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Gender, urban space, and the right to everyday life

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ABSTRACT

Gender remains a neglected focus for theory and practice in shaping cities. Given women's continuing economic and social marginalization and the prevalence of violence against women, how can this be the case? Despite several decades of feminist scholarship, dominant perspectives within the "the right to the city" literature pay little attention to how "rights" are gendered. In contrast, feminist and queer scholarship concerned with everyday life and the multiple spatial tactics of marginalized city dwellers reveal a more complex urban arena in which rights are negotiated or practiced. This article suggests that a fuller recognition of the contested publics that coexist within the contemporary city and the gendered mediation of everyday experiences could enable planners and policy makers to undertake more inclusive forms of intervention in urban space.

The feminist critique of urban theory and planning that developed in the 1970s demonstrated how urban planners have created gendered environments that are predominantly suited to the needs of men and the heteronormative family. As a direct response to this, explorations have been made of what a "nonsexist city" might look like and how cities might differ if they were designed equally for men and women (see, for example, Hayden, 1980). These remain important insights, but many questions raised remain underexplored.¹ Which accounts might help us to understand the ways in which women are able to access the city and the role of planning in supporting these processes? How can a focus upon the everyday aid us in understanding the gendered mediation of space? This article suggests that a greater engagement with everyday spatial practices provides critical insights into how claims to urban space and the exercise of rights are inherently gendered.

Despite the development of feminist planning scholarship, the integration of gendered perspectives within professional practice remains limited. One of the key barriers to more nuanced narratives is the continuing binary categorization of men and women. For Petra Doan this "tyranny of gender" (2010, p. 635) demonstrates how being gendered is not an innate, essentialized identity. Doan's work engages not only with how spaces are highly gendered but also how the gender binary is spatialized (see Doan, 2010, 2015). The recognition of "intersectionality" reveals the complexity of gendered experiences in tension with race, ethnicity, class, age, or sexuality (see Crenshaw, 1991; Frisch, 2015). We know that experiences of being gendered vary across places, contexts, and political regimes. Gender is continuously being remade at different scales, through national legislation, and changing life circumstances, thereby presenting different layers of complexity for coherent analysis. The city is gendered through multiple actions and experiences of its inhabitants.

Shifting patterns of gender relations also reflect the success of numerous political contestations and social movements to claim greater rights. Despite these evident advances, women continue to endure an unequal position in society: firstly, there is women's economic inequality in the labor market, along with the continuing burden of unpaid labor disproportionately falling on women (see Fraser, 2014; McDowell, 1983; Sayer, 2005); secondly there is women's underrepresentation

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across a range of political and leadership roles (see Durose, Combs, Eason, Gains, & Richardson, 2012; Trondal, Murdoch, & Geys, 2015); and thirdly, there is the persistence of widespread violence against women (see, for example, Sweet and Ortiz Escalante, 2010, 2014; Whitzman, Andrew, & Viswanath, 2014).

Though within planning there has been a participatory turn that emphasizes the importance of engaging with citizens, community influence within statutory planning processes remains limited. Planning can be understood as the set of institutional processes that mediates development decisions and is interrelated with policy approaches that articulate visions for future development patterns. Mechanisms exist to take into account gender and other groups, but there are dangers that “gender mainstreaming” has been used as a bureaucratic tool distanced from the rights agenda that emerged in the 1970s (see Sánchez de Madariaga & Roberts, 2013). Though the language of rights and equality was more common during the 1980s and early 1990s, the gendered dimensions of planning seem to have fallen down the agenda more recently (see Irschik & Kail, 2013). We can see a shift within policy away from politicized discussion about women’s rights toward the language of creating spaces that value diversity and inclusivity within the UK context. Yet there is little reflection on how planning policy contributes to supporting inclusivity. In emphasizing planning’s potential to promote rights I draw upon the work of Clara Irazábel and Claudia Huerta (2016), who emphasize planning’s critical pedagogic and ethical role “... to contribute to progressive struggles for greater rights to the city and socio-spatial justice for minoritized people” (p. 725).

