Selected Papers of AoIR 2016:
The 17th Annual Conference of the
Association of Internet Researchers
Berlin, Germany / 5-8 October 2016

INTERSECTIONS OF TECHNOLOGY & PLACE

Erika Polson
University of Denver

Rowan Wilken
Swinburne Institute of Technology

Germaine R. Halegoua
University of Kansas

Bryce J. Renninger
Rutgers University

Adrienne Russell
University of Denver

The five papers compiled here draw from new ways of thinking about place, with a particular focus on interrelations of space and place with media technologies and practices. Following from Jansson's (2009: 308) suggestion that scholars consider intersections of communication and geography to analyze "how space produces communication and how communication produces space", this panel brings together a series of papers researching this nexus.

"Geo-social media & the quest for place on-the-go", evaluates how geo-social media can produce 'meaningful place' through a hybrid of online and offline interaction. The author draws from ethnographic studies of how mobile professionals (both business travelers and expatriates) in Paris, Singapore, and Bangalore use geo-social platforms such as meetup.com, internations.org, Facebook groups, and Couchsurfing to demonstrate how online communication fuses with geographic co-presence to create meaningful place 'on-the-go'. The author shows how, for a new demographic of mobile cosmopolitan subjects deployed into the world by corporate interests, geo-socially organized gatherings provide the answer for a mobile demographic that craves belonging and disdain commitment, and seeks rootedness without stasis.

Suggested Citation (APA): Polson, E., Wilken, R., Halegoua, G., Renninger, B., Russell, A., (2016, October 5-8). *Intersections Of Technology & Place*. Paper presented at AoIR 2016: The 17th Annual Conference of the Association of Internet Researchers. Berlin, Germany: AoIR. Retrieved from http://spir.aoir.org.

TRACES OF OUR PASSAGE: LOCATIVE MEDIA AND THE CAPTURE OF PLACE DATA

Rowan Wilken
Swinburne Institute of Technology

The paper examines what underpins efforts by location-based services (hereafter LBS) to capture place data. The contention I explore in this paper is that the significance of LBS is not just that they locate us at a particular point in space ('pure geographical location' is rarely the primary consideration of LBS users or services), nor that they locate us at a particular moment in time (by being at a particular venue right now), but, rather, that they reveal a great deal about complicated spatio-temporal and socio-technically mediated, and socio-culturally specific, patterns of movement through and engagements with places.

To conceive of LBS in this way—which draws from recent scholarship within anthropology and geography—requires a reorientation in how we approach and think of *place*, such that places are understood less as stable (if not fixed) sites and more as deriving much of their meaning from the possibilities of mobility and movement (Cresswell, 2011: 576; Agnew, 2011: 325), and as acquiring 'dynamic meaning as a consequence of the location-based information that is attached to them' (de Souza e Silva & Frith, 2012: 9).

Working on social media business models, José van Dijck (2013: 12) makes the point that the key revenue generation options of social media firms, which I here take to include LBS firms, involve the fostering of data generation by users—'data generation has become the primary object rather than a by-product of online sociality'—and the subsequent utilisation of this data to 'influence traffic and monetize engineered streams of information', whether through advertising, analytics services, or via other means. The capture of rich, place-based geodata—what the US tech industry sometimes calls 'location intelligence'—has become a vital part of the larger social media business ecosystem (van Dijck, 2013).

I touch on a key LBS business example: New York based firm Foursquare. Long known as a mobile social networking and venue 'check-in' service, Foursquare has, since 2013, undergone a much-publicised reorientation of its business operations. Among other things, this has involved the integration of new features to its flagship Foursquare app (and which are linked to its offshoot app, Swarm) that seek to combine mobile, social, and place-based interactions with past and present user data to generate real-time and even predictive venue recommendations. Furthermore, by drawing in place-based insights from its own users, and as a result of cross-platform partnerships with other social media firms, Foursquare has been able to build a rich places databases – part of its longer-term ambitions to position itself as the 'location layer of the internet'. Based on its expertise in this area, Foursquare has more recently repositioned itself once more, through the launch in 2015 of Pinpoint, as a 'location marketplace' providing place-related data and analytics services to social media and other businesses and to

the advertising industry (Kaplan, 2015). This, and other cases, will be expanded on in the longer version of the paper.

