

The Augmented City in Protest: The Urban Media Studies Perspective

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This article considers the implications of applying an interdisciplinary urban media studies framework to study protest in the city and the city in protest. Using the case of a grassroots community in the Euromaidan protest in Ukraine, it demonstrates how this approach can help explain the melding of citizen agency and local political and cultural contexts with the digital and material geographies of the city. Such interdisciplinary thinking also allows us to consider how the changing relationship between the city, its inhabitants, and their media use informs our methodological approaches to the study of augmented urban protest.

Keywords: urban media studies, protest, Ukraine, agency, interdisciplinary

Research into human existence in urban environments has seen a widespread recognition of the fact that human lives, behavior, and relationships in cities are inevitably mediated by various technologies—networks, platforms, and devices—as well as the content we produce and consume on them. The field of urban media studies has emerged largely as a response to this reality. However, there has been a more recent shift away from this laser focus on the media to consider other important aspects of human activity in urban spaces, of which media use is only one example. Such a shift is in line with the truly interdisciplinary nature of urban media studies as a field of inquiry and allows us to glean a sharper understanding of how humans, cities, and technology (including media) shape each other in various ways.

This article considers the implications of applying an interdisciplinary urban media studies framework to study protest in the city and the city in protest. Using the case of Galas, a grassroots urban community that emerged as part of the Euromaidan protest in Ukraine, it demonstrates how this approach can help explain the melding of citizen agency and local political and cultural contexts with the digital and material geographies of the city. Such interdisciplinary thinking also allows us to consider how the changing relationship between the city, its inhabitants, and their media use informs our methodological approaches to the study of augmented urban protest.

The modern communicative reality demands that we combine the study of digitally augmented protest organization, action, and identity construction with the study of the city itself as a spatially multiple yet material environment that also affects urban protest communication and activity. Such a dilemma

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requires that we cross-pollinate between existing methods of protest studies, approaches to the study of digital media and communication, and urban studies. Moreover, it is in the dialogue of diverse approaches that we can find productive methods for the study of urban mediated protest.

As Mattoni and Treré (2014) note, the development of comprehensive frameworks for understanding the connections between media and modern social movements is also hindered by the fragmented nature of social movement and protest studies. These traditionally draw on research from multiple fields with little conceptual overlap, underscoring the growing need for interdisciplinary work. Applying this logic to urban protests, we must also account for the complex relationships between mediated protest practices and urban spaces to tease out the significance of space, mobility, and physical urban infrastructure in the modern practices of resistance.

Such an emergent approach to the study of protest in cities requires that we not only account for the various objects and subjects of our study but also consider them as a whole instead of separate entities. What we seek to study is how people living increasingly mediated lives in cities engage and are able to participate in protest activity, and how that activity both shapes and is shaped by their urban mediated environment. It is therefore necessary to speak about “de-centering” the media component (Krajina, Moores, & Morley, 2014) thus far prevalent in the study of mediated urban dissent, and to examine instead how the “media,” “urban,” and “citizen/human” components speak to and augment each other.

The Shifting Focus of Social Movement and Protest Studies

Traditional social movement and protest literature has chiefly concerned itself with the political and organizational development (Davis, McAdam, Scott, & Zald, 2005; McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996) of movements or cycles of mobilization and the frameworks and structures of contentious politics (Tarrow, 2011, 2013). Most of these theoretical and conceptual analyses were fairly high-level and were aimed at shaping models that could be useful for understanding how social movements emerge and how collective action happens at scale. The role of the media in these processes was recognized but never central, often focusing on specific media forms or technologies and suffering from what Mattoni and Treré (2014) refer to as “one-media bias” (p. 254).

With the emergence of individualized computing, personal mobile devices, and horizontal social networks, a number of researchers, especially those at the juncture of communications, politics, and society, have shifted focus to these technologies, exploring their role in mobilization and political participation processes. Though these views range from utopian to dystopian (as summed up by Morozov [2011] in *The Net Delusion*) and the democratizing potential of the Internet and digital technology remains a contentious issue, there is undoubtedly a newly found fixation on digital media as both the field and the object of inquiry—a kind of platform fetishism focusing on the latest communications technologies (Mattoni & Treré, 2014). Granted, some of the recent research in the area has been aimed at adding much needed nuance to articulate how specifically digital media are entangled in the fabric of political activism and protest. Gerbaudo was an early voice of caution, calling for the need to understand exactly *how* the use of digital media and technologies resonates with street action and reshapes the repertoires of communication and contention for protesters from the Arab Spring to the Occupy movement (Gerbaudo, 2012). Juris (2012), reflecting on the

networking logic of the Occupy Everywhere movement, found that social media, while connecting individuals from different backgrounds, actually contributed to the aggregation of protest participants within particular urban physical spaces. Likewise, Lim (2014) argues that social movements today often emerge at the intersection of online and offline spaces: Mobilization might occur on social media, but it results in contestation of power and claims made in urban public spaces, making the two dimensions interdependent.

