The production of public open spaces and the deliberate exclusion of undesirables

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Abstract – *While the remaining chapters in this book introduce and discuss a series of experiences in co-creation and participatory processes in the production of public spaces, this chapter intends to reflect on the appropriation and the production of public spaces from another aspect – that of the undesirables, those who are not wanted in the use of public spaces. By 'undesirable' is to be understood all those who, for different reasons, are not supposed to use - at least for a large amount of time - a public space. The reasons for considering someone undesirable are diverse and often not explicit. Yet, this divide severely restricts social development and limits the understanding of publicness and of an urban society, which is undoubtedly becoming more and more diverse. For those considered "proper", such daily actions as using a public space are never questioned. Exclusion is a delicate issue, and thus probably no one will publicly recommend excluding the undesirables from public life; however, in fact, an increasing number of architectural elements are being put in place in order to restrict the accessibility and use of public spaces by certain citizens. And the decision to do so is an ambiguous one, as design aims at finding solutions that are effective from a user's perspective. This chapter argues that the production of public space, namely the idealized informality of open public space, is a continuation of the social conflicts present in normative space dynamics by renewed exclusion means and strategies.*

Keywords - Undesirable and orderly users, exclusion and inclusion, spatial practices, anti-social behaviour

INTRODUCTION - SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACES

Publicness and inclusiveness sound great in theory, but implementation can be a much more difficult prospect. Urban life brings great challenges, and in order to coordinate them, in a collective sphere, a set of principles and standards that stimulate common sense among individuals has been established. The issues related to the transgression of these normative principles and standards are, in fact, the subject of reflection by researchers from a variety of fields, including philosophy, social sciences, anthropology and psychology (of spaces), and to a different extent they also list those people who have been driven out of public spaces. Among them, deemed as undesirables, are panhandlers, prostitutes, and the homeless, and to a certain extent even the mentally ill, as well as street artists, skateboarders and groups of teenagers. Evicting is *per se* a contradiction to the concept of public spaces as common good, as the main part of the public realm that should be open to and benefit all (Thompson, 2002).

Public spaces are the heart of a city and can not only influence lifestyles, wellbeing and public health but also affect social capital. There is a wide body of research that evidences the benefits of public spaces, from social and educational to environmental and economic. For instance, Smaniotto Costa & Hoyer (2014) and the Project GreenKeys (Smaniotto Costa et al., 2008) analyse the environmental dimensions extensively, while Carmona (2015, 2003) examines the social aspects. Sendi & Goličnik Marušić (2012) highlight the fact that the public space has various functional and symbolic purposes and meanings. Reclaiming public space has been also at the centre of urban debates, especially in the early 1990s, when the death of public spaces was widely pronounced (Bodnar, 2015). Returning to the values of public spaces, the listed benefits are complemented by a good number of conceptual frameworks that, in their intention to guide the production of public spaces, share similar underlying motivations. Despite setting different emphases, they aim at adding value in different ways to the social and environmental urban fabric. In fact, the concept of public space is not one-dimensional, because in public spaces not only different functions and features are articulated, but also the "softer" issues such as identity, belonging and sense of place. In fact, places have become, more and more, a dominant *locus of desire*[1], setting a certain tendency towards the production of locality in the age of globality – to a point where, with increased intensity, a single place is a heterotopia. The *heterotopic*[2] nature of spaces is widely discussed by Patricio, Breser and Ioannidis (2019). Spaces are therefore able to offer simultaneously and cumulatively many services besides their immediate functionality – indeed, as noted by Michel Foucault, "we are in the epoch of simultaneity; we are in the epoch of

[1] See Lucy Lippard. 1997. The Lure of the Local: Senses of Places in a Multicentered Society. New York: The New Press, p. 4.

