The End of Public Space? People's Park, Definitions of the Public, and Democracy

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Struggling over the Nature of Public Space: The Volleyball Riots

On the morning of August 1, 1991, about twenty activists, hoping to stop a joint University of California (UC) and City of Berkeley plan to develop People's Park, were arrested as bulldozers cleared grass and soil for two sand volleyball courts (Figure 1). By that evening, police and Park "defenders" were battling in the streets over whether work on People's Park could proceed. Rioting around the Park continued for the better part of a week. Police repeatedly fired wooden and putty bullets into crowds and reports of police brutality were widespread (including the witnessed beating of a member of the Berkeley Police Review Commission). But neither did protesters refrain from violence, heaving rocks and bottles filled with urine at the police.[1]

The bulldozers (along with their police reinforcement) represented the first step in a UC and City agreement that, many hoped, would settle conclusively the disposition of People's Park, the site of more than twenty years of continual conflict between the City, UC, local activists, merchants, and homeless people. For those who sought to stop Park development, People's Park represented one of the last truly public spaces in the city—"this nation's only liberated zone," as the People's Park Defense Union called it (Rivlin 1991a:3). Any attempt to develop the land by either the University or the City was seen as a threat to the public nature of the Park.

To be sure, the public status of People's Park has always been in doubt. The property is owned by UC, which had acquired the site through eminent domain in 1967, ostensibly to build dormitories. Although lacking funds to construct the dormitories, the University quickly demolished the houses on the property. For the next two years, the land stood vacant, save for usage as a muddy parking lot. In 1969, an alliance of students, community activists, and local merchants challenged the

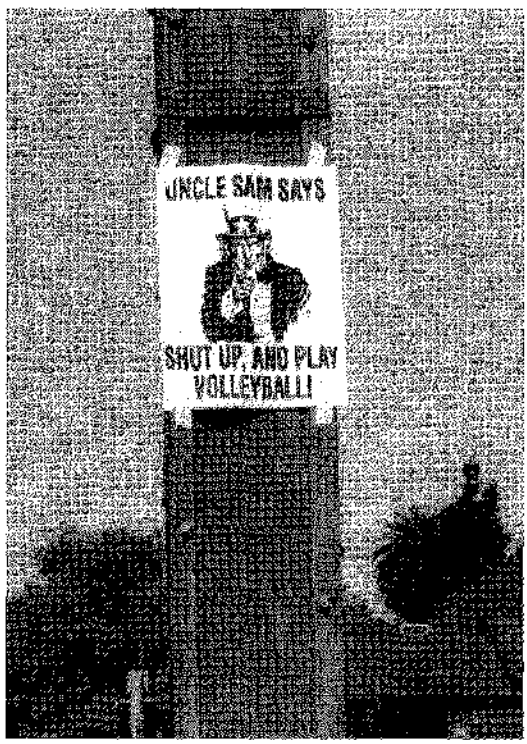

Figure 1. The volleyball courts at People's Park, Berkeley, California. The construction of these courts was the proximate cause of several days of rioting in August 1991. Source of photo: Don Mitchell.

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University and laid claim to the land. Their goal was to create a user-controlled park in the midst of a highly urbanized area that would become a haven for those squeezed out by a fully regulated urban environment (Mitchell 1992a). UC responded to the founding of People's Park by erecting a fence around the Park and excluding those who sought to use it. Activists countered with mass protests that rapidly escalated into the 1969 riots that for many have come to symbolize Berkeley. Park founders argued forcefully and violently for resistance against powerful governmental agencies, police forces, and the expansion of corporate control over the fabric of cities (Mitchell 1992a) (Figure 2). And, to a degree, they won. The police and the University were eventually vanquished,[2] and their power over the parcel of land known as People's Park has been minimal ever since.

Nevertheless, the University has maintained ownership of the land, frequently announcing plans for its imminent "improvement." The political reality has been otherwise. People's Park represents for activists an important symbol of political power (Mitchell 1992a), and they have been able to maintain the Park as originally envisioned: as a haven for persons evicted by the dominant society (cf. Deutsche 1990), as a place of political activism, and as a symbolic stronghold in the on-going struggles between university planners and city residents (Lyford 1982). But in 1989, the University, sensing a changing political climate reflected in a moderation of the Berkeley City Council and a remission of activism by UC students during the 1980s, decided that it finally possessed the political strength to take firmer control of the land. Since neither the Berkeley City Council nor Park activists would tolerate a complete elimination of the Park, the University entered into negotiations with the City over plans to build recreation facilities for student use, while retaining portions of the Park for community use.

Figure 2. Detail of mural on Haste Street depicting the 1969 People's Park riots. Despite the conflict over People's Park over the past two decades, and despite large amounts of graffiti in the neighborhood, this mural has rarely been defaced. Source of photo: Nora Mitchell.

Throughout these negotiations, UC emphasized that it had every intention of maintaining People's Park *as* a park. But now it would be a park in which inappropriate activities—"the criminal element" in the University's words (Boudreau 1991:A3)—would be removed to make room for students and middle-class residents who, the University argued, had been excluded as People's Park became a haven for "small-time drug dealers, street people, and the homeless" (Lynch 1991b:A12).

To accomplish this goal, the City and UC agreed to a seemingly innocuous development plan (Figure 3). UC agreed to lease the east and west ends of the Park to the City for $1 per year for five years ("on a trial basis") for community use. Meanwhile, the central portion of the Park (the large grassy area where many homeless people slept and the traditional place for concerts and political organizing) (Figure 4) would be converted into a recreational area replete with volleyball courts, pathways, public restrooms, and security lights. In exchange for the lease, the City would assume "primary responsibility for law enforcement on the premises." The plan also called for the establishment of a joint City-University "Use Standards and Evaluation Advising Committee" designed to "bring about a much-hoped-for truce, and realization of the place as a park that everyone can enjoy" (Kahn 1991a:28). While these developments seemed modest, all agreed that they portended much greater change. "To be sure," the suburban *Contra Costa Times* (Boudreau 1991:A3) commented, "the one-of-a-kind swath of untamed land will never be the same. And to that extent, an era is ending."

After more than twenty years of riot, debate, controversy, neglect, and broken promises, the end of the era marked by the City-UC agreement seemed long overdue for many in Berkeley and the Bay Area. To critics of the Park in the city government and the university administration as well as in the mainstream national and local press, the need for improvement in the Park was a common theme. "To some park neighbors and students, People's Park, owned by the university, is overrun with squatters, drug dealers and the like" (Boudreau 1991:A3) (Figure 5). In the words of UC's Director of Community Affairs, Milton Fujii: "The park is underutilized. Only a small group of people use the park and they are not representative of the community" (*New York Times* 1991a:1.39). Similarly, UC spokesperson Jesus Mena declared: "We have no intention to kick out the homeless. They will still be there when the park changes, but without the criminal element that gravitates toward the park" (Boudreau 1991:A3). For these critics, the evident disorder of the Park invited criminality and excluded legitimate, "representative" users. Illegitimate behavior, coupled with the scruffy appearance of the Park, confirmed that People's Park was a space that had to be reclaimed and redefined for "an appropriate public."

For opponents of the UC-City development plan, however, People's Park constituted one of the few areas in the San Francisco Bay Area in which homeless people could live relatively unmolested (Kahn 1991a:2). For them, People's Park was working as it should: as truly a public space. It was a political space that encouraged unmediated interaction, a place where the power of the state could be held at bay. Activists felt that the accord jeopardized some of the Park institutions that had developed over the years: the grassy assembly area, the Free Speech stage, and the Free Box (a clothes drop-off and exchange) (see Figures 3 and 4). Without these, they felt that People's Park would cease to exist. According to Michael Delacour, one of the founders of the Park in 1969, the defense of People's Park was "still about free speech, about giving people a place to go and just be, to say whatever they want" (Lynch and Dietz 1991:A20). This aspect of the Park—the ability for people "to go and just be"—was inextricably connected to issues of homelessness. For those opposed to the UC-City plan, People's Park since its inception had been regarded as a refuge for the homeless and other streetpeople. Activists feared that the building of volleyball courts struck at the heart of the Park's traditional role. Changes in the Park that led to the removal of homeless people, they surmised, were tantamount to an erosion of public space.

