Gramsci and Foucault in Central Park: environmental hegemonies, pedagogical spaces and integral state formations

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Abstract

Gramsci's and Foucault's readings of power provide critical illuminations for understanding the linkage of state formations to urbanization and the spatial production of subjectivity. This article uses Central Park to illustrate how a combination of their insights helps to elucidate the emergence of pedagogical spaces and environmental hegemonies. I first propose a conceptual framework drawing on diverse parallels and tensions in Gramsci's *Quaderni del carcere* and Foucault's investigations in the 1970s, reassessed here from the vantage point of the implicit debate with Marxism in *La société punitive*. Urbanization and the built environment are theorized as material apparatuses of a form of capillary power that reconfigures the relations between state, civil society and individual subjects, striving to forge common senses of space that buttress political hegemony. This analytical toolkit is then applied in a political reappraisal of Central Park, exploring the role of design in the pedagogy of subaltern spatialities and the normalization of a consensual regime of publicity. The discussion pays special attention to the park's assemblage of liberal and disciplinary spatial techniques, its connection to broader agencies beyond core state apparatuses, and their effect on the advent of an integral state formation.

Key words

Introduction

New York City politics faced a regime crisis in the 1850s. Economic turbulence and labor unrest had increased in the previous decade, following breakneck growth after the creation of the Erie Canal. A brief period of expansion ensued, but the city was again hit by deceleration in the winter of 1854-5 (Burrows and Wallace, 1999: 824-33; Wilentz, 2004: 363). Increasingly vulnerable to displacement in the budding metropolis, workers began to develop a more proactive strategy that aspired to take over urban policy, proscribing top-down reformism amidst corruption scandals and the dissolution of the Jacksonian party system (Bernstein, 1990: 75-78; Commons, 1918: 547-ff.; Ware, 1924: 227-240). At stake was political centrality and, with it, the capacity to delineate the contours of debate about alternative city futures. Tackling this challenge, diverse elite groups strived to revive upper-class hegemony with a program of new public facilities that fused the provision of services with an attempt to control popular strata and secure

support from an embryonic middle class. In this process the bourgeoisie transformed Gotham into an urban laboratory which, in turn, altered the shape of local statehood (Scobey, 2002: 40). The built environment became a governmental device, increasingly connected to other regulatory spheres. Public space was a particularly ticklish matter. A highly contested material expression of class hierarchies, it also began to be perceived as an opportunity to articulate the political field. In that context the idea of a grand park acquired the status of an open spatial signifier, concentrating class battles to reimagine the social landscape of Manhattan. An emergent Republican reformism gradually prevailed in this struggle for meaning, envisioning Central Park as a paradigmatic piece of a new generation of public institutions promoting the formation of a cohesive American people.

This article serves a double purpose. The case of Central Park is examined to illustrate how the attempt to regulate urban order generates 'environmental hegemonies' whereby certain class projects mobilize and mediate the intersection of space, design, governance, and subjectivity to further their own interests. In order to unpack this process, I first elaborate a conceptual scaffold for understanding such declensions of power, drawing on several parallels and tensions in the work of Antonio Gramsci and Michel Foucault. Previous attempts to combine their insights are developed here to elucidate how urban environments are operationalized by, and in turn rearticulate, state formations when enmeshed in subject(ivat)ion processes. This framework relies particularly on the complementarities between Gramsci's *Quaderni del carcere* and Foucault's investigations in the 1970s, re-read in the light of his lectures on *La société punitive*, a material that provides new opportunities for a productive dialogue with Marxism (Elden, 2015; Hoffman, 2015). The conversation between these theoretical bodies in the second section is then applied to articulate the empirical-historical discussion in section three.

Through this analytical lens some important regulatory innovations of Central Park stand out, which hitherto remain insufficiently theorized despite the substantial related literature in various fields (eg, see Cranz, 1982: 3-59; Gandy, 2002: 77-113; Schuyler, 1986: 77-100; and, especially, the magisterial monograph by Rosenzweig and Blackmar, 1992). First, the governmentalization of landscape, public space and urban nature implicit in the experience contributed to reshape erstwhile state-civil society divides. The incipient new state-form took greater control of urbanization processes, but also connected them to forms of power increasingly diffused and articulated to other agencies within and beyond traditional administrative apparatuses. Secondly, in order to counter the emerging working-class linkage of struggles in the workplace and the neighborhood, this novel institutional ensemble sought to forge a consensual spatial imagination, presenting an orderly, monitored leisure realm disconnected from both the shop floor and popular communities as a matter of general interest. The agendas and means to achieve this goal differed. However, the creation of the park fostered a

growing agreement between various upper-class sectors and a nascent middle-class about how a proper use of public space should look like. Thirdly, this common sense of publicity was to be achieved by investing space with a pedagogical agency that blended a new, liberal approach to subjectivity formation with previous disciplinary schemes. In a vision that would become an intrinsic element of subsequent reform, a moralized urbanization should help to mold autonomous individuals capable of reproducing normative, decorous deportments. Subjects were being recast as the terminal ends of a capillary statehood.

Critical approaches have problematized the conventional portrait of Central Park, depicting it as a bourgeois landscape created for the enjoyment of local elites (Rosenzweig and Blackmar, 1992) or the intensification of real estate profit (Gandy, 2002). Still, these conditions were not specific to our case at that time. Less controversial institutional schemes and much more lucrative methods were available to create exclusive leisure areas and boost property values—the Viennese Ringstraße or Haussmann's boulevards in Paris are two examples of contemporary initiatives that mobilized real estate and financial capital to build grand elite sceneries. Moreover, the connection of landscaped spaces with speculation and the creation of exclusive promenades were common phenomena in Manhattan since the 1830s, with the tradition of small gardens in upper-class neighborhoods (McNeur, 2014: 47).

