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Choice and Transformation of Public Space in Toronto: a Case Study of Tamil Protests 2009

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CHOICE AND TRANSFORMATION OF PUBLIC SPACE IN TORONTO: A CASE STUDY
OF TAMIL PROTESTS 2009

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ABSTRACT

The 2009 Tamil demonstrations in Toronto challenged the preconceptions of public space
and the legitimacy of transnational politics within a 'multicultural' city. This paper explores the
impact these demonstrations had on Toronto's 'public spaces', especially how they were able to
transform the city. An analysis of secondary data sources, including, media coverage and
participant-observations reveal that even though the political demonstrations organised by the Sri
Lankan Tamil-Canadians were 'tolerated', they were not necessarily 'accepted' by many
Torontonians. This observation raises numerous interrelated questions, particularly related to the
rights of immigrants and refugee groups to the city.

Key words:

Public spaces; social movements; transnational politics; the city

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Table of Contents

Chapter One

"I was on my way home walking to St George Station back in April of 2009 when I first stumbled across the group of Tamil students walking around the University of Toronto Campus carrying signs calling for intervention in Sri Lanka. As an undergraduate student at the time I paid no heed to the noise and attempted to walk around the protests so that I could cram for my exams the next day. I remember clearly walking with friends who expressed their curiosity over the demonstrations, questioning their purpose..."

In recent years, the diaspora of Sri Lankan Tamils in Canada has become a significant political actor in international relations (Wayland 2004). Although Tamils have been emigrating from Sri Lanka since the 1950s[1], the Tamil diaspora in Canada is largely made up of refugees and asylum seekers leaving Sri Lanka from the early 1980s onwards at the wake of intense ethnic violence. Since 1980, Sri Lankan Tamils have sought asylum in approximately thirty one countries, including Canada, India, the U.K., Germany, France, and Switzerland (Vimalarajah & Cheran, 2010). Since the early 1980s, Canada has been the home of the largest concentration of Sri Lankan Tamils in the world, with approximately 250 000 people (Vimalarajah & Cheran, 2010). Toronto is home to a significant number of those Tamils ranging at approximately 93 590 (Census, 2006). There are numerous Tamil institutions in Toronto, which hold annual festivals and commemorations to celebrate and preserve the Sri Lankan Tamil heritage in Canada (Wayland, 2003).

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[1] In the 1950s, middle and upper class Tamils left to seek better prospects elsewhere namely Europe and then North America (Imtiyaz, 2008). Migration that had initially started out as a way for established professionals to seek affluence abroad or maintain their position in Sri Lankan slowly moved to also encompass those wanting to escape the politics of the ethnic based conflicts that began to emerge in Sri Lanka following the years of independence (Wayland, 2004).

The Sri Lankan Tamil identity in Canada continues to be divided, some looking to establish an independent region for Tamils in Sri Lanka while others are concerned with establishing equality within Sri Lanka moving for equal opportunities for Tamils in Sri Lanka (Vimalarajah & Cheran, 2010). The move from an authoritarian, discriminatory government in Sri Lanka to Western countries in North America and Europe has enabled the Sri Lankan Tamils to express themselves in a manner that was previously denied to them (Wayland, 2004). The Tamil diaspora in Canada actively campaigns for international intervention to redress the human rights violations and investigations of war crimes committed by the Sri Lankan government resulting from the civil war. With Canada maintaining the largest of Sri Lankan Tamils outside of Sri Lanka the political interests of their homeland has often been at conflict with the foreign policy agendas of Canada. Canadian Tamils while the largest diaspora of Tamils outside of Sri Lanka have also been faced with intense scrutiny from the Canadian government because of their actions and beliefs about their domestic politics.

In 2009, demonstrations engineered by the Tamils in Canada took place across the country in reaction to the escalating conflict in Sri Lanka. Protests were attended by thousands of Tamils from across the Greater Toronto Area to downtown Toronto who actively engaged in the protests to encourage the Canadian government to take a stand in the then ongoing civil war in Sri Lanka. Demonstrations took place across the city ranging from candle light vigils at Queen`s Park to marches and protests at the American consulate and Parliament in downtown Toronto. The demonstrations while justifiable as the rights of the group to exercise their civil liberties were not interpreted as such by onlookers. The Tamil protest received both positive and negative attention from the public, media and the government (Siddiqui, 2009). While reports from *The Globe and Mail* (Thomas, 2009; Reinhart, 2009) questioned the legitimacy of the demonstrations

taking place across the city and the level of tolerance exercised by residents of the city, reports from *The Toronto Star* lent a sympathetic ear to the demonstrations, arguing that the Tamils were also a Canadians and as residents of the city they are entitled to engage in political protests.

When people migrate to a new country it is more than just a shift from one country to another, the individual or group by traversing the spaces in between bring with them their own beliefs and value systems to their new country of residence (Hyndman & Walton-Roberts, 2000). Through their transnational ties individuals maintain both their identities challenging existing ideas in their new country of residence by as Wald (2008) notes "maintaining a foot in each nation (p.275)." Political participation through the organization of protests has been a popular form of activism for all groups of people. Immigrants in particular have begun to take a louder stand against their governments in both the United States and in Canada against legislation that has hindered their integration (Lenard, 2010).

While Toronto is labelled a diverse city and considered to be a multicultural city the actions of the city and the tolerance level of the city towards political activism by racialized minorities indicate otherwise (Goonewardena & Kipfer, 2005). Urban politics of racialized minorities are viewed as subdued and sedate in Toronto compared to their counterparts in the United States according to Goonewardena and Kipfer (2005). While the city is touted as one of the most diverse cities in the world the structures of the city, privatization of the city and retraction of the welfare policies at the municipal levels has indicated the exclusive trends adopted by the city to exclude less influential groups. Racialized minorities are also routinely excluded as a result of this bourgeois urbanism in which the middle class and elites have dominated policy formation within the city (Goonewardena & Kipfer, 2005). With the increased arrival of immigrant populations from non-European sources in the 1980s, Toronto has struggled

to manage diversity and tolerance towards these groups in their bid to make Toronto a global city (Kipfer & Keil, 2002). Diversity for Toronto has become a label in which racialized minorities are tolerated more than they are actually accepted within the city (Goonewardena & Kipfer, 2005).

The 2009 Tamil protests in Toronto are an important phenomenon to consider because of the influence transnationalism has played in cultivating the political activism of the Tamil diaspora within the city. The political activism of the Tamil immigrants raises interesting questions regarding issues of integration and acculturation experiences. While on one hand, transnational politics has aided the Tamil diaspora in raising awareness for the violence occurring in Sri Lanka; it has also raised questions regarding the appropriateness of transnational politics in the city.

By examining the 2009 Tamils protests in Toronto, this research attempts to analyze how Canadian-Tamils have negotiated public space through their participation in their transnational political protests. Through a review of the existing literature on the Tamil protest movements, selected media reports and participant observations I argue that the mobilization of the Tamils stand as an example to other groups in the city, to continue to engage in demonstrations to not only seek change but to reassert their place in the city. The changing landscape of the city both in structure and planning have implemented a regulation of public space and everyday life restricting not only behaviour but access to the city as well in order to reflect the image of a global, competitive city. In the following sections of this research paper, I will first review the existing literature on the changing forms of the city and public space next, data sources and the research methods will be presented following an analysis of the Tamil demonstrations in 2009.

<center>**Chapter Two**</center>

<center>**Literature Review**</center>

The literature reviewed for this paper includes a critical examination of concepts in social geography such as the city, and privatization of the city, public space, as well as a review of the literature on Toronto as a corporate city more specifically. The books reviewed deal with the study of space in geography looking into the study of social geography. The review will consider the impact social interactions and specifically how social movements have challenged the privatization of spaces within the city.

Defining the city

Cities are spaces formed by the interactions between individuals, structures and institutions. Spaces according to Knox (1994) represent "...mediums in which economic, social, political and historical processes are expressed...influencing patterns of urban development... (p.3)" Space for Lefebvre is a social product constructed both socially and physically (Schmid, 2008). Cities reflect the characteristics of the interactions that take place within its boundaries. Spaces take on new meanings and change according to human needs, evolution and society altering the spaces within it by the activities taking place (Lefebvre, 2002). It is the activities taking place within the spaces of the city that influence its trajectory and developmental patterns as well as shaping the relations between the existing social groups within the city. They represent sites of inequality and exploitation but they also serve as spaces that offer opportunities for change (Connolly & Steil, 2009). These produced spaces are defined by the actions of human beings as well as their needs and has become an object to be crafted by the individuals whims of human beings (Lefebvre, 2002). Cities are not only formed as a result of changing political

<center>5</center>

economic and social processes but also shape the nature of these areas through the development of the city. It is through the borders of municipalities' rules and regulations are put into place transforming the nature of the city attempting to maintain continuity but also bringing about changes. The downsizing of governments has brought more attention to the importance of the municipality and the struggle within the city to move towards a more socially just society versus the increasing influencing of neoliberalism (Connolly and Steil, 2009). Spaces of the city have become objectified to the needs of neoliberal thoughts with the commercialization of the city and the emphasis on marketing the city instead of making it accessible to its residents. For Lefebvre (2002) cities have become "...cultural consumption for tourists, aestheticism, avid for spectacles and the picturesque (p.368)." Cities have morphed into objects or more accurately social spaces for sale that are becoming increasingly privatized.