[2] Recalling Foucault's "Of Other Spaces", the 1967 conference first published in 1984 in Architecture, Movement, Continuité, no. 5: "The heterotopia has the power to juxtapose in a single real place several places, several emplacements that are in themselves incompatible" (Foucault 1994, 758).

juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed" (Foucault, 1994: 752). As Carr et al. (1993) put it, public spaces serve various functions and thus various users. In theory, it is in public spaces that all forms of urban life interact, and share values (Thompson, 2002).

In fact, the nature of this multidimensionality is another factor of complexity, which makes a holistic and comprehensive approach difficult, and therefore not easy to communicate. There are several obvious reasons why communication with the public is important. The production of public spaces cannot be taken for granted, it is in constant fight, not only for the physical space itself, but also for support and funding. Public spaces depend ultimately from taxes; and as resources are becoming increasingly scarce, this fight may intensify (Smaniotto, 2014). The understanding of public spaces, besides their socio-spatial features, has to consider all functions, services, benefits, components and factors as well as their interactions. This all make them common places, the fundament of any urbanity. On top of these interactions are stakeholders and public space users and ultimately the value placed on the places and the environment. This value may play a role in whether someone understands him/herself as part of society or not (Habermas, 1990). Determining who is part of the (urban) society is a complex and almost impossible endeavour that involves risks, such as racism, xenophobia and leaving out some individuals or groups. This is also the scope of *The Struggle for Recognition: the Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, by Axel Honneth, noted thinker of the Frankfurt School. In his book, first released in 1992, Honneth develops an interesting approach to the Hegelian intersubjective "struggle for recognition", setting the foundations for a social theory with normative character within the framework of a theory of communicative action. Reinterpreting Hegel in light of the contemporary metaphysical crisis, and thus following the social psychology of G. H. Mead, Honneth notes that the patterns of intersubjective recognition are based on love[3], rights and solidarity (Honneth, 1995: 95), and the negation of these three forms correspond to three experiences of disrespect, namely the violation of the body, the denial of rights and the denigration of ways of life (Honneth, 1995: 131-139). Social conflicts emerge as a consequence of shared experiences of disrespect.

Despite their differences, both Hegel and Mead aspire to the "universalistic achievements of equality and individualism", embedded in a social tissue where all subjects would be recognised as equal, autonomous and individuated persons (Honneth, 1995: 175). This, too, is the idea behind the Habermasian terms of a public deliberation of a "discursive will-formation"[4]. Honneth situates his approach to social conflicts in

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[3] Following the context, we should clarify that "[…] to speak of 'love' as an 'element' of ethical life can only mean that, for every subject, the experience of being loved constitutes a necessary precondition for participation in the public life of a community." (Honneth 1995, 38)

[4] See J. Habermas, 1996, *Between Facts and Norms*, MIT Press, and J. Habermas, 1987, *The Theory of Communicative Action*. Boston: Beacon Press.

the field of morality - *qua* the Kantian aspiration to a universal principle. Only an analysis that seeks to explain social struggles from the dynamics of moral experiences instructs about the logic that follows the emergence of these collective movements. And even if the structure of the social relations of recognition is systematically renewed through time, normative claims are constant and structurally inherent to the relations of mutual recognition. When a group experiences a denial of their rights, social mobilizations emerge.

Public space is still the paradigmatic space for the revelation of intersubjective or social struggles. It is the site of their occurrence and, moreover, the place of social transformation. When it becomes a normative camp by means of architectural elements, excluding the undesirables, social struggles erupt. This is why it makes sense to call for more inclusive urban spaces, shared also by the vulnerable members of the society. Evicting the undesirables raises the issue of who the public is, who those facilities are intended for. It is worth highlighting that the debates on inclusiveness often focus on the reduction of public spaces and their loss through privatisation and/or the increase in control, also through remote video surveillance. The blurring of boundaries between the public and the private realms contributed massively to this form of discussion, as the freedom of movement between both is reduced. The processes of identity formation constitute the basis for Honneth's "Formal Conception of Ethical Life". This means it "[…] encompasses the qualitative conditions for self-realisation (…), insofar as they form general pre-requirements for the personal integrity of subjects […]" (Honneth, 1995: 172). The claim for inclusiveness gives rise to hopes that it would make previously marginalised users and arguments more visible to a broader public. But that is indeed the point. Does engaging those who would usually not participate increase the diversity of opinions as well as the support for co-created solutions? This question concerns the multiple functions of public spaces and their synergic action. Far from reopening classic debates on a just and equitable society, this chapter challenges, not such questions as 'what is a public space?' and 'what are the functions of it?', but overcoming two intertwined challenges: who public spaces are intended for and who is allowed to share and construct them.