Homeless residents in the Park agreed. In her reply to a reporter who asked her about the UC-City plans, Virginia, a homeless woman living in the Park, voiced the fears of many homeless people in the Park and of Park activists: "You know what this is about as well as I do. It's only a matter of time before they start limiting the people able to come here to college kids with an ID." When the reporter reminded

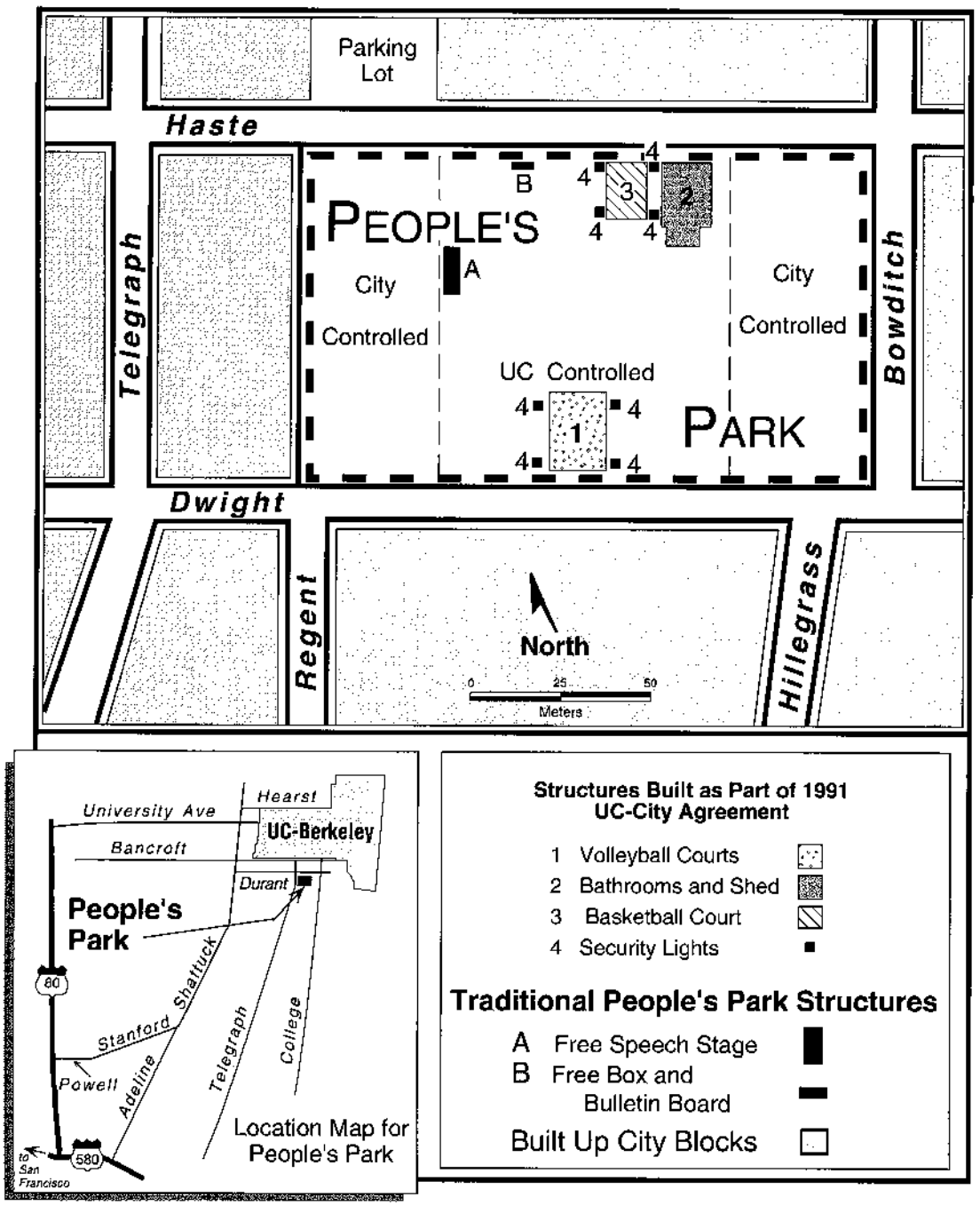

Figure 3. People's Park, Berkeley, California. The map indicates changes implemented as part of the 1991 UC-City agreement for developing the Park. Source: author's field notes.

Figure 4. Central portion of People's Park before 1991. The people in the photograph are near the Free Stage; the Free Box is in the middle right. The shaded area is roughly where the volleyball courts were built. Source of photo: Don Mitchell.

Figure 5. A homeless encampment at the east end of People's Park (in the city-controlled area) in 1993. Numerous people still sleep in the park after the changes, but see the conclusion. Source of photo: Nora Mitchell.

her that the University promised not to remove the homeless, Virginia responded: "You look smarter than that. A national monument is being torn down" (Rivlin 1991a:27). Oakland Homeless Union activist Andrew Jackson put the struggles over People's Park into a larger context: "They're tearing up a dream. . . . Ever since I remember this has been a place to come. It's been a place for all people, not just for some college kids to play volleyball or the white collar. It's a place to lie down and sleep when you're tired" (*ibid*). And for Duane, a homeless man who lived in the Park, the 1991 riots were specifically about the rights of homeless people: "This is about homelessness, and joblessness, and fighting oppression" (Koopman 1991:A13).

Activists considered changes in the Park to be related to changes on nearby Telegraph Avenue, long a center of the "counterculture" in the Bay Area. Activists feared that the Park would become a beachhead for the wholesale transformation of the surrounding neighborhood. "The university says they're not against homeless people," commented homeless activist Curtis Bray soon after the City-UC accord was announced:

> but all the rules and regulations that are coming out for the park are regulations that only affect the homeless community and no one else. . . . They don't want their students to be faced on a daily basis with what it is like to be poor and in poverty. Once they get the cement courts in, they're going to want to keep the homeless population out as much as possible. (Kahn 1991a:2, 28)

Bray predicted that the agreement on People's Park was just the beginning. "Once People's Park is off-limits, the homeless are going to go to [Telegraph] Avenue. The university will then say the Avenue is a problem" (*ibid*). David Nadle, another founder of the Park and an owner of a world-beat dance club in Berkeley, concurred. He denounced the City-UC agreement as a final move toward the total commodification and control of space. "The corporate world is trying to take Berkeley. The park is at the center of that struggle, because the park represents a 22-year struggle over corporate expansion." Berkeley, he claimed, had become "yupped out" (Kahn 1991b:30).

Telegraph Avenue had, in the years since the 1969 People's Park riots, experienced a series of transformations. A popular gathering point for Bay Area teens, the Telegraph Avenue-People's Park area experienced several street disturbances during the latter part of the 1980s. The twentieth anniversary of the 1969 riots, for example, was marked by rock throwing and window smashing (*Los Angeles Times* 1989a:l3; *New York Times* 1989a:1.26). But the Avenue also remained a vibrant shopping district, catering to affluent students and young professionals in the 1980s. By the mid-1980s, corporate retail outlets had grown at the expense of locally owned-businesses.[3] And upscale bars and restaurants had begun to compete with used bookstores, coffee houses, and businesses catering to students. Coffee bars that appealed to the slumming suburban middle classes replaced the small restaurants and "head" shops that marked an earlier era. Graffiti- and poster-covered walls were partially replaced with pastel colors and tasteful neon.

Moreover, as the boom times of the 1980s turned to the bust of the early 1990s, many students in the South Campus area had little time or patience for street spectacle or street activism. Both the Park and Telegraph Avenue reflected these changes in political and economic climate. "In a city where protesting was once as common as jogging," wrote the *San Francisco Chronicle* (Lynch and Dietz 1991:A1), "there is little tolerance for uprisings." As Park activist Michael Delacour observed, "[t]he students have changed. They know times are tough and they want to survive" (Lynch and Dietz 1991:A20). Time was scarce for activism and the community involvement that make spaces like People's Park possible.[4] Many students simply avoided the "untamed land" of People's Park.

In the early 1990s, some of the chain stores moved out of Telegraph Avenue (Figure 5), and an air of dilapidation permeated this business strip (May 1993:6). While many Avenue merchants attributed decline to the continual hazards posed by People's Park, officials of the Telegraph Avenue Merchants Association conceded that the Park's image was more threatening to business than the realities of rioting and homeless populations. One official, after affirming that crime was not more prevalent in and around the Park than elsewhere in the city, quickly added that perception was much more important than actuality. "If the majority of people think it's unsafe, unclean, why do they think that? Isn't it based on some sort of real-

ity?" (Kahn 1991a:28). For this official, such perceptions were manifested in the declining traffic of what the merchants considered the neighborhood's legitimate public: the shoppers, the students, and the housed.

In their efforts to reverse these perceptions, the City and the University eventually resorted to violence in early August of 1991; Park protesters responded in kind (Figure 6). The papers of that week are filled with reports of street skirmishes, strategic advances by heavily armed police, and the rage felt by many protesters. Police were accused of beating bystanders, roughing-up homeless residents of the Park, and using wood and putty bullets needlessly. Protesters threw rocks and bottles, smashed windows, and lit street fires. By August 6, eight formal complaints of police brutality had been filed with the Police Review Commission and six with the police department itself. A Police Commission member had received fifty statements alleging police abuse and the Commission received another twenty-five calls of complaint. In addition, an unknown number of police were injured in the rioting (Rivlin 1991b:18).

"We offered to negotiate," club owner David Nadle claimed, "but this is what we got. Militarily, they have commandeered that part of the park"—the center zone with the Free Speech area, the stage, the human services, and the free boxes (Kahn 1991c:11). The occupation had succeeded. Rioting had all but subsided by Saturday night, and Park defenders conceded defeat. At a rally of protestors in the Park on August 4, Park founder and activist Michael Delacour declared: "Basically we've got no choice over what happens in this park anyway" (Auchard 1991:23).

