1989, Chinese students seized a territory in the symbolic heart of China, raised banners in English, Chinese and Cyrillic praising the President of the Soviet Union, and courted foreign and domestic media to cover the story. In the mid-1980s, Filipinos used the American song 'Tie a Yellow Ribbon' as a theme song for the political campaign against the US-backed regime of Ferdinand Marcos. In 1955, the Reverend Martin Luther King gained crucial information about strategies of local protest by placing a long-distance telephone call from Montgomery, Alabama to a colleague in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

These three examples show some of the many ways telecommunications can be used to share information and ideas across space and alter the balance of power in social struggles. They indicate a refusal by subordinated groups to accept the boundaries of communication taken for granted by, and fundamental to, established systems of domination, be they economic, political or racial. They challenge territorially bounded authority systems (Sack, 1986) with an alternative authority of text and image. Although bodily trapped, protesters escape the social confines of territorial space.

Moments such as these demonstrate contestation over what Smith (1993: 97) calls 'the production of scale' (see also Herod, 1991; Smith, 1992) and illustrate what Jonas (1994) refers to as the 'scale politics of spatiality'. They confirm Staeheli's observation that:

To the extent that oppositional movements can move across scales—that is, to the extent that they can take advantage of the resources at one scale to

overcome constraints encountered at different scales in the way that more powerful actors can do—they may have greater potential for pressing their claims. (Staeheli, 1994: 388)

A complementary line of research traces how the globalization of communication systems involves a solidification and centralization of capitalist power in certain core states and world cities (Nicol, 1985; Moss, 1987; Castells, 1989; Langdale, 1989; Hepworth, 1990). I would point out that this process paradoxically provides new opportunities for decentralized politics. Another complementary line of research examines practices of resistance from a local point of view, studying political struggles over the meaning and function of places, and emphasizing the political autonomy of local communities within larger political and economic systems (Castells, 1983; Gaston and Kennedy, 1987; Kirby, 1988, 1989, 1993; Lake, 1994). It is not to deny such observations of local resistance that I undertake the current study, but rather to situate local politics in larger contexts, which constitute political resources for those who want to change social conditions. The question at hand is not whether resistance is local or trans-local, but how resistance movements can incorporate both local and trans-local tactics.

In short, I examine situations in which subordinated groups reach beyond the boundaries of place through communication media to substantiate their political claims, create openings for new ideas of scale and new scales of connection, and thereby challenge the social hierarchies embedded in pre-existing territorial contexts.

Scale politics of communication

When examining the role of communication in scale politics, it is essential to clarify what we mean by scale and to distinguish between the content and the context of communication. As a concept, 'scale' is so general that discussions of it may deepen the divide between political theory and the struggles of daily life unless some distinctions are made. First, scale as a tool for analysis must be held distinct from scale as an attribute of material reality (Jonas, 1994). Boundaries, such as those of census tracts, zip code areas, cities and states, while providing convenient units of analysis, should not be conflated with particular social processes; processes that appear to 'belong' to a particular scale are actually sustained horizontally by relations between same-scale units and vertically by relations with smaller and larger units. Second, a balanced analysis of scale issues (see, for example, Anderson, 1983; Agnew, 1995; Mitchell, 1995) considers discourses about scale—groups' appeals to ideas of locality, state and region—as separate from but related to systemic indications of scale—communication networks, institutions, material flows, economic flows and migrations. In addition, researchers must be aware that preconceptions about scale lie concealed in language, including the language of geography (Brownhill and Halford, 1990). Turning now to content and context: content refers to the subject matter of communication. It is never simply present in a text (such as a magazine article, television program, newspaper article or book) or discourse (set of texts), rather it is created through encoding and decoding practices embedded in cultural value systems (Hall, 1973; Fiske and Hartley, 1978). Contexts are systems built of hardware, social institutions, individual actors and places. Contexts organize the flow of content of all sorts, including financial transactions and music, political opinions and pornography, religious beliefs and scientific theories.¹

While content never remains exactly the same as it passes between any two persons or any two contexts, it does remain sufficiently stable that geographers can describe the

diffusion of ideas and information. If we could watch the diffusion process in detail, however, we would see not simply the spread of ideas and information through space, but the passage of ideas and information from geographic spaces, to institutions, to media, to spaces, to media, endlessly shifting contexts. The idea of communication as context-shifting content—studied more directly in semiotics, cultural anthropology, symbolic interactionism and structuration theory—is fundamental to the arguments in this paper.

To study the *scale politics* of communication, therefore, we must consider first the ways people construct ideas or ideologies (content) about scale and, second, the ways people construct politically significant communication links (contexts) over great and small distances. The first dimension is defined by discourses on 'our community', 'outsiders', the 'exotic' and so on, as well as ideas about region and nation, neighborhood and homeland, North and South, East and West (Said, 1979; Barnes and Duncan, 1992; Smith, 1993). While communication is often portrayed as conflict, 'a struggle of adversaries who strive to usurp each other's meaning, who dodge and squirm to escape each other's dictations, who are simultaneously recalcitrant and imperious, who would define but will not be defined' (Smith, 1993: 90), it can also be likened to love and sexuality (Olsson, 1993). More prosaically, it is 'something that is shared' (Gould, 1991: 3).

The second dimension concerns scales of political interaction as evident through transportation and communication patterns; these have both a geography (a mappable arrangement of connected locations) and a geometry (a functional arrangement embodying hierarchies and directionalities of connection). The spatial expression of politics occurs through, and is inextricable from, this spatial array of communication opportunities (Thrift, 1985; Pred, 1990). For example, the upper class benefits not simply from greater material assets, but also from greater informational assets produced by greater mobility and special access privileges, while the working class is handicapped by informationally 'sequestered life-spaces' (Thrift, 1985: 388).

When considering communication contexts it is important to avoid technological determinism. As Philip Bereano (1990: 279) points out, the pen can be used 'to sign someone's death warrant or to write the Declaration of Independence'. Annis (1992) affirms this point by showing that the diffusion of new communication infrastructure into Central America is creating new opportunities for environmental defenders and for those who want to exploit the environment. However, we must not assume that *media* are politically neutral. When we speak of 'media' we are generally speaking of content *and* context (we say 'television is violent', referring to content, and 'television is bad for your eyes', referring to context), and content–context complexes manifest distinct tendencies with regard to social processes.

When comparing the political biases of media, we can compare the difficulty or 'arbitrariness' of the codes used, the degree of immediacy or time lag in communication, whether they allow interaction or merely one-way communication, and who controls the production of content. The sum of such characteristics shapes whether a particular medium will 'help improve the fairness and quality of the process which allocates resources to competing social actors' (Annis, 1992: 594) or assist in the concentration of power. For example, writing and printing allow certain persons—the literate—to maintain flows of information and command which give them an advantage in struggles against non-literate and less literate persons, and consequently to centralize power (McLuhan, 1962; Eisenstein, 1979).