Location-based Services and 'Ambulatory Knowing'

In the final section, I suggest that an alternative, and potentially productive, way of understanding the underlying business interests of LBS companies is by turning to anthropologist Tim Ingold's work on maps, and, in particular, his notion of 'ambulatory knowing'. In his book *The Perception of the Environment*, Ingold draws a lengthy and careful distinction between map-use and mapmaking on the one hand, and wayfinding and mapping on the other hand. Ingold's allegiances lie with the second pairing. Arguing against cognitive approaches to explaining human orientation (as developed by Alfred Gell and others), Ingold (2011: 226) develops the thesis that maps, primarily, are indexical of *movement* (not of topographical features as understood by an individual). For Ingold, 'our perception of the environment [...] is forged not in the ascent from the myopic, local perspective to a panoptic, global one [the bird's-eye view], but in the passage from place to place' (227). 'Every "somewhere"', he writes, 'is not a location in space but a position on a path of movement' (227). Ingold's central contention is, thus, 'that people's knowledge of the environment undergoes continuous formation in the very course of their moving about in it' (230) – regardless of whether this environment is familiar to them or not. As he explains:

> [W]e know *as* we go, not *before* we go. Such ambulatory knowing – or knowledgeable ambulating – cannot be accommodated within the terms of the conventional dichotomy between mapmaking and map-using. The traveller [...] who knows as he goes is neither making a map nor using one. He is, quite simply, *mapping*. (230-231)

This is an important passage insofar as it draws out the processual and perceptual qualities of wayfinding and mapping, as he understands them. Ingold is clear that mapping, as an embodied process – 'the renactment, in narrative gesture, of the experience of moving from place to place within a region' (232) – is *not* synonymous with mapmaking. Nor, he argues, is wayfinding synonymous with navigation. On this second distinction, Ingold argues that 'locating' oneself is less about the determination of longitude/latitude coordinates than it is about 'situating that position within the matrix of movement' (237). For the wayfinder, he suggests, 'every place holds within it memories of previous arrivals and departures, as well as expectations of how one may reach it, or reach other places from it' (237). That is to say, 'places enfold the passage of time' (237-238), they 'figure not as locations in space but as specific vortices in a current of movement, of innumerable journeys actually made' (238)

My contention here is that it is wayfinding and mapping (not mapmaking or map-use) that is conceivably of greatest interest to location-based services companies. It is these rich, embodied practices, and the 'current of movement' of which they are a part, that holds greatest, long-term value for them and what these companies' efforts in relation to geodemographic profiling, API use, and the population of places databases, and so on, are ultimately trying to capture. While map-use and map-making are obviously encouraged (not least by firms like Google and Apple, among others), the longer term

ambition – often articulated, most notably by Foursquare, as the desire to construct the 'location underlayer of the internet' – is to be able to make sense of the less tangible yet arguably richer store of knowledge, motivations, behaviours, social connections, and so forth, that are part-and-parcel (as Ingold conceives of them) of wayfinding and mapping.

References

Agnew, JA (2011) 'Space and Place'. In: Agnew JA & Livingstone DN (eds) *The SAGE Handbook of Geographical Knowledge*. London: SAGE.

Cresswell, T (2011) 'Mobility'. In: Agnew JA & Livingstone DN (eds) *The SAGE Handbook of Geographical Knowledge*. London: SAGE.

de Souza e Silva, A & Frith, J (2012) *Mobile Interfaces in Public Spaces*. New York: Routledge.

Ingold, T (2011) *Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. London: Routledge.

Kaplan, D (2015) With Pinpoint, Foursquare's now a location marketplace, *GeoMarketing*, April 14, http://www.geomarketing.com/with-pinpoint-foursquares-now-a-location-marketplace.

van Dijck, J (2013) *The Culture of Connectivity*. New York: Oxford University Press.