Chadwick (2013) demonstrates that new and old media platforms and practices interact with each other as part of a complex hybrid media system that also involves citizens, political bodies, and other structures. Bennett and Segerberg (2012) suggest that the use of digital networked media by activists and protesters leads to a shift from collective to connective action, and a new organizational pattern of action networks, where digitally enabled personal connections often supplant established political organizations and institutions. This kind of protest communication can connect a wider range of individuals and offer opportunities for more ephemeral, flexible connections and mediated modes of activist engagement. However, as Tufekçi (2017) cautions, social media and Internet networks can amplify protest movements as well as undermine their longevity, as they make some elements of protest building (e.g., quick mobilization) easier than others (e.g., sustainability and entrance into mainstream discourse).

A more nuanced examination of digital media's place in protest movements nonetheless preserves the fixation on media as the central element of an infinitely more complex environment of urban life. As Calhoun (1998) argues, the use of any emerging media technologies is rooted in the historical context of how power and movements are organized in particular spaces, so understanding the intricacies of media use by activists and protesters is predicated on an understanding of spatial relations between those in power and the resistance. Therefore, heeding Morley's caution to not automatically canonize "new media" as enabling protest or democratic development (Morley, 2009), these new affordances—and limitations—of digitally networked media must be put into a broader context of mediated human activity in cities. Indeed, these augmented communication networks often rest on or wrap around existing urban practices, embedding themselves in the city's structures and spaces, and become only part of the everyday urban routines. Teasing out how these overlaps occur and what happens when they do should become the focus of research into urban mediated protest.

From Media-Centric to Practice-Centric Urban Protest Studies

In calling for a "non-media-centric" shift in media studies, Morley stresses the significance of attending "more closely to its material as well as its symbolic dimensions" (Morley, 2009, p. 114). This is especially applicable to the urban media studies context, where the materiality of the city and its spaces is inextricable from the urban mediated lived experience. Thus, discussions of networked connections in largely symbolic terms can enter into interdisciplinary dialogue with more tangible networks in the social, infrastructural, and geographical sense. Barassi (2013) has examined interorganizational social movement networks as emergent spaces of action and meaning. Nicholls (2009) theorizes that the spatial geographies of social movement networks affect the relational dynamics in the social movements depending on the locality/globality of the networks, and that they impact the formation of the "social movement space" (p. 79). Halvorsen (2012) further argues that preoccupation with networks and networked spatiality occludes the growing importance of tangible territories occupied by activists and protesters in movements such as

Occupy, leading some scholars to coin emergent protest modalities closely tied to the urban spaces claimed by protesters (see Patel, 2013, and the "Tahrir Square model," p. 1). Similarly, the notion of mobility as a symbolic concept of "access anywhere" becomes entangled with specific "wheres," engaging with urban spaces and the nature of people's movements within them (including spaces where access to technology or the Internet may be restricted or unavailable). Beyond noting the role of these various spatialities in contentious politics in cities, it is important to recognize that they are invariably connected and may impact each other in complex ways (Leitner, Sheppard, & Sziarto, 2008). As Martin and Miller argue (2003), the spatial and the social dimensions of social movement activity are inseparable from each other and must therefore be analyzed in concert.

Furthering this concern with the materiality of the mediated city, Tarantino and Tosoni (2013a) call for an urban media studies that expands the liminal space between media-centered and place-centered approaches and looks at how people use media in urban spaces and how that impacts their daily spatial practices. How the digital meshes with the material and influence and shape each other is a central concern of this article, in particular as it considers protest as an urban practice augmented by both digital media technologies and the material structures of the city. This echoes Lim's idea of cyberurban space, where online and offline activist practices, imaginaries and trajectories construct the hybrid reality of urban social movements (Lim, 2015).

The practice-centered approach relies heavily on Couldry's theoretical conceptualization of media as practice that already shifts the focus away from media themselves and concerns itself with people's practices or discourse "in relation to media" (Couldry 2004, p. 121). Mattoni and Treré (2014) argue that social practices (including media-related ones) are an intrinsic part of the comprehensive approach to understanding the complex interplay of temporalities, actors, and media use in social movement activity. Tosoni and Ridell (2016) further suggest that placing urban practices at the center of inquiry is a useful way to decenter the excessive focus on media and media use: In this regard, what urban citizens do and how they do it (e.g., how they communicate or "audience," whether with media or without them) is of primary interest. For protest research, this would mean focusing on how people protest in cities and what these protest practices entail, beyond only looking at Internet use or social media engagement and drawing on media studies or communication studies literature and methods.