Some of the most obvious political characteristics of media arise from 'gatekeepers', persons and institutions that sustain the medium and whose implicit or explicit role is to

exclude certain facts, ideas, values and beliefs (Westley and MacLean, 1957; Blumler, 1970). Gatekeepers' content-filtering power has less to do with the scale of a medium (considered geographically) than it does with the peculiarities of a medium. For example, television and computer networks are both international in scale, but television has been a major site for gatekeeping activities while computer networks have thus far been resistant to gatekeeping, supporting a free-for-all, permissive, 'frontier'-type society (Rheingold, 1993).

As Gregory has pointed out (1978: 76–77), critical social science should problematize three aspects of science: the relationship between theory and observation, the self-sufficiency of frames of reference and the cognitive interest of scientists. Many authors simplify communication by conflating location with context and interpreting content according to predetermined criteria—failing to problematize frames of reference sufficiently. Thus, structuralists pre-judge content based on the mode of production and see context as fixed capital (for example, Harvey, 1989); technological optimists pre-judge content based on the most remote geometrical possibilities of the newest contexts (for example, Toffler, 1970, 1980); and postmodernists either pre-judge content as a pastiche, overlooking coherencies, or conflate context with the particularistic materiality of place (such as Soja, 1989; Barnes and Duncan, 1992; O'Tuathail and Luke, 1994). All of this falls short of a rigorous critical approach. In short, just as Massey (1994: 151) calls for us to 'think through what might be an adequately progressive sense of place', I see a need to think through what might be an adequately progressive view of flows.

Modernization and contexts

One requirement of this project is the re-evaluation of modernity. The rise of mechanical printing in the 16th century, the development of the telegraph in the 19th century and the diffusion of radio and television in the 20th century (speaking, of course, not of technologies but of contexts) have strengthened certain territorial processes. Geographers are well aware that the instruments of mass communication have been put to use legitimating state imperialist expansion. At the same time, the diffusion of mass communication technologies has set in motion cultural and political processes that are irrevocably undermining the power and meaning of territoriality, not simply segmenting or fragmenting the world (Tuan, 1982), but making the nature of boundaries more varied and differentially permeable.

Telecommunications stretch out now one, now another set of social relations through space. Giddens (1984) draws attention to this 'distanciation' in connection with the modernization of political and economic systems. Manning (1983: 6) indicates that this process has a cultural side: 'Social entities arise, and often develop an amazing, if ephemeral, solidarity because [people] share interests deriving from television programs, movies, sports, entertainment and so on'. In late modernity, distanciation is so pervasive that the terrain of political contestation is now situated between a 'space of places' and a 'space of flows' (Castells, 1989). Thus, Luke asserts that:

... hyperrealities of informationalization have surpassed the power dynamics of in-stated laws (juris-dictions) tied to exclusive and exhaustive control of *places* by generating new structuralizing games and alternative encoding dictions, nested in rapid and intense *flows* of ideas (ideo-diction), symbols (semio-diction), people (demo-diction), images (video-diction), and money (pluto-diction) on a global scale, which are disjunctive and fragmenting, anarchical and disordered. (Luke, 1994: 620)

Appadurai (1990) refers similarly to a process of 'deterritorialization' in which the combined effects of mobility and media create new communication contexts—'mediascapes', 'technoscapes', 'finanscapes', 'ideoscapes', and 'ethnoscapes'—supporting various types of interaction. Each person enters these various contexts at a different 'place', and consequently sees the lie of the virtual land (media, technology, finance, ideology, ethnicity) from his or her particular (subject-) position situated in space and society. So, even as telecommunications media promote stateism, territoriality and nationalism in their content, the ultimate message they may convey *as contexts* transcends partitionings of the political, spatial and social world, to trans-stateness, transterritoriality and transnationality (Taylor, 1995).

Scale politics of protest

The theories of E. E. Schattschneider and Michael Lipsky illustrate how comparatively weak political actors can situate themselves strategically in these contexts. Schattschneider's seminal observation (1960: 4) is that 'bystanders are a part of the calculus of all conflicts'. It can be applied as easily to relations in media as in places. A bystander can be defined as anyone who witnesses a conflict. Witnesses are, in fact, involved in a conflict, insofar as protesters know that witnesses' opinions may directly or indirectly guide an intervention to help one side or the other. Consequently, most political conflicts are, in part, conflicts over whether news of the conflict itself should be bounded in space, as powerful interests generally desire, or publicized and spread out through space, as the weaker side often desires. Schattschneider calls this struggle the 'scope factor' of politics.

The first observation we can make about this scope, or scale, factor is that new media create new potentials for publicizing conflicts, and hence new opportunities for weak political actors. Second, we may note that new media, by expanding the speed and range of communication, raise the stakes of the scope factor. As the pool of 'bystanders' becomes ever larger, more diverse, and more dispersed, political leaders find themselves having to make some accommodation to an increasing number of opinions. This situation is far from McLuhan's 'global village' (McLuhan and Fiore, 1967: 66–67) but nevertheless reduces the practicality of using brute force to resolve internal or external conflicts.

Schattschneider's argument is refined by one of the most quoted scholars of protest, Michael Lipsky. Lipsky (1968, 1970) argues that four social groups are involved in a protest: protest constituents, communications professionals, 'protest targets' and 'reference publics'. The protest constituents are those who are marching, sitting-in, striking, or otherwise disrupting the status quo. The protest targets are those relatively powerful persons who make decisions or set policies that the protest constituents seek to change. The reference publics are those persons (usually more powerful than the protest constituents but less powerful than the protest targets) whose opinions matter to the protest targets. Protesters do not act directly on the targets, but instead court the support of reference publics or, more precisely, the perception on the part of targets that reference publics support the protest.

It is intuitively unconvincing to suggest that fifteen people sitting uninvited in the Mayor's office have the power to move City Hall. A better formulation would suggest that the people sitting-in may be able to appeal to a wider public to which the city administration is sensitive. (Lipsky, 1970: 2)

Geographically, then, protest effectiveness depends on a wavelike succession of effects: protest constituents occupy a territory; media personnel, attracted to a potentially

profitable story, converge on this place and package images of the occupation for distant audiences; these audiences formulate their impressions in distant places and in ideoscapes, ethnoscapas and mediascapas (imposing ideologies, racial stereotypes and routinized spectator behaviors); then, if the protest is successful, protest targets respond to a shift in public opinion by releasing explanatory texts (speeches and pronouncements) and perhaps adopting new policies. This official response reconfigures the contexts of struggle, making every subsequent protest somewhat different.