Privatization of the city

Privatization and consumerism have become the defining characteristics of modern cities, as a result conditioning people's access to the city. The planning and redesigning of cities across North America with similar traits witnessed across the globe has sought to transform the city to suit the appeals of tourists and shape it to the personal desires of the few (Harvey, 2008). One of the characteristics of the city has been its ability to shape and develop according to the needs of its inhabitants, with the privatization of the city it has come to reflect the desires and needs of a select few leaving the rest left out. According to Valentine (2001) the declining state of the cities in the 1970s and 1980s has brought upon revitalization projects with the emergence of the twenty-first century marketing the cities not for their historical or social importance but for their economic potential and prowess. Consumerism and privatization have changed the values of the city and in turn restricting the accessibility of the city to certain groups. Current relationships and

6

institutions put in place have altered the everyday patterns of modern society to reflect the needs of capitalist production, the everyday needs of the present society reflect that of the consumer society (Keil, 2002). Spaces within the city are constructed based on the institutions, structures and individual interactions that take place within the place. The spaces available in the city are modified by the presence of individuals occupying the space but individuals are also conditioned by the same spaces in which they occupy (Knox & Pinch, 2010). While the individual interactions contribute to the production of spaces in the city the interactions of the individual are moderated by the existing institutions, or structures in place that may characterized the person to act in a certain manner appropriate to the space. While the everyday actions of modern society have become based on consumerism, individuals and groups continue to act against the dominant norms in their attempts to reclaim space within the city.

The neoliberal influence that swept Toronto from the 1970s onwards with restructuring policies from the state and municipality has regulated the everyday life of individuals to support capitalism and the consumerism firmly rooted in modern society (Keil, 2002). The conditionings of everyday activities have regulated the actions and behaviours of individuals as well as restricting the access of the city as a result of the entrenched modern consumer society. Cities represent sites of inequality and exploitation but they also serve to be the areas that promise opportunity and change (Connolly & Steil, 2009). The latter representations of the city have become especially true with the ongoing struggle between privatization of the city and or keeping it government operated. The privatization taking place within cities has not only affected the construction of the city but also the individuals living within the urban spaces and their access to resources within the city. The privatization of the city has resulted in a loss of basic resources available to residents in the city including the labelling of districts characterizing

certain places as being open to certain groups and classes of people (Kipfer & Keil, 2002). Open spaces within the city have become constrained into districts and subdivisions like that of the entertainment district, historic districts and gated communities with the increase of policing and surveillance (Kipfer & Keil, 2002). Values are constantly changing in cities and are in constant motion. Since the implementation of neoliberal reforms changes have been made to produce a certain image of Toronto in its aim to become a global competitive city. Planning of the city has no longer become the responsibility of elected public officials but has increasingly been taking place behind closed doors with municipalities aiming to shoulder their responsibilities onto the private sector due to their ever decreasing budgets (Kipfer & Keil, 2002). The increasing reforms taking place within the city are not only reregulating life but also alienating the residents from the use and access to the city (Basu, 2012). The changes implemented in Toronto and the amalgamation of the municipalities into one large entity has reflected the broader trends of North American cities to become attractive to investors.

With this changing emphasis on marketing the city and making it competitive on a global scale the rights of the individual and social welfare have moved out of the focus in city planning and policy goals. Through the increased surveillance of the city, certain groups have become more welcome than others within the spaces of the city. Cities have become both site of equality and inequality, representing sites for change but also sites of decreasing freedom. Rights are more often than not conditional and are dependent upon some sort of belonging or social contract with the state or smaller entity in which the individual must belong or give in to in order to receive the protection of the state or benefit from the state (Harvey & Potter, 2009). Access to the city has become a privileged benefit entitled to those with the ability to afford it (Harvey & Potter, 2009). The rights to the city are no longer based on the premise of the working class

struggling for urban reform but have evolved to encompass the larger goal of reclaiming the city to sustain basic human needs. With the privatization of the city, deviant behaviour and graffiti have become frowned upon with the changes reflected in the city making it open to the whims and persuasion of the elites residing within the city. City structures and spaces have been revamped with gentrification policies aimed to suit the appeal of tourists and upper echelons of the community neglecting the input of the everyday individuals that reside within the city (Harvey, 2008). Lefebvre's right to the city was intended to bring about the participation of urban citizens and also encourage their voices in the planning and management of the city (Dikeç, 2009). The right to the city is being taken away with the privatization of urban spaces preventing individuals from taking an active part in shaping the city to suit their collective needs instead of those of the few and privileged (Harvey & Potter, 2009). The current trend in cities have been to cut back on welfare policies deregulating society to promote independence and self sufficiency which has delayed the development of individuals with lesser means in the city that may not be able to catch on to changing trends as quickly as others (Navy & Mayer, 2009).

Spaces in the city and 'public space'

Space is understood "as architecture of concepts, forms and rules for Lefebvre (p.35)" (Schmid, 2008). For Lefebvre spatial triads exist to explain the relationship between the construction of space and the characteristics that compose of them. The three dimensional analysis of space for Lefebvre follows spatial practice, the representation of space and spaces of representation (Schmid, 2008). Spatial practice refers to the "networks of interaction and communication as they arise in everyday life (p.36) (Schmid, 2008)." The second dimension deals with the language of space and how theories and definitions represent space for Lefebvre in which the architecture, the planning of spaces meaning their representations depicts space

(Schmid, 2008). And lastly the spaces of representation for Lefebvre complete the triad looking at symbols within the production of space like institutions, monuments or even landscapes (Schmid, 2008). The three dimensions come together in the production of space within the city constructing the characteristics of the place to take on certain meanings. Another triad of importance from Lefebvre is that of the perceived space, conceived space and lived space which illustrate the production of society (Schmid, 2008). In short perceived space refers to that which can be grasped within the senses while conceived space refers in part to the knowledge of space and how it is thought to have been constructed (Schmid, 2008). The last part of this triad is that of lived space which illustrates the experiences of space as experienced by human beings and it is through this lived space that we see the experiences of individuals come into conflict with each other (Schmid, 2008). These triads denote the relationships that take place within the production of space and the last triad specifically showcases how the interactions of the individual form the production of society. Spaces within the city are formed within the architecture of these beliefs with the perceived space, where the senses coincide with the conceived and lived space in the formation of everyday life in the city.

Rights to the city have become restricted with the privatization of the city and the erosion of public space. The interactions and institutions within the urban space shape the characteristics of the city and the privatization of the city has reflected the restricted access within the spaces of the city. Cities are urban spaces representing the interaction of not only individuals to each other but to surrounding structures and institutions as well. The city not only remains the site of social relations but also acts as a social organism through its functions and interactions (Valentine, 2001). Spaces that used to be open and free have become restricted with the increased monitoring and surveillance of law enforcement. Public space has become a rare space within the

city with almost all spaces being monitored if not directly then indirectly for deviant behaviour. The notion of public space has its roots from ancient Greece and the agora which was an open space for citizens to conduct public affairs and settle legal disputes (Mitchell, 1995). At present public space can be understood as space to which all individuals have access, where different people are met and differences are encountered (Valentine, 2001). Some of the problems with public space are that while intended for by the use of everyone, certain individuals and groups have been barred from its use. Even with the original concept of public space traced from ancient Greece, it was citizens that had the right to voice opinions in the agora. At present while spaces remain open to the public, certain individuals or groups of people namely the homeless are frowned upon and discouraged from entering public spaces. Mitchell (1995) in his discussion of public space argues that the homeless and undesirables are not entitled to access public spaces because of their class and are discouraged from entering places where other more affluent members of society may visit.

Despite the claims of public space being open to all, certain groups continue to face discrimination when attempting to make use of such places and in their attempts to access them. Ghettos and slums have stood as testament to the obvious divides in the city despite claims to equal access and opportunity for all. Much like certain structures are open to certain individuals, certain parts of the city are characterized by different groups of people. As McDowell notes (1999) certain institutions like monasteries or places like clubs or schools are open to certain individuals and sometimes gender exclusive. Social characteristics and the values placed in institutions shape the construction of spaces and their accessibility to individuals. While the city may be an open space certain places are restricted to certain groups and individuals. The disadvantaged include not only of those without resources but also women and racialized

minorities. Women and racialized minorities are subject to different constraints from those of men in their access to public space in the cities. Places like the public park or the urban street while perceived as public space open to all have different meanings to different groups based on their own personal characteristics. While the park and urban street may seem like a space open to all for a female it may be viewed as a safety measure or a trap depending on the time of day (McDowell, 1999). The increased surveillance of the city has projected an image of the militarized space in which control needs to be exercised to preserve a certain level of order within society. McDowell (1999) notes "places are constructed through sets of complex; intersecting social relationships...which are affected by beliefs and symbols that are also complex... (p.30)" The relationship between the individual and space within the city is dependent on a number of variables and characteristics making spaces like the parks or urban streets welcoming to one group or individual more than another.

