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Edited by the The Romanian Society for Feminist Analyses AnA, the journal intends to open conversations among eastern and non-eastern feminist researchers on the situated nature of their feminism(s) and to encourage creative and critical feminist debates across multiple axes of signification such as gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, ethnicity, religion etc.

The journal publishes studies, position papers, case studies, viewpoints, book reviews from practitioners of all grades and professions, academics and other specialists on the broad spectrum of gender and feminist studies.

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EDITORIAL: (Non) Sexist Cities - Mapping a New area of Research for Gender Studies in Romania

Laura Grünberg
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This summer at the University Square (one of the most important places in Bucharest) an ambiguous visual message was given to all those travelling in the area. On one side of the boulevard, a new unexpected statue was implanted overnight (“The Countess”, Ileana Oancea -part of an urban art project, the statue travelled in many other places in the city). It was placed in between other four famous important male figures of the Romanian history and culture. Fragile - made up of porcelain (or at least suggesting this), stabbed, the Countess seems to demand ‘the right to the city’, the right to be part of the collective memory of Bucharest. At the same time, on the other side of the same boulevard, a huge banner celebrating 150 years of existence of the University of Bucharest was displayed presenting nine famous Romanian people that graduated over time this prestigious institution-among which there was no woman.

I simply started wondering – is Bucharest a European capital that pays due attention to issues of inclusion, diversity, equality? Is Bucharest a sexist, homophobe, transphobe or racist city? Is it a safe city for all? Why so few women are represented in urban art? Why so few streets have names of women personalities? Do we know enough
about street harassment in the city? At that moment, I realized that in Romania, although research in the area of Gender Studies is quite developed, the gender dimension of the city was not investigated at all.

I was not the only one observing this omission from the gender sensitive agenda of research especially in Romania. Together with a group of gender experts we decided to do something about it. Consequently, within our women NGO (the Romanian Society for Feminist Analysis AnA) we designed a project on “Urban Discriminations. Gender Sensitive Active Citizenship Program”, obtained support from SEE Grants and start looking, through gender lens, at Bucharest¹. The program offered: (i) a model of active informed online and offline citizenship - concrete instruments for people’s civic involvement in the spirit of tolerance, social equity and inclusive democracy (online platform, street actions, lobby for naming a street, park or building under construction with the name of a feminine personality, etc.); (ii) a model of integrated treatment of issues of gender segregation and discrimination, by an interdisciplinary approach to the issues and by implication in the activities (flash mob, art exhibition etc.) of diverse category of people. We collaborated closely with Front Association, an NGO with large experience in the area of feminist activism.

We also launched this special issue of our Journal for Gender and Feminist Studies -AnAlize dedicated to the topic of “Genders, Diversity and Urban Space”, hoping to increase awareness and knowledge on the importance of the way cities are talking about their citizens.

Each place corresponds and defines a certain cultural, political, economic and historical context. Any city, with its spaces, places, monuments, traditions, inherits a past - a collective memory about its people and builds up a future - a set of aspirations and values about what its inhabitants can and may do in their multidimensional existence.

**Urban space is a social institution** that defines and models human interactions, delineating each of us as individual and as citizen, as man and woman, as young or aged, minority or majority. Urban architecture, urban signalectics, urban language, the visual identity of a place, the organization of the city and its surveillance mechanisms, its outdoor publicity, its patterned relations among various social groups, are just a few mechanisms through which urban structures and practices regulate human relations

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¹ For more details on the project please visit its online platform: [www.discriminari-urbane.ro](http://www.discriminari-urbane.ro) and the facebook [https://www.facebook.com/DiscriminariUrbane](https://www.facebook.com/DiscriminariUrbane)
and interactions and take (or not) into consideration issues of diversity, inclusion, violence, freedom, human rights.

**Urban space is also deeply gendered.** The increasingly diverse and transnational character of urban landscapes invites a rethinking of the relation between gender, identity and urban space. The way it is thought, planned, built, organized, lived, who is symbolically visible and invisible within its premises and how one or the other is *made* by the city either important or anonymous, who has the power of decision over the city, all these aspects give important information about the gendered roles, relations and practices, about the explicit and implicit power negotiation between its women and men, about mentalities and equal opportunities policies.

Identifying what a **sexist or non-sexist city** (Greed, 1994) would mean and look like is a complex endeavor undertaken quite recently in the area of Gender Studies. It refers in fact to **women's right to the city**. It means, as Carolyn Whitzman thoroughly has analyzed, looking at the right to mobility - the right to belong anywhere in the city; at the fact the economically disadvantaged women are more likely to do more walking and use public transportation - so depending much more on the quality and safety of this kind of travelling. It means also looking, from a feminist intersectional perspective, at what is usually called “**inclusive cities**” and notice that in fact, many cities are not as inclusive as it seems because of the deliberate emphasis on an often paternalistic and extreme notion of ‘safety’ (increased policing, ubiquitous surveillance, and even total exclusion of certain groups of people from participating in public life), because the lack of clean and better lighting in train stations, bus shelters, and underpasses or because of not well-maintained public toilets for women. Inclusive cities should probably emphasize more an engagement with and even the embrace of risk. Women’s right to the city means also **the right to undertake risk** - an experience that involves encounters with strangers, it means that women can sit alone in parks, can walk alone without fear but they are allowed to be serendipitous and be lost without fear or repercussion. Investigating a non-sexist city means also looking at **creative cities** - in terms of policies and practices undertaken and analyze how citizens, decision makers, activists, artists engage in performative interventions to “trouble”, as J. Butler would say, the exclusionary production of urban spaces (Whitzman, 2013).

For the special issue of our journal we invited articles from a variety of fields such as sociology, architecture, urbanism, arts, history, anthropology, political sciences,
feminism etc., asking potential authors to reflect, from interdisciplinary perspectives, on themes such as¹:

- How the concepts of gender and space have been conceptualized so far within the feminist thought?
- What signs of sexism, racism, homophobia, ableism can be identified in public spaces?
- The dynamics (in time and space) of gender discourses of the cities.
- How marginalizing or even exclusion of women or men from the public space takes place at the level of daily practices (e.g.: street sexual harassment or hate speech).
- How gender unfriendly planning of the urban space (e.g.: lack of facilities for old and disabled people, of accessible/properly equipped toilets for parents with babies or insufficient green areas and parks) increase/decrease the quality of life for some.
- What do outdoor/urban advertisements say about women and men?
- What are the gendered messages of urban art (stencils, graffiti etc.)?
- What historical and cultural narratives are promoted by the public space (street denominations, building/ monuments/metro stations/market places names, urban art etc.) and how they contribute (or not) to the empowerment of women.
- What kind of urban physical, functional and symbolic oppressive elements can be identified, elements that obstruct women's self-esteem (which women in particular?), and how these barriers can be removed for offering alternative narratives to the dominant ones.
- Is public space friendly towards women’ activism?
- How friendly is the city in relation to “other” genders?
- Who is visible, important or on the contrary marginalized, ignored, anonymous in the city? Why?
- How would a gender friendly city look like?
- What is an inclusive city, a democratic city, a creative city, a non-sexist city?

Although we did not succeed in having a true interdisciplinary perspective, we consider we are able to offer a set of interesting approaches to the topic. We are most grateful for the invited paper prepared and offered to us by Professor Helen Jarvis from New Castle University, U.K., a well-known expert in the area of urban social geography and gender studies. She offers a substantial overview on theoretical approaches in the

¹ For developing the list of themes proposed for reflections we took inspiration initially from (Lada, 2009).
field and argues that “the sexist city should be reconceived as a ‘place to think with’: to
do this, discussion turns first to a scale of inter-personal imagination associated with
intentional egalitarian communities of practice; then to the transformative role of
feminist teaching and learning. In this sense, the topic in question is as much about the
nature of transformation, as a paradigmatic process of thinking differently, ...., as it is
about the phenomenon of urban space being constructed and segregated by gendered
bodies and power relations of domination and subordination” (Transforming the Sexist
City: Non-sexist communities of practice).

As a follow up of her involvement in the research component of the project that
focused on urban discriminations in Bucharest (briefly introduced in the beginning of
this article), Diana Neaga presents an in depth gender sensitive case study focused on
one of the major Square area in Bucharest - Piața Universității (Doing and Undoing Gender
in Urban Spaces. The University Square Bucharest).

Manta Adina Tatiana focuses in her article on bicycle riding, pinpointing to
various interesting gender specificities within this activity (Ridding the city - Gender and
mobility practices in urban context).

Oana Crusmac proposes a pertinent discussion about deliberation concerning
civil partnership (Exclusion and Deliberative Democracy. A Brief Case Study on Romanian
Deliberation regarding the Civil Partnership).

Gender analysis of the streets is developed in two other articles. Bruno Puccineli
from Sao Paolo, offers a discussion from the perspective of the masculine characteristics
of streets (Masculine bent street: sexualities, real estate market and masculinities) and
Ana Mizil, investigates streets in an area of Bucharest by looking at toponymy-at street
naming mechanisms and also to the importance and relevance of subjective biography
((Re) Naming Streets in Contemporary Bucharest: From Power Distribution to Subjective
Biography).

Taking an intersectional perspective and approaching cities from the
multiperspectives of genders, Elena Stanciu talks about the complex relation of queer
identities with the urban spaces (Urban Space and Queer Identities) and Gabriela
Ghinea and Elena Manea analyse some of the constrains and practices encountered in
the process of space appropriation for the LGBT community in Bucharest (LGBT
Community - Constraints and Practices of Space Appropriation in Bucharest).
I believe that, beyond differences, between all articles, there is mutual agreement: the city is the actual expression of its makers’ values, hopes, and worries. Maybe for a long period of time women of various ages, races, ethnicities, sexual orientations have not been true makers of their cities. But isn’t the case today anymore. Today our cities should permanently recreate and reinvent themselves in order to better reflect the needs, aspirations, and fulfilments of its inhabitants – including women. We live in a new era - so we urgently need new urban stories reflecting these new realities. That means stories framed by gender too!

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Transforming the Sexist City: Non-Sexist Communities of Practice
(invited paper)

Helen Jarvis
Newcastle University, United Kingdom

Introduction

Walk around any city in the world and you will observe well entrenched patriarchal systems etched deep into the urban fabric. Monumental architecture and statues to the ‘founding fathers’ often provide the most immediate testimony to the historic domination of a wealthy white, male ruling elite (Jarvis et al. 2009). Yet, the sexist city is not simply the legacy of a bygone era and, paradoxically, it is harder to ‘read’ than is at first suggested from this monumental scale. The depth and extent of this sexism can be difficult to discern, not because the evidence is subtle or hidden but instead because it is everywhere routinely normalized and, by the same token, rendered of little account (Bondi 1998). Unravelling this paradox opens up space, not only for critical feminist enquiry, but also for niche demonstration intentional communities of practice and progressive feminist teaching. Rather than to concede a ‘hopeless’ legacy of patriarchy, this paper argues that direct engagement with the sexist city, through field-based epistemologies and methodologies, provides the ideal stimulus for transformation. Furthermore, it is argued that transformation has to be understood in a more nuanced way than is usually the case, beyond opposition, as a combined processes of resisting, imagining, feeling, reflecting and acting mindfully around patriarchy and prejudice. For any progressive transformation to effect change, such as to incubate gender mainstreaming and inclusive urban development, there must be combined critical and creative thought and practice.

The following discussion introduces this intertwining of resistance and reimagining through a utopian method of thinking differently about, and envisioning, alternative urban futures. This challenges the tendency in orthodox urban studies to neglect the role of women and gender, where the focus is on ‘top down’ global neoliberal narratives, building instead on a recent resurgence of interest in the social and political spaces of everyday life and a revival of citizenship in civil society. New forms of citizenship coincide with diverse expressions of direct action including practices
associated with community-led urban regeneration (Isin 2002: 265). In this context it is necessary but not sufficient to call attention to the contested terrains of women’s claims-making in ‘rights to the city’ urban social movements (Staeheli 2008). Additional theorizing needs to draw on a hopeful urban imaginary that translates strategies of resistance into an actually existing alternative practices and realities. This paper consequently argues that the sexist city should be reconceived as a ‘place to think with’: to do this, discussion turns first to a scale of inter-personal imagination associated with intentional egalitarian communities of practice; then to the transformative role of feminist teaching and learning. In this sense, the topic in question is as much about the nature of transformation, as a paradigmatic process of thinking differently, or ‘otherwise’ (Levitas 2013), as it is about the phenomenon of urban space being constructed and segregated by gendered bodies and power relations of domination and subordination.

This paper is structured in three parts. The first part introduces a well-rehearsed critique of the sexist city. This illustrates not only the enduring legacy of androcentric urbanism but also how this persists in the commercial exploitation of gendered and sexed bodies in contemporary urban public space, such as through sexist imagery and fear of sexually motivated violence (Rosewarne 2007). For example, findings from the International Violence Against Women Survey (IVAWS) show that violence against women remains prevalent in every country studied and among all age and socio-economic groups of women: sexual violence tends to occur with the same or greater frequency as physical violence (Whitzman et al. 2013: 7). These observations are qualified by recognition of the valuable work underway in a number of progressive (women’s) planning networks and urban social movements claiming rights to the city (Staeheli et al. 2013; Jarvis et al. 2009: 291). The second part addresses an identified gap in the literature on the sexist city by first imagining and enacting what a non-sexist community of practice might look and feel like on the ground. The ‘hopeful’ power of transformation is suggested in two interdependent scales of action represented as intertwined threads of thought and practice; first through niche demonstration projects of intentional egalitarian community (Seyfang 2010; Wenger and Synyder 2000); second with the role of education, notably feminist teaching and learning and the significance of critical scholarship that motivates and drives all the other transformation processes. The paper concludes with a suggested agenda for continuing research at the interface of cities, gender and transformation.
The sexist city

Historically the planning and development of cities has derived from a supremely masculinized belief system that emphasizes the male-dominated sectors of economic activity in the city and elsewhere. This legacy of struggle over space and representation, between the masculine City-as-Citadel and feminine City-as-Garden, dates back to the Platonic ideals of Grecian philosophy and even further, to the ancient city-forms of the Middle East (Akkerman 2006). While social and material structures of patriarchy are shown to persist, we are also reminded from the utopian studies literature that these are paradigmatic struggles, including imaginary accounts of the ideal city, rather than a polarised 'battle of the sexes'. Thus, according to Akkerman 2013: 733) in Book V of the Republic, Plato advocates equality for women by implying a role for women in the ‘upper echelon’ ‘guardian class' while at the same time understanding ‘idealised’ femininity and masculinity as essentially determined by a masculine structure to the cosmos. Plato opens up a space for thinking about equality while at the same time explaining and justifying a sex-segregated hierarchy of intellectual and political elites as essentially given. Similarly, in his fabled island of Utopia, Thomas More's (1516) description of 'a city of open spaces rather than mere buildings' with 'communalism and altruism' appears to modify the effects of a ruling hierarchy, applying a hopeful feminist imaginary, while maintaining an otherwise structural account of male domination (Akkerman 2013: 734).

A tendency to contrast the positive science of a rational urban order against a cosy rural idyll frames the anti-urban bias identified in classical urban sociology. This way, for Georg Simmel the alienating 'logic' of capitalism and patriarchy arouses yearning for a lost, more harmonious rural past which, like More's Utopia, hints at a feminist critique while failing to enact a politics of social transformation. This binary conception has been heavily criticised by feminist scholars not only for the assumptions of a masculinist ontology but also for the way it fails to acknowledge the tenacity and powerful ties of working-class industrial communities (McDowell 1999: 100). We have come to associate this tenacity with the ‘weapons of the weak’ (Scott 1985) of creative coping. At the same time, these classical utopian paradigms inspire movement toward urban social change. Thus we find aspects of contrast theory in the otherwise enlightened Garden Cities movement and in the philosophy of its founder Ebenezer...
Howard who spoke out against the pollution, congestion and social dislocation of the modern industrial city.

It is nevertheless crucial to recognise that the official account of urban studies has been constructed as history, overpowering herstory. Ebenezer Howard’s vision of inclusive urban design, for example, was directly inspired by the socialist feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Yet Gilman’s intervention remains largely unacknowledged. Due to his male privilege and his architectural training, Howard was able to exploit Gilman’s ideas in the construction of his Garden Cities and elaborated on them through influential publications. By contrast Charlotte Perkins Gilman achieved limited impact when she published *The Man-Made World or Our Androcentric Culture* in 1911, and *Herland* in 1915. Ultimately her ideas inspired a range of utopian experiments in urban design, including ‘stripped down’ living quarters supplemented by central kitchens, family hotels and serviced blocks as well as examples from around the world of more collective, ideological and matriarchal communities, including the cohousing concept that has attracted popular interest since the 1970s (Roberts 1991; Fromm 1991; Fromm 2000). Thus, Gilman’s critique of androcentrism opened up space for thinking creatively about alternative ways of living.

Alongside the suggestion that utopian ideals have reflected critically on hegemonic masculinities in the construction of, and writing about, cities; it can also be observed that critical and creative thinking has surfaced in a widespread turn from ‘macro’ to more ‘micro’ methods and fields of research interest. From the early twentieth century this took the form of street-level ethnographies that drew attention to everyday social interactions and encounters in urban public life. The classical sociology of Ferdinand Tönnies, for example, emphasised the qualitative significance of close knit associations of ‘gemeinschaft’ (community), contrasting these with the ‘gesellschaft’ (alienation) of the crowded city street. George Simmel, a contemporary of Tönnies, further conceptualised this scale of inclusive belonging by recognising the need for playful, creative association. Simmel pointed to the universal occurrence in human development of a sociable pleasure in the physical company of others (what he calls Geselligkeit) that could be further deepened through social awareness and empathy. To Simmel, the virtue of Geselligkeit is that engagement runs deep, beyond fleeting impressions. Nevertheless, at this time urban public life was typically defined by a distinctly masculine urbane sensibility in the figure of the flâneur. As John Rennie Short
(2006: 39) reminds us, the voyeuristic flâneur was quite specifically a *gentleman* stroller of the city. Accordingly, Elizabeth Wilson (1995: 65) observes that the flâneur ‘represents men’s visual and voyeuristic mastery over women, (his) freedom to wander at will through the city is essentially a masculine freedom’.

The early industrial European and North American cities were constructed to a large extent through clear architectural distinctions between residential areas and sites of industry, commerce and government. Residential areas were spatially separated, designed for (not by) women as the domain in which ‘respectable women’ were expected to display feminine skills of home-making - subject to the authority of the husband. Architects and planners were complicit in this segregation by the way that they ‘kept women in their place’ through comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances that were variously hostile and insensitive to women’s needs (Knox and Pinch 2006: 140). Marion Roberts (1991: 6) maintains that cities remain quite literally ‘man-made’ because of a historically entrenched mix of state policy and cultural expectations regarding family life, gender relations, public health and motherhood. Even in the 21st century, it can be argued that male-bias remains endemic to Euro-American cities because the urban construction professions are dominated by middle class white men.

Research by the UK Centre for Education in the Built Environment, while 38 per cent of students accepted onto architecture courses are female, women make up only 15% of architects practising the profession five years after graduation (CEBE 2006: 9). The persistence of the problem is revealed in UK government data from the Architects Registration Board: the proportion of women making up the profession’s registered architects dropped from 28% in January 2009 to 21% in December 2011 (Architects Journal, 2012). Poor retention is widely attributed to an uncompromising studio culture which promotes personal sacrifice and commitment to the project through late nights, long working hours and the promotion of conflict through individual competitiveness. This echoes a similar ‘always on’ culture of long working hours in male-dominated digital media career trajectories (Jarvis and Pratt 2006). Architectural practice by necessity interacts with the cultures of other professions within the building industry, and is influenced by normative attitudes to a host of issues, including women in practice (Salter et al., 2012: 5).
Towards inclusive infrastructures of daily life

It is illuminating to consider the urban bias that underscores the pursuit of modernity, and yearning for a more harmonious rural past, alongside the post-industrial proliferation of new media technologies and the apparently futile quest for ‘balance’ between home, work and family life. Issues of ‘balance’ have been addressed in urban studies literature with reference to the rise of a network society (Castells 1996) whereby new information and communication technologies allow virtual or time-shifted transactions to replace inter-personal interactions. In theory it is possible to squeeze more ‘productive’ activity into each working day (Schor 1992). From a time-geographical perspective, Davies (2001) argues that emphasis on time as a quantity-based resource (equally available to all as a measure of the calendar or clock) and space as a gender-neutral, fearless dimension, obscures important social processes that explain why cities remain gendered in their construction and spatial arrangement resides with the (false) separation of discrete functions of production, consumption and social reproduction. Social reproduction covers all those activities that are fundamental to the continued maintenance of human life (subsequent generations) and social existence. What it actually takes to reproduce cities and daily life goes far beyond biological reproduction to encompass all of the mundane, typically unpaid (and disregarded), activities of feeding, clothing, sheltering and caring/ fetching, carrying and caring. In reality, household members engage in ‘multiple economies’ in order to secure income, domestic reproduction, raise children, and care for the disabled, frail and sick. They work formally and informally, in many economic spaces outside and inside their homes, do paid and unpaid work, produce and exchange goods, services and emotional care (Jarvis 2005: 85-6).

Reconsidering urban infrastructures from an everyday life perspective calls for both gender mainstreaming and an integrated understanding of all that it takes in a practical sense for individuals and households to ‘go on’ from one day to the next. This framework encompasses structures, capabilities and contingency. Structural constraints determine what is actually available as a possible course of action in a given situation. Capabilities include the temporal and spatial ‘grain’ of provision including when and where the buses run, when the shops are open, how safe the streets appear, parking restrictions, traffic congestion and so on. The distribution and use of these infrastructural networks arguably vary from person to person and in direct relation to
the activity concerned. Attending to what is possible in the spacing and timing of daily life highlights the contingency of these routines and strategies of coping. It exposes the potential for fragile daily routines to be disrupted by external events, constrained by the need to co-ordinate movements with others and made uncertain by gaps or delays in infrastructure networks.

A constructive starting point for ongoing feminist critique of the sexist city is the Nordic feminist housing and building project ‘New Everyday Life’ (Forskargruppen) (Gullestad 1991), where the vision of a more harmonious, creative and just society draws attention to unequal relations within the household, civil society and polity as the basis for imagining a non-sexist alternative (Hayden 1981; 1984; Matrix 1984; Roberts 1991). Other advocates of progressive planning include EuroFEM, a loose affiliation of European feminist scholars committed to promoting and implementing gender mainstreaming in planning policy, job creation and local initiatives, models of participatory engagement, and the reorganising of everyday life around housing, drawing on historic ideals of collective living (Booth and Gilroy 1998; Darke et al. 1994; see also Matrix 1984). The EuroFEM Toolkit is a collection of participatory and culturally sensitive methods and stories taken from women’s projects across Europe, from southern as well as northern contexts, which can be used to build capacity for collaborative planning (Horrelli et al. 1998; 2000). These groups share in common a critical distancing from the criteria of profitability, competitiveness, and engineering efficiency traditionally applied to urban development and planning.

**On transformation**

As already noted, the sexist city has not gone unchallenged. Notions of gender mainstreaming, participatory democracy and sustainable livelihoods have all developed rapidly over the last twenty years as analytical narratives through which to reposition marginalized groups and communities in an effort to remedy persistent exclusions and bias. In mainstream urban studies, notions of transformation are typically conflated with modernity, neoliberalism and economic and technological restructuring. This neglects the hidden power of transformation enacted by the marginalised ‘other’. The ongoing challenge for feminist urban scholars today is to ‘think through what a non-sexist or non-gender specific (non-androcentric) urban environment might look like’ (McDowell 1999: 120). Overcoming the sexist city requires that feminist scholars influence (and
transform) the tone of debate and engagement with policy and planning. According to Sylvia Walby (2005: 323) a vision of transformation suggests ‘neither the assimilation of women into men’s ways, nor the maintenance of a dualism between women and men, but rather something new, a positive form of melding, in which the outsiders, feminists, change the mainstream’. The aim in this paper is to push this understanding further by engaging more explicitly with what this process of transformation actually entails in the sense of creative utopian as well as critical oppositional spaces of thinking, feeling, being and doing.

Here, inspiration is drawn from the way Ruth Levitas (2013) liberates the concept of utopia from a place and goal (of master planning), replacing it with a ‘utopian method’ of unsettling and challenging the dominant culture of the day, recognising that this process of imagining is prevalent and necessary (Levitas 2007, P.289). This method of thinking ‘otherwise’ rescues an inclusive grassroots resistance from a top-down blueprint. In effect, a utopian method of thinking is encountered in many ways within and beyond different communities of practice, such as those associated with niche demonstration initiatives and those cultivated in classroom teaching and learning. These encounters represent a neglected field of feminist theory and practice and a significant impetus for social change. Burr and Larsen (2010) also argue that in order for imagination to flow there has to be space for creativity and experimentation. This creative ‘thinking space’ is revealed to function through plural encounters including deep relationships between people and the physical landscape. On the one hand this might be explained in terms of convivial public spaces that open up inclusive participation in civil society initiatives. On the other hand we learn from the literature on women-only spaces and organisations that freedom to think for oneself or in non-violent dialogue with others requires a ‘safe space’ of ‘authenticity and compassion’ in which to ‘restore’ capacity for human flourishing, including ways of imagining alternative possibilities (Jarvis et al. 2009: 19).

By critically engaging with the notion of utopia as a method of analysis it is possible to rescue multiple geographies of activism that are enacted through participation in the ‘craft skills’ of cooperative community (De Angelis 2003; Sennett 2012). Crucially, this shift in emphasis increases rather than eliminates the significance of space and place. Thus, in addition to utopian thinking, it is argued that closer interdependence of urban studies with gender studies should critically engage with the
enacted geographies of activism. Most current theorising on resistance (e.g. anti-globalisation) draws attention to public demonstration, individual activists and trans-local social movements. This tends to consign women’s activism in and around the home and community to individual, parochial expressions of work-life ‘balance’. One way of rescuing these domestic and community spaces of utopian thinking from neglect is to draw attention to actually existing collaboration in non-traditional domestic arrangements, as inhabited ‘living laboratories’ of social change and urban transformation. The notion of collective housekeeping introduced above in Ebenezer Howard’s Garden Cities is one example. More recently, new forms of collaborative housing (such as cohousing) suggest new forms of citizenship and critical and creative non-sexist alternatives. Crucially, rather than to function as island enclaves of opposition, these inhabited milieu better represent a common asset; a ‘thinking sphere’ of inspiration.

**Niche demonstrations of intentional community**

The ‘soft infrastructures’ of Simmel’s concept of Geselligkeit, introduced above, as well as more recent discourse on gender mainstreaming, are clearly implicated in collaborative housing experiments and collective housekeeping. No one arrives at intentional community by accident. Even to hear a radio programme on the topic, or attend a town-hall meeting, or make enquiries of an email contact, there has to be the kernel of orientation or ‘leaning towards’ particular questions and ideas (Ahmed 2006). Orientations are not sprung out of nowhere; they are socially and geographically constructed; they are preconscious to the individual but they then evolve through the dynamic of group negotiated (felt and experienced) intentionality. When a group of people set out to construct and manage their immediate built environment with the intention of sharing amenities and making decisions collectively, more is at stake than material and economic goods: significant ‘soft’ inter-personal capabilities are called into being. From the literature on intentional communities we learn that degrees of sharing vary, from the highest level of income sharing (what is often labelled a commune or kibbutz) (Manzella 2010), to looser arrangements combining private and shared resources (such as with cooperatives, eco-villages and cohousing) (Jarvis 2011).

Cohousing is one type of intentional community made up of private homes with additional shared facilities in which residents actively participate in the design, planning
and governance of the community as a whole. The contemporary cohousing concept is inspired by the Swedish ‘kollectivhus’ and a similar Danish ‘living together apart’ arrangement known as bofællesskab dating from the late 1960s (Vestbro 1997) but it captures the enduring ideals of a much longer communal imagination. Swedish cohousing in particular emerged from a concerted effort to bring about greater equality between men and women and to support dual earning and caring roles (Vestbro and Horelli 2013). Common meals and other services were designed to reduce the burden of housework and to make it possible to combine personal careers based on paid employment with family and community life. In the many places around the world where the cohousing concept has taken root, commitment to shared meals is widely held as the benchmark of gender-democratic shared housekeeping.

Existing studies acknowledge that intentional communities represent ‘laboratories for testing and demonstrating new ideologies and social structures’ (Forster 1998: P.39; Crabtree 2005). Yet, there is limited understanding of the creative experimentation actually entailed in building a shared space and community, including the tacit communication skill required to make decisions by democratic consensus through collective self-governance. For example, experiments in non-sexist intentional communities demonstrate a depth and intensity of dialogue and narratives of self-realization and deliberation that rarely arise in mainstream society where urban neighbourhoods are characterised by the preservation of private property and individualism. In conventional urban studies, ‘innovation’ is typically construed instrumentally as a function of efficiency and competitiveness, influenced by institutional actors and technologies that deliver tangible (monetised) value to urban regeneration. Less well understood are the characteristics and processes of inter-personal capability required in communities of practice to address ‘structural transformations in the world political economy within a civic context of justice responsibility and care’ (Wekerle 2013: 249). This resonates with an understanding of male-bias in the way that ‘work’ and ‘worth’ are circumscribed in dominant public discourse by reporting only those activities and qualities that ‘count’ as economically productive. Efforts to critique and transform systematic gender bias in the international standard of measuring economic growth, and the ways in which women’s unpaid work have been excluded from what counts as ‘productive’ in the economy have contributed
to a significant and growing body of feminist scholarship (Waring 1990; Campbell 2014).