Ideally, the wave of effects is amplified as it reaches out from the place of protest, then converges inwards on targets, but it may also be attenuated. We can see some attenuating forces in Herman and Chomsky's 'propaganda model', which explains that any news printed in the mainstream media 'must pass through successive filters, leaving only the cleansed residue fit to print' (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 2). In the USA, these filters are: the concentration of control over the media among a few corporations, the profit orientation of these corporations, the dependence of news production organizations on information supplied by government and industry, the use of retaliatory policies or 'flak' by these official sources, and the quasi-religious rhetoric of anticommunism (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 2; see also Smith, 1980; Hallin, 1986a,b; Manoff and Schudson, 1986; Parenti, 1986; Mosco and Wasco, 1988; Luke, 1989; Bagdikian, 1990). The result of this filtering is stated concisely by Hallin (1986a: 134): 'most places are not covered on their own terms—from the point of view (or points of view), for example, of their own residents'. Instead, stories are 'framed' according to routine, ethnocentric interpretations (Gitlin, 1972, 1980, 1987).

Some researchers would argue that these frames dominate communication to such a degree that news about distant events means nothing to people. People's geographical ignorance is so profound that mass media do more to reinforce bonds of locality than to promote the diffusion of ideas between localities (Kirby, 1988, 1989, 1993). Against this view we can raise the objection that modern media, whatever the distortions in their content, build a sense of involvement in distant lives, a feeling of 'being there', a perception that transcends specific content. The prevalence of color photography, film and video, media that convey meaning 'iconically' (Peirce, 1955; Hopkins, 1994: 52), virtually ensures recognition of certain foreign places by a majority of the world population. The mechanism conveying meaning is simple visual recognition as opposed to the arbitrary codes of written language. Although most Americans 'have no idea where Ethiopia or South Africa is' (Kirby, 1988: 247), and while their understanding is distorted by various filters and frames imposed by producers and audiences, they still come to recognize distant places and situations. Recognition is, as the formidable Black novelist Ralph Ellison suggests, the basis of moral inclusion and intellectual engagement: 'Responsibility rests upon recognition, and recognition is a form of agreement' (Ellison, 1947: 11).

That is not to say that people will see an effective way to help distant others, still less that the geographical texts in mass media meet the standards of scholarly monographs, but we fail to problematize scientific geography fully if we dismiss media-supported world views as either politically irrelevant or wholly regressive. Gregory's call to problematize the self-sufficiency of frames of reference goes unheeded and we fail to acknowledge what protesters already recognize, that 'activism today is no longer a case of putting bodies on the line; increasingly, it requires and involves bodies-with-cameras' (Penley and Ross, 1991: xv).

To illustrate scale politics I present three examples. These situations are much more deeply rooted in space and time than I can describe here; their tendrils of cause and effect

are traced elsewhere (such as Adams, 1993). One would have to explore a vast range of different media, including radio, television, newspapers, magazines and posters, to begin to trace the connections between protesters and distant audiences. Audiences in several countries would have to be studied in the process of making meaning to understand the nature of their participation in distant political struggles fully. I can offer here only a suggestion of what such a study might reveal.

The Tiananmen Square occupation

The Tiananmen Square occupation that occurred in the spring of 1989 was a prime example of how 'dissident political movements, by appropriating monumental spaces, appropriate the power "condensed" in those spaces' (Hershkovitz, 1993: 398). Employing theories from de Certeau (1984), Lefebvre (1991) and Ross (1988), Linda Hershkovitz has shown that the complex historical layering of spatial symbolism in this area over 600 years elucidated the meanings that were called into play in 1989. This approach clarifies some of the political processes involved, but overlooks the facts that the most recent occupation of the Square was a deliberate attempt to transcend the Square, to use this place to open China up to the gaze of distant bystanders. For the protesters, at least, this place was not simply a context in and of itself, historically embedded, it was a node of access to non-place realms (Webber, 1964), mediascapes (Appadurai, 1990) and the spaces of video-diction (Luke, 1994; see also Calhoun 1989). It was both here and there.

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping had arranged an historical summit for May 1989. After 30 years of strained relations between China and the Soviet Union, this meeting indicated a major *rapprochement*. An international contingent of reporters arranged with the authorities to establish temporary satellite links from Beijing to relay breaking news from the unprecedented meeting to distant news centers. Chinese college students interpreted this situation not simply as a spectacle of and by their ageing leaders, but also as an opportunity to hail distant bystanders with their own spectacle. One student, referring to the summit, observed in late April that everyone in his circle of acquaintances 'knows that if the students can hang on for only two and a half more weeks, they will have a world stage like never before' (Firestein, 1990: 45). Others echoing this plan ranged from protest leader Wu'er Kaixi to the less politically astute students at Beijing's Agricultural University (Elliot, 1989: 32; Firestein, 1990: 79).

Thus, when the Soviet leader arrived, students were occupying the ceremonial center of their nation (Samuels and Samuels, 1989; Hershkovitz, 1993), bearing posters and banners with bold slogans such as:

WHY HAS HEAVEN GIVEN THE SOVIET UNION A GORBACHEV, WHILE IT
HAS GIVEN US A DENG XIAOPING?
THE SOVIET UNION HAS GORBACHEV, BUT WHO DOES CHINA HAVE?
PIONEER OF GLASNOST
AN EMISSARY OF DEMOCRACY
HELLO, MR. DEMOCRACY
THE TRUE REFORMER
(Schell, 1989: 6; Kwan, 1990: 120; Liu *et al.*, 1989: 31)

Praise of the Soviet leader was directed less at the man than at the Chinese government, to cause the latter to 'lose face' in front of foreign audiences (Firestein, 1990: 89; Mark, 1991: 268–269). The government was the target, and the reference publics were citizens and leaders in other nations of the world. The signs in English and Cyrillic were obviously

aimed at reference publics in the USA and USSR, but English also functioned as a lingua franca. Wire-photos of English signs were printed by newspapers in countries where English is a second language (such as Costa Rica's *La Nación*, 19 May and 6 June 1989).

One could justifiably conclude that the Tiananmen Square protest failed. Neither the occupation nor the massacre that ended it on 4 June precipitated any increase in the Chinese government's receptivity to popular opinion. But this interpretation is incomplete. Changes in political attitudes and concepts of government of the Chinese people will not be widely apparent for many years. In political history, repeated failures may add up to a success; rebellious sentiments are not forgotten when rebellion is quelled but simmer below the threshold of public life. 'Hidden transcripts' of rebellion persist as symbolic resistance in public places (such as feigned ignorance, slow work, minor infractions of propriety and inappropriate attitudes), or retreat to private and semi-private spaces where they can be fully rehearsed (Scott, 1990). When a resistant movement goes 'underground', like the Chinese rebellion after 1989, it often grows broader roots and creates the potential for radical change at a future time.