Rogers, Barnett and Cochrane (2014) highlight the importance of considering "media-in-practices" as a productive way to highlight broader power struggles and relational urban politics in a particular urban mediated context or moment, be it a protest event or an annual urban garden competition. This relational nature of urban mediated politics aligns with the understanding of urban space as a product of social relations, interactions, and contestation (Tarantino & Tosoni, 2013b). Ridell complements this idea of relational space by arguing that the city itself constitutes a "medium of media" (Ridell, 2013), given its overlapping, multispatial nature and its hyperpermeation with digital and material infrastructure for communication and other human activity. Along a similar vein, Davies (2012) suggests that one way to deal with the relational spatiality of social movements is by examining the "assemblage" of everyday activity in spaces to understand both territorial and relational elements of the sociospatial practices involved. Davies' assemblage could, perhaps, be extended to understand urban protest practices as at once spatial, relational, and mediated social processes.

Cities today emerge as frequent sites of protest activity, becoming focal points for the actions of movements that are increasingly transnational (Köhler & Wissen, 2003), yet concerned with how global issues are constituted in local contexts. Protesters often target representatives and headquarters of international institutions based in cities, as well as local authorities governing decision-making and exerting power in those urban environments. In some cases, as highlighted by Marom in his study of the Israel 2011 protest movement, protests in cities may begin with a limited, explicitly urban agenda (e.g., lack of affordable housing) but go on to expand and become more politically inclusive (Marom, 2013). Though only a share of urban protest events explicitly deals with urban issues, such as access to city infrastructure, illegal construction, or lack of bike lanes, cities inevitably end up being the battlefields where power is contested, demands are negotiated, and conflicts come to a head, often resulting in violence or crackdowns on dissent. This has implications for how protests are interpreted, covered, and remembered, with cities or city spaces often giving names to the events occurring in them (e.g., Battle in Seattle, which became the common label for the 1999 WTO protests in Seattle, or the 2013 Gezi Park protest in Istanbul). But today's multiply mediated cities and the daily practices and struggles of the people living in them also shape how protest movements develop, how they frame their agendas, and how the protest is lived and practiced as part of the urban life, disruptive though it may be.

What happens in a city when a protest erupts? In "The Right to the City," Harvey (2008) stresses that "the question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from the question of what kind of people we want to be" (p. 23), implying that the personalities, political preferences, and habits of the people claiming a right to the city are closely intertwined with the kind of change that they seek to achieve in a given urban environment. Despite the fact that not all protests in cities focus explicitly on urban issues (Ukraine's Euromaidan certainly did not), those practicing dissent nonetheless seek to remake their city: (1) by embedding the claims, values, and goals of the protest in the urban environment; (2) by restructuring the mediated power, resource, and information relations, underpinned by personal networks and the infrastructure of the city. Ultimately, by changing the city through protest, the people transform themselves, exercising "the freedom to make and remake" (Harvey, 2008, p. 24) themselves and their cities. To capture those multidimensional transformations, it is necessary to approach urban protest as an assemblage of variously mediated spatial practices that would help interpret how protesting reshapes the city and its inhabitants in terms of their agency, their relationships with each other, and their perception and use of the urban environment around them.

In sum, the shift to a non-media-centric approach in urban media studies, and a turn to closer scrutiny of urban mediated practices, emerges as a productive way to do research on protests in cities. First, it allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how people in cities "practice" protest in a highly mediated environment. Second, it accounts for the fact that urban protest activity today is augmented not only by digital media but also by the complex spatial and material geographies of urban daily life of which media is only one layer. Third, drawing on a diverse set of disciplines to query the urban environment and its relational structures allows us to zero in on what Ridell and Zeller refer to as the "power-related mediatedness of public space and agency" (Ridell & Zeller, 2013, p. 438). Though challenging in terms of interdisciplinary rifts and methodological puzzles, such an approach nonetheless promises a more rewarding, richer understanding of the interplay of space, agency, technology, and human creativity circumscribed in a given urban protest moment.