Intentional community groups adopt non-hierarchical, non-violent methods of conversation that follow tacit rules. Establishing a space of deep engagement resonates with what Kittay (1999) and others identify as ‘love, care and solidarity’ that are attitudes and activities that involve ‘work’ as well as availability; just as someone can be ‘present’ but emotionally unavailable, the emotion-work of group encounters (quintessential invisible labour) can remain unequally distributed in an otherwise equal setting (Lynch et al. 2009, 1, 31). Encounters are sustained through the phenomenon of conversation, the systematic properties of which entail patterns of opening and closing and turn-taking (Giddens 1984, 73). Adherence to democratic turn-taking is necessary but arguably not sufficient to cultivate cooperation. This is because there are two sorts of conversation, the dialectic and the dialogic (Sennett 2012, 18). Accordingly, in the dialectic conversation the aim in any oppositional exchange of views (debate) is to eventually reach a common understanding. In this conversational form, often viewed as a verbal duel, superior skills of practice entail the interpretation of intent (exposing what the other person assumes but does not say) expressed as an argument for action. Dialectic conversation tends to be associated with hierarchical socio-spatial relations.

In the dialogic conversation ‘misunderstandings and cross purposes come into play; doubts are put on the table; people then have to listen harder to one another’ (Sennett 2012, 19).

Conscientious listening is central to the common practice of sitting in a ‘tribal council circle’ that many forming groups practice as a means of open communication. Originally derived from indigenous cultures and widely adopted in the Quaker movement, this open forum was adopted with particularly cathartic affect in the counter-cultural peace camps (Roseneil 1995). In a tribal council circle, a talking stick is passed around from member to member allowing only the person holding the stick to speak. This enables all those present to be heard, especially those who would feel intimidated by adversarial debate. In theory at least, meeting in the circle, where there is no up or down, beginning or end, a non-hierarchical culture is enshrined which promotes openness towards each other’s concerns and emphasis on non-judgemental experimentation.
In dialogic conversations, intentions are not exposed as right or wrong but submerged in a nascent state of coming into being. The statement and re-statement of intent (bouncing ideas off other people) does not necessarily resolve itself by finding common ground; instead the process expands awareness of divergent views and remains open to new experimental ideas. The dialogic process implies repeated practice or rehearsal of individual interests and experiences, not in a mechanically repetitive way, but rather, by invoking a ‘transitional affect’ which makes coordination and cooperation possible over time (Sennett 2012, 12). For many groups ‘open’ dialogue can feel too challenging and the potential for creative experimentation is consequently stifled by superficially democratic turn-taking. Arguably, intentional community groups require not only open and meaningful dialogue but also scope for lively and playful association. Practised effectively, openness can stimulate creative solutions that are not simply the function of repeated practice. This resonates with the connection that Ahmed (2006, 157) makes between vitality (as an expression of sociality) and disorientation. In lively dialogues, Ahmed (2006, 157) highlights the creative potential to unlock the direction of orientation, observing that ‘moments of disorientation are vital’. Similarly, Sennett (2012, 38) observes that ‘sociality is not an active reaching out to others; it is mutual awareness instead of action together’.

Perhaps inevitably, evidence from the historical record and contemporary demonstration communities reveal a mixed picture of gender democracy. The social scale relations of sharing, collaboration and consensus governance are complex, fragile and difficult to ‘engineer’. Emphasis on non-violent consensus-based communication can reinforce gender separated rather than inclusive egalitarian group settings. The social and material networks that cultivate conviviality and sharing in a consensus community are not always benign or sufficient to combat persistent gender inequalities. Even when ideological commitments to gender equality are widespread in the intentional community group, gender divisions can be normalised and taken for granted by the way democratic social relations and cooperation are enacted. While sexist attitudes are challenged in outward displays, persistent gender imbalances are witnessed in the taken for granted undervaluation of the emotional labour most frequently constructed as ‘women’s work’. Nevertheless, viewed as a journey rather than a destination, demonstration intentional communities represent a plausible shift toward
fundamentally rethinking how and where people live, to promote sustainability and gender justice in the future.

**Transformation in the classroom**

According to Horelli (2002) ‘gender mainstreaming’ variously represents a policy, an approach, a philosophy, a mechanism, a strategy, and a method: it is a transformative process. The ‘mainstream’ that is being influenced includes less tangible cultural norms and assumptions (attitudes and minds) of governing institutions – including households and communities (see also Droste 2011). For Sylvia Walby (2005: 321) making sense of the contested issues bound up with the theory of gender mainstreaming requires that the (local) meaning of gender equality is addressed as well as the project of gender mainstreaming (Walby 2005: 321).

Ultimately, in order to transform the sexist city into a more progressive place, it is necessary to unsettle the attitudes, assumptions and practices underpinning the professional training of architects, designers, planners and local government officials. This calls for transformative teaching and learning that challenges normative assumptions and routine behaviour. Liz Bondi (2004: 175) has argued for instance that the transformative potential of feminist teaching and practice has been neglected and connections have too rarely been made between the subject of gender studies (or urban studies) and questions about how we teach feminism in the classroom (see also Valentine 1997). Techniques promoting ‘feeling as learning’ are presented to support the transition to environments built on an ethic of care (Jarvis 2009).

The links to classroom learning and feminist teaching are clear. To be transformative, efforts to alter the subject and method by which people-place urban interactions are viewed normatively need to be related to the capacity for gender mainstreaming in the classroom and in professional practice. It is entirely possible and appropriate to make gender interventions in the classroom and professional practice, to provoke personal and political transformation as an antidote to the instrumental pursuit of economic efficiencies and measurable learning objectives alone. Beyond existing guidance on feminist teaching practice, the point is to recognise that new ideas and learning rely less on a straightforward exchange of information than on shared experience. The classroom has to become a community of practice rooted in non-hierarchical collaboration and non-violent dialogue (Jarvis 2009). Following a utopian
method of thinking, channels of communication within this community of practice are better characterised by the power to enchant or inspire rather than to the exchange of information or conventional ‘learning’. This is why transformation in the classroom is intimately bound up with the ‘impulse’ of desiring a different, better future.

This is a lesson that is usefully carried over from the commitment to gender democracy and diversity represented by intentional communities: it is a commitment best translated into effective practice through a strong community of reciprocal reliance and collective governance (Beall 1997). Conscientious listening is central to the ‘non-violent’ open dialogue adopted by the intentional communities in question and this combines with wider social learning. On the one hand gender democracy is manifest in terms of an absence of leadership, in a non-hierarchical gender division of labour and decision-making. On the other hand, in more subtle ways, egalitarian intentions are also instilled in a culture of non-violent community and a shared ethos that commits individual members to challenge and rewrite oppressive and sexist language and behaviour in mainstream society. In this way, ‘calm’ communication, nurturing and compassionate language becomes the superior cultural capital intended to replace the taken for granted privilege and domination of loud, confident, aggressive or intimidating voices (Flanigan, 2011; xviii). Arguably, a non-violent community of practice should be instilled in university teaching and learning. In theory at least, meeting in the circle, where there is no up or down, beginning or end, a non-hierarchical culture is enshrined which promotes openness towards each other’s concerns and emphasis on non-judgemental experimentation (Jarvis 2011). Yet, while intentional communities may be explicitly inclusive, the indication from existing empirical research is that the demographic profile at this small scale of belonging lacks representative diversity in terms of race, class and ethnicity. This is also true for the university classroom.

Here it is argued that practice-based teaching and learning can enable students to reflect empathetically on the tensions, paradoxes and concrete experiences underlying gender stereotypes/sex-typing in their own and other people’s lives. It is entirely possible and appropriate to make gender interventions in the classroom, town hall and conference; to provoke personal and political transformation as an antidote to the instrumental pursuit of measurable learning objectives (and competitiveness) alone. One approach is to push the practise of reflexive learning beyond the most commonly mobilised form of ‘intellectual oversight’ (Giddens 1991). This opens up transformative
potential by deploying concrete experiences (as interpreted through the medium of role
play, diaries, field trips and participatory action research (see Kindon et al. 2008).

Recent urban planning scholarship and policy initiatives also demonstrate
renewed commitment to public participation, emancipatory planning, deliberative
democracy and ‘mainstreaming’ efforts to incorporate gender in urban planning (Rahder
1998; 1999; Healey 1997) along with a ‘renaissance’ in the kind of ‘human scale’ urban
vernacular associated with cohousing. At present, many of the most economically
‘successful’ cities are hostile environments for families with young children. A first step
is transformation in the classroom and in practitioner training and public participation.
Transformation will come from a reintegration of a culture of care in public life where
ruthlessly competitive structures are dismantled and replaced with soft infrastructures
which support and enable the social reproduction work that ultimately maintains
societies, livelihoods and an inclusive, gender democratic urban environment.

Concluding remarks
Sexism persists and is manifest in subtle ways (Valentine et al. 2014: 401). The
androcentric origins of cities and urban studies are evident not only in the profile of
classical urban scholars, including those men like Plato and More pronouncing on the
utopian ‘ideal’, but also in the subject matter considered to be worthy of critical
discussion (and thus transformation). Throughout history the dominant narratives have
arguably been ‘macho’, ‘macro’ grandstand views of the city. Yet, rather than to concede
a ‘hopeless’ legacy of patriarchy, this paper argues that direct engagement with the
sexist city, through field-based epistemologies and methodologies

There is a growing trend in urban studies for a ‘network society’ to be traced
through plural spatial scales, beyond ‘the city’ and ‘the state’, in response to the profound
influence of global institutions and, associated with this, the global penetration and
consequences of neoliberal restructuring and structural adjustment. Recognising
multiple scales and shifting strategies of political engagement in the field of urban
studies has generated greater appreciation of ‘cracks in the totalizing narrative of
globalization’ and civil society initiatives mobilised to effect political and social change
within everyday local struggles (Wekerle 2013: 245). A significant gender gap
nevertheless remains between the androcentric discourse and explanations advanced in
this production of knowledge- and the lived realities of women’s urban movements and
their claim to rights, equality and social justice (Staeheli 2008). Yet, significantly, at a time when a global ‘neopatriarchal and neoliberal matrix’ appears more totalising than ever, there is evidence that the ‘optimistic politics of feminism’ continues effectively to demand an alternative to the sexist dominion of social spaces and democracies (Campbell 2013: 8, 91). The express aim of this paper, then, has been to extend the reach of feminist analysis beyond a spatial scale and politics of urbanism, to a method of thinking about transformation in ways that acknowledges the creative as well as critical ‘soft’ interpersonal skills entailed in realising communities of practice. This argument was developed with reference to a utopian method of thinking (Levitas 2013), viewed as an active, restless process (of doing, being, thinking, listening and co-creating) that involves radical attempts to bring about social change (Gorz 1999).

The discussion highlights that while shared space and collective self-management can summon forth new forms of citizenship, everyday practices of home-making remain deeply implicated in relations of paid and unpaid work and this has profound implications for dimensions of difference including gender, class, disability and age. Finding common ground with others calls for craft skills ‘of cooperation and collaboration that have to be continually rehearsed through intensely reflexive processes of self-governance (Sennett 2012, x). This suggests a nuanced mix of individual activism combined with collective visioning and creative experimentation. Crucially, this implies the development of a ‘soft’ infrastructure of ingenuity in this experimental milieu which evolves from, and lubricates, collective activity and shared dwelling space (Jarvis et al. 2009, 133). This appears to align the creative process of collaborative dwelling with theories and practices of gender mainstreaming such as EuroFEM above. By emphasising the influence of self-organised group dialogue and structures of governance, this paper considers individual notions of commitment and affiliation, to reveal deeper patterns of meaning and ways of ‘doing’, performing and experiencing non-sexist societies and environments. In short, social dimensions are especially significant because individual intentions are bound up with those of others in a group, and the internal organisation of the group arguably lends contextual specificity to communities of practice, subjectivity and meaning.

Perhaps inevitably, evidence from the historical record and contemporary demonstration communities reveal a mixed picture. The social scale relations of sharing, collaboration and consensus governance are complex, fragile and difficult to ‘engineer’.
Notwithstanding the recurring motivation of distaste for misogyny and materialism and enduring efforts to subvert the conventional nuclear family and single family home, we find paradoxical evidence to suggest that non-violent consensus-based communication can reinforce gender separated rather than inclusive egalitarian group settings. The social and material networks that cultivate conviviality and sharing in a consensus community setting are not always benign or sufficient to combat persistent gender inequalities.

Finally, by mobilising a utopian method of thinking it has been argued that closer interdependence of urban studies with gender studies should critically engage with the enacted geographies of activism. Recognising the co-constitution of cities and gender requires an integrated analysis of the ‘material’ and the ‘social’ which can only be achieved by tracing the circuits, networks and cultures of social reproduction which intersect and transcend discrete realms (such as ‘home’ ‘work’ ‘family’ and urban daily life) (Jarvis et al. 2009). Viewed in this integrated fashion, the home becomes something ‘more than material’, through the intersection of multiple economies and meanings, as a threshold to admit or exclude gender democracy and diversity. While acknowledging the contested nature of gender in this closer integration, it is important to confront persistent sexism; in the built environment, in communities of practice, and in classroom encounters. Valentine et al. (2014) suggest that we need to adopt new ways of seeing the sexism that remains so prevalent. Here, the argument has been to achieve this not only by witnessing and resisting the sexist city but also by imagining and realising non-sexist alternatives.

References:


Doing and undoing gender is a well-researched theme mainly in the area of feminist studies, but how this process is reflected in different urban spaces still remains understudied, a fortiori in Romania. That is why the Romanian Society for Feminist Analyses AnA is implementing the project „Urban Discriminations. Gender Sensitive Active Citizenship Program”. Through its documentation and activism activities, the program will mark women’s active presence in the urban space, and will contribute to the identification of potential urban oppressive elements for diverse women by removing physical, functional and symbolic barriers, offering alternative narratives to the dominant ones and arguing for the need to adapt the urban space to the society’s contemporary requests of inclusion and respect of difference among people. In this context, in my paper I will present the data collected for a case study, namely University Square – Bucharest, a place with an important symbolic relevance for the recent history of our country. How women’s presence (absence), but also the presence of other minorities, can be captured in advertising, graffiti, statues and monuments, streets names or other types of urban manifestations in University Square is the main research question of my study. In order to do so I will first present a theoretical framework for understanding the way which our daily life area of living (the city) can be experienced through gendered lens, starting from the assumption that sexual & gender differences in the production of urban space analysis is very important in understanding public life, social interaction and the construction of identities. Second, I will present the data collected in order to, last but not least, open a discussion about the reappropriation & reinterpretation of urban spaces in the process of more equitable socio-cultural production.

**Key words:** gender regime • city • toponymy • social memory

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1 An early version of this study is forthcoming in *The (non)sexist city*, Laura Grunberg, Diana Elena Neaga (eds.), 2015.
Introduction

The usual, the habitual, the normal are, at first sight, hard to associate with fields (objects) able to stir research interest. They are more likely perceived as an innate of things which is known, familiar and most importantly lived in everyday life practices. And, if you know, what’s the point in researching? The paradox consists, just as in the field of study of the mundane (everyday life studies) which is relatively new to the field of social sciences, in giving meaning to something which isn’t meaningful (is ordinary), in putting into discussion something which isn’t worth discussing (Olson, 2011, 175). The city, as a space in which everyday life interactions are developed, seems to enter the category of the mundane, of the usual. Despite all of this, the city and the urban space are also institutions which generate sets of norms, rules and values which shape the behaviors and expectations of those that come into contact with them. And I can quickly come up with a few personal examples such as the difficulty I had in integrating in the 9th grade into the collective of colleagues which was comprised mostly of townspeople, and the way I struggled for a long time to hide the fact that I’m from the countryside or the way in which I’m now teased whenever I go to the countryside about my Bucharest-isation – a sort of expectations related to a certain way of behaving, speaking, dressing. More so, we often hear the expression Bucharest, European capital. What does this mean? Is it a normative reference towards a series of civilization which we should find in this urban setting, from the often talked about cleanliness, to the road infrastructure, to street safety, to the quality of services, to cultural events which the city hosts? Or perhaps it’s a reference to the way in which this space is manifesting restrictively for some categories of people, to yet-to-be-paved roads, to houses that don’t have sewerage, to the lack of bike lanes or maybe the fact that it’s promoted as a tourist destination with easy access to cheap sex?

Stating the problem

Still, what is the city and what are the research challenges which it sets upon us? Gorsz (1992, 244) proposes the following definition: the city is a complex and interactive network which ties together, often in an unstructured way and ad-hoc a number of social activities, dispersed processes and relations to a number of relations that are real or imaginary, projected, geographic, civic or public. Thus the city connects economic and
informational fluxes, power networks, forms of marginalization, of management and political organization, social family relations, extra-familial and impersonal, models of economic and aesthetic management of the space and place in order to create a semi-permanent and constantly dynamic surrounding.

Therefore, on the one hand the city models our daily existence, it acquires meaning and becomes livable through legends, memories and projections which we have about it (De Certeau, 105), on the other hand our daily life is modeled by the way in which the city is, for some more, for others less, a comfortable setting and, why not, emancipatory, capacitory. As Elizabeth Grosz puts it in her article about the way in which the interaction between body (as biological nature, but also capable of reasoning) and city, “the city is built and rebuilt inside the body, and the body is in its turn transformed, *citified*, urbanized differently, as in the shape of a metropolizing body” (Grosz, 1992, 242). All of these aspects, as well as many others related to the mundane at the intersection with urban representations have constituted throughout time a field of study, and for me this type of research is all the more provoking as they integrate a perspective sensible to gender and other marginal (or marginalized) categories & groups with which the city interacts.

This sort of research has the purpose of outlining a form of metaphorical geography of the city by bringing to light other ways in which daily urban practices are organized and are given meaning (Collie, 2013, 1), and they become that much more valuable if they are used with the purpose of contributing to a more righteous and fair reconstruction of the environment in which people live and which should instead be one of manifestation and valorization of the differences and perhaps one less of segregation, polarization and invisibility as is most often the case. There are in this sense numerous studies which refers to the way in which the city discriminates, marginalizes, excludes certain categories of people and the flow of power which it channels, the management of symbols being in this sense an important resource. Cities have reflected over time the hegemonic (dominant) ideas and values, this process being more likely one that is generated, imposed and doubled as reactions by spontaneous cultural-urban productions. Statues, paintings, temples, palaces, etc. – all of them combined have been used as a justification and reinforcement of holding power and for intimidating adversaries (see Parker, 2014).
The city through gender lens

Thus, the fundamental premise which originates this research is that any "city is a gender regime that ideologically and concretely manifests a distinctive relationship among its political, economic, and familial systems. This gender regime is patriarchal: it reflects the social relations of power in any given society in which the values and behaviors of men are presumed normative and thus embedded in urban institutions and structures to privilege male control and insure female subordination. This gender regime has also striven to keep women invisible - literally and figuratively, as much as possible—within the city" (Flanagan, Valiulis, 2011). And if the gender regime is identifiable at a diagnosis level, at a production level "the city is a gendered space and place where women must struggle to destroy the barriers that have been erected to keep them invisible, to claim their bodies and their bodies' needs as integral parts of the city, and to assert their rightful visibility as urban citizens" (Flanagan, Valiulis, 2011).

How this urban gender regime can manifest itself I will present in short in the following, with references to various studies made on this subject. One of the clearest manifestations of the gender regime existing in cities is poverty. Even if cities are seen more like engines of economic development and as producers of wellbeing, they produce at the same time a large polarization between the rich and poor, and from the poor of the world women are from the category of the most vulnerable. Global preoccupations for the way in which women are affected by poverty in urban environments has come to fruition over time in engagements, resolutions and statements of position of international officials, among which I will remember the Habitat Agenda recognizes the human rights of women, it promotes greater participation of women in public and political life, and encourages capacity building for women and there are also calls to take into account the special needs of women and to value women's knowledge and contribution in planning and managing towns and cities; the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) refers to urbanization while it also recognizes the rise of rural-to-urban migration and its "unequal consequences for women and men and draws attention to the “feminization of poverty”; the Millennium Development Goals can be enhanced through attention to gender and urbanization - special attention is given to
the plight of impoverished women in slums, the need to ensure environmental sustainability—also has linkages to gender equality and sustainable urbanization\(^1\).

Another way in which the city interacts differently with its citizens according to their gender & sex refers to the way we feel as part of it, or to put it differently, to the **comfort or discomfort which is generated by the interaction with the city in our everyday life (the way in which we belong to the city)**. Such a mundane gendered practice is for instance walking – to school, to work, home, to a club, etc. “Walking practices are usually gendered, as women’s daily walking routine is usually dictated by their household gendered divisions of roles, e.g. taking care of the children, doing the shopping, working in the vicinity to the home. This is usually more explicit for young mothers who walk with baby strollers, and for dog owners, whose daily repetitive practices create their sense of belonging to the environment” (Fenster, 2005, 253) A vision of the city from the perspective of its accessibility and the way in which it is perceived through walking is developed in the *Walking in the city*, by Michel de Certeau, which is more like an essay in which the city is analyzed from the perspective of daily experiences and beyond the urban and architectural planning, for which walking represents a secondary means of locomotion (Certeau, 2011). Therefore the author tries to capture the way in which the city lives, has a life and mostly constructs and deconstructs identities in a carrousel of interactions in which we, as inhabitants of the city, live in a perpetual metamorphosis of contrasts – from spectators to players, from anomy to familiarity, from place & time effectively to toponymy, symbolism and metaphors, from models of collective city administration to subjective, individual meanings.

*Urban gender based violence (GBV)* is another theme which must be brought into discussion when we look at the city from a gender sensitive perspective. Even if the city is frequently associated with emancipatory and capacitory formulas, this doesn’t mean that it is safe from phenomena such as violence. More so, specific formulas of abuse and aggression are developed in the shadow of urban particularities (anonymity, social polarization, apparition of subcultures, ethnic and racial heterogeneity, etc.) and women are especially affected by these phenomena. Moser and McIlwaine make a summary of the urban particularities of GBV which I will take in the following.

"Evidence shows that violence against women by male partners is less prevalent in urban than rural areas, while GBV by non-partners is higher in cities. However, these

\(^1\) For more information about this issue see see [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/urban/](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/urban/)
patterns are not clear-cut; nor is it proven that urbanization processes lead to GBV, although social, economic and institutional changes that accompany urbanization can affect the incidence of GBV (...) Features of the urban environment that heighten the exposure of women to stress-induced violence include poor-quality and remote sanitation facilities, widespread sale of alcohol and drugs, and secluded, un-policed spaces with limited street lighting. These risks are further compounded by the types of urban occupations in which women engage, such as sex work and employment in export-processing zones where sexual violence against women is so common that it has been referred to as “femicide” (...) At the same time, for women there are also positive aspects of living in cities; they have much greater freedom from social stigma and are more likely to seek help to address GBV both informally, through social support mechanisms, as well as through violence reduction projects and interventions that tend to concentrate in cities.” (2014, 337 - 338)

Last but not least, another very important aspect in analyzing the way in which the city reflects gender inequalities is that which puts into discussion the visibility and/or the invisibility of women in the urban public space. When I’m referring to visibility I have in mind specially what Judith Lorber calls, by proposing a dynamic way of defining gender, gender display – meaning the way in which gender is displayed, represented, symbolized and which includes in itself the expectations held by those that decode this display (2000, 417). From the perspective of the way in which the city represents a space of gender display, we can refer on one hand to the way in which it is constructed (modeled) as a gendered space, and here I take into account everything that means street billboards – advertising, informative, educative – graffiti, inscriptions and messages, windows, monuments, statues, etc. On the other hand, gender display can be understood by referring to urban toponymy elements and in this way we are rather brought to a discussion about women’s invisibility in the urban space – here I take into account elements such as the toponymy of streets, markets, institutions and public organizations (such as theaters, schools, museums, libraries). Because, as Tichleaar puts it, toponymy is the science that deals with the study of geographical names, and these names are rarely chosen randomly. Even if they have a physical signification (such as Mont Blanc) or are used to honor someone, to commemorate a historical event, or to mark someone’s property, once used they become an integral part of language (2002, i)
and thus they give meaning that can be analyzed also from the point of view of the way they fuel the patriarchal regime or not.

At the same time, elements that are part of urban planning, of place management, of architectural or technical formulas of city construction are embedded also in modeling the identities of those that must and are looking to belong to these places, including by means of construction and reconstruction of gender. We’re talking about what Certeau calls the transformation of the place as a form of expression of power, of authority in space as a formula for the appropriation of place, of practicing it and the way in which this interaction has an impact on the citizens seen in their diversity (I’m mainly interested in this study of gender differences).

For clarity, I will take an example presented by Certeau: “Thus the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into a space by walkers. In the same way, an act of reading is the space produced by the practice of a particular place: a written text, i.e., a place constituted by a system of signs” (2011, 117). In this sense, I can quickly come up with examples, some personal, some not, of ways and situations which reflect the dynamics of name-place and I will present some of them. High heel shoes, even if worn initially by men in order to augment their masculinity, have become over time one of the strongest symbols of femininity. To be a woman still means too many wearing heels as an expression of elegance, but also a formula of passively manifesting sexuality. But what happens with these constructions of identity in a metropolis, in which every day life supposes the effective travel of tens of kilometers in public transportation, or by foot, in a very alert rhythm? The transformation of the place into space means the reconstruction of gender through giving up on heeled shoes, through adopting more casual outfits – masculine as some would put it. We wear more and more pants instead of dresses or skirts (see the fashion revolution made by Coco Chanel), we wear more and more clothes that are as comfortable as possible and we perhaps pay less attention to design, we wear more and more darker colors, all of these as an expression of the way in which we adapt to the place we’re living in. Just like this, the city can also become a space of change, of all sorts of demands, of alternative movements which are fueled by the lack of communitarian constrains and of the so called anonymity which is typical of urban spaces. Referring to the way in which the city constrains us, the way in which it manifests as a structure that models our behaviors, we can analyze aspects which take into account the aforementioned gender based violence, and here,
phenomena such Take Back the Night are clear expressions of demanding the city back by the women. It’s often happening to us as women, that we carefully choose our clothes when we’re going out, especially at night, and this is because of the way in which street harassment becomes a part of the normality of present day urban life – at least in Bucharest. For instance, when I was doing street research at the University Square a young girl’s skirt was pulled up right in front of me – it was broad daylight in the center of the capital and no one reacted, and these images are not at all rare (for more details on street harassment see for example hartuirestradala.wordpress.com). The city thus belongs less to women, especially at night and in some neighborhoods, and belongs less and less to sexual minorities, keeping in mind the fact that in this community they know the safe spots, but also the less accessible places, and also belongs less to ethnic minorities – see here the racist and xenophobic manifestations –, and to people with disabilities, etc.

Urban discriminations. Active citizenship gender sensitive project

In the logic presented above, and the field of study formed at the intersection between urbanism or city studies, symbolics, sociology, gender studies we also have the research done as part of the Urban discrimination project. Active citizenship gender sensitive project implemented by the non-governmental organization the Society of Feminist Analyses AnA in partnership with Front Association (between 2014-2015) and financed by the Civil Society Development Fund, part of the results which will be presented and analyzed in this paper. The general objective of the project consists in the developing of a model of active urban citizenship, sensible to gender, the specific objective being on the research component, namely documenting and outlining a table of segregation, inequality and gender discrimination in Bucharest. At the end, the goal is to propose certain narratives which are alternatives to the dominant ones and to adapt the urban space to the demands of inclusion and respect of differences between people.

Defining the universe of the research was based on one hand on a certain hierarchy of needs of research identifiable in such a pioneering project in Romania, more precisely on the need of some analyses of quantitative nature which can present the bigger picture specially regarding women invisibility in the urban space and that will later be completed with nuances, detailed analyses of qualitative nature. On the other hand, the delimitation of the field of research has been also done in relation to data
accessibility, but also taking into account the financial and temporal limitations implied by the backing of the FDSC. Therefore, the collection of information from the field, with respect to the dimension of gender and urban toponymy has aimed at realizing a complete inventory for Bucharest, of streets, memorial plaques, monuments and statues, metro stations, universities, high schools and state theaters. The data collection with respect to the dimension of “sexist/misogynistic/instigation to violence against women messages” has been realized through study case analyses (qualitative method) which were implemented in the following places in Bucharest: Piața Romană (author Ana Mizil), Piața Universității (author Diana Neaga), Piața Obor (author Monica Pavel), Nerva Traian - Șoseaua Colentina (author Ștefania Neagoe), touristic tour of Bucharest (author Ruxandra Yılmaz). The documentation for the “street violence/sexual harassment” dimension has materialized in the project on the one hand through the realization of a material about aggressions that women have to deal with when they’re biking around the city – author Adina Mata, and on the other hand through two informative videos – materials on which the team coordinated by the director Matei Grünberg are working.

Last but not least, the research component of the project also encompasses a material made by Tudorina Mihai which makes a reference to the gendered construction of citizenship in relation to the right to public expression. In this material the author arguments in favor of the hostile attitude of the representatives of the City Hall Commission for Public Manifestations Approval have in relation to the actions of the organizers that fight for women rights. In the following I will present a part of the data collected during this research, placing accent on the detailed presentation of the analysis made in the University Square. I will add the fact that the complete data, but also the critical analyses, suggestions and recommendations on the themes aforementioned are in the process of being published in the “Guide to gender discrimination in Bucharest” (for details please see http://www.discriminari-urbane.ro/).