The analytical toolkit I propose illuminates a genuine aspect of Central Park: its capacity to integrate these moments in a more ambitious political and regulatory experiment, delineating a general economy of public pleasures and hence forging new forms of hegemony that relied on spatial mediations to reproduce state effects across broader layers of the social body. The park's class character lay in its attempt to materially articulate bourgeois social and cultural preeminence by prefiguring a new common sense of urban order—a representation of space whereby the elite not only reinforced its class boundaries through promenades and carriage drives, but also and especially tried to normalize and educate the entire body politic, rendering its social 'others' a polite, respectful assemblage of subaltern classes. The goal was only partially achieved. However, the experience established a reference framework for subsequent articulations of state forms around urbanization, design and collective pedagogies, illustrating a broader shift in mid- to late nineteenth-century urban reform, with an emerging mode of capillary governance that used both liberal and disciplinary means to shape a new public sphere.

Integral state formations, pedagogical power and environmental hegemonies in Gramsci and Foucault

This section explores the resonances between Gramsci and Foucault in order to propose a set of theoretical coordinates for the analysis of urban statehood, which will be applied

afterwards in the study of Central Park.[1] Of course, both authors have met before in the work of other scholars. Mouffe's (1979: 201) early remark about Foucault's "convergence" with Gramsci has been followed by a now rich tradition of contributions. Cocks (2013), Ives (2004), Kreps (2015), Laclau and Mouffe (1985), Morera (2000) and Olssen (1999: 89-110) have noticed some of the correspondences developed here, albeit not systematically. The fields of history and geography provide especially valuable interpretations of this encounter. Gunn (2006) portrays Gramsci and Foucault as intellectual landmarks for successive social history paradigms with a common focus on the analysis of power formations. Ekers and Loftus (2008: 11) see the combination of the spatial dimensions in the work of these authors as a critical opportunity for "theorizing the urbanization of capitalist hegemony". The discussion below extends this tradition with a reappraisal that uses the vantage point of *La société punitive*—which provides a more obvious engagement with Marxist authors and topics (Elden, 2015; Hoffman, 2015)—to reinterpret Foucault's work during the 1970s.[2]

This analytical framework will allow to depart from the functionalism implicit in many analyses of Central Park, which present the state as a direct supplier of simple class purposes, be they recreational, economic, disciplinary, or other. My reassessment of the park's governance builds upon four interrelated aspects of Gramsci's and Foucault's works: a) the development of a new state-form through the proliferation of practices of government beyond conventional administrative apparatuses; b) the normalization and homogenization of common sense as foundations of a public sphere that secures hegemony and enables the conduct of social conducts; c) the emergence of pedagogical power and new regulatory techniques to implement these strategies, combining liberal and disciplinary interpellations that take subjects as targets of moral reform; d) the political mobilization of built environments as governmental technologies and the development of environmental hegemonies at the local scale as a means to stabilize social order.

Restructuring the state-civil society divide

Both Gramsci and Foucault conceived power relationally, as a substance that articulates state and civil society, regulatory apparatuses and subjects. Problematizing Marxian premises about state supervision of civil society, they endowed the hypothesis of a statecraft that percolates "down to the private life of each individual" (Marx, 1869: 38) with political and institutional complexity. For Gramsci, the extension of government beyond administrative apparatuses defines the contour of an 'integral state' that gradually subsumes diverse manifestations of civil society; using a more flexible approach, Foucault emphasized the co-determination of central and peripheral agencies and the emergence of new forms of government as a by-product that reconfigures previous demarcations between both spheres.

While both authors saw the state as the institutional condensation of a bundle of political strategies, the Sardinian developed a more structural account of its morphology and class content. Gramsci (2007: Q4§38, Q8§130, Q13§17)[3] thought of the state not only as a thing or a relation, but also as a condition or quality, the protean effect of schemes for organizing social life. His notion of 'integral state' (1996: 458-459, 2007: Q6§137, Q6§155, Q13§18, Q15§10) qualifies the political agency as a dialectical unity whose attributes are the 'political society'—the conventional conception of the state as public administration—and 'civil society'—"the set of organisms commonly called 'private'" (Gramsci, 2007: Q12§1; see also Thomas, 2009: 190-193). These moments do not constitute necessarily separated ensembles, but work as different sets of relations so that certain agencies can operate on both spheres simultaneously (Simon, 1991: 72).

The interface between political society and civil society is historically mediated by shifting forms of hegemony. As an arena where rival conceptions of the world collide and struggle to become dominant, civil society sieges and can at the same time be seized by political society (Gramsci, 2007: Q7§18). Depending on the balance of forces at any particular time, civil society can be the engine to transform political society or work as its buttress, reproducing the procedures of administrative apparatuses (Gramsci, 2007: Q6§138, Q7§16). Integral state formations emerged in the second scenario, as a result of the Lampedusian 'revolutions from above' that swept Europe in the decades following the 1848 Springtime of the Peoples (Gramsci, 2007: Q13§7, Q15§11; Morton 2007: 63-67).

During this phase of 'passive revolution'—whose features were also evident in the contemporary wave of political change in antebellum New York, as we will see—the bourgeoisie expanded statehood to reinforce its rule, incorporating reform initiatives beyond traditional institutions and forging new social alliances with an emerging middle class (Gramsci, 2007: Q8§36, Q10-I§9, Q15§62). In this process political societies reshaped, colonized and, ultimately, re-invented civil societies as creatures of the new state-form. Foucault (2004a: 357-358, 2004b: 299-301; see also *Foucault Studies*, 2015) referred to this problem too in the late 1970s, from a different political perspective, when he described civil society as a "technology of government", the discursive "correlate" of a new mode of liberal governmentality. Along with the formation of a nascent generation of institutions in this period, Gramsci (2007: Q7§83, Q13§37) identified new regimes of publicity as the key intersection between political society and civil society, an interface across which the former reconfigures the latter. Again, we find echoes of this formulation in Foucault's (2004a: 77, 281) depiction of the public as something that states mold by means of practices of truth in order to shape opinions and behaviors.