Setting aside the question of the Tiananmen protest's ultimate effectiveness, protesters did use mass media to expand the context of the conflict to include hundreds of millions of distant bystanders. This expansion received support from news editors acting in their own economic interest, but media and protesters collaborated in each other's projects in a way that would not have occurred to previous generations of Chinese, particularly the octogenarians constituting China's leadership. The scale politics of this uprising were, arguably, a response to the media's growing role in Chinese culture. In the short span between 1978 and 1987, the number of television sets in China had increased by 38 times, from 3 million to 116 million (*Newsweek*, 1989), while the growth of audience numbers was several times higher, since sets are shared by extended families. Less spectacular gains in other media compounded the effects of this diffusion: a ten-year doubling rate for domestic mail, an eight-year doubling time for urban telephones, and a similar growth rate for long-distance calls handled by Chinese telephone services (*Newsweek*, 1989). The emergent mediascapes introduced the Chinese people to a new view of the world, images of the protest tactics employed in the Philippines, South Korea and Central America, and a sense that 'with TV, we can understand the feelings of human beings everywhere' (Lull, 1991: 171–172). In the late 1980s, a typical week of Chinese television might include programming from Japan, Germany, Taiwan, Czechoslovakia, Brazil and Japan, as well as travel documentaries on several other foreign areas. The self-images of persons constituted in these technologically extended contexts contrasted radically with those of older persons constituted in village and nation, orality and pictographs, like hundreds of preceding generations. The protest transformed these new Chinese contexts into content.

Thus Tiananmen Square became the scene for the enactment of a new social order, an 'imagined culture' of modernity, democracy and global interconnection (Lull, 1991: 48). Whereas previous movements, such as the May Fourth Movement, were primarily nationalistic in character, protesters in 1989 borrowed symbolic gestures and clothing used in other countries by grassroots movements. They sang American folk songs from the 1960s as they camped out under makeshift tents. They wore headbands, flashed two-fingered peace signs and experimented with casual intimacy. According to one of the participants, some students called it the 3-Rs Movement, standing for 'rock'n roll and romance' (Kwan, 1990: 159). This acting out of envied foreign behaviors constituted a recognition of the other, a shift toward cosmopolitanism.² Across the Pacific, a wide range

of media, from newspapers to news magazines to television, followed the protest, and large numbers of Americans for the first time came to 'recognize and identify with individual Chinese, such as the student leaders Wang Dan, Chai Ling, and Wu'er Kaixi' (Mark, 1991: 281). For Americans, the experience formed emotional bonds that help account for the long public memory of the 4 June massacre.

For the Chinese, a shift toward cosmopolitanism is indicated by the fact that a justified fear of the media, based on the 'hundred flowers' campaign against free speech and other state persecutions (Shapiro and Heng, 1986), eventually gave way to adoration of the media. According to one reporter, 'in the beginning, the first week, it was very rough. People would threaten to smash the camera. They wanted the movement to be covered, but they didn't want to be personally identified' (Reiss, 1989: 28). But after Gorbachev's arrival and the swelling of protest ranks to over 1 million, 'bringing a camera anywhere, whether to Tiananmen Square or to a back alley, would attract a small throng of boisterous demonstrators, all of whom, it seemed, had something to say' (Reiss, 1989: 28). At this point the students acquired greater self-consciousness about their media image, what Steven Mark (1991: 269) calls 'media savvy'. They began to stage formal press conferences and other media events. A newspaper reporter was asked by a Chinese student: 'What kind of coverage is ABC giving us?' (Mark, 1991: 270). John Reiss (1989: 28), a producer for ABC news stationed in Beijing, relates that 'each day during Gorbachev's visit we walked the half mile from the Beijing Hotel to the square to sustained applause'.

Foreign interest can be estimated from foreign newspaper coverage of the protests, in particular, the frequency with which newspapers placed the protests in a prominent position. In modern societies, newspapers are primary agencies of 'agenda-setting' (McCombs and Shaw, 1972, 1976): gatekeeping of what is considered important, relevant or meaningful by the reading public. Most powerful is the front page, where news editors place the stories they judge most capable of creating the desire to buy a newspaper. Unless one sees readers as passive 'dupes' (a view long discredited in media theory), one can assume that the profit motive keeps the front page in line with popular interest. Agendas are set, but only within the bounds of popular interest.

In simple terms, front pages placed Tiananmen in the world's news agenda, but in a regionally differentiated way. The *New York Times* carried front-page articles about the protest in 45 of the 75 issues printed between 17 April and 30 June, constituting 60 percent of the total issues printed in this 2½-month period. *Le Monde*, of France, carried front-page articles about the protests in 31 of the 65 issues printed in the same period, 47 percent of the total time. In contrast, *La Nación*, of Costa Rica,⁵ allowed room for Chinese protests on the front page of only 12 of the 75 issues printed between 17 April and the end of June, but all of this attention was gathered in two short intervals: the 8-day span from 17 to 24 May, and the 5-day span from 4 to 8 June. This concentration would have probably produced some public discussion about the protests, before a return to Latin American concerns. Obviously the 'global audience' is not a monolithic entity but a spatially varied terrain of mediated perception, a mediascape.

We still know nothing about the degree to which the news coverage supported communication between protesters and audiences, as opposed to simply embellishing the preconceptions of audiences with a few foreign pictures and names. This is a question of content. Given the filtering (Herman and Chomsky, 1988), framing (Gitlin, 1972, 1980, 1987) and gatekeeping (Westley and MacLean, 1957; Blumler, 1970) functions of the media, it is possible that the content was predominantly a local creation of the media on the *idea* of protest in China, a local response to locally determined interests. In this case,

the distant bystanders we have called reference publics would be, as it were, staring into a mirror.

I conducted a content analysis (Krippendorff 1980; Rosengren 1981) on a representative segment of the American media, the more than 70 000 words contained in articles about the protest and its consequences, in the three main US news magazines—*Time*, *Newsweek* and *US News and World Report*. Following Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model, we would predict that 'reflective' content, that is, content framed as if the audience were staring into a mirror, would lean heavily on prefabricated themes that support the 'ideology and religion of anticommunism' (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 31). Such themes include the following ideas: Marxism/socialism/communism (used interchangeably) are inherently flawed and doomed to failure; any disruption in a communist state is a sign of people's preference for a 'western'-style political and economic system; conflicts within foreign states are always, fundamentally, conflicts between democracy and communism; economic liberalization inexorably leads to democracy.

News magazines were chosen for analysis because these media foreground their own frames, interpreting the week's events for people who prefer not to read and assimilate all of the facts in newspaper reports (Baughman, 1987). Their interpretative function allows a more sensitive critique. Time constraints made it necessary to limit the study to US magazines, although ideally magazines from several countries should be considered.

