Zeitschrift: Geographica Helvetica : schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geographie = Swiss journal of geography = revue suisse de géographie = rivista svizzera di geografia

Herausgeber: Verband Geographie Schweiz ; Geographisch-Ethnographische Gesellschaft Zürich

Band: 64 (2009)

Heft: 1: Public spaces and social diversity = Öffentliche Räume und soziale Vielfalt = Espaces publics et diversité sociale

Artikel: Cities of "others" : public space and everyday practices

Autor: Vaiou, Dina / Kalandides, Ares

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-872789

Cities of «others»: public space and everyday practices

Dina Vaiou, Athens, Ares Kalandides, Athens and Berlin

Leaning at the window with her back to the observer, a woman is looking outside. Her back makes her vulnerable, in the way of someone caught in the privacy of day-dreaming. There is a sober emptiness about the dark room, and though the bright day and the poplars outside speak of spring, the woman is dressed – almost wrapped – in warm clothes. The window begins at chest-level and the woman leans on the sill with her arms. The wall keeps her body back, but her mind can leave the room and travel. The masts of the sailing boats outside suggest the possibility of travelling and going places. The observer does not see the woman's eyes, but one can maybe see through them, and gaze with the same nostalgia at something somewhere far away. Although she is leaning at the window and looking out, the woman probably does not qualify as the distanciated observer of Lefebvre who analyses the rhythms of the city from his window; she has her ascribed place in the house and cannot be «at the same time both inside and out», nor can she «dominate the street and passers-by» (Lefebvre 1996: 219). This is a picture by one of the most prominent German romantics, Caspar David Friedrich, and the woman is his wife, Caroline Friedrich (née Blommer). The boats are on the Elb and the room is the artist's atelier. Yet beyond the real people and places, what is thematised is a favourite subject of the romantics: the inside and the outside, the close by and far away, the earthly and the limitless (Schuster 2003).

«Woman at the window» by Caspar David Friedrich, 1822, Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin
«Frau am Fenster» von Caspar David Friedrich, 1822
«Femme à la fenêtre» par Caspar David Friedrich, 1822
Source: http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caspar_David_Friedrich 17.02.2009

1 Introduction

In one of the classics of post-war German urban sociology, *The Modern Metropolis*, Hans Paul Bahrdt (1961/2006) argues that the clear distinction between the private and the public is of central importance for the understanding of urbanity. The polarization between the two spheres is the major differentiating element between what may be defined as a city and what is not. The more polarised the relationship between public and private spheres, the more «urban». In the city, what cannot be clearly characterised as «public» or «private» loses importance; the problems of the modern metropolis are traced back to both the hybridisation of space and to the misbalance between the two spheres.

In this tradition of thought, the public/private binary becomes central in urban discourse and corresponds to a series of other binaries: inside/outside, close/far, movement/stasis, light/dark, mind/body, but also local/stranger and inclusion/exclusion. This discourse characterises not only material aspects of urban space, but also institutional regulations, symbolic codes and social practices, which put people «in their place». At the same time, it elevates the public, and everything that corresponds to it, to a prime domain of theoretical and practical endeavour, thereby devaluing or obscuring the importance of the private in urban space and in politics. Such a (binary) conception constitutes the

«norm», i.e. the rightful subjects who have access and rights to public space, and those who are «out of place» in public space, «others», «outsiders» or «strangers» (these concepts are discussed in more detail below). Thus, public space is dominated, as it is often said, by masculine, white, bourgeois, local, heterosexual, adult subjects – subjects who can act and move freely in the public realm, expelling «others» who may be defined in terms of a number of criteria (gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, age) and/or combinations of these.

This paper deals with what is referred to here as cities of «others» – of those who are not included in the norm and are thus placed «out» of public space and its functions. In a first part, drawing on concrete examples from personal field work, research practices are examined in connection with how «others» achieve visibility, access, recognition, communication, and eventually participation in the functions of public space, challenging strict divisions and exclusions. The second section of the paper works with the ambiguities of «public space», which includes, on the one hand, material spaces and, on the other, the functions and institutions of the public sphere. In a third part, the concepts «stranger», «outsider» and «other» are discussed in view of how they are used in this paper. Finally, through the approximations mentioned above, the paper returns to the cities of «others»: an understanding of public space is sketched out that includes, and engages with, everyday practices which produce, and at the same time contest, fixed boundaries and point to ways in which each side of a binary presupposes (and is co-constituted with) the other. The arguments draw on feminist theoretical perspectives, which are clearly distinct from other theoretical models on the public/private dichotomy, e.g. liberal-economistic models or Marxist (a discussion of the different models can be found in Staeheli & Mitchell 2007).

2 Examples of border-crossings

On a first approximation, the examples presented here indicate different takes of crossing the border between public and private, of claiming, in different ways, access to the public by subjects who «inhabit» the cities of «others». In the context of this analysis, «others», «outsiders» or «strangers» are not those who «we» fail to recognise, but rather those who have already been constructed and recognised as such, as different from «us» (Ahmed 2000); and this difference is imbued with relations of power and domination, as is argued in the following sections.