Feminist approaches like those put forth by McDowell (1999) look beyond class and consider the impact that race, sex, age, religion and other differences have upon an individual and their relationship to spaces in cities and their interactions in society. Unlike the Feminist approach, Marxist perspectives emphasize the class based distinction in the accessibility of public spaces. Mitchell's (1999) example of the People's Park illustrates the larger conflict emerging between privatization of public spaces versus preserving access to such spaces within the city. For Harvey (1973) social justice and distribution of it depend on the relations of the workers of the society assessing their production and contribution to society drawing from the working class paradigm. The city for Harvey (1973) represents the epitome of human life and the progressive privatization of the city has illustrated the decreasing access to public space for humans in the city, an environment which is a social product of their interaction with urban

12

spaces. Public space is understood according to Valentine (2001) as a popular space with unrestricted access to all individuals but the rising privatization has sought to bring about the end of public spaces. Like the Greek agora, considered the model for public space, conditions are placed on current spaces in the city that are conceived of as being open to all individuals and groups. Both Harvey (1973) and Lefebvre (2002) argue that the working class will become the agent of change for urban reform but the Marxist framework used by both omits the problems that are inherent to others in society that are attempting to access the city and lay claim to the public spaces. The public and private dichotomy have been argued endlessly as part of the class based struggle in the city under Marxist perspectives but beyond that of class, racialized groups face further barriers to accessing public space in comparison to white working class groups. Like certain classes are stereotyped as being prone to deviant behaviour, racial groups are also labelled as disruptive to city life and have often had their claims to public space questioned because of their history of belonging to a racialized group which will be further explored at a later point in this paper.

Despite the supposed open nature of public spaces, privatization and changing values in the twenty first century has sought to regulate certain types of behaviour within the city in the quest to make it the competitive global city. Knox and Pinch (2010) illustrates the effect that Foucault's carceral city and the metaphor of the Panopticon have had on current securitizing measures taking place within the city. The carceral city to Foucault indicated "an urban area in which power was decentred and in which people were controlled by micropowers (Knox & Pinch, 2010, p.47)." Within municipalities people are controlled by the powers of influence and the access to spaces have been conditioned with the increased surveillance of police and use of private security (Knox & Pinch, 2010). The Panopticon further entrenches the idea of the

militarization of space. While the Panopticon in its initial grounding by Bentham was intended to reflect the model prison where inmates were kept under watch from a central point it has been used by Foucault to describe modern surveillance practices in shopping districts (Knox & Pinch, 2010). Public spaces are becoming increasingly restrictive in nature and have come under increased scrutiny to prevent deviant behaviour within the city. Social codes of behaviour are attempting to be observed more strictly now more than ever with the goal to make Toronto an attractive city but in doing so pushing out marginalized groups. The crackdown on gangs of youth, homeless people and drunks on urban streets and public parks have enforced on urban spaces a distinct image of safety, cleanliness and security reinforcing the perception that disruptive behaviour will not be tolerated in public spaces or within the city at all (Knox & Pinch, 2010). Public space has become a rare space within the city not only because of privatization but also due to the increased surveillance of the city shaping Toronto into an aesthetically pleasing city in both appearance and structure for investors.

Social movements in the city

Harvey and Potter (2009) along with Lefebvre (2002) emphasize that the right to the city is not an action to be taken by a single individual but to be represented through a collective effort through the efforts of all residents. People around the world have been voicing their dissent through social movements throughout history. Social movements as noted by Wekerle and Peake (1996) are "...constituted by individuals who understand themselves to have common interests and for at least some significant part of their social existence, a common identity..." (p.263) Social movements come in various forms that include revolutions, strikes, waves and protests (McAdam, Tarrow &Tilly, 2001). While the nature of certain activities may differ, most of the activities share the same underlying premise of advocating for the shared common interest. The

common interest of the collective will in social movements seeks to address matters, pursue reform or demand action. Social movements have been demonstrated on global, national and local levels and for the purposes of this paper the review will look at the relationship between social movements and the city. Social movements in the city are often spurred on by the desire to reform the city and make it accessible seeking the ideal of the just city (Valentine, 2011). While national and global movements gain greater recognition at times, it is at the municipal level that individuals can engage on a direct level with their grievances on more personal grounds in comparison to larger based movements that may lack the same claims being made. Localities hold stronger ties to the community because of the social relations the individuals have to the specific places they occupy. During the term of Harris in the Ontario government Toronto residents did not stand aside watching the reforms being implemented and staged protests throughout the city to stop the changes taking place through protests (Keil, 2002). Social movements claim city spaces as their own to reflect the purpose of their movements.

The appropriation of space through social movements illustrates the act of groups or individuals reclaiming their right to the city through their actions and movements (Knox & Pinch, 2010). Protests in public space validate the claims of the participants, their actions and validate their personal ties to the city as residents. Tonkiss (2005) argues that "common spatial rights are an everyday aspect of social and political belonging (p. 67)." Protests reaffirm the rights of individuals in the city through their interactions taking place within the public spaces of parks and urban streets which represent not only the social production of space but the informal encounters that are characteristic of public spaces as well (Tonkiss, 2005). Protests taking place within the public spaces of the city are no longer based on the working class struggles but incorporating local politics into their struggles. Women led the urban reform movements in the

1980s advocating for the lacking welfare policies in place, initializing plans to feed their families which evolved into caring for the entire city through the initiatives like the food banks and community kitchens (Wekerle and Peake, 1996). The movements advocated by the women in the city during the lack of welfare policies placed the emphasis of the city as a home instead of a profit inducing environment. The drive for capital accumulation and making the city competitive city has not only led to a human crisis but ecological crisis first and foremost because of the damage occurring to the environment (Hartmann, 1996). Chances of conflict between the groups have become possible though with the increase in the new types of social movements that have sought to protect their rights to the city through what they believe is the proper route to do so. While the 1980s reform movements were successful in picking up the slack from the municipalities, the groups were quite large and as a result overlooked the specific circumstances that women of colour might face as new arrivals in the city (Wekerle and Peake, 1996). Underrepresented groups sought to stake their own claims to the city by branching off into their own groups bringing their own grievances that differed from the usual plights.

Immigrants and Toronto Inc.

Privatization and the retrenchment of the welfare state have not been the only changes made to the cities of North America there has also been an increase in immigrant populations from the 1980s onwards that have changed the city spaces. Changes in the immigration policies of the 1970s have resulted in a large number of racialized minorities claiming Toronto as their home (Murdie & Ghosh, 2010). The 1970s onwards saw an increase in immigrants seeking refuge in Canada and allowed them to enter into the country en masse overwhelming the state with the mass migration that characterized Canadian immigration policy at that time (Anderson, 2010). Rights based politics during that period worked to stimulate immigration and

simultaneously restricted the ability of the state to control the influx of immigrants into the country (Anderson, 2010). The lack of control over national borders was reflected in the large influx of immigrants into the cities. Immigration and the entrance of diverse populations into major cities like Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver altered the landscape of cities introducing gentrification near the downtown core and the creation of ethnic enclaves along the outer areas of the core and into the suburbs (Murdie & Ghosh, 2010). While Toronto has become prized among many for being a global diverse city the constructed image glosses over the problems the city and its inhabitants have experienced as a result of the diversity. Kipfer and Keil (2002) point out how the rising diversity prompted conflicts in the planning of the city "over the location of mosques, temples and cultural centres..." (p.229). While marketing strategies signified Toronto as being diverse, ground level politics struggled to maintain a balance between the racialized minorities attempting to settle into the cities disrupting plans of modernizing the city (Goonewardena & Kipfer, 2005). Toronto has been touted as a diverse and multicultural city but the extent to which the marketing scheme has been accepted in reality and implemented in the ground is of much debate with the constant conflict over the rights of racialized minorities and their access to the city.

The influx of immigrants during the 1970s onwards threw the cities off kilter in their planning to refurbish Toronto and in the end resulted in utilizing the newcomers in advertising the city as a diverse. Cities have become an important scale onto which globalization has been expanding its influence and Toronto has been no exception to the role transforming itself through its various privatization schemes (Keil, 2002). The marketing of the city, its transformation into a competitive global city and the branding of cities has regulated a consumer society with the spaces of the city running Toronto like a corporation. According to Knox and Pinch (2010)

"cities provide the example of the relationship between culture, space and power (p.48)." The introduction of neoliberalism and movements of globalization have shaped the present image of the city into a business resorting to privatization in order to reduce the budget deficits of overburdened municipalities like that of Toronto. Changes in the economy and restructuring polices of the 1970s reduced the need for workers in manufacturing and increased the need for low skilled service workers which coincided with the loosening of immigration policy and the diversification of newcomers to Canada (Murdie & Ghosh, 2010). The changes led to the racialized minorities settling on the borders of downtown and into the suburbs because of the lack of affordable housing in the downtown core (Murdie & Ghosh, 2010). The restructuring policies were in large part influenced by the ideas of Thatcher and Reagan during their massive restructuring of government (Keil, 2002). The gentrification policies introduced in the latter years including the restructuring of city policies influenced by neoliberal regulations began to impact Canadian governments on provincial and then local scales.

Urban neoliberal policies implemented by the Harris government during his term in government meant to reduce the deficits of the provincial government slashed downgraded responsibilities to the municipalities with Toronto being hit the hardest (Keil, 2002). The shift in responsibilities through neoliberal regulations has according to Keil (2002) re-regulated urban life moulding privatization and consumerism as the foundation of the society placing an emphasis on "performance, efficiency, and marketability of knowledge (p. 582)." Urban spaces accumulated new meanings within the city and have been redefined to reflect the changing lifestyles to be emulated in order to market Toronto as a successful, competitive global city. Urban life and streets became redefined through the years with a crackdown of deviant behaviour or people that threatened the plans for the future of Toronto regulations imposed on food vendors

on the streets, squeegee kids, and graffiti (Keil, 2002). While some of the trends have been reversed from the Harris years the urban neoliberal framework continues in city planning today with attempts to continue to make Toronto a competitive city attractive to outsiders. Slashes to welfare, social housing and trampling over various trade and union groups in the city all were done to cut corners and reduce deficits that impacted the lives of urban residents and newcomers (Keil, 2002). New histories are invented for places in the city that have been subject to gentrification policies in attempts to revitalize Toronto often forcing the history of the spaces to be forgotten in the attempts to market the city (Harvey, 2008). The privatization of Toronto has been based off transformations that have occurred elsewhere across North America and continue to influence cities in the need to make the city profitable and maintain its global advantage.