PUBLIC SPACES ARE FOR ALL, BUT THEY ARE NOT NEUTRAL

Putting it simply: public space is where social processes and public life take place, and they are inclusive when people from different backgrounds come together. Yet, a public space is only good for a community when people use it. It is our contention that "use" encompasses a conscious and shared practice, where users identify one another. But it is also "use" when users are merely moving around the space.

There is an intrinsic relationship between space and people, as space shapes people's shared values. Whyte (1980) was one of the first authors who empirically studied the

impact of design on appropriation and behaviour in public spaces. He detected that public plazas with a comfortable design, which includes seating opportunities, shelter, grass and trees, were visited by more people than those without these features. He also measured the frequency and interaction of people sharing the same space, and also found that good physical and visible access without barriers was important for the use of public spaces. Whyte (1980) also coined the term undesirables using it for those who are not welcome in public spaces. Although Whyte looked on the undesirables from a more positive perspective, namely stating that their presence in public spaces, too, is a contribution to what makes the sociability of a place. Sociability, anyway, is a complex quality both to achieve and to measure, but it is an unmistakable quality for a place. Gehl (1996) has a very firm opinion: the more quality a place has, the more intensive and diverse are the social activities it fosters. When people see friends, meet peers, greet neighbours and feel comfortable interacting with strangers, they tend to feel a stronger sense of place or attachment to their community (Gehl, 1996: 11). Gehl also highlights that these activities occur only when places invite people. Nevertheless, this capacity to generate quality of place is not exclusive of the actual space. People's relational complexity also shapes the dynamics of public spaces, and it is no less material than their architectural features – from soundscapes to pictorial flows generated therein, to the use of ICT devices, and, perhaps less ambiguously, the conservation or degradation of its furniture elements. This is reflected in a more or less provoked noise or visual pollution. The public use of spaces and its human geographies are of reciprocal moulding: A degraded space is more propitious to instigate criminality whereas a proper space gives a sense of security, for instance. This example also explains how the presence of many healthy people in public spaces generates barriers against violence and crime.

The relationship between people and spaces is of such deep strategic importance that in 2015 UN-Habitat published a set of principles for improving access to good public spaces and to demonstrate the value of public involvement in securing, developing and managing public spaces (Charter of Public Space and the UN-Habitat Global Public Space Toolkit, 2015). The Charter and the Toolkit demonstrate how public spaces are crucial for democracy and community well-being. Public spaces are the ideal stage for showing publicness and for actions that need public attention, such as demonstrations, strikes, sport events, or even carnivals, which require precisely the prominence that public spaces can offer. These events require the immediacy of a live acting or the impact of the kinetic energy of a mass in motion (Šuklje & Smaniotto, 2015). This evidences that public spaces have to be understood as a sphere of defiance and debate. Malone (2002) refers to them as a place of political struggle and protest, and in this sense, they are a place of participation, democracy and inclusion. But, on the other hand, if certain groups, because of characteristics as diverse as socioeconomic background or age, are excluded from their use, the question necessarily arises: can these spaces still be called public?