2.1 Trespassing and appropriation

On sunny weekends, Tiergarten, the large park in the heart of Berlin, becomes the site of a very unique appropriation: Turkish families gather around barbeques, bring out their chairs, tables, table-cloths glasses and plates. Men usually grill, while women sit, chat and prepare the food and children run around and play. This is a kind of ritual among Turkish families and an integral part of their urban lives, with the park becoming an extension of the home. As a reaction to it, in 1997 the Christian Democrat Party brought a petition into the local parliament to ban grilling in the park, based on «objective» arguments of damage, littering, danger of fire. The other parties accused the Christian Democrats of being xenophobic, thus initiating a public debate on the issue. The argument that ensued focused on the problem of the appropriation of space by a particular group and the exclusion of everybody else, as well as on what is to be considered «private» and «public» behaviour. The parliament managed to reach a compromise and now there is order: there are places in the park where one can grill and others where it is banned. Signs ensure the correct use of space. Today, some years after the argument, there is an interesting coda to the story. Young non-Turkish groups have discovered the park as a picnic space, where, like the Turkish families, they gather in larger groups and barbeque, and it has become quite common to celebrate parties this way.

By bringing the private into the public, through their bodily presence and their practices, the migrants contest a particular use and concept of space. They leave the hidden private space of their home, they enter (material) public space and become visible. Visibility also means familiarisation – though resentment and a latent feeling of threat may persist. Some practices are symbolically understood as belonging to the realm of the public and some to the private – they have their ascribed place and they surprise when they are performed elsewhere. As the case of non-Turks following the example of Turks demonstrates, the symbolic qualities of practices may change over time and proper public behaviour is renegotiated. Indirectly, migrants are given public speech: their presence and practices force the political world to deal with them. There are those who will speak for them and others against them. Yet visibility seems to be the first condition for participation in the political (Kalandides, forthcoming).

2.2 Uses and functions of a neighbourhood square

Loretta comes from Fieri in Albania. She came to Greece 12 years ago, lives in Kypseli, the most multicultural neighbourhood of Athens, and works as a domestic worker. She is married to an Albanian and has an eight-year-old daughter. When the weather is good, she takes her daughter to the neighbourhood square, which is bustling again with life since the arrival of migrants, in the early 1990s. She sits on a strategically located bench, knitting and occasionally looking

at her daughter playing with children from around the globe. A couple of other women come and sit next to her, one of them also knitting, another mending socks; they are locals, eventually commenting in a rather positive manner on the changes in the neighbourhood due to the migrants' presence. A woman moves from another bench and joins them, temporarily leaving alone the elderly man she had escorted to the square for his afternoon outing; she has done some shopping and is shuffling through the bags to sort things for the evening meal. Loretta, together with her companions on the bench, has brought to the public functions or tasks usually ascribed to the private (e.g. knitting, mending, preparing food), thus informally appropriating and re-configuring the neighbourhood square, crossing (perhaps trespassing?) the boundary between her private home and the (everyday) public space.

Loretta is still an «alien» according to the law and, in this sense, constituted as an «outsider» to the public realm; as a recent migrant, she has no formal «right to the city» or *logos* in the public sphere. But her regular embodied presence and practices in everyday public spaces have created space for her in the city, her trajectories work in many ways against an imposed spatial order (De Certeau 1984). By now, she knows her way around, she has crossed the square innumerable times, she walks the streets of the neighbourhood, waits at the bus-stop together with women and men from all over the world, shops at the local supermarket, stops at the kiosk which sells newspapers and periodicals in any imaginable language, takes her daughter to school, hangs about in the square sharing time with her women neighbours. These repetitive everyday practices do not challenge in any way her status towards the law, nor the «duties» deriving from her role in the family. But they have contributed to remove much of her initial anxiety and strangeness in the city and its public space.

At the same time, Loretta's practices and embodied presence in the square have contributed to familiarise local women, by now her regular companions (perhaps even friends), with the multitude of strangers. The square of their memories is now a different place where, on a summer evening, one hears a complex mix of languages, feels the presence of «strangers», witnesses a variety of playing habits, behaviours, ways of sitting and socializing. But their daily contact and shared practices, in that very space, with Loretta, and other migrant women who frequent the square as a semi-private/semi-public outdoor space, has significantly modified their earlier attitudes towards «strangers». These attitudes now take shape not only by representations which abound in the media, but also by reference to their known and familiar companion/s, thereby destabilizing notions of familiar/strange, insider/outsider, close/far (Vaiou 2008).

2.3 Identity formation in semi-public space

Murad is a gay male in his early 20s who was born in Berlin of Turkish parents. He considers himself to be «definitely Turkish» and, at the same time, insists that he is a Berliner. His gay identity is even more ambiguous, as he faces a double exclusion: in the (heterosexual) Turkish community and simultaneously in the German homosexual community. For him, the discovery of the «Gay Oriental Night», a party organised regularly in a particular club by and for gay and lesbian Turks, is one of the «most exciting» moments in his life. When entering the club he feels he has found a place of his own, he understands that there is a group that shares some of his experience of exclusion. Though he knew of other gay Turks, everything was hidden under a cloak of silence while the club suddenly made them visible to each other; they speak the same language, use similar terms and codes. Murad reports never missing a single party, since this is the only place he feels free.