Four days later, the first volleyball games were played in People's Park. Seeking to cement what one Park defender earlier called "dominion, imposing solutions for other people's own good" (*New York Times* 1991c:A8), university officials released student employees from their jobs provided that they would play

Figure 6. This storefront formerly housed Miller's Outpost, a clothing store which nicely represents the changes experienced on Telegraph Avenue in the last two decades. Miller's Outpost was one of the earliest chain stores to move onto Telegraph and was a frequent target of rioters and looters in the various People's Park and Telegraph Avenue disturbances. Miller's Outpost weathered these many battles, but it finally closed in 1992, a symbol of the steady decline of the Avenue in the past few years. Source of photo: Don Mitchell.

volleyball in the Park. One of the players, a Berkeley junior and housing office employee, told the *San Francisco Chronicle* (Lynch 1991c:A20): "At first, I thought 'OK, let's go play volleyball.' But then I realized there is more at stake and I got a little scared. But I came out here because I want to see this happen and show my support. People's Park needs to change. I've only been here once before—most people think this place isn't safe." That evening at 7 p.m., despite the absence of "disturbances" since the previous Saturday, police arrested sixteen people for trespassing after the Park—which the University asserted they planned to retain as "open space"—was closed (*ibid*).

Envisioning Public Space

The Berkeley housing employee was right. There was a lot more at stake in People's Park than volleyball. Two opposed, and perhaps irreconcilable, ideological visions of the nature and purpose of public space were evident in the words of homeless people, activists, merchants, and city and university officials as they sought to explain the long and sometimes violent struggles over People's Park. Activists and the homeless people who used the Park promoted a vision of a space marked by free interaction and the absence of coercion by powerful institutions. For them, public space was an unconstrained space within which political movements can organize and expand into wider arenas (Mitchell 1992a; Smith 1992a; 1993). The vision of representatives of the University (not to mention planners in many cities) was quite different. Theirs was one of open space for recreation and entertainment, subject to usage by an appropriate public that is *allowed* in. Public space thus constituted a controlled and orderly *retreat* where a properly behaved public might experience the spectacle of the city. In the first of these visions, public space is taken and remade by political actors; it is politicized at its very core; and it tolerates the risks of disorder (including recidivist political movements) as central to its functioning. In the second vision, public space is planned, orderly, and safe. Users of this space must be made to feel comfortable, and they should not be driven away by unsightly homeless people or unsolicited political activity. These visions, of course, are not unique to Berkeley; they are in fact the predominant ways of seeing public space in contemporary cities.[5]

These two visions of public space correspond more or less with Lefebvre's distinction between *representational space* (appropriated, lived space; space-in-use) and *representations of space* (planned, controlled, ordered space).[6] Public space often, though not always, originates as a representation of space, as for example a court-house square, a monumental plaza, a public park, or a pedestrian shopping district (Harvey 1993; Hershkovitz 1993). But as people use these spaces, they also become representational spaces, appropriated in use. This standard chronology was reversed, however, in the case of People's Park. It began as a representational space, one that had been *taken* and appropriated from the outset. Whatever the origins of any public space, its status as "public" is created and maintained through the ongoing opposition of visions that have been held, on the one hand, by those who seek order and control and, on the other, by those who seek places for oppositional political activity and unmediated interaction.

Yet public spaces are also, and very importantly, *spaces for representation*. That is, public space is a place within which a political movement can stake out the space that allows it to be *seen*. In public space, political organizations can represent themselves to a larger population. By claiming space in public, by creating public spaces, social groups themselves become public. *Only* in public spaces can the homeless, for example, represent themselves as a legitimate part of "the public." Insofar as homeless people or other marginalized groups remain invisible to society, they fail to be counted as legitimate members of the polity. And in this sense, public spaces are absolutely essential to the functioning of democratic politics (Fraser 1990). Public space is the product of competing ideas about what constitutes that space—order and control or free, and perhaps dangerous, interaction—and who constitutes "the public." These are not merely questions of ideology, of course. They are rather questions about the very spaces that make political activities possible. To understand, therefore, why the struggles over People's Park turned violent, why people can be so passionate about spaces like these, we need to re-exam-

ine the normative ideals that drive political activity and the nature of the spaces we call "public" in democratic societies.

The Importance of Public Space in Democratic Societies

Public space occupies an important ideological position in democratic societies. The notion of urban public space can be traced back at least to the Greek *agora* and its function as: "the place of citizenship, an open space where public affairs and legal disputes were conducted . . . it was also a marketplace, a place of pleasurable jostling, where citizens' bodies, words, actions, and produce were all literally on mutual display, and where judgements, decisions, and bargains were made" (Hartley 1992:29–30). Politics, commerce, and spectacle were juxtaposed and intermingled in the public space of the agora. It provided a meeting place for strangers, whether citizens, buyers, or sellers, and the ideal of public space in the agora encouraged nearly unmediated interaction—the first vision of public space noted above. In such "open and accessible public spaces and forums," as Young (1990:119) has put it, "one should expect to encounter and hear from those who are different, whose social perspectives, experience and affiliations are different."

Young's definition represents more nearly a normative ideal for public space than an empirical description of the ways that public spaces have functioned in "actuality existing democracies" (Fraser 1990). This normative public space reflects Habermas' (1989) discussion of the aspatial and normative public *sphere* in which the public sphere is best imagined as the suite of institutions and activities that mediate the relations between society and the state (see Howell 1993). In this normative sense, the public sphere is where "the public" is organized and represented (or imagined) (Hartley 1992). The ideal of a public sphere is normative, Habermas (1989) theorizes, because it is in this sphere that all manner of social formations *should* find access to the structures of power within a society. As part of the public sphere, according to many theorists (Fraser 1990; Hartley 1992; Howell 1993), public space represents the material location where the social interactions and political activities of all members of "the public" occur.

Greek agora, Roman forums, and eventually American parks, commons, marketplaces, and squares were never simply places of free, unmediated interaction, however; they were just as often places of exclusion (Fraser 1990; Hartley 1992). The public that met in these spaces was carefully selected and homogenous in composition. It consisted of those with power, standing, and respectability. Here then are the roots of the second vision of public space. In Greek democracy, for example, citizenship was a right that was awarded to free, non-foreign men and denied to slaves, women, and foreigners. The latter had no standing in the public spaces of Greek cities; they were not included in "the public." Although women, slaves, and foreigners may have worked in the agora, they were formally excluded from the political activities of this public space.

Nor has "the public" always been defined expansively in American history. Inclusion of more and varied groups of people into the public sphere has only been won through constant social struggle. Notions of "the public" and public democracy played off and developed dialectically with notions of private property and private spheres. The ability for citizens to move between private property and public space determined the nature of public interaction in the developing democracy of the United States (Fraser 1990; Habermas 1989; Marston 1990). In modern capitalist democracies like the United States, "owners of private property freely join together to create a public, which forms the critical functional element of the political realm" (Marston 1990:445). To be public implies access to the sphere of private property.

Each of these spheres, of course, has been constrained by, *inter alia*, gender, class, and race. By the end of the eighteenth century:

> The line drawn between public and private was essentially one on which the claims of civility—epitomized by cosmopolitan, public behavior—were balanced against the claims of nature—epitomized by the family. . . . [W]hile man *made* himself in public, he *realized* his nature in the private realm, above all in his experiences within the family. (Sennett 1992:18–19; emphasis in the original).

The private sphere was the home and refuge, the place from which white propertied men ventured out into the democratic arena of pub-

lic space.[7] The public sphere of American (and other capitalist) democracies is thus understood as a voluntary community of private (and usually propertied) citizens. By "nature" (as also by custom, franchise, and economics), women, non-white men, and the propertyless were denied access to the public sphere in everyday life.[8] Built on exclusions, the public sphere was thus a "profoundly problematic construction" (Marston 1990:457).

For the historian Edmund Morgan (1988:15), the popular sovereignty that arose from this split between publicity and privacy was a fiction in which citizens "*willingly* suspended disbelief" as to the improbability of a total public sphere. The normative ideal of the public sphere holds out hope that a *representative* public can meet, that all can claim representation within "the public" (Hartley 1992). The reality of public space and the public sphere is that Morgan's "fiction" is less an agreeable acquiescence to representation and more "an exercise in ideological construction with respect to who belongs to the national community and the relationship of 'the people' to formal governance" (Marston 1990:450).

As ideological constructions, however, ideals like "the public," public space, and the public sphere take on double importance. Their very articulation implies a notion of inclusiveness that becomes a rallying point for successive waves of political activity. Over time, such political activity has broadened definitions of "the public" to include, at least formally, women, people of color, and the propertyless (but not yet foreigners).[9] In turn, redefinitions of citizenship accomplished through struggles for inclusion have reinforced the normative ideals incorporated in notions of public spheres and public spaces. By calling on the rhetoric of inclusion and interaction that the public sphere and public space are meant to represent, excluded groups have been able to argue for their *rights* as part of the active public. And each (partially) successful struggle for inclusion in "the public" conveys to other marginalized groups the importance of the ideal as a point of political struggle.

In these struggles for inclusion, the distinctions between the public sphere and public space assume considerable importance. The public sphere in Habermas' sense is a universal, abstract realm in which democracy occurs. The materiality of this sphere is, so to speak, immaterial to its functioning. Public space, meanwhile, is material. It constitutes an actual site, a place, a ground within and from which political activity flows.[10] This distinction is crucial, for it is "in the context of real public spaces" that alternative movements may arise and contest issues of citizenship and democracy (Howell 1993:318).