Social movements of Immigrants in Canadian cities

Racialized minorities bring their own individual beliefs that draw from wider sources than their right to the city when they engage in protests in public spaces. For immigrants and racialized minorities they not only protest to assert their rights to the city but protest to advocate their beliefs that fall outside of the scope of the municipality and reach to international connections. Following the urban reform movements by women, racialized minorities have involved in protests engaging in their rights to the city to bring attention to issues that involve their homeland politics falling out of the scope of the municipality to connect to events that happen around the world. Transnationalism has influenced many of the recent social movements that have taken place in the city by racialized minorities which as defined here by Wayland (2006)   is summed up as "...the creation of new identities that incorporate cultural references from both the place of origin and the place of residence... (p. 18)" Globalization and transnationalism have marked the malleability of territorial boundaries as borders are no longer

19

impenetrable walls. Transnationalism provides insight beyond the state to state transfer of immigrants and look at the linkages that bind immigrants to their previous country of residence (Hyndman & Walton-Roberts, 2000). Political transnationalism sustains the connections for immigrants to the politics of their homeland, politics focusing exclusively on the political context that shapes the relations between the sending and receiving states of immigrants. For Wayland (2006) it "...consists of various types of 'direct cross-border participation in the politics of their country of origin by migrants and refugees' as well as their indirect involvement via either political institutions of the receiving state or international organizations (p.19)." Globalization and privatization have changed the landscape of the cities restricting behaviours and regulating the everyday lives to reflect consumerism. In contrast the social movements undertaken by racialized minorities through political transnationalism has eroded the borders of the city like globalization but done so to advocate claims of homeland politics.

Political transnationalism has linked cities beyond their territorial boundaries connecting cities to international dilemmas through the migration patterns of newcomers. The case of the Burmese refugees settled in Vancouver illustrate the strong linkages formed as a result of political transnational, while most of the Burmese in Canada were forced to leave as refugees they maintain strong linkages to the Burmese community despite their forced leave from their previous country of residence (Hyndman & Walton-Roberts, 2000). Immigrants with closer attachments to their homeland politics may feel duty bound to advocate for their contacts back in their previous country of residence (Wald, 2008). The migration of immigrants create spaces that reflect the multiple identities that shape the individual as a result of crossing spaces across boundaries of territories creating a space that flows through the rigid walls of the nation state (Mendoza, 2006). Movements of the individual are more than just blind transfers to a new state

they consist of individuals crossing borders, individuals with identities that have crossed multiple spaces to arrive to their destination (Hyndman & Walton-Roberts, 2000). Through transnationalism the centre of focus is on the individual migrant that crosses the spaces to come to their new destination and their travels shape the spaces and the political identity of the moving person. Immigrants have become a large voice in urban politics in the municipalities because of their transnational ties (Kipfer & Keil, 2002). Transnationalism allows for the creation of another space that transcends the borders of the state and territories tying individuals together through their migration patterns (Mendoza, 2006). Racialized minorities maintain their links to their previous country of residence through transnationalism and in doing so they not bring new meaning to local politics but they also change the ways in which spaces are constructed in the city.

The lived experience of the immigrants extend beyond the borders of the municipality to include the experiences of the individual from their previous country of residence adding another element to which cultures are connected, produced and changing the scope of local politics (Hyndman & Walton- Roberts, 2000). As cities become more diverse and global their spaces are expanded and changed because of the transnational ties maintained by immigrants creating translocalities, which has become the case in Vancouver and elsewhere in global cities of North America (Hyndman & Walton- Roberts, 2000). Hyndman and Walton-Roberts (2000) explain translocalities as "a place where immigrants are not simply newcomers who assimilate and integrate into Canadian society, but one in which the individual and group identities and livelihoods make and remake the place in which they come to live (p. 249)." Cities and spaces are remade through the move of the immigrants and newcomers that are individuals that come with histories that originate beyond their new place of residence. Social movements undertaken

21

by newcomer groups or racialized minorities draw influence beyond the scope of the city through international ties that reshape the meaning of not only spaces within the city but the political climate as well. The influence of transnationalism has gained as much force as globalization with diasporas becoming just as influential as nation states in international relations. Like the forces of globalization that have contributed to the preservation of the consumerism society in Toronto, transnational ties also connect the world bringing to the forefront the experiences of the migrant and the connections maintained across borders to form a collective identity overreaching territorial boundaries. Social movements conducted as a result of transnational ties challenge the traditional identities of cities as related to the power of the nation state by enabling diasporas and translocalities to define the identity of the city through their actions and movements.

Research Questions

Based on the above literature, three main questions will be examined: How did the protests challenge municipal politics, in particular the impact of transnational politics in the city? The paper will also consider if the Tamils did have rights to the city and How the Tamil protests compare to other groups in the city that have engaged in social movements.

By looking at the places chosen for the sites of the protests I seek to demonstrate whether racialized minorities are accepted in the diverse city. Is public space open to all social movements? Are social movements of racialized minorities looked down upon? By looking at the mainstream newspaper coverage of the protests I seek to explore how some protests performed by other groups may be viewed as more acceptable than others in Toronto. With spaces of the city being increasingly privatized and sold off to different interest groups are the social movements conducted by the Tamils in public spaces viewed as out of place in Toronto?

In asking these questions I attempt to raise attention to the common misperception that immigrants are expected to shed their previous life upon arrival to Canada without consideration for their past experiences in their previous country of residence.

Analytical framework

This paper will look at the access that racialized minorities have to the city and how the Tamils asserted their rights to the city by conducting their demonstrations in downtown Toronto and elsewhere. This paper will use the theory of public space as outlined by Mitchell (1995) and McDowell (1999). When looking at access to the city and public space, two approaches are most prevalent the traditional Marxist perspective (Lefebvre 2002; Harvey, 1973; Mitchell, 1995) and the feminist approach (McDowell 1999; Wekerle & Peake, 1996). Both approaches define public space as being open to certain individuals based on specific characteristics. McDowell (1999) with her feminist approach goes beyond the class based analysis of public space offered by the Marxist approach delving into how spaces can be discriminating based on categories of race, ethnicity, gender and culture. The feminist perspective also illustrates how the bodies of racialized minorities are perceived in the city and the prejudice faced by such groups because of their lack of integration into normalized city spaces (McDowell, 1999). The criminalization of racialized minorities illustrates how access to the city may be restricted to the individuals not only because of their class but also because of their racial identity. The Marxist approach despite is emphasis on the class based struggle offer valuable insight on the changing form of cities, Harvey (1973) and Lefebvre (2002) illustrate the construction of the city as influenced by the movement of capital and the changing trajectories of North American cities to become global cities by appealing to the influential and elite classes in urban reform (Harvey, 2008). Both the

23

feminist and Marxist approaches illustrate the conditionality's associated with public space and

how public space has become regulated as a result of growing privatization within the city.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

Approach

The qualitative approach was used for this study as it best illustrated the intentions for this paper. The chosen approach provides insight into the historical reasons behind the protests and why it was embarked upon by the Tamils in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The use of the qualitative approach in studying the politics of social movements enables the researcher to explore the circumstances surrounding such demonstrations on both an individual and group level (Archer & Berdahl, 2011). According to Neuman (2000) within the transcendent perspective `the research question originates within the standpoint of the people being studied...it questions power or inequality and views social relations more as the outcome of willful actions than as laws of human nature (p. 122)." This perspective will help assess how the demonstrations of the Tamils in the public spaces challenged the norms of public space and the views of immigrant political protests in Toronto. It will also illustrate how the actions of the Tamils asserted their rights to the city as residents of Toronto disrupting the attempts made by planners to market Toronto as a safe, attractive market city for investment.

The findings sought for the purpose of the paper would not have been possible to achieve through a quantitative approach because I was not seeking to find out which of the movements conducted in Toronto were seen as tolerable. Nor was I seeking to measure the amount of people who either condoned or condemned the Tamil demonstrations that took place. Another method that I could have pursued would have been through the organization of personal interview or a focus group of select participants from the 2009 demonstrations but time constraints and the availability of participants that volunteered to disclose their participation during the

25

demonstrations remained few altering the course of the paper to a review of the events that took place. Under the current approach chosen, the paper will survey the literature published regarding the demonstrations including media coverage to determine the level of access protestors had during the course of their demonstrations. I will examine how the participatory experiences and the advocacy networks constructed by the Tamils enabled them to engage in their demonstrations and their use of public space. They engaged in the demonstrations in the chosen places because of the meanings associated with the locations as well as the attention to be garnered in those locations legitimizing their protests and calls for government action. Furthermore, the demonstrations conducted will be compared to prior events that involved mass demonstrations within the city and contrast whether certain groups may have been more welcome than others.