Challenges of Cross-Disciplinary Work

The key scholarly challenge in this context is that urban activists and protesters today are at once online, offline, and moving in the city. While studying their activities, we need to take into account at the outset both the urban environment as a digitally mediated spatial context, and the platforms and devices that afford protest communication in contemporary multispatial cities, as well as the political and cultural context in which the protest occurs, whether regional, national, or local. Tosoni and Ridell (2016) suggest that the first step to bypass the limitations of a media-centric approach is to focus on the practices and routines of mediated urban life and to consider how media-related and non-media-related practices intertwine. Aiello and Tosoni (2016), in their writing on the timeliness of addressing methodological considerations for urban media studies, propose considering the symbolic, technological, and material ways in which urban dwellers engage with each other and the city they inhabit, to capture mediated activity in cities that are heterogeneous, are in constant flux, and often emerge as contested spaces. In turn, Mattoni and Treré (2014) suggest attending to the triumvirate of actors, actions, and temporalities in social movements, and this framework is certainly applicable to the context of urban resistance practices. For protest research in particular, this means we must arrive at a set of methods that combine human interaction and conversations with protesters (e.g., interviews or focus groups), collection and analysis of media and digital content generated by and around the protest, and gathering evidence of the city's transformation as both a site for and a symbol of dissent (observation, visual ethnographies, mapping, or cartography). These approaches can then be triangulated to illuminate the complexities of digitally and spatially augmented urban protest activity as a heterogeneous assemblage where the material, the digital, and the symbolic are all enmeshed.

Ukraine and Euromaidan: Background

Ukraine's capital city, Kyiv, has seen its share of protest movements addressing distinctly urban concerns but also expressions of dissent with broader political and social claims. Groups such as Save Old Kyiv, concerned with illegal construction in historic areas and the destruction of heritage buildings, have years of creative city protest experience (Sarapina, 2014). At the same time, given that Ukrainian government officials (both on a national and a local scale) have been mired in corruption and nepotism (Kubicek, 2009; Neutze & Karatnycky, 2007), this developing kleptocracy has led to a melding of various activist groups and their protest potentials, resulting in an overlap of protesters who contested power in the city because they were concerned for city infrastructure or cultural heritage, with those who contested power in the city because they were concerned about abuse of power at all levels. In these conditions, Euromaidan emerged in the fall of 2013 first as a protest against the then Ukrainian president's refusal to sign an association agreement with the EU (Bohdanova, 2013), but over time it grew to encompass a broad base of claimants, including those who protested against government corruption, police brutality, and censorship, and for human rights, free expression, and a Ukraine that was a part of Europe. Though the protest in Kyiv ballooned to become multiscalar (Köhler & Wissen, 2003), branching out to other Ukrainian cities and connecting with groups outside of Ukraine, Kyiv was both the material and geographic center of the activity and the nexus of attention (local, national, and international), with the city itself becoming a symbol of the resistance, splashed across newspaper front pages and fragmented into Twitter posts and Instagram photos (Szostek, 2014). This speaks to the common feature of many urban protests—that of simultaneous

multiplicity and centrality, as identified by Marom (2013). Protesters in Kyiv would sometimes be exasperated with Western media covering their takeover of the city center as “pro-European” or “anti-Moscow” and instead preferred to speak of protesting for change and “taking back” their country (Lokot, 2013), the city acting as a synecdoche for their larger present and future.

As they shaped the city in protest, participants navigated between cafes and street kitchens, mobile phones and laptops, paper posters and digital maps, refashioning the everyday routines of urban life to align with the rhythm of the protest event but also allowing them to inscribe their own guidelines for how the event unfolded. The Euromaidan protest managed to merge the spectacular and the ordinary elements of life in a mediated city (Vuolteenaho, Leurs, & Sumiala, 2015) and to embed spaces of contestation into everyday mediated and spatial urban practices. To some extent, the protest was a disruptive phenomenon, as it dominated the media agenda, blocked off a large chunk of the city center, and later occupied several government buildings. But more unexpectedly, protest sensibilities and practices seeped into people’s daily existence and permeated their variously mediated practices, imbuing them with new meaning. Selfies were ordinary; selfies from the protest camp were a sign of spectacular dissent. Cooking for yourself was mundane; making sandwiches and tea for the protesters on Kyiv’s wintery nights was civic engagement. Walking or driving to work was a usual thing, but it became an act of protest when people carried canisters of fuel for campfires or made a detour to Independence Square (Maydan Nezalezhnosti) to help pick cobblestones out of the street to serve as projectiles against riot police. All of these ordinary-cum-revolutionary activities combined as various ways of mediating what protest in the city looked like, what the city in protest did, and how the different actors and spaces interacted within this environment at different moments in time.

Though there was a multitude of different movements and initiatives within Euromaidan (no small wonder, since hundreds of thousands of people participated in events in Kyiv and elsewhere), this study focuses on a specific protest community, to place the findings about its practices within a broader context. This case study also seeks to demonstrate that an interdisciplinary approach to researching urban mediated protest requires a variety of methods to obtain a rounded knowledge of the assemblage of resistance practices and a degree of readiness for the truly multifaceted nature of the protest in and for the augmented city.