If contemporary trends signal a progressive erosion of the first vision of public space as the second becomes more prominent (Crilley 1993; Davis 1990; Goss 1992; 1993; Lefebvre 1991; Sennett 1992; Sorkin 1992), then public spaces like People's Park become, in Arendt's words, "small hidden islands of freedom," islands of opposition surrounded by "Foucault's carceral archipelago" (Howell 1993:313).[11] In these hidden islands, space is *taken* by marginalized groups in order to press claims for their rights. And that was precisely the argument made by many of the People's Park activists and homeless residents. As the *East Bay Express* (Kahn 1991c:11) observed: "Ultimately, they claim, this is still a fight over territory. It is not just two volleyball courts; it's the whole issue of who has rightful claim to the land." Michael Delacour argued that People's Park was still about free speech, and homeless activist Curtis Bray claimed: "they are trying to take the power away from the people" (*New York Times* 1991a:1.39). For these activists, People's Park was a place where the rights of citizenship could be expanded to the most disenfranchised segment of contemporary American democracy: the homeless. People's Park provided the space for representing the legitimacy of homeless people within "the public."

The Position of the Homeless in Public Space and as Part of "The Public"

People's Park has been recognized as a refuge for homeless people since its founding, even as elsewhere in Berkeley, the City has actively removed squatters and homeless people from the streets (sometimes rehousing them in a disused city landfill) (Dorgan 1985:B12; Harris 1988:B12; Levine 1987:C1; *Los Angeles Times* 1988:I3; Mitchell 1992a:165; Stern 1987:D10). Consequently, the Park had become a relatively safe place for the homeless

to congregate—one of the few such spots in an increasingly hostile Bay Area (*Los Angeles Times* 1990:A1). Around the Bay, the homeless had been cleaned out of San Francisco's United Nations' Plaza near City Hall and Golden Gate Park; in Oakland, loitering was actively discouraged in most parks (*Los Angeles Times* 1989b:l3; 1990:A1; *New York Times* 1988b:A14).

In part, the desire to sweep the homeless from visibility responds to the central contradiction of homelessness in a democracy composed of private individuals (see Deutsche 1992; Mair 1986; Marcuse 1988; Ruddick 1990; Smith 1989). The contradiction turns on publicity: the homeless are all too visible. Although homeless people are nearly always in public, they are rarely counted as part of *the* public. Homeless people are in a double bind. For them, socially legitimated private space does not exist, and they are denied access to public space and public activity by capitalist society which is anchored in private property and privacy. For those who are *always* in the public, private activities must necessarily be carried out publicly. When public space thus becomes a place of seemingly illegitimate behavior, our notions about what public space is supposed to be are thrown into doubt. Now less a location for the "pleasurable jostling of bodies" and the political discourse imagined as the appropriate activities of public space in a democracy, public parks and streets begin to take on aspects of the home; they become places to go to the bathroom, sleep, drink, or make love—all socially legitimate activities when done in private, but seemingly illegitimate when carried out in public. As importantly, since citizenship in modern democracy (at least ideologically) rests on a foundation of *voluntary* association, and since homeless people are *involuntarily* public, homeless people cannot be, by definition, legitimate citizens.[12] Consequently, "[h]omeless people prove threatening to the free exercise of rights" (Mitchell 1992b:494); they threaten the existence of a "legitimate"—i.e., a voluntary—public.

The existence of homeless people in public thus undermines the ideological order of modern societies. George Will (1987) speaks for many when he argues that: "Society needs order, and hence has a right to a minimally civilized ambience in public spaces. Regarding the homeless, this is not merely for aesthetic reasons because the aesthetic is not merely unappealing. It presents a spectacle of disorder and decay that becomes contagion."[13] For reasons of order, then, the homeless have been eliminated from most definitions of "the public." They have instead become something of an "indicator species" to much of society, diagnostic of the presumed ill-health of public space, and of the need to gain control, to privatize, and to rationalize public spaces in urban places. Whether in New York City (Smith 1989; 1992a; 1992b), Berkeley (Mitchell 1992a), or Columbus, Ohio (Mair 1986), the presence of homeless people in public spaces suggests in the popular mind an irrational and uncontrolled society in which the distinctions between appropriate public and private behavior are muddled. Hence, those who are intent on rationalizing "public" space in the post-industrial city have *necessarily* sought to remove the homeless—to banish them to the interstices and margins of civic space—in order to make room for legitimate public activities (Mair 1986; see also Marcuse 1988; Lefebvre 1991:373).

When, as in Berkeley's People's Park or New York's Tompkins Square, actions are taken against park users by closing public space or exercising greater social control over park space, the press explains these actions by saying that "the park is currently a haven for drug users and the homeless" (*Los Angeles Times* 1991b:A10; see also Boudreau 1991:A3; Koopman 1991:A13; *Los Angeles Times* 1991a:A3; 1992:A3; *New York Times* 1988a:A31). Such statements pointedly ignore any "public" standing that homeless people may have, just as they ignore the possibility that homeless people's usage of a park for political, social, economic, and residential purposes may constitute for them legitimate and necessary uses of public space (Mitchell 1992a:153). When UC officials claimed that the homeless residents of People's Park were not "representative of the community" (Boudreau 1991:A3), they in essence denied social legitimacy to homeless people and their (perhaps necessary) behaviors. By transforming the Park, UC hoped that illegitimate activity would be discouraged. That is to say that the homeless could stay as long as they behaved appropriately—and as long as the historical, normative, ideological boundary between public and private was well patrolled.

Public Space in the Contemporary City

> *Failure to recognize the homeless as part of the urban public; disregard of the fact that new public spaces and homelessness are both products of redevelopment; the refusal to raise questions about exclusions while invoking the concept of an inclusionary public space:* these acts ratify the relations of domination that close the borders of public places no matter how much these places are touted as "open and freely accessible to the public for 12 or more hours daily." (Deutsche 1992:38, emphasis in the original)[14]

> . . . *liberty* engenders contradictions which are also spatial contradictions. Whereas businesses tend toward a totalitarian form of social organization, authoritarian and prone to fascism, urban conditions, either despite or by virtue of violence, tend to uphold at least a measure of democracy. (Lefebvre 1991:319)

As a secular space, the public space of the modern city has always been a hybrid of politics and commerce (Sennett 1992:21–22).[15] Ideally, the anarchy of the market meets the anarchy of politics in public space to create an interactive, democratic public. In the twentieth century, however, markets have been increasingly severed from politics. The once expansive notion of public space that guided early American democratic ideology and the extension, however partial, of public rights to women, people of color, and the propertyless have been jeopardized by countervailing social, political, and economic trends, trends that have caused many to recoil against any exercise of democratic social power that poses a threat to dominant social and economic interests (Fraser 1990; Harvey 1992).

These trends have led to the constriction of public space. Interactive, discursive politics have been effectively banned from the gathering points of the city. Corporate and state planners have created environments that are based on desires for security rather than interaction, for entertainment rather than (perhaps divisive) politics (Crilley 1993; Garreau 1991; Goss 1992; 1993; Sorkin 1992). One of the results of planning has been the growth of what Sennett (1992) calls "dead public spaces"—the barren plazas that surround so many modern office towers. A second result has been the development of festive spaces that encourage consumption—downtown redevelopment areas, malls, and festival marketplaces. Though seemingly so different, both "dead" and "festive" spaces are premised on a perceived need for order, surveillance, and control over the behavior of the public. As Goss (1993:29–30) reminds us, we are often complicit in the severing of market and political functions. He points to the case of the pseudo-public space of the contemporary shopping mall:

> Some of us are . . . disquieted by the constant reminders of surveillance in the sweep of cameras and the patrols of security personnel [in malls]. Yet those of us for whom it is designed are willing to suspend the privileges of public urban space to its relative benevolent authority, for our desire is such that we will readily accept nostalgia as a substitute for experience, absence for presence, and representation for authenticity.

This nostalgic desire for the market Goss (1993:28) calls "agoraphilia"—a yearning for "an immediate relationship between producer and consumer" (see also Hartley 1992).

Such nostalgia is rarely "innocent," however (see Lowenthal 1985). It is rather a highly constructed, corporatized image of a market quite unlike the idealization of the agora as a place of commerce *and* politics (Hartley 1992). In the name of comfort, safety, and profit, political activity is replaced in these spaces by a highly commodified spectacle designed to sell (Boyer 1992; Crawford 1992; Garreau 1991:48–52). Planners of pseudo-public spaces like malls and corporate plazas have found that controlled diversity is more profitable than unconstrained social differences (Crawford 1992; Goss 1993; Kowinski 1985; A. Wilson 1992; Zukin 1991). Hence even as new groups are claiming greater access to the rights of society, homogenization of "the public" continues apace.

This homogenization typically has advanced by "disneyfying" space and place—creating landscapes in which every interaction is carefully planned (Sorkin 1992; A. Wilson 1992; Zukin 1991). Market and design considerations thus displace the idiosyncratic and extemporaneous interactions of engaged peoples in the determination of the shape of urban space in the contemporary world (Crilley 1993:137; Zukin 1991). Designed-and-contrived diversity creates marketable landscapes, as opposed to uncontrolled social interaction which creates places that may threaten exchange value. The "disneyfication" of space consequently implies increasing alienation of people from the possi-

bilities of unmediated social interaction and increasing control by powerful economic and social actors over the production and use of space.