But Foucault's earlier contributions reveal an even more obvious consonance with Gramsci's interpretation, especially in *La société punitive*. Here he suggests a similar

interrelation in the historical development of new linkages between state and civil society, emphasizing the circularity of the process (Foucault, 2013: 109-113). Initially, self-disciplined bourgeois groups try to moralize social order and demand that state apparatuses incorporate this imperative in order to control the lower orders. This moralization of the state is followed by a gradual "statization" of the punitive tactic and later by its dissemination in the entire social fabric (Foucault, 2013: 115). Civil institutions then reproduce the mechanisms of state apparatuses and converge in their mission to reform the working class, operating as "power multipliers" in a society that tends to adopt a state structure (Foucault, 2013: 192, 211, 214-215). Foucault (1975: 140, 215, 1997: 39) subsequently underscored the role of police as a vehicle for this distribution of state power in the social body and suggested that state apparatuses themselves sit upon this network of scattered devices. Social dominance hinges upon this process of capillarization, as the elite incorporates and delegates certain functions to groups which initially held different interests (Foucault, 2013: 128-129). Such diversion legitimates the actions of a state that now appears as a mediator between classes and social agencies (Foucault, 2013: 168). Foucault (1976: 123-124) later considered the state-form itself as the hegemonic effect of this dynamic, the strategic articulation that binds them together.

Hegemony, normalization, and the struggle to shape common sense

In his most developed formulation, Gramsci (2007: Q13§37, Q15§10, Q19§24) conceived hegemony as leadership (*direzione*), a condition combining consent and coercion, forged in the sphere of civil society but secured through political-society procedures. Hegemony relies on "diffused and capillary form[s]" of "molecular" power, a constellation of institutions, agents, and material and discursive practices that structure everyday lives by "modifying … customs and … ideas" (Gramsci, 2007: Q14§13, Q15§11). These hegemonic apparatuses constitute the expanded state as a crystallization of governmental moments beyond the conventional administrative fabric (Gramsci, 2007: Q3§49, Q6§136). They compose social identities, guiding allied factions, and controlling, reforming and, if necessary, repressing antagonistic groups (Gramsci, 2007: Q12§1, Q19§24).

Hegemony is a ceaseless discursive struggle for the production of common senses that shape forms of consciousness (Gramsci, 2007: Q10-I§12, Q11§13). It attempts to totalize the field of the intelligible, mediating structures of feeling, images of the world and experience on an everyday basis (Gramsci, 2007: Q10-II§44, Q11§67). Politics thus becomes a battle to stabilize collective meanings that prescribe how to live in common, and hegemony the capacity of particular blocs to present their own agendas as universal interests, turning them into "norms of conduct for the entire population" (Gramsci, 2007: Q6§79, Q13§17). In this context, conceptions of the world are strategic because they have material correlates in the realm of praxis that embody these norms and

configure social order (Gramsci, 2007: Q11§13); they operate "transitorily—via emotions—or permanently" as a drive "whereby the intellectual base is so rooted, assimilated and experienced that it can become passion" (Gramsci, 2007: Q10-II§44). Hence the "reform of consciousness" strives to homogenize fragmentary, incoherent popular common senses, introducing a "new moral" in order to forge an organic cohesive people (Gramsci, 2007: Q10-II§12, Q11§13, Q15§13). However, this is always a labyrinthine project requiring constant readjustments, precisely because common sense "is not a singular conception, identical in time and space" but the multitude's variegated expression (Gramsci, 2007: Q8§173). As will be seen, the trajectory of Central Park illustrates the precarious, open condition of these dynamics of homogenization.

In *La société punitive* Foucault (2013: 213,220) provides essential indications to understand *how* "institutions of normalization" articulate this process, naturalizing the interests of a particular social group. His mentor, Georges Canguilhem (1988: 182-183), had theorized the ascent of a "normative class" in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, an elite with the "power to identify … the function of social norms with the use that class made of those whose content it determined". Following that thread, Foucault analyzed the formation of "apparatuses of confinement" (*appareils de séquestration*) that produce 'normal' individuals by moralizing popular and proletarian behaviors through a direct or indirect control of existence (Foucault, 2013: 179,217, 221,242; see also 1997: 34-35,225, 1999: 24,45-48). He later observed that the more liberal "apparatuses of security" (*dispositifs de sécurité*) prolong the attempt to turn an amorphous people into a well-ordered 'population' by other means (Foucault, 2004a: 44-45, 57-58).

Subjectivity, pedagogical power and the assemblage of government techniques

The parallels between Gramsci and Foucault are even more palpable—and particularly relevant for our study of Central Park—in the analysis of power as a process that generates new articulations between the state and subjects, reaching the point where new citizens are engineered with a self-regulated subjectivity that replicates governmental action (Foucault, 1982: 789-790; Gramsci, 2007: Q8§142). Although Foucault delved deeper into this question, the Sardinian provided a striking precedent for his interpretive strategies. Gramsci (2007: Q8§130) advanced the perspective of an "organic unity" between state and subject inasmuch as the former deploys an "element of active culture" that "create[s] a new civilization, a new type of … citizen" whose spontaneous initiative becomes the "normal continuation" of political society. Stabilizing "norms [as] rules of life and conduct", the self-governed deportment of individuals acquires a "state character" and embodies "new forms of state life" (Gramsci, 2007: QC8§130, Q14§13). While Foucault also read the subject as an effect of power, he hinted at a "co-evolution of modern statehood and modern subjectivity"

(Lemke, 2007: 44; Foucault, 1982: 782-783), with new practices of government based on "systems of subjectivation" (*systèmes d'assujettissement*) that "manufacture individuals" (Foucault, 1975: 30, 172, 1997: 38-39). Police—broadly understood as the ensemble of mechanisms securing social order (Foucault, 2004a: 320-321)—plays a central role in this endeavor. Associated to specific facilities or as a holistic function covering the entire social spectrum (Foucault, 1976: 35, 2004a: 329-331, 2013: 123), it guarantees the integration of subjects in a state framework by distributing individuals in a set of institutions and activities throughout their lives (Foucault, 1975: 144, 2004a: 329-330, 2013: 210, 214, 234).