Case Study: Mapping Connections in the “City in Protest”

The focus of this study is Galas, a crowdsourcing protest logistics initiative that sprang up during the Euromaidan protest in the Ukrainian capital city of Kyiv at the end of December 2013. Founded by a group of enthusiasts seeking to help coordinate human, material, and other resources for the protest, Galas (Ukrainian for *noise* or *ruckus*) grew into a major hub of the urban contentious effort. The case provides a compelling opportunity to critically examine the entanglements between the material and virtual geographies of urban protest communities and to understand how citizens navigate these relationships as they engage in protest online, offline, and in the city. The case invites us to consider how the melding of the “urban” and “media” dimensions affects the opportunities and limits for action in civic dissent; the mobility of activists in relation to both the material and the digital; and activists’ access to resources, in terms of information, urban infrastructure, and ultimately, power.

The study uses data collected through a multimodal ethnographic approach recommended by multiple scholars of urban social movements and protest events (e.g., Barassi, 2013; Mattoni & Treré, 2014). The multimodal ethnography comprises seven interviews with Galas founders and key Galas/Euromaidan activists, including Web developers, programmers, designers, and volunteer coordinators, conducted in person during the protest in Kyiv in the winter of 2013–14; a netnography of Galas' online presence, including its main website and Facebook page, conducted in December 2013 to February 2014; and two weeks of ethnographic observation of Galas community practices in December 2013 and January 2014, including their activities on digital platforms, in the protest camp in downtown Kyiv, and in other locations around the city. This multipronged data collection strategy emerged from the desire to capture the assemblage of emergent and often ephemeral practices that together represented the variously mediated and spatially diverse urban protest initiative. Though the data collected were heterogeneous and often difficult to structure and categorize, employing interdisciplinary data gathering methods was necessary to decenter digital media as a dominant component of urban mediated protest research and to describe the full range of protesters' practices in a broader context of the city as a highly networked space where the material and the digital entwine, and where bodies, technology and urban spaces augment each other. The multimodal research methodologies used enabled a comprehensive analysis of the different dimensions of urban augmented protest across different spaces, temporalities, and media platforms. Following the conceptual model developed by Mattoni and Treré (2014), the study examines how urban protest activities in this case functioned with regard to participation, organization, protest, and symbolic visibility practices. Based on observations of these practices, the study considers how the initiative exploited the hybrid, mediated spatiality of their protest effort for the collection, curation, and distribution of extant data and emerging information related to protest logistics.

Support for specific initiatives during the Euromaidan protest in Ukraine often formed spontaneously around particular needs; in some cases, just a handful of individuals were able to take projects off the ground due to the affordances of existing personal networks of relationships, as well as easily scaled free, open-source platforms that enable volunteer signup, project management, and resource mobilization. Galas was born in response to a logistical puzzle; the management and distribution of resources (funds, transportation, lodging, medications) at the early stages of the protest were chaotic and fragmented, despite the fact that many people in the capital city of Kyiv and elsewhere expressed their desire to help the Euromaidan protesters. One of Galas' founders, who works as an IT manager at a software company, said they discussed this conundrum with friends (developers, programmers, designers) and wondered if the protest movement would benefit from an organized coordination initiative that could combine material and virtual efforts to manage and distribute crowdsourced resources more coherently.

Galas was built around a loosely tied community of protesters, and it relied on both active contact with other Euromaidan protest groups and collection of extant, publicly available information about available resources and needs. Galas' main protest activities—the active outreach for information and the collection and curation of data that were already available—were performed through various channels, including digital online media and phone conversations, as well as face-to-face communication and distribution of visual materials in the protest camp in the city center. The initiative also worked within various urban spatialities and temporalities, circumscribed by the routine rhythms of urban life and the unusual rhythms of the protest

event. What follows is a more structured account of Galas' protest practices with regard to the conceptual framework outlined here.

In terms of organization, Galas relied on a small group of protesters to design and create its initial structure; the endeavor depended on a combination of volunteer work both online and in the protest locations around the city center. In spatial terms, Galas operated without a central office, relying on part-time labor from its coordinators and volunteers based in different locations around Kyiv. New part-time volunteer staff was recruited from protest participants and sympathizers on social networks and in the downtown street camp. Galas activists maintained a regularly updated shared list of individuals, useful contacts, and daily tasks, allowing relevant actors access to necessary information from their workplaces or from smartphones if they were in the protest camp. One interviewee, a founding member of Galas and an IT manager, said the team relied on a number of digital tools, including social media, chat apps, and online document and storage services to get their work organized and work around the clock:

Google docs, group chat, several documents with instructions and manuals, where we describe the basic algorithm, and where everything is stored. Several extra information resources: a history of our communications with coordinators in various places related to [Euro]Maidan, we keep a log of that, whom we called and when and what happened, and similar things for transport and such.