In this context, Strohmayer (2016) employs the term 'public' to comprehend aspects of spaces that invite, rather than discourage, participation in the shaping and reshaping of society. This means that, through the use of public spaces, place design can transform communities. This evidences the close relationship between space and behaviour, which in turn builds a sense of belonging and place attachment. Public spaces are therefore an intersecting mirror to reflect local culture(s). Public spaces as mentioned above are only good for people if people use them. And that is a question of determining qualities, namely attractiveness, accessibility and design (which also encompass maintenance) on the one hand; and a question of being attracted by and making use of the same qualities, on the other. In other words, the mere existence of a public space does not ensure that a community benefits from it. A public space can only spread its wings and find its place in the core of the community if it responds to what people need. And that differs, not only from population to population, but also between age or socioeconomic groups. This calls for a responsive public space that congregates different publics and is dynamically adaptable to different milieus. However, potentially speaking, by offering opportunities to gather and reflect, places acquire a meaning for people, and this meaning, associated to their appropriation, turns spaces into places. These qualities are therefore capable of establishing an emotional appropriation of space. The sense of belonging and the sense of attachment are diverse and become even more multifaceted when associated to other dimensions such as communities' values, norms, beliefs, ethnicity, and symbolic meanings (Iecovich, 2014).

If there are undesirables, this also means, of course, there are desirables, also called the healthy (Carmona, 2015), on the flip side. The healthy are those who speak on behalf of a large number of voices, for whom public spaces are made. With them all the pros and cons are identified, they also provide a broader perspective; one that favours sharing knowledge and expertise among stakeholders (Carmona, 2015). The articulation of such a normatively important "public" in placemaking is a key, even if implicit, of the planning endeavour, which results in the symbolic placing of sites. In reality, however, such collective practices are often hampered by an underlying notion of the public as a unified field of practice, a singular articulation of civil society.

The participation of all (desirable) stakeholders, thus involving a wide range of interests, is at the heart of novel forms of placemaking. Such actions legitimize a broader liberal model of construction and a coalition of interest groups. In the field of participatory science and consulting, placemaking has been supported by the concept of 'partnered governance'. This advocates promoting the inclusion of a wide range of stakeholders, particularly end-users, in a variety of tasks encompassed by placemaking and producing public spaces. If this will result in more inclusive and sensitive public spaces remains to be seen, but that is the basic idea of co-creation and partnered governance.

Eventually, this also communicates how policy makers and placemakers are experimenting with novel approaches and structures to transform the public realm. All is well and good, but what are the results when design is used to segregate people and prevent them from enjoying space?

THE UNDESIRABLES AND THE REGULATED ACCESS TO PUBLIC SPACES

Castells (1996: 410) aptly points out that "Space is the expression of society". If so, does the concept of equity have any relevance to the production of public spaces? To see places and their multiple meanings as a matter of political, as well as planning, social and cultural importance is not new, but is something that emerges cyclically when the liveability of the urban environment is in question. Backed by the previously discussed arguments, it is true to say that space encodes power, in the sense of who may use the public space, just as who may be involved in placemaking, which ultimately aims at creating better places. There are at least the above-mentioned quality factors that can contribute to the effective appropriation of spaces across barriers.

Public spaces are being challenged in a time of instability with pressures on society through political changes, economic instability, migration, refugees, etc. Climate change alone will mean more flows of refugees and more conflicts over natural resources. These immediate uncertainties, however, reflect the diverse ethnic, economic and cultural makeup of the urban society. A pluralistic urban society also needs "the plurality of public space", as Carr et al. (1992) state. The authors also highlight the fact, that one single public space does not serve all, but various groups; and that spaces differ in terms of physical shape, character, or the envisaged purpose or manner of use. If so, does this corroborate the assumption that there is "room" for all kinds of people in sharing spaces, even for the so-called undesirables? This is a tricky question, since equity implies there is strategic thinking behind it and an investment in following this strategy. Perhaps one of the reasons why equity and placemaking, no matter how well intended, often fail to lead significant societal and behavioural changes is that there is no recognition if there are no incentives for immediate personal gains. Hence, equity implies investment, and the quality of public spaces is not to be achieved without efforts. The use of spatial resources, and public spaces are a type of land use, to fund long term liveability is for nothing if cities do not manage to effectively reduce exclusion and division.