The pedagogical essence of government in this process of subject(ivat)ion is another common feature in both authors. In *La société punitive* Foucault (2013: 243; see also 1975: 238) presents the "master" as the paradigmatic figure of a regime of "total education" that invests social institutions with an instructional mission. These agents of productive power inculcate conducts on an everyday basis, only occasionally resorting to punishment (Foucault, 2013: 109, 113-114, 242). Subsequent analyses led into the idea of pastoral power and a conduct of conducts that spans the individual's whole existence (Foucault, 2004a: 129-134). Forty years before, Gramsci (2007: Q10-II§44) had already observed that "[e]very relationship of 'hegemony' is necessarily a pedagogical relationship", noting that this bond "exists throughout society as a whole". Critical reflection on education pervades the *Quaderni*, either as a power-analytical perspective—which will be emphasized here—or as a political project through the linkage of philosophy of praxis to a re-education of the masses. For Gramsci the integral state "transformed [its] entire function" to "become an 'educator'" (Gramsci, 2007: Q8§2), making "educative functions" its "most important" activity (Gramsci, 2007: Q26§6). Their "formative role" is "that of creating new and higher types of civilization, of adapting … the morality of the broadest popular masses … thus of physically producing new types of humanity", shaping the environment to transform "customs, ways of thinking and acting" (Gramsci, 2007: Q11§22, Q13§7).

This project involves both coercion and persuasion. However, like Foucault, Gramsci emphasized the latter's advantages as a vehicle to produce hegemony (Gramsci, 2007: Q13§37). Pedagogical power transforms coercion into liberality by instilling subjects with a form of self-government that consolidates elite's authority (Gramsci, 2007: Q12§2). In other words, "liberal" hegemonies govern through freedom (Gramsci, 2007: Q19§24). Similarly, Foucault's security apparatuses entail a liberalism that rules by constantly manufacturing and organizing freedom, even by force (Foucault, 2004a: 49-50, 2004b: 65-66). Liberal governmentality rests upon the relative autonomy of individuals—the state channels collective desires, providing services that shape them in the image of an alleged general interest (Foucault, 2004a: 75, 77). While Gramsci's remarks about the combination of both strategies remained intuitive, Foucault developed a more consistent account of the specific articulation of diverse power

technologies in various contexts. Between 1977 and 1979 he put forward a tentative synthesis of disciplinary, police, biopolitical and security mechanisms, suggesting that they can be understood as moments that appear simultaneously to regulate different aspects of social life (Foucault, 2004a: 361, 2004b: 68). The continuity or separation between punitive and liberal techniques, between negative and positive forms of power, depends on ad-hoc strategies that obstruct certain practices while encouraging others (Foucault, 1976: 124, 135). The state is the effect resulting from these (re)assemblages, the reactivation of old procedures and their connection to new mechanisms (Foucault, 1997: 215-216, 222).

Spatial apparatuses and environmental hegemonies

Finally, both thinkers provide inspiration to grasp how state power becomes materially articulated in the built environment.[4] I will conclude this discussion by considering some general political-spatial implications of the elements above. A tradition of texts has developed Gramsci's frequently implicit spatial ruminations beyond his attention to the political geography of international relations, focusing on how hegemonic struggles to mold the material structure of ideology produced the modern urban fabric and the local integral state (Davies, 2013: 3216; Ekers, Hart et al, 2013; Ekers and Loftus, 2013; Gramsci, 2007: Q3§49; Jessop, 2005; Morton, 2007: 92, 130-131). Extending this line of research, the arguments above can also be utilized in a more speculative approach, with a spatial extrapolation of Gramsci's theorization of language. For him, linguistic practices are the basis of knowledge and feeling, and hence become the object of hegemonic struggles. State normative grammars try to compose subaltern spontaneous grammars in a coherent, acquiescent enunciation of the world (Gramsci, 2007: Q10-II§44, Q29§2; see also Ives, 2004: 90-96). Similarly, harsh battles are waged over the meaning and constitution of the spatial practices that configure the urban environment, over what a city is and what—and who—belongs therein. Regimes of urbanity embody specific social orders. Hence the importance of mobilizing and shaping a 'common sense of public space'. Quoting Marx, Gramsci (2007: Q11§22) concludes that "if the environment is the educator, it must in turn be educated too".

Following this intuition, we can speak of 'environmental hegemony' to designate the dissemination of a system of spatial conceptions and performances which are functional to generate this normative grammar of spatiality and the dominant-bloc goals it guarantees. In line with the discussion above, 'environmental hegemonies' should be grasped not as a preconceived overall plan, but as a mobile 'state effect' resulting from struggles to inscribe meaning in social space—the fruit of regulatory maneuvers that, transcending merely administrative measures and mingling practices of government within and outside core state apparatuses, activate certain sociomaterial configurations and spatial procedures to produce environments that compose and buttress a particular social order, securing the reproduction of political power. The process is reflexive. Not

only are environments transformed under the influence of hegemonic apparatuses, but the latter are also shaped by the milieu in which they operate and are themselves generated through these procedures. Sustained as they are by unceasing environmental battles, these state assemblages are often contested and unstable. However, they are all but accidental and respond to specific political and class determinations.[5]

The forge of environmental hegemonies requires at least, a) the design of a coherent pattern of material everyday practices and its articulation as a spatial common sense embodying a conception of urban worlds; b) the organization of apparatuses that promote the assimilation of such practices by supporting and subaltern groups; and c) the implementation of devices that secure the control and repression of antagonistic spatialities. Here Foucault re-enters stage, showing how these apparatuses and forms of hegemony are sustained by complex ensembles of spatial techniques and knowledges. As is well known, Foucault studied how elite anxieties about outcasts and idle workers triggered new governmental approaches which turned spatial mechanisms into strategic regulatory devices. His analyses, however, tend to be more incisive on the scale of the building and with reference to architectural typologies within the tradition of the Enlightenment. While he provided illustrations of schemes for the economic organization of national territory under sovereign power (Foucault, 2004a: 15-17) and identified the police as the condition of possibility of modern cities in disciplinary societies (Foucault, 2004a: 343-344), we lack conceptual equivalents as effective as the panopticon (Foucault, 1975: 201-210) or the prison-form (Foucault, 2013: 72, 85-86, 230) on those scales and in relation to post-disciplinary power formations.