The analysis showed that the idea of the uprising as *essentially a movement for democracy*⁴ was not a significant theme in either *Newsweek* or *US News and World Report*, appearing in less than 1 percent of the total coverage. In *Time*, it was only somewhat important, appearing in 5–10 percent of the text. In *Newsweek* and *US News and World Report* the demonstrations were interpreted primarily, and accurately, as *a protest against government corruption and for free speech*. In both *Time* and *US News and World Report*, 1–5 percent of the total text, a small but significant amount, was devoted to arguing that the Tiananmen occupation was *not a movement for democracy in the western sense*. Compared to the amount of text on the idea that *communism cannot sustain itself* or that *economic liberalization necessarily leads to political liberalization*, more space was devoted to each of the following topics: *historical comparisons* with China's past, *geographical parallels* to events in other countries, indications of *a power struggle among China's highest leaders*, *distribution of protests throughout China*, descriptions of *the transformations protests worked on particular places* and *negative portrayals of the Chinese government*. While these frames could certainly have bolstered American pride, they did not exclude the particularities of the actual situation and did not render the coverage primarily reflective.

Among the dominant frames I identified, those most likely to indicate preconceptions were: (a) the construction of *geographical parallels* and comparisons, and (b) the idea that the *protests were a reflection of geopolitical shifts*. These frames obviously supported a US-centered world-view, yet again there were surprises. Geographical parallels were drawn between the Chinese movement and uprisings in countries with US-backed governments, such as the Philippines (*Newsweek*, *US News and World Report*), Iran (*Newsweek*, *US News and World Report*), South Korea (*Newsweek*), Panama (*US News and World Report*), the Israeli-occupied territories (*Newsweek*), and Bolivia (*US News and World Report*), as well as with, more predictably, the Soviet republics and Soviet satellites such as Poland.

Such comparisons problematized the notion of democracy and compounded ambiguity in the text. A 29 May article in *Time* asked: 'What exactly did the students want? Did they

even know?' and went on to call democracy 'an ambiguous word' (Benjamin, 1989: 44). The normally conservative *US News and World Report* failed to filter out one writer's insights:

Often in the not-so-distant past, Washington praised popular rule in one breath and backed dictators in the next—especially those promising trouble-free, anti-Communist stability in strategically important regions. The Shah of Iran and Anastasio Somoza of Nicaragua come to mind, as does former Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, who enjoyed staunch backing from the Reagan White House until he and his cronies became more of a liability than an asset. (Roberts, 1989: 38)

The radical press could not have put it more starkly. For a brief moment, protest in China had created a context for the problematization of Cold War political frames, for seeing and learning, rather than stereotyping distant human beings. That fact is interesting in itself. In the present study, it rules out a purely 'reflective' role for the American mass media.

Despite the distant bystanders invited into their political arena by the protesters, the Chinese gerontocracy used violent force in reclaiming the Square. On the night of 3–4 June, the 27th unit of the People's Liberation Army entered the Square in tanks, levelling protesters' tents and their monument, the 'Goddess of Democracy'. All remains of the protests were piled and burned, and the last contingent of protesters was driven from the Square with gunfire. Estimates of the number killed ranged from none to thousands, depending on the source.

After the military defeat there came a final bout of scale politics. When the Chinese government set up special telephone 'snitch' numbers, lines were jammed with calls reporting as war criminals non-existent persons and top party officials (Sullivan, 1990: 127; Lord, 1990: 234; Lull, 1991: 205). Images and stories of the protest were clipped by Chinese students studying in Europe and the USA and faxed back to China (Dorn, 1989; Lull, 1991: 205) to circumvent a news ban. Overseas Chinese also set up a computer network based at Stanford University—China-Net—to provide rapid, comparatively inexpensive communication among overseas Chinese and to facilitate diffusion of the protesters' side of the story (Cai, 1989; Dorn, 1989). In all cases, communication was used as a tool to overcome the state's efforts to re-in-state its people's boundaries. Despite these efforts, in the years since 1989, a rigidly centralized absolutism has been replaced by a disorganized, free-market absolutism, a situation that answers none of the protesters' demands. In this case, distant audiences were reached, but the Chinese government did not place a value on their opinions so they failed to function as reference publics.

The role of religion

As we turn now from the China to other protests, we confront a new ingredient in scale politics—religion. Barring interpretations of mass psychosis and hysteria, we can explain this ingredient first, and perhaps foremost, with the fact that religious beliefs are shared by *communities*, and community bonds are quite useful for resisting oppression. We must strain to understand that a belief system does not simply define beliefs, it also defines a group, persons who share a perceived common destiny. Such ties help a group to mark time and preserve its anger and identity while waiting for the right moment to rebel (Scott, 1990).

In addition, protest marks a break with the past and demands an unusually intense sense of the future. Protesters risk life, health and social standing for goals they can often

hardly imagine. They must believe more intensely in an imagined world than in the one they see around them. Philosophies that support the denial of what is, for an imagined world, are called eschatologies. Religious philosophies are often eschatological, elaborating on such themes as the annihilation and endurance of the individual soul, of a prophet, or of the world itself. Many of the root ideas of Christianity are eschatological (Crossan, 1989). It is not surprising, then, that we see a prominent role for Christianity in the following two protests.

The People Power Movement

The Philippine uprising that led to the ousting of the US-backed dictator, Ferdinand Marcos, in 1986, shows how a Christian sense of community can support politically radical conceptions of scale. Chronologies of the 'People Power Movement' or EDSA (so called after Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, a freeway where the main crowds gathered) generally begin in 1983, with the death of Benigno ('Ninoy') Aquino. Exiled to the USA when Marcos imposed martial law in 1973, Aquino, the principal challenger to Marcos, did not abandon his hopes of ruling the Philippines. Instead, he waited, and, when Marcos appeared to be in failing health, caught a flight to Manila. Shortly after Aquino's plane touched down, a group of men boarded the plane, escorted Aquino onto the portable stairs leading from the plane to the runway, and executed him. The photographers he had brought with him as a scale manoeuvre to provide some protection against assassination were able only to videotape the image of Aquino being led from the plane and the sound of the gun that killed him.

His widow, Corazon ('Cory') Aquino, promoted Ninoy's martyrdom by publicly displaying his body, with blood on the shirt and a bullet hole in the face, on a prolonged tour of his home province (another scale manoeuvre). The culmination of this tour was a massive procession involving hundreds of thousands of Manilans. Participants at this procession and later opposition gatherings sang the American popular song 'Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Old Oak Tree' (Simons, 1987: 44). Adoption of this song by the movement, which had adorned itself and its fallen hero with yellow, inscribed a fragment of global mass culture on a local political hero, then helped elevate his wife to the presidency.

The other main song that symbolized the political resistance was 'Ang Bayan Ko', written by a local poet in the mid-1920s, during US colonization of the Philippines, expressing a longing for national sovereignty. This song, and its central image of a caged bird, carry immense significance in Philippine politics; through periods of alternating foreign control (most often under the USA), the song has become strongly politicized (Cullinane, 1992). Thus, one of the songs that animated the movement was borrowed from the USA, the other was, in large part, a complaint against the USA.