**Bucharest under the magnifying glass – a toponymic and urban memory analysis**

Streets, boulevards, subway stations, statues, monuments, memorial plaques, high schools, universities, theaters – all stand as expressions of the construction of the patriarchal gender regime in Bucharest, through the act of naming places and public institutions which should refer to the recent or less recent history of this city. Perhaps
many of us have noticed the absence of women from the collective and honorable memory of the city, perhaps many of us have passed by the statue of Alexandru Lahovari or by that of Barbu Catargiu (both in the Piaţa Romana) at the feet of whom are placed in admiring positions women (see the study of Ana Mizil), or I have seen the bust of Traian Demetrescu carefully decorated with flowers, also by a woman. Maybe walking through Herăstrau we have seen the circle of writers and we have noticed the fact that no woman has had the honor of being represented there, even if an author such as Bianca Buruta-Cernat sign – with a name as if made to uphold our research hypothesis „Group photo with forgotten writers – interwar feminist prose” (Cartea Românească, 2011) – volumes that bring to light the remarkable work of women writers. Maybe some of us wondered why there is no metro station that has the name of a woman or how many boulevards do have the names of women and which are they, maybe we’ve been curious to know how many universities in Bucharest bear the name of some women, etc.

All of these aspects, this time studied systematically don’t do anything but to uphold the hypothesis of the patriarchal gender regime upheld by urban management elements that make the city reflect the dichotomic social construction, gendered, unequal in which women are associated more with the private, familial space, with the sexuality and passivity, while men belong to the public sphere, active involved, professionally accomplished.

But let’s let numbers talk. In the analysis made on the monuments and statues of Bucharest, Laura Grünberg and Corina Brăgaru (the coordinators of the research) have inventoried 161 such urban representations, the conclusions being the following: the androcentric character of the statues of Bucharest – out of 102 statues which were inventoried, 87 represent men and only 15 women; the gender roles are dichotomic: the women sleep and they are generic (anonymous), the men fight for country and are personalities. Gender inequalities are maintained when it comes to authors of statues/monuments that were inventoried – an overwhelming majority of these being made by men (135 vs. 14 women).

Regarding the toponymic analysis, things are the simplest when it comes to metro stations – 41 (data collected by Ilona Voicu) and universities (40) of Bucharest (data collected by Ruxandra Yılmaz and Ana Maria Popa) – not even one of these bears the name of a woman. It would be hard to say that in the case of high schools we’re

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1 Because women are invisible as role-models, as personalities they are more likely present as sexual objects, as marketing instruments
better off, bearing in mind the fact that out of 105 high schools in Bucharest, only 5 bear
the name of some feminine personalities (Iulia Haşdeu, Ita Wegman, Regina Elisabeta,
Floria Capsali, Elena Cuza), 89 bearing the names of men.

What will we find through simple inquiries applied on the database that
inventories the streets of Bucharest with respect to their names regarding gender? We
must remember here the fact that in the database we’ve inventoried a number of 5221
streets, the gendered toponymic analysis generating the following results: 27.7% of
streets bear the name of male personalities; 1.5% of streets bear the name of female
personalities, 0.8% bear generic male names; 0.8% bear generic female names; names
without gender signification 64%; names with masculine signification 3.6%; names with
feminine signification 1.2%. Thus, Bucharest keeps in the memory of its streets 18 times
more male personalities perpetuating in this way the dichotomies and categorizations
through the association of women with the private sphere and of men with the public
sphere, associating performance and career mostly with the masculine and limiting the
references to women which have made history. The power relations are found clearly
when we also make a toponymic analysis of the streets of Bucharest in correlation with
their type (boulevards, streets, ways, entrances etc.). Thus, out of 41 boulevards in
Bucharest, only 2 bear the name of women and these are in fact the wives of great
statesmen – we’re talking about the boulevard Regina Elisabeta and the boulevard
Regina Maria, and so the ratio is 1 to 20. The ratio is maintained approximately also
when it comes to streets: 1 street with the name of a female personality to 19 streets
with male name personality, it grows significantly when it comes to squares – 1 to 28 (so
there is in Bucharest a single square that bears the name of a woman) and drops down
when it comes to entrances 1 to 13

The tendency is preserved when we analyze the memorial plaques in Bucharest,
Thus, 347 inventoried plaques (according to the material collected by Corneliu Luples in
the volume Whispers of the Urban, Oscar Print, 2011) 74.9% represents a homage
brought to the memory of men, and only 6.6% honor the memory of women. Also, there
are in Bucharest plaques of collective memory, some exclusively masculine – 2%, some
mixed – 5.2%, but there are no memorial plaques that hold in the urban collective mind
the memory of a collective exclusively comprise of women. Also, regarding state theaters
10 in all, only 1 bears the name of a feminine personality (Bulandra theater), 4 with the
name of men and 5 with neutral names.
What do these numbers say in fact? That there are no remarkable women that have contributed to the writing of history in these places, or rather the differences of gender and especially their hierarchization (the deprecation of feminine domains, the association with the household sphere, and the public-private dichotomy) have generated over time the marginalization of women, their invisibility in urban spaces? Certainly the first part of the answer can be easily contested, not the lack of feminine historical personalities is the problem, but the regime of power that leads to their deprecation. All of these elements may be interpreted as manifestations of the second rank citizenship of women which are thus deprived of the exercise of power on the dimension of symbolic appropriation of urban elements. Women are therefore excluded from the dynamics of naming places, of writing history and of assembling the collective memory of the city that remains, at least for Bucharest, a dominantly masculine one, or to put it better – as we will see in the case study presented below, one of perpetuation of traditional gender roles among which we could include the invisibility of women.

Case study – women and men, conformism and contestation in University Square

After presenting the big picture of the way in which Bucharest perpetuates gender inequalities, limiting in its toponymic and eulogizing memory the presence of women, I propose in the following a detailed analysis, critically-feminist of one of the most symbolic places in Bucharest, the University Square. The selection of this area of research is based on many considerations, but most importantly on the symbolic and profound meaning that this space bears. University Square has been for the last twenty five years the symbol of freedom and of the fight against communism, but also one of the main tourist and rendezvous places in the city. Being in the center of Bucharest, at ground zero, the square has not seldom been a place of contesting various authoritarian formulas considered illegitimate and so a space in which the voices and demands of the citizens have been hear, a sort of urban speakers. Tacitly accepted as an area open to protests, University Square manages to concentrate in a clearly defined urban perimeter, or clearly definable, symbols of the democratic construction of post-communist Romania, from the 1990 University Square phenomenon as a symbol of ultimate sacrifice, of citizen martyrdom, to the student revolts in the 90s, to the protests in the

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1 See for instance the two volumes of Ştefania Mihăilescu, which came out at Polirom, From the history of Romanian feminism, that refer to countless feminine personalities actively involved in the public life and the governance of the citadel. I was recalling earlier Bianca Burta-Cernat’s volume and many more similar works can be counted here.
winter of 2012 against the austerity measures, to those in the autumn of 2013 as a formula of civic revitalization of a nation\(^1\), and closing with the solidarity protests with the diaspora surrounding the presidential elections of 2014. The research question that concentrates the essence of this case study can be formulated as follows: is University Square, in virtue of the symbolic of strong contestation with which it is associated, also a place of contesting the patriarchal gender regime?

Therefore, I aim in the following to make a frame which can allow us to understand the productions of the urban space, with careful consideration of the way in which these present the gender regime with respect to inscriptions, messages, graffiti, street signs, statues, monuments, memorial plaques and toponymy elements. I will state from the beginning the fact that I’ve concentrated my attention more on the realization of an inventory of urban productions aforementioned and kept more or less in mind aspects which were aimed at the frequency with which certain elements appear, even though I don’t exclude completely the use of such references over the course of the text. The hard nucleus of the methodology used was aimed at summing up the aforementioned elements found in the area of Piața Universității, with careful consideration of the gender dimension. I’ve also had in mind the realization of some transversal gender categories – man/woman, masculine/feminine, minority (marginal), signification with a sexual connotation. These were the categories defined initially, after some field research, others resulting as well. Given the specificity of the location, but also the urban dynamic, after the data collection on the field with the aim of facilitating the analysis I felt the need to make other categories as follows: political with all the subcategories – political ideology (messages, inscriptions as references to ideologies), political contestor (messages which are critical to some doctrines or ideologies) and last but not least political figures (references to Romanian political people); religious and I have included here the messages, monuments with a religious feel existing in high numbers in the area; small businesses element which is made to present rather the urban dynamic of the small entrepreneurs who promote their businesses through sticking certain small-advertising and adds referring here to marketing political classes realized through street signs. Without discussion that the analysis of these categories will be made through a gender mainstreaming approach, their use having the goal, as I

\(^1\) Here I take into account the strong nationalist feeling present at the Roșia Montana protests, but also a type of civic engagement associated with what the press called at the time the hipster movement.
mentioned before, the facilitation of the data analysis, but also offering some frames which will present the specific difference of the researched area.

As an effective perimeter in which I’ve done the collection of data, I kept in mind the area in front of the National Theater, starting with the corner towards Piața Rosetti, continuing all the way to the Intercontinental hotel – across from the Fortuna Casino – the area of the fountain at the University (the effective place of the Piața 18 Decembrie 1989) – Edgard Quinet street (all the way to the Academy street) – Biserica Enei church (all the way to the Academy street) – the corner formed at the intersection between the Nicolae Bălcescu boulevard with the Regina Elisabeta boulevard. Even if the perimeter in front of the National Theater can be considered a distinct area, the delimitation proposed above had in mind a symbolic perimeter designated by the Piața University as a contester space. In this regard we all know that for instance the Nicolae Bălcescu Boulevard has often been occupied as a means of civil disobedience by the protesters thus merging the two areas – TNB and the University Square at the fountain. It is also true the fact that this boulevard has separated over time the protesters in competing camps, which remains common to the two areas being this association with a sort of agora in the classic sense, specific to the Athenian democracy.

The inclusion of the research perimeter and of the two streets – Biserica Enei and Edgard Quinet – was supported by data collected over time through the method of participative observation. Thus the two areas are recognized informally as spaces of gathering, as areas appropriated by certain alternative movements and contesters, but this also because it splits a university area, that of the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ioan Mincu, and that of the Faculty of Geography from Bucharest University. I held in mind the role which the legends, the memories have in defining the metaphoric geography of a place, beyond the technical, rigid, architectural delimitations.

**Formal urban elements – toponymy and memorial plaques**

I will start of course by presenting the aspects which are related to place toponymy by summarizing the names of the streets that are part of the area of research. These are: Nicolae Bălcescu Boulevard, Regina Elisabeta Boulevard, Carol I Boulevard, I.C Bratianu Boulevard, Edgard Quinet Street and Biserica Enei Street. Thus three boulevards and a street that bear the names of masculine personalities, a street with a neutral name (Biserica Enei), and a boulevard (one of the existing two in all of Bucharest) which bears
the name of feminine personalities. It is interesting to notice the fact that all the personalities aforementioned are related to the construction of the modern Romanian state, with references to the 48 generation and it’s French inspiration (see here Edgard Quinet) and to the democratic ideals. Another commentary is about the tandem created by the two boulevards that can be seen as a eulogy to the family – Carol I and Queen Elisabeta – but that can also generate meanings less motivational by associating women with traditional gender roles (Queen Elisabeta being known for her affinity towards care) and through promoting alongside the strong men of their lives (husbands, fathers, etc.) ¹. We can continue our toponymic journey with references to the existing institutions in the area. Therefore it’s worth reminding that the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu, designed of course also by a man, the famed engineer and architect Grigore Cherchez. These are essentially the acts of naming that can be found in the researched space, the only feminine personality that can find her place amongst men being Queen Elisabeta.

University Square is by far a place of recent memory and of eulogy brought to those that have died for the liberty and revolution of December 1989, and this can be strongly felt in virtue of numerous places with religious connotation, but also which have the meaning of keeping alive the memory of those that have fought against the communist regime. Thus, out of 11 monuments and statues inventoried in the area², 5 are actually monuments dedicated to the heroes of the Romanian revolution and/or to University Square 1990 phenomenon, these being placed in front of the National Theater as well as in the area of the fountain – here we find the memorial plaque (the cross) dedicated to Cristian Paţurcă, next to which there is a guitar, symbol of the revolution which wanted to be peaceful, and monuments dedicated to the anti-communist fighting heroes, heroes of the 21-22 December 1989 revolution. All of these monuments are associated with Christian symbols – the cross – making us think inevitably about another form of domination, which breeds marginalization and exclusion. There is however an element which is different in this setting that is overflowing with Christian religious symbols, which seems to be more likely catholic or protestant, all the while being a feminine representation of the Virgin with the baby (traditional representation) – a small monument without inscriptions or references to the author, on the wall

¹ Perhaps it’s worth mentioning here that the Regina Maria Boulevard doesn’t really do a tandem with the Ferdinand Boulevard, since they are both situated in the central area of the capital.

² Incluzând aici Universitatea de Arhitectură și Urbanism considerată monument istoric
towards the Ion Mincu University fountain. The monument is hard to notice and when I’ve discovered it I had the feeling of a subversive action made to disturb the Christian-orthodox uniformity which reigns in the area.

It is interesting to notice that if we refer to official religious symbols placed in University Square, there are unanimously orthodox. However, when we make an inventory of the inscriptions, the messages, and the stencils we can also observe clearly a form of manifestation of religious diversity which we can integrate in the contester logic, demanding of transformation of the place into space. There appear representations of the Star of David as a Judaic symbol; Pentecostal messages such as “The return of Christ”, but also of feminist contestation of the authority imposed by religion such as the stencil “God is a woman”.

Getting back, no other monument or statue from the researched area refers to a woman, that is if we don’t put into discussion the statue group of course done by a man (Ioan Bolborea) Cărută cu Paiaté, part of the Caragealiana ensemble, which refers to characters from Caragiale’s works, amongst which women (Zoe, Mam mare, Miţa, Veta, Ziţa). The question would be how does such an ensemble work socially, how does it fuel stereotypes and gender prejudices (hysterical women, ridiculous, lacking in personality) in the context in which in the area the references to feminine personalities, to good practices or to success models are almost inexistent? We meet however 3 monuments/statues that clearly refer to male personalities, specifically the statue of I.L. Caragiale part of the Caragealiana ensemble, the monument dedicated to Cristian Paţurcă and the reference to the architect Grigore Cerchez.

Regarding the inventory of the memorial plaques, 10 such elements in total, they can be integrated in the same logic of institutional reinforcing of the gender regime, the description which follows taking the place of the argument:

- Gender neutral plaques – 4 (A century of geographical education at the University of Bucharest, the first laboratory of paleontology in Romania – 08.1905. Here died for freedom 21-22 December 1989. Gratitude to the heroes of the revolution. Tears and flowers on their graves);
- Memorial plaques dedicated to men – 5 (George Filepeanu, Gheorghe Tomat, Constantin and Nicolae Dobrescu, Simion Vasilescu, in the year 1875, in the houses of

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1 I. L. Cragiale - Romanian playwright, short story writer, poet, theater manager, political commentator and journalist
Mazar Paşa and the street Biserica Enei no. 11 bis was founded the National Liberal Party under the coordination of the great patriots I.C. Brătianu and C.A. Rosetti;
- Memorial plaques dedicated to women – 1 (Elena Voinescu)

Informal urban elements – inscriptions, messages, graffiti or the right to belong, the right to difference
The inventory of urban grass-roots production, which reflects reactions, ideas identities of the citizens which live in the city and can be thought of as formulas of closeness and signification of the place confirms almost unequivocally the fact that University Square remains a space of contestation and of critical citizen manifestation. I present in the table below the centralization on categories of the data collected, which upholds the aforementioned affirmation. Therefore, the distribution on categories of the 106 inventoried elements is the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Sexual meaning</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Groups/minorities</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small business</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total: 106</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As I was mentioning earlier the summarization of these varied formulas of urban communication, this time coming from the bottom to the top, lead to the realization of the categories presented in the table and which will be detailed and analyzed in the following. Of course that these categories are ideally typical and they have the role of helping the structuring of analysis and of producing interpretative models, this aspect being prone to consideration as one of the limitations of this work.

The political category refers to messages which talk about i. Political characters, ii. Political ideologies, and iii. Critical political manifestations. In the category political characters I have included clear references to political people – counting 6 – the characters being Ion Iliescu (Iliescu, unprosecuted criminal), Ion Caramitru (Caramitru prime-minister is Romanian. Caramitru, come to the balcony!), Mircea Diaconu (Suca) and Traian Băsescu (2). There is also a reference to Nicușor Dan, which I have categorized as political-ideological because the message is centered on ideology, the
character being in fact an instrument (ecology – *I’m part of the class of mild-mannered cars. I vote Nicușor Dan*). Some observations can be taken from this assumption:

- The references to political characters are rather critical, contesting;
- We can observe a sort of acculturation between the two spaces – TNB and Piața 18 December 1989, supported of course by the real political implication of the two actors (Diaconu and Caramitru);
- None of the political characters reminded is a woman – another proof of the perpetuation of the gender regime that leaves women outside the substantial citizenship

From the registered elements in the political category, most of which are part of the subcategories *ideologies* – 29 and *critical* – 17. The inventory of the ideologies signaled in the area researched is the following:

- Nationalism – most of the references among the messages such as *Bessarabia is Romania!, Romanian Echo* (media agency, portal for informing with the goal of bringing Romanians closer to romanianship and romanianship closer to Romanians), *Romania! Don’t elect leaders that don’t love their country! Petre Țuțea, Vlad Țepes*;
- Socialism – with anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, anti-fascist messages, *Students slaves to corporations, Student – bar code*;
- Feminism – *God is a woman! Democracy in the country and in the home! We shit on the misogynists*;
- Ecology – *I’m part of the class of mild-mannered cars. I vote Nicușor Dan; Roșia Montana, Culture not cyanide; 4th April University NO to fracking*;
- Anarchism – *Anarchism!, Punk is not dead, Cops in civilian!, ACAB*

The inventory of the critical political attitudes can be summarized as follows:

- Critiques of the political class – *Free people don’t have anyone to vote for, We change the political class, Don’t let them steal your vote (Băsescu and Antonescu), Who am I voting for? Down with the Emanate, AntiLaw; Accusative state who/who*;
- Appeal to civic attitudes – *The only solution, our own evolution, We Make Evolution, Get Indignated!, Reforms, Spiritual Militia* (The organization's mission is to mobilize the active civic consciousness and the spirit of citizen solidarity).

What are all these elements saying in fact from the perspective of interaction between city and its inhabitants? On one hand we can understand these expressions as ways of renegotiating the distinction between public-private. This way, they can be placed
somewhere between the two spheres – they are not public because they are not assumed directly, all the while they can be associated with formulas with civic disobedience and even with infractions (so it’s not a manifestation of accessibility, of the power to have access), but they are neither private because they are realized with the purpose of becoming public, of being visible. Here we could rather talk about what Tovi Fenster calls “the right to belong identified as the right of people of different identities to be recognized and the right to take part in civil society in spite of one’s own identity differences (...) the right to difference. The right to belong in contested spaces can be perceived as a deeper expression of citizenship in the global city.”(2005, 253 - 154)

From the perspective of gender representation, in these formulas we have seen that there are in University Square feminist natured expressions which can suggest the need of this community to manifest its right to belong to the city, but also the need to contest the masculine privileges preserved, as we have seen, through formal policies, authorized (see the toponymic formulas presented above)

**Women in University Square – sexism and traditional gender roles**

And still women/the feminine are not so absent from the urban representations inventoried in University Square, only that we find them rather in the advertisements and small businesses adverts, which is for those minimally familiarized with feminist theories not at all surprising. Women sell, most of the time dressed in skimpy outfits or even naked, sodas (e.g.: Nestea), body care products (e.g.: Nivea), life and health insurance, or they sell themselves in video-chat type businesses, Top Escorts (poster found directly in front of the Intercontinental hotel), Speed Dating, and Erotic Massage. We’re talking about traditional gender roles, with women sexualized, objectified, of constraints generated by beauty standards imposed by the society in which we live – impeccable bodies, without wrinkles or cellulite. Also from the perspective of gendered analysis it’s worth stopping our attention for a little bit on the recruiting announcement “We’re hiring girls, boys, couples for studio video-chat”, in which the references to sex, correlated with the images on the poster (two girls) suggests the idea of openness to this domain even to boys, but also to couples – therefore displaying a certain dynamic of this phenomenon.

Also in this logic are interesting the announcements (small businesses) that are aimed toward renting certain spaces for students. These seem to be rarely neutral
referencing to students (male) as a generic term (one announcement – I’m hosting one student [male]), but they aim rents for girls and/or boys. This drew my attention regarding the fact that at a common language level, there are few people who use the appropriate gender (student/studentă) and despite all of this, when it comes to offering some spaces to rent sex/gender becomes relevant. One possible explanation is also one that refers to traditional roles, stereotypes and prejudices, more exactly those that associate girls with calmness, diligence, cleanliness, and qualities sought after by a person looking to rent a living space.

However, if we refer to the messages, inscriptions with a sexual connotation, a single aspect I consider is worth mentioning, and this is the fact that in the time that I’ve done the field research, the university fountain was full of penis drawings, next to which were scribbled two boys’ faces (one having a name – Billa), one with a girl’s face. These drawings seemed to be the result of some adolescents’ rebelliousness, being scribbled in a hurry, but at the same time in the symbolic heart of the square – the fountain. These aspects can be interpreted through the grid of constraints generated by the taboo of sexuality which can make out of the simple drawing of a penis an act of courage.

Interesting to mention is also the fact that in a couple of days the drawings disappeared, just as the message “Caramitru, come to the balcony” was erased from the fountain, but which was later redone.

Conclusions
Therefore, the Square is alive, it is claimed and resignified at every moment by groups that seek their identity and belonging in this urban space. And this entire dynamic can’t be perceived outside the power relations that, under a more careful analysis, can be clearly identified. In short, we could sum up this whole analysis as two categories of urban products.

Formal products officially authorized and that represent expressions of the dominant power regime, and here I classify the statues, the monuments, the memorial plaques, and the toponymy elements, but also the advertisements and the street sign elements. And in this perspective, things are as clear as can be, and we can talk from my point of view about institutionally implicit sexism which disadvantages obviously women, giving better opportunities to men. The data that was collected and presented in this study support this affirmation when I bring into discussion on one hand the
invisibility and marginality of women in such urban productions, and on the other side their hypersexualization in adverts and posters.

**Informal products**, unauthorized, even illegal and expression of a form of civil disobedience manifested as a public, non-violently and conscientious breach of law undertaken with the aim of bringing about a change in laws or government policies (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). The elements that I am integrating here are those that pertain to messages, inscriptions, graffiti, stencils, but also small business adverts. Here the results can be divided into elements that fuel and support the gender regime [Looking to host student (feminine)], and on the other hand those that contest, meant to claim a more equitable order – messages explicitly feminist. We’re talking about a grass-roots contestation of the system, but that remains between the public and private spheres, and whose marginality is underlined by the effective disclaimer of civil disobedience (people who engage in civil disobedience are willing to accept the legal consequences of their actions, as this shows their fidelity to the rule of law - Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). What I mean to say is that the critical message exists, we therefore find in University Square claims of the space, inclusive alternative identity manifestations of feminist nature, but by the form through which they are materialized they rather remain perceptible at an individual level (those that see them are the passers-by, and maybe not even them, and eventually those that clean the walls and urban furniture) and with a minimal impact with respect to the dominant system. They tell us that the city lives and thus everyday life is unfolding beyond formal constrains as well, and that all this dynamic can constitute at a certain point, why not, the engine of new structural changes.

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Riding the City
- Gender Dimension of Mobility in Urban Context-

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Abstract
In this paper I tried to understand the way in which the city is experienced by the female cyclist, taking into consideration city-mobility and gender relationships. I was also interested in observing if there is an identity transposition in this practice of mobility, investigating the relationship between the bicycle and the female cyclist. To answer the research question, I conducted 5 unstructured interviews with female cyclists and analyzed answers from a blog dedicated to women who ride bicycles where I managed to better identify which is their perception towards the bicycle. Combining the data obtained from the interviews and the blog with Marc Auge’s theory about spaces and non spaces, Michel de Certau’s theory that introduces the “practiced space” concept, I have identified the gender dimension of these spaces trying to go beyond public-private dichotomy, basing my research on the “gendered space” concept. The results of the research have a descriptive character and are not representative for the entire female cyclist population.

Keywords : city • gender • mobility • bicycle

Introduction
From the 18th century until now the bicycle has gone through numerous changes, both technical as well as socio-symbolical. Born from the need of easing mobility, the bicycle appears at the end of the 18th century under the name of célèrifère, 27 years later after technical enhancements becoming the dresine, and only around the end of the 19th century becoming the modern bicycle. Also, in the 19th century the „Tirul” company rents a few velocipedes to its employees and in 1954, in Zărnești, the first Romanian bicycle “Victoria” is produced. Historically speaking, the evolution of the bicycle is presented mostly from the perspective of technological changes, whereas the socio-

1 Bicycle history:Before the bike as we know it. Available at http://www.freerider.ro/mag/istoria-bicicletei-inainte-de-bicicleta-asa-cum-o-stim-27326.html Accessed at 7.06.2014
symbolical point of view is ignored. By changing the perspective we can say that the functions and meanings of the bicycle get reconfigured through history, moving from means of transportation (18th century) to means of emancipation for women (20th century). As a consequence, in Romania we have Mița Mihăiescu, also known as Mița Biciclista (Mița the Cyclist). A controverted character of those times, Mița the Cyclist becomes an exotic appearance in a society where the public/private – male/female dichotomy is strong, the public space being male dominated. Mița the Cyclist is the first woman that pedalled wearing pants in Bucharest, breaking the social gender norms derived from riding a bicycle, and also through the outfit she chose to wear. I believe that Mița’s deviations from the social norms were tolerated by the male dominant society thanks to the fact that she was a male chaperon, this label justifying her behavior to society. But still, in her case the bicycle was a symbol of emancipation, she was a woman that no longer depended on a man to travel in the public space, an independent woman that decided on her own the aspects of her life. A modern figure, Mița was frequently mentioned in the Furnica magazine, thus certifying her modernity and the curiosity that she arose all around her, thus becoming the attraction of interbelic Bucharest:

“When she would appear on Victoriei Bulevard, the aristocrats from Capsa, the bourgeois from Otetelesanu and the boema of Kubler abandoned politics and svart to admire the lovely bizarre cyclist specimen, whom the kidder Ranetti never missed an opportunity to call Mița the Cyclist. The bicycle with a silver handle belonged to a thin and elegant daughter of Eve, with black curls, silk purple tight pants, with a pinkish blouse that freed fluffy sleeves, with tall boots and white silk headgear, wrapped around in white veil, from which two large needles Madame Butterfly style arrose” (Alexandru Predescu, 1990).

Mița’s outfit came as opposed to what all the other women were wearing when riding the bicycle, Adrian Silvan Ionescu (2006) describing the image of the female cyclist from the interwar period:

“The ladies have continued to wear fluffy pants, tight under the knee, or a pants-skirt, all the way down to half of the leg; the blouse was white, with gigot sleeves and a tall collar on the neck, and over that a short jacket up to the waist, closed two times and very big lapels. They had tall boots, with laces, and on the head they would wear a simple hat, with a small peak, on top of a rich coiffure.” (apud, Rotaru, 2013).
Starting with these stories related to the social-symbolic dimension of the bicycle, I intend to understand the way the urban space is experienced by women through bicycles and what are the meanings of this interaction between females and the city, one done through bikes. The bi-dimensional connection between the city and the social actor is highlighted by investigating women cyclists: the space structures exerting an influence over the female cyclist’s experience but also the female cyclist exerting a certain influence over the explored spaces. This connection between spatial agency and woman cyclist is my main focus in this paper. Also, I explored the identity aspects of the bicycle and the bond between the female cyclist and the bicycle. The next part of the paper will introduce a short literary journey that is both directly and indirectly related to the subject, and presenting theories from both urban sociology and the feminist paradigm concerning urban mobility.

**Literature Review**

**Space narratives and gender space**

Physical space becomes a social space, full of social-cultural meanings resulting from the interaction of individuals with the space as a set of social icons. Michel de Certeau (1984) relates the everyday social practices, such as walking, with active experience of the city and with the transformation of the urban space through this type of experience, thus giving meaning and function to urban furniture elements, resulting into an anthropological, poetic and mythic experience of the space. Space is being crossed by space narratives that function as an organizational element (de Certeau, 1984, p. 93). In this way, narratives about mobility have an essential role in highlighting gender as a social construct (Cresswell, Uteg, 2008). The act of story-telling becomes a channel for understanding the way in which the city is experienced genderwise.