There is an increasing mismatch between the ways in which everyday rights are framed within planning and the direct experiences of marginalized urban dwellers. To take one example, the London Plan, which is the city’s principal strategic planning document, contains language that is deliberately vague, discussing inclusivity, access, and safety in largely abstract terms while at the same time referring to how the city may take gender and other forms of difference into account. This is not an unrepresentative example of planning language that asserts a viewpoint from which spaces become positioned as an independent container within which we are enabled to live with difference. Yet spaces are not static sites but animated by physical characteristics, history, location, time of day or week, season, or the presence of other people (see Amin, 2013). Inclusivity, access, and safety are dynamically produced through space and negotiated in tandem with other people.

The urban scale itself has become increasingly important in attempts to promote progressive collective rights in the face of neoliberalism. A variety of both theoretical and activist-oriented perspectives, most notably the neo-Lefebvrian “right to the city,” have come to the fore as a means of reclaiming urban spaces. However, dominant scholarship within this field is underpinned by a patriarchal gender perspective (see Fenster [2005] and Vaiou [2014] for a critique). Turning our attention to how everyday life is negotiated can provide productive insights into the multiplicity of spatial practices that illuminate gendered experiences (see de Certeau, 1984).

Two interrelated arguments emerge: firstly, gender remains a pivotal concern for a critically engaged planning discourse that does not rely solely on the language of diversity and difference and, secondly, although significant contributions have been made to our understanding of the role and significance of gender in urban space, there remain important questions that have only been partially addressed. Though feminist debates have catalyzed new ways of thinking about gender and gender relations, the limitations of planning’s understanding of the complexity of gender militate against an extended conversation about the gendered and dynamic nature of space that might enable stronger linkages to feminist, antiracist, or queer scholarship. Given that feminism is not a homogenous critique or set of beliefs, what challenges are raised for our understanding of urban space and how might they connect to conceptions of rights as distinctively urban? Not explicitly feminist in outlook or thinking, the right to the city debate nonetheless provides a productive tension for considering how the discourse of urban rights has neglected their gendered nature.

Right(s) to the city?

Symptomatic of the neglect of gender within much urban theory is the influential recent debate over the reprise of neo-Lefebvrian discourses focused upon the right to the city. This has been a focus for contemporary concern with increasingly divided, restricted, and securitized urban spaces. The Lefebvrian perspective on the right to the city has become a rallying cry for attempts to counter the neoliberal impetus of urban policy making and the exclusionary dynamics of increasing socio-spatial segregation. We have witnessed activist movements such as Occupy claiming public space to highlight unequal access to the city. The emancipatory possibilities of reterritorialization away from the nation-state to that of the urban arena have also become a critical scale for political action. Nonetheless, we must exercise caution in downplaying national and international policy frameworks and coalitions as important sites of activism (see Nicholls & Vermeullen [2012] for a discussion in the context of immigration).

The writings of Lefebvre continue to influence predominantly Anglo American theorists to extend our understanding of how space as a social and historical set of processes is understood, constructed, lived, and perceived (Merrifield, 2006; see Shields, 1999; Soja, 1996). The political dimensions to Lefebvre's work have influenced the right to the city, in part, as a response to the oppressive effects of neoliberalism (see Brenner & Theodore, 2002). Lefebvre cannot be described as a feminist, yet his theoretical understandings of the social dynamics of space have clear implications for gender relations (Shields, 1999). Lefebvre's concern with the alienating impact of the modern city emphasized an increasing disconnection between urban inhabitants and their abilities to participate in the production of spaces. The right to the city offers a series of perspectives regarding the redemptive political potential of the urban experience. Nonetheless, contemporary urban theory that draws upon Lefebvre's work rarely develops a feminist or gendered understanding of space (notable exceptions are Fenster, 2005; McLeod, 1996; Vaiou & Lykogianni, 2006).