Imposing limits and controls on spatial interaction has been one of the principal aims of urban and corporate planners during this century (Davis 1990; Harvey 1989; Lefebvre 1991). The territorial segregation created through the expression of social *difference* has increasingly been replaced by a celebration of constrained *diversity*.[16] The diversity represented in shopping centers, "megastructures," corporate plazas, and (increasingly) in public parks is carefully constructed (Boyer 1992). Moreover, the expansion of a planning and marketing ethos into all manner of public gathering places has created a "space of social practice" that sorts and divides social groups (Lefebvre 1991:375) according to the dictates of comfort and order rather than to those of political struggle. But as Lefebvre (1991:375) suggests, this is no accident. The strategies of urban and corporate planners, he claims, classify and "distribute various social strata and classes (other than the one that exercises hegemony) across the available territory, keeping them separate and prohibiting all contacts—these being replaced by *signs* (or images) of contact."

This reliance on images and signs—or representations—entails the recognition that a "public" that cannot exist as such is continually *made* to exist in the pictures of democracy we carry in our heads: "The public in its entirety has never met at all . . ."; yet "the public [is] still to be found, large as life, in the media" (Hartley 1992:1). Hence: "Contemporary politics is *representative* in both senses of the term; citizens are represented by a chosen few, and politics is represented to the public via the various media of communication. Representative political space is literally made of pictures—they *constitute* the public domain" (Hartley 1992:35; emphasis in the original). I will return to this theme of symbolic politics and resistance to it in the material spaces of the city; for now, it is sufficient to note that the politics of symbolism, imaging, and representation increasingly stand in the stead of a democratic *ideal* of direct, less-mediated, social interaction in public spaces. In other words, contemporary designers of urban "public" space increasingly accept signs and images of contact as more natural and desirable than contact itself.

Public and pseudo-public spaces assume new functions in a political and social system in which controlled representation is regarded as natural and desirable. The overriding purpose of public space becomes the creation of a "public realm deliberately shaped as theater" (Crilley 1993:153; see also Glazer 1992). "Significantly, it is theater in which a pacified public basks in the grandeur of a carefully orchestrated corporate spectacle" (Crilley 1993:147).[17] That is the purpose of the carefully controlled "public" spaces such as the corporate plazas, library grounds, and suburban streets critiqued by Davis (1990:223–263) and the festive marketplaces, underground pedestrian districts, and theme parks analyzed by the contributors to Sorkin (1992). It is certainly the goal of mall builders (Garreau 1991; Goss 1993; Kowinski 1985; A. Wilson 1992).

These spaces of controlled spectacle narrow the list of eligibles for "the public." Public spaces of spectacle, theater, and consumption create images that define the public, and these images exclude as "undesirable" the homeless and the political activist. Thus excluded from these public and pseudo-public spaces, their legitimacy as members of the public is put in doubt. And thus *unrepresented* in our images of "the public," they are banished to a realm outside politics because they are banished from the gathering places of the city.

How "the public" is defined and imaged (as a space, as a social entity, and as an ideal) is a matter of some importance. As Crilley (1993:153) shows, corporate producers of space tend to define the public as passive, receptive, and "refined." They foster the "illusion of a homogenized public" by filtering out "the social heterogeneity of the urban crowd, [and] substituting in its place a flawless fabric of white middle class work, play, and consumption . . . with minimal exposure to the horrifying level of homelessness and racialized poverty that characterizes [the] street environment" (Crilley 1993:154). And, by blurring distinctions between private property and public space, they create a public that is narrowly prescribed. The elision of carefully controlled spaces (such as Disneyland, Boston's Fanueil Hall, or New York's World Financial Center) with notions of public space "conspires to hide from us the widespread privatization of the public realm and its reduction to the status of commodity" (Crilley 1993:153). The irony is, of course, that this privatization of public space is

lauded by all levels of government (e.g., through public-private redevelopment partnerships) at the same time as the privatization of public space by homeless people (their use of public space for what we consider to be private activities) is excoriated by urban planners, politicians, and social critics alike.

The End of Public Space?

Have we reached, then, the "end of public space" (Sorkin 1992)? Has the dual (though so different) privatization of public space by capital and by homeless people created a world in which designed diversity has so thoroughly replaced the free interaction of strangers that the ideal of an unmediated *political* public space is wholly unrealistic? Have we created a society that expects and desires only private interactions, private communications, and private politics, that reserves public spaces solely for commodified recreation and spectacle? Many cultural critics on the left believe so, as do mainstream commentators such as Garreau (1991) and conservatives like Glazer (1992). Public spaces are, for these writers, an artifact of a past age, an age with different sensibilities and different ideas about public order and safety, when public spaces were stable, well-defined, and accessible to all. But these images of past public spaces and past public spheres are highly idealized; as we have seen, the public sphere in the American past was anything but inclusive—and public space was always a site for and a source of conflict. Definitions of public space and "the public" are not universal and enduring; they are produced rather through constant struggle in the past and in the present. And, in People's Park as in so many other places, that struggle continues.

But these kinds of spaces are dwindling, despite the fact that many cities are increasing their stocks of parks, bicycle and hiking corridors, natural areas, and similar places that are owned or operated in the name of the public. That is certainly the case in Boulder, Colorado, where the preservation of open spaces in and around urbanized areas is one of the most strongly supported city and county initiatives (Cornett 1993:A9). Mountain parks, prairielands, small city blocks, farmlands, and wetlands have all been set aside. But are these public spaces in the political sense?

During the period of rapid suburbanization and urban renewal in the decades after World War II, North American cities: "vastly increased 'open' space, but its primary purpose was different [than public spaces with civic functions], i.e., to separate functions, open up distance between buildings, allow for the penetration of sunlight and greenery, not to provide places for extensive social contact" (Greenberg 1990:324). There are many reasons for the growth of open space—preserving ecologically sensitive areas; maintaining property values by establishing an undevelopable greenbelt; providing places for recreation; removing flood plains from development; and so on. But in each case open space serves functional and ideological roles that differ from political public spaces. It is rare that open spaces such as these are designed or appropriated to fulfill the market and civic functions that mark the public space of the city. More typically, these open spaces share certain characteristics with pseudo-public spaces. Restrictions on behavior and activities are taken-for-granted; prominent signs designate appropriate uses and outline rules concerning where one may walk, ride, or gather. These are highly regulated spaces.

In Berkeley, UC officials recognized this distinction between open space and public space. During various People's Park debates, speakers for the University never referred to the Park as public space, though they frequently reiterated their commitment to maintaining the Park as open space (Boudreau 1991:A3). Berkeley City Council member Alan Goldfarb, an occasional critic of University plans, also traded on the differences between public and open space. Speaking of People's Park, he celebrated the virtues of public space and then undermined them:

> It's a symbol for the police versus the homeless, the have-nots versus the haves, progress versus turmoil, development versus nondevelopment, all of the undercurrents most troubling in the city. You've got pan-handling going on, the business community nearby, the town-gown tensions. You have anarchists and traditionalists. People's Park becomes a live stage for all these actors. For many people around the world, Berkeley *is* People's Park. (Kahn 1991a:28; emphasis in the original)

But if "[t]hese things are real and important," he continued, it is more important to make People's Park "a viable open space" that would provide a bit of green in a highly urbanized neighborhood (*ibid*).

New Public Spaces?

There is an even stronger argument for the end of public space than the one that is based on the growth of open space. Many analysts suggest that the very nature of space has been transformed by developments in communications technology. They maintain that the electronic space of the media and computer networks has opened a new frontier of public space in which material public spaces in the city are superseded by the fora of television, radio talk shows, and computer bulletin boards. For many scholars (not to mention entrepreneurs), modern communications technology now provides the primary site for discursive public activity in general and politics in particular. Defining electronic bulletin boards and networks, fax machines, talk radio, and television as public space stretches our traditional assumptions about the materiality of space and replaces them with celebrations of television as a global village and disquisitions on "the creation of the first cyberspace nation" (Roberts 1994:C1). With these technologies, citizenship no longer requires the dichotomy between public and private *geographies;* access to a television set, radio, or computer with a modem is sufficient.

Perhaps the most optimistic view of electronic space as public space is taken by the Mass Media Group (MMG) of the Committee for Cultural Studies at CUNY Graduate School. They challenge the second part of the "unquestionable truism" that "the media today *is* the public sphere, and this is the reason for the degradation of public life if not its disappearance" (Carpignano et al. 1990:33; emphasis in the original). The MMG argues instead that the evolution of television talk shows has transformed "the public" from an audience for mass politics and entertainment into a discursive, interactive entity. TV talk shows "constitute a 'contested space' in which new discursive practices are developed in contrast to the traditional modes of political and ideological representation" (Carpignano et al. 1990:35).

For the MMG, talk shows are now "common places" that produce "common sense" in a manner analogous to idealized town meetings of times past: "Common sense could also be defined [within these shows] as a product of an electronically defined common place which, by virtue of being electronically reproduced, can be considered a public space. In its most elementary form, going public today means going on the air" (Carpignano et al. 1990:50). MTV put it even more bluntly after the 1992 presidential campaign. On November 9, 1992, the network ran full-page advertisements in newspapers across the nation "salut[ing] the 17 million 18–29 year olds who stood up, turned out and voted." The advertisements carried the logo: "MTV, the community of the future." As with MTV's vote-drive campaign, the advertisements were "presented by AT&T, The Ford Motor Company, and your local cable company." MTV's campaign tempers the MMG's optimistic assessment of the power of electronic media "in the age of chatter": corporate sponsorship makes public space possible.