Mobility practices become the ways of experiencing the city and the mode of understanding the way in which the space can construct and deconstruct social relationships. Marc Auge (1995) discusses about “non-space” as a product of the super modernity, the main characteristic of this space being the lack of social and personal meanings. A context for new experiences but also for alienation, non-spaces tends to mediate the relationships with the self and with others, non-spaces being defined by the words and texts through which they communicate with us (e.g: Instruction for use) (Auge, 1995, p.100). Through experiencing the urban places (highway, parks, airports,
streets) labeled as non-spaces they become meaningful spaces created through fleeting and solitary embodiments (Spinnery, 2007). Considering this spaces only as connection points from a point A to a point B, Auge’s theory does not take into account the everyday practice as a key concept. Auge (1995) defines the non-space as a place for mobility, known only through texts and signs. In this way, the sight is the main interactional channel with these spaces, the experiencing occurring only individually without a focused social interaction (Auge, 1995, p.100). Spinnery (2007) revies Auge’s theory through the concept of embodiment of social practice. Therefore, riding the bicycle becomes a way of transforming the non-space in lived, experienced and embodied spaces (Spinnery, 2007, p. 29). Mobility does not refer only to geographical space but also to social space focusing on spatial meanings associated with mobility (Crosswell, Uteg, 2008).

Riding the bicycle as a form of mobility becomes the connection between the city and the individual. The embodiment of this mobility practice permits to explore and understand the city from the gender relationship perspective. For a better understanding of this perspective, it is best to move the focus from the individual to the city. In this context, the city is characterized by spatial agency, thus managing the relationships between the participants to everyday life. The streets, parks, highways - all these non-spaces elements become a framework for everyday activities which reflect the social structures existing at the macro level. So, the bicycle becomes an active instrument that permits the embodiment of the city and the transformation of the static, meaningless urban spaces in spaces that are permanently constructed and deconstructed in terms of social and symbolic meanings.

Technology becomes a central element in understanding the connection between mobility and spatial embodiment. Through technology the interaction with the city is facilitated, the experiencing process being given sensory connotations. Analyzing the urban spaces from an embodied perspective and through the technology lens, we can observe the reconfiguration of the non-spaces in meaningful spaces, different types of technologies opening new possibilities for exploration and experience of the same space (Spinnery, 2007). The bicycle becomes the connection between the agent and the context, and through the bicycle the city becomes embodied. Objectifying the bicycle as a gendered element is realized in close connection with its technology, thus, the universalizing of the diamond bike frame from 1890 is a key element in the
transformation of the bicycle into a gendered object (Oddy, 1996, p.61). Men have a more relaxed relationship with technology than women, fixing their bicycles by their own. On the other hand, women’s relationship with technology is being mediated by men. (Skinner, Rosen, 2007, p 90). Skinner and Rosen (2007), analyzing the relationship with technology from a gender point of view, concludes that women narratives regarding their technical interactions with their bicycles are reinforcing the stereotype according to which women lack ability when it comes to fixing a technical problem on their bike. On the other hand, men have a more relaxed attitude and conjure “lack of time” as an excuse for not fixing their bikes, avoiding admitting the lack of technical skills (Skinner, Rosen, 2007, p 90).

The “Gender Space” concept has its origins in Michael de Certeau’s theory, mobility practices having the role of spatial agents (Burde, Kohn, 2009). According to the authors, in this context, the space agency can be investigated under the form of space seen as narrative and social constructions, space that becomes the framework in which social interactions can change. Another approach for this matter is represented by the question “Spatial structures shape individuals or individuals shape spatial structures?” (Burde, Kohn, 2009, p. 59).

The approach used in this paper aims to investigate the question of duality for the relationship between spatial structures and individuals. Also, the main focus of this paper is the gender dimension of mobility. In this note I try to identify if space and urban places create ways of experiencing, or if this ways already exist and they are only replicated in the urban space. How the city is built and conceptualized can reinforce or deconstruct gender differences, breaking the public-private dichotomy. Negotiation and renegotiation of public space by women is achieved through everyday activities such as cycling (McNamara, 2013).

Hidden dimensions of human interaction can be deciphered by studying the city as "Silent language", the limited access of women in the urban space perpetuates the gender stratification (Spain, 1993). The metaphor used by Spain (1993) “the city as a silent language”, even if capturing the agent function of the city, it only reveals one dimension of the investigated social phenomena. On one hand, there is the city as a language but on the other hand, I consider that woman’s perceptions about this “language” should be taken into account. Spain also follows the assumption that there is limited access for women in urban areas, but it is interesting to see how women perceive
this, and if from their narratives one can tell that some areas of the city are felt as inaccessible to them. From this perspective, it can emerge that not only gender stratification is perpetuated by the city, but that it is even passed on by women.

Breaking the public-private dichotomy and understanding the city as a complex form of social organization may facilitate the individualized way of experiencing the city. This type of city is an emerging city that does not have a fixed shape, as it is constantly changing, both mobile and territorial, with multiple identities and with no ideal models (apud, Cattan, 2008, p. 92). The explored and lived city becomes a mobile city, an individualized city through the meanings assigned by each participant. Also, the concept of “emerging city” highlights the bi-dimensional relationship that exists between the social actor and the city, so, as the actor changes and shapes the city through active experiencing, while the city also has an influence on the actor’s narratives.

The space as an instrument of thinking and acting involves the triangulation of the mental, psychic and social dimension. Understanding the space involves understanding the perceived space of everyday practices (The mental dimension), the imaginative representations of space (The psychic dimension) and the lived representation that focus on the embodiment of the city (The social Dimension) (Lefebvre, 1974/2003).

The mental and psychic dimension may constitute barriers in space experiencing. The way in which the woman or the cyclist perceive the urban space in terms of safety can influence the way in which the social dimension is constructed in their narratives. Fears such as the fear of heavy traffic can become barriers for the woman cyclist in experiencing the non-space or even avoiding it. Stereotypes, heard stories from friends or past experiences do not allow space to be decoded. Also, how the space is built can be another obstacle in exploring the non-spaces.

According to Gillian (1993) in the public-private dichotomy, the private represents femininity and security and the public represents masculinity, danger, thus outlining a "geography of fear" that reinforces the feeling of insecurity. This type of fear is not an individually-created fear but a collective one, culturally built and resulting from gender roles associated with spatiality (Massey et all. 1993, p71). The demystification of the space through crossing social constructed barriers is achieved by using the space in the daily social routine, so in this way the mental map is not filled with indirect illustrations of the space and the myth of danger can be erased permitting women to
explore the public space with no restrictions (Gillian, 1993). I consider that only through experiencing the urban space the gender stereotypes can be deconstructed.

Leaving behind the classical approach of mobility, which focuses on the dichotomies local-global, here-there, private-public, there is a need to define spatial objects conceptualized in terms of hybrid dimension, body representing a key element in the new approach of space and place. It is also seeking to identify spatial and local identities as multiple and not reducible to a single model (Cresswell, Uteng, 2008, pp. 92). Mobility decisions (choosing to ride the bus, the bicycle, or the subway etc.) have an important role in defining one's identity by interacting with other life aspects like age, gender or occupation (Skinner, Rosen, 2007). Therefore, integrating the concept of identity in understanding mobility practices represents one of the central questions of this paper and creates an intersectional context for analysis.

**Identity in mobility practices**

Introducing the concept of identity takes the paper from a rational choice model to a more complex model of analysis, one focused on cultural aspects. Assuming that the bicycle can become an extension of an individual’s identity: Why that kind of bike is chosen? Why choose that color? Why do they accessorize them? What they wear while riding their bikes? All these are questions about the identity of the woman cyclist, and help in the better understanding of how cycling is experienced.

Skinner and Rosen (2007) identify 3 identity models in the matter of mobility. On the one hand, identity can be seen as a pre-existing element forming and determining the behavior. On the other hand there is the model that addresses an integrative perspective, transport and identity being a part of a circular process in which the social dimension and identity influence and are influenced by transportation experiences (Skinner, Rosen, 2007, p. 86).

**Methodology**

**Research design**

In order to gather my information I conducted 5 interviews with women aged between 23 and 30 years old, with a minimum of a-two-year experience in riding bicycles in the urban space of Bucharest. The last interview was conducted with a couple of cyclists and beside their narratives regarding the mobility practices, I was interested in the way they
interacted with each other and how each of them responded to the same question. The male perspective was very interesting, especially because it was in contrast with the female’s narratives. From his stories, one could tell how the spatial fears of his partner were reiterated.

The respondents are participants to Skirt Bike manifestations, which promotes wearing chic outfits while ridding the bike. Women outfits turned out to be a key element in developing the feminine perspective of this social practice, the bicycle becoming a gendered object. Besides the 5 interviews, I conducted a content analysis on the Skirt Bike blog, interpreting the answers to the question "What does the bike represent to you?".

Research Questions

1) How is Bucharest city experienced by women cyclist?
2) Does the bicycle become an extension of the woman cyclist’s identity?
3) Which is the relationship between city- bike and mobility?

Results

Doing city

The mobility practices intermediate the transformation of non-space into space. Riding the bicycle is the active experiencing of the city spaces, spaces named by Marc Auge (1995) as being non-spaces because of the lack of personal meanings given by individuals. The sensorial experiencing of the spaces gives birth to a process of giving meanings to the space travelled, meanings that are in direct relation with the bicycle experience: “As often as you travel on a certain itinerary, you know where the easy slopes are, or where you have to pedal harder because there’s a hill, you know these parts(...) You feel less in danger but that’s the part that you enjoy, you feel very free” (Blog, 31).

For women, cycling is not just a simple way of getting around, this type of mobility becomes part of a process of personal development, breaking gender norms and conquering the city: "When I am on my bike I feel free, I feel that the city is mine" (Velvet, 30 ani). Starting from the classic dichotomy, public/private, where the private is associated with feminine, safety, and public is masculinity, danger, the bicycle mobility takes women out of the private space, allowing access to public space. The need for safety and fear of traffic, fear of danger, of risks, are often assured by urban spaces that
are specially designed for riding a bicycle, like parks, for instance. According to Marc Auge, the park is a non space, the only type of interaction being visual. Through the bicycle, the park becomes alive and actively experienced. In this case, the park experienced through the bicycle determines certain emotions to the female cyclist, like freedom and joy. From this point of view, I believe there is an indirect relationship of giving meanings, because at first sight, from the stories of the female cyclists, there is no meaning given to the park, being just the context where she gives meanings to riding the bike. But it is because the bi-dimensional relationship between riding the bicycle and context. The context is associated with safety and this permits to achieve feelings like freedom or joy. In this way, the meanings are attributed indirectly: “I have honestly been hundreds of times there, it’s my park, I go there since the 7th grade, I know all the roads, alleys, corners, I know how the sun rises. There is a small slope I can take with my bike, next to a bridge over the lake, I always take this slope near the lake. And there’s a road, up near the lake, it’s the segment, first trees and then it goes down the valley, then there’s the lake and it’s awesome. It gives me a freedom feeling that only there I can obtain.”(MTB, 23).

This experiencing process is mediated by body mobility and the perceptive memories. (Degen, Gillian, 2012). Therefore, the type of technology chosen in performing the daily mobility influences the sensorial experimentation. Another element that follows in this analysis of space-sensorial-mobility is technology. From this angle, the bike is the connection element between space mobility and sensorial experiences, becoming a space exploration instrument. Spinnery (2007), after doing a research on cyclists, states that hearing and sight react to the body’s position, because of different geometries of the bicycles. Furthermore, technology eases and influences the way the city is perceived and experienced. The image you create relating to a certain place, space or even city, is mediated by the type of technology used for exploring them. The city appears differently from inside a car, from a bike or a motorcycle. The car allows sight to be the sense that prevails in this mobility experience while the bicycle or motorcycle, through the way they are built, involve more actively all the senses. Technology mediates visual representation of the city, this suggesting the importance of the sensorial in acknowledging and deciphering certain spaces, the same place or street being differently represented visually by the same person according to the mobility practice. Therewith, it is noticeable that the sensorial involvement determines a much more intense space experience and ownership (“My park”, “My road”).
Despite all these, the parks are artificially created contexts for experiencing certain leisure activities, while the streets become complex frames of analysis of the everyday activities. Extrapolating to the public-private dichotomy, I consider the private space as being represented by spaces that have been built to create a proper context for activities that imply the felling of safety or relaxation and to separate them from the rest of the day to day activities, such as the parks. On the other hand the streets and the roads are public spaces associated with risk, masculinity and fear. Women riding bikes in this context, becomes a suggestive illustration of the gender dimension in the urban. So, does the city create ways of experiencing space structures or does the individual change these structures by acts of mobility?

The city is perceived as a place full of danger, especially for a woman. “As a girl, you’re scared to walk alone on the street” (Velvet, 30). Starting from Lefebvre’s theory (1974/2003) where space is perceived as a kind of thinking and acting instrument, we can identify in the stories of the female cyclists the mental as well as the psychological dimension of the space. In this case, the imaginative representations of the space becoming barriers in its exploration:

“Girls are easily scared. I have friends that ride bikes themselves, but some say that you have nowhere to ride through this Bucharest traffic. They’re scared of cars, comments from the drivers. At first they’re malicious because you’re a cyclist, then because you’re a woman. There’s this sort of discrimination of female cyclists, because of the stereotype that women drive lousy therefore they must ride bikes badly as well.” (Ariel, 27).

From this point, the city is the one who shapes the relationship with spaces and the ways of exploring, Bucharest being pictured as a hostile city for the female cyclist, one that does not offer through its infrastructure the necessary comfort to explore and live it. In exchange, the moment this “mental map of fear (Gillian, 1993)” is deconstructed by taking risks and coming out in traffic, the power balance is changed, the female cyclists being the one shaping the city:

“Nothing up to then made my heart beat so hard as passing a large intersection in rush hour. The experience of pedaling in traffic has equaled with a sensation avalanche, from trust, emotion, alert and liberation, pure joy that has slowly made me addicted. I realized it was for the first time when I managed to leave a comfort zone, defying all the limits I have set before.” (Velvet, 30).
From this female cyclist’s narrative we can identify embodiment elements of the bike in the city ("Nothing up to then made my heart beat so hard"), this non-space becoming a lived and embodied one, defining itself in the third dimension as well, the one Lefebvre identified as the social dimension of the lived representations. At the same time, the shaping process is not directed only by the experiencing of the city but also towards the female cyclist. The relation between the city and the female cyclist becomes a bi-dimensional one, where riding a bicycle through the city deconstructs the geography of fear, but in the same time has an important role in the personal identity process ("defying all the limits I have set before.").

The Paradox of the female cyclist’s perception is in the fact that on one hand, it is seen as an element that offers safety and keeps them away from the city dangers ("Frankly, you’re a lot safer in the evening than waking, because if somebody were to pick on you, you just hop on the bike. I haven’t had such issues up to now. I’m on my bike and nobody bothers me, you’re happier, you have ownership on what’s going on. It gives me a feeling of safety, I’m way more safe on my bicycle" Ariel, 27) and on the other hand, the bicycle is perceived as offering more exposure and vulnerability in traffic, rising the awareness in terms of physical safety ("when I come out on the street I have to be careful to all the cars, how that guy opens a door, how the other passes me by, there’s a crossing and there’s 3 kids left, all these things" (MTB, 23). I believe that this paradox results from the dual perception of risk. If in the first instance the bicycle offers protection against human factors, in the second the risk is the traffic itself.

**Bicycle as a gendered object – Femininity on two wheels**

The bicycle genderisation is done strictly in relation to its technology (Oddy, 1996, p.61). Therefore, the approach of this mobility practice is influenced also by the bicycle’s technology. In this research I focused on women ridding city-bikes. From a technological perspective, this kind of bike - through it’s frame facilitates - allows women to wear dresses or skirts. Choosing this kind of bicycle, in the case of my respondents, depended on variables such as their profession, the bike being a means of transport from home to job, but also because of identity reasons. In this case, the bicycle’s technology allows them to wear a chic and feminine outfit on the bike (Picture 1).

This type of bycicle was adopted by the Cycle Chich movement, members of this movement changing aspects of their life in terms of behaviours. In terms of Actor
Network Theory, the bicycle can be seen as an non human actor (Ignacio, Thomas, 2010). The changes the non human actor (the bicycle) applies to the network, in this case, relate to identity issues. The bike itself becomes an identitary image that one as owner addapts to, in terms of apperance and behaviour:

"Since I got Scarlet I changed my clothing step by step .I became brave and I quit the rigid office clothes that were anyway not suitable for my new bike" (Scarlet, 30).

In this respondent’s case, the bicycle becomes a visual symbol of femininity, through accessories such as the front basket and the horn, but also through colour. The mobility practice in this case does not relate only to passing through a space but it also indicated the transformation of the gender dimension of the space. Riding a feminin bicycle wearing a skirt or a dress becomes a statement of retrieving femininity in the urban space.

![Cycle chic](https://www.facebook.com/SkirtBike/photos_stream)

*Picture 1 - Cycle chic*¹

After gathering the data, I have identified in the narratives of the female cyclists the identity analysis model that Skinner and Rosen (2007) proposed. Therefore, the relation between mobility and identity is built on the fact that the means of transportation and

¹ Available at https://www.facebook.com/SkirtBike/photos_stream Accessed at 17 August 2014
identity are part of a circular process where they influence each other. Further, I will present elements of identity discovered in the stories of the female cyclists I have interviewed and also in the answers on the Skirt Bike blog.

**The name of the bicycle**

The bicycle is no longer a simple way of transportation. A tight bond is born between the bike and the female cyclist. This relation is determined and strengthened continuously because of the experiences accessed through the bicycle by the cyclist.

Giving a name to the bike is an indicator of the strong relationship established between female cyclist and their bikes. The personalization of the bike not only with accessories but also by giving it a name indicates the step from just a form of transport to a subjective and emotional level that is more pronounced: “My bike’s name is Ariel. I love the turquoise color, I’m a redhead and my favorite cartoon is Little Mermaid, so, well, her tail is blue, turquois, her red hair and we’re both a whole so we round up this character” (Ariel, 27) (Picture 2), “Meanwhile, Scarlett timidly backed off, once space shortage occurred, making room for my new city bike, the colorful Velvet, that has made my dusty streets urban rides so smooth that they suggested her name. And in the urban journey breaks, in the weekend, I gather with the help of my mountain bike Kaila, new stories from mountain paths or from over the hills, with people, feelings, new places, and we’re happy together” (Velvet, 30) (Picture 3).

![Picture 2](https://www.facebook.com/SkirtBike/photos_stream)  

**Picture 2** - Ariel the bike

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1 Available at [https://www.facebook.com/SkirtBike/photos_stream](https://www.facebook.com/SkirtBike/photos_stream)  
Accessed at 17 August 2014
Outfit and feminization of a mobility practice

Riding the bicycle is associated with the loss of femininity and embracing a sport, masculine outfit. The cycle-chic movement promotes the chic riding on the bicycle amongst women. Transposing the identity elements in this type of mobility practice is done also through outfit:

„I think that if you ride a bike, it doesn’t mean that you have to give up your femininity. (...)I wouldn’t give that up and the way I like to dress most of the time“ (Ariel, 27), „And to those who question the compatibility between bike and heels, I say it’s easier to pedall than to just walk on them“ (Velvet, 30).

Considering all these, the female cyclist’s narratives revealed the fact that this type of outfit is seen as a curiosity, being considered abnormal „People see you a bit weird. Some have an admiring look, but most of them just think hey, you’re on a bike, how can you dress like that ? I feel comfortable, I have no problem.“(Blog, 26). The gendering of the bike makes this means of transportation mostly associated with sports and masculinity (Picture 4).

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1 Available at https://www.facebook.com/SkirtBike/photos_stream  Accessed at 17 August 2014
Wearing a skirt on a bike is perceived as strange, and adopting this outfit in public, masculine spaces, like the roads, makes the bicycle become a way of demanding the city’s space femininity. Like the case of Mița the Cyclist, the outfit becomes an element that is looked at as being unusual, but the paradox is that in the interwar period a woman in tight pants on a bike meant a turnaround of the norms, and in the case of the female cyclists I have interviewed in this research, the woman wearing a skirt becomes the deviation from the norms. I believe that a possible explanation may be in the socio-symbolical value of the bicycle. The city cannot be labeled as a masculine or feminine space because the city is composed out of spaces and places that are differently experienced by the participants in its life. From this point of view, the space is individualized getting new meanings from different social actors. The boarders between public and private are no longer there, these being influenced by the meanings given by each actor in particular and the way of exploring and experiencing these spaces. The city is no longer seen as something inert, static, it is a mobile city ("Emerging city") with a lot of identities, in which each urban element ends up constructed and deconstructed by the social actors through their social practices in the urban space.

The urban space becomes a gendered space, in which the space structures are negotiated continuously from the gender dimension perspective. Starting from this assumption, the roads become strongly masculine spaced associated with risk, fear and danger, where the appearance of women in a dress on a bike becomes a curiosity, being

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Second Bike Available at [http://www.findnaturewallpapers.com/mountain-bike-picture-1555.html](http://www.findnaturewallpapers.com/mountain-bike-picture-1555.html)
Accessed on 17 August 2014
labeled as peculiar. This reaction confirms that certain urban spaces and social practices are perceived as masculine.

For Low (2002), the space represents a plurality of spaces. Following Low’s theory, space cannot be represented as a single space, with the same meanings for everybody. The space is constructed from places, experiences, technologies and social practices that permanently reconfigure the individual’s image about spatiality. Urban places are not defined by their land-marks but by the social practices that are associated with them (Farias, Bender, 2010). Through sensorial experimentation, meanings and mental images are constructed, images that are reflected in the individual behaviors and performance.

Conclusions
In this research I tried to capture the gender dimension of the urban space, basing it on understanding the way the city is experienced and explored by bicycle. Following the understanding of the city-gender-mobility relation, the paper reveals the concept of gendered space, a space where the representations of gender are built and deconstructed by social actors. Therefore, the roads are considered masculine spaces thanks to the attributes given, extracted from the narratives of the female cyclists. The road is associated with danger, risk, fear while the park, although it is part of the same symbolic public space, is associated with safety, becoming a rather feminine space. Using the classic public-private dichotomy from the gender dimension perspective, one can observe certain symbolical refinements related to the way of experiencing of giving meaning to spaces you interact with. Just like Marc Auge defines as non space all the spaces that belong to the public sphere, ignoring from his analysis the concept of meanings given by the social actors, the city is no longer a simple developmental context for daily activities, but it becomes an emerging city with multiple identities, in a continuous symbolical transformation, being built and socially deconstructed by their social interaction. The embodied experience of cycling reveals the relation between the social actor and the urban space and how each of them has an influence on each other. This connection between the social actor and the space is intermediated by technology, in this case by the bicycle. Also, approaching the cyclist phenomena in Bucharest from a gender perspective the paper identified another type of discrimination in the public
space, the discrimination of women cyclists in a masculine space such as the Bucharest streets.

For women, cycling is a type of mobility that becomes part of a process of personal development, breaking gender norms and conquering the city. From the interviews I could identify the bicycle as a mobility practice that takes women out of the private space, allowing access to public space. Through the bicycle the barrier between private space and public space is passed, women claiming public space through this type of mobility. This paper illustrates the bicycle as a visual symbol of femininity. Riding a bicycle becomes an indicator of the transformation of the gender dimension of the space and a statement of retrieving femininity in the urban space. Analyzing urban space and mobility practices through a gender lens I could identify how the gender dimension is created in the urban space through day to day activities such as riding a bicycle.

The current research is a strictly exploratory one that allowed me to taste a bit of the wide universe of gender dimension in the mobility practices from the urban space. I do not believe it is complete but I consider it a generator for empirical development directions I wish to pursue in the future. Still, through this paper, I could identify certain study coordinates of this phenomenon that will be followed up. As for the future research issues, I believe in giving a special attention to the way the city, through its nature, builds gender stereotypes or fuels already existent ones. It is not about the female cyclist’s discrimination, but about the cyclist’s discrimination generally speaking. Bucharest is not a bike friendly city, the lack of bike lanes, the too high sidewalk borders, or the attitude of the other traffic participants being indicators of this. Unlike other strongly developed cities, bike wise, (like Amsterdam, Berlin etc.), Bucharest, due to the lack of this infrastructure, creates a strong fear feeling, on which the mental map of the space is built. Fear that comes from traffic conditions but also from lack of parking spaces for bikes, fear of getting your bike stolen, these findings coming out from all the interviews. All the impediments take an even more pronounced shape in the female cyclist’s speeches, becoming barriers of public space exploration. I chose to analyze this phenomenon from the gender dimension perspective because I believe that any type of discrimination becomes even more sensitive when the gender variable is introduced. The gendered dimension of the city and the mobility practices must be studied from the intersectionality perspective, following the way the variables like profession or ethnics influence the mobility practices used in exploring of the city.
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### Appendix 1- Age, occupation and the most attended routes by women interviewed in this research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Most attended routes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ariel</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Account Manager</td>
<td>Unirii Square- Iancului Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Velvet</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>Stefan cel Mare Road – Iancului Road- Victoriei Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTB</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Tineretului Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scarlet</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Cotroceni- Iuliu Maniu Boulevard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Re)Naming Streets in Contemporary Bucharest: From Power Distribution to Subjective Biography

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Abstract

The present study is grounded on the premise that street names represent an embodiment of the socio-political order in the realm of everyday life (Azaryahu 2002, 135-144). It develops on three complementary axes of interest: a descriptive statistical analysis of power distribution among genders and professional categories in the current configuration of street names, a case study of Ion Câmpineanu Street as a 'memorial landscape' (Dwyer and Alderman 2008, 165 – 178) and the street's subjective history as it is recalled by locals in semi-structured interviews.

Research's findings sustain the idea that individuals invest personal or contextual significance endorsed with emotional resonance, in street names and rarely reflect upon the personalities naming their streets. The case study outlined Ion Câmpineanu Street as a self-contradictory, vivid landscape, an urban setting where several versions of history vindicate their memory. The analysis of street names in sector one reveals an unequal distribution among genders in favor of men, who are prominent in naming streets. The novelty in the present inquiry emerges from a gender sensitive approach upon the subject of street toponymy and social memory. Street names are understood as an embodied instrument employed in the social construction of gender in urban spaces.

Keywords: social memory • memorial landscape • street toponymy • power relations • social construction of gender

Introduction

The cornerstone of the present research consists of Azaryahu's and Light, Nicolae and Suditu's findings according to which street names are established and modified according to principles which reflect the socio-political order of the moment (Azaryahu 1996). Street names commemorate figures and events which consolidate and legitimate the ideological perspective of the ruling political agencies by integrating it into the everyday life of the citizens. Street toponymy represents a mean for expressing symbolic authority, therefore, it is my assumption that street names act as embodied instruments.
for the social construction of gender in urban spaces. In consequence, this paper represents a gender sensitive analysis upon the reconvention of social memory by means of street toponymy developed on three complementary axes of interest: power distribution in the process of naming streets, the street as ‘memorial landscape’ (Dwyer and Alderman 2008) and its subjective history as it is rendered by locals.

Aiming to analyze power distribution in terms of gender and profession, I have employed descriptive statistical analysis on a data base of streets from sector one realized by Alice Călin. My interest stands for what types of personalities are socially reinforced as being memorable, so then, desirable and remarkable, by means of street denomination. As for my expectations, they consist of finding an unequal division of symbolic investment among different categories, especially among genders. Furthermore, when streets’ denomination is modified by local authorities, operations of de-commemoration are performed and personalities, events and symbols no longer congruent with the accepted version of history are replaced.

In order to assure the validity of results, a case study of Ion Câmpineanu Street will focus on how the urban rhetoric of power applies upon a particular situation. This part of the paper is also concerned with determining whether a street’s name and its development in time reflects the history of the space it denominates. Additionally, it can also be read as a reflection upon means of reconstructing the history of a place. Semi-structured interviews with individuals who lived on Ion Câmpineanu Street in different periods of time were performed in order to explore the nature of bearings invested in street names by locals, their insight upon street names, upon the process of naming and renaming, and in the purpose of outlining oral histories of the space. Moreover, I will be inquiring into gender particularities in constructing memories of space. The biographies of the place are expected to reflect the semiotic processes operated by the social actors when investing personal meanings into urban space (Azaryahu 2002).

The study could also be given a pragmatic stake, which consists of proposing a model for further deciding on street names according to the principle of promoting equal visibility. For that matter, the present endeavor represents an attunement to international social activist movements such as EVE, a non-profit organization which militates for equal visibility everywhere for women.

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Theoretical Approach

Collective memory: A Few Terms of Reference

Halbwachs (2008, 129 - 144) understands memory in the light of its social nature: a system of storage and retrieval of information operated by human collectivities like groups, communities or nations. The process of memorizing information is structured according to categories and schemas offered by language. Likewise, the information an individual is presented with is also committed to an operation of selection by social institutions like family, school and church. In Halbwachs’s perspective, the term of ‘social memory’ can be understood as a ‘memory of society’, which makes the attunement of language and transmission of cultural heritage possible (Chelcea 2008, 132). Also, evocation takes place within interaction with other members of the familial, religious or national group of appurtenance. Halbwachs (2008) refers to contexts of communication facilitated by the affiliation to a group, class or collectivity by using the notion of ‘social frameworks’. The repository of memory is not the individual, but the group. Collective frames embed both affective and normative implications, operating with notions of order and value (Neculau 1999, 179 - 198). Each memory falls into a temporal and spatial continuity, proposes a precept and endorses a model of behavior. We do not socially inherit only memories, but also linguistic frames, cultural patterns and symbolical associations meant to regulate them and form on the hierarchical system. Hence, the present study is particularly interested in how the discourse concerning women’s memory, identity and experiences is constructed by means of street denomination.