One of the principal Lefebvrian-inspired political theorists, Mark Purcell (2002) considers that the right to the city has transformative potential to reformulate power away from the state into the hands of citizens. Purcell (2014) does not ignore the gendered dimensions of city life, including state-led gender mainstreaming initiatives as materially beneficial practices, if not part of the right to the city movement. But within Lefebvre's desire for holistic understandings of life there is a move "to apprehend human life as complex whole and avoid reducing our understanding of experience to small fractions of life, such as class status, gender, race, income, consumer habits, marital status, and so on" (Purcell, 2014, p. 145). Such perspectives reflect the way in which many writers in articulating the right the city subsume gender within the urban citizenry rather than theorizing gender as a structuring dimension of peoples' identities.

Don Mitchell's (2003) influential work highlights both the problems and potential of public space as the site of emancipatory claim-making. Struggles over space reveal the implicit hierarchies, the ordering of space, the rules, and the exclusions in order to maintain particular visions of the orderly city. The concept of the public itself has relied upon the exclusion of different groups over time. Inclusion, for groups including women, is often gained through "concerted social struggle, demanding the right to be seen, to be heard and to directly influence state and society" (Mitchell, 2003, p. 132). Such struggles have been necessary because rights are not experienced in the abstract but have a spatial and material dimension. Rights are complex and multiscalar, mutually reinforcing neither inclusion nor exclusion. The realization of legal rights or protections is not experienced innately as if there were a direct correlation between legislation and everyday life. Rather, everyday life is a complex negotiation where the concepts and practices of citizenship, exclusions, and prejudice are experienced and coconstituted with other urban dwellers. Our rights are embodied and form the sites where assumptions are made about our subject positions. The valuing of some social groups over others is maintained through our interactions and access to differentiated spaces of the city (see Staeheli, Ehrkamp, Leitner, & Nagel, 2012).

The city is not necessarily a site where gender, race, or sexed bodies can enjoy the anonymity of the flâneur (see Rendell, 2002) but can also be the focus of (un)wanted attention. Within the articulations of everyday urban life, a shifting terrain of spatialization emerges where continuous forms of unspoken negotiation with other urban dwellers are worked through. Urban spaces are actively constituted through the spatial practices of different groups. Yet developing an understanding of the multiple users who may either be in conflict or create gendered patterns of exclusion is rarely the focus of planning attention, much less policy intervention.

The right to everyday life

For Lefebvre, there were contradictory notions of both the alienating and emancipatory possibilities of everyday life (see Lefebvre, 1991). However, Lefebvre's usage of the term *everyday life* encompasses more than our daily routines and extends to concerns with the effects of "banal and meaningless life" (Shields, 1999, p. 69) but still positions everyday life as "the site of authentic experience, of self, of the body and of engagement with others (Shields, 1999, p. 77). The potential of everyday life has also been explored by numerous urban theorists drawing upon the work of de Certeau. But there is a tension between conceptualizations of everyday day for proponents of Lefebvre and de Certeau (Goonewardena, 2008). For some urbanists, de Certeau overromanticizes the liberating potential of individual action and simplifies the operation of power as visible primarily through top-down planning visions (see Keith, 2003).

For de Certeau, conceptualizations of space and his focus upon everyday activities of the city as a site of ordinary political action, embodied activity, and emotion provide alternative insights that he contrasts to an interpretation of modernist planning as a static overview from above. In giving attention to walking, for example, we can observe both individual and collective modes of asserting rights within urban space. Though these are not the collective and political acts of the right to the city, de Certeau proposes that embodied everyday practices such as walking recover meaning and belonging in the world. He distinguishes those walking within the city as the "ordinary practitioners," to be contrasted with the planner, urbanist, and cartographer (de Certeau, 1984, p. 93). Rather than a fictive planning vision of the city, walking through the city becomes a series of acts full of meaning that destabilize the unified vision of place that emerges through planning visions. For de Certeau, "walking, wandering or window shopping" (p. 97) is part of a multitude of activities with meanings not obvious to the outside gaze. Walking is not analyzed in terms of efficient transport choices guided by the map's rationality but as a pleasurable or even political act:

Places are fragmentary and inward-turning histories, pasts that others are not allowed to read, accumulated times that can be unfolded but like stories held in reserve, remaining in an enigmatic state, symbolizations encysted in the pain or pleasure of the body. "I feel good here." The well-being under unexpressed in the language it appears in like a fleeting glimmer is a spatial practice. (de Certeau, 1984, p. 108)

Strategies and tactics are an important distinction in the work of de Certeau. Institutional power is distinguished from that temporarily wielded by city dwellers. He situates strategies within those institutions able to claim a "power of knowledge" (1984, p. 36) over a space and able to represent spaces in particular ways that suit their purposes. These privilege certain types of spatial relationships and demand a coherent mapping of space, with planning identified by de Certeau as an example of strategy. In contrast, tactics are the activities de Certeau describes as weak because their actions are piecemeal and momentary in contrast to strategy (de Certeau, 1984). For de Certeau, tactics are embedded within temporalities. Planning visions attempt to fix spaces and rationalize city spaces and are differentiated from the multiple lived experiences of the city. Instead of a vision of the city as a coherent knowable space, the walker is able to temporarily, at least, take over the spaces she or he moves through and imbue them with their own meanings, bringing past memories and present emotions with them. Rather than operating within fixed or static space, the walker dynamically inhabits it, shaping its qualities. For the moment it is his space filled with meaning or emotional

attachment he ascribes to it, and through repetitive use of space an embodied sense of belonging develops. For de Certeau these tactics are ways of claiming the city, resisting the planning gaze, moving down to the streets where the constant movement and interplay between urban dwellers creates meaning. Here is the sense of the city as an “immense social experience” (de Certeau, 1984, p. 103).

This concern with urban life as a site of micropolitics represents a critical part of de Certeau’s articulation of everyday life. A focus upon movement—primarily walking—provides an alternate more fluid sense of urban space. This sense of everyday life demands a fuller interpretation of women’s spatial and temporal experiences of the city. Vaiou and Lykogianni (2006) argue that though the neighborhood is a critical site for understanding women’s identities, it is sometimes overprivileged in analyses, leading to a neglect of the multiple spaces women occupy within the city. They argue that a fuller analysis of everyday life is central to illuminating multiple spatial practices that span women’s roles as workers, carers, and people enjoying leisure activities. Together these numerous spaces are where our rights are denied or removed, claimed, or asserted. The lack of attention to the everyday neglects how women’s grounded experiences directly influence “... their use and perception of the urban environment” (Vaiou, 1992, p. 248) and can be understood as different to men’s everyday life. “To this end, public issues need to be made out of the many practices considered too trivial or too private for urban analysis” (Vaiou, 1992, p. 259). If everyday life holds redemptive potential, then gendered everyday experiences require closer scrutiny in order to develop a richer insight into urban rights.

Everyday life can become understood as the mediator of rights underpinning the usage of urban space to its fullest extent. An assertion of urban rights is collectively negotiated through “... the users of the space who *actively* inhabit space in the course of their daily lives” (Purcell, 2014, p. 148, emphasis in original). Considering an active inhabitation of space is precisely the concern of feminist geographer Tovi Fenster (2005), who questions the lack of recognition within the right to the city of “how patriarchal power relations are the most affecting elements in abusing women’s right to the city in different ways to those of men” (p. 219). Her qualitative study of London and Jerusalem explores how women’s rights become restricted within both public and private space, thereby limiting feelings of belonging. Fenster (2005) turns to the everyday as a means of alerting us to how urban spaces becomes used and claimed by different groups as part of the “construction of belonging” (p. 223). These gendered practices restricted women’s ability to express their rights when they felt excluded from spaces at certain time periods by men. In contrast, she also finds that for mothers, routinized practices of moving through spaces as part of their caring duties within daily life, increased knowledge of these spaces acted to affirm their sense of belonging in the city.