The difficulties increase the more the *public*, the target of placemaking, differs from decision-makers and from the above-mentioned normative principles and standards in culture, socioeconomic status, age, education and value systems. Low et al. (2005) state that currently cities are facing a different kind of threat to urban parks,[5] not only

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[5] Noting that urban parks are the most classic typology of public spaces; with the predominance of unsealed soil and greenery, they provide not only socio-cultural benefits but essential ecosystem services.

one of disuse (and to this we add overuse and misuse), but also one of patterns of design and management that exclude some people and reduce social and cultural diversity. The literature supports this view, and, as far as this reflection is concerned, it advocates that a wide range of people are prevented from benefitting from public spaces. In this regard we need to point out that most of the problems that culminate in undesirability (especially social exclusion) cannot be solved by urban design. They are a social issue, but one that becomes more visible and pressing with a growing number of marginalised people (undesirables) in the streets and parks. The situation is more alarming when these undesirables become an eyesore and are accused of "stealing the city" from the "orderly people" (Belina, 2003). Moreover, public perception conjures up undesirables' images of delinquency, loitering, etc.

Another aspect refers to the interaction between how planners "plan" the spaces and how people use and give life to them. Divergences in this relation, i.e. graffiti or loitering, are often identified as problems. Ensuring that such relational issues, between 'the city as it is designed and made by professionals' and 'the city as it is experienced and filled in by its residents', are taken into account at the earliest possible stage can help reduce problems. Therefore, it will be worth shedding light into the relation of public spaces between how they are planned by professionals and how they are experienced and enlivened by people. No doubt a greater diversity of people and lifestyles has implications for the sense of a place, and probably for its use, design and management. Appropriation of public spaces will not be homogeneous and permanent. The question is if such frugal interconnections between different dimensions will inspire and steer future policies.

In the C3Places' Lisbon case study, teenagers are the focus group. Often, young people belong to the group of undesirables, although teenagers are among public space's most frequent users. The presence of teenagers is often associated with anti-social behaviour, for instance as a result of noise made by skateboarding or playing music loudly. The case study will also serve the purpose of demonstrating the value of involving teenagers in placemaking, trying to direct their voice to policy recommendations. Co-creation as advocated by the Project can provide guidance.

The issues pertaining to teenagers' use of public space are diverse, complex and in many cases tied to particular local conditions, particular ages of young people, and specific situational problems (Batista et al., 2017). The public space provides them with the context where they can gather and interact away from adult power and supervision, exploring the freedom to be themselves. Conversely, despite this spatial need and the opportunity offered by public spaces, teenagers are, in different contexts, deprived of them and prevented from enjoying them. They can be excluded in multiple ways, as they are often viewed as a "polluting" presence (Wyn & White, 1997). Their behaviour in appropriating space is often loud and of a confrontational nature, disrupting the subtle rules of public behaviour and the delicate boundaries

that delimitate space use and configuration. This puts them on the front line of conflict over space (Malone, 2002). Conversely, young people have complained that adults interfere in their affairs without reason, and that authority figures treat them unfairly, especially in instances where they have not broken any laws or committed a crime.

Adolescents are excluded, not only from a free experience and use of space, but also from the process of placemaking, as adults are often entitled to act upon young people without their agreement. For this reason, the case study in Lisbon focused on the direct engagement in living labs of teenagers. The case study provided empirical evidence that when teenagers have the chance, they are able to discuss their needs and develop new opportunities for an overall improved experience of public spaces.