The concept of ‘gender’ touches upon ‘social and cultural bearings and regulations prescribed to sexes and used in particular social systems to label individuals as feminine, masculine or androgynous’1. By definition, gender is prescribed, normative and represents a social construct. Furthermore, social representations regarding attitudes, behaviors, practices and appearances associated with genders are referred to as ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’. It is ‘social memory’, namely shared accounts of past events, actions and personalities invested with a special significance by a particular social group, that is employed in constructing a common perspective upon its socio-historical background as a basis for a group’s present identity (Chelcea 2008). For the

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matter of that, a gender sensitive approach in the study of social memory could shed light upon social mechanisms of articulating femininity and masculinity. When treated individually, gender equates to similarity while, socially, gender is rather about disparity (Lorber apud Grünberg 2010). By this token, urban spaces can be understood in the light of the regulatory function they exert upon the social construction of gender.

According to Candau (Candau apud Neculau 1999, 120), the initial sequence of events is perpetually re-created by being committed to operations of augmenting and retrenchment by the social instances which are responsible for evoking it. Operations of inclusion and exclusion, deciding upon what is held as memorable and what is forgotten make the past ‘a selective social and geographic construction’ (Alderman, Reuben and Azaryahu 2008, 161). The constructivist approach (Derek and Mercer apud Chelcea 2008) defines memory as being constructed in social interaction by means of language while rejecting its understanding as a process of coding and stocking information. From this perspective, as from Halbwachs’s, language is still central to the structure, interpretation and re-organization of memory (Derek and Mercer apud Chelcea 2008).

Thus, history is the object of a permanent process of reorganization, in which several social agencies are actively involved. As Giddens points out, a setting actively participates in social interaction (Giddens 1979, 207). Studies like Maurice Halbwachs’s *Topographie légendaire des évangiles en terre sainte: étude de mémoire collective* attest to the influence of geographical and constructed spaces in anchoring and embodying social memory in the core of day-to-day life. Hence, history is not only re-written with every new history handbook, but also with the rearrangement of geographical frames or constructed deposits of memory such as monuments, museums or street toponymy. Further on, I will particularize streets as sites of remembrance in the broad framework of collective memory.

**Street Names as Memorial Landscapes**

Starting from Halbwachs’s observation that collective memory finds itself in a permanent process of revision, Pierre Nora (1989) differentiates between ‘real memory’, ‘social and unviolated’, an apanage by excellence of archaic societies, and modern history, which embodies a perpetual obsession for change in an attempt of permanent reinvention. Memory appears as being affective, magical, vivid while history is merely an incomplete re-enactment.
Thus, history can be understood as a process of disenchantment, critical and secular. It is from the latest that the need of creating ‘lieux de mémoire’ where memory crystallizes and secretes itself (Nora 1989, 7) arises. By the same token, it was in the ‘90s that Huysen (Huysen apud. Alderman, Rose-Redwood and Azaryahu 2008) brought into reference the increasing need of individuals to find isles of memory in an informational and highly mediatic society. Sites of memory represent the last remains of memorial consciousness in a derritualized modern society, accused by Pierre Nora for killing its sacrality with its own reflexiveness. As a result, they develop because environments of memory gradually cease to exist, therefore, they need to be artificially reinforced: ‘Museums, archives, cemeteries, festivals, anniversaries, treaties, depositions, monuments, sanctuaries, fraternal orders – these are the boundary stones of another age, illusions of eternity.’ (Nora 1989). They embody the product of transformation, alteration and alternation specific to modern history. These are the results of a society where memories are removed, then subsequently rehabilitated.

According to Neculau (1999), there are three main existing central mechanisms, employed in the construction of social memory: globalization, symbolization and commemoration. Globalization is the equivalent of a synthetic process of recollection, while the opposite of globalization is symbolization, which consists of using an element such as a photograph or a discourse to evoke an entire memorial universe. Both symbolization and commemoration, that is the reminiscence of historical events, figures, places, narrations, are ordered into use by the naming and renaming of streets. Following the same line of thought as Nora, Neculau also argues that it is the illusion of eternity, which is sought to be constructed by appealing to commemorative symbols.

Nora (1989) asserts alongside that the transition from memory to history practice fades away. Its bearings are no longer negotiated in the process of transmission, but artificially imposed to the individuals as a necessity while no longer immanent. Taking into account the fact that women were historically ascribed with roles corresponding to the private sphere of life and their legacy is firmly affined to oral accounts, the shift from negotiating the past to ingesting it as it is redeemed by constructed sites of memory make women les grandes perdantes of history.

Pierre Nora emphasizes that each individual becomes one’s own historian, engaging in a permanent search of one’s roots, recovering a past which will always be threatened to be contested. Gary Fine uses the term ‘reputational politics’ to refer to
one's struggle to reclaim and then defend one's memorial inheritance (Fine apud. Alderman 2002). Historical reputation represents a construction derived from a process of negotiation between agendas of different social groups and is regulated by 'reputational entrepreneurs' (Fine apud. Alderman 2002) as Fine calls them. Such 'custodial agents' (Alderman 2002) are individuals in charge with advocating, contesting and controlling symbolical power attributed to social categories formed after criteria like gender, race, ethnicity, profession, social status. Alderman concludes that the power they display over the process of asserting historical reputations derives from their motivation, their rhetoric abilities and their social position among hierarchies of power.

Moreover, Alderman argues that named streets act like 'memorial arenas', public stages used for disputing reputational politics between groups of influence. These urban spaces can be interpreted as depositories of historical representations, circulating the prestige of important figures, standing for their relevance, and consequently for their place in the social memory. Street names appear as holders of symbolical power as they embed commemorative bearings into the urban quotidian, thus, legitimating identities of social actors and groups (Alderman, Rose-Redwood and Azaryahu 2008). Hence, they represent urban embodied versions of different historical discourses in general and of femininity and masculinity in particular, structuring the experience of memorial landscapes. Also, Grahan, Ashworth and Tunbridge (Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge apud. Alderman 2002) point out that the co-existence of several versions of history in the same spatial boundaries results in social tensions and conflicts, which limit the individual ability to celebrate one's past. Such social pressures and rivalries for symbolical power are the core of politics of memory.

After synthesizing two decades of cultural geographical studies, Dwyer and Alderman (2008) conclude that there are three central metaphors used to understand memorial landscapes in the urban space: arenas, texts and performances. By the same token, Palonen (2008) employs the term 'city-text' to refer to street names and memorials in Budapest. The theorist argues that through the process of renaming streets and monuments, the urban setting becomes not only a space where the past is constantly re-evaluated, but also a stage for disputing problems of national identity and political platforms by different groups of interest. Palonen's research upon street names and memory redefinition demonstrates that the city-text can prove to be a fertile
ground for observing the symbolic striving for deciding what society, in her case post-
communist Hungary, should celebrate and what it should forget.

In the present paper, the more comprising term of ‘memorial landscapes’ was
preferred to the others mentioned in the presentation above on the criterion of its
complexity and vastness. Street toponymy evokes the entire metropolitan universe of a
street, which encompasses a diversity of spaces, interactions, realities, manifold worlds
colliding and mixing. An urban street brings together spaces of habitation like houses
and blocks, spaces of consumption such as markets, shops, coffeehouses, spaces of
leisure and entertainment as theatres, movie houses, concert halls, parks. Moreover, it
represents a junction of gendered trajectories of everyday life. The street also
comprises several forms of embodied memory as monuments, statues and memorial
plates recalling social, political, military, cultural, artistic, scientific personalities who
used to live there. It represents a meeting point between different ages evoked by all
elements of the surrounding urban space, therefore, reuniting arenas, texts and
performances in a complex and diverse memorial landscape.

The Power of Naming
Naming streets fulfills two types of functions, practical and symbolical. The pragmatic
character of designation implies differentiation between several streets. It represents an
administrative measure which fulfills the need for spatial orientation in urban and rural
areas. An example of a toponymic system which accurately reflects this function is the
alphanumerical one utilized in New York. Although it started by being the primary
function, purposes of naming streets gradually glided towards its symbolical use. This
shift finds its best representation in cases of totalitarian systems when the ideological
goals of naming streets are probably at their highest rank. For example, one of the
strategies of augmenting the political impact of street toponymy in Communist
Bucharest (1948-1965) consisted in using repeatedly particular names throughout the
different areas of the city. Hence, relevant historical personalities such as Vasile Roaită,
Nicolae Bălcescu and Tudor Vladimirescu, events like 23 August, 30 December, 6 March
or concepts as Freedom or Peace with ideological bearings could name from 7 to 10
different streets in Bucharest City (Light, Nicolae and Suditu 2002).

This administrative taxonomic procedure operated by authorities becomes
invested with political meanings once we refer to naming as a mark of symbolic control
over public space. In his article *The Power of Commemorative Street Names*, Maoz Azaryahu discusses the plurality of emblematic functions associated with toponymy in contemporary urban settings. In a symbolical register, naming equals an expression of authority and an agency of appropriation. In modern societies, authorities are in charge of establishing and modifying toponymy. Therefore, the act of naming or renaming is a state power expression.

Another symbolical function of street designation is commemoration. Aligning with Nora’s considerations (1989), street names with historical resonance represent ‘lieux de memoire’ in the social settings of modernity (Azaryahu 1996, 312). Furthermore, Azaryahu (1996, 319) highlights the instrumental role of commemorative naming in the reification of particular historical events by integrating them in the everyday life: ‘Spatial commemorations in particular, which merge history and physical environment, are instrumental in the naturalization of the commemorated past.’ All the more so, the commemorative message of street names is circulated through all instrumental means necessary in the everyday life, ‘road maps, phone book listings, the sending and receiving of mail, the giving of directions, advertising billboards, and of course, road signs themselves’ (Alderman 2008, 101) and recently, Google Maps, GPS devices and other technological applications with similar purposes. When referring to streets, we can talk about several types of signs such as the street plates indicating denomination, memorial plates placed on buildings to evoke the presence of a significant figure linked to the space or region or events of collective importance which took place in that setting. Signs indicating directions in cities also take part in creating the sense of space and integrate a particular street in a broader urban picture by relating to other central destinations of the metropolis.

Since the late 19th century, commemoration has been transformed into a key strategy for constructing and implementing the concept of ‘nation’. George Mosse’s ‘nationalization of the masses’ or Hobsbawn’s ‘invented traditions’ imply the usage of national monuments, museums or celebrations which act like markers of the national specificity for social actors, but can also be applied to commemorative street names which bring national heroes or crucial historical events into the everyday life of the citizens. The 20th century is emblematic for national and ethnical revivals operated by means of street renaming, due to its role of imprinting the relevant past and its mythical foundations into the landscape itself. Thereby, the urban setting is transformed into an
embodied history which accommodates all of social activities. Smith (apud. Azaryahu 1996, 319 – 320) accentuates the role of ‘poetic landscapes’, saturated with national and ethnical meanings and symbols, in the semantic re-appropriation of a terrain as a homeland for a community. James Duncan and Nancy Duncan (apud Duncan Azaryahu 1996) argue that if they are not the subject of profound reflection, such landscapes do not only naturalize the past in a particular cultural pattern, but also project, highlight and legitimate a certain type of social relations, materializing them into the present social reality. For that matter of fact, it is in the interest of the present study to inquire upon the types of social relations among genders legitimated by urban spaces in contemporary Bucharest.

Above all, commemorative street names have the function of implementing, consolidating and legitimating the socio-political order as it is conceived by the present administration of the state (Azaryahu 1996). Political powers make use of the urban landscape in order to institute and anchor their ideological perspective into the social reality of everyday life. In some cases, the internal organization may be dictated even by the influence of foreign political powers of the moment or international organizations. This socio-political order represents an officially accepted version of the world and of life, which symbolically invests stipulated meanings.

Moreover, relating to gender in the light shed by West and Zimmerman (1987, 125), who define it 'as a routine accomplishment embedded in everyday interaction', highlights the regulatory function of constructed urban spaces in the articulation of 'living femininities' (Rovenţa-Frumuşani 2002, 146 - 149). Masculinity and femininity cannot be discussed without reference to power relations, domination and submissiveness between genders. Connel (1987) integrates the two notions in the theoretical frame of hegemony constructed by Gramsci (Rovenţa-Frumuşani 2002), who argues that domination does not rely on power, but on the cultural system which accommodates it. According to the author, power relations are not grounded upon real difference between individuals or on the patriarchal appetite, but rather on context. Mass media, social policy, income distribution, the layout of both living and urban space are particularly relevant in constructing and intensely circulating gender roles for femininities and masculinities are not matters of essence, but are rather constructed in relation. They represent customized enactments of relationships (Rovenţa-Frumuşani 2002).
The conventional understanding of the past as a linear chronological narrative based on causal explanation and sequential chains makes the present appear as a natural consequence of the objective trajectory of history. Such a manner of comprehending the past leads to the conclusion that the sociopolitical order of the present is a result of history: ‘This narrative structure ‘explains’ and celebrates the present, which is identified with the status quo embodied by the ruling sociopolitical order, as the only possible, and hence inevitable, outcome of the ‘objective’ course of history’ (Azaryahu 1996, 319). Enacting such definitions of the past creates acceptance and even embrace of the present organization of society as it is wrapped in an appearance of simplicity and is not conventionally the object of reflection or criticism.

The Act of Renaming

If naming streets embeds a certain socio-political order among the members of a society, renaming is equivalent to a restructuration of the existent organization or even to its abolition in favor of implementing and legitimating a new ideological system. The symbolic implications of renaming as an instrument for restructuring social memory can also be understood in the light of Bartlett’s theory (Chelcea 2008) of structuring memory according to culture and interest. The theorist’s experimental studies plead for the idea that it is not oblivion that caused the loss of information, but the reorganization of significances.

According to Azaryahu (1996, 318), the process of renaming streets represents a marker for stages of transition when political strategies are modified or when a society experiences a shift of political regime or government: ‘The act of renaming asserts that a radical restructuring of power relations in society has indeed been accomplished, or is underway, and it indicates a profound reconstruction of social and political institutions.’ Lefebvre (apud Azaryahu 1996) understands the reorganization of social space as representing the climax of a revolution by creatively using the practices of everyday life in order to crystallize social transformation.

There are two types of processes involved in renaming a street. Firstly, the removal of the former denomination results in a de-commemoration of a certain historical figure or context. The modifications of street denomination act upon the collective memory of a community. They affect the social routine and the relations concentrated around it. Renaming can create cognitive dissonance and also fragment
communication and the circulation of specific memories (Azaryahu 1996). Secondly, another personality or event is invested with symbolical significance by the means of commemoration.

In the article called *Toponymy and the Communist city: Street names in Bucharest*, Duncan Light, Ion Nicolae and Bogdan Suditu discuss the case of the modifications operated to street names of the Romanian Capital in the period 1948-1965. Due to the centralization of state power in the capital and to its significance as emblem of the nation, Bucharest is a valorized urban space and therefore it is saturated with symbols of the ruling socio-political order. By implementing Communist symbols into the urban scenery and the ‘politicization of toponymy’ (Ilyin apud. Light, Nicolae and Suditu 2002, 142), a socialist mentality was gradually reinforced: ‘Street names were essentially one more form of propaganda for the regime.’ Legislative modifications were officiated simultaneously with changes in the mundane register of life such as renaming streets.

Another strategy consisted of replacing street names in a district with other historical figures who all fixed a particular type of biography such as revolutionary figures like Nicolae Bălcescu, Ana Ipătescu or Tudor Vladimirescu. This type of practice was particularly common for the marginal regions of the city or former villages which were in process of being assimilated in the city structure. Light, Nicolae and Suditu observed that politics of naming and renaming streets in Communist Bucharest also reflected attitudes towards other state powers such as fidelity to the Soviet Union and later on the 1960s de-sovietization process. Further on, they stand for positions towards institutions inside the national structure such as the Orthodox Church. Although it was under state control, streets named after saints and bishops did not represent a priority in the process of renaming.

Chelcea’s (2008) comparative study of reorganizing memory after the 1989 Revolution highlights renaming streets and boulevards as central to the process. As soon as the Romanian Popular Republic was proclaimed, street denominations evoking members of the royal family and political figures of the monarchy were de-commemorated in favor of crucial personalities and moments of communist history. Geopolitical affiliations and departures from other states are reflected by de-commemorations operated by means of changing street denominations. National symbols and markers of technological progress were also circulated by street toponymy. In its most virulent manifestation, the reorganization of memory was objectified through
effacement of entire neighborhoods and churches in its most physical expression. The Romanian Revolution of 1989 symbolized the rise of democracy, which was followed by a systematic effort of obliteration of communist reference points. In addition, opponents of the regime were transformed in models and recognition was offered by re-naming streets in their memory. Chelcea (2008) concludes that nations have a selective way of forgetting, but as well of preserving historical personalities who have had a significant contribution to their development and also manifest a predisposition of remembering those who have suffered from injustice. However, deciding upon who the aggrieved are depends on the historical period one is relating to.

Patterns of Reaction to Street Renaming

Changing the name of a street also has practical implications for locals. This could mean having them change their identity cards, driving licenses and announce friends and relatives. Therefore, by word of mouth, the newly invested significances start circulating among the members of the community.

Yet, if associated with political oppression, certain social groups might reject the new denomination of the street. This act of resistance can be manifested by not referring to the official name and even using an alternative name. In the article called *Street Names as Memorial Arenas: The Reputational Politics of Comemorating Martin Luther King Jr. in a Georgia County*, Derek H. Alderman talks about the social construction and disproof of commemorated historical personalities and the ‘discursive rivalry’ between social groups who have particular interest in a figure or another. By presenting this process, the author also highlights civil agencies who actively participate in public debate regarding the politics of naming and renaming streets. If from the perspective of political authorities which embed the socio-political order in the urban setting, the action upon memorial landscapes is equivalent with controlling mechanisms of collective memory, for social actors and groups, the same sites of commemoration become a means of manifesting social resistance (Alderman, Rose-Redwood and Azaryahu 2008).

Azaryahu (1996) argues that although street naming and renaming is an intelligent strategy of introducing political significations into a non-political domain of everyday life, people rarely reflect upon the meanings of the name written on a street signs. As opposed to monuments which are invested with pathos and symbolically
invested with the sacred, streets are rarely referred to in the historical context fixed by their denomination. Moreover, Azaryahu talks about the fact that the semiotic operations carried out by social actors involve other types of contexts than the initial historical ones and usually result in semantic displacements. In other words, individuals rather tend to invest the name of a street with biographical significance or link them with local happenings or places, events which actually happened on that street or important buildings on that street. By the same token, Nas (apud. Alderman, Rose-Redwood and Azaryahu 2008) understands urban memorial landscapes as being ‘polyvocal’ referring to the plurality of meanings which can be invested by social instances, groups and individuals.

The city-text proposes and legitimates a systematic manner of understanding and interpreting the world, which makes use of symbolic operations of inclusion and exclusion in order to create the impression of immanent coherence (Palonen 2008). By renaming streets and monuments, the mundane reality of individuals is saturated with significances pertaining to the legitimated view over the world.

Methodology

The first dimension of my research subscribes to a quantitative logic of understanding the mechanisms which underlie the present structure of street names. It develops from the assumption that characteristics of personalities evoked by street names like gender and profession influence the rank of the named street (entryways, streets, boulevards). The predilection for historical, military, political, cultural, artistic or athletic personalities, who are representative for particular amalgamations of traits, reflect models proposed as remarkable, therefore desirable, by the present socio-political order.

A complete list with the street denominations obtained from Bucharest Sector 1 City Hall and a summarization of the streets according to rank, gender and domain of activity effectuated by Alice Călin were employed to account for power distribution among genders and professions within the present socio-political order. Moreover, non-numerical social documents, both written and visual sources like The Bucharest Municipality Street Guide¹, The Bucharest Street Guide (Bordușanu 2001), The Street Index of Sector 1, Bucharest on www.strazibucuresti.ro, were put into use for confronting

changes in street denomination over time in the case of Ion Câmpineanu Street. The research design does not propose an exhaustive account of all the street names, but is rather concerned with identifying key patterns in which they are assigned, that reflect the structure of power distribution and gender relations enabled by the present socio-political order. Furthermore, the socio-political circumstances and interests invest with significance certain traits which make certain personalities eligible for being evoked in order to implement or reinforce the new or the existent order.

So then, the second dimension of my research consists of a qualitative approach, divided in two different directions. The first encompasses a case study aiming to reconstruct the history of a street from sector one, meaning Ion Câmpineanu Street. The main question I am trying to answer in this part of the paper is whether a name of a street and its’ development along time also reflects the history of the actual place. This includes non-numerical, public, official, written documents such as city guides of Bucharest approved by the National Office for Land Register, Measurement and Mapping. The second direction of the qualitative dimension is complementary to the first. In the article about The Power of Commemorative Street Names, Maoz Azaryahu argues that locals rarely reflect upon the historical references set by the street names and often invest subjective significance, either personal or contextual, which result in subjective biographies of a place. In consequence, this part of the research uses open-ended interview for unfolding the semiotic processes operated upon the street name by the individuals living there and gender differences in constructing memories. Semi-structured interviews with locals’ prospect for the meanings associated with the name of the street where they domicile and which also represents the focus of the case study. The central themes of interview focus on the memories associated with the street name, personal or collective events and stories fixed by its’ denomination, attitudes towards the changing of street names by local authorities, the manner in which individuals relate to the toponymy of their street and in which they integrate it in their personal narrative. This technique is meant to outline oral histories of the street; a biography of the place complementary to the official development overtook in the case study of Ion Câmpineanu Street.
Research Analysis and Interpretations

Clash of the Titans¹: Power Distribution in (Re)Naming Streets

When referring to structures of symbolical power circulated by street denominations, the most pronounced differences between categories have been recorded in the case of gender. In sector one of Bucharest, there are no alleys, roads, main roads, highroads or boulevards baptized after women. Only 7% of the number of streets bearing names of persons refers to a feminine personality. It could be argued that the present reality is the result of the social division of genders in the historical development of humanity. Feminine roles have been long ascribed to the private sphere of life, which presumed domestic activities and an active agency in the education of children. At the same time, men have always been associated with roles subsumed to the public domain of existence, which permitted access to social positions and functions invested with influence and prestige. Masculine figures were empowered with military, political, social and intellectual prerogatives, which enabled them to prove their qualities. Men were the most eligible to be prescribed with remarkable destinies as kings, warriors, generals, philosophers, orators, politicians, thinkers while feminine figures tended to remain behind the curtains of history, educating those who were to be the future heroes. This explanation could account for the unequal division between men and women in naming streets. Due to the manner in which gender roles were socially constructed, it appears that masculine figures were invested in key positions and functions as beneficiaries of prolific historical contexts. In other words, the social organization empowered men to play the most memorable roles of history.

However, even if the majority is still constituted of men, women are best represented in naming entrances. The label of ‘entrance’ is used for the smallest streets with a dead end, therefore, we are actually talking about hierarchy when referring to the dimension and visibility of streets named by men and of those denominated after feminine figures. Even when taking into account women who proved themselves remarkable in history, the importance they are invested with is still marginal as they are only ascribed with ‘blind alleys’.

Regarding the total of 849 streets, 322 of them are named after a man and 24 after a woman. More than a quarter of them is presented in a role which accentuates the

¹ Title borrowed from the American cinematographic production: Clash of the Titans. United States of America: Warner Home Video, 2010. Film.
relationship with a man. Therefore, they are daughters\(^1\) or wives\(^2\) of important men in history. Their husbands or fathers are usually voivodes. For example, we have Doamna Despina, Neagoe Basarab's wife, and Doamna Stanca, the wife of Mihai Viteazul. Functions of servants at the royal court are evoked, for example, Maria Clucereasa was responsible with the food supply for the royal family and guests. In Romanian, the term "clucereasa" refers to the spouse of the so-called "clucer". Veronica Micle is an interesting example from this point of view because she was not married to Mihai Eminescu, but their love affair and all the letters revealed later on were responsible with her notoriety so I believe she could be integrated in this category. The present findings could suggest that women become memorable due to their connection to powerful men with visible positions in the social hierarchy. Characteristics such as marital status and family of origin become central to the recollection of feminine figures. In short, women appear to be valued according to what is already ascribed by existing social structures.

A second category refers to female figures known for their professional attainments or for being the first woman to defer in a certain professional domain. Here we have the example of Ecaterina Teodoroiu, sub-lieutenant, who fought in the First World War. Another example is Elena Caragiani which was the first woman to be an aviator in Romania. In the artistic sphere, there is the soprano Hariclea Darclée, the actress Frosa Sarandy and writers such as Elena Văcărescu. We remarked three religious characters: Saint Mary, Saint Alexandra and Saint Teofana.

The historical marginality of women has been a subject of concern for feminist theorists (Mihăilescu 2006, 132 - 136), who talk about a weakening of collective memory regarding feminine historical personalities and their cultural inheritance. Mihăilescu argues that even feminine figures of autochthonous or international sonority, pioneers in the struggle for rights and freedoms for women, are placed at the loose ends of history. Street denominations do not seem to represent a dissonant tone among other vehicles of social memory as historical treaties, encyclopedias of personalities and dictionaries, which also seem to lack feminine models. Also, urban repositories of femininity like buildings which employ particular significance for the social emancipation of women as the Woman's House are not fixed in the collective memory by any sign usually placed on memorial monuments.

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\(^1\) domnița  
\(^2\) doamna
Regarding types of accomplishments, male figures belong to a variety of professions such as politicians, voivodes, rulers, historians, essayists, prose writers, poets, play writers, actors, doctors, chemists, physicians, metropolitans, bishops, sculptors, painters, pharmacists or different positions at the royal court. Saints are also prominent personalities among the ones celebrated in the collective memory by naming a street. The most prominent professional category in denominating streets refers to high culture. Consequently, this finding could suggest personalities with cultural accomplishments are invested with value by the present socio-political order. Another perspective which could be employed in interpreting this result refers to the fact that Romanian society has been prolific in producing intellectually endowed individuals. Another justification for this result may refer to the fact that this category was oppressed by communist authorities, a fact that would lead to a present exoneration of its memory. However, this could also be the consequence of the fact that the cultural domains comprises a diversity of profession such as artistic professions and intellectual professional trajectories such as writers, theoreticians, publicists, professors, social scientists.

The next most popular category of accomplishments in denominating streets refers to military ranks. This finding suggests that according to the axiological system of contemporary Romanian society the Army represents an institution which is considered worthy of social recognition. However, the Romanian people have only fought when threatened and provoked, when geopolitical contexts utterly demanded action. It has not been animated by colonist or imperialistic ideals. The prestige affiliated with military occupations could be understood as a smothered desire of Romanians of becoming what they never were: a military power. The valorization of personalities with military accomplishments could also make reference to a fondness of heroic bearing, the sacrifice leitmotif, usually characteristic to the nationalist stage of political development.

In the same line with observations formulated by Light, Nicolae and Suditu (2002), the practice of using the same name for several streets in order to consolidate its social investment is sustained by the results of the present research. It is the case of denominations used both for naming an entrance, an alley, a boulevard and for referring to a street. A couple of examples which illustrate the principle are Grigore Alexandrescu Entrance and Street, Ion Mihalache Entrance and Boulevard, Iulia Haşdeu Entrance and Street, Nicolae Iorga Entrance and Street, Știrbei Vodă Entrance and Street.
Sector 1 of Bucharest City encompasses 157 entrances (intrări), 17 alleys (alei), 849 streets (străzi), 7 roads (drumuri), 20 main roads (căi), 16 highroads (șosele) and 34 boulevards (bulevard). Due to our research objectives, the dimension concerned with analyzing power distribution comprises only the streets which are named after individuals. However, this represents a limit of the data employed in the research because as a result of the process of renaming, many of the streets which are not presently baptized after persons have borne such names in the past. Another limit of the utilized information refers to the way categories were defined in the construction of the database. Research results would have been more precise if professions would have been described in detail and not presented in wide categories such as medical field, army, culture, politics, religious ranks and titles and combinations among the domains.

**Down Memory Lane: Ion Câmpineanu Street**

The argument for choosing Ion Câmpineanu Street as the focus of my case study refers to the abundance and diversity of elements which are gathered under this street denomination and transform the urban realm into an eclectic memorial landscape, a mélange of modernity and conservatism, between consumerist sensation and communist nostalgia. Ion Câmpineanu Street will be further analyzed from the perspective of street denomination shifts, from the point of view of the place’s historical and present setting and as it is constructed in the perception of locals. In addition, marks of feminine personalities, memories and experiences will be prospected for in this central and diverse area of Bucharest. Also, it is of interest for the present study to carry out preliminary inquiries concerning the recurrence of politics of marginality in the history of a street.

The first denomination consigned by official documents from the City Hall and Bucharest’s Street Guides is Lutheran Street. This name is determined by the proximity of the Lutheran Church. According to its website, the Church dates from the nineteenth century and it was constructed by the German architect Monbach with the support of German aristocracy and of religious organizations. Furthermore, the fact that the Lutheran Church is at the intersection of Știrbei Vodă Street, Lutheran Street and Ion Câmpineanu Street is not accidental as it was constructed under the reign of Barbu

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2 In Romanian, Luterană Street.
Ştirbei. In consequence, some street denominations still conserve the memory of the place they indicate. In the inter-war period, the street was renamed after Aristide Briand (1862 - 1932), who was the Prime Minister of France for eleven mandates. He was also recompensed for the Locarno Treaties by being awarded with the Nobel Price. Naming a central street after Aristide Briand symbolized the recognition of his accomplishments, of his role in the international political scene and, furthermore, stood for the Romanian effort of aligning with French models and ideals.