The feminist writer Elizabeth Wilson (1991) has illuminated how claims to space in the early industrial city have been a process of transgression and negotiation where the right to equality has to become enacted as series of tactics in tension with others coexisting within space. There have been immense challenges for women and other groups seeking a place and public right to be within cities. A historical examination of sidewalks (pavements) reveals how they provide a space of micropolitics. “Daily acts on public sidewalks legitimize those who warrant basic respect, and, more fundamentally, those who comprise the public body and have a right to the city” (Loukaitou-Sideris & Ehrenfeucht, 2009, p. 86). Drawing upon a range of examples, Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucht (2009) demonstrate how hierarchies are subverted or challenged within the sidewalk. Here, the example of suffragettes shows how they recast sidewalks as political spaces and a means of reaching male audiences for their campaign. The scope for spatial tactics to challenge societal hierarchies is observable through understanding these acts as intersections where group-based rights overlap with individual acts of resistance. They provide more than a space for replication of existing inequalities but a site of resistance. The sidewalk becomes a more complex and potentially overlooked set of spaces revealed to be where “hierarchies are both upheld and challenged” (Loukaitou-Sideris & Ehrenfeucht, 2009, p. 86).

Recognizing the importance of enabling diverse groups to claim city spaces places responsibilities upon planners to trace the complexities of everyday experiences and map the dynamic qualities of “peopled” space (see Vaiou, 1992). The concept of *space claiming* emerges where the elements within particular spaces convey familiarity and security for certain religious or ethnic groups. A study in Brooklyn, for example, found that for Muslim women certain spaces were considered more hospitable if there was a mix of ethnic groups and families and places where they would see other women wearing the headscarf (Johnson & Miles, 2014). The perceived gendered and ethnic patterning of space complicates how rights or belonging are mediated in tension with other users of the city.

Toward a feminist reengagement with the practical realization of urban rights

It is clear that the everyday is an important but undertheorized space outside feminist scholarship. Here the multiple temporalities of space are revealed as contested sites for identity and rights. It is within the everyday that a complex set of spaces, feelings of belonging, and rights to the city can emerge or be challenged. Interactions within space can be seen to facilitate or hinder rights and shift planners’ perspectives. Here planners can learn from feminist projects designed to engage women’s experiences in using space to consider alternative possibilities. One project led by the Women’s Design Service in Bristol, for example, in the southwest of England, worked with women who were fearful of moving around their neighborhood due to the urban motorway (freeway) that bisected the area along with fear of men and young people in the park (see Women’s Design Service, 2004). Though physical barriers existed, it was fear of potential unwanted interactions that limited these women’s access to urban space. On one occasion when the women participants were involved in an audit, some of these young people asked the group what they were doing and a discussion ensued. The young people expressed surprise that the women were scared of them. Later on some of the women reported to the project worker that not only had they started to walk through this space more but that these young people would now greet them when they walked past, thereby increasing their feelings of belonging. Although this was a temporary change, the encounter revealed something about how fear can be productively challenged and the potential for dialogue about space between different users can coconstitute productive changes.

Though this Bristol example represented an unexpected positive encounter, it illustrates how a process of active engagement, using walking as a collaborative and political strategy, was pivotal in a small way to mediate a reconfiguration of emotion and fear within one locality. The work of Betsy Sweet and Sara Ortiz Escalante (2010) in Mexico, Spain, and the United States develops practices of community mapping where women consider how spaces are tied to “urban emotions” identifying different qualities of space including feelings of safety or fear (see Sweet, 2016, p. 121). These highly localized experiences can influence feelings of belonging or fear within daily lives. Using walking methodologies not only helps planners understand women’s everyday experiences but brings women together to safely map community assets or areas of concern as a way of integrating everyday life with rights (see Sweet & Ortiz Escalante, 2014).