Even so, the future of placemaking needs to integrate an intergenerational mix and people from diverse cultures. Methods and means to protect all vulnerable members of the population need to be put in place to secure equity in the allocation and design of these spaces.

HOSTILE ARCHITECTURE AS ANSWER TO THE UNDESIRABLES

Public spaces are a right, not a privilege; people rely on them for daily activities (Francis, 2016). As discussed above, they are the places where social life occurs. To practice societal verification and protect the "orderly" from undesirables, different cities are denying some citizens basic rights of access, use, and enjoyment of public spaces. There is no doubt that the recognition of the benefits of public spaces for the liveability and competitiveness of cities is growing. Investment in public spaces has grown in recent decades in many cities. This evidences that quality public spaces found their "place" in policies and urban agendas. However, this widespread recognition raises the question whether the design of new spaces embraces cohesion and equity too, besides a function of embellishment.

Design features based on people's needs are important for the success of public spaces. To be vibrant and alive with people places need to be inviting; among the amenities are benches, greenery (trees, flowers, etc.), ease of transit use (walking, biking), and lighting to support comfort. Moreover, the call for more sustainability demands to incorporate nature back into the city, and public spaces are for many inhabitants the only place they have to connect with nature. On the flip side, the call for safety and surveillance challenges also designers, and this latter call is used to attempt to discourage undesirables from using public spaces and to avoid anti-social behaviour. The results are design answers, also called defensive design or hostile architecture, that put the use of public spaces in question. Hostile architecture is concerned with actions to make public space hostile and uninviting, and with adopting measures to deliberately exclude the unwanted. Figure 1 depicts some simple but

Fig. 1. Just a walk through the city, as here in Algés, in the Lisbon metropolitan area, reveals different hostile and uninviting measures to keep strollers away. Photos: Patrício, 2020.

effective examples. The act of making public spaces hostile, as discussed above, is of a cosmetic nature, and does not get to the root of the social problems that provoked it. Furthermore, Jock (2019) argues that what hostile architecture achieves after all is to make life even harder for those already struggling. This kind of design guidance can also unintentionally affect other *orderly* but vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and children, which cannot be the aim of any public policy.

Maybe the most visible act of hostility is the lack of investment in seating solutions. Whyte (1980) sets opportunities for seating and staying as one of the qualities that help draw users into the space and make public spaces more sociable. Benches are particularly important for older adults' social integration in their environment, as they create the opportunity to sit comfortably to observe and connect with others. Seating facilities also have a positive impact on the liveliness of commercial streets. Hostile architecture not only involves the lack of seating accommodation but also includes setting benches in rows and not in clusters. This does not encourage, for example, teenagers to have group conversations or homeless people to linger in public places. Anti-sit-lie devices are just as normative to people as traffic barriers are to the vehicular circulation they prevent.

Examples of lack of comfortable seating in newly developed public spaces include the waterfront development in Lisbon (Portugal) and the reuse of a parking area in Hannover (Germany). In Lisbon, the Ribeira das Naus-promenade (Fig. 2) is a favourite spot to appreciate the sunset along the River Tagus. But people search in vain for comfortable seating. Sure, the terraced riverbank can be used for seating, but the steps do not offer an adjusted ergonomic solution to the requirements of the elderly, for example. In Hannover, the abandonment of a parking area in the city centre gave birth to a new open space. The area, called Marstall (the former royal

Fig. 2: The Ribeira das Naus-promenade in Lisbon, since 2014 a terraced inclined plane made of yellowish sandstone, provides access to the Tagus and has become a new magnet for strollers – albeit without sitting facilities. Photo: Smaniotto 2015

stables), situated in the red-light district of Hannover, was completely redesigned between 2017-2018, as Fig 3 shows. The contemporary design is interesting as it sets flowerbeds as a measure against drug selling in the shadow of the parking lot. Drug dealing is used to justify the absolute absence of benches, not even around the new water games in the new square. In this part of the Marstall, maybe the new restaurant with its outdoor area played a role in the decision. Firstly, because the owners do not want competition from public benches, and secondly, they surely do not want people lingering for extended periods. However, after a public outcry, a bench was installed in the square. This wooden park bench doesn't match the design language of the place, with its striking appearance and modern materials. In a press release, the Council stated that seating opportunities where planned from the beginning.