The similarities between the "therapeutic" discursive practices (Carpignano et al. 1990: 51; see also Sennett 1992:12, 269–293) of the talk show and the privatization and control of public space are readily apparent. In both cases, the material structure of the medium closes off political possibilities and opportunities. The "public" gathering in the "public space" of the afternoon talk show (contra the MMG's claim that it is unmediated) is a selected audience that is scripted *in advance.* Members of the audience are expected to be articulate, to stake out controversial positions, and to add to the spectacle without completely alienating sponsors or viewers. MTV's structuring of the community of the future, along with the Mass Media Group's assessment of contemporary public space, thus fits well with scholarly conclusions about the commodification and elimination of more traditional public space (Crilley 1993; Davis 1990; Sorkin 1992; Zukin 1991).

Hence, the migration of the public sphere into electronic media further forecloses the uses of material space for democratic politics. If the MMG is correct, then politics will henceforth be possible *only* through the media, only through highly structured and dominated "spaces," only by "going on the air." The MMG puts the best face on this situation by suggesting that the nature of the talk-show format, its compromise between confrontation and shock, "becomes an opening for the empowerment of an alternative discursive practice" (Carpignano et al. 1990:52). Yet this empower-

ment is almost exclusively a private, solipsistic empowerment of therapy, and one which has little to say about alternative political projects.[18] These shows, like "disneyfied" city spaces, create a certain kind of "public"—one in which individuals are allowed to get angry, albeit in their place and in a highly controlled manner, but one which is ultimately non-threatening to established structures of order. The spectacle of "the public" dissolves into public spectacle.

On another front, the prospects for a computer "superhighway" or a public "cyberspace nation" are mixed. The United States' government's desire to privatize most parts of the Internet seems to suggest that electronic networks are not viewed primarily as *public* and political spaces. Indeed, just the opposite seems to be the case as anxious telecommunications companies line up to receive the property rights to various parts of the now public networks.[19] As importantly, electronic communication embodies a different ideal than that embodied in the agora, and it responds to a different set of desires within society. "What society expects, and [cyberspace] exemplifies, is to conduct itself via a privatized ethic of transmissive communication" (Hillis 1994:191), and electronic networks are becoming the perfect technology for this desire. This raises, once again, the problem of representation in public spaces. A fully electronic public space renders marginalized groups such as the homeless even more invisible to the working of politics (Hillis 1994). Leaving aside the troublesome First Amendment issues posed by private networks operators such as Prodigy or Compuserve (Naughton 1992; Schlachter 1993), there is literally no room in Internet's "public space" for a homeless person to live. Nor can their needs, desires, and political representations ever be *seen* in the manner that they can be seen in the spaces of the city.

The Necessity of Material Public Spaces

> The Universal consequence of the crusade to secure the city is the destruction of any truly democratic space. (Davis 1992:155)

This vision of an electronic future—and of its meanings for public space—has not gone uncontested. Opponents maintain that social movements must, and do, occupy and reconfigure material public spaces in the city. Indeed, these movements are premised on the notion that democratic (and certainly revolutionary) politics are impossible without the simultaneous creation and control of *material* space. The collective protest in Tiananmen Square in May 1989 offers a case in point. Although Tiananmen underlines the importance of television and other electronic media for revolutionary movements, it was above all else an occupation of material public space. Electronic communication played an important role in organizing the protest, but the uprising truly began with the transformation of the Square itself from a monumental and official space "into a genuine place of political discourse" (Calhoun 1989: 57). Students and other activists "met in small groups of friends for discussion, large audiences for speeches and even more or less representative council for debating their collective strategy and carrying out self-government" (*ibid*). The public appropriation of Tiananmen Square is incisive "evidence of the extraordinary power of apparently 'placeless' movements to create and transform space in new and authentically revolutionary ways" (Hershkovitz 1993:417).[20] This place-centered struggle was *then* captured by the media. The Square became a place *for* representation—in this case the representation of a powerful popular movement opposed to the state. Spaces such as Tiananmen Square, or People's Park, enable opposition to be extended to wider scales. *After* space is taken, oppositional representations expand beyond the confines of the local struggle. Without occupation of material space, however, the kinds of protest that came to a point at Tiananmen or People's Park would have remained invisible.

For this reason, reliance on the media as the entreé into the public sphere is dangerous (Fraser 1990). Media in the "bourgeois public sphere" (that is, the public sphere as described by Habermas and developed during the great bourgeois upheavals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) "are privately owned and operated for profit. Consequently, subordinated social groups lack equal access to the material means of equal participation" (Fraser 1990:64–65). To overcome the problem of access, "subaltern counter publics" create "parallel discursive arenas where members of subor-

dinated groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests and needs" (Fraser 1990:67). In these arenas and spaces, counterpublics can be seen by other factions of the public. Without these spaces, "the public" is balkanized. Occupation of public space, then, "militates in the long run against separatism because it assumes an orientation that is *publicist*. Insofar as these arenas are *publics* they are by definition not enclaves—which is not to say that they are not often involuntarily enclaved" (*ibid;* emphasis in the original).[21]

While television has an important role to play in political movements and revolution, there has never been a revolution conducted exclusively in electronic space. Revolutions entail a taking to the streets and a taking of public space. They require the creation of disorder in places formerly marked by order (for revolution is also a pictorial event—it must be represented). Political movements must create the space in which they *can* be represented. While Lefebvre (1991) may theorize the continual production of representations of space and representational spaces, public social movements understand that they must create spaces *for* representation. Consider the "mothers' movements" in the Southern Cone states of South America (Scarpaci and Frazier 1993). Mothers of the "disappeared" publicly proclaimed their cause by appropriating public squares and monuments. Their occupations of public space forced their cause to be "aired." In the absence of these spaces, the mothers' cause could not have been conveyed to the rest of the city, the region, the nation, or, through the eye of television, the world.

This pattern has been repeated elsewhere: in Eastern Europe and China in 1989 and in the Soviet Union soon thereafter. Similar strategic occupations of public space were effected by the Industrial Workers of the World in its struggles for Free Speech around 1910 (Foner 1965; Dubofsky 1988), and by the Civil Rights, Farm Workers', and anti-war movements of the 1960s. The pattern also held true for the fascist movements in Italy and Germany in the 1930s—a reminder that when social movements liberate space, the results are not always "progressive." The creation and maintenance of public space thus entails risks to democracy itself, which makes public space an inherently dangerous thing.

The opponents of public, unmediated, and thoroughly politicized spaces have responded to this danger with an "enclosure" of public space. Fearful of disorder and violence in public space, some developers, planners, and city officials advocate taming space by circumscribing activities within it. Powerful processes of exclusion are thus arrayed against the play of assertive, uncontrolled difference within and necessary to public spaces. As Lefebvre (1991:373) has argued, difference threatens social order and hence must be absorbed by hegemonic powers:

> Differences arise on the margins of the homogenized realm, either in the form of resistances or in the form of externalities. . . . What is different is, to begin with, what is *excluded:* the edges of the city, shanty towns, the spaces of forbidden games, of guerrilla war, of war. Sooner or later, however, the existing centre and the forces of homogenization must seek to absorb all such differences, and they will succeed if these retain a defensive posture and no counterattack is mounted from their side. In the latter event, centrality and normality will be tested to the limits of their power to integrate, to recuperate, or to destroy whatever has transgressed. (emphasis in the original)

Whether challenged from the left or the right, the established power of the state and capital are threatened by the exercise of public rights within public spaces.

The conflicting desires for order and for rights and representation structured the 1991 riots at People's Park. Activists in Berkeley fought on behalf of expansion and opposition: the power of the state and corporate capitalism, they felt, had to be opposed by (re)taking space. *Only* by taking and maintaining control over People's Park could oppositional political activity be represented and advanced. For activists such as David Nadle, the precedent was clear. The struggle in People's Park was another "Tiananmen Square" in which Park activists and homeless people together would halt the expansion of the corporate state (Kahn 1991b:30).

Conclusion: The End of People's Park as Public Space?

The University seemed just as clear in its use of precedents. According to an unnamed University employee, Berkeley Chancellor Cheng-Lin Tien "personally rejected" the possibility of further negotiations with activists during the

riots "on the grounds that he wanted violence and confrontation to show the regents he is tough. He alluded to Bush's actions in the Persian Gulf; you don't negotiate, you simply attack" (Kahn 1991c:13). Attack was necessary because the occupation of People's Park by homeless people and activists was illegal and illegitimate, and because that occupation had excluded the majority from the Park. Berkeley City Manager Michael Brown promised the City would do all that was necessary to ensure implementation of a more orderly vision of public space. Referring to the homeless residents and activists, Brown told the *New York Times* (1991c:A8): "If they obstruct the majority opinion in a democracy, the city, the university, the county, and the state will apply whatever force is necessary to carry out the law." Brown kept his word. In the midst of the battle between protesters and police, Brown told the press: "We have a serious situation out there. People think this is about volleyball at the park but it is not. It's about a group of people who think they can use violence to force their will on a community, and we won't accept that" (Lynch 1991a:A21). "We almost lost the city," he added later (Kahn 1991c:13); the police and governing institutions of the city, according to Brown, were nearly incapable of quieting the disorderly politics of the street (*ibid*).