Fear of violence is a particular concern to women, minorities, and LGBTQ communities. Recent work in remote sensing on crime in London has revealed innovative ways to understand the temporal and spatial dimensions of fear. Traditional crime surveys treat space in static ways, but fear of crime is not constantly experienced over large spaces but in specific locations and concentrated during specific times of the day or week (see Solymosi, Bowers, & Fujiyama, 2015). The authors developed a mobile phone app where fear of crime was reported within four different time periods, including morning and evening commutes, daytime, and nighttime. Findings show nuanced “fear of crime” maps and were able to point to some urban interventions, in one case moving a bus stop away from a pub whose patrons subjected those going home from a popular LGBTQ bar in north London to homophobic abuse (Solymosi, 2015). Though these do not tackle unequal rights directly, such projects demonstrate the temporal dimensions and the possibility of challenging discrimination through more intelligent data collection and interpretation initiatives.

These challenges are not fully within the power of planning to solve. However, planners as mediators can play a critical role within the urban agenda emphasizing the spatial dimensions of rights. In the related field of transport, a recent project by the British Transport Police in London provides an example of the value of engaging with a feminist perspective in investigating and challenging harassment on the city's public transportation network. Project Guardian was established in London between the police force and Transport for London, following the annual Transport for London (2014) *Safety and Security Survey* findings that 15% of women had been sexually harassed when using public transport in London. The vast majority surveyed did not report it because they did not think it would be taken seriously. Project Guardian (n.d.) was established to both increase reporting of offenses and highlight the important right that women have to use public transportation free from harassment. The project is advised by the feminist organizations, The Everyday Sexism Project, End Violence against Women Coalition, and Hollaback London, with a clear focus on empowerment of women and police monitoring of unwanted sexual behavior.

Project Guardian demonstrates the necessity of new approaches through its incorporation of women's experiences along with advisors from feminist organizations, trained police officers, and station staff and a commitment to prosecution to enforce rights when they are potentially breached. Affirming the existence of harassment as a structural issue facilitated through aspects of the transportation network promotes an agenda whereby measures are taken to assert women's right to be in public space. Travelling, in this context, is reframed as a politicized practice connected with gendered conceptions of urban rights.

A second planning consideration, and one that is more related to traditional forms of planning, is the varying physiological needs of women. In the UK, the only full-time nongovernmental organization working specifically on feminist planning, the London-based Women's Design Service, was established to provide a feminist response to the lack of attention to gendered difference in architecture and planning. The organization had a range of important inputs into gender difference in planning working around housing, community facilities, and public toilets. Work focused on campaigning for material changes and also increasing the participation of women within planning debates. A former director of the Women's Design Service interviewed in 2015 emphasized how the political dimensions of creating seemingly basic services are often forgotten as they move into mainstream policy:

We campaigned to get spaces for buggies [strollers] on buses. We campaigned to get nappy [diaper] changing facilities in public toilets. Before that women had to change their babies on the floor in the toilets.

Here the physical facilities that women as primary care givers needed in order to be in the city were framed as political fights to change urban space to accommodate women, who have often had primarily responsible for childcare.

Access to public toilets is a gendered consideration. In early industrial cities, women's toilets have been the subject of intense contestation with men organizing to prohibit them (see Flanagan, 2014).² Access to toilets outside the home is important to women, particularly because women need to urinate more frequently (see Mueller et al., 2005). Many women menstruate and need regular access to toilet facilities. Thus, sufficient public and well-maintained toilets provide opportunities for women to spend greater amounts of time walking or moving within the city. Quasipublic spaces such as department stores and malls provide toilets and other women-friendly amenities, but these are more accessible to wealthier socioeconomic groups. Clara Greed (2008) notes that toilets are primarily designed by men but that they do not necessarily understand gendered toilet needs. In addition, men have many more toilet facilities, including usage of the street. Yet research shows that there is a huge decline in the number of public toilets. Although reliable data are hard to find, a 10% decline was reported in London between 2000 and 2004, and the local state no longer has a statutory duty to provide public toilets (see Knight, 2015).