GEO-SOCIAL MEDIA & THE QUEST FOR PLACE ON-THE-GO

Erika Polson
University of Denver

Innovations in mobile data applications have opened up new ways of experiencing 'place', and not just in terms of virtual worlds. In this paper, I suggest that users of geo-social media are creating new forms of offline 'place' that open up geographically based sociality to a growing number of professionals who live mobile or transient lives. Drawing from ethnographic studies of how mobile professionals (both business travelers and expatriates) in Paris, Singapore, and Bangalore use geo-social platforms such as meetup.com, internations.org, Facebook groups, and Couchsurfing, I demonstrate how online communication fuses with geographic co-presence to create meaningful place 'on-the-go'. I also consider new forms of exclusion that operate in this techno-social arranging of place.

The New Expats

This research provides insights into a new figure: the lonely cosmopolitan subject deployed into the world by corporate interests, using digital media to come together ad hoc, creating their own spaces in a network of global cities. As corporations ramp up

‘workforce globalization’ and young professionals increasingly pursue opportunities to work abroad, social entrepreneurs use online platforms to create offline social events where foreigners may gather face-to-face.

Sharing ethnographic stories of such groups from three global cities, I illustrate how a new generation of expatriates uses location technologies to create mobile ‘places’ and access drop-in communities along a web of global cities. In my talk, I will briefly describe this new demographic and its frictions, such as how mobile professionals crave belonging and disdain commitment, and seek rootedness without stasis.

Communication and the Social Constitution of Place

My conception of ‘place’ is informed by researchers from many disciplines, who have increasingly come to see places as constituted by relationships, memories, knowledge, cultural practices, and so on, rather than simply geographically. Along these lines, scholars have demonstrated places to be social, gendered, flexible, extendable across distance, and socially constituted through interaction and everyday routines (e.g. Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 1994; Appadurai, 1996; and Cresswell, 1996 respectively).

Internet and communication researchers have entered this conversation through what is referred to as the spatial turn, or mobility turn, of media studies (e.g. Falkheimer and Jansson, 2006). Along these lines, communication is seen as productive of place itself. For example, Caldas-Coulthard and Iedema (2008) point out how through recurring practices of communication and social engagement, the production of new meanings and feelings of belonging and attachment to a place may occur. As Augé notes (citing Descombes), finding a place where one belongs is about finding comfort in “the ability to make oneself understood without too much difficulty, and to follow the reasoning of others without the need for long explanations” (1995, p. 108).

Online practices play an important role in creating this rhetorical sense of place and, in fact, scholars increasingly acknowledge that meaningful places may even be virtual ones (e.g. Moores & Metykova, 2009; Golub, 2010). Parallel to this strand of thinking is a growing awareness of the connection between online and offline environments in meaning making. A growing seamlessness of interrelations between digital and face-to-face communication suggests that the relationship between online and offline sociality will become increasingly taken for granted (Andersson, 2012). In fact, according to Andersson, media should be seen not only as *used* within everyday territories but also as playing a “vital role in the constitution of the territories, be it the home, or the city one resides in” (p. 12).

These strands of thinking on place (that places are constituted through social relations and communication, combining on- and offline practices) create a conceptual starting-point for examining how the series of digital practices explored here facilitate place-making processes through a hybrid of online and face-to-face communication. As I contend in this paper, much of this communication ‘work’ can be done online, through geo-social media apps that then allow users to manifest their online connectivity to create a sense of belonging in offline space.

Mobile Places

In this section of the talk, I explore how geo-social media applications produce such new places in ways that enable mobility and transience. The main focus of this section is on meetup.com—an online tool specifically meant to create user-generated and -defined community groupings that come together in physical space with little or no commitment or prior knowledge among participants—but draws from other geo-social platforms as well.

I discuss both benefits and challenges that emerge as people participate in mobile place-making. For example, while geo-social media act as mobile 'emplacement platforms' that enable users to create and access places on the go, expectations of the relational experience of place (e.g. 'community') seem to suffer as participants are met with a lack of commitment, trust, and history. At the same time, new forms of agency are produced as mobile subjects are emboldened to enter new and unknown geographic locations knowing that they are integrated into a network.

References

Andersson, M. (2012, May). *Media and migration through the lens of mediatization and transnationalism.* Paper presented to the Philosophy of Communication Division at the annual ICA conference, Phoenix, AZ.

Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Augé, M. (1995). *Non-places: Introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity*. London, England: Verso.