Data Collection

Through the survey of existing literature along with selective media coverage of the demonstrations that have occurred within the past three years I seek to compare and contrast the similarities and differences between the tactics used by the Tamils and other groups that have engaged in demonstrations within the city. In addition, using my personal experience as a participant of the protests I will illustrate how the Tamils sought to use the spaces in the city that they felt they were entitled to as Canadian citizens. The articles were collected online through a multidisciplinary research database specializing in its collection of media reports. Search results were narrowed to locate coverage of events that took place in Toronto and Ottawa. As the protests occurred three years ago they remain the oldest articles surveyed while media coverage of the Syrian, G20, Occupy Toronto and Iranian movements remain more recent. Articles were collected randomly from predominantly major newspapers that were local and national as well as

minor newspapers that covered the protests that took place in Ottawa and Toronto. The articles were searched under select key words which included: protests, Toronto, social movements, and police coverage and where appropriate Tamil, Syrian, Congolese, Iranian, G20 and Occupy were also inserted during the searches to fit the above selected key words. A total of fifteen articles were collected seven from *The Toronto Star*, three from *The Globe and Mail*, two from the *National Post* and the remaining three from smaller local newspapers. The following will illustrate where the papers were collected from and what topics they covered:

Table 1

Newspaper	Participants in the Demonstrations					
	Tamil Demonstrations	Syrian Demonstrations	Congolese Demonstrations	Iranian Demonstrations	G20 Demonstrations	Occupy Demonstrations
The Toronto Star	3				2	2
The Globe and Mail	3					
National Post	2					
Other newspapers		1	1	1		

Data

The data used for the paper include the existing literature on the 2009 Tamil demonstrations, selected media coverage that primarily include *The Toronto Star*, *The Globe and Mail*, the *National Post* and other smaller newspapers. The data collected for this paper will be drawn from a variety of sources regarding the demonstrations. My personal insight as a participant in the 2009 protests by the Tamil diaspora will also be used to make the connections and differences between previous demonstrations that have taken place in the city and how they might have been similar or different to the 2009 demonstrations. The following will list out the articles collected according to the demonstrations being covered by the media source:

Tamil Demonstrations.

- "Tamils get in staid old city's face (DiManno, 2009. *The Toronto Star*)."

- "Tamil protests a test of our tolerance (Siddiqui, 2009. *The Toronto Star*)."

- "Why all the fuss over Tamil street protests? (Siddiqui, 2009. *The Toronto Star*)."

- "Tamil protestors close University Avenue for a second day... (Reinhart, 2009. *The Globe and Mail*)"

- "30 000 Tamil protestors jam Parliament Hill... (Chase, 2009. *The Globe and Mail)*"

- "Toronto can expect more protests... (Thomas, 2009. *The Globe and Mail)*"

- "12 000 march through downtown; Tamil protests peaceful... (Leong, 2009. *National Post*)"

- "Taking a road less travelled... (Martin, 2009. *National Post*)"

Syrian Demonstrations.

- "Syrians in split over Assad... (Zillio, 2012. *Ottawa Citizen*)"

Congolese Demonstrations.

- "Canadian Congo protests escalate... (Roberts, 2012, *Regina Leader Post*)"

Iranian Demonstrations.

- "Toronto Iranians want former bank boss sent back to Tehran (Godfrey, 2012. *Kingston Whig Standard*)."

G20 Demonstrations.

- "Toronto Mayor amongst many expressing revulsion over protest violence... (Agrell & Freeze, 2010. *The Globe and Mail*)"

- "Key issues for G20 probe set... (Wingrove, Bonoguore & Curry, 2010. *The Toronto Star*)"

Occupy Demonstrations.

- "Occupy protestors change strategy (Li & Gillis, 2012. *The Toronto Star*)."

- "Barrick Gold faces off with the occupiers...(Flavelle, 2012. *The Toronto Star*)"

Police coverage varied depending on the events with some taking more or less man power than others leading to questioning the biases that might be held against certain communities or organizations by the authorities. Some of the largest resources obtained for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) came from organizations and individuals in Canada, making Tamils a much watched group for terrorist activities from the Canadian Security Intelligence Services (CSIS) (Cronin, 2006). Certain groups like the Tamils have had a history of negative confrontations with the authorities, which led to reluctance on the part of the authorities and the pubic to view the demonstrations with sympathy. In some cases the coverage of the demonstrations were favoured, like publications in the *Toronto Star* which cast a favourable light on the plight of the Tamils and the initiatives taken citing them as well within the rights of a

Canadian citizen. In contrast others called the protests tests of Canadian tolerance and that the protests were unwelcome, questioning why the Tamils would protest the domestic problems of an outside country in Canada (Thomas, 2009). The questions of legitimacy surrounding the demonstrations raise larger questions of tolerance in Canadian society and to what extent racialized minorities are allowed to act on their personal beliefs in Canada. Participants of the protests engaged in them because of their belief that they were Canadian citizens. For onlookers to claim that such movements were inappropriate raise questions about how welcome the city is to activism and mobilization by racialized minorities. Likewise the response to the demonstrations calls to questions about the larger ideas of citizenship and belonging, delving into ideas of limitations to Canadian citizenship for immigrants.

Due to the time limitations and scope this paper will only look at the coverage of the protests that took place in Canada, with the predominant focus on Toronto along with instances in Ottawa. These were the two cities that received the most attention by both media and public at the time because of their location and their proximity to government institutions and continue to remain important places for other demonstrations that have taken place. I will draw on existing literature published on the demonstrations in combination with the media coverage and reports published regarding the demonstrations at the time to make the case that the Tamils were not as openly accepted in the city despite their personal claims as residents in that area.

Chapter Four

Analysis

2009 Tamil Demonstrations

Protests regarding the conflict in Sri Lanka have been ongoing in Canada since the migration of Tamils from as early as the 1980s but when the LTTE was being backed into the Northern city of Kilinochchi in January of 2009, the demonstrations conducted as a result of the changes in the civil war were much larger than those of the past (Peters, 2009). Tamils poured into the major cities across Western countries in Europe and North America in outrage over the growing violence being exercised by the Sri Lankan government and to get Western governments to intervene (Sarvendra, 2011). The protests that were staged were the largest demonstrations to have ever been organized by the Tamil diaspora in their history abroad with the largest and most outspoken protests having taken place in Canada and England, home to a significant number of established and prominent Tamils (Vimalarajah & Cheran, 2010). Peters (2009) notes how the Tamils "…gathered in thousands constantly from January 2009 to May 2009 at the Houses of Parliament in Toronto and Ottawa to show their distraught at the silence shown by the Canadian Prime Minister (Steven Harper) on the escalating violence against Tamil civilians inflicted by the Sri Lankan Sinhalese dominated state (p.20)." Demonstrations were also conducted along streets in front of government consulates, TTC subway stations, Queen's park and streets within downtown Toronto. The demonstrations conducted in Canada continued to grow in size as the conflict escalated, reflecting the growing anxiety of the Tamils in Toronto which finally led to an unexpected takeover of the Gardiner Expressway in downtown Toronto. The blockade of the Gardiner remains the only out of character movement that occurred during

the 2009 Tamil demonstrations when they took over the Expressway on May 10 2012 which was an unprecedented move that caused a rush of outrage and arguably the first formal acknowledgement from the federal government of the protests (Wingrove, Bonoguore & Curry, 2009). The outspoken act reflected the growing desperation of the community and remained the only out of place act conducted by the Tamils during the demonstrations. The protests that continued to take place after the takeover the Gardiner Expressway resumed their normal patterns of sit-ins and marches nothing going beyond the takeover of the Expressway.

Tamil protests a social and political movement

Social movements come in a variety of forms, some meant to inspire reform while others seek to commemorate existing achievements. Not all forms of social movements intend to bring about a revolution but the common characteristic of them all revolves around the idea of united common interests creating a collective identity (Wekerle & Peake, 1996). Social movements have been increasing in propensity with individuals readily taking to the streets to express their enthusiasm, discontent or grievances with the state. I argue that the mobilization of the Tamils stand as an example to other groups in the city to continue to engage in demonstrations not only to enact change but to reassert their place in the city. The Tamils were able to effectively use the spaces that they occupied in order to create awareness and demand government intervention for their homeland politics. "...Urban spaces are governed by the work of the eye, by strategies of visibility and surveillance (Tonkiss, 2005) (p.76)." The Tamils conducted their demonstrations in areas that allowed them maximum visibility with the locations of Parliaments and in the various locations of downtown Toronto that were seen by all individuals who were residing in those areas as well as passer-bys.

Identity politics are an integral part of functioning civil society. For immigrants and racialized minorities identity politics have become a way for them to address their individual grievances against the state. The Tamil diaspora like that of other groups including Jews, Kurds, Iranians etc., sought to address the wrongs being committed in their country of origin by protesting for government intervention in Canada and elsewhere. Transnationalism has sustained the transforming identity of the Tamil diaspora allowing them to maintain their dual identities. They retain their connections to their previous country of residence/origin by maintaining ties through cultural practices, communications or by participating in their homeland politics.