Under the security paradigm he referred to more diffused, centrifugal techniques of urban government (Foucault, 2004a: 46, 65-66) that take "the effects of the environment" as their "field of intervention" (Foucault, 1997: 218), mobilizing it as a means to shape the population's physical and moral condition (Foucault, 2004a: 22-25). In that sense, nineteenth-century cities and public space appear as the privileged arena for the deployment of a new form of liberal governmentality, a 'rule of freedom' that preserved police approaches but embed them in a wider scaffold of normalization techniques (Joyce, 2003). Foucault, of course, didn't develop this line of inquiry. The discussion in the next section suggests that, within that historical context, this tendency to loosen the punitive scheme (Foucault, 1975: 174) is better epitomized by what I will call a *park*-form. Fostering a generalized access under a common norm, public spaces in the fashion of Central Park pursued a series of mass effects: inoculation of polite behaviors and democratic ideals, gregarious experiences and strategic social segmentation, internalization of governmental attitudes, respectful acceptance and examination of the other, etc. From this perspective, the emergence of landscape architecture, and subsequently that of planning, can be seen as key landmarks of a governmental transformation devised to achieve new forms of environmental hegemony.

Dispositif Central Park

Passive revolution in New York City

The scheme of 'passive revolution' can be rescaled to understand the origins and role of Manhattan's urban reform and Central Park in a more intricate political trajectory than is usually the case. Compared with the oft-mentioned dawn of the Park Movement in the 1840s, the contemporary combination of economic and political crises constituted a much more excruciating element urging regulatory change (Burrows and Wallace, 1999: 833-834). Working-class unrest and reform initiatives between the late 1840s and the early 1850s posed a challenge to bourgeois hegemony that triggered a realignment of elite political actors conducive to conservative reform (Bernstein, 1990: 85-91). Whig and Republican reformism fueled the circularity of governance restructuring and tensions between agencies suggested by both Gramsci and Foucault: initially from civil society, creating new charities and normative discourses; and later, from the administration, implementing an innovative institutional constellation that reshaped, prolonged and bypassed traditional state agencies (Beckert, 2001: 73-76,92-94; Bernstein, 1990: 185). Actors such as the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, the Children Aid's Society or the Union League Club pursued a new social order and the moral reform of the 'deserving' poor through joint public-private ventures or interventionist public institutions that reconfigured the state–civil society divide (Boyer, 1992: 86-107). Despite their partisan origins, these organizations promoted their agendas as a matter of general interest, projecting an image of political centrality, realigning debates around the provision of public services and assimilating former antagonistic groups in their own endeavor. Different sectors of the Democratic Party would join soon and, after the 1863 Draft Riots and the Civil War, bipartisan lobbies such as the Citizens' Association replicated these programs, gaining support from broader strata of an emergent middle class (Bernstein, 1990: 187-188).

The process was not free of difficulties, as Frederick Law Olmsted—a Republican and founding member of the Union League—discovered through his tribulations as Superintendent, Architect-in-Chief and co-designer of Central Park. The initiative epitomized the trajectory of mid-century reformism. In the first steps it was contested by sectors of all classes: from the elite, wary of the impact of eminent domain on real estate property; to the working class, skeptical about the benefits of a then-suburban park for the population of Lower Manhattan; and an incipient middle class, concerned about the associated tax burden (Rosenzweig and Blackmar, 1992: 39-42). Institutions replicated these conflicts, with confrontations of all kinds between different political factions and local and supra-local agencies. However, the issue of social control and order soon became a consensual common ground. Even Mayor Wood—Democrat, regarded as permissive by Republicans—participated in the imagination of the park as a

security apparatus, creating a special park police in May 1856 in the first step of his short-lived inaugural Consulting Board (Olmsted Jr. and Kimball, 1973: 533). Although contradictions resumed later, by the mid-1860s the main conflicts were seemingly limited to inner administrative struggles and design criteria. The press extolled the benefits of the park. Olmsted crowed about the positive reception by audiences from all classes and the "exceptionally creditable exhibition of orderliness and decorum" on its grounds (Olmsted, 1873: 2, 1971). Although this celebratory discourse was only partially accurate, it helped to amplify the consensus about the park's capacity to foster a peaceful confluence of diverse groups and to normalize behavioral patterns in public space. Within a few years other cities were following its lead (Schuyler, 1986: 102-146).

Implicit since the initiative's inception in 1851, this vision was decisively articulated by the newborn Republican Party after 1854, integrating the commercial elite's longing for a representative public space, the industrialists' demand for new institutions for the reeducation of popular conducts, and the cultural gentry's defense of the general benefits of urban parks. After the 1856 New York State election this amalgamation of interests secured an alliance with 'reform' Democrats that "challenged … the Democratic Machine in New York City" with a "form of non-electoral politics of commission governance" (Scobey, 2002: 209). Bypassing Mayor Wood, the Legislature in Albany took over key policies of social order and imposed extra-municipal, supposedly non-partisan boards to supervise the metropolitan police and Central Park (Ryan, 1997: 159). These new bodies altered traditional civil society–state balances, departing from the Aldermanic model with a form of commission rule that operated independently from elected politicians while simulating a control of civil society over urbanization processes, a scheme that set the tone for subsequent planning initiatives in the US (Peterson, 2003: 270-271).

A Gramscian approach would require a dissection of these agencies in class terms. The first Park Commission comprised notable members of civil society, all but one of bourgeois extraction (Scobey, 2002: 228). This configuration resembled Olmsted's idea about the social hegemony of the "true American aristocracy", an "élite of the élite" composed of "[m]en [sic] of good stock, … substance and established high position" (Olmsted, 1879: 12-13), who would engage in a national crusade to shape the 'American public'—"one of the easiest in the world to regulate" (Olmsted, quoted in Rosenzweig and Blackmar, 1992: 258). With only a minor "increase of the friction of governmental machinery", this group should promote "places … for re-unions … so attractive to the nature of all but the most depraved men [sic], that the rich and the poor … shall be attracted together and encouraged to assimilate", generating "an elevating influence upon all the people" (Olmsted, 1854, np).