Caldas-Coulthard, C. R., & Iedema, R. (Eds.). (2008). *Identity trouble: Critical discourse and contested identities*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Cresswell, T. (1996). *In place / Out of place: Geography, ideology, and transgression*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Descombes, V. (1987). *Proust, philosophie du roman*. Paris, France: Editions de Minuit.
Golub, A. (2010). Being in the world (of Warcraft): Raiding, realism and knowledge production in a massively multiplayer online game. *Anthropological Quarterly, 83*(1), 17–46.

Falkheimer, J., Jansson, A. (eds). (2006). *Geographies of communication: The spatial turn in media studies*. Gothenburg: Nordicom.

Massey, D. (1994). *Space, place & gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Moores, S., & Metykova, M. (2009). Knowing how to get around: Place, migration, and communication. *The Communication Review, 12*, 313–326.

"WE KNOW THAT RIGHT NOW WE ARE NOT FUNKY:" PLACEMAKING STRATEGIES IN SMART CITY DEVELOPMENT

Germaine R. Halegoua
University of Kansas

Developers of ubiquitous or smart cities built from the ground up have reluctantly cited problems in attracting residents, talent, and businesses to their fabricated urban environments. Professional placemakers have noted issues in producing these cities as places in which people who are familiar with the amenities and social life of urban environments would like to live. For example, New Songdo, a ubiquitous city in South Korea, has been critiqued as a "consciously planned, somewhat artificial city with a modern functionalist face" and because of this, it will be challenging to reinvent as "lively and attractive" (Oosterman, 2012). Even the city's developer Stanley Gale agrees that the character of a city like Songdo will be difficult to cultivate from scratch, and emphasizes the role of urban programming and planning in constructing even the most mundane, seemingly organic elements of urban culture: "We know that right now we are not funky. We need artists, internet entrepreneurs, fashion designers, so we are building incubator spaces in the city to try to get the mix right. You can't manufacture grit, but you can encourage it" (Keeton, 2012). In their current form, cities like Songdo fulfill policy initiatives of technology development and global entrepreneurship, but tend to disregard urban experience, community efficacy, and social interactions in their construction. The socio-cultural factors, social networks, and cultural variation that lead to the success and sustainability of urban spaces has not emerged organically in ubiquitous cities, but is being planned and orchestrated by people other than the residents themselves.

Several examples evidence a global trend of planning, designing, and constructing a city from scratch with extensive digital communications networks and infrastructures in mind. Some of these examples that have emerged over the past decade include South Korea's extensive network of ubiquitous cities or U-cities (cities that universally embed ubiquitous computing opportunities into the built environment), PlanIT Valley in Portugal, Konza Techno City in Kenya, and Masdar City in the United Arab Emirates. These "cities of the future" don prefixes such as "smart," "intelligent," "digital," and "ubiquitous" to indicate their distinction from less digitally integrated urban environments. Technology designers, urban developers and municipal officials often hail these urban environments as advanced and upgraded in terms of safety, efficiency, transportation, economic development, sustainability, and overall responsiveness to urban structures, patterns, and demands. In some cases, digital media technologies and infrastructures are planned even before buildings, roads, and other municipal services. In all cases, the populations that will utilize these buildings and networks have yet to move in. As a result, professionals are charged with the burden of constructing these cities as "places" anew as well. However, the discursive construction of place is

not exclusive to fabricated urban environments. The retrofitting of a pre-existing city as a “smart city” is also on the rise, particularly in the US context.

According to previous literature reviews and discourse analysis, smart cities are reported to be built by governments and corporations but are imagined to improve quality of life, community and civic engagement alongside economic development, efficient service provision and sustainable environments (Mosannenzadeh & Vettorato, 2014). Although individual technologies like digital kiosks, urban screens, media facades, and sensor technologies have been understood in terms of placemaking and tools for civic participation (Foth, Brynskov, & Ojala, 2015), researchers have critiqued smart cities projects in terms of lack of citizen and community input into placemaking processes and lack of participation in smart city creation (Townsend, 2013; FutureEverything, 2013; Halegoua, 2011). Instead of focusing on the ways in which communities are included or excluded from placemaking efforts in smart cities, this paper analyzes the discursive and practical strategies used by smart city initiatives to social re-produce urban place.