The logic of choosing the next name of the street, that is Royal Street, is consistent with the first in terms of naming streets according to the history of the space, precisely due to its proximity to the Royal Palace, which presently hosts The National Museum of Art. This was the house of Prince Carol of Hohenzollern and of King Carol I, who initiated projects to extend the Palace. His preoccupation for the space and for his art collections also figure in his will. After it is affected by a fire, it is reconstructed and extended during Carol II’s reign. In the communist period, the street was renamed December 13th as a symbol of Proletarian manifestations of typographers in Bucharest, in December 1918. All leaders of the demonstration, including Ion C. Frimu, were further imprisoned and subdued to violent reprisals. After the Revolution of 1989, the street was given the name of Ion Câmpineanu (1789-1863), a boyar of Țara Românească, who was actively involved in the 1848 Revolution. He was particularly animated by cultural interest and took part at laying the foundation of the Philharmonic Society in 1833.

In consequence, Ion Câmpineanu Street possessed denominations invoking a religious institution, royalty, a French Prime Minister, laureate of the Nobel Prize, a proletarian event and a revolutionary boyar. Two wars, four street names later, its denomination still doesn’t celebrate a feminine Romanian figure although due to the exquisite inter-war fur boutique down the street, to the Union Cinema and the park nearby, Ion Câmpineanu Street has always been a popular spot for feminine audiences.

Nowadays, the street is popular for the various urban attractions which it accommodates. It is situated in a hyper-central area of Bucharest, close to University Square, at a twenty minutes’ walk from Roman Square and nearby Victory Road. Furthermore, it is in the proximity of the Civic Centre, which is intensely populated due

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2 In Romanian, 13 Decembrie.
3 In Romanian, Piața Universității.
4 In Romanian, Piața Romană.
to the multitude of bars, pubs, restaurants, coffeehouses, clubs concentrated in the same place. Ion Câmpineanu Street is marked by religious monuments such as Lutheran Church and Kretzulescu Church and cultural destinations such as The Palace Hall, which hosts concerts of popular international and autochthonous artists, conferences and expositions, The National Museum of Art of Romania, which is intensely visited not only for the sake of its collections, but also for the parties which are organized there. Pastry Shop Capşa House¹ is close to Ion Câmpineanu Street and Union Cinematograph is placed in its core. Encompassed by parks, it is situated in the proximity of Cişmigiu Park, ‘a place of affective resonance for any individual who lived in Bucharest’, as one of the female respondents stated.

The pronounced cultural resonance of the area is given by the proximity of The Romanian Atheneum, of the Central University Library ‘Carol I’ of Bucharest, to the National Museum of Art of Romania, to several art galleries. Due to the proximity of the popular Muzica Store and of the National University of Music from Bucharest, Ion Câmpineanu Street is also a focus for musicians as the place is pinned with stores with musical equipment and musical productions companies: Music Shop, Muzică For You, Senia Music. Among them, the passers-by can observe shop fronts exposing expensive and professional sportive equipment, emblematic for urban lifestyles of young people: Sport Virus, Outdoor Equipment, Surmount Bikes and Boards Store. In this respect, shop fronts on Ion Câmpineanu Street construct sports as inherent to masculinity because most of the lay figures are representations of men. The street's landscape encloses highly contrasting elements such as the juxtaposition of names such as Outdoor Equipment and Aquarius Garments², which could be called ‘left-over spaces of state-socialism’ (Light and Young 2010), spaces created by the communist regime which were re-appropriated to suit capitalist functions.

The memories recalled by respondents, who live on Ion Câmpineanu Street in different periods from 1950 until the present, are strongly connected with affections they experienced on this street: the harsh sound of tramway 6 which turned at the corner waking them up in the early morning, the taste of their favorite sweets from the nearby pastry, for which they saved money for weeks, the chill of the nights when they queued for passes at the Union Cinema, the sight of a homeless feeding the birds with his only piece of bread. According to the expectations of this research, the memory of Ion

¹ In Romanian, Casa Capşa.
² In Romanian, Vărsător – Haine.
Câmpineanu Street in the perception of interviewees has a pronounced affective content. In all the ten interviews I conducted, living on a street was linked to the stages of one’s life: childhood, adolescence, youth, maturity and aging. Furthermore, for women, marking events of one’s existence are fixed by the space they are consumed in: first love, first written poem or song, marriage, having a child, death of parents. This space is invested with the role of repository of memories. While the content of experience is first embedded in the depth of the landscape, in time, the individual comes back to the space after he or she has left it in order to revive the times he or she longs for. Gender disparities regarding the content of memories were more vivid when talking to aged couples. Women tend to regularize memories relating to stages of their marital relationships, for example, getting married or having the first child while men incline to demarcate time periods by referring to material achievements like the first house or the first car, but of course until further studies in depth these preliminary findings can only serve as starting points.

According to my results, individuals tend to create coherency within the spatial and temporal patterns of their life, searching for connections between the numbers they lived at, the name of the street and their significance for the experiences they went through while being there. The interpretations of the number of their address are of the domain of superstition or connected to their date of birth. Furthermore, similar associations are established between the personality naming the street and own familial history, place or region of origin, other relatives’ forenames or last names.

From this point of view, that of the connection between the history of the space and its denomination, respondents appear to still be convinced that there is a logical correspondence between the two. For example, one of the female respondents I interviewed needed to get to the Embassy of France and was shocked to learn that it is not situated on Paris Street as it ‘should be’. In this line of thought, there was a respondent who stated that this should be the role of street denominations, precisely that of indicating what one could find at that location. For instance, an interviewee concluded that Abatorului Street must be a place where he can surely find a butchery. Moreover, the initiative of naming a street near Mogoșoaia Palace after Princess Martha Bibescu was applauded according to the same principle of marking the history of the space by means of street denomination.
Regarding the process of renaming, one of the interviewee recalled that her father once took part of a committee for naming streets and described the procedure they followed in choosing names. After selecting prominent personalities and beautiful names, the committee appealed to the dictionary in order to find suitable words. Respondents manifested their preference for streets named according to aesthetical principles, melodic names, with enjoyable resonance and when asked about what types of personalities they would consider appropriate for naming streets all respondents referred to masculine figures with cultural accomplishments, writers, philosophers like Ion Luca Caragiale, Constantin Noica, Emil Cioran. Moreover, living on a street named after a person they admire is perceived as adding prestige to the street.

Conclusions and Reflections

Developing from the premise that principles of the socio-political order of the moment determine street denomination (Azaryahu 1996), the present study employed three complementary objectives: power distribution among genders and professions in the present configuration of street denomination, the street as ‘memorial landscape’ and its subjective history as it is recreated by locals. Resting upon West and Zimmerman’s considerations about gender as 'the activity of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate for one’s sex category' (West and Zimmerman 1987, 127), the present study endeavoured to delineate the regulatory functions of urban spaces, street denominations in particular, in constructing and reconstructing gender identity. While masculinity is presented as remarkable, denoting main arterial boulevards, femininity is at its best marginal, a name for a 'blind alley'. Women seem to be les grandes perdantes of history. With no legacy to arise from, they are mostly celebrated only on the strength of their liaison with the men surrounding them, fathers, husbands or sons, for example, Doamna Despina, Doamna Stanca or for enacting masculine behaviors, attitudes and values. Honouring women like Ana Ipătescu or Ecaterina Teodoroiu can be interpreted as a manner of stating that women are usually not capable of such acts of courage and strong will, that is why they are considered to be a model to strive after. Such female figures could be celebrated as the exception that is meant to fortify the rule.

Methodological triangulation between quantitative analysis, case study and face-to-face social inquiry was utilized to investigate the significances embedded in street
names from three different angles: patterns in naming streets, the renaming of one street and locals' attitudes regarding street denomination with a gender focus. The analysis of Sector One from the perspective of present denominations of streets named after people illustrated an unequal distribution among genders. According to research findings, there are no alleys, roads, main roads, highroads or boulevards celebrating feminine memory in Sector One, Bucharest. In a total of 849 streets, 322 celebrate a masculine figure and only 24 account for feminine personalities. While men name boulevards, highroads and roads, feminine figures are only evoked in entrances and streets. Among professions, cultural and military accomplishment are best represented among street names. The preference for military and scientific professional trajectories, only recently approachable by women, does not endorse celebration of feminine identity, memories and experiences.

Hence, street toponymy as an embodied instrument employed in the social construction of gender in urban spaces are congruent with other vehicles of social memory as historical treaties, dictionaries or encyclopedias of personalities in the marginalization of feminine cultural heritage. Collective memory isn’t only responsible for what individuals remember, but also for what they forget. It is Maurice Halbwachs who remarks that social memory is not a question of preservation, but rather of reconvention (Chelcea 1998). Hence, it provides mechanisms of reconstruction and reinterpretation of memories in order to offer justifications for present actions. In this line of thought, presenting feminine figures, memory and experience as peripheral to Romanian social memory as it is reflected in street denominations in Sector 1 of Bucharest could contribute to justifying and preserving this position in the present social configuration.

The area of Ion Câmpineanu Street is at the junction of cultural, religious, entertainment, relaxation, leisure and consumerist interests, a space where memorial significances blend in together without creating a dissonant tone, but rather homogenizing into a spectacular realm of everyday life. Semi-structured interviews sustained the expectation regarding subjective meanings individuals invest in street denominations. In addition, the research revealed numerous aspects of the sensatory content of located memory, of the connection respondents establish between naming and the history of the space. Moreover, it asserted gender disparities in the nature of elements used by respondent to regulate memories on a linear axis. Female respondents
tend to temporally layout memories by reference to family-related accomplishments such as marriage or the first-born while material attainments seem to be preferred as milestones for regulating memories. However, it is true this finding is more prominent in the case of aged respondents. Due to the reduced number of interviews conducted, such findings can only serve as leading points for further research.

I suggest as further directions of study treating the selection among historical personalities, who are socially valued as being more or less memorable in relation with the concept of multiple and intersectional discrimination, which highlights that individuals become an object of direct or indirect discrimination as result of a superposition of several characteristics or identities and not only based on one criterion (Grüenberg, Borza, 2008). Further studies should also focus upon the link between identitary aggregations of features like gender, ethnicity, political appurtenance, type of accomplishment, social origin and the distribution of the named street in the urban setting: central or peripheral position, the rank of the street (entrance, street, avenue, and boulevard) or the amount of the biographical information found on the name plate. Moreover, photography, paintings, drawings can be used in order to reconstruct a visual history of the street. Auditory means of consolidating a memorial landscape such as songs and other written sources such as poems, novels are to be studied as they also contribute to the collective meanings invested in the urban landscape. What is more, the on-line environment, especially blogs and social networks, is a repository for several types of individual memorial like blog spots, personal photos, Facebook tags and posts.

The present research only offers preliminary conclusions, which can stand as premises for future research. However, I believe that it is proof for asserting that street denominations and urban settings represent a fertile field for sociologic investigation and can offer material for a diversity of themes ascribed to several domains such as urban anthropology and planning, visual anthropology, architecture, politics, gender studies, sociology of values and of discrimination.

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Street Declined in Masculine: Sexualities, Real Estate Market and Masculinities in São Paulo Downtown (Brazil)

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Abstract
This article addresses, theoretically, empirical data about the production of centers and peripheries in downtown São Paulo, taking as vectors gender and sexuality-based assumptions of differences. Such a thematic and epistemological approach comes from produced data which discusses the existence of a “gay street” in São Paulo: the Frei Caneca Street. Contrastingly, República region appears as carrier of a type of homosexuality less legitimate, poorer, darker, dirtier and sicker, and therefore, a less interesting masculine-feminized homosexuality. This article is based in two São Paulo city districts, located in the central region of São Paulo, República and Consolação. Such districts congregate most options for night leisure, shopping and meetings between homosexuals. A considerable amount of streets and sets of streets in this region are generically called “gay”, although the presence of identity-defined audiences is complex and variable. Their identities vary among lesbians, bisexuals, transvestites, transsexuals and queer people, and those who don’t have a well-marked identification. But what kind of space is gendered here? And how does this process impact space, city and people?

Key words: gender • sexuality • space • Brazil

Summary
In Portuguese, the term rua (street) is feminine. There is no neutral gender in Portuguese, either something is masculine or it is feminine, the closest possibility to an equitable genre declension in this language are the so-called comum de dois (two common) adjectives, as it happens to poeta (poet), a term used for both men and women. But in common parlance, things are either ela (she) or ele (he). Just like many other everyday objects, such as cadeira (chair), mesa (table) or colher (spoon), rua (street) is a gendered thing. This kind of qualification of an object, which attributes gender difference through inflection of certain terms that alludes to the noun in question, is
commonplace in Portuguese and in other akin Latin-originated languages such as Spanish, French and Italian. *Cidade* (city), for example, is a feminine noun in the four mentioned languages: *a cidade* (Pt.), *la ciudad* (Es.), *la ville* (Fr.), *la città* (It). In all these cases, the word *city* is a feminine noun, *the city* is a woman.

From its water runoff properties to the traffic area at towns, one could say that the street -“woman” is passage and stasis to men, is a place of change through the masculine.

Social scientists show how the separation between the house and the street, for example, segregates public and private, masculine and feminine, political and apolitical as distinct dimensions in social life. *Rua*, a feminine noun, is transformed through the action of masculine collectives composed by men who work and interfere in the most important decisional fields, in the present and in its future. The street, therefore, inflects to masculine.

This article addresses theoretically empirical data about the production of centers and peripheries in downtown São Paulo, taking as vectors gender and a sexuality-based difference assumption. On the one hand, such a thematic and epistemological approach comes from produced data which discuss the existence of a “gay street” in São Paulo: the Frei Caneca Street. On the other hand, the Repúbica region appears as carrier of a type of homosexuality less legitimate, poorer, darker, dirtier and sicker, and therefore, a less interesting masculine-feminized homosexuality. This article is inspired from two São Paulo city districts, located in the central region of São Paulo, República and Consolação. Such districts congregate most options for night leisure, shopping and meeting among homosexually behaving people. A considerable amount of streets and sets of streets in this region are generically called “gay”, although presence of identity-defined audiences is complex and variable. Their identities vary among lesbians, bisexuals, transvestites, transsexuals and queer people, and those who don’t have a well-marked identification. But what kind of space is gendered here? And how does this process impact space, city and people?

**Introduction**

In Portuguese, the term *rua* (street) is feminine. There is no neutral gender in Portuguese, either something is masculine, or feminine, the closest possibility to an equitable genre attribution in this language are the so-called *comum de dois* (two common) adjectives, as it happens to *poeta* (poet), a term used for both men and women.
But in common parlance, things are either ela (she) or ele (he). Just like many other everyday objects, such as cadeira (chair), mesa (table) or colher (spoon), rua (street) is a gendered thing. This sort of qualification of an object, which attributes gender difference through inflection of certain terms that alludes to the noun in question, is commonplace in Portuguese and in other akin Latin-originated languages such as Spanish, French and Italian. Cidade (city), for example, is a feminine noun in the three mentioned languages: a cidade (Pt.), la ciudad (Es.), la ville (Fr.), la città (It.). In all these cases, the word city is a feminine noun, the city is a woman.

Let us go back to the term rua (street), from this city outlook. Etymologically, rua is a “feminine noun”, derived from the Latin word ruga, which, in its turn, means groove-shaped skin fold. This shape that names the street-thing refers to a half-cone, opened to the flow of water. Rua, in this case, comes from this L-shape, groovy shape; but the rua synonyms, vala (ditch) and sarjeta (gutter) – also feminine nouns – refer to filthy and degraded spaces. Vala can also refer in Portuguese to the place where we bury the dead, whilst sarjeta is the spot where drunkards and the dying can be found. In the sarjeta (gutter) are those who fell down; in the vala (ditch), those who are already gone.

From its water runoff qualities to its existence as traffic territory in cities, one could say that the street -“woman” is passage and stasis to men, is a place of change through the masculine. Social scientists\(^1\) shows how the separation between the house and the street, for example, segregates public and private, masculine and feminine, political and apolitical as distinct dimensions of the social life. Rua, a feminine noun, is transformed by the action of masculine collectives, composed by men who work and interfere in its most important decisions, in its present and in its future. The street, therefore, inflects to masculine.

I would like to point out this phenomenon as a good manner of reflecting how spaces of a big city are gendered and I assume that streets can only be understood in their complexity if this dimension is considered essential to the production of sense, difference and discrimination. They are shapes through which spaces and subjects are characterized as feminine or masculine. This article addresses theoretically my ongoing PhD empirical data about the production of centers and peripheries in downtown São Paulo, taking as vectors gender and sexuality-based assumptions of differences. Such

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\(^1\) See, for example: Souza, O Espírito das Roupas; Massey, For Space; DaMatta, A Casa & A Rua; and Rose, Feminism and Geographical Knowledge.
thematic and epistemological approaches come from produced data that discuss the existence of a “gay street” in São Paulo. Frei Caneca Street, the so-called city’s “gay street”, exists in a legitimate way as a possibility to masculine homosexuality, fluxes following determined gender standards. Conversely, República region appears as carrier of a type of homosexuality less legitimate, poorer, darker, dirtier and sicker, and therefore, a less interesting masculine-feminized homosexuality.

Empirical data come from two São Paulo city districts, located in the central region of São Paulo, República and Consolação. Such districts congregate most options for night leisure, shopping and homosexual meetings. A considerable amount of streets and sets of streets in this area are generically called “gay”, although presence of identity-defined audiences is complex and variable. Audience identities can vary from lesbians, bisexuals, transvestites, transsexuals and queer people to those who don’t have a well-marked identification.

In this article, I intend to demonstrate how sexual identities’ definitions are contextually produced inside determined situations. I shall follow Brah’s (1996) approach to the production of difference - something also spotted by Hall et al. (1996) and Agier (2009) in his research concerning urban space. The city is not something meant to be taken for granted. I also employ Rose (1993) and Massey (2005) proposals on the feminist geography debate, which contests not only the gendered-space status in subject, but also the way it helps men in Academia to reproduce knowledge. Regarding this matter, and in a more incisive way, Butler (1990) gives evidence about how such an outline conducts to the naturalization of a gendered space. But what kind of space is gendered here? And how does this process impact space, city and people?

**Gentrification and gendering: where streets, gender and cities interfere on urban planning**

Binnie & Skeggs (2004) show how a region in downtown Manchester, historically known for its working class presence and housing, gradually acquired new characteristics. In the 2000’s, due to cheaper building plots, some pubs and restaurants targeting masculine homosexual audiences were settled in a certain set of streets, changing the outline of the area. The authors show how this process reveals the transformation of that place in the town, previously acknowledged as a Manchester-like place, into an internationally well-known location offering “sophisticated” and bold services. According to the authors, this region was compared to other areas with
services targeting gay audiences such as areas in cities like Amsterdam and Barcelona, making it less English and more cosmopolitan. Little by little, the gay presence made the space safer to women who defined themselves as heterosexuals, since they could walk around this place without being harassed. One could say that this process enabled the central zone of Manchester to become more feminine than gay, inside a cosmopolitism logic that allows an expression of homosexual masculinity and disallows invasive and aggressive heterosexual masculinities at the same time. This course of events has also raised building plots prices, making these spaces of meeting, leisure and consumption prohibitive to the working class that used to be part of this region before the gentrification and gendering process.

There are similarities and differences between central zones of São Paulo and the Manchester case, especially concerning appropriation and acknowledgement of some streets as “gay”, investments in new options for night leisure and housing market investments over the past ten years. This also impacts people's understanding of São Paulo’s center, and how it is characterized and valued. Two examples of presentation of Consolação and República in different media help in understanding the ways gendering the city leads to gentrification: new housing market advertising brochures and guidebooks featuring maps directing foreign gay tourists to places of interest in the city. On the one hand, both media build up an idea of center that displaces the official Center of the city, making it, therefore, more desirable. On the other hand, they design a desirable sexuality network on the map of the Center. In general, places such as pubs, restaurants and night clubs in the region which include Frei Caneca and Augusta streets gain centrality in terms of options offered to tourists, while spaces like the República Square and Arouche Square, historically known for their gay attendance spots, become invisible. In order to make the explanation clearer, I will briefly highlight some points that enlighten and shape zones, streets, neighborhoods and cities arisen from assumptions of sexualities as a definition mark. These spaces are located inside the República and Consolação districts, contiguous spaces in downtown São Paulo.

These two districts are among the most populated of São Paulo and their occupancy and urbanization started in the second half of the XIX Century - early occupancy, considering the city’s development. These districts include neighborhoods filled up with shops, bars, restaurants, residential buildings, hotels, office buildings, cultural options and offers of urban equipments such as hospitals, bus stations, subway
In these districts, for example, one can find the city's Municipal Theatre and part of the Paulista Avenue, two main São Paulo symbols. In spite of a greater presence of middle class and upper-middle class residents in Consolação than República district, home to people with lower incomes, there are streets that don't fit in these regions’ outline. Furthermore, the gendered-gentrification process mentioned above has been altering sensibly this outline, leading to rapid socio-economic profile changes in both districts. Before moving on to the understanding of present actions and contexts, it's necessary to go back a few decades to locate the homosexuality question in the city and in the two regions and also to comprehend how differences produced in the relation between the two regions impact the understanding of each region's identity.

República, the oldest district, also includes the earliest public gay occupancy in São Paulo. Data stating this region as a space of meeting and leisure for homosexual audiences reaches back to the 1950s, in one of the first Sociological researches on the theme in Brazil. Posterior to this date, there’s Néstor Perlongher's (2008) work of impact about masculine prostitution in this region. His oeuvre allows a broader outlook of República in terms of class, ethnicity and gender in interface with its urban occupancy in the 1980s. In this work, there is already information on drug dealing and drug consumers, one of the features that stigmatizes central region of São Paulo nowadays as dangerous, dirty and poor. This profile is in plain change. To the purposes of this article, I will consider especially República Square, Vieira de Carvalho Avenue and Arouche Square triad as the region of “República”.

The Consolação district arose a little later than República, when the city's urbanization trailed to the route now known as Paulista Avenue. In comparison to the Republica, the presence of homosexual audiences in Consolação is of a more recent date, as well as research reports on the theme providing data on Consolação. As remarkable records there are the works of França (2006), Vega (2008) and Rocha (2013). These works show the 2000s as the turning point for the spatial change in this region: leisure spaces targeting gay audience’s moves from southern region of Paulista Avenue to its avenue’s central region, taking mainly Augusta and Frei Caneca streets. Puccinelli (2013) shows the transformations undergone by the region, focusing on Frei Caneca Street, to which a gay identity is assigned. A mark of this attributed identity was the Mall

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1 "Homossexualismo em São Paulo", José Fábio da Silva's thesis, defended in the University of São Paulo and lost during the military regime. James Green and Ronaldo Trindadé's work on its recovery has allowed its publication in 2005.
and Convention Center Frei Caneca opening in 2001, sued two years later for the actions of a security guard, who cashed out a couple of boys who were exchanging in affectionate gestures inside the mall. The place was already known by nicknames which alluded to its customer’s homosexuality, and the removal, together with the prosecution on the place, helped disseminate such identification even internationally.

Meanwhile, the real estate market expansion in Brazil and São Paulo turned to this region as construction site for new residential buildings. Once Consolação district urbanization is relatively old, there were no free or cheap construction plots for these real estate projects. Moreover, the decreasing presence of prostitutes on Augusta Street helped valuing the projects and multiply the buying options. Data gathered on the region, from real estate brokers, account for the dissemination of the idea of a gay presence in the region as an appeal to the arrival of new buyers and residents of these new housing projects. Also the valuation of the idea of living in the center of the city, a cosmopolitan and open minded space, aims to draw buyers by locating the center in this region. This occurred initially on the Frei Caneca Street, the city’s “gay street”, following, more intensively, on the Augusta Street, reaching Paim Street\(^1\). This context resembles changes analyzed by Binnie & Skeggs, besides the fact that the region hasn’t become safer to some segments of its goers\(^2\). As already mentioned, this region includes the Frei Caneca, Augusta and Paim streets, in addition to Paulista Avenue. In order to simplify the explanation, I will be calling it “Augusta”.

1 The Paim street is a Frei Caneca street by street, which for a long time was known as home for poor, northeastern migrants (that suffer origin discrimination in the city of São Paulo and in other states from Southeast and South regions of the country), drug dealers’ work, and home for prostitutes and transvestites. As great part of the housings were tenements, little by little the construction enterprises began to buy these housings for low prices, and opening the path for seven residential buildings in an area of five hundred meters, drastically affecting the housing profile of the street.

2 During the process of Frei Caneca Street “gay” identity attribution and the profile change on Augusta Street, violence towards LGBT people became clearer and issued on broad circulation media. That is partially related to a larger expression of social media complaints in Brazil, but also for the fact that the region has become a reference point of LGBT presence, which makes hate crimes more frequent.
Since 2013, the real estate housing market started to migrate to República region, where nowadays there are five real estate projects scattered on different streets. In spite of the República region being almost neglected by traveling guidebooks directed to foreign gay-audiences, it starts fitting into an interesting central housing idea, also because of its gay presence. But the masculine homosexuality mentioned as an appeal on these distinct marketing contexts doesn't occur on the same way, neither does the market look for reaching every and any gay person. The term itself, gay, generically used, hides specificities of the people in flux thus classified, especially concerning a positively or negatively gendered space definition. It corresponds to a symbolic valuation of streets and city spaces, taking a presence as the exclusive attribute of this street that can interest future buyers. Similarly to what Binnie & Skeggs describe in their study, the use of the term gay helps creating real estate speculation to new housing and business for what it can congregate of masculine and buying power to this generic homosexual person. Brah (1996), in this sense, allows us to reflect upon how alterity is built in context: the homosexual gay person produced in Augusta values this region whilst homosexual bicha (fag) person produced in República devalues this district. Here, processes of spatial gentrification are intricately connected to processes of homosexuality valuation through a greatly normative masculinity. The street, as the city, in other to be valuable, must be inflected to masculine.

Hereafter, I approach the speech of two research interlocutors who shed light on the way in which gay street/space/city arises from the process here contextualized.

**Two equidistant points: Adriano, Fernando and Eliel**

In 2013 I talked more closely to people populating the leisure spaces on Augusta region, especially with clusters formed at a corner bar on Frei Caneca Street. My intention was to understand the dynamics of street spaces occupancy and how those who occupied them to have fun having understood the idea of hanging out on a “gay street”. In a complementary way, I talked to region residents, some businessmen, and followed the real estate market expansion, observant to how these different dimensions complemented themselves in the comprehension of what was the homosexuality of the street. To a great extent, what is printed in the different speeches is a strong idea of (homo) sexuality legitimated by gender performance of who speaks in contrast to whom is spoken of. The interlocutors built a “me” and an “other”, on which the latter was
always disqualified by their more feminine expressions. It’s important to notice that defining oneself as being gay, in this case, necessarily included defining oneself masculine and, therefore, desirable. Therefore, the one who speaks is in the center, whilst the one whom is spoken of is in the periphery.

This production of differences includes other markers triggered with performances of gender, ethnicity, social class and place of origin in the city. Moreover, the contrast between undesirable profiles and places became clearer during the conversation with people like Adriano¹, for example. Tall, white, light eyes and hair, athletic, self-defined as gay, Adriano is 26 years-old and graduated Journalism at a private University. Nowadays, he is dedicated to Dramatics, working as an actor and producer, but also episodically works as model, photos being available on his personal Facebook page. Adriano was introduced to me by a friend who knew my research interests and knew about his former attendance on Frei Caneca Street, an attendance which has ceased recently. He lives with his parents, both physicians, in Paraíso, southeastern region of the city.

I chose fragments of this conversation with Adriano because it is illustrative for a large part of speeches about the “gay street” and its region, in contrast to the República region, although he has only been in República for a short period of time. It’s important to note that this contrast is spatial, and focused on undesirable people only a few meters away from Adriano, in other words, theoretically we would all be on the same region, but that’s not exactly how it is.

For our discussion, I suggested going to the mall or to a corner pub which becomes quite crowded on evenings and weekends, the “bar d’A Lôca”². However, Adriano suggested the pub Frey Café & Coisinhas³, quite close to the Frei Caneca Mall, since it was “mais arrumado” (neater): “the Bar d’A Lôca is also gay, but it’s very ‘cagado’ (shitty).”