Further examples worth noting briefly are directed against skateboarders. In Lyon (France), in the Jardin du Musée des Confluences, with an area of 24,000m² located at the confluence of the rivers Rhone and Saone, concrete blocks offer seating to admire a unique view of the rivers and of southern Lyon. But "pig's ears" deter unwanted skateboarding by eliminating the long smooth edge of the blocks that skaters seek (Fig. 4). In Lisbon, a new park was created in 2005 in an abandoned tramway workshop and became a honeypot in a neighbourhood with few open spaces. From dusk until late at night a meter high wall that separates the park from the street became a popular meeting-place for students and young people.

Fig.3: In Hannover a former car park transformed into square provides an attractive open space
in a difficult area, but people cannot stay long as no benches were planned for the area.
Photo: Smaniotto 2019

Fig. 4: Pig's ears deter unwanted skateboarding on concrete blocks
in the Jardin du Musée des Confluences, Lyon (France). Photo: Smaniotto, 2018.

Following a complaint lodged by the people living nearby, in 2016 the City Council
installed a triangular metallic structure to prevent people from sitting on this wall
(Fig. 5). In both cases, the municipalities considered more the prevention of users'
undesirable behaviour rather than facilitate the park appropriation.

Fig. 5: The metal triangle over the wall in the Jardim Arco do Cego, installed to prevent people from sitting on the wall and therefore from hanging out here. Photo: Patrício, 2020.

Another issue which is underpinned by the same principle is reported by Carmona et al. (2003). The authors mention an extreme example of a direct action aimed at keeping undesirable people away from public spaces. They reported the use of the electronic device Mosquito in the UK to keep teenagers away from particular places, as it emits irritating, high-pitched radio waves in a frequency to which teenagers are more sensitive than adults. These devices are used in parking lots or in front of shops to maintain teenagers (unknowingly) at a distance.

The present global security crisis, with the spread of terrorism acts, is giving rise to new threats on the public use of spaces. Anti-terror infrastructures aimed at preventing acts of terrorism also affect "orderly" users and partly prevent them from using a space. The changes around the Eiffel Tower in Paris are an unfortunate example, as evidenced by Fig. 6 evidences. Until few years ago, people could walk freely underneath the tower. The area is now walled, even of glasses, they prevent people from enjoying a pleasant view and just cross the Champs de Mars park.

These examples expose a central question that we face with undesirables and the publicness relocated. This evidences a narrow line between enabling, protecting and limiting the use of public spaces. The results of eviction processes are usually homogenization and domestication of places, or even to what Sorkin (1994) called the disneyfication of public space. More than the social and physical damage the hostile actions cause, is the fear of new events that can drive all these security actions and their extension. Changes in the urban public landscape will consequently

follow. The examples also show that design and architecture are powerful instruments, their success in terms of sociability depends on how they are used. They can create great places, where people feel safe and welcomed, or uninhabitable places that are not inviting, in a way that they cannot be an improvement towards a better quality of life.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Public spaces have always been a contested domain. Following the processes of social divide, which has created a split between legitimate and illegitimate groups of users, and between appropriate and inappropriate use of space, the answers of professionals through hostile architecture have perpetuated spatial segregation and fostered conflicts over public goods, while not providing sustainable solutions. Members of marginalised or vulnerable groups, like the homeless or teenagers, are frequently the targets of hostile architecture devices. Consequently, if we want to provide an adequate account of the actual production of public space, we will have to tackle both the political landscape that frames the nature of its social conflicts and the publicness of the open spaces that produce or mitigate social clashes.

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