The relationship between homosexuality and migration is often conflictual, in the context of an underlying hierarchy among outsiders: masculinity – and its perceived attribute of heterosexuality – is stronger than origin. Thus, a Turkish heterosexual male stands above a German homosexual male, an assumption confirmed through the repeated reports by gay men of feeling harassed and threatened by Turkish gangs in the streets. Harassment and insults serve to reverse exclusion and inclusion at least for that moment. But barriers remain also inside the club – there are *us* «the gay Turks» (Murad does not speak about the presence of lesbians) and *them*, the Germans. Yet, for the Turkish gay men, the party has proved to be a place of liberation. More than that, it is the only place where Turks and Germans (gay men) got together, dance to the rhythms of Turkish pop (of which Murad is very proud), and even talk to each other. The club, thus, became a political space: for gay activists it was an appropriate place to distribute leaflets, to raise awareness, to get the gay Turks to form their own political group/s. For social workers, it became a place to talk about the risks of HIV and offer their counselling services. In time, gay and lesbian Turks (and later Greeks, Jews and others) got organised as distinct communities inside the gay community. That club served as a place where «coming out» was possible and a gay Turkish identity could be formed. Turkish homosexuality became visible in this semi-public place, before demanding access and participation in the public sphere (Kalandides, forthcoming).

2.4 «Women in public space»

In the highly politicized atmosphere of the mid-1980s, feminist groups in Athens organised a discussion on «women in public space» in the square of Exarcheia,

one of the central neighbourhoods of the city. The memories of dictatorship (1967-74) were still fresh, while the then recent accession of PASOK (the socialist party) to power had created a climate of hope and expectations. Throughout the 1980s, after long mobilisations, the women's movement had a very active and visible presence in politics and in the city.

The event was to take place in two parts (May 18 and 22, 1986) but the second part never happened. Women participants were attacked by «enraged citizens» and special police troops and were faced with insults, beating and threats, while 28 of them were arrested on no other charges than perhaps the content of the pamphlet which they handed out for the discussion and in which they wrote:

> «As women, we claim public space against sexist discrimination and suppression of fundamental human rights. As women, we search for the image of a public square in a city belonging to us as well».

The event took place in a public square which those women had often crossed to go about their daily errands, carrying shopping bags, hurrying to catch a bus to work, passing from the corner bank to pay the regular bills; some of them may have spent many cool mornings or warm summer evenings there attending to their children playing ball or skating around; some younger ones had probably spent hours in the cafés all around; still others, alone or in company, had gone to the open-air cinema right there, on one corner of the square. None of the women had been stopped from performing those common, banal, everyday tasks.

What triggered, then, the «enraged citizens» (mostly men, but also some women)? How could the square, a space of their everyday activities, become a forbidden realm? It seems that they could have free access only insofar as they pursued the itineraries of the everyday, those which neither overtly trespassed established boundaries nor contested accepted representations (shopping, doing household-related errands, looking after children, going to work, crossing space hastily). On that spring afternoon, however, the neighbourhood square of everyday routines became a public space when those women claimed their right to the city «as women», i.e. in their own terms. They crossed the boundary of their ascribed place (at home) claiming both access to the public and their own *logos*. Stating the claim, these «others» challenged, even indirectly, established hierarchies and «rightful owners» of the public. As feminists, they were even more «outsiders», they represented a threat which had to be promptly suppressed (Vaiou 1990).

The examples above portray the issue of access to public space for different subjects who do not conform to the «norm» according to a number of criteria, including gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class – but mainly, combinations or constellations of such criteria, a deviance from the norm which has a destabilising effect on binary thinking. For example, the Turkish families in Berlin's Tiergarten, or the Albanian woman migrant in the Athenian square, by exposing in urban public spaces practices which are usually considered private, claim access to spaces in which they would otherwise be/feel strangers. Through contact with locals, a process of familiarisation is mobilised and participation in something which is «less private» (which crosses over boundaries) is made possible. The Turkish gay man in Berlin seeks access to places where he would be less of an «outsider» or «stranger» and eventually gain access to the city. The women who demonstrated in Athens formed a different public space not only through their bodily presence but also through their demands to participate in public/political discourse. The claims and practices underlying these examples pose questions about the constitution of the public at different levels, questions which have to do with processes of inclusion/exclusion, with the transposition or transgression of boundaries which separate public from private, «inside» from «outside», «we» from «them».

The passage from concrete examples and from the experiences of particular embodied subjects to theoretical conceptions of the public and the private is not an easy step. But the examples help carry the argument forwarded here in two directions. First, they help develop an understanding of the multiple determinations of otherness in public space, as well as ways of contesting it. Second, they help introduce an approach to public space which oscillates between two levels of reference which are usually kept apart: on the one hand, urban space and the spatialities produced through the everyday practices of individuals and groups, and on the other hand the constitution of one (or more) public sphere/s, where, at least in the Western world, the primacy of the public is affirmed and the subjects of access and participation determined (Vaiou 2008).