The long-simmering, and sometimes white-hot, controversies over People's Park in Berkeley are paradigmatic of the struggles that define the nature of "the public" and public space. Activists see places like the Park as spaces *for* representation. By *taking* public space, social movements represent themselves to larger audiences. Conversely, representatives of mainstream institutions argue that public spaces must be orderly and safe in order to function properly. These fundamentally opposed visions of public space clashed in the riots over People's Park in August 1991. Though the "public" status of People's Park remains ambiguous (given UC's legal title to the land), the political importance of the Park as public space rests on its status as a *taken* space. By wresting control of People's Park from the state, Park activists held at bay issues of control, order, and state power. But for many others, the Park's parallel history as a refuge for the homeless suggested that People's Park had become unmanageable, that large segments of the public felt threatened by the Park's relatively large resident population, and that the City and University needed to exercise more control over the Park. For more than two decades, these visions of the Park as a public space collided as UC sought to reclaim the Park and to define the Park's appropriate public and what counted as appropriate behavior there.

As the history of People's Park has unfolded, the homeless have become rather iconographic. One of the issues raised by the struggles over People's Park (and one that I have not completely answered), is the degree to which "safe havens" like People's Park address the needs of homeless people themselves.[22] Certainly the provision of "free spaces" for the homeless in cities does nothing to address the structural production of homelessness in capitalist societies. Nor do these "havens" necessarily provide safety for homeless people (cf. Vaness 1993). But, as I have argued, spaces like People's Park are also political spaces. For homeless people, these spaces are more than just "homes." They serve as sites within which homeless people can be seen and represented, as places within which activism on homelessness can arise and expand outward. On the stages of these spaces, homeless people and others may insist upon public representation and recognition in ways that are not possible in the vacuous spaces of the electronic frontier or the highly controlled pseudo-public spaces of the mall and the festival marketplace.

People's Park represents therefore an important instance in the on-going struggles over the nature of public space in America (and elsewhere). The riots that occurred there invite us to focus attention on appropriate uses of public space, the definitions of legitimate publics, and the nature of democratic discourse and political action. By listening to various actors as they assessed their motives in People's Park, we have seen that struggles over public space are struggles over opposing ideologies, over the ways in which members of society conceptualize public space. These public utterances reflect divergent ideological positions, adhering more or less to one of two poles in discourse about public space: public space as a place of unmediated political interaction, and public space as a place of order, controlled recreation, and spectacle. Arguments in behalf of the thesis of "the end of public space" suggest that an orderly, controlled vision of public space in the city is squeezing out other ways of imagining public spaces. The recent history

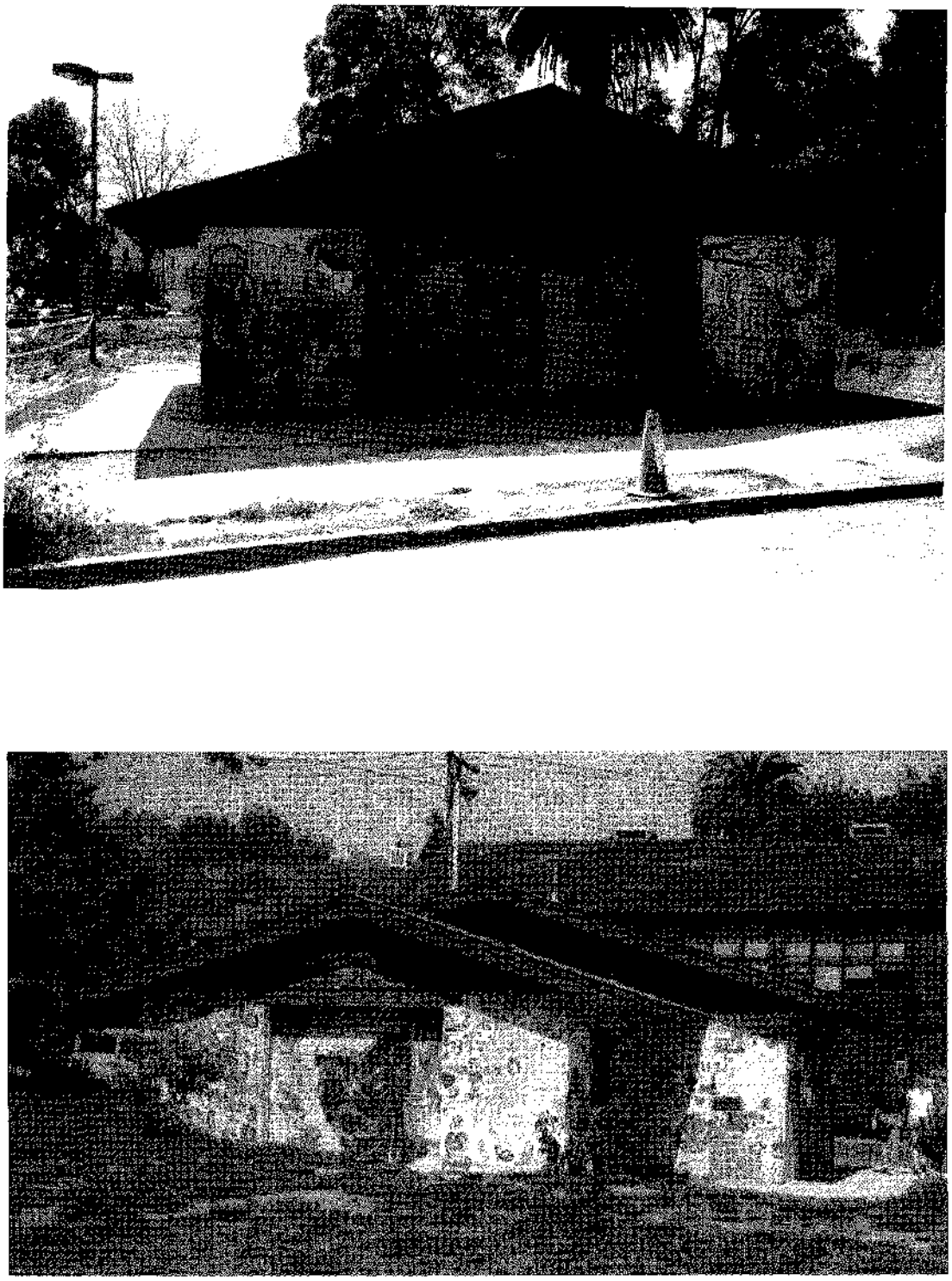

Figure 7. The restrooms (top) and equipment shed (bottom) built as part of the 1991 UC-City agreement. According to Park residents, the equipment shed doubles as a police substation. Source of photo: Don Mitchell.

of People's Park suggests that these arguments are, if profoundly important, too simple. Oppositional movements continually strive to assure the currency of more expansive visions of public space. Still, to the degree that the "disneyfication" of public space advances and political movements are shut out of public space, oppositional movements lose the spaces where they may be represented (or may represent themselves) as legitimate parts of "the public." As the words and actions of the protagonists in Berkeley suggest, the stakes are high and the struggles over them might very well be bloody. But that is at once the promise and the danger of public space.

Coda

As for now, an uneasy truce has settled over People's Park. On a sunny but cold Sunday morning in January 1993, some thirty to fifty homeless people sleep, sit on benches, and chat in small groups. The unnetted volleyball courts are idle. The basketball court is also vacant. A new building, already covered with graffiti, houses toilets with no doors on the stalls. During the school term, students may borrow volleyballs and basketballs from a room in this building that looks out over the large grassy center of the Park. According to some Park residents, this room doubles as a police substation. On this particular morning, the shutters are pulled down (Figure 7). Some of the graffiti appears to be gang or individual "tags," but most depicts events of the 1969 and 1991 riots (Figure 8). There are also painted references to Rosebud DeNovo, the Park regular who was killed by police after she broke into the UC Chancellor's house wielding a large cleaver (Fimrite and Wilson 1992:A1; Snider 1992:A1). Police patrol the Park, but on this morning they attract little notice from the homeless people.

By nine in the morning, the arrival of a small group of women for the day's protest serves as a reminder that Park activists continue to use the Park as a staging ground (Figure 9). But

Figure 8. Symbols of conflict and power on the bathroom wall at People's Park. Activists have sought to reclaim this space by depicting the various activities and riots associated with the Park. These murals seem less able to withstand random graffiti than does the mural of the 1969 riots down the street. Source of photo: Don Mitchell.