Although extraneous to the board, the working class and the emergent middle class were essential elements in the park's scheme. The reports permanently identified interclass mixing as the main goal. Central Park should "become a favorite resort of *all* classes" (BCCP, 1857: 78, my emphasis; see also BCCP, 1859: 62, 1861: 37-38, 1865: 31), a democratic claim instrumental both to the park mechanism and its legitimation as a matter of general interest. Nature would operate as a universal leveler not only in terms of status but also regarding ethnic diversity, a first step in the "work of fusing the people of differing nationalities into a homogeneous body" (BCCP, 1864: 36). Popular behavior was both a major source of anxiety and the central target of commissioners from the onset, as we will see (Olmsted, 1971: 95). The fragmented 'middling sorts' of independent artisans, shopkeepers, young professionals and clerks—an inchoate class before the Civil War (Boyer, 1992: 61)—soon became an ally in this endeavor. Attempting to shape an identity of their own in a sharply polarized city and conditioned by expectations of upward social mobility, these groups often emulated elite approaches to public behavior and assumed a subaltern position (Kasson, 1990: 43). They soon became willing disseminators of the decorous deportment the authorities had envisioned, eager to demarcate the boundaries with the lower orders through the adoption of courteous manners (Rosenzweig and Blackmar, 1992: 225-228,230-232). In fact, while the emerging middle class played a fundamental supporting role in an essentially upper-class campaign to restructure Manhattan's publicity, it is difficult to elucidate whether they were an agent or a by-product of the effort to create a middle public through the cleansing of working-class conducts.

Park-form: normalizing a common sense of publicity

In line with the above-mentioned normalization of spatial grammars, the morphology of these regimes of publicity was of central political import in a city experiencing profound social change. The modes of appearance in public space had long been markers of social differentiation (Domosh, 1998), but amidst the 1850s turmoil the choreography of the streets became increasingly unstable and contested. Central Park constituted an institutional attempt to stabilize and normalize public conducts. The unprecedented over-regulation of the park's design and ordinances tried to preclude the potential "prevalence ... of vague, immature … and muddled ideas of [its] purpose" (Olmsted, 1886: 8). This 'empty-signifier' condition had to be removed, shaping in advance a new, 'normal' use for the park's shared places that aspired to become a common sense of publicity. As Olmsted warned, the "Park is not simply … a ground to which people may resort to obtain some sort of recreation", but one to do so "in certain ways and under certain circumstances" (BCDPP, 1872: 26-27)—"ignorant" New Yorkers would "need to be trained to the proper use of it, to be restrained in the abuse of it" (Olmsted, 1857: 6).

But how was that goal to be achieved? The discussion about the combination of different ranges of techniques is especially helpful here. The decision to proactively regulate park practices predated Olmsted's incorporation as Superintendent. Actually he owed his appointment to his knowledge of European police systems (Olmsted, 1882: 23) and his commitment to the "[a]dministration and management of the public introduction to and use of the park" (Olmsted, 1990: 153). "The preservation of order [was] of the very first importance" from the beginning but it was pursued through a subtle, ambivalent approach that fused liberality and discipline, "freedom" and "restraint" (BCCP, 1861: 37-38). It is in this sense that we could talk of a 'park-form' as an important moment in the articulation of apparently heterogeneous spatial-governmental strategies. If the panopticon was for Foucault the diagram of disciplinary power, the park can be taken as the site of a government that promotes liberal measures but complements them with punitive mechanisms. It could be argued that, as a simultaneous source of pleasure, education and punishment, this new spatial paradigm epitomized the emergence of new techniques combining incentives and castigations, positive and negative subjectivations.

Pedagogical devices: design, police and the regulation of deportment

The strategy in Central Park combined three regulatory mechanisms—design itself, a special police body and park ordinances—to produce a regime of place that was later reinforced and disseminated through other institutional and civil agencies, such as the school system, the press or literary and pictorial representations. The park should "furnish instruction with amusement" (BCCP, 1861: 99), promoting a gregarious, passive experience of public space to foster the assimilation of new deportments (Olmsted, 1971: 74). Governmentalizing collective desire, the "[g]eneral gayety" of "pleasure-seekers" (BCCP, 1861: 101) was slowly penetrating state calculation. The commissioners regarded this pedagogical 'conduct of conduct' as a complex task demanding delicacy, and wondered whether the rules needed to make the park "operate as an *educator* of the people, w[ould] meet with cheerful acquiescence" (BCCP, 1862: 37, my emphasis).

Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, his partner in the Greensward project for the park, entrusted much of this power to affect visitors to the "silent teachings" of design, relying on the tacit seductions of quiet pastoral atmospheres to produce the desired mode of passive reception (BCCP, 1864: 29; Cranz, 1982: 24; Gandy: 2002, 98). The visual approach was combined with a rudimentary socio-functional zoning that structured the park in a series of locations or scenes conceived for particular social groups, where collective interaction and physical exertion were to be monitored or precluded (BCDPP, 1872: 83; Olmsted and Vaux, 1868). Very much like Foucault's (1975: 150) disciplinary "*tableaux vivants*", the park's system of places was devised to turn "dangerous multitudes" into "ordered multiplicities". But this was only one aspect of the scheme. A

Gramscian interpretation would also observe that individuals themselves were required to become agents of state order. Central park was "planned upon a motive which, in the very freedom it offer[ed] the visitor, assume[d] the exercise on his [sic] part of a degree of circumspection and restraint to avoid the abuse of its advantages" (Olmsted, 1873: 2). In that sense, park policemen would "quietly and civilly [point] out to visitors … how they [could] best attain what they desire[d] … and [caution] them in a respectful, courteous and propitiating way when they [were] going wrong" (Olmsted, 1873: 9); users, in turn, should acquire the "confidence to ask and *accept what they need*" (BCDPP 1873: 27, my emphasis). This adjustment of popular desire to a set of normative performances was based not on crude coercion, but on the voluntary acquiescence of visitors to a purported general interest that they should recognize and reproduce. Individual or group preferences "should be subordinated to the common benefit, not in the spirit that requires obedience to arbitrary orders, but appreciating the propriety of a regulation, in the mild and firm exercise of the necessary authority that requires, for the general good, a respect for a proper rule" (BCCP, 1863: 28). Similarly, Olmsted asked the guards to proceed as if they "represent[ed] the general, permanent and legal interests which [each visitor] possessed, in common with all other citizens, in the park" (BCDPP, 1873: 33).