3 Approaches to public space and feminist critiques

Public and private are concepts with important material and symbolic effects at the level of institutions, social practices, language and constitution of individual and collective identities. They are also concepts which structure our understandings of urban space, in terms of legal and institutional practices (e.g. property), social norms (e.g. who can be in what spaces), individual and collective practices (e.g. who claims access to what). They are not (and have never been) «conceptual absolutes, but a minefield with huge the-

oretical potential» (Davidoff 1998: 165). As the two sides of a binary, they have a long history in Western thought and have become a basic part of the way in which our social and psychic worlds are ordered, even if this order is constantly shifting (Benhabib 1998). When brought together in the binary, public and private embody and express relations of power, between the two sides of the slash («the cut», as Golding 1997 calls it), as well as within each side, among individuals, groups and also (material) spaces. As feminist critics have often pointed out, the public is the side which holds a prominent position and presupposes a community of equals who participate actively in it, excluding those who do not conform to the norm in terms of gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity, age (e.g. Benhabib 1998; Landes 1998) The private remains in the shadow, as a realm of inequality and necessity, even though it is implicitly presupposed in and for the constitution and operation of the public.

Contemporary debate about public space draws from the theoretical formulations of two great political thinkers of the 20th century, Hanna Arendt and Jürgen Habermas, whose thought informs the approach taken here as well. The emphasis on the public, as underlined above, is prominent in the work of Arendt which discusses the Greek *polis* as the public sphere *par excellence* (Arendt 1958). For her, the private and the public, which correspond to the space of the home and the space of the political, are completely distinct: The public, with its materialisation in the *agora*, includes the realms of the political, of participation among equals, of the *logos*. The private, on the other hand, is identified with the *anagke*, the necessities, and distinguished from the intimate, the space of the self and the body; it is the place where women, slaves or children are confined to. Arendt underlines the loss of public space in modernity and the rise of the social: the institutional differentiation of modern societies into the narrowly political realm on the one hand and the economic market and the family on the other. As a result of these transformations, economic processes which had hitherto been confined to the «shadowy realm of the household, emancipate themselves and become public matters» (Benhabib 1998: 66). Public space, where freedom can appear, emerges only when and where, in Arendt's terms, «men act together in concert». In this sense, a material/urban public space (a town hall or a city square) is not a public space unless «men act together in concert». On the other hand, a private salon or dining room, where political debate develops, becomes a public space (Benhabib 1996).

The idea of public space emerging or coming into existence only when «men act together in concert» is taken up also by Habermas. He introduces the idea of public space as the creation of procedures through which those affected by general political decisions and social norms can have a say in their formulation and adoption. The public sphere thus exists insofar as multiple publics engage in practical discourse and evaluate the validity of norms. The ensuing dialogue is based on criteria of «practical discourse» through which a plurality of public spheres can emerge in modern societies – in fact there may be as many publics as there are contested issues of general concern (Habermas 1962/1989). Habermas analyses the expansion of the sphere of public participation in the context of social differentiation and the development of possibilities in three distinct realms: in institutions, through the creation of general norms of action; in the formation of individual identities, beyond conventional roles and established social practices; and in the critical reappropriation of cultural tradition (Habermas 1985). In this context, the meaning of participation extends beyond the political, to include the social and cultural spheres of life – which leads to a novel conception of public space.

This strict public/private division, which characterises the work of both Arendt and Habermas, as well as the conceptions associated with each side, permeate debates about (Western) democracy and citizenship, and have been subject to rigorous feminist critique/s from a variety of fields and disciplines (e.g. Klinger 1994; Pentelidou-Maloutas 2002). In Arendt's highly idealised picture of the *polis*, for example, a whole constellation of issues is absent. Most prominently, the fact that

> «the agonistic political space of the *polis* was only possible because large groups of human beings, like women, slaves, labourers, non-citizen residents, and all non-Greeks were excluded from it, but, through their «labour» for the daily necessities of life, they made possible that ‹leisure for politics› which the few enjoyed; by contrast, the rise of the social was accompanied by the emancipation of these groups ‹from the shadowy interior of the household› and by their entry into public life» (Benhabib 1998: 67; see also Honig 1993).

Habermas's model on the other hand, based on the idea of a theoretical public, broadens the public sphere and refers to exclusions based on criteria of class or the related issues of education and property. Yet, as Habermas himself acknowledges, at least in part, in his 1990 introduction of *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, he does not ask how some groups and their concerns are already ruled out by the very definition of the public. Starting from a fundamental principle of egalitarian reciprocity and democratisation of social norms, this model cannot address the domains of preexisting social inequalities, which do not fit into the abstract and distanciated public.

As many feminist theorists have convincingly argued, an idealist vision of the universal public conceals the ways in which exclusion from the public sphere has been from the start a constitutive feature of the bourgeois public and not some kind of conjunctural or incidental occurrence. In this context, the (unmarked) subject of autonomy and public deliberation is gendered as male; *homo politicus* or *homo economicus* is not a female self – she is relegated to the private sphere. The latter, in its aspects of intimacy and household, remains out of the public agenda. It is, therefore, not surprising that much of feminist political struggles and theoretical endeavours have focused on the public/private binary and the power relations associated with it. The dividing line, as well as the content of each side of the binary, is a matter of continuous re-negotiation towards more publicity, as a means of empowerment and emancipation. When women started organising themselves in public, on the basis of what were considered their own private interests,

> «they risked violating the constitutive principles of the bourgeois public sphere: in place of one, they substituted the many; in place of disinterestedness, they revealed themselves as having an interest. Worse yet, women risked disrupting the gendered organisation of nature, truth and opinion that assigned them to a place in the private, domestic but not the public realm» (Landes 1998: 143).