Adriano relates purchasing power to a higher tolerance, information and “culture”. According to him, people in the region Augusta and at the mall had less purchasing power and, therefore, less information and education:

¹ All names have been changed.
² The “bar d’A Lôca” is a common pub that acquired this name for being next to the “A Lôca” night club, whose gay attendance is massive on some weekdays. Its official name is "To-Zé", but almost none of its customers calls it that. Most of the people who consume at this pub stand on the sidewalk, even if there's space to sit inside the pub.
³ The “Frey Café & Coisinhas” pub offers a more “sophisticated” and expansive menu, has a concern with spaces decoration and the attendance of DJs.
“People with lower purchasing power are more ignorant, have more prejudice, are very *tadinhas, cagadinhas* (poor thing!, shitty). But even so, I think there are more open minded people with low purchasing power on Frei Caneca. But in my opinion a person with more money, a family person, is more O.K. with being gay, with oneself being gay. In fact, the mall has become a ‘gay hole’, but that’s good, because people can greet with kisses, exchange affection without having problems. At the beginning, I thought it was a normal mall and later I came to realize how things stood, because of two flirting moves. One took place in the mall’s toilet. I was at the urinal and the guy next to me began to show his hard dick, trying to grab me, I left and realized that this kind of thing happened a lot there [laughs]. I don’t come here to walk around. Because, you know, everything is related to money, to purchasing power. As lower the social class, more *PCO* fag, *poc-poc* fag, lower education and culture. Because there are niminy-piminy gays and men gays, but the latter are hard to acknowledge as gays”

**Me:** “And how would you define the Frei Caneca Street, where is it located in town?”

**Adriano:** “The street is in the Center, on the old Augusta, on the low Augusta, theoretically poorer. Augusta has a Center’s atmosphere, it has beggars, whores, it frightens people because of robbery, there, on the lower part. Yet Frei Caneca is gay, so if you go down the street you’re not so scared because gay people are not violent, you feel at home. The street is placid even if it’s crowded. The Frei Caneca is welcoming, you feel at ease. Even the commercial employees here have a more open mind from seeing so much gay and the street has become a way to the gay having their space, every city has a gay space, in São Paulo, the most famous, is here, the Frei Caneca. In Center there was a gay street before the Frei Caneca, I don’t recall its name, but now the gay street is here, because in Center this is minority, the gay are much marginalized and the Frei Caneca is the best option.”

In the above excerpts of Adriano’s speech, the Frei Caneca Street that arises is identified, positively, with some places, such as Frey, chosen by him for the

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1 Both “ploc-ploc” and “poc-poc” are adjectives which emphasize the effeminacy of a fag, making reference to the high heels’ sound. “PCO” is an abbreviation to “*pão com ovo*” (egg sandwich), an expression which refers to poverty and this kind of food as only feeding option.
conversation, but negatively when it comes to other spaces, such as the "bar d’A Lôca". It’s Center is Augusta, and has in itself - a flow of people with lower purchasing power, more “ignorant”, “tadinhas” (poor girls!). But, still, there’s something positive about this less desirable occupancy. Nevertheless, Adriano says he doesn’t wish to live there, he prefers the traditional neighborhoods in town, such as Paraíso and Jardim Europa.

It’s important to pay attention to the terms Adriano uses while referring to the lower purchasing power people have, always on the feminine. They are expressions that altogether help us think about class and ethnicity, since Adriano relates such “fag” (and not gay) people to assumed material and formation poverty, and spots examples amongst darker people relating to their color. The street is gay, he is gay and the place where he’s in is gay, but not the “others”. “His” street is masculine.

A few months later, I invited Adriano to go to a night club on the República region, and he accepted. I waited for him at a pub on the surrounding area and, in spite of being able to move to the region by subway, he preferred going by car. When he arrived at the bar, he made sure that I got in the car so we could search for a parking lot even though we were two hundred meters from the night club. On the way, he made comments about the people who walked through the region, emphasizing the danger and the dirt of the streets and the people, something that seemed to grab his attention.

A similar idea was presented by Fernando, even more emphatic in his Center definition as Frei Caneca’s location and, therefore, of undesirable people. I met Fernando through colleagues’ indication, for his frequent attendance to Frei Caneca, mainly to the “Bar d’A Lôca” and to A Lôca itself. With 24 years-old, self-identified as gay, Nipponese descendant, Fernando lived on Penha, a neighborhood of eastern São Paulo, and worked at the Paulista avenue. By his suggestion, we went to the Shopping Center 3¹, which to him represents the same space about which I intended to talk, Augusta region. I asked him what the Frei Caneca was:

“For me, it’s all about the mall. Bar d’A Lôca is exclusive for meeting friends, I don’t like it there. I prefer the Barão da Itararé pub, which is calmer, you can go there with your boyfriend, and there is a different audience. At the bar d’A Loca, there are many ploc-ploc, I think all this “bichice” (faggotry) is unnecessary”

¹ The Center 3 is a mall localized on the Paulista Avenue, on the block between Augusta and Frei Caneca streets.
Fernando says that the mall has a gay history and even people from the inner side of the state knew this, without even going to the place: “there are many gayzinho (faggies), but it is an open place. At the mall, I always meet friends, but I don’t go walking there. It’s kind of shameless, you go to the bathroom and see some people at the urinal”.

He said he went to A Lôca only twice:

“A Lôca is full of calopsitas¹ (cockatiels), people with colorful hair. But what I really like is going to The Week² when the Gambiarra party is held. There’s difference between the audiences of one place to another, on The Week the economical class is higher, which is noticeable by the conversations, as well as by people’s formation. To tell the truth, of all the gay clubs on Frei, I only know A Lôca. There’s the Bofetada, but it’s a pub, there’s a cool, relaxed climate, the audience is different than the A Lôca’s, less exaggerated. As for gay pubs, for me there’s only the bar d’A Lôca.”

Me: And does the Frei Caneca differ much from Augusta?

“Very Much! Frei Caneca is gay, has more clubbing options and prettier things, the street is more beautiful. The Augusta is more of an underworld, darker, with older building. There circulates a more... indie, rock, over, exaggerated people. But people of both streets walk through them. But it’s impossible not to know that Frei Caneca is gay, that’s in traveling guidebooks. Here is the gay region of São Paulo. Here is the Southern Zone, the Paulista is Southern Zone, but Frei Caneca is more central. I live in Penha, here is much more elite than there, and I would live well here, I mean, I only live on my neighborhood, I don’t do anything there, I go out mainly here. Further from here, there are gay people also on Centro-República, over there there’s a concentration of dirty gay, if you talk to them for a long time you might even get a disease, Aids, for example. There, people dress in a more flashy, more colorful way, are less educated, there are very lean people, with a kind of sick face. In República, it’s also crowded with transvestites and male escorts, things you don’t see here on Paulista”

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¹ Fernando refers to the white bird with yellowed feathers on the top of its head, comparing it to people who have bleached or dyed hair with flashy colors, who go to A Lôca’s.

² A big night club which defines itself as gay, localized on the Lapa neighborhood, Western Zone, and known for the presence of higher purchasing power customers. França (2012) has an interesting comparative analysis between different parties and night clubs in São Paulo, which includes detailing on The Week.
Eliel speaks from another point of view and helps us understand the city's flows, the two highlighted regions, the discrimination and the masculinity expressions triggered by Adriano and Fernando. Eliel has a medium height, a skin considered brown or indigenous, dark and narrowed eyes and lives with his parents in Jardim Miriam, south peripheral region of São Paulo city. At the age of 27, Eliel works as a commercial agent of a food enterprise and defines himself as “jovem da periferia” (periphery young man) or “jovem LGBT da periferia” (periphery LGBT young man). Regarding his sexuality, Eliel defines himself as “gay”, but this word is not the most triggered as a presentation. He’d rather use a form of personal presentation which emphasizes his places of “origin”: coming from a region far from the Center and the LGBT militancy. Eliel is quite articulated with the municipal politics engaging LGBT people and that influences his speeches, but his transits helps us to comprehend the city's self characterization in terms of legitimated sexuality.

Almost every Sunday Eliel is with his boyfriend and a group of friends on Arouche Square, which they call “Vieira” making reference to an avenue next to the place. The Arouche is next to the República Square and it’s part of the República region, being one of the places of highest numeric attendance of homosexual audiences, mainly on Sundays. On a brief look, comes to view a significant amount of people that could be classified regarding color/ethnicity as dark or brown, on clear contrast with the massive presence of white people on the Augusta region. Part of the clothing and hairstyles also denote a more popular, of lower purchasing power audience, similar to the one described by Adriano and Fernando. This similarity, in spite of being punctual, registers a more generalized understanding of the profiles of people who attend each region. But are Eliel and his friends confined to the República?

There are at least three places that are inside a preferential circuit in the routes of Eliel and his friends: the Ibirapuera Park (southern zone), a square in Tatuapé (eastern zone) and the Augusta (he makes reference to the Peixoto Gomide Street, in the patch that connects Augusta and Frei Caneca streets). It’s interesting to consider this last place, the Augusta, as part of Eliel’s, which he uses mainly on the Friday and Saturday dawns.

The streets’ days and periods of occupancy are punctual and determine larger or lesser appreciation for the space. The Eliel’s “Augusta” is not as good as the “Vieira” and, on that, the three speeches, his Adriano’s and Fernando's joined: “There's a bunch of
people who go to the ‘Augusta’ get drugs and speak low of ‘Vieira’, but also go to ‘Vieira’. Many of them think that being on the ‘Augusta’ means being superior. There are only junkies, ‘A Lôca’ is famous because there’s only drugs”. The emphasis, in this case, is the discrimination of República done by people who circulate in Augusta, including people who are always in República. The places occupied in Augusta would have power to make someone superior for their mere attendance, including a masculine superiority between subjective performances and the rating of other people as desirable.

**Conclusion**

This article’s title and also its main argument might entail that this is a located explanation, of a very particular context which doesn’t necessarily support itself in other definitions of the city’s spaces or that it would be impossible to compare this article to those definitions. That is partially true. But the way through which Brazilians and those who live in São Paulo gender things, limited by language, doesn’t reproduce the way every person genders space. This becomes clearer with a closer look at Doreen Massey’s writing about space gendering and the political shapes this process implies. Thinking about English, a language which includes a neutral gender for things, but doesn’t have neutrality in the gendered definition, the geographer makes relevant comments about how, in general, space is feminine. This becomes clearer when Massey discusses how great narrations give time power to change, to modify, to produce speeches whilst space can only be related to immobility, passivity and acceptance. The use of these poles to distinguish what is masculine, powerful, public and political, from what is feminine, powerless, domestic, apolitical is not new. It’s not recent that several feminist social movements have contested the idea of political as a masculine property and the idea of domestic as something apart from politics.

Binnie & Skeggs, aforementioned, also demonstrate how a masculine, working class space, becomes acknowledged as gay to, later, start being recognized as a safe place for women. Perlongher (2008), Argentinean anthropologist settled in Brazil, shows how occupancy of the central São Paulo streets by male prostitutes can, at first, assign a masculine spectrum to such places; the work as a hustler, however, might bring them closer to women who sell their bodies and feminize them as people who have sex with men; still, money mediation reassigns their masculinity, and justifies sex as an objective profit vehicle; the sexual use, public performances and client-targeting appearance reinforces the male spectrum which perhaps hangs in the balance and, acting as virility
marks and libidinal tensors, become male powers. This particular aspect interests us for its way to handle social markers of difference which print more or less masculinity to subjects and spaces: the social dynamics, in the case of the prostitutes described by Perlongher, produce spaces such as corners, parts of streets and urban areas that are more masculine than others. There are masculine declined streets.

Facchini (2008), Salamanca (2010) and Puccinelli (2013) in different historical, spatial and national contexts, show similar processes of masculinity attribution to streets, neighborhoods and cities that work as part of the definition of oneself and others as sexually attractive, socially legitimate or at potential risk of contagion. It is not by accident that the idea of a “disease” arises in some speeches as property of the subjects recognized as homosexuals, but feminine, poor and with the risk of having “aids”. Here the disease overlaps the virus which causes it and gains an agency inexistent to its transmission: the possibility of contraction through a conversation or being close to these subjects, these fags. Such process impacts even the fact that specific actions for disease prevention take place in locations known as spots of homosexual men sociability in São Paulo, with almost full coverage to the República region. But in what does the described and analyzed data relate to the city’s real estate market?

Great part of the investment in new residential buildings in downtown São Paulo occurs in the Augusta region, as previously stated, with main focus on Augusta, Frei Caneca and Paim streets. The second, Frei Caneca, was the first to receive such buildings. While one could argue for the low price of these construction plots when compared to vicinity, it’s a fact that identification with gay audience helped guaranteeing the plot choice, the unities’ definition of profile and the targeting of advertising campaigns. Because of the restricted space of this article, I won’t be able to deepen this topic; however, it suffices to know that in all advertising brochures there are references to the region as “cosmopolitan”, as a space of experiences and exchanges linked to other city experiences, such as New York and London, for example. The existence of a gay attendance certainly made possible the achievement of this region’s internationalized status.

On the other hand, it is not any type of gay that can move around Frei Caneca Street. The previously highlighted speeches show how this region idealized gay is white, has greater buying power, which also gives him a variety of educational and cultural tools, he also has sophisticated taste and, mainly, is male. To understand oneself as male
homosexual, as gay, is to move away from those understood as effeminate, fags, even if both occupy the same space, not over a few meters apart. A boy understood as fag, on the presented terms, even if he’s on a bar beside the one who defines himself as gay, will be allocated to the República. Not only that, but this República region boy won’t be on the center of interests of one who defines himself as gay, and therefore the Augusta region. Such interests include, to some extent, living on the downtown, even if the highlighted speeches don’t bring that on. However, the new buildings advertisements emphasize the benefits and sophistication of living on this center and its quick sales show that this speech is supported. The fags, effeminate homosexuals are considered poor, dark and potentially sick - they aren’t on the center, they are located on the periphery.

It’s interesting to notice how many difference markers are triggered and compete on the gendered definition of a space in the city. McClintock (1995) study about Massa’s journals on the XIX Century and the obsession with the London working women shows how these women, who lived on the periphery of the city, were beastialized, masculinized and compared to racist ideas which considered Africa a place of savages. In our analysis, the more feminine a street is, the more negative. What values the address, in different senses, is the masculine inflection. That way, center and periphery, male and female join and produce people and spaces sexually desirable and unveil other senses of interest. The street, when infected in feminine, declines.

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LGBT Community - Constraints and Practices of Space Appropriation in Bucharest

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Abstract

Space appropriation gestures happen in everyday activities and conflicts can arise from a resistance of particular groups to such demands. A right we usually take for granted, as is for instance that of being with our friends in a pub, for LGBT people seems to be a continuous negotiation with the people around: to what extent the latter allows them to express their gender and sexual preferences. The article dwells on the following questions: how does the capital city of Romania, Bucharest, question the sexual orientation and gender of LGBT people, in what way they respond to such challenges and what role does space appropriation play in this situation? Thus, we will differentiate between urban public spaces and sexualized heteronormative places, investigating the practices (supported or not by legal instruments and social groups) used by LGBT people to appropriate space. As such, we use interviews and participative observation to analyse the interaction between the LGBT community and urban spaces with an eye on potential negative consequences of the current situation.

Key Words: LGBT Community • space appropriation • coping mechanisms • homophobia

Introduction

The issue of discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation is altogether not new anywhere in this world. The types of discrimination though, at least in the case of Romania, and specifically Bucharest have changed dramatically from blunt, state sponsored discrimination to a more individualized and subtle one. Today we can find them more under the form of different constraints. In order to pinpoint those constraints we are going to employ space as an analytical tool, as a lens, if you may, to look at a particular sub-culture in Bucharest’s landscape, namely the LGBT community.

What sex or gender is the person next to us, with which we enter a conversation,
work or simply share a piece of the public space is without doubt important for who the person is, for what they have become. However, it is disturbing when this aspect of human identity takes precedence in areas of our life where other factors should be relevant (like, for instance, our skills for a job), instead of being a matter of our private, personal realm.

What we are interested to see in this article is how does the capital city of Romania, Bucharest, question the sexual identity of LGBT people and in what way they respond. Thus, we'll talk about urban spaces as sexualized and heteronormative, and investigate the practices (supported or not by legal instruments and social groups) used by LGBT people to appropriate space. As such, we analyse the interaction between LGBT people and urban spaces, as well as between LGBT people and heterosexual urban inhabitants.

The first part of the paper will deal with the important terms and dichotomies that recur throughout the article such as: space vs. place, homophobia and transphobia and the Bucharest LGBT Community. Secondly, the paper goes a bit into describing the research process followed by an array of what we consider to be relevant literature for our particular concerns. The last part is concerned with results and interpretations, and some concluding remarks.

**Conceptualization:**

It is important for the economy of the text that certain terms get clarified, with the scope that the message will be received in the intended manner. The differentiation between public space and sexualized heteronormative place, as it is going to be further elaborated, should be put in connection to space appropriation mechanisms. The formation of the LGBT community is tightly connected to the idea of bounded space. As Accept and supporters of their objectives continue to stage events, they assert the right of LGBT people to be present and visible in the public space and at the same time the shape of a community starts to be envisioned.

**Public space and Sexualized heteronormative place**

Gans (2002: 329) defines social space as departing from natural space and being characterized in relation to three criteria: boundaries, use and meaning, the ownership transforming the space in someone’s place. However, people do not refer to all social space as place, and even when it is legitimate to call it so, we do not refer to it as place in
all situations. So, we wondered what it is that makes us use the latter term, when we do. Our conclusion was that we tend to use it more when the accent is placed on consequences of power relations. Let us consider the instance of the public space as the discursive area of battle between different interests. One result of such debates would be that the boundaries between public places in a city (community - owned and regulated) and private areas there are in a continuous change. Space is, thus, fragmented by power relations and broken into places. Let us take another example, closer to our study. The day the LBTG parade was organized in Bucharest, the street they marched along, as well as the area where they stopped for a while, called the “discrimination-free zone” are both parts of the public space. That was, still, a space they were appropriating, since it became their place for the brief period of hours, they had owned it at a physical and discursive level. In the morning of the same day, on a different street, the march of normality took place and rallied people who shared a heteronormative view: the city belongs to straight people that could be easily categorized as men or women. They appropriated that specific space with anger and thus that became an area where LGBT people had no place to be in, from their perspective.

The difference between space and place is thus the difference between the general and the specific, the difference between an objective, societal and a subjective, personal perspective. The answer to our question is then that we would talk about “space” when at stake are issues of border, use or meaning, in their general form, i.e., as they result from the aggregation of particular viewpoints. We use “place”, when it is more about the ownership, accessibility, use and meaning as invested by individuals.

The LGBT Bucharest Community:
Community is one of those concepts that have been discussed relentlessly in the literature, thus encompassing an impressive array of meanings and connotations. Sometimes when a concept receives this much scrutiny, it does not help illuminate it but rather to decrease its analytical power. In most cases, the term community is a useful shortcut, not inviting further questioning because, after all, who does not have an opinion about what a community is? But as soon as one tries to get a sense of what are the bonds that keep people together, how these bonds are sustained, what are the inclusion and exclusion elements and others factors, the shortcut becomes problematic. This was one of our first issues, meaning we tried to look a bit beyond the over-optimistic connotation of community (Day 2006: 90), and understand to our best ability
the fabric that constitutes the Bucharest LGBT community.

The community, regardless of the approach taken, is not a static formation but rather a dynamic process, and in this sense it must have a history and a trajectory. Before the constituency of Accept NGO in the mid 1990's, the Bucharest public discourse, let alone the Romanian one, lacked completely any mention of the existence of an LGBT community, partly because homosexual propaganda of any kind was illegal but mostly because an LGBT community as such did not exist. What today bears the name of community was formed, as we can see it, as an opportunity structure. In some cases opportunities are presented by formal organizations facilitating interactions between people that otherwise appear to be quite dissimilar (Neal 2012). Our community question gains two dimensions in this sense: firstly it appears that the community is also bounded, amongst other criteria, by a physical dimension, and secondly, this characteristic made possible the development of specific types of networks. To be clear, the idea of boundary is extracted from the discourse of Accept officials, which clearly differentiate between communities residing in different cities. In this sense, there is a Bucharest LGBT community, as well as, for example, a Ploiești LGBT community (hence the physical dimension) with most of the same goals as the Bucharest one but with potentially different challenges. Accept also plays an important role in facilitating ties between networks, not only with other nationally based LGBT communities, but also with international ones. The discussions with the Accept representatives illuminated partly the directionality of information flow through the extended national network, having at its core the Bucharest LGBT community. The representatives visit periodically LGBT communities outside of Bucharest as to understand their constraints and offer support, while the other communities come to Accept when in need of legal and bureaucratic assistance.

Boundaries are put in place “so as to include some and leave out others” (Day 2006: 116). This means that we can identify elements of inclusion and exclusion in/from the structure. In our particular case an element of inclusion but also self-exclusion is the adherence, or non-adherence respectively, to the principles put forward by Accept¹. Another criterion of self-exclusion is the one of indifference and/or reservation towards the official community's stance. Schematically put, the opportunity structure can be envisioned as having a strong pro-active core, a larger peripheral mass that adheres to

¹ We do not exclude the possibility of other centres of polarization to exist, but if they do they do not have well established public structures, official stance or visibility.
the values and principles put forward, but are rarely active, some gravitational fuzzy elements\(^1\), that subscribe to some of the principles but do not feel as being an integral part of the community, and the invisibles\(^2\) which do not adhere to the institutional approach to community. In other words, we do not focus on the fixed elements and relationships but rather on the dynamics at play in the continuous process of creating the community. The scheme presented above will serve as a landmark, helping us approximate throughout the research, where within the circles of the community we find ourselves.

**Homophobia and transphobia**

Anyone trying to extract a definition of *homophobia* from the sexual minorities literature would find themselves in great difficulty, since, as it is accepted in many academic articles, there is no widely approved use of the term. The meaning we use in this paper is mainly based on that found in Bernat et al. (2001: 180), since it is one of the common views, where homophobia is composed of "negative affect (i.e., aversion, discomfort, and fear) and behaviour (avoidance and aggression) toward homosexuals". We would like, however, to add *prejudice* (McCormak 2014) and replace *homosexuals* with *sexual minorities*, as McCormak rightfully does. In other words, it seems of better use a definition composed of the meaning attributed by the two researchers, where the cognitive level (thoughts) triggers a change at an emotional level (feelings towards), which can be followed by behaviour (discrimination), all of which are directed in this case towards sexual minorities.

Still, as discussed in Herek (2004), the extensively spread term “homophobia” has some important shortcomings. Not only does it make reference to the intense feeling of fear known as “phobia”, but is also strictly associated with individual behaviour and leaves out the norms and expectations of the social realm inhabited by individuals. Discussions also concern the discrepancy between the meaning conferred on the term in dictionaries and academic writings compared to a meaning gained from enactment in real life situations, *e.g.*, in homophobic speech (Plummer 2014: 128).

On this backdrop, Herek (2004) puts forward two concepts, *heterosexism* and *sexual prejudice*, to replace *homophobia*. **Heterosexism is more like a macro-level**

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\(^1\) A similar idea can be found in a discussion about weblog community boundaries found in Eftimova and Hendrick (2004).

\(^2\) They emerged as characters in the conducted interviews but we never got the chance to meet them.
concept that attempts to grasp a cultural context which devalues any mark of nonheterosexual way of life, and thus “perpetuates sexual stigma” (Herek 2004: 16). Sexual prejudice, on the other hand, pays attention to the individual and expresses their “hostility and negative attitudes […] based on sexual orientation” (idem). Plummer (2014), on the other hand, argues in favour of homophobia in the conceptual debate with heterosexism, since the former is invested with an emotional meaning that the second lacks. We understand that to him heterosexism is more like a sanitized, academic term, clean from real life impurities.

In this paper, we chose to use mostly the term homophobia, as defined above, because we wanted to include all three dimensions (cognitive, emotional and behavioural) the term gives access to. In the same way we will use the concept transphobia, with the obvious difference that in this case, the target population is transgender. We also draw on the distinction introduced by Herek, but only when we consider important to treat separately the macro- and micro-level perspective.

**Methodology**

We decided to approach the topic “hands free” and open minded, partly because we did not have a previous contact with LGBT people and also because the Romanian literature on the subject is quite thin and lacks the voice of the community. To begin with, we contacted some of Accept’s representatives, with the hope that they could link us to LGBT people willing to participate in our study. Accept is the first and most visible NGO promoting LGBT rights at a national level. Their main activities involve lobbying, advocacy campaigns, media monitoring and information collection and dissemination, but also social and cultural activities with the purpose of facilitating the creation/strengthening of relations among the LGBT Community members and friends. After several sessions of observation we started the construction of our interview guide. In order to get a glimpse of what it means to be LGBT in Bucharest, we made use of our six interviews. The guide for discussions was split in bulks of open ended questions on topics such as socialization, gender identity, places in Bucharest and their degree of LGBT friendliness, formal education, working place and associations, be them political or not. We built the interview guide with the hope that the respondents will give more direct information regarding their relation to the city and specific places here. However, their first reaction was of surprise as to why we were so interested in places, description
of and attitudes towards them, since they did not, at least not consciously, value or devalue specific places. To them, it all seemed to be more about people and events than places. As we came to discover later, the urban space and specific places within Bucharest did represent important foci for the development of what they called their community. Suffice it to look at Accept’s headquarters, which was mentioned in five of our six interviews as an important place for the respondents, a place where they feel safe and where they can meet friendly faces. This is how place emerged as having an important role in the way in which LGBT people feel constrained by the city and respond to it. The interviewees were readily willing to recounts their experiences, and they all shared the opinion that research is much needed and always welcomed. Because of this, the dialogues went smoothly, but we did sense at times that fragments of their discourse were rehearsed, not because they were about to be interviewed but maybe because of repetitive exposure to situations where they felt responsible to educate. The transcripts also revealed some markers of entitlement, even if we did not use opinion questions. The questions we asked were mainly about their personal experiences and the fact that we received many times answers in the name of larger groups or the community they belonged to made us think that this might have been a distancing strategy.

We were also involved in participant observation that spread throughout the month of May and the beginning of June. The main events that can be included here are the: International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT), Tomboy party, “Homohistories”, discussions on “Being Trans in Romania”, Bucharest Pride Parade.

We were also present, doing non-participant observation this time, on the private virtual group destined to the LGBT community residing mostly in Bucharest, but not exclusively, acquaintances and Accept volunteers. Generally, we did not encounter

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1 We considered as marks of entitlement phrases such as “we would never go there”, “we” as in the LGBT community or “it’s not like that at all”.
2 International annual event, celebrated also by Accept, where all the members of the LGBT community and their supporters were invited to take a picture with the official IDAHOT symbol and, if willing, to transmit an anti-homophobic message to the camera with the purpose of putting together a short spot.
3 A party organized by some of the core members of the LGBT Bucharest community several times a year, at irregular intervals, initially focusing on women but welcoming all trans, gay, straight, drag, gender neutral, questioning, bi, non-wanting-to-be-labelled with no restrictions towards heterosexuals.
4 An event that concentrated on the communist period and how gay persons managed to obtain information about gender identity, how they negotiated and kept secret their identities in a period when being gay meant you were breaking the law.
5 The discussions were held in a centrally located café, taking the model of an informal conference with a moderator and two transgender males as special guests.
6 The parade is an annual event in Romania beginning with 2005, in which LGBT people and supporters of the cause march on a main street of the city, with symbols and banners, in order to increase their visibility and promote acceptance.
“gatekeepers” to restrict the access to information, meaning the conferences and discussions were public and no invitation was needed. More of a restriction was the fact that the outlets for information about the events were quite limited to the people connected in some way to the community.

**Relevant studies:**

Urban spaces are associated with the characteristics that create possibilities of development for subcultures, which focus on identity politics and space appropriation. Referring to German urban spaces, Doderer (2011: 431-2) describes an environment in which sexual minorities activist groups make use of the public space to stage cultural events (e.g., film festivals and parades) and open social locations with or without commercial purposes. To this she adds the specialization of the media on the LGBT community, with radio stations, TV channels that target it, as well as the creation of virtual spaces with special destination for community problems. She argues that the urban life favours as such the expansion of an “LGBT culture”, through a (re)production of space, if we might add using Lefebvre’s (1991: 416) terms.

Larger cities provide anonymity in the context of diverse groups, and an alert rhythm of life, which is why they represented the favoured choice of gay people for social and cultural gatherings (Kitilinski and Leszkowicz 2013: 72). Compared to rural spaces, or small cities, these urban spaces allow LGBT people to escape the strict social control pervasive in small, tightly knit communities and meet other non-heterosexual people (Doderer 2011: 432). By helping them preserve the anonymity, the city triggers a mechanism related to networking, where events are promoted mainly through word of mouth and helplines (Valentine 1995: 101) which maintains a lack of visibility even among them. As a consequence, LGBT people can become isolated, a problem especially identified in single LGBTs in older age (Doderer 2011: 434).

On the other hand, in their study on LGBT Polish citizens, Kitilinski and Leszkowicz (2013: 70) underline that urban safety still represents a weighty issue in all Eastern European countries where the majority resists the social integration of sexual minorities. The authors put forward two examples of assaults based on ethnic and sexual criteria, to show that even in cities with an active cultural life, perceived as more liberal, such was the case of 2013 Wroclaw, there is a stringent need in the public sphere for LGBT people to be protected from verbal and physical violence. Here we can identify
common demands of LGBT and feminist movements, which present the groups they represent as vulnerable in “spaces which have been designed and largely built by men” (Doan 2007: 67).

Transgressing gender roles in a visible manner make LGBT people, but especially transgender people, vulnerable to discrimination and violence (ibidem). Prior investigations in urban spaces belonging to Western countries found out that their interaction with the city revealed them as being at serious risk for verbal and physical assaults (Witten and Eyler 1999).

Romania, among other Central and East European countries, adopts a more conservative approach towards the social integration of LGBT minorities, and its capital city fits very well this pattern. Though providing a basic legal framework that sexual minorities can use to counter discrimination on the labour market (Altman et. al 2012: 441), it is still far from granting civil rights such as that to marriage or same-sex partnership (Kitilinski and Leszkowicz 2013: 70). Legal protection, however, is not enough to change mentalities or to ensure the safety of sexual minorities. Not only that, but Accept’s director mentioned in an interview on RFI (2014) that a significant issue is also the absence of information in the public space and the lack of procedural clarity in implementing the rights of the LGBT. We certainly agree with the second point. Suffice it to take the example of changing documents for a transgender person, to see that the procedure is difficult to follow.¹ As for the former point, it can be noticed that the information exists, concerning the rights of the LGBT people, in Monitorul Oficial, for instance. However, it is true that it is not widely disseminated or readily available.