During the protests and even after, the Tamils continue to face scrutiny regarding their connections to the LTTE especially because of the presence of LTTE memorabilia present at many of the demonstrations (Reinhart, 2009). Viewers of the protests and onlookers upset with the traffic delays questioned the legitimacy of the protests because of the presence of the logos used during the demonstrations which undermined the cause of the Tamils because the insinuations and the presence of the logos were viewed as delegitimizing the cause. With the LTTE banned as a terrorist organization the presence of the logo only served to harm the Tamils and their cause. Likewise, politicians refused to acknowledge the protests if the logo of the LTTE was present as was the case in Ottawa with politicians encouraging them to abandon the use of the logos (Chase, 2009). Other organizations seeking to end the conflict in Sri Lanka boycotted the protests all together because of the presence of the LTTE logo and in other cases because they did not agree with the aggressive approach adopted by the Tamils. Ethnic mobilizations have opened up a wide array of demonstrations across the country from domestic politics from all over the world and despite the presence of the LTTE logo the demonstrations by the Tamils continued as did public sympathy and discontent with the protests. Despite a history

of on and off associations with the LTTE and the intense scrutiny of CSIS, the Tamils were allowed the right to conduct their demonstrations in the city as well as elsewhere except when they had taken over the Gardiner Expressway (Wingrove, Bonoguore & Curry, 2009). Demonstrations did not stop people from questioning the appropriateness of the displays, nor did they stop onlookers from their comments on dismantling and even preventing the Tamils from protesting because they were considered as being disruptive within the city.

Rights to the city

The Tamils that engaged in the demonstrations continued to maintain their transnational ties to Sri Lanka raising awareness of the ethnic conflict by expressing their dual identity as Canadian Tamil citizens. Slogans of "Canada don't fail your people (Chase, 2009)" echoed by protestors in Ottawa captured the hybrid identity and the sense of entitlement the Tamils felt during their demonstrations. Protests were conducted across the country throughout Canada. The Tamils felt that as Canadian citizens and residents in the individual cities they were entitled to organize and conduct demonstrations not only because of their ties to Canada but because of their personal attachment to Sri Lanka as well. Despite the fact that Canada did not physically intervene in the conflict the demonstrations sought to engage with the government in dialogue to redress the grievances of the Tamils. Their sense of duty to their home country coupled with their sense of belonging encouraged the ongoing demonstrations and their continued activism regarding Sri Lankan politics. Engaging in the protests not only reaffirmed the identity of the Tamils as a diaspora displaced from Sri Lanka but also affirmed their place in Canada and elsewhere in the globe where they sought to create a new home away from the violence faced in Sri Lanka.

Consumerism and privatization have shaped the landscape of the city of Toronto branding the image of the city into a certain image that has regulated the everyday life of the city to appeal to tourists and consumers. The right to the city has become restricted with the modifications imposed on the city by municipalities and the Tamils in their pursuit of homeland politics challenged the restricting access of the city by reclaiming it through their demonstrations. Demonstrations like those conducted by the Tamils are done out of a sense of belonging, through the protests the Tamils were not only advocating for their homeland politics but affirming their rights as Canadian citizens, residents of the city that were using the space because they were entitled to do so. Spaces within the city are constructed based on the surrounding institutions, structures and individuals that occupy the spaces (Knox & Pinch, 2010). The Tamils engaged in the demonstrations as their rights to the city, using the public spaces, they exercised the meanings associated with the structures like Parliament Hill and government consulates expressing their rights as citizens allowed to protest.

Ethnic mobilization and class struggle, the shared characteristics between all of the surveyed movements thus far have placed a premium on human rights. Some of them have advocated for the rights to be maintained abroad in other countries while others have sought to reform current politics in place that have been negatively impacting the less important people in the city. Ethnic mobilizations have sought to redress the human rights violations that are ongoing in their homeland politics insinuating by default that countries like Canada have had a clean record in terms of violating the rights of individuals when the opposite may actually be the case. Social movements advocating the protection of rights reassert the power of the nation state and its borders and while individuals like the Tamils have a strong network that overrides territorial boundaries they fall back on their respective nation states to fulfill their demands for justice.

Power struggles have become a constant with the increase of social movements battling the dominance of territories and pushing for change that is often seen by the state as contrary to its economic development and growth. The growing disparities of wealth have become a battle for all levels of government and municipalities are being hit the hardest with the constant downgrading of responsibilities resulting in a lack of funds to carry out the tasks because of tightening budgets. Human rights encompass a wide range of securities but more and more frequently individuals are protesting the need for a wider recognition of the rights to include more than the basic requirements. The G20 and Occupy movements pushed for an alternative to the capitalism system that has dismantled the rights that were fought to be put in place because neoliberal institutions continue to restructure policies in place to ensure profit over equal access. The struggles for reform have continued the 'us vs. them' mindset pitting individuals against each other within the city. Instead of recognizing the ethnic mobilizations as part of the greater struggle for human rights, the demonstrations conducted were seen as out of place in the city because they were ethnic specific.

The insider/outsider mentality has been very much apparent during ethnic mobilization and struggles in the city that seems to focus on the politics of outside countries. Hyndman and Walton-Roberts (2000) note in their study of Burmese refugees of Vancouver that residents often ignore the fact that immigrants may have had attachments or beliefs prior to their arrival because of their status as newcomers. Immigrants should not be expected to abandon their old lives upon migration to a new country and should be entitled to continue their lifestyles in their new country of residence without being criticized for the appropriateness of such actions. Advocating for politics in their homeland in their new country of residence should not have to be a sign of the city being tolerant. Movements of the individual are more than just blind transfers to a new state

they consist of individuals crossing borders, individuals with identities that have crossed multiple spaces to arrive to their destination (Hyndman & Walton-Roberts, 2000). Editorials in newspapers and online blogs constantly questioned the appropriateness of the Tamil protests and the limits of Canadian hospitality further reinforcing the notion of the immigrant as a permanent visitor. Pre migration experiences of immigrants are important to keep in mind when delving into ethnic political participation but there must be measures placed to prevent people from dictating how immigrants are allowed to engage in political activism in their new country of residence. It is understood that activities should not offend the beliefs of Canadian society but presuming that immigrants are barred from advocating for their homeland politics reinforces the Global North/South divide and the superiority of the practices of the Global North. In the case of the Tamils, it was understood that despite their personal beliefs about the LTTE as positive contributors to the civil war it was inappropriate to wave their logos and expect government action knowing clearly that the group had been recognized as a terrorist organization in North America.

Public space and the use of space within the city

Public space as understood by Mitchell (1995) despite its claim to open spaces has become restricted with increased surveillance and privatization regulating behaviours, and discouraging disruptive behaviour (Knox & Pinch, 2010; Keil 2002). The three dimensions of space as espoused by Lefebvre which include spatial practice, representations of space and spaces of representation (Schmid, 2008) come together to produce the spaces in the city. The demonstrations of the Tamils in Toronto challenged the construction of public spaces within the city with the disruptive behaviour that was a stark contrast to the normal planned social movements conducted within the city like that of the Pride parade or the occupy movements.

The Tamils targeted what Lefebvre (Schmid, 2008) has pointed to as spaces of representation which as defined earlier were symbols within the production of space like institutions, monuments etc. The location of the demonstrations were structures that were significant in the city, Queen's park is adjacent to provincial parliament, Yonge and Dundas square is arguably the busiest and most publicized space within the city. Parliament Hill in Ottawa is not only symbolic because of its place in front of Parliament but also because the hill has had a history of being open to the use for both celebrations and social movement by other groups. The locations chosen by the Tamils were chosen to assert their right to the city claiming the space through their demonstrations because the spaces were considered open to all and were accessible to demonstrators and bystanders that were forced to witness the demonstrations because of their locations. The demonstrations claimed the spaces within the city by exercising their rights as Canadians as well as transforming the boundaries of the city to encompass the transnational ties of the groups. Their identity as Canadian Tamils challenged the image of the diverse Toronto that seemed to be something in name only by advocating for levels of government to intervene in the civil war abroad.

Street closures are a constant in downtown Toronto and have come to be generally accepted as a natural routine. Spaces in the city are fluid and constantly changing as new rules and regulations are put into place. Places in the city are considered to be spaces open to all individuals that include places like parks, TTC stations, streets, government buildings etc. But even with these open spaces rules have been put into place to regulate behaviour and to preserve a certain image. Locations like Queen's park were approved as a legitimate location to conduct the demonstrations while the takeover of University Avenue and the areas surrounding the U.S. consulate were viewed as nuisances to neighbouring businesses. Papers and politicians alike

published a flurry of comments after the Tamils had walked onto the highway about the right and wrong way to protest indicating that protests were allowed but needed to be conducted in a lawful manner (Leong, 2009). Places like parks are associated as being open to all individuals allowed to indulge in a multitude of activities so long as they do not violate the law. In the streets of downtown near the areas of the consulate onlookers were upset with the noise and overcrowding that they found out of place in the business area and disruptive on their daily lives. On the other hand if the protest had been planned and only occurred on the weekend then it might have been looked upon more favourably as it would not have disturbed the neighbouring downtown offices or commuter traffic. The persistent unplanned actions while legal were viewed as unfavourable to the city because citizens were forced to accept the ongoing disruptions instead of having them stopped. While disgruntlement over the protests and their noise levels were widespread when they took place on the busy streets of downtown Toronto police continued to allow the Tamils to exercise the liberties so long as they were conducted in a peaceful manner.