This paper identifies and analyzes some of the ways in which planners, developers, municipal officials, and technology designers strategically employ digital infrastructure and digital media in order to reproduce ubiquitous or smart cities as unique, inhabited, user-friendly urban places instead of abstract “spatial fixes” (Harvey, 2001). The analysis presented focuses on how discourses and understandings of place are inscribed in the design and implementation of ubiquitous city technologies, the construction of the built environment, and decisions around the branding and promotion of the city as a social space. Through a discourse analysis of social media accounts, discussion boards, press releases and popular press, town hall meetings, and interviews with people charged with constructing and promoting smart cities this paper offers an analysis of the processes and challenges of constructing a smart city as an urban place.

References

Foth, M., Brynskov, M., & Ojala, T. (2015). Citizen’s Right to the Digital City: Urban Interfaces, Activism, and Placemaking. Springer.

FutureEverything. (2013). Smart Citizens (p. 104). Retrieved from http://futureeverything.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/smartcitizens1.pd

Halegoua, Germaine. (2011). The Policy and Export of Ubiquitous Place: Investigating South Korean U-Cities. In Marcus Foth, Laura Forlano, Christine Satchell, & Martin Gibbs (Eds.), From Social Butterfly to Engaged Citizen: Urban Informatics, Social Media, Ubiquitous computing, and Mobile Technologt to Support Citizen Engagement (pp. 315–334). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Harvey, David. (2001). Globalization and the “Spatial Fix.” Geographische Revue, 2.

Keeton, Rachel. (2012). New Songdo City. Volume, (34).

Mosannenzadeh, F., & Vettorato, D. (2014). Defining Smart City. A Conceptual Framework Based on Keyword Analysis. Tema. Journal of Land Use, Mobility and Environment, 0(0). Retrieved from http://www.classiconorroena.unina.it/index.php/tema/article/view/2523

Oosterman, Arjen. (2012). Notes from the Telepresent. Volume, (34).

Townsend, Anthony M. (2013). Smart Cities: Big Data, Civic Hackers, and the Quest for a New Utopia. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. Retrieved from http://www.amazon.com/Smart-Cities-Civic-Hackers-Utopia/dp/0393082873

GRINDR KILLED THE GAY BAR, AND OTHER ATTEMPTS TO BLAME SOCIAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Bryce J. Renninger
Rutgers University

> "Grindr has changed everything," says Keith Shore, a buff 38-year-old hairdresser and long-term Pines summer resident. He does not mean for the better, and he's far from the only one to make that complaint. Critics say the popularity of the gay hook-up app is ruining the island's unique and delicate social ecology. (Rogers, 2012)

In the Summer of 2012, *New York Magazine* published a piece called "The Pine's Summer of Discontent," in which Thomas Rogers spoke to a few visitors of the gay resort town, The Pines, on Fire Island off of Long Island in New York. In the short article, Rogers makes the claim that after "the AIDS epidemic, recessions, and, most recently, a fire that destroyed the Pines' legendary nightclub…now residents are worrying about a new menace, one that announces itself with a distinctive electronic chime." The menace is the ubiquity of the social app Grindr – a location-based app facilitating connectivity for gay men within a requested geographical range of each other. This is hyperbolic language indeed. Surely, Rogers does not mean to equate the effect of Grindr to the decimating toll of AIDS. To make such a claim that the *use* of a technology has created a "menace" should require great evidence. Instead, what he provides are anecdotes from three visitors to The Pines who testify to the ways the presence of the app have changed the social landscape of The Pines. One of the three people he quotes is a first-time visitor to The Pines.

The goal of this paper is to consider critiques that negatively link social technologies to urban change as part of a popular but poorly organized attempt to respond to the impact of social technologies on urban change. While it is worthwhile to seriously consider the ramifications of the use and popularity of social technologies, these arguments often isolate social technologies in a way that underestimates the importance of other social forces in creating certain kinds of unwelcome urban social change.