The development of one or more public spheres presupposed the parallel development of new forms of private spheres, linked to the patriarchal, conjugal family and its intimate domain. The binary distinction between on the one hand the public sphere (of politics) and on the other the market and the family meant that a whole range of matters or concerns came to be labelled private, hence improper for public deliberation. By this token, the (embodied) subjects of these «private» concerns were ruled out from the theoretical public and its abstract discourse of rationality, norms and truth: most prominently women, but also people of the lower classes, homosexuals, «deviants» from accepted norms, migrants or even Jews were worse suited to perform the discursive role of participants in the public sphere, on a variety of criteria.

4 Aspects of otherness: strangers, outsiders, «others»

The abstract theorisations of the public and the private briefly discussed in the previous section can be identified in much of the urban debate/s as well, both historically and at present. In this tradition of thought about urban space, important transformations in urban public space are linked to the debate on the public as a sphere of politics and rights. The focus in this section is upon this link returning to the initial questions on access, recognition, participation of «others» in urban public space and in the spatialities formed by individual and collective practices. According to Habermas (1962/1989), the emergence of the bourgeois public sphere relates to a number of historical developments (urbanisation, distant trade and stock market operation, new communication systems and state administration, as well as cultural institutions flourishing in cities), which led to the formation of early modern states and the coming into existence of civil society. These developments (the increasing complexity of the social division of labour in industrializing societies) found expressions in new urban spaces and new types of buildings.

The factory, the office building, the stock exchange, the railway station, the library, the opera, the «grands magasins», the cafés, the designed park, the hotel, the literary salon, the neighbourhood square are all part of a novel urban typology and of an expansion of material space which goes parallel with the expanding functions and institutions of the public sphere. Through design and decoration, some such spaces, particularly those linked to shopping and entertainment, aimed to re-produce the «homely» ambiance of private space, thereby introducing a new shift of boundaries: the private world of sexualised body and femininity extended to the «homely» world of these spaces, as the underside of a public sphere where white male reason, rationality and control of material space continued to dominate (McRobbie 1994; Wilson 1991). The spaces of consumption and entertainment started opening for upper class women (and later for other «outsiders»), who gradually developed their own practices of movement and appropriation and became less strange in such public spaces.

The concept of the «stranger», which is particularly useful for the development of the argument forwarded here about the cities of «others», has a long history in urban discourse. It can already be found in the writings of Georg Simmel (1903/1984, 1908) about modernity, where cities/modern metropolises are understood as places where strangers – people unknown to one another – congregate together in the complex functions of the monetary economy. In Simmel's terms, the authentic city disintegrates through processes arising from the ever-increasing circulation of commodities. Money and the speed-up of life in the metropolis leads to the loss of intimate contact and face-to-face communication, which is replaced by different types of interaction, characterised by anonymity and casual contact (Simmel 1903/1984, 1990; see also Frisby 1991). Strangers come into and out of view in urban public spaces; they find forms of communication and arrangement to bridge the tension that results between what they have in common and what belongs to their respective privacy, what is permitted and what is not.

In this line of argument, the stranger in the metropolis remains an abstract subject who does not face boundaries and exclusions in public space. In this sense, it identifies rather with the «norm», the man who acts and moves freely in public space. At the end of the century, Zygmunt Bauman (1995) sees in the ambivalence of the stranger, in his/her hybridity, the actual threat to the order of the modern world: the stranger questions dualisms such as the inside/outside, the here/there – being both at the same time. The modern world, Bauman argues, is obsessed with the thought of clear separation; anything and anybody in-between throws it off balance. Bauman sees in the post-modern world, through its extreme differentiation and fragmentation, a chance of tolerance. His rather optimistic view of the future resembles Simmel's city as the place where strangers meet, but it does not take into account that there are different ways of being a stranger.

In somewhat different terms, Arendt (1959/1981) also engages with the concept of the stranger in an earlier – and less known – work, Rahel Varnhagen, where she reflects on the question of the «outsider», by narrating the life of a Berliner Jewess, famous for her salon at the turn of the 18th to the 19th century. In her case, the categories «woman» and «Jewess» defined her as stranger and outsider in a male, Christian society. If, as in the biography of Rahel Varnhagen, gender and religion/culture are two possible categories that distinguish who is inside and outside of society, for the German literary critic, Hans Mayer, there is a third category that should be added to it: sexuality. In his book *Aussenseiter* (Mayer 1975), he considers women, Jews and homosexuals to be the permanent «existential», as he calls them, outsiders of Western civilisation – existential in the same sense that Arendt called being Jewish a «destiny». Looking at the same time at literary creations and historical personalities, Mayer tries to establish an archaeology of the «outsider». He shows the permanence of certain mental images in Western society and the archetypal construction of the «other» and argues that there is no community between the outsiders, since even among them there are relations of power, hierarchical representations, first or second-class outsiders.