A third consideration draws upon LGBTQ planning and the importance of recognizing queer spaces within the urban fabric of the city. The contributions of LGBTQ communities are often

marginalized and there is limited public recognition of queer spaces. However, queer spaces are important sites to also build campaigns for community rights. Doan and Higgins (2011) highlight the specific threats that gentrification has when queer spaces and neighborhoods are displaced. One of these potential impacts is a collective forgetting of these important LGBTQ spaces within the city fabric. They argue that historic preservation policies can be deployed, with one initiative being to “mark the location of gay landmarks” (Doan & Higgins, 2011, p. 16). Honoring and recognizing the different groups that constitute urban space are important in retelling the city through multiple narratives and reaffirming rights.

In a similar vein, we can ask how cities reflect the contribution of women to their creation. Though this article has focused upon the importance of everyday tactics, moments of claiming space offer important insights. Street protests such as “Slutwalk” or “Take back the night” have asserted the temporal dimensions of women’s right to be in public space. Women challenging the norms of public space are powerful reminders of how the choreography of the city can restrict freedom of movement within cities. These acts of disruption can be nurtured within city spaces through the support of public officials and planners. City leadership can support cultural and political initiatives that promote the gendered rights of urban dwellers.

A feminist critique of the right to the city demonstrates that though great gains have been made in gender equality, sexual discrimination persists within everyday life. Moving toward a greater analysis of the multitude of gendered spatial tactics provides opportunities to practically engage with the struggle for rights through an analysis of varying spatial tactics. A more dynamic mapping of spaces and the understanding that spaces cannot be equally inclusive at all times might facilitate the creation of more diverse spaces that suit different urban dwellers’ needs. However, refocusing upon everyday tactics sheds light on how planning practices might learn to consider space through the prism of everyday life. Through the everyday spheres of life, the gendered and patriarchal nature of cities is more readily revealed and the agency of city dwellers operates to challenge it.

New modes of thinking signaled within the work of philosopher Luce Irigaray raise further questions. Both the right to the city and practices of everyday life reveal tensions arising from static views of city space. Irigaray raises questions regarding not only gender difference but also ideas of objectivity and rationality. Her work explores the concept of being different but equal (1985). For Irigaray, Eurocentric culture and philosophy is based on one form of objectivity, and gender is an essentialist distinction that favors the male. Women are primarily understood in a binary relationship to men; their difference is a lack in contrast to the completeness of men. The question of equality between genders is an impossibility for her as she rejects the concept of sameness and equality suggesting that such categories rely on sexual difference and thus women are always rendered in a subordinate position, as if equality with men were possible when they are, in fact, different (see Irigaray, 1985).

The architectural theorist Elizabeth Grosz (2013), drawing upon Irigaray, explains that “[s]exual difference is not only a concept of interest to women, to feminists, to activists involved in women’s struggles: rather Irigaray’s claim is stronger—that sexual difference is the most significant philosophical concept, the most significant thought, issue, idea of our age” (p. 176). Current conceptions of difference presuppose binary categorizations where gender and other forms of difference must be placed in opposition or complementary relationship, one to the other. Thus, in producing urban space, gendered spaces or needs are seen to be special accommodation rather than a recognition of the limited conceptualization of difference (Vaiou, 2014). A right to everyday life emphasizes how theories that subsume gendered experiences within an attempt to articulate universal rights underestimate the complexities of difference.

Conclusions

Everyday lived spaces are neglected as political sites, but a closer examination reveals their importance to building belonging and rights. In these often overlooked spaces we can recognize processes

of negotiation, challenge, or appropriation that mediate everyday spatial practices and where gender relations are discursively created. Debates surrounding belonging within the city have sought to reinvigorate and reclaim urban life as a source for political inclusion and action in very different ways, pointing toward an inhabitation and activation of belonging through various forms of movement within space.