This paper starts with examples like the one above of social commentary that links the closing of gay bars and the death of gayborhoods to the ascendance of gay social apps that turn strangers into familiars. After laying out the ways that these kinds of arguments circulate, I make clear what these arguments are valuing. What, in other words, is trying to be salvaged by advocating for the continued thriving of gay bars and gayborhoods, and what makes Grindr and social apps attractive villains in the story of urban change when there are far more far-reaching and powerful forces that have contributed to the kinds of urban change these arguments document?

I respond to the "Grindr is killing the gay bar" meme in two ways. First, I use ethnographic work I carried out from 2012-2014 on Grindr and Scruff to note the ways that users of these locative apps conceptualize and exploit the locative features. I pay particular attention to the ways that these users discuss their use in particular neighborhoods, often the ones they live in. What arises from the ethnographic data is an unexpected diversity of practices motivated by presence in particular neighborhoods or towns. While users are cognizant of space and place when they use these apps, the use of these apps creates an attitude toward space that is not congruent with the perspectives on space that have led to communities and individuals to value the gay bar and the gayborhood.

Second, to deploy my observations of actual use into an attempt to be proactive about an awareness of the role of social technologies and their users as social agents, I use Sclove's (1995) concept of a democratic approach to technology to think about the current phenomenon of linking social technologies to certain trends in urban development, or blaming these technologies for unwelcome change. Considering Sclove next to scholars from science and technology studies (Hess, 2007), social theory (Sennett, 1974; Putnam, 2000), psychology (Turkle, 2011, 2015), sociology (Ghaziani, 2014), anthropology (Gray, 2009) and urban theory (Jacobs, 1961), I interrogate the links commentators regularly make—both casually and seriously—between social technologies and trends in urban development like the closing of gay bars.

To end, I will briefly explain the similarities and differences between "Grindr is killing the gay bar" and other arguments levied against Uber and Airbnb for their contributions to urban change. In doing this, I will show how the arguments that critique social technologies for their impact on urban life can expand beyond valuing gay bars and gayborhoods. These arguments consistently, though, act as if the elimination of the unattractive social technologies would rid the world of certain kinds of unattractive urban development. Unless their authors pursue what Morozov (2013) would call "technological solutionism," these arguments rarely imagine a world that would foster the positive urban attributes that are being lamented.

References

Ghaziani, A. (2014). *There goes the gayborhood?.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP.

Gray, M. (2009). *Out in the country: Youth, media, and queer visibility in rural America.* New York: NYU Press.

Hess, D. (2007). *Alternative pathways in science and industry: Activism, innovation, and the environment in an era of globalization*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Jacobs, J. (1961). *The death and life of great American cities*. New York: Random House.

Morozov, E. (2013). To save everything, click here: The folly of technological solutionism. New York: PublicAffairs.

Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Rogers, T. (2012). The Pines' summer of discontent: It's Grindr's fault. *New York Magazine*. Retrieved from: http://nymag.com/news/intelligencer/grindr-fire-island-2012-7/

Sclove, R. (1995). *Democracy and technology*. New York: Guilford Press.

Sennett, R. (1974). *The fall of public man*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Turkle, S. (2011). *Alone Together: Why we expect more from technology and less from each other.* New York: Basic Books.

Turkle, S. (2015). *Reclaiming conversation: The power of talk in the digital age.* New York: Penguin Press.

DEFINING SPACE THROUGH JOURNALISM AND ACTIVISM AT THE 2015 PARIS CLIMATE SUMMIT

Adrienne Russell
University of Denver

"Space is neither a subject nor an object but rather a social reality."
--Henri Lefebvre

Competition and conflict between older and newer media, as well as overlap between their various sensibilities, are shaping the contemporary media environment, and in turn the spaces that social and political realities inhabit. Media now readily flow back and forth across geographic borders, media genres and platforms, and on and offline space and place.