Protest strategies reflected a similar ambivalence. Protesters declaimed the 'US-Marcos dictatorship' but also paid close attention to the opinions of the US press. By the mid-1980s, significant sources of US news, beginning with the *San Jose Mercury News* and followed by the *Village Voice*, the *New York Times* and the news magazines *Time* and *Newsweek*, printed articles on the corruption of the Marcoses. Even when these articles said things that every Filipino knew, they were reprinted in Philippine newspapers and the information was given greater weight for having made the circuit to the USA and back (Maramba, 1987: 163). Arillo (1986: 161) observes that 'foreign opinion would land with full impact on the minds of the populace, especially when it began descending from the US Congress, the Japanese Diet and, later, from the halls of the Australian Parliament. If

the world cared, why shouldn't Filipinos?' In this case, the expansion of scale originated in the media and subsequently inspired a popular movement.

Marcos's claims that Aquino was killed by communists were not believed at home or abroad. Under international pressure, an independent committee was appointed to investigate Aquino's murder. The committee concluded that the killing had been orchestrated from the top of the Philippines' military command, and leaked its findings to the American press before announcing them in the Philippines, so any attempts at retaliation against board members would undermine Marcos's foreign support (Simons, 1987: 146–151). The fact that the board members were not, in fact, harmed may have suggested to the Philippine people the power of scale politics.

Following the release of these findings, Marcos went on the defensive, trying to demonstrate his political mandate by holding 'snap' presidential elections which would give the opposition little time to organize but would mollify American critics. Marcos's announcement came late in 1985, while he was on the American television program 'This Week With David Brinkley', an unwise selection of venue, to say the least. While the weak in the Philippines might benefit from scale politics, the country's dictator found them working to his disadvantage. Filipinos suspected collusion between Marcos and the Reagan administration, felt slighted, and understood that the election was mainly for foreign eyes. Their response showed that regardless of who expanded the scale of communication, such expansion worked consistently against Marcos.

Cory Aquino's subsequent presidential campaign is an interesting story (see Simons, 1987), but it was Cory's loss of the election—Marcos used bribes, threats and faulty counting to validate his claim to victory (Rush, 1986a)—that set the stage for religiously inspired scale politics. The Archbishop of the Philippines likened the practices of the Marcos regime to those of 'Dr Goebbels in Nazi Germany' (Rush, 1986b: 62) and the Philippine bishops (powerful figures in this overwhelmingly Catholic country) formally prohibited Marcos from receiving communion. Excommunication, extremely rare in modern times, no doubt impressed many Filipinos, particularly when solidified from afar by the message of Pope John Paul II: 'I am with you' (Rush, 1986c; Simons, 1987 : 253). This coup in scale was announced at Cory's 16 February 'Victory Mass', so candidate and Church, Catholic community and politically mobilized community, were fused. The group at this point included some of the wealthier Manilans whose quiet resentment of Marcos's economic plunder had finally overcome class boundaries.

Meanwhile, a long-standing semi-autonomous organization in the several branches of the military chose this time to carry out its plans to seize control of the country (Nemenzo, 1986). Discovered at the 11th hour by Marcos, the organizers fled to the outskirts of Manila and barricaded themselves with their militia in two military camps adjacent to EDSA. Momentarily safe, but outnumbered by loyalist forces, the military leaders formed a hasty coalition by telephone with Aquino and the Archbishop: the devout and the radical in support of the treasonous.

The Church broadcast a call on its station 'Radio Veritas' to the people of Manila and hundreds of thousands of people poured onto the streets, most gathering on the highway leading to the rebel strongholds. A stretch of some 3 miles was occupied, and crowds ambitiously called 'human barricades' faced down tanks. Crowds also gathered around radio and television broadcasting facilities and assisted rebel troops and media-minded clergy in seizing these facilities.

Church involvement shaped the movement, since many of Manila's poor refused to join street crowds until a large contingent of priests and nuns was present (Pinches, 1991: 172). When the first television station was taken, the Catholic staff of Radio Veritas

relocated to these facilities in a formal procession, one car flying the Vatican flag, another bearing an image of the Virgin of Fatima, followed by a triumphant procession of supporters (Joaquin, 1986: 62). Likewise, when the ex-Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile crossed over EDSA to join the other rebel leader, ex-Lieutenant General Fidel Ramos, he and his forces 'moved out of Camp Aguinaldo as if in procession, accompanied by nuns chanting the rosary and freedom fighters carrying ikons of Our Lady' (Joaquin, 1986: 39). Nuns and clergy rubbed shoulders with students, soldiers and political activists. People of all ages wore yellow ribbons and rosary beads. Rebel soldiers carried Christian icons and tied yellow ribbons around the barrels of their guns. Aside from the local, religious meanings of religious imagery, which helped quell fears and temporarily forge alliances between disparate groups, such imagery also proved useful in the endeavor to neutralize the framing devices of the Cold War in the US media, specifically to cancel out 'communist uprising' frames.

The insurrection lasted only four days, succeeding when the Reagan administration refused to extend military support to Marcos. Many Americans, attending to the Philippine events but lacking knowledge of their historic and geopolitical context, surveyed the scene with little more than passing curiosity. For a few weeks, a normally forgotten country in the South Pacific was a subject of diffuse interest, then other locations loomed into view on the rapidly changing news scene of the late 1980s. The power of the US audience came not from its commitment, or interest, or knowledge, but as if by default: the Reagan administration, sensing the impossibility of justifying the slaughter of thousands of unarmed Filipinos, including children and nuns, by a client state, cut its support to the Marcos regime and flew the family to Hawaii *before* the real news story could occur. In other words, the threat of scale politics, more than its actuality, produced a political effect.

In the heat of conflict, the main bystanders in whom the Filipinos were interested were saints and deities, but the geopolitical dimension did not entirely escape them. In the heady mood following the departure of the Marcoses, the *Manila Times* (24 February 1986: 4) claimed: 'We have redeemed ourselves before the world', another Manila paper crowed that 'Filipinos can take their place in the council of nations' (*Inquirer*, 27 February 1986: 4). US hegemony over the Philippines substantially weakened after the protest, with the departure of Ferdinand Marcos and his family. Power became decentralized within the country, to locally powerful families. However, the people's problems are far from resolved; the success of People Power was only one stage in a frustratingly slow political evolution.

The Civil Rights Movement

The Civil Rights Movement can be distinguished from the movements thus far discussed in that it was much broader in space and time. It began in the southern USA in the mid-1950s and lasted for some 15 years, during which time protests occurred widely throughout the South, border South and Midwest. The beginning and end of the movement are points of contention among historians, but most agree that 1955 marked the beginning of a transition in the tactics of racial struggle, from legislative politics to pro-integration protest politics, and the mid-1960s brought another transition, to separatist politics. Each phase conceptualized and constructed scale differently.