Organizing a heterogeneous collective of protesters was challenging with regard to their varying temporalities: Most of these people worked day jobs, so they could afford to spend only a few hours each day (or sometimes night) designing and sharing content, fielding calls, inspecting donations or facilities, or adding requests for and offers of resources to the crowdsourced map and database. One interviewee, a developer, said he did a lot of his protest-related work for Galas from his office, as he shared his time between work and protest-related tasks, but would "still run down to Khreshchatyk," the city's central street close to the protest camp, "after work just to add another check-in on Foursquare to the protest event there, to boost the numbers." Consequently, this allowed him to feel like he was "present and involved" within the material protest space, even if he didn't get to enter the physical center every day. Despite the part-time engagement and a high turnover of volunteers, Galas was able to document its daily routines to an extent where protesters quickly learned on the job.

With regard to participation practices, the main protest-related activities in Galas involved the collection, curation, and dissemination of extant data and emerging information about the needs and resources within the protest movement. Spatially, this involved mapping the available information onto the network of the physical sites of resistance in the city. The map became the main symbolic representation of Galas' work. The initial core team designed both the website and the mobile apps around a real-time alert, mapping platform that had already been tested during the heavy snowfalls in Kyiv the previous winter. The Galas website used the open-source Ushahidi platform for populating the interactive map with information about resources on offer and the needs of key protest hubs around the city. The main website, defunct as of June 2017, is still available to view on the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine (see Figure 1).

ГАЛАС Незалежна волонтерська ініціатива з допомоги громадському спротиву

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ЗАГоловок	ПОЛОЖЕННЯ	ДАТА
АКТУАЛЬНІ ПОТРЕБИ МАЙДАНУ станом на 7 лютого	Україна, Київ, Майдан Незалежності	2014-02-07 13:59
Дуже потрібна допомога лікарів!	Україна, Київ, Майдан Незалежності	2014-02-06 12:54
Мешок дров с позняков	Київ , м.Харьковская ул Вербицкого	2014-02-06 11:53
Потреби Громадського сектора	Україна, Київ, Майдан Незалежності	2014-02-04 11:28
Авто, волонтер	Україна, Київ, Майдан Незалежності	2014-02-03 12:48
Віддам дрова	Київ, Нивки	2014-02-03 12:07
Зубні щітки для активістів	Україна, Львів	2014-02-01 19:10
Надам теплі речі (Житомир)	Україна, Житомир	2014-02-01 14:50
ПОТРЕБИ ГРОМАДСЬКИХ ТАБОРІВ МАЙДАНУ станом...	Україна, Київ	2014-01-31 23:43
Потрібно відвезти	Ірпінь Київської обл	2014-01-31 14:53

Figure 1. The Galas website as captured on February 8, 2014. Source: Wayback Machine (<https://web.archive.org/web/20140208062230/http://www.galas.org.ua>)

The interactive map was populated with information in the following categories: (a) help needed, (b) ready to help, (c) searching for missing persons, (d) locations of help centers, (e) free Wi-Fi locations. This map was populated from messages coming in through the website's feedback form and the apps, as well as from calls, text messages, and social media exchanges, all of these curated by Galas volunteers. Additional resource-related information came in through face-to-face communication with various hubs within the central protest camp downtown, as well as through other networked protest initiatives dealing

with medical needs, cooking, or transportation. One of the Galas interviewees, a volunteer coordinator, said the website was successful in raising awareness of the protest needs and connecting them to available resources, in large part due to the information sharing work done on social media and on foot in the main protest locations. She also pointed out that high or low numbers of visits to the website depended on particular protest moments:

The site was the most visited of our platforms, after November 30 [the first case of police brutality against protesters] we had a peak, December 4 we had 80K visits a day. An increase after every police clash or something big happening. But traffic also depended a lot on our promotion efforts, Facebook reposts, retweets.

In addition to managing the supply and demand of the protest resources, Galas activists also designed, produced, and disseminated useful information about protest practices, distributing bright, eye-catching posters, maps, and newsletters through digital channels and plastering paper copies around Kyiv city center and beyond. These contained information on Galas itself and on key contact points in the protest effort and their spatial locations in the city, as well as practical advice on what to bring to the protest and where to donate extra supplies.

Though most of Galas' activity was logistically oriented and mapped onto specific locations or protest network nodes, its participants also engaged in more political and symbolic practices such as reposting and sharing protest slogans and key news about state and police reaction on their Facebook page (7,300 followers as of January 2016). But even these more symbolic communications served as evidence of Galas' embeddedness into the relational space of the protest, where the group served as an amplifier of other protest groups and communities and, in turn, expected them to amplify its own calls for help or information (many of Galas' own Facebook posts would start with the word REPOST at the top, to indicate a call for distribution beyond its initial network). The visuals designed by Galas volunteers and distributed in print and digital form throughout the protest spaces, both virtual and material, served as another symbolic representation of its place and function in the protest effort—that of creating a recognizable curatorial presence, a sense of order and direction in the protest practices. Indeed, where other protest groups used art or photos in their visual communications, Galas mostly relied on infographics, text-rich posters, or maps (see Figure 2), underscoring its mission as information collector, resource curator, and, in a sense, protest geographer.