Conceptualizing media as space is not unique applied to the networked media environment. Perhaps most famously Marshall McLuhan thought of space and place not strictly in terms of geography but also in terms of the social arrangements created though technology. In the early 1960s, he famously theorized a global village that would create an evenly distributed shift in our connections and perception of the self and Others. McLuhan's hyperbolic but partially accurate prediction predates a more widespread recent "spatial turn" by scholars in various disciplines who have begun treating space as a crucial analytic considerations, discarding the dominant understanding of space as something simply locational, and instead considering it as social (Peters 2012:4). Jason Farman (2013), for example, rejects the notion of space as a container that can be filled. He writes, "space needs to be considered as something that is produced through use. It exists as we interact with it—and those interactions dramatically change the essential character of space." (9)

By highlighting journalistic and activist communication initiatives deployed for COP21, the 2015 UN Climate Summit in Paris, this paper explores the ways journalists and activists imagine, interact with, and create media space and in turn how digital technologies and infrastructures are influencing the concepts of space in both the fields of journalism and activism.

Indeed, today's international reporting is inseparable from technological infrastructures that define the conditions under which international news is gathered, reported, and disseminated. And similarly, activist communication networks are shaped by not only the strategies and tactics deployed by social movements but also by the tools and connection that shape those networks. Drawing from interviews with reporters, activist and tech developers behind key activist media and journalistic endeavors deployed during COP21, as well as analysis of related media content, tools and practices, this paper demonstrates the various ways local, national, and global space are shaped though this this "global" media event, grounded in geographic place-based action.

I argue not that media is becoming more global, but rather that the global conditions and connections that do exist—including a more global outlook among journalists and global ties among activists--are changing the representations and reality of *local contexts*. The paper highlights examples of new emerging space-related practices. Some of these examples constitute what Appadurai calls grassroots globalization, or "social forms [that] are emerging to challenge and reverse this epistemological exclusion and the resulting social exclusion, and to create forms of communication and social mobilization that are independent of the actions of corporate capital and the nation-state system" (2000:3). Other examples are less overtly challenging the powers but, nonetheless, shape alternative media spaces and connections.

The paper highlights 3 new players in the journalism landscape with a global and online presence: Vice, Buzzfeed, and Huffington Post, all of which had reporters present at the summit and produced a high volume of coverage. In the case of these new journalism outlets reporters are taking up new practices and turning an eye from the national "us" to a more global outlook; they are engaged in transnational collaboration, sharing tools, support and training in effort to strengthen news worldwide; they challenge representations in legacy international news by focusing on local voices and expertise.

The paper also explores several activist media initiatives that were launched during the summit including the following: *Climate Games*, “a trans-media action framework,” or a platform conceived of and built by artists, hackers, and activists that allowed activists to anonymously register for teams, download targets, and coordinate non-violent acts of civil disobedience during the 2 weeks of the summit; *350.org newswire*, the communication arm of the NGO founded by climate activist and journalist, which in Paris become the unofficial newswire for activists at the summit through its comprehensive and sophisticated coverage of both the official and unofficial COP-related news events; and *Place 2 Be* the de facto headquarters of international civil society during the summit, housed in a youth hostile in the center of Paris, and hub of some of the most innovative coverage coming out of Paris.

These examples demonstrate that there is an emerging network and a set of space-related practices that inform the work of media activists. While activists are most often responding to local conditions and national policy and law, issues and movements are often global in the sense that they 1) they collaborate transnationally to lend one another technological support, training, and strategic advice; 2) seek involvement and inspire participation and solidarity from people around the world; 3) Create informational campaign aimed at a global community.

In order to understand the process of abandoning the old and inventing the new structures and spaces, this analysis focuses too on how space is being reshaped by an increasingly pervasive type of media actor, who spans the space of journalism and activism, is tech savvy enough to remake genres, tools, platforms, and practices, and is dedicated to both the politics of and the political uses of networked digital communication tools. In the broadest sense, this research looks at how these media actors imagine and thus produce media space, in order to help address the questions: What are the forms - technological and thus social - through which spaces get made available for use, and within which particular sensibilities are encouraged.

References

Chadwick, A. (2013) *The Hybrid Media System: Politics and Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Farman, J. (2013) *Mobile Interface Theory: Embodied Space and Locative Media*. New York, NY: Routledge

Lefebvre, H. (1991) *The Production of Space*. New York, NY: Blackwell.

Marshall, M. (1964) *Understanding Media*. London: Routledge.

Peters, C. (2012) “Journalism to Go: The Changing Spaces of News Consumption.” *Journalism Studies* 13(5-6), 695-705.