In the examples above of border crossings and multiple determinations beyond and through binaries, the terms «stranger», «outsider» and «other» have been used almost interchangeably. It is therefore necessary to comment on their non-identical content. Starting with «stranger», the use of the term as part of a binary involves relations of power, in the context of which, following Ahmed (2000), the figure of the stranger is far from simply being strange or unknown, as in Simmel's argument. On the contrary, it is a figure which is construed and recognized as such and, in this sense, it comes closer to the idea of the «outsider», which can only be thought of in terms of hegemony and has stronger spatial connotations. As the weak part of a binary, the outsider is ascribed his/her space and place and does not constitute a threat as long as s/he remains encapsulated or isolated there. That space is both a material entity (e.g. the home or the club in the examples above) and a constellation of social relations and individual or collective practices, which may acquire significations as public or private. Yet, when borders are crossed, when the outsider is present among us – then s/he becomes the «other». The other among us, in our space, brings the strange into the familiar, the far away into the close, the there into the here, s/he questions borders and binaries. Bodily presence becomes a threat to the established order, the everyday practices of formerly invisible «others» claim access, while their public speech challenges accepted hierarchies (see also Secor 2004).

In this context, the concept of the stranger as outsider is seen here as distinct from abstract or universal disembodied subjects who meet, mingle and perform in the public realm. It focuses on subjects with specific bodies which come to be lived through being differentiated from other bodies, including the «norm», in terms of gender, sexuality, race, class, age and a whole host of other features (see also Simonsen 2003). This specificity, which is constituted as the coming together of a constellation of features, allows reflection on strict lines of division and calls for thinking beyond binaries and in the plural: not the stranger/outsider as a fixed category or identity but rather strangers in their particular concrete embodiments. By extending the argument of Ahmed (2000), strangers are not those who are not known in (everyday) public spaces, but those who are «painfully familiar» and already recognised as not belonging, as being out of place. Here, relations of power are involved, in the context of which some strangers are marked as stranger than others, thereby establishing and reinforcing boundaries between «insiders» and those recognised as out of place or «outsiders», as well as (de)legitimate forms of presence, mobility or movement through/within the public.

5 In the spaces of the everyday

Thus, until now, the approach has been made, through approximations, to make more concrete what has been called in the title of the paper cities of «others», by linking notions of public and private with conceptions of the «other», discussed in different contexts in relation to the «outsider» and the «stranger». Linking these concerns to conceptualisations of space/place introduces new levels of complexity, which permit neither homogeneous and predetermined categories

nor uni-dimensional approaches to access, belonging, transgressing boundaries or negotiating participation (Anthias 2000). As has already been underlined, everyday public spaces are not considered here as only material entities, but as a synthesis of social relations, individual and collective practices and symbolic meanings, a synthesis which determines the specificity of place in a given conjuncture. From such a perspective, everyday public spaces in the city are, in many ways, open and provisional, rather than bounded, fixed and static (see Massey 1994). They are open to contestation and to different readings by individuals and groups with different experiences (Keith & Pile 1993).

Working class Turks in Berlin re-define public space through practices which (some) Germans consider private. By exposing their everyday practices in public, these outsiders gain visibility and perhaps become less strange through contact. Their activity, coded private by locals, as well as their mere presence in that urban public space, constitutes a breach which provokes public discussion. Yet, public discussion becomes an indirect way of attaining public speech. Access and visibility seem to be a step towards participation (see also Mitchell 1995).

In a similar vein, Loretta's everyday practices and embodied presence in the neighbourhood square of Athens make her visible and contribute to establishing contacts with local women. But her practices in public space, like those of many migrant women, are also a daily testimony of presence, which creates fissures in the multiple levels of her strangeness, as young woman, as working class and as migrant, and perhaps leave room for participation. Thus, the borders between familiar and strange, insider and outsider are re-negotiated and even challenged, while public space acquires new meanings.

Murad, by attending his first gay Turkish party, contests some of the multiple layers of his being an outsider in Berlin. In the relative security of the hybrid space of the gay club, he finds a (public) place of his own, which he also constitutes through his presence and interconnections with others, thereby continuously destabilising divisions between «us» and «them», «insiders» and «outsiders». The gay club is a place where Murad, and other gay Turks, do not have to be outsiders; claiming the same right outside the club would be the next step.

The feminists who organised a public discussion in Exarcheia square in Athens triggered hostility in that they crossed the boundary of «a woman's place» – in the home and in private matters and activities. Their initiative was seen as a provocation to be suppressed, since they did not only demand access passively; they also, and most importantly, demanded participation in the public sphere – they claimed their right to the city in their own terms, as women.

As these examples indicate, the lines of division which are implied in the binaries, are contested and crossed in different ways through the everyday practices of embodied individuals who, in their turn, do not fit in strict categorisations. These practices contribute to the constitution of everyday public spaces, material spaces of the city, like streets, squares, playgrounds, parks, public buildings – which acquire new functions and meanings (see also Secor 2004). This reference to the everyday, drawing mainly from the work of Henri Lefebvre (e.g. 1990, 1996), is meant to underline the importance of repetitive, trivial practices «without importance» for understanding public space not as a physical space that is already determined, fixed and bounded, but as space lived through contact and meeting with others, encounters which produce both inclusions and exclusions (see also Chaney 2002, as well as the collection of papers included in Wastl-Walter, Staeheli & Dowler 2005). Coming out of invisibility, familiarisation, contact, claiming recognition and participation means a passing through these everyday public spaces of informal social contacts, random encounters and everyday participation, where one lives and suffers inequalities, but may also negotiate and challenge them.