Throughout its organization, participation, and protest practices, Galas activists were seeking to make visible the flows of information and resources within the protest. Using both digital platforms and physical protest spaces, they harnessed the rhythms of urban life to collect information from heterogeneous sources, inscribe it onto a virtual live map representing the city, and then connect that representation back to the material locations and relational networks of the urban resistance movement. This hybrid nature allowed Galas to straddle the junctures between the protest square in the city and the social web, connecting loose, informal networks and tighter, more organized protest groups to leverage information and resources. This underscores Quan-Haase and Martin's (2013) point that in an urban context, the material and the digital do not exist in separate spheres, but "need to be conceptualized in relation to each other" (p. 524). Especially in the case of public or mass urban events, such as the Euromaidan protest or the urban festival

in Chichicastenango that Quan-Haase and Martin analyze, the augmented urban environment is mediated in various ways, both digital and material, that expand the definition of practices such as visibility, participation, witnessing, and mobilization.

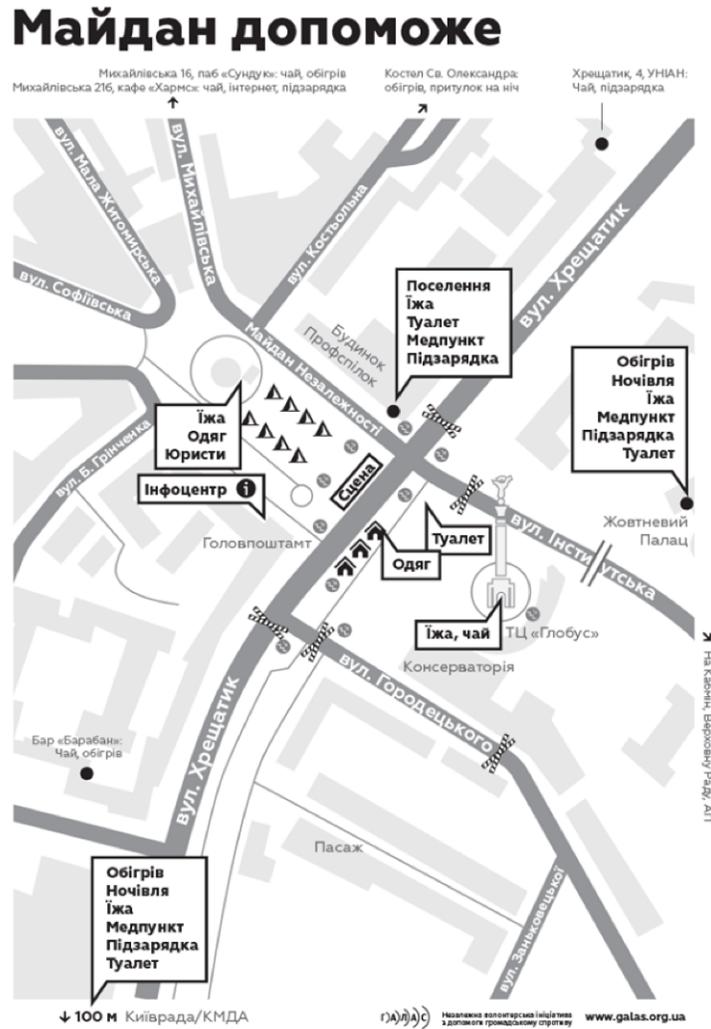


Figure 2. Leaflet produced by Galas, mapping key protest locations and resources.
Source: Galas Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Galas.org.ua/>).

Although on first approach Galas protest activity seemed to revolve predominantly around a digitally enabled platform, the case study shows that it was also firmly embedded in the material geographies, temporalities, and practices of the city, while at the same time availing itself of the increasingly

common digital networks that now permeate the urban life. For instance, most new recruits found out about Galas through social media, but word-of-mouth and some form of prior weak ties were crucial for securing commitment and prolonged engagement. In terms of organization, Galas' flexibility resulted not only from a reliance on digital tools (online map, shared digital spreadsheets, and contact databases) but also from the fact that urban participants often had random amounts of time they could devote to Galas work and had to balance their varying temporalities within the needs of the initiative. Some of them freelanced and had more leeway; others could only work at night or on weekends, but had unfettered Internet access; yet others were self-employed or ran their own companies and could afford to take unpaid leave when needed to visit physical locations. These temporal variations, structured by the rhythm of urban employment and daily life, meant that people saw their volunteer work at Galas as a fairly low-maintenance commitment that nonetheless allowed them to "practice protest" in a meaningful way. While volunteer turnover was high, the training for volunteers required minimal effort and the decentralized nature of Galas operations meant that most practices and their evolution were extensively documented, with records made available for all community members. The flexibility of the resource management and volunteer operations structure also meant that Galas, as a project, was able to adapt quickly to the changing needs of Euromaidan, going from collecting camping gear, tea, and phone chargers at the start to crowdsourcing medical equipment and bulletproof vests when the protests turned violent.