In contrast to the Tamils, the G20 movements and potential disruptions to be caused were foreseen by the city that had preplanned to put barriers in place to block off sections of the street from protestors and activists in the event that they might slip out of control. Groups of people crowded over the streets are viewed questionable by onlookers who see them as potential troublemakers and disruptive mass movements have been viewed with contempt as being out of place and inappropriate. Even the relatively peaceful Occupy movement was criticized by onlookers as being unnecessary and a waste of time because they were not going to prove anything with similar thoughts voiced during the Tamil demonstrations of 2009. Despite the era of human rights leading movements across the world individuals will continue to remain wary of demonstrations attempting to enact change that may be seen as irrelevant to third parties. Public

spaces are understood as open to all individuals, where individuals meet and communicate but certain behaviours are expected in such areas and while streets are open to the public they are not expected to be taken over causing unnecessary disruption and traffic. While spaces may be open to individuals certain behaviours and attitudes are expected to be followed when engaging in demonstrations. Ethnic mobilizations have had mixed reviews and despite the guarantee of rights and equality for all certain groups continue to be viewed with suspicion, sometimes more so than other groups. Groups like the G20 activists were foreseen as trouble because of actions from previous summits indicating a tendency for things to get out of hand and authorities had pre-existing stereotypes about the activists regarding them as suspicious. In a similar manner the same suspicion was reflected with the views of the Tamils when they began their demonstrations and the apprehensive feelings expressed by politicians who viewed the protests as possible influences from LTTE factions instead of looking at just the people.

Bodies of groups or individuals have been criminalized and demonized based on the history of the group which delegitimize the actions of the group. As Valentine (2001) notes on the case of Rodney King, despite evidence indicating his innocence officials still sought to convict him based on presupposed prejudices. The criminalization of racialized minorities continue to persist especially in small scale incidents with everyday encounters between the police and minority groups who continue to clash because of the potential delinquent behaviour expected from certain groups. The discrimination faced by certain groups because of their tendencies to be violent must be understood as not being a general label on the individual but a result of their circumstances, surrounding institutions and structures (McDowell, 1999). The Tamils were constantly viewed with skepticism because of prior links to the LTTE and the presence of the logos at numerous demonstrations which made politicians uneasy with

acknowledging the protests as legitimate. Instead of hearing the voices of the demonstrations, onlookers judged the protests based on the visibility of the group and found it to be not only disruptive to everyday life but threatening as well because the large group was making a ruckus for a lengthy period of time. This once again reiterates the idea of migrants as without history and prior beliefs, expected by residents of the receiving country to quietly acclimate themselves to their new country of residence forgoing ties to their previous life. The Tamils were not barred from engaging in their demonstrations but their outbursts following demonstrations provoked appeals from individuals to look into the setting of city by laws to prevent the sort of disruptions from taking place again. Increased surveillance has been discussed and implemented in certain parts of the city along with a removal of open space to prevent deviant behaviour from taking place and there has been an increased trend to monitor and police public behaviour. Such changes indicate the continued power neoliberal restructuring policies have had on the city; disruptive behaviour has been limited with rigid surveillance to preserve the aesthetic image of the city and ensure its attractiveness to tourists (Lefebvre, 2002).

Social movements as claiming space

The Tamils have not been the only ones to take over space in the city as has been clearly illustrated in recent years with the movements from the Arab population after the collapse of government in Egypt, recent protests conducted by the Congo and Syrian populations in response to growing conflict in their homeland. In contrast to the ethnic mobilizations have been the protests organized during the G8 and G20 meetings in Canada of 2010 along with the Occupy movement that has spread across North America. Recent protests by the ethnic organizations of the Congolese and Syrians have not reached quite the same dramatic scales as those conducted by the Tamils but have garnered enough recognition to bring attention to the ongoing violation of

human rights happening in their respective countries. Protests conducted in response to the growing violence in Syria echo similar stirrings that were echoed by the Tamils in 2009 who advocate for their homeland politics in Syria because of their guilt of leaving the country and moving abroad (Zillio, 2012). Instead of blocking streets and closing off sections of the city the Syrians have acted through Syrian councils petitioning local and national governments, raising awareness about the escalating conflict as well as raising funds to support humanitarian aid in Syria (Zillio, 2012). Similar tactics were employed by the Tamil diaspora but they also took to the streets to raise awareness and conducted mass rallies at parks and legislatures to demand government intervention. Differences exist in the types of mobilization that was attempted by the groups and while both groups utilized their networks, the Tamils sought to gain public attention through their numerous demonstrations. While the demonstrations were loud, disruptive and inconvenient they were more aggressive than the actions taken by the Syrians but less aggressive than the actions taken by the G20 movements. Different social movements demand different responses and actions and while the collective idea may be to act in a certain manner not all individuals may agree upon the selected path. The class based struggle against globalization which was captured through the G20 movements took a much more violent tone than the Tamil demonstrations but both were looked down upon, one for the unnecessary violence and the other for its disruptive behaviour.

Toronto has generally been receptive to the social movements embarked upon within the city and while police surveillance was a constant at the demonstrations conducted by the Tamils they were believed to have behaved in an orderly manner. The possibility of violence may seemed to increase depending on the movement taking place, past history has indicated that the Summits of G20 and G8 have provoked violent outbursts but that has not been a set pattern as on

42

some occasions the summits have gone quite smoothly. The takeover of the Gardiner Expressway remains the only demonstration conducted by the Tamils that not only risked the safety of the participants but also resulted in the arrests of some of the participants being charged with mischief and disobeying the authorities. Demonstrations up until the event and following it continued to be peaceful and only involved the blocking of local traffic but nothing as large as the closure of the highway. The tactics employed have rarely been used by any other group but as coverage from the *National Post* indicated it was probably one of the most effective tactics used by the Tamils thus far and garnered them a great amount of publicity (Martin, 2009). Police up until that moment were respectful of the protests and even commended the behaviour of the protestors as law abiding up until the takeover of the highway. The actions taken indicated the desperate nature of the Tamil people that were agitated by the escalating signs of conflict in Sri Lanka, frustrated by the lack of acknowledgement from the Canadian government. Similar tactics were not to be used with the onset of the G20 Summit in Toronto that completely overturned the steady stream of non violent demonstrations that had occurred in Canada up until the summer of 2010. Coverage from national and local media including *The Toronto Star* and *The Globe and Mail* illustrated the violent nature of the G20 protests that had been uncharacteristic to the city (Agrell & Freeze, 2010). The controversy from the handling of the G20 protests have provoked numerous reviews over police action and violence (Teontonio, 2010) which is in marked contrast to the surveillance of the Occupy Toronto movement that did not even come close to the same scale as that of the earlier movements in 2010.

City spaces and political transnationalism

Homeland politics may influence the political participation of minorities but Canada continues to remain as their place of residence, home and place of belonging. Syrians, Tamils

Congolese, G20 protestors however violent some groups may have been more than others still identify Canada as their place of residence. The working class are not the only members with rights to bring about urban reform in the city; ethnic minorities have been trying to improve the city and its accessibility opening spaces for their use through social movements, institutions and redevelopment of existing structures within the city. In order to satisfy their emotional and physical attachments as human beings individuals exercise their senses to fulfill their needs which are reached through their everyday existence in cities (Lefebvre, 2002). The longing for conflict resolution in their homeland prompted the mobilization of the ethnic groups to engage in demonstrations at various points in time throughout the city. Identities, spaces and movements are constantly changing as do the needs of individuals in the city who act according to the needs of their time. The starting of the G20 movements and the Occupy movements were both anti capitalist ventures that intended to bring light to the increasing disparities in wealth. The Occupy movements claimed downtown business districts through their demonstrations in an attempt to altar the image of the areas chosen as affluent places within the city and sought to illustrate the meanings of inequality, and discrimination within the chosen areas selected for demonstration. Likewise Tamils in Toronto sought to lay their claims to the city by airing out their grievances in public parks, government buildings downtown, around TTC stations and sites of legislature to gain recognition. Protests on Ottawa Hill, or those in front of the legislature in Queen's Park were intended to spread awareness, the Tamils wanted an acknowledgement of their plight and an affirmation indicating government action.

Diasporas and transnational advocacy networks have become powerful international actors moving beyond the borders of states and territories to unite people, ideas and movements. Canada is no stranger to the diaspora politics and protests of homeland politics in Canada has

become a dominant part of Canadian politics. One of the more popular displays of homeland politics from the 1950s/60s was in regards to the Eastern European migrants fleeing oppression from the Soviets who then mobilized to get the Canadian government to intervene in their homeland politics (Black, 2011). Transnational networks have become as influential as nation states bringing as much influence to international relations if not more because of their global support (Wayland, 2004). Social movements have become a normalized channel of immigrant politics despite the fact that some immigrants that do engage in such movements often come from repressive countries which previously prevented them from engaging in civil disobedience (Bilodeau, 2008). Evidence of protests and other forms of social movements indicate a more inclusive democracy and despite the negative comments the Tamil demonstrations received their actions were accepted by authorities as part of their liberties and allowed to continue their demonstrations. Immigrants bring political suitcases to their new country of residence (Wals, 2011). Their migration experiences contribute to the changing politics of identity, making way in the cities for new institutions and structures to integrate the newcomers for residence. Identity politics provides a space for women and minorities to make their claims that often go unnoticed in larger struggles against the privatization of the city. While ethnic mobilizations are becoming prominent within the city they are not as aggressive as their counterparts in the U.S as demonstrated by Goonewardena and Kipfer (2005) who note that urban politics continue to be controlled by the urban elite, influential members in society and multiculturalism is merely a tolerance instead of an acceptance of the diversity in Toronto.