Crossing boundaries in everyday practices obviously does not cancel binaries, or relations of power which operate at different levels to do with gender, class, sexuality and ethnicity. Matters of access and participation continue to persist and become visible in different spatial contexts. There, one finds codes of recognition of who belongs and who does not – and such codes may be very strong. In order to contest the lines of division, or to re-negotiate them, it is necessary to acknowledge them in all their complexity. The ambiguities of the presence of «others» in public space, already determined in multiple ways and across binary conceptions, can lead one to the need to think in terms of a more refined succession of privacy and publicity, with several intermediate zones of access.

References

Ahmed, S. (2000): Strange encounters. Embodied others in post-coloniality. – London: Routledge.

Anthias, F. (2000): Metaphors of home: gendering new migrations to Southern Europe. – In: Anthias, F. & G. Lazaridis (eds): Gender and migration in Southern Europe. – Oxford: Berg: 15-48.

Arendt, H. (1958): The human condition. – Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Arendt, H. (1959/1981): Rahel Varnhagen. Lebens-

geschichte einer deutschen Jüdin aus der Romantik. – München, Zürich: Piper.
Bahrdt, H.P. (1961/2006): Die moderne Großstadt. Soziologische Überlegungen zum Städtebau. – Opladen: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
Bauman, Z. (1995): Moderne und Ambivalenz. Das Ende der Eindeutigkeit. – Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.
Benhabib, S. (1996): The reluctant modernism of Hannah Arendt. – London: Sage.
Benhabib, S. (1998): Models of public space: Hannah Arendt, the liberal tradition and Jürgen Habermas. – In: Landes, J. (ed.): Feminism. The public and the private. – Oxford: Oxford University Press: 65-99.
Chaney, D. (2002): Cultural change and everyday life. – London: Palgrave.
Davidoff, L. (1998): Regarding some «Old husbands' tales»: public and private Feminist History. – In: Landes, J. (ed.): Feminism. The public and the private. – Oxford: Oxford University Press: 164-194.
De Certeau, M. (1984): The practice of everyday life. – Berkeley: University of California Press.
Frisby, D. (1991): The aesthetics of modern life. Simmel's interpretation. – In: Theory, Culture and Society 8, 3: 73-92.
Golding, S. (1997): A word of warning. – In: Golding, S. (ed.): The eight technologies of otherness. – London: Routledge: xi-xiv.
Habermas, J. (1962/1989): Structural transformation of the public sphere. – Boston: MIT Press; originally published as *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, Darmstadt: Luchterhand (1962).
Habermas, J. (1985): The Theory of Communicative Action. – Boston: Beacon.
Honig, B. (1993): The politics of agonism. – In: Political Theory 21: 528-533.
Kalandides, A. (forthcoming): The constitution of place identity: multiple narratives from Prenzlauer Berg, Berlin. – Research in progress for PhD dissertation, Athens: National Technical University of Athens.
Keith, M. & S. Pile (eds) (1993): Place and the politics of identity. – London, New York: Routledge
Klinger, C. (1994): Die politische Theoriediskussion der Gegenwart in einer feministischen Perspektive. – In: Kriesi, H. (ed.): Frauen und Politik. – Bern: Haupt Verlag: 33-50.
Landes, J. (1998): The public and the private sphere. A feminist reconsideration. – In: Landes, J. (ed.): Feminism. The public and the private. – Oxford: Oxford University Press: 135-163.
Lefebvre, H. (1990): Everyday life in the modern world. – New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers (first edition in French 1968).
Lefebvre, H. (1996): Writings on cities. – Translated and edited by E. Kofman and E. Lebas, Oxford: Blackwell.
Massey, D. (1994): Space, place and gender. – Oxford: Polity.
Mayer, H. (1975): Außenseiter. – Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
McRobbie, A. (1994): PostModernism and popular culture. – London: Routledge.
Mitchell, D. (1995): The end of public space? People's park, definitions of the public, and democracy. – In: Annals of the Association of American Geographers 85, 1: 108-133.
Pantelidou-Maloutas, M. (2002): The gender of democracy. Citizenship and gendered subjects. – Athens: Savalas (in Greek).
Schuster, K.-P. (ed.) (2003): Die Neue Nationalgalerie. – Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Köln: DuMont.
Secor, A. (2004): «There is an Istanbul that belongs to me»: Citizenship, space and identity in the city. – In: Annals of the Association of American Geographers 94, 2: 352-368.
Simmel, G. (1903/1984): Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben. – In: Simmel, G. (ed.): Das Individuum und die Freiheit: Essays. – Berlin: Wagenbach: 192-204.
Simmel, G. (1990): Philosophy of money. – London: Routledge.
Simmel, G. (1908): Exkurs über den Fremden. – In: Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 1, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp: 767-771.
Simonsen, K. (2003): The embodied city: from bodily practice to urban life. – In: Öhman, J. & K. Simonsen (eds): Voices from the North. New trends in Nordic Human Geography. – Aldershot: Ashgate: 157-172.
Staeheli, L.A. & D. Mitchell (2007): Locating the public in research and practice. – In: Progress in Human Geography 31, 6: 792-811.
Vaiou, D. (1990): Gender relations in urban development. An alternative framework of analysis in Athens, Greece. – Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of London, Department of Geography and Planning.
Vaiou, D. (2008): Intersecting patterns of everyday life and socio-spatial changes in the city. Migrant and local women in the neighbourhoods of Athens. – Athens: L-Press (in Greek).
Wastl-Walter, D., Staeheli, L. & L. Dowler (eds) (2005): Rights to the city. – Roma: Società Geografica Italiana.
Wilson, E. (1991): The sphinx in the city. – London: Virago.