Despite their military training, park-keepers were instructed to "be courteous and respectful in the discharge of their duty" (BCCP, 1862: 37). They should prioritize "timely instruction, caution, and warning" over arrests (BCCP, 1860: 45), and "aid [offenders] toward a better understanding of what is due to others, as one gentleman might manage to guide another" (BCDPP, 1973: 31). In any case, they could detain misusers and impose fines. According to official reports, sanctions were especially abundant in the park's early days (BCCP, 1860: 45, 1863: 42). Olmsted—described by a friend as a "potent disciplinarian" (Scobey, 2002: 216)—considered the control of correct public use of the park his main achievement and a fundamental extension of design (Olmsted, 1990: 153). Actually he is regarded today as a key figure in the modernization of American police force precisely in the sense of the broader approach that interested Foucault, as an agent responsible for shaping new behavioral standards (Thacher, 2015).

Park ordinances were another innovative but strange element in the governmental landscape of antebellum Manhattan, the regulatory basis for the inscription of new grammars of conduct. Although their prescriptions may seem natural today, for the most part they focused on precluding practices that were common in conventional—and largely unregulated—public space at that time. The park was conceived as a 'space of exception'. Besides restrictions related to safety and the preservation of the park's image, the ordinances dictated modes of access and movement, and banned any activity "whereby a breach of peace may be occasioned", such as peddling, "civic or other procession[s]", games or sports, "obscene … act[s]", the use of "indecent language",

"musical instrument[s]", "flag[s], banner[s]", etc. (BCCP, 1861: 108-109). Faced with major everyday challenges to its conception of public-space performances, the elite began to act like a normative class and governmentalized its own polite etiquette, endowing it with a regulatory, coercive form. Moreover, the prohibition of any kind of politically charged practice revealed the attempt to neutralize the potentialities of public space as a site of politicization, and indeed the park remained free from rallies at a time when mobilizations were usual elsewhere in the city (Rosenzweig and Blackmar, 1992: 315).

Capillary disseminations: the role of schools and the media

Initiatives to spread the new use regime started soon after the creation of the park. Devised before Olmsted's formulation of parkways and park systems as organizing principles for city-wide schemes (Schuyler, 1986: 125-146), Central Park was conceived to operate by itself, spurring change in the city as a whole; visitors were expected to behave as orderly subjects in their neighborhoods after the experience of re-education in the park (BCCP, 1867: 35; Olmsted, 1971: 66). The Commissioners, however, saw to it that dissemination was more systematically secured through the interaction with other "power multipliers" (Foucault, 2013: 211) within and outside the administration. This was the case, for instance, with the school system and the media—both vital institutions in Gramsci's (2007: Q3§49, Q16§21) account of civil society.

As quintessential malleable subjects, children were a fundamental target, especially after the appointment of Andrew H. Green—former President of the New York City Board of Education—as President of the Park Commission in 1860 and the creation of a special Children's Department (BCCP, 1870: 46-47). Under his initiative the pupils of public schools were organized to participate in monitored playing in the park's grounds every week. The privilege was "dependent upon regular attendance and good standing … in the School"; teachers should control "the proper behavior of their pupils while at the Park" and make sure that the advantages would be "extended to those only who w[ould] use it properly" (BCCP, 1868: 113). The experience became a precedent for the playground movement in subsequent decades.

Media was another key vehicle of state integration in Central Park, radiating the new regime of publicity from core apparatuses to civil society even before the inception of the Greensward plan and in newspapers usually sympathetic to labor's claims. In 1853, for instance, *Tribune*'s editor Horace Greeley wrote that "the workingman and his working wife and working children" would be "civilized by the good manners which would spontaneously be the rule [in the park], and be enforced when wanting" (quoted in Rosenzweig and Blackmar, 1992: 100). From the early 1860s on newspapers published the park ordinances and the commissioners encouraged the elaboration of guidebooks that reproduced the official vision of choreographed assemblies (BCCP,

1861: 99). Olmsted played an important role in this process, recruiting journalists to corroborate that rich and poor could peacefully share public space (McNeur, 2014: 216). Illustrated magazines, guidebooks and postcards helped to visualize the idea of a well-mannered "democratic crowd" (*Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 1879: 697) and had an important influence on an embryonic middle class, popularizing the park's system of places and thus reinforcing the association of certain spots to particular subjects, activities and experiences (eg, Cook, 1869; *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 1861; McMahon, 1877).[6] Once stabilized, the same depiction was reproduced for at least a whole century, consolidating the iterative and representational essence of the park's performative archipelago (eg, Reed and Duckworth, 1967).

Conclusions

According to official statements, Central Park achieved its goals even before completion. In 1867, in another explicit reference to pedagogical agency, the Board celebrated its "influence as an educator of popular taste", equating it with museums and applauding the emulation of similar schemes in other American cities (BCCP, 1867: 40). In a very Foucauldian gesture, Olmsted invoked Bentham's *Of Indirect Means of Preventing Crimes* in a defense of the park's capacity to provide pleasure and "weaken the dangerous inclinations [of the] lawless classes of the city", exerting "an influence favorable to courtesy, self-control, and temperance" upon them (Olmsted, 1971: 96). More importantly, he observed that visitors gradually internalized governmental attitudes: "[t]he public seemed not only to submit to the enforcement of the necessary regulations, but to welcome the means used for that purpose"; "[t]he admonitions of the keepers were generally received in good spirit and willingly heeded, and when this was not the case by-standers were often prompt to reprove the offender and applaud the representative of the law" (Olmsted, 1873: 2-3). This was a new form of "organic subject" that "govern[ed] herself without … entering into conflict with political society, thus becoming its normal continuation" (Gramsci, 2007: Q8§130). In private, though, Olmsted was more skeptical, constantly complaining that everyday deviations from the norm could neutralize the efforts of the Park Commission. A decade after the declarations above, his *Spoils of the Park* (Olmsted, 1882) summarized the eclipse of decorum on the park's premises due to the relaxation of discipline after his dismissal in 1878.