Demonstrations like the Occupy movements that have circulated throughout the North American cities have settled their presence and conducted their protests at the financial districts of the major cities or capitals, laying claim to the space for the ordinary individuals that have

gone overlooked in the money making global markets. Social movements regardless of their ideals, declarations, or stance seek to make a stand and make a mark on their beliefs leaving a part of themselves in the city to state their claims. Tonkiss (2005) points out that social movements are designed to make claims and their demonstrations attempt to put forth one of many contending claims already put through the streets, parks or structures. Some spaces in the city are already labelled as private others continue to maintain a sense of private but are open to the public. Referring to locations in the city as the entertainment district or the financial district defines the space and despite the fact it is a part of the city and the streets are open to the public in the area the characteristics of these districts do not change because they have been claimed and have had supporting institutional structures that define the space as what it is. Labelling of the districts reinforce the re-regulating of everyday life to accommodate the consumerist lifestyle characterizing the city. For Kipfer and Keil (2002) the changing values of the city reflect the changing characteristics of the individual that should occupy the spaces in the city. Parks and legislatures are constant and changing spaces, the latter changing every election, becoming imbued with different meanings as different political leaders take charge. Government offices and embassies represent authoritative spaces that are intended to be open to citizens and responsive of their needs. The Tamils sought government aid and occupied the spaces of legislature to reiterate their claims asking for the Canadian government to intervene in their homeland politics. They sought to utilize the existing spaces in the city and defined them through their demonstrations, using structures of highly visible and were of common use in the city to gain attention.

Transformation of the City

The changing course of the cities is reflected through the increased surveillance of the city, privatization of the city and the dismantling of unions and reduction of their powers. If the TTC had been a private entity, the blockage of the stations would not have occurred and while protestors left open spaces for pedestrians to walk through the Tamils would not have been near the stations had the places been privatized. The move for privatization across the city as well as the revitalization projects have sought to revamp the image of the city making it more attractive to investors and select groups of people challenging beliefs of the openness of the city. The political change in the municipality has indicated a change in the type of government policies being proposed and dispensed at the local level indicating the need to offset the burdens that have been piled onto the local leaders to expand their budget. Efforts are being made to no longer make the city a place for its residents to live in but a place for investors to leave their finances and claim city place. Everything and anything can be bought and sold for a price which began with the exporting of industries overseas for cheap labour and has rapidly evolved into the race to the bottom for countries to market themselves as investor friendly as possible despite problems that may arise to the environment (Hartmann, 1992). Movements like the G20 and Occupy movements however violent, disruptive and misguided in their attempts have sought to challenge the spaces open to capital production by arguing the extent to which the environment can continue to be mistreated for the purpose of capital accumulation (Hartman, 1992). Social movements regardless of their causes and activism pose a test to tolerance and what people continue to accept or reject with the growing move towards privatization in the city.

Some movements are more welcome than others namely movements that have been preplanned and obtained with permits from the city which usually consist of parades as

47

demonstrations do not legally require any permits to be obtained in order to be acted out. But in this planned and opinionated society outbursts have come to be frowned upon and viewed as unsafe with people taking to enclosing themselves within the confines of the indoors instead of looking outdoors (Valentine, 2001). Privately run spaces are becoming more and more appealing with the growing violence in the city. The demonstrations by the Tamils were debated in the media and public as tests of tolerance to Canada's claim to multiculturalism the coverage in *The Toronto Star* positively endorsing the demonstrations of the Tamils as part of the rights and liberties guaranteed to Canadian citizens. Siddiqui's articles approach the Tamil protests as a natural right of the community guaranteed to them by the Charter and contrast the demonstrations with other movements in the city that have taken extra costs from the city. The protests continue to indicate the level of acceptance in cities regarding the demonstrations that continue to take place within the city and elsewhere in public spaces. Reactions to the protests have raised larger questions about ethnic politics and their rights to access city space in pursuit of their beliefs. The comments made by onlookers suggest that homeland politics were not welcome in Canada despite the fact that they were acknowledged as having the right to protest in the city. Elected officials and police allowed the protestors their space while maintaining their vigilance to ensure no one stepped out of line. Tamils were allowed to protest despite discouragement and lack of public approval for their outbursts in their selected spaces throughout the city, utilizing the space to define their movement.

Chapter Five

Discussion

While identity politics have become an integral part of civil society some may feel that practicing identity politics creates further divisions within civil society instead of uniting it. A prime example would be the branching off of women's groups into ethnic organizations because racialized minorities were being drowned out in the larger groups leading to smaller groups to address the grievances of the ethnic minorities (Wekerle and Peake, 1992). But large organizations because of their size often overlook smaller issues that address specific groups because of the limited capacity to handle all subjects within an organization. While groups may rally around a single cause, individuals have varying methods on how to go about pursuing the goal. The demonstrations conducted by the Tamils would not have merged within another group because the cause was a movement advocated by the displaced Tamil migrants in Canada that wanted to enact change. Transnational politics brings international politics to the local level and while social reform in the city is important social movements influenced by political transnational ties reflect the growing diversity of the city branching away from the regular class struggles to introduce the plight that ethnic minorities experience in the city. Although Toronto is their current home, the transnational ties of the Tamils of Sri Lanka reinforce the dual identities of the residents. Despite the fact they left Sri Lanka they are still irrevocably tied to the country because of the connections maintained through their transnational practices whether it is through the celebration of cultural festivals or continuing their correspondence with their relatives left in Sri Lanka. They maintain their identity as displaced Tamils that call Canada their home and widen the scope of city politics normalizing political transnationalism into local politics. City life has been long dominated by the struggle between the classes and the Tamils along with other

racialized minorities through their demonstrations challenged the normalized struggles taking place by advocating for their homeland politics. By engaging in their respective homeland politics, racialized minorities challenge the norms of their identity in the city that is shaped only by the duration of their settlement in Canada.

By engaging in the protests the Tamils sought to normalize their transnational connections as part of city politics, conducting the protests with images of the Canadian Tamil diaspora legitimating their claim to spaces in the city. Reform movements are an integral part of an active civil society and the Tamils exercised their civil rights by engaging in the demonstrations protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Peters, 2009). Their actions challenged local movements that have taken place in the city that were traditionally centred on the preservation of the rights of the working class. The demonstrations challenged the Marxist view of society and the tolerance level of the city to movements conducted by racialized minorities. While many claimed the demonstrations as disruptive and intrusive in downtown Toronto disrupting businesses, the police allowed the Tamils to continue because they were entitled to exercise their right to protest. Onlookers questioned the legitimacy of the protests because it had nothing to do with Canadian politics but to the Tamils that had made Canada their home the demonstrations were symbolic in representing their ties to Canada and to their identity as Tamils. Social movements influenced by political transnationalism are frowned upon because they are not seen as part of Canadian politics but to the individuals participating in the demonstrations their actions are viewed as entirely legitimate because of their dual identities as both citizens of Toronto and their previous country of residence. The protests illustrated the one dimensional view that onlookers had during the demonstrations of 2009 in which onlookers saw the Tamils as outsiders for advocating their homeland politics in Canada instead of

understanding that both places were important to the Tamils. As Hyndman and Walton-Roberts (2000) have noted immigrants are viewed with a single identity which is adopted by them upon arrival to their new country of residence with the assumption that their previous lives are no longer existent due to the fact that they had migrated.

The misconception has resulted in movements like those conducted by the Tamils to be viewed negatively by onlookers and judging them as out of place within the city because of their one dimensional view of immigrants. Political transnational ties are legitimated through city spaces when racialized minorities engage in social movements, they normalize their politics at the local level bringing it down to the city level illustrating that the politics of their homeland are not only global in scale but local as well. Public spaces were challenged by the demonstrations conducted by the Tamils and while police were heavily monitoring the protests to ensure that deviant behaviour would be controlled the disruptive nature of the protests were allowed to continue within the city because the Tamils were exercising their civil rights. Public parks and spaces in front of government institutions took on new meanings filled with individuals that were demanding change from the government. Policy reforms from the 1980s and onwards have cultivated the image of Toronto as a revitalized global city reflecting new structures and institutions as a result of the gentrification of the city. The demonstrations by the Tamils, occupy movements and G20 protests while radical challenged the privatization of the city and reclaimed spaces of the city through their movements. While the Tamils were not a class based struggle they still managed to impart upon the government the need to redress the domestic conflict in Sri Lanka and appealed to the government based on their ties to citizenship in Canada. The Tamils in their demonstrations did not change the policy of the city but they made a lasting impact on successive racialized minorities to advocate for their homeland politics through whatever means

necessary. The interactions between the Tamils and the city through their demonstrations reaffirmed their rights to the city as both citizens and residents of the city.

Conclusion

Cities are part of produced spaces resulting from social and physical interactions that take place within their spaces. North American cities have not stopped their attempts to become competitive at the global level and Toronto has continued on its course with its current and ongoing revitalization projects. The changes in the city have also been marked by the influence of social movements that have begun to become a staple of urban politics from struggles over the dismantling of unions and workers rights to ethnic mobilizations within the city. The actions of all these struggles continue to shape the spaces within the city despite its ongoing privatization. Demonstrations like that of the Tamils reaffirm the rights of individuals and minorities access to space within the city. They challenge the image of the diverse Toronto putting to the test how tolerant the city really is of transnational politics in the city. Public space continues to become narrower as surveillance of the city increases with the intent to prevent disruptive and deviant behaviour yet social movements challenge surveillance tactics by reclaiming the space for disruptive behaviour through civil disobedience.

The demonstrations conducted by the Tamils challenged the image of the diverse Toronto with onlookers claiming the protests were a test of their tolerance. The demonstrations served to not only legitimize political transnationalism within the city but illustrate the integration of immigrants within the city and how the Tamils created space for their dual identities within the city by engaging in the demonstrations. The attitudes reflected over the 2009 demonstrations

indicate that while the Tamils were successful in establishing their rights to the city, Toronto still

has a long way to go in fulfilling its image as a diverse city.

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