The period of protest pitted North against South and federalism against localism. Analysis also indicates the imposition of a placeless moral order (the concept of civil rights is applied to all persons, whoever and wherever they may be) instead of a place-

bound 'we don't do it that way, here' moral order. The Civil Rights Movement ushered in an era of federal intervention on behalf of oppressed groups, in which 'states' rights' were constrained by the federal government acting as a champion of personal rights. While 'personal rights' can be invoked to legitimate the power of capitalists over and against the public, the notion can and did provide a real basis for social justice (Blomley, 1994).

The federal government's response to the movement was not simply an internal matter; it involved concern with global audiences as well. In the 1950s, the USA attained a position of global dominance. Although 'communist propaganda had long used stories of racial discrimination and injustice to discredit American capitalism and democracy in the eyes of the world', during the Cold War 'this issue gained tremendously in poignancy' (Woodward, 1974: 131). Foreign opinion became important to US policy-makers, as 'the daily press of Tokyo, Delhi, Peiping and Saigon was diligently searched in our State Department for reactions to the latest outburst of interracial violence in Florida or Detroit, or the latest Supreme Court decision on segregation', and the US Attorney General argued that segregation 'furnishes grist for the Communist propaganda mills, and it raises doubt even among friendly nations as to the intensity of our devotion to the democratic faith' (Woodward, 1974: 132). Even the Supreme Court's landmark decision, *Brown vs Board of Education*, was initially a tool for foreign propaganda, broadcast by the Voice of America all over the world, in 35 languages, only hours after it was made public in the USA, and years before it was implemented in many states. The government's concern with distant audiences did, however, create an opening for spectacles highlighting the gap between rhetoric and reality.

African-Americans had used various forms of non-violent protest since the time of slavery (Meier and Rudwick, 1976; Bloom, 1987: 22), but new media, new geopolitics and a newly urbanized Black population combined in the 1950s and 1960s to revive protest and bring it to national and international attention. For most historians, the Civil Rights Movement began on 1 December 1955, when Rosa Parks refused to surrender her seat to a White passenger on a city bus in Montgomery, Alabama. This attack on a microscopic piece of the South's racially segregated geography was eventually expanded through media and reference publics to reach decision-makers at the national level.

Unlike the Philippines or China, where large and clearly defined areas of occupation were separated from oppressors by front lines of contact, in the USA, the occupation and contact spaces were an array of micro-regions. In China and the Philippines, what was challenged was a highly centralized power structure, in the USA what was challenged was a dispersed power structure, manifested in countless contact points between the races. Segregation statutes or 'Jim Crow' laws sustained a geography of dual spaces: White and Black drinking fountains, restrooms, building entrances, waiting areas, eating areas, parks, playgrounds, hotels, neighborhoods and churches (Woodward, 1974). The imbrication of White and Black, dominant and subordinate spaces, made the landscape a text of racial supremacy in which inequality was a part of daily life and hence apparently natural.

Montgomery's African-American community responded to Parks's arrest with a boycott of city buses. This was essentially an economic strategy, because the majority of passengers in Montgomery were Black. However, the attention it received suggested to many observers that economic pressure on the bus company was secondary to political pressure brought to bear by national media on the White community of the city.

In a situation analogous to that in the Philippines, the pre-existing centrality of the churches in the oppressed community made them highly effective for political mobilization, particularly when supplemented by leaflets and telephones. The protest's organizer, a young Martin Luther King, bypassed other tactics designed to thwart the

movement by obtaining information through a long-distance telephone call to a colleague, Theodore Jemison, in Baton Rouge. Jemison had organized a similar boycott and, 'as I expected, his painstaking description of the Baton Rouge experience was invaluable' (King, 1958: 75). The telephone functioned, as it often does, to build decentralized social formations. Later in the year-long boycott, support and advice flowed in through the postal system, in the form of letters and contributions from all over the USA and from overseas locations including Tokyo, Switzerland and Singapore. Obviously, news of the protest was reaching a world audience. The protest ended a year later when the US Supreme Court upheld a district court ruling that bus segregation is unconstitutional.

Under the inspiration of King and his Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC), a movement developed which exploited the radical potential of Christian ethics. At a conference in 1960, for example, King reminded his listeners that:

There is another element in our struggle that . . . makes our resistance and nonviolence truly meaningful. That element is reconciliation. Our ultimate end must be the creation of the beloved community. (quoted in Bennett, 1968: 144)

Protest involved refusal to observe segregation statutes, but also the Christian doctrine of 'turn the other cheek', which ensured protesters the moral high ground whenever news media expanded the scale of involvement.

In 1960, a non-violent sit-in challenged discrimination at a Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina (Wolff, 1970), again attacking a microscopic piece of the Jim Crow geography: the White Only segment of the counter space. Similar protests then spread to over 100 cities and towns, mostly in the South and border South, but also in Illinois, Nevada and Ohio (Matthews and Prothro, 1966: Blumberg, 1984: 68). Soon, nearly all expressions of the Jim Crow geography were challenged, including segregated 'parks, swimming pools, theaters, restaurants, churches, transportation facilities, museums, art galleries, laundromats, beaches, and courtrooms' (Matthews and Prothro, 1966: 408). Perhaps the only aspect of Jim Crow that was not attacked was the African-American church, because that was indeed crucial to the movement. Within 18 months some 70 000 persons, nearly one-quarter of all Black students in the country, had participated in such protests (Chong, 1991: 136). Most southern cities had neither a Black-owned radio station nor a widely read Black-owned newspaper. Black churches, created by the Jim Crow system, became the 'social sites of the hidden transcript', where the 'bitten tongues created by relations of domination find a vehement, full-throated expression' (Scott, 1990: 120). That 'full-throated' expression in this case took the form of praise, songs and celebration, and sermons on brotherly love did not weaken the movement. Just as in the Philippines, the religious grounding partially defused condemnation of the movement as self-serving, nihilistic, or communist.

Meanwhile, the media available to carry images of oppression to reference publics were constantly improving in quality and diffusing in space. By 1963, when protesters provoked 'Bull' Connor, the predictably violent police chief of Birmingham, Alabama, audiences around the world were shocked by clear photographs and films showing young children being attacked by helmeted police with clubs, fire hoses and attack dogs. The Civil Rights story was particularly poignant as 'the first running story of national importance that television fully covered' (Donovan and Scherer, 1992: 4).

Expansive use of media contexts was supplemented by expansive ideologies in written and spoken texts. While in jail in Birmingham, King wrote a famous letter to White church officials, indicating the ideological basis of his movement:

I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. (King, 1969: 62)

Similarly, Ella Baker told a crowd of Student Nonviolent Coordinating Council (SNCC) volunteers: 'Remember, we are not fighting for the freedom of the Negro alone, but for the freedom of the human spirit, a larger freedom that encompasses all mankind' (Zinn, 1964: 106). These texts must not be read simply as ecumenical religious views; they are also statements asserting the broadest possible scale of moral commitment. They are textual equivalents of the scale politics of the Civil Rights Movement; erasures of the line between 'Us' and 'Them'.