The right to the city discourse offers a range of perspectives on reclaiming the city as a site of public political action for urban dwellers. Yet it is through attention to the centrality of everyday actions to engender belonging within the city that rights are undermined through unequal experiences of the city in tension with others (Fenster, 2005). These issues are complex and multifaceted, but planning has a critical contribution to make to support women in being able to access the city. Through developing frameworks that draw more directly upon women's experiences and spatial tactics, we can develop more fine-grained understandings and therefore ways to support gendered and grounded notions of everyday rights. Learning from these city dwellers we can better understand how seemingly mundane activities and spaces support a sense of belonging.

Engaging with the negotiation of rights and gender in planning cannot provide fixed statements or checklists of what should be done. Implementation of such policies may become disconnected from the fundamental political questions that created an imperative for action. A gendered engagement with rights discourses emphasizes that much more caution is needed regarding the redemptive possibility of the right to the city as currently theorized. There are a myriad of encounters within the city that can empower and exclude. Spatial practices and an attention to the right for everyday life allude to a potential conversation about how we perceive dwelling within the city as a political act. Are there ways in which claims over space or inclusive spaces can be forged through more dynamic representations of space? Grosz (1994, 2013), along with other feminists, develops Irigaray's concerns with the "lived body" (Davis, 1981), contending that we must start to recover perspectives engaging with bodies as distinctly different and beyond the binaries of gender, reason and irrationality, with the potential to reevaluate how spaces emerge (Moore Milroy, 2000).

The challenges raised by feminist scholars from the 1970s onwards remain salient. Women still earn less on average, are more likely to do most of the domestic chores, and take greater responsibility for childcare. Public transportation, walking, and accessibility still disproportionately impact women. A right to everyday life is built up from ordinary practices and experiences of life. An examination of seemingly mundane practices poses challenges for planners. Instead of the agora, the public square, or other civic locations more usually associated with the right to the city, the everyday and the unmapped gain importance. These quotidian spaces, such as pedestrian walkways and underpasses, public restrooms, and bus stops are often overlooked within planning but exist as sites of everyday life constituted by the people constantly moving through them. A greater range of urban spaces is worthy of attention. Such studies may point toward other ways of analyzing space that give greater attention to embodied spatial practices.

The continuing neglect of gendered and embodied rights to everyday life reveals the limits of the right to the city as conventionally understood. If we consider multiple rights to the city and recognize the contested publics that coexist within the city and their spatial tactics, there may be more productive ways to incorporate divergent experiences within planning practices. A reengagement within the multiple uses of space within a framework that is attentive to difference can provide potential to sustain a fuller sense of gendered rights to everyday life.

Notes

1. The recent diversification of scholarship on gender and space reflects the significant shift within feminism during the 1990s and early 2000s away from questions of redistribution and state intervention toward socio-cultural questions framed around identity (see Fraser, 2014). Equally significant is the critique of second-wave feminist thinking led by African American and minority scholars challenging the Whiteness of the feminist

movement and its lack of engagement with the intersections of race, class, and gender, including the distinctive histories of African American women (see Anthias & Yuval Davis, 1993; Davis, 1981; Hill Collins, 2000; hooks, 2000).

2. Though there is a growing body of work dealing with sanitation in the Global South that emphasizes patriarchal relations as complicating women's experiences. Women risk both the threat of sexual violence in using public or private toilets or open space yet at the same time feel that it is immodest to defecate in the open, thereby constrained by "social norms of modesty" (see Desai, McFarlane, & Graham, 2014, p. 108). In the Western context there has been limited engagement with these themes. A notable exception is the long-standing work of planning academic Clara Greed (2002), who has engaged with both the theoretical and policy dimensions of toilet provision in urban space. Architectural historians such as Maureen Flanagan (2014) have revealed the histories of public toilets and the bathroom in cities such as London, Dublin, and Chicago. Flanagan (2014) reminds us that men saw women as unruly interlopers in the early industrial city.

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