Abstract: Cities of «others»: public space and everyday practices
This paper deals with the concept of «public space». It works with the ambiguities embedded therein, contrasting material space/s – the streets, squares, parks, public buildings of the city – with the other spaces created through the functions and institutions of the «public sphere» as a site of public deliberation. Focussing on the ambiguities of the concept allow questions

of access, interaction, participation, cultural and symbolic rights of passage to be posed. Public space is approached here as constituted through the practices of everyday life: it is produced and constantly contested, reflecting – among other things – relations of power. Differences in gender, ethnicity or sexuality often lead to binary thinking, such as inside/outside, inclusion/exclusion, local/stranger. The way that such categories intertwine in everyday life, though, unsettle easy categorisations and force a questioning of strict lines of division. It is in this context that a proposal is made to discuss the city of «others», drawing from research examples which cross over such lines.

Keywords: public space, migrants, homosexuality, ethnicity, gender

Zusammenfassung: Städte der «Anderen»: öffentlicher Raum und Alltagspraktiken
Diese Arbeit stellt einen Versuch dar, über den «öffentlichen Raum» nachzudenken, indem mit der Vieldeutigkeit des Konzeptes gearbeitet wird: zum einen mit dem materiellen Raum und zum anderen mit den Funktionen und Institutionen der «Öffentlichkeit» als Ort des öffentlichen Diskurses. Diese Vieldeutigkeit des Begriffs «öffentlicher Raum» erlaubt, nach Zugang, Interaktion, Partizipation, kulturellen oder symbolischen Übergangsriten zu fragen. Der öffentliche Raum wird hier verstanden als durch Praktiken des Alltags konstituiert: er wird produziert, stets in Frage gestellt, und widerspiegelt dabei – unter anderem – Machtbeziehungen. Unterschiede in Gender, Ethnizität oder Sexualität führen oft dazu, in Dichotomien zu denken, so wie drinnen/draußen, Inklusion/Exklusion, einheimisch/fremd. Die Verwobenheit dieser Kategorien im Alltag erlaubt jedoch keine einfachen Klassifizierungen und zwingt dazu, strenge Trennlinien zu hinterfragen. Indem eigene Forschungsbeispiele aufgezeigt werden, die solche Limiten überschreiten, wird vor diesem Hintergrund vorgeschlagen, über die Stadt der «Anderen» zu diskutieren.

Schlüsselwörter: öffentlicher Raum, Migration, Homosexualität, Ethnizität, Gender

Résumé: Villes des «autres»: espace public et pratiques quotidiennes
Cette contribution tente de penser la notion d'«espace public» à partir des ambiguïtés du concept, qui inclut d'une part l'espace matériel (les rues, places, parcs et bâtiments publics de la ville), d'autre part les fonctions et les institutions de la «sphère publique» comme site de délibération publique. Ces ambiguïtés quant au contenu et au champ de référence du concept d'«espace public» permettent d'aborder des questions d'accès, d'interaction, de participation et de rites de passage culturels et symboliques. L'espace public est ici traité comme étant constitué par les pratiques du quotidien: il est produit et objet de contestation en permanence, reflétant (entre autres) les relations de pouvoir. Les différences de genre, d'ethnicité, d'orientation sexuelle, amènent le plus souvent à penser en termes binaires tels que «dedans/dehors», «inclusion/exclusion», «local/étranger». La manière dont de telles catégories s'interpénètrent dans la vie quotidienne remet cependant en cause de telles catégorisations simplistes et force à repenser les lignes de division trop strictes. Dans ce contexte, cet article propose de débattre de la ville des «autres» en se basant sur des exemples de recherches qui traversent ces lignes de division.

Mots-clés: espace public, migration, homosexualité, ethnicité, genre

Prof. Dr. **Dina Vaiou**, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, National Technical University of Athens, Patission Str. 42, 10682 Athens, Greece.
e-mail: divaiou@central.ntua.gr
Ares Kalandides, PhD Cand., Department of Urban and Regional Planning, National Technical University of Athens, Patission Str. 42, 10682 Athens, Greece and INPOLIS UCE GmbH, Dunckerstrasse 90A, D-10437 Berlin, Germany.
e-mail: kalandides@inpolis.de

Manuskripteingang/received/manuscrit entré le 8.6.2008
Annahme zum Druck/accepted for publication/accepté pour l'impression: 27.2.2009