Many observers, including significant portions of the Black community, initially thought that to attack so small a piece of the segregation system as a bus seat or a 'White only' stool at a lunch counter could not make a difference. The tactic was effective not because of the territory it claimed, but because news of the cruel responses it provoked became emblematic of racial oppression when carried on the media and aroused the sympathy of distant reference publics. Sometimes this sympathy caused embarrassment among local government authorities and concern among local business leaders, prompting local revisions in the law. At other times, the local authorities were intransigent and the federal government intervened, asserting its legislative dominance. Such interventions did not simply affect racial politics; they reworked the nature of political power in the USA, at once centralizing power and distributing it more justly among the populace.

Perhaps the most impressive moment in the movement occurred in 1965. Black leaders planned a march from Selma to Montgomery, crossing 50 miles of the state widely considered to be the most racist in the union, to support registration of African-American voters. By this time, King had perfected his methods and would call off a rally or protest if there was no indication of two essential components: the press, and agents of violent oppression (Donovan and Scherer, 1992: 16). Both were present in Selma. Officials there had already caught the attention of distant audiences by driving 165 children on a 2.5-mile run with electric cattle prods. The march to Montgomery began on the morning of Sunday 7 March. As 525 persons, including women and children, prepared to leave town, they were met by Sheriff Jim Clark and 'a battalion of state troopers in steel helmets plus a mounted company of the sheriff's posse armed with bullwhips' (Brisbane, 1974: 97–103; Blumberg, 1984: 111–116). When the marchers requested a word with Major John Cloud, they were told: 'There is no word to be had'; in less than a minute they were beaten and driven from the road. Hospitalization was necessary for 66 marchers. Television cameras recorded the entire incident. The rout served the purpose intended by the protesters: Selma became a symbol and supporters traveled there from all over the country to make sure the march went on. According to one account, 'the Selma march, . . . made direct action fashionable' (Meier *et al.*, 1991: 10).

John F. Kennedy observed astutely that 'the civil rights movement owes "Bull" Connor as much as it owes Abraham Lincoln' (Bennett, 1968: 151; see also Stiehm, 1972: 15). Another contemporary observer argued that 'if anyone got manipulated [by King] it wasn't

the media—it was Bull Connor and Sheriff Clark' (Donovan and Scherer, 1992: 19). In a letter to supporters in SCLC, King wrote that the movement 'had to have someone like Clark to do in public, before the cameras, what whites had done to blacks . . . largely without notice' (Lentz, 1990: 143). Understanding of this theatrical necessity was evident in even the youngest protest participants. A 14-year-old Black girl remarked: 'When Sheriff Clark was in the hospital [for a lung ailment], I wanted him to get well as soon as possible, because when we demonstrate, he lets the world know how bad it is here' (Watters, 1991: 101).

Scale politics of this sort spurred the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act in 1965, bringing a semblance of representative democracy to the South for the first time. Meanwhile, riots in Harlem, Watts, and other northern cities were filling the news. After King's assassination, militant leaders such as Huey Newton and Stokely Carmichael took his place in the news, if not in the heart of the Black community. Carmichael talked of 'building a movement that will smash everything Western civilization has created', (Roberts, 1991: 152), while Newton expressed similar attitudes. Organizations such as the SNCC became militant and the Black Muslims spoke of White people as 'devils'. The media did their part, by focusing inordinate attention on organizations with separatist or militant aims, such as the Black Panthers, the Revolutionary Action Movement and the Republic of New Africa.

By 1965, the evolution from inclusionary scale politics to a new, self-imposed segregation was well underway. The goal of interracial community was almost forgotten and the movement's political power was evaporating (Brink and Harris, 1967: 130, 220). Among White Americans, 77 percent thought African-Americans were 'moving too fast'. The percentage of Whites sympathizing with the Black protests was 46, and only 24 among poorer Whites (Brink and Harris, 1967: 136). A 'conservative backlash' shaped the 1968 elections.

The Civil Rights Movement brought many legislative and cultural victories, which have lost some of their appeal with the persistence of economic disparities in later years. Creating racial economic justice may require a more place-based and community-based approach, but it still may find some solutions in non-place realm, for example through the use of music, film and even computer networking.

Discussion

The Civil Rights Movement produced a lasting change in southern territorial patterns, and a 30-year swing toward federalism. The EDSA occupation ousted a dictator. The Tiananmen occupation produced no significant changes in China's domestic politics. It may be that the differences in outcome reflect imperatives of capital: racial integration and federalization greased the wheels of commerce in the USA; Marcos had become an obstacle to capitalist expansion in the Philippines; China's totalitarian capitalism was systemically threatened by the specter of democracy. I have left those arguments for others to pursue.

Some may reply that I therefore must see protest as a universal cure for oppression, or a central feature of modern culture. I do not, and would not go that far. On a day-to-day basis, most injustices and inequalities cannot be met by media-assisted protests. The desire and ability to take great risks, organize large groups and captivate large audiences do not arise frequently. Meanwhile, the 'power of capital to coordinate accumulation across universal fragmented space' (Harvey, 1993: 24) is supplemented by other large-scale systems, such as race and gender relations, that constrain people's freedom. Normal

spaces and places, texts and contexts are constructed by and for normal social relations. Supported by real and virtual territories, normality prevails. Attention to the moments of protest is justified simply by the fact that these events *are* unusual and are poorly understood.

Nor do I wish to extend my argument about boundary-crossing and posit that place is irrelevant to modern politics. Much of the character of each case study is produced by particularities of the place of protest. Normal characteristics of a place may be inverted or exaggerated in protests, and are often transformed into outward-flowing images and texts, but they are never simply forgotten. To search, however, for a politics *of* place, as if place could somehow be turned into an exclusive zone of the progressive, while tentacles of political and economic power expand through space, seriously misunderstands the nature of places and persons, and the interdependence of space and place in the modern world (Massey, 1994: 151; Adams, 1995). I would certainly not go as far as David Harvey (1993: 24), who claims that 'place-bound politics . . . is doomed to failure'. Instead, I advocate the problematization of place, as a progressive strategy.

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Notes

1. The distinction between traffic and backcloth (Gould, 1991; Gould *et al.*, 1984) is similar, although more general as it applies to any system of relationships.
2. Re-cognition, meaning to become aware of something known before, suggests also a sudden increase in one's consciousness of that thing, as in something seen many times but recognized for the first time.
3. I am indebted to Larry Martens for assistance in this part of the study.
4. Content analysis categories are shown in italics.

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