A premature application of Gramsci's and Foucault's ideas could be used here to conclude that any exercise of power remains open to contestation in the form of counter-hegemonies and resistance. Yet this diagnosis would be only partially accurate, obscuring key political aspects of Central Park's afterlife which are more easily discern through the theoretical framework I have suggested. Even if conflict persisted, the strategies at play left a distinctive trace not only on the park itself and the ensuing tradition of large urban green areas, but also on the technical imaginations it propelled

and the apparatuses of hegemony based upon them; novel regulatory experiments in inter-institutional and extra-state exchange had been established that rendered the divide with certain civil society agencies more tenuous; despite ongoing everyday transgressions, the new grammars of public space use provided a powerful reference for decades to come, stabilizing particular practices and behaviors as a norm that later discourses and representations would replicate; finally, while the experience was insufficient for the Republicans to take over Manhattan, it at least helped to supersede working-class reform initiatives and to rearrange the political chessboard in a way favorable to the elite. Subsequent social blocs relied on these foundations to amend the strategies and build their own projects in new contexts. As mentioned above, the park's technical and institutional approach had a penetrating influence on urban greening and playground policies, the civic-design movement and commission governance throughout the Gilded Age and, especially, the Progressive Era (Schuyler, 1986; Peterson, 2003). Particular solutions and procedures varied, but the park's common sense of publicity remained a seed for a growing consensus about the goals and instruments of regulated urbanization, becoming an influential reference in the consolidation of town planning in the US. With his recipe of disciplinary beauty, Olmsted's ghost still haunted the discourse of the Central Park Conservancy in the 1980s ([Rogers], 1981).

In that sense, the *dispositif* Central Park can be understood as a significant episode in the history of the techniques that shaped our present regimes of publicity, an early attempt to mobilize public space in the political articulation of a deeply uneven and conflictive social geography. Although it did not entirely achieve its goal, the experience provided Manhattan's upper class with a type of dynamic environmental hegemony that paid off later, promoting the statization of reformist approaches and privileging a form of indirect government based on spatial mediations. Central Park reflected the emerging inclination of modern statehood to rely on capillary institutional networks that blurred the boundaries between an expanded state and civil society, triggering the colonization of new regulatory spheres, the reproduction of the procedures of state apparatuses in extra-state forms, and the inoculation of individual behaviors with state organizational principles. The analytical framework I have drawn from Gramsci and Foucault helps to emphasize these aspects of the park's politics and its attempt to stabilize a common sense of urbanity, its relation to the development of the local integral state and its role in the evolution of environmental hegemonies connected to everyday spatialities and subjectivities. This article, however, does not exhaust the potentialities of this conceptual toolkit. Additional contributions are required to prolong the lines of analysis suggested here, particularly through a more detailed engagement with geographical approaches to state theory and secondary literature on Gramsci and Foucault. At all events, I hope the discussion above provides sufficient illustration of how a combination of their insights can reanimate our

interpretations of the politics of urbanization, the evolution of state spaces, and the history of spatial techniques.

Notes

[1] For the sake of brevity I focus on Gramsci's and Foucault's own texts, particularly the *Quaderni del carcere* and the courses between 1972 and 1979, for which I provide direct translations whenever possible.

[2] The lectures for this course started in early 1973 at a crucial point in Foucault's complex connections with the French radical left. His Groupe d'Information sur les Prisons—originated in 1971 following the imprisonment of militants of the Maoist group Gauche Prolétarienne—had just dissolved (Eribon, 2011: 380-389). On special occasions he reciprocated the support Gauche Prolétarienne had given the GIP (Macey, 2004: 106), but Foucault (1972) continued his dialogue with the 'Maos' in a rather discordant tone. It was perhaps the dusk of an intellectual affair started with his arrival at Vincennes in the wake of May '68 along with Balibar, Rancière, Badiou and others (Macey, 2004 pages 86-90). Elden (forthcoming 2017) provides an extensive discussion of Foucault's politics during this period. Foucault would nevertheless maintain a fundamental affinity with Maoism: their common antagonism towards the French Communist Party (Dean and Villadsen, 2016: 53-54). We could speculate that Gramsci may have provided another opportunity to mediate his realignment vis-à-vis PCF guru Louis Althusser, at a time when, according to Thomas (2009: 8), Gramsci and Althusser constituted two irreconcilable but fundamental references for the French intellectual avant-garde in the 1970s, after the latter's criticism of the Sardinian in *Lire le capital*. Mouffe (1979) and Hall (1985) would subsequently attempt to provide a rapprochement of both authors. The conjecture about Foucault's reading of Gramsci, however, goes beyond the more instrumental interests of my discussion here. For the purpose of this article, it is enough to consider the resonances between them the result of parallel analyses of a common theoretical-historical problematic from different but potentially complementary understandings of power.

[3] The International Gramsci Society provides concordance tables with the location of specific sections of the *Quaderni del carcere* in English anthologies: http://www.internationalgramscisociety.org/resources/concordance_table/

[4] Amongst others, Crampton and Elden (2007), Ekers, Hart et al (2013), Elden (2001: 120-50) and Philo (1992) provide general introductions to the spatial nuances specific to each author.

[5] See Ekers and Loftus (2008) for an alternative formulation of the space-hegemony nexus.

[6] See Kasson, 1990: 70-111, for a description of nineteenth-century urban guides' influence on the middle class.

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