Because Galas was responsive to the relationality of the urban environment, whether digital, material/spatial, or temporal, its activists were able to recognize the urban protest space as a roiling mass of human activity and interaction instead of a square in the city center filled with tents, barricades, and burning tires. They were also able to spot the opportunities for action, the "missing links" in this multispatial environment, and to address these opportunities through creating "shortcuts" in the relational networks to gather and deliver information and resources where they were available or necessary—or, sometimes, simply to connect the right people with one another, whether face-to-face or via digital means. In the words of one Galas activist, "We knew where free Wi-Fi was available and we knew where you could get 100 kg of firewood. And if we didn't, we knew who to ask." Recognizing the limitations of the various elements of this multispatial relational environment and attempting to overcome them by hybridizing space, technology, and human agency allowed Galas to create new connections between protest groups and to synthesize protest knowledge and practices in the process. This is reminiscent of Davies' (2012) conclusion that social formations emerging during social and political upheaval are best seen as temporary assemblages of people, objects, spaces, and connections, able to temporarily cohere and disperse as required by the needs of the movement or protest event.

Conclusions and Discussion

Galas is only one example of many urban protest communities that made up Euromaidan as a movement and as an urban event, yet it emerges as a stark case for power-related mediatedness of urban space and public agency (Ridell & Zeller, 2013) and for how such variously mediated agency is shaped by and itself shapes the urban environment. Though it served to fulfill a niche need for coordinating logistics and information about certain resources for the protest, access to those resources was closely tied to the distribution of power within the city. By mapping the protest network in relational terms and creating and sustaining the necessary connections between various Euromaidan supporters in hybrid protest spaces,

Galas ultimately helped reconfigure the flows of power in the urban space: the power to know, the power to fund and be funded, the power to heat or heal, and the power to contribute and make a difference. Certainly, Euromaidan protesters were contesting political issues (Euromaidan's claims were pro-European, anticorruption, pro-human rights, etc.), but they were simultaneously contesting urban spaces and demanding squares and streets, walls and screens, attention and time, atoms and bits to express and (re)present those claims. Access to resources such as fuel, medications, wireless Internet and mobile networks, urban infrastructure such as transport and accommodation became explicitly political in the context of the protest, and so the mediation of this access by Galas through its hybridized participation, organization, and symbolic visibility practices was also imbued with implications for how power and agency were redistributed, thus contributing to the protest's goals of greater transparency, grassroots participation, and a growing sense of civic responsibility. The redistribution of power also contributed to a reshaping of the imaginary of the city in the minds of the protesters, offering a different symbolic image—that of a coherent urban space connected on multiple levels—to one of dysfunctional nepotism and corruption that the protest was rebelling against.

In the case of Galas, the digital and the material components of urban mediatedness mesh with the spatial and temporal practices of protesters to create a kind of "connective tissue" between individuals and organizations that transcends physical or digital dimensions, creating instead an augmented map of the "city in protest" and capturing the heretofore unseen connections and entanglements between urban locations and routines, digital media platforms, and the individuals and communities practicing protest in these spaces. It is in eliciting these distinctions and connections between different types of protest practices in these mixed relational spaces that we can arrive at a constructive urban media studies approach to studying protest in the city. Seeing these entanglements of urban spatiality reproduced and represented in protesters' practices is undoubtedly challenging, as it requires a multipronged approach to conducting fieldwork and an intentionally interdisciplinary theoretical base from which to proceed. Though the protest participants themselves may recognize the hybrid nature of urban existence and, consciously or unconsciously, wrap their protest practices around the potentialities and constraints of mediated urban agency, the researchers observing and studying protest events in mediated cities have yet to catch up with them. Taking up this challenge, however, would surely result in a richer and more productive understanding of mediated protest practices as part of a broader relational politics and of contestations of power in a particular urban context. It could also allow for a more empirically grounded examination of the affordances of people's media-related and technology-mediated protest practices for transformative agency, avoiding technological determinism or cyberutopian narrow-mindedness. In the case of Galas, the research reveals that though such urban hybrid protest initiatives often depend on confluences of specific relations and opportunities that emerge at specific times, they nonetheless are able to create new ways of collaboration and modes of spatiality that blend the digital and the material, remain decentralized and grassroots, and successfully renegotiate the balance of power and, thus, the right to create and shape the city in protest.

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