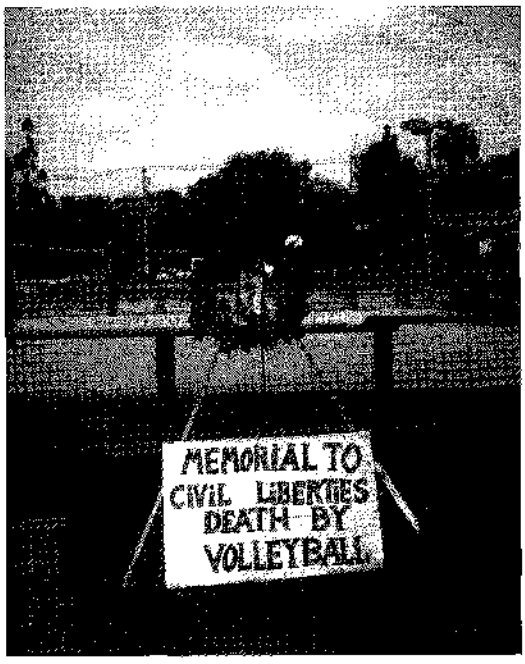

Figure 9. A typical symbolic protest at People's Park. This sign appears frequently at the edge of the volleyball courts along Dwight Avenue to remind passers-by of the issues behind the recent changes in the Park. Source of photo: Nora Mitchell.

their descriptions of political activities are now peppered with tales of police abuse and rumors of homeless women raped by police. While I cannot confirm the truth of these accounts, that they are told at all speaks vividly of the enduring animosity and uneasiness that rules this space. What is certainly true is that UC has brought a series of suits against Park protesters and activists for alleged damages during the 1991 riots. In early 1993, UC offered to settle with the defendants in exchange for a payment of $10,000 and their acquiescence to a permanent injunction that barred them from acts of vandalism and violence against the University and from "interfering with construction on the park." Averring that UC was seeking to silence criticism, the defendants refused the settlement and filed a countersuit claiming that they were victims of a Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation (SLAPP) (Stallone 1993:9).[23]

On a beautiful Sunday morning like this one, such matters seem remote to me, but not to the women with whom I speak. They are defendants in the University's suit. As we talk the police spend more and more time watching our activities. The Free Stage and Free Box still stand, but so too do the bright security lights that blaze through the night, illuminating most of the Park. Is this the public space that Park activists envisioned? Is it the open space the University wanted? I am not sure; what I do know is that these issues are far from resolved and that so long as we live in a society which so efficiently produces homelessness, spaces like these will be—indeed *must be*—always at the center of social struggle. For it is by struggling over and within space that the natures of "the public" and of democracy are defined.

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Notes

1. The best reporting of the riots is in the weekly *East Bay Express* (Auchard 1991:1ff; Kahn 1991c:1ff; Rivlin 1991b:1ff) which details incidents of police abuse and the actions of protesters.
2. The details of the 1969 riots are less important here than their effects and meaning. Interested readers may find more detailed descriptions in Mitchell (1992a); Rorabaugh (1989); and Scheer (1969).
3. In the August 1991 riots, the first target for window smashers and looters was Miller's Outpost outlet on Telegraph. Miller's Outpost was one of the earliest corporate chains to expand into the Telegraph shopping district (Auchard 1991:19).
4. The response in Berkeley has been to pioneer a "liberal" anti-homeless campaign. Shoppers and residents are asked to give panhandlers 25¢ vouchers rather than cash. These vouchers may then be exchanged for food or laundry services. They may not be used for alcohol or tobacco. "I don't know that we will discourage panhandling," says Jeffrey Leiter, President of the Downtown Berkeley Association, "but we will encour-

age good panhandling." The value of the program for a merchant along Shattuck street is that "the truly homeless people will approve. The streetpeople who are just hustling may object. We hope this will help them move on" (Bishop 1991:A10). This program has now been copied in numerous other cities. In each case, the hope that vouchers will separate the "deserving" from the "undeserving" poor is paramount. Marylin Haas, the Director of Downtown Boulder Inc., wonders if vouchers "will make those people [panhandlers] leave. I don't know. But I think this is worth a try, and the timing is good" (George 1993:B4).

5. I recognize that there are potentially many more than two visions of the nature and purpose of public space, and that many people will hold a middle (and perhaps a wavering) ground between them. But these, as we will see, are the predominant ways of seeing public space across a variety of societies and historical periods. I suggest in what follows that by examining these visions, we can begin to see how public space is produced through their dialectical interaction.
6. Lefebvre (1991:39) claims that representational space is "passively experienced" by its users, yet his thesis will not withstand scrutiny. People actively transform their spaces, appropriating them (or not) strategically.
7. At least this is how the separation of spheres was posited, even if in actuality these divisions never precisely existed.
8. Public women in the city, as E. Wilson (1991) suggests, have historically been viewed as suspicious, as prostitutes, deranged, or uncontrolled. Alternatively, stylized representations of women in public—the heroine on the barricades—have often proven ideologically important in political struggles over space.
9. Of course, widening the franchise has never been a guarantee of full political participation—and still is not. Nonetheless, many of the necessary political and legal structures are now in place to guarantee to many traditionally excluded groups at least a fulcrum in the sphere of the public with which to leverage further political advances.
10. This definition of space has been challenged by those who see electronic media assuming the role of public space in modern democracies; see below.
11. "The great difference between Arendt and Habermas," Howell (1993:314) writes, ". . . is that, for Arendt, public space, as distinct from the public sphere, has not lost its geographical significance."
12. Legal definitions of the homeless in English jurisprudence can be traced in Ripton-Turner (1887). For an American example of how citizenship issues and homelessness interact in legal discourse, see Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1890).
13. This attitude has certainly grown in the years since Will commented on the celebrated Joyce Brown case in New York. This is precisely the type of rhetoric that proved so useful in the recent mayoral campaigns in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and elsewhere. It has guided new laws such as those in Seattle that prohibit sitting or lying down on sidewalks between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m.; and it intrudes in San Francisco's debate over the size of the "bubble" within which homeless people will be prohibited from standing near automatic teller machines. For a more recent celebration of the need for order in cities, see Leo (1994; also *New York Times* 1989b:A14; 1991b:B1; 1992a:1.40).
14. The quotation from the end of Deutsche's comments is from a Vancouver, BC, Social Planning Department document that defined public space as places open and accessible for twelve or more hours a day. Obviously, in this rendering, public space has a temporal dimension as well: public spaces *can* be closed.
15. Public spaces have also been places of religious activity in many cities. In the American context, however, the formal relegation of religion to the private sphere—separate from a secular state—has meant that the role of religion has been relatively weak.
16. I am indebted to Neil Smith for helping me to see the distinctions between socially produced "difference" (largely a product of social struggle) and constrained diversity (largely a product of design).
17. Compare Wallace (1989) who argues that the presentation of spectacle in place of history and society fits well with prevailing corporate conceptions of progress and "democracy."
18. For an analysis of the dangers of the narcissistic empowerment implied in what MMG celebrates, see Sennett (1992).
19. For example, the National Science Foundation has begun to franchise network-access points to regional telephone companies which may begin charging for electronic transmissions and data transfer. The metaphors we use to describe electronic "space" are very important. Metaphors of public space imply rights for citizens. Highway metaphors, on the other hand, bespeak of a need for regulation and policing. Rather than raising questions of rights, highway metaphors suggest that, like driving, electronic communication is a privilege.
20. Hershkovitz is arguing against de Certeau's (1984) notion that movements of political resistance are inherently placeless. Hegemonic powers, according to de Certeau (1984:xix), have a monopoly on place and space, and resistance can only occur in the interstices—no place.
21. There is, of course, a danger of arguing for "safe havens" for discourse or just for everyday life—especially in the case of homeless people. To the degree that People's Park became an oasis for a homeless counterpublic, was it also possible to ghettoize the social and political production of homelessness to these areas? That is certainly a problem, but as Fraser (1990:67) points out, the creation of subaltern counter-public *spaces* allows political actors "to disseminate one's discourse into ever widening arenas." Places like

People's Park become staging grounds for wider political movements (Mitchell 1992a).

22. In November 1992, a judge in Miami declared that Dade County would have to establish "safe havens" for homeless people. In these havens, police harassment of aid workers, panhandlers, or those "sleeping rough" would not be tolerated by the court. The court-ordered creation of public space in this instance stands in stark contrast to the dominant trend of closing space to the illegitimate (*New York Times* 1992b:A10; on closing public space to the homeless, see the map and report in the *New York Times* 1989c:E5).
23. An Alameda County Judge has granted a temporary injunction similar to the permanent order sought by UC.

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Mitchell, Don. 1995. The End of Public Space? People's Park, Definitions of the Public, and Democracy. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 85(1):108–133. *Abstract.*

The nature of public space in contemporary society is changing. This paper uses the turmoil over People's Park in Berkeley, California, as a means for exploring changing ideas about and practices in public space. I argue that as public space is increasingly privatized or otherwise brought under greater control, possibilities for democratic action are minimized. To make this claim, I provide a brief outline of the roots of the August 1991 riots at People's Park. I then examine the role that public space plays in modern democracies, and how ideas about public space have developed dialectically with definitions of who counts as "the public." In American democracy, "the public" is constituted by private individuals. In this paper, I suggest that the presence of homeless people in public spaces raises important contradictions at the heart of this definition of "the public." Many commentators suggest that these contradictions have led

to "the end of public space" in contemporary cities, or at the very least, the removal of its political functions to the "space" of electronic communication. I examine what this move means for democratic action in the city and show that material public spaces remain a necessity for (particularly) oppositional political movements. This returns us to People's Park, as these were precisely the issues that structured the riots in 1991. I conclude the paper with a sketch of where People's Park and the issues raised by the riots now stand. **Key Words:** democracy, electronic space, homelessness, People's Park, political representation, public space, rights, social movements.

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