Another strand of research that drew on talks about potential negative consequences of heteronormativity and coping mechanisms employs LGBT members. Research carried out both in the U.S.A. and Europe uncovers multiple negative consequences that can arise from practices of discrimination, stigmatization, isolation, either verbally or physically. Firstly, people that are aware that their gender or sexual self does not conform to social norms can internalize homophobia, as a consequence of social pressure, which leads to anxiety, depression and even suicide (Altman et al. 2012: 440). Even as late as 2012, cases of suicide were reported among adolescents in the U.S.A. as consequence of bullying on account of sexuality (ibidem). On European ground the situation stands not far. A 2009 study conducted in Denmark concluded that the

attempted suicide rate in LGBT people is four times as large when compared to the rest of the population (Gransell and Hansen 2009).

Stigmatization documented on transgendered people can also lead to suicide, attempts being very frequent within this category. Transgender people have more difficulties in finding employment when their physical appearance cannot be easily assigned to one of the binary gender categories of female and male. As a consequence, some may look for low status work places which put them at risk for health problems deriving from social practices associated with these jobs, such as substance abuse (Doan 2007: 61). Another highly vulnerable subcategory is composed of gay men, especially with respect to HIV infection, given the difficulty in access to information and potential marginalization which increases the efforts needed to access resources associated with preventive practices (Altman et al. 2012: 443).

In a study on “men who have sex with men,” either of whom belongs to ethnic and racial minorities in the U.S., Choi et al (2011) discovered five coping strategies the subjects resorted to, when confronted with racism and homophobia. The five strategies act on two levels: indirect, with the aim of limiting triggers for homophobic reactions and reducing the impact of such reactions when they happen, but also direct, engaging the stigmatized. The situation is more complicated in the case of this study due to the intersectionality of discrimination, since the stigmatization can have its origins in both race and sexuality. In such cases it is difficult to disentangle the two systems. One of our respondents, Irina, recalled an experience she had with a friend of hers who was a gypsy and a homosexual. His entrance was refused in a bar in Bucharest, but even she had difficulties in explaining why; was it because of the colour of his skin or because of his rather effeminized behaviour?

Another study sees the coping strategies employed by transgender individuals as divided in facilitative and avoidant (Budge, Adelson and Howard 2013: 546). The former category of strategies focus on operating at the level of the self, its skills and behaviour, but also on finding appropriate sources of support or happiness. The avoidant set of strategies, as the name suggests, have the role of avoiding an emotional behaviour in relation to the stressing factor. Examples include minimizing the stressors or assigning

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1 “To minimize opportunities for stigmatization, men used (1) concealment of homosexuality and (2) disassociation from social settings associated with stigmatization. To minimize the impact of experienced stigma, men (3) dismissed the stigmatization and (4) drew strength and comfort from external sources. Men also actively countered stigmatization by (5) direct confrontation.” (Choi et al. 2011)
them other meanings, or redirecting the emotional response as in overeating.

To meet the purpose of our paper, we have divided the coping strategies identified in *affirmative* and *negative*. Given that we emphasize the relation between people and space/place, “affirmative” refers to civic activism aimed at reclaiming the group’s place in the public sphere, which includes among others, space appropriation tactics. The term “negative” is assigned in this case to attitudes and actions that refuse engagement with the public sphere, and include changes incurred upon oneself, like for instance, withdrawal from the public space, decreased visibility or self-restraint. In other words, negative strategies are closely related to the avoidant strategies presented above, but we believe the term is more useful since it uncovers two more meanings compared to “avoidant”: change and consequences.

Kitilinski and Leszkowicz (2013: 70) explain how on the background of slow structural improvement of LGBT integration in Eastern Europe countries, a strong activism has taken shape. The authors underline also that the movement has a political character (idem: 71), justified by the affiliation with other minority rights movements for an “urban citizenship that promotes the visibility and participation of all minorities” (idem: 69). As it appears, LGBT activism in Poland is leading to a normalization of the situation. What we mean is that the sexual identity is fortunately put more in the background than being a qualifying characteristic. Here, we can point to the cases of two openly transgender, respectively homosexual individuals which were elected in the Parliament in 2013 (idem: 72). While this example refers to a more distant relationship between citizens and the political arena, the case of Robert Biedron, the elected mayor of Slupsk, “a conservative city of 97,000” constituents, as Lyman (2014) states in a New York Times article, is more informative. Not only did his sexual orientation not seem to make a difference to the voters, but it did not constitute a bone of contention in the competition for the City Hall. “Of course they [the voters] knew I am gay, because everyone in Poland knows that I’m gay [...] But it did not matter. In the campaign, none of the seven candidates tried to use it as a tool against me, not even the right-wing ones” (idem).

**Results and Interpretation**

**Public space and sexualized heteronormative places**

Imagine a public space where all of us would have their gender identity questioned at
every step. For most of the public space in Bucharest, LGBT people go unnoticed and they themselves do not have to be self-conscious about their gender identity. However, there are specific places that compel one to place oneself in either male or female category, which becomes difficult when you identify as neither. These places governed by heteronormative practices, such as toilets, pools and gyms but also those that involve bureaucratic processes, sustain a permanent state of anxiety mostly for bi-gender and transgender people. The situation is most stringent in the transition period when their physical characteristics do not match the gender previously assigned to them. Take the simple example of a routine bus pass control. In Bucharest, bus passes do not have a photo, but they do have your name on them, the name in the birth certificate, which in these cases is associated with the official sexual identity. The suspicious bus pass controllers will in most cases, if not always, believe you are trying to fool them, which can lead to embarrassing situations.

The gendered nature of public places derives mostly from the general social tendency to preserve the classic dichotomy. Both Patrick (transgender male, 29 years old) and E. (bi-gender, 20 years old) were questioned about their identity on the street by strangers, who did not manage to classify them with precision as male or female, and possibly wanted to ridicule them into adopting one such category. “I was on my way to Chișinău, last year, before the transition, and a man in the bus felt the need to ask me if I am a girl or a guy on a tone that I considered a little rude” (Patrick). “I had a certain haircut and I was walking on the street and a guy asked me, out of nowhere: Are you a girl or a guy?” (E.)

**Importance of urban spaces for the development of LGBT culture**

Three spaces in Bucharest emerge as having a particular importance for the development of the LGBT culture: the University environment, spaces associated with liberal arts and places appropriated through public manifestations like Bucharest Pride Parade. Patrick, for instance, affirms the importance of urban space through its liberal arts and the “funky” places associated with it, which in turn are associated with an open mind. “Cool, funky places in Bucharest are automatically LGBTQIA\(^1\) friendly”. Speaking about adopting the term of transgender, he says that he assimilated it “around the age of 20, when he got to University, in Bucharest.”

\[^1\text{Where letters Q, I and A stand for queer, intersex and asexual.}\]
When E. talks about meeting LGBT people – online and in real life, she says that in real life she met them “through other friends or when I was staying in a hostel [in Bucharest, while at University], a colleague of mine was lesbian.” She also talks about University as an open, friendly place, where she gets along with people, with whom she goes out, as opposed to the village she grew up in, as a child and the small town where she went to high school.

**Urban Safety and Homophobia**

When asked about an overall impression on the city’s safety and attitude towards LGBT people, the general response was a positive one, but when we broke down to the issue of safety and constraints into specificities, the respondents seemed to contradict themselves. For example, even though not afraid to wear their symbols, they still maintain an attitude of prudence because “you do not know what kind of people you are going to meet” (Sasha, transgender male, 30). The symbols worn must be of a subtle nature, and easily hidden in case of danger. This is sort of a motif amongst our respondents. Regarding the use of symbols, one of us did a small experiment inspired by our interviewees concerns, wearing for three months two visible rainbow symbols, with no signs of public annoyance. Two possible conclusions may be drawn from this experience: either the majority does not know what the rainbow stands for, and those that do are not homophobes; or homophobia outbreaks are more common towards organized groups of LGBT people promoting events. One recent occurrence is suggestive for this assessment, whose aim was to present aspects of the life and history of gay and lesbian people. It was organized by the Spiritual Militia\(^1\) and hosted by the National School of Political and Administrative Studies. The central attraction was a play, based on four interviews depicting the life of the homosexual person in the “golden age”\(^2\), followed by a debate joined by both students and professors. The event per se ran quite smoothly; the problems arose afterwards. While leaving, the organizers were approached by a group of young men who pushed the girls aside and started beating on the boys. They made sure that the victims understood the reason they took the beating, meaning because they were trying to promote gay rights.

It is a generally accepted idea that Bucharest is the best city to express yourself as a sexual minority. However, when talking about Bucharest in this positive tone, most

\(^1\) Non-governmental organization with the declared purpose of mobilizing citizens’ civic conscience.

\(^2\) Pre-1989 period.
respondents refer to the central areas of the city. In their discourses, they frequently made a distinction between the centre and the peripheral areas, associating the former with mind-openness, a higher level of education, spaces which promote dialogue and diversity. As you go further away towards the outer city, these characteristics tend to fade away, in their opinion. Both Patrick and Sasha made assertions like “the centre is very different from peripheral areas, neighbourhoods at the margins [of the city] are completely different worlds”, and respectively “(LGBT friendly areas) are mostly everywhere... in the central area... I don’t know... as you go further away towards neighbourhoods where people have a specific lifestyle... I don’t know... we meet mostly in this area.” Also in the discussions with the other interviewees, the idea of a group mental map of the city emerged, where they have some Xs placed on specific pubs/clubs, or larger (peripheral) areas, but also approval checks marking other specific places or areas. The classification seems to be made according to both personal experiences and those of LGBT people around them.

**Legal and Social Support in the city**

The story of the legal support begins with the abrogation of the Article 200. The communist legacy included a harsh legal stance on homosexual relationships, which was perpetuated until mid-1990s, when the legislation softened as a consequence of international pressure. Firstly, instead of incriminating indiscriminately homosexuality, the law was modified to refer to homosexual acts that happened in public or triggered public outrage. A few years later, following the insistence of international bodies which took the form of requirements for the Council of Europe and EU accession process and monitoring period\(^1\), in 2001 Romania finally abrogated the infamous article. The fact that the legal acceptance of homosexuality was a consequence of foreign influences and not an expression of Romanian society’s values and beliefs, which lagged behind, is easily noticeable today. In other words, the legal and the social support in Romania, in general, but also in its capital-city as a particular case, are not on a par. And this is not to say that the legal provisions are the best of possible scenarios, not even by far, but that this is an instantiation of implementing a form first, which is hoped to shape the substance it contains, in time. If there is a minimum legal context that recognizes some of the basic human rights of homosexual people, like that of expressing their sexuality,

engaging in homosexual relationships and belonging to groups that would work to better their situation,\(^1\) there are still institutions and individuals which have difficulties in accepting this as a fact. And they are commonly known as homophobic by the offended party or by some third party when they bother to question these attitudes and label them in some way.

The question we ask ourselves at this point, departing from the distinction introduced by Herek (2004) between heterosexism and sexual prejudice is whether Bucharest is displaying sexual prejudice or heterosexist attitudes. And to answer it, we suggest we take a look at two recent events that took place in the city, in a public and a private place, and were discussed in the media. One is related to the Central University Library in Bucharest, who held initial talks with Accept’s representatives regarding a public event in which a writer, activist of LGBT rights and Special Adviser on LGBT Mental Health at Yale School of Psychiatry, Andrew Solomon was to give a talk. After an informal agreement on the space provided by the library for the event, it subsequently withdrew its permission and refused to justify their decision. Accept believes that the library’s management later realized what the nature of the event would be, \textit{i.e.}, a talk on sexuality and gender, with a focus on homosexuality and transgenderism, which led to a negative response. The director of the library denies such accusations claiming it was all just a misunderstanding (Călin and Cerban 2014). If Accept is right, and its director and the delegate of the writer did meet with representatives of the library and received an informal permission (which the Library’s director denies, but without offering clear information), then we could assume that there was someone in the management that was not very fond of the topic or afraid of public reactions to such an event. The assumption is based on the fact that there is no rule or procedure that forbids discussions on LGBT issues in public spaces. As such, it is either about sexual prejudice or fear of sexual prejudice. What kind of public reactions are we talking about? If we go back a few months ago, we might see how such a worry may not be completely ungrounded, given the February 2013 incident at the Museum of the Romanian Peasant, where a group of people boycotted the projection of a movie that should have been one

\(^1\) Not only that, but these provisions are reinforced each time a judicial court rules in favour of gay people that have been discriminated. Some of these cases are detailed in Iordache and Ionescu (2010) - thematic study. One of our respondents (Irina, 43, lesbian) also talked about one such case, which happened after her return in Romania in 2005, in which her resignation was demanded by the company she worked for on the grounds of her sexual orientation. She talked to a lawyer, and in order for her not to file a complaint, she received compensations from the company.
of the LGBT Month events. Not only that, but the protesters demanded that the manager of the Museum be removed from his position for having agreed for the institution to host the events.

The second case is an example of potential mutual feedback of the two types of attitudes: heterosexism and sexual prejudice. The facts were described in the media as follows.¹ In an internationally renowned gym, in Bucharest, at the pool, two gay men came with their four-year old twins, a girl and a boy. The parents changed their children in the men’s locker, and the presence of the little girl bothered some of the other men there. In response to a complaint, the couple pointed that their family was homoparental, at which point the other guy started to address them injurious words, and the conflict ended with an appeal to the management. The following day, a notification appeared at the pool specifying that children should not be taken in the opposite sex’s locker. The situation was criticized in the media and a complaint of discrimination was filed against the gym by the National Council against Discrimination and Accept. Following a serious agitation that was created around the topic in the media, which put the company's image in danger, the latter issued an official position (Marcu 2014b) in which it promised to arrange a special place for children to be changed. They also underlined that they do not wish to discriminate and want all their members, regardless of their sexual orientation, to feel welcome.

How is the feedback mechanism working in this case? Schematically, the individual-level hostility (here sexual prejudice) determines a community level rule. In this case, the initial response of the gym was not directly heterosexist, but indicating a potential tacit approval of the legitimacy of the sexual prejudice. This in turn supports individual-level attitudes. In this case, out of the public debate between the hostile and the sympathetic attitudes (both expressed in several articles), the latter established a victory, which is manifested in the public attitude adopted by the company.

While we are at it, it is fair to mention that though the majority of the interviewed people were willing to be in harmonious relations with heterosexual people, all were referring to themselves as a distinct group. Some of them also manifested sexual prejudice towards heterosexual people. Irina (lesbian woman, 43), for instance, was one of the persons who displayed strong feelings of belonging to groups formed generally of gay men and lesbian women, but also other members of LGBT. She made it clear that she

¹ For a more comprehensive account, see Marcu (2014a).
would more easily renounce a friendship with a heterosexual than a gay person, because the former are easier to find. When the topic of frequented pubs and clubs came up, in describing the places, she made negative evaluations of heterosexual behaviour in such settings. She and her friends seem to build their groups and attachments, and more generally identity, in opposition to heterosexual groups, using expressions like “we are not like them”, “unlike us, they...”.

Reiterating a distinction we made in conceptualization, *homophobic* works better when applied at individual level, and *heterosexism*, when making an evaluation of higher-order objects, like groups, societies, their norms and regulations. From the examples above, situations that were the focus of public debates on LGBT issues in Bucharest for the past months, we see that the degree of heterosexism found in formal public or private institutions is determined by the public pressure in one way or the other. We could assert that Bucharest does not appear as either heterosexist or homophobic, given the resolution of these cases. All the above examples show that homophobic attitudes or sexual prejudices do exist, but they are not sufficiently strong as to put a monopole in the public debate; on the contrary.

If the legal situation of homosexual people is not as good as it could be, comparing to other countries in the EU for instance, in the case of transgender people, the legal provisions are completely lacking. To change their identification documents, for instance, an issue that is central to transgender people, there is only indirect and unclear guidance on procedures (Iordache and Ionescu 2010: 42-3). Another issue mentioned by our two transgender male respondents, but also by E. (bi-gender) was the underdeveloped medical assistance they need so much to perform the transition safely. Patrick, for instance, underlines the lack of medical doctors trained to help transgender people, explaining that “I was looking for someone specialized in the area and someone else suggested that I go to Accept because they would offer me support, medically and legally”. In 2011, the first female to male surgery was accomplished at a hospital in Bucharest and was partly financed by the National Agency for Health Insurance (CNAS). However, the experiences of six other people that Patrick knows about, tell him not to be confident in the success of such surgery in Bucharest. According to him, out of six people he could recall at the time, who undertook breast extirpation surgery, five had

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1 At a discussion with Transform members, organized during the Bucharest Pride week, much of the dialogue revolved around the tricky issue of appropriate identification documents.
2 Complaint expressed also by Accept’s director in the aforementioned RFI interview.
anaesthetic scars, and for the other it took a very long time for the wounds to heal.

E., on the other hand, underlines the lack of information in the public space and difficulties in finding out about her gender “I didn’t have information; on the TV there wasn’t anything about this... I heard of Trans (FtoM and MtoF) when I was 14 [when she started to use the Internet] and then I found out about all things included under the ‘trans umbrella’ and I was very confused”. The lack of information in the public sphere leaves people ignorant or misinformed about LGBT people. Thus, if the situation arises in which a child goes to his/her parents and tells them he/she is a transgender they might refuse the reality and react violently, trying to ignore the situation, like E’s mother did.

Another important source of support, as well as of conflicts can be found in other NGOs’. On the one hand, Accept creates links with other organizations by helping the latter further their cause, or a common cause. On the other hand, NGOs which are led by different values (especially those with religious or nationalist stance) pair to discredit Accept’s position in the public space. To evaluate the support Accept receives from other NGOs in Bucharest, we looked at social media pages, especially on Facebook, but also at the presence of representatives of such social bodies at the Bucharest Pride Parade. At the parade the only ones that were (visibly) present were coming from Active Watch. Two volunteers were standing in the “discrimination-free zone”, with typewriting machines, surrounded by some of Accept and Transform representatives and at times a few others. Coming out of one of the typewriter, a page was leaning backwards and had already written on it a paragraph of what was supposed to be a story on an LGBT topic. The improvisation action had been announced a couple of days before on their Facebook page and was called “Poveşti gay la minut” (Gay stories in a minute). Other NGOs share on Facebook events organized by Accept, as it promotes in turn actions staged by their fellow activists.

For Patrick, as well as for Sasha, Accept played an important role also because of the support groups they attended there. It is from here that they knew each other and gathered the necessary moral support to found their own association for transgender people. This development is similar to the ones in other communities, where

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1 See for example a letter signed by 53 organizations, including Accept, which was sent to the mayor of Bucharest, in which they demand a meeting meant to discuss the situation of 27 families that were evacuated from buildings that were retroceded by the state to private actors. The letter is available in Romanian at the following address: http://www.ce-re.ro/upload/cerere_audienta.pdf.
transgender people used more general LGBT communities to secure a more stable position and develop their own way from there, “an entry point to the city,” that previously excluded them (Doan 2007: 64). LGBT organizations are used in this case as a substitute for the broader social support they needed.

Coping strategies

A small portion of the LGBT community in Bucharest is a highly active, but they are active more civically than politically. The activities developed by Accept are a good example of this behaviour. Except a few petition distributed to their secret group and some very short discussion about Euro parliamentary elections the political constraints are not tackled upon at all. At a first guess someone would say that maybe there is no political constraint element, but the fact that transgender people cannot legally change their name and sex on their papers unless they sue the state is a problem pertaining to the political realm. The interviews revealed that even though the respondents understood the importance of political acceptance of the LGBT community it is the last step on their list, after trying to manage their issues together with doctors, psychologists and lawyers. This situation is highly different in other ex-communist European countries, such the example of Poland that was mentioned in the literature review, which has two members of the LGBT community in Parliament (Kitilinski and Leszkowicz 2013: 73). As for the involvement of LGBT representatives in Romanian politics, a comment Patrick made might be suggestive for their blasé attitude “to me, the political area is a very complicated one”.

A different type of activism is portrayed by E. Given the fact that she has limited contact with the LGBT group in Bucharest, in real life (one lesbian girl, one bisexual girl and a gay man), she oriented herself to the virtual environment, where she found space to express herself, and where she feels she can help, thus turning to the form of online activism. “I decided to make a blog for bi-gender people […] I share resources, if I receive questions about another gender, I redirect the person to people I know and have that gender”.

Another instance of civic involvement that also illustrates the practices of space appropriation used by LGBT people in Bucharest, we suggest that we take a brief look at the Bucharest Pride Parade from 7th of June 2014. Legally, the parade is allowed, a part of a well-known street in Bucharest was closed for the traffic, and the area was full of
policemen and gendarmerie. A two way street interpretation can be brought into attention. From one point of view, the security forces played a role in keeping the happy crowd safe. This was a viable concern considering that during the morning of the same day, an anti-homosexuality march of “normality” took place in the city. The second interpretation comes to mind only when you take a few steps away from the parade and you watch it through an outsider’s eyes. The anti-discrimination zone appeared to be rather enclosed than protected. The area had the shape of a semi-circle coming out of the main street. On one side, along the street, there were rows of gendarmerie and policemen, who placed a fence between them and the participants. On the other side, the open area was limited by the entrance to a park, delimited by trees.

Given that it was our first Bucharest LGBT Parade, we found ourselves in the impossibility to approximate its success. Thus we asked around. It was registered as a moderate success taking as variables the fact that the number of participants was comparable to the previous years, there were no conflicts and some heterosexual families even brought their children. We felt, though, that the support was limited. From the point of view of the general public, there were few supporters, given the public stigma associated with, or in many other cases indifference towards LGBT people in Bucharest.

This was a medium-scale event, of which the organizers believe it should have by now “entered the customary of the city”¹. As of this year its name was changed from Gay Pride to Bucharest Pride, which is a further hint to a practice of reclaiming their place in the public space. Space appropriation gestures happen in everyday activities and conflicts can arise from a resistance of particular groups to such demands. A right we usually take for granted, as is for instance that of being with our friends in a pub, for LGBT people seems to be a continuous negotiation with those around: to what extent the latter allow them to express their gender and sexual preferences. Such an example was given to us by Irina, who talked about some gay friends of hers that went into a pub to drink a beer. Because they “have a much more vivid way of expressing themselves”, some guys sitting at a table next to them, identified as belonging to a football gallery “asked them to finish their beer and go out”, which they did to avoid a violent clash.

The interviews showed that the community is often split into gangs, but when their identity is challenged by outsiders, a feeling of solidarity arises as a strong coping

¹ The statement comes from an interview on Radio France International taken to Florin Buhuceanu, the Director of Accept Association.
mechanism. For instance, if the word spreads that one of their own got in a way discriminated, the gang from which the person was bares no importance, everybody stops going to that place: "When I saw what was happening, I put a great red cross on the situation and I said 'nobody goes there anymore'[..] I would say that they lost some business”.

As for the negative strategies, we propose one simple example. Sasha is the one that talks about an incident where he (before the transition) and his girlfriend at the time were assaulted by a group of guys in his neighbourhood, because they were holding hands on the street. “After the first fight, we stopped holding hands, but they still beat us”. This is classic self-censoring behaviour adopted. Another coping strategy was to talk to one of the guys and explain that he was not in a relationship with that girl, which was another censorship of manifestation of his identity.

**Conclusion**

The aim of the paper was to uncover the perceived constraints and coping mechanisms experienced/used by people that belong to the LGBT community, in Bucharest. In doing this, we used public space as a mediator in the relationship between the city and LGBT people. Since throughout the article we focused on what the Bucharest public space offers and the different places within, to wrap it up, we propose a change of perspective. With that purpose in mind, and in the good feminist tradition, let us turn our attention towards what is missing.

Firstly, we conceptualized public space as a battlefield for different interests, which divide it in places whose ownership is of a fluid nature. We found that these places can be heteronormative, neutral or LGBT friendly. While the first category of places, like pools and gyms are governed by rules which visibly question the identity of transgender people, for instance, the LGBT-friendly places provide the necessary support and instruments for affirmative actions. From the interviews, this quality of friendliness was assigned to places such is the university or places associated with the liberal arts. Nevertheless, if we are to think of what is missing from this picture, we realize that we are mostly unaware of the efforts they make in space appropriation actions. This happens because the instruments at their disposal are either limited or their legitimacy is contested by other parties.

An example we discussed throughout the article is the Bucharest Pride Parade.
The instruments employed in this case were at a discursive level, *i.e.*, changing the name of the parade to include the reference to the city; at the physical, palpable level, by using Accept’s headquarters and resources in organization, but also through the employment of physical demarcations, to temporarily delimitate the “discrimination-free zone” or the whole street they were marching along, for that matter.

Another thing that is missing and was denounced in our interviews is visibility of the LGBT community in Bucharest. One reason we identified for this issue is the reduced public space they can use to assert their identity and demand recognition, given the obstacles they encounter in the form of other fragments of the civil society. As we understand, there are at least twenty organizations that openly and constantly militate against LGBT’s organized demand for equitable treatment from society. The urban environment is appreciated for the anonymity aura that it offers, which is associated with a kind of freedom that small cities and villages lack. On the other hand, a peril created by this situation is the invisibility cloak with which it gets to cover not only members of LGBT community, but also their problems. This lack of assertion leads to a shortage of well trained, specialized doctors in LGBT issues, either psychologists or endocrinologists.

Good news is that we managed to identify a community-like structure. But as discussed, its current shape was established mainly through outside catalysers such as international pressures. What we can see missing is an array of internal catalysers that would, according to the community model described in the conceptualization, facilitate a better integration within the community.

A question we asked ourselves in this paper was whether Bucharest is characterized by sexual prejudice or heterosexist attitudes. What we found is that displays of sexual prejudice are common, but given that the legal background is favourable to the development of the LGBT community, instances of heterosexism (where we refer to institutions) are rare. What public institutions can do is avoid contact or association with LGBT actors, be they people or organizations, or their causes, as might have been the case of Central University Library of Bucharest, if our understanding is correct. The manifestation of individual or small-level sexual prejudice is not, however, as strong as to prevent Accept from promoting their cause.

Lastly, some other important findings we drew from the interviews are related to the needs of the LGBT communities and the role of the state. It is not enough for the state to
provide a basic legal framework, for LGBT people to be protected. What is needed is also dissemination of information in the urban public sphere, to avoid confusion and stigmatization; social support for people when they realize/accept their gender or sexuality, in order to prevent isolation and improve social integration, but also in case of discrimination/assaults; help LGBT communities establish organizations and develop activities for this community and heterosexual and LGBT communities to work together for what was called in the literature review the “urban citizenship” that would ameliorate the life quality of urban residents. Actions organized by feminist groups such as marches and lobby for police protection, better public illuminating system, improved treatment of female victims of abuse (ibidem) could be of very much use if they broadened their reference group to encompass LGBT people.

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Democracy, Deliberation and Exclusion.  
A Brief Case Study on Romanian Deliberation Regarding the Civil Partnership

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Abstract
The present article has its starting point in the feminist critiques directed against the theory of public reason detailed in Political Liberalism. These feminist critiques reject Rawls’ model as they consider it limits both the individual’s access and also the topics and themes subjected to debate. Starting from the question how and who establishes the limits between political and non-political (and therefore the implications reasonable/unreasonable, public/private, inclusion/exclusion), this paper will analyze Rawls’ model (and its reasonability restriction), Habermas' proposals (and the rational argument restriction) and those of Iris Marion Young (communicative democracy), adding in the last part Morgan-Olsen’s conceptual frame. The four approaches will be then used in a short overview of the 2014 Judiciary Committee debate on legalizing civil partnership in Romania.

Key words: exclusion • public reason • legitimacy • deliberative democracy • communicative democracy • Rawls • Habermas • Marion Young

Rawls and the limits of reasonability
Rawls’ theory of political liberalism is based not on pluralism, but on reasonable pluralism, and therefore its two main components are public reason and tolerance (overlapping consensus). Citizens are considered reasonable when they accept each other as free and equal, when they cooperate in a fair way and if they reach an agreement even if this is not favorable to their own interests as long as this entails that the other will accept the solution (Rawls 1997, 770).

Reasonableness is based on the criterion of reciprocity (Rawls 1993, XLII): citizens must accept / validate certain actions as free and equal individuals, without being manipulated or dominated. Reciprocity ensures the fairness of a choice in the political space. Being reasonable, thus, does not require sharing the same political values, but the mutual recognition of others’ deliberative freedoms, the necessity for dialogue and the acceptance of reviewing their own opinions (Bohman 1995, 264) following the process of deliberation in equal terms with others. Unreasonable citizens do not approve social cooperation with others and/or do not agree that reasonable
citizens contradict on various matters (Friedman 2003, 166), and/or the fact that all citizens are free and equal (Quong 2004, 315).

The reasonableness of citizens represents the basis of public reason and the purpose of the latter is public justification (Rawls 1997, 786). Public reason proposes how to organize the structure and content of society’s fundamental underpinnings for political deliberations (Rawls 1993, LVIII) and does not apply to the background culture (non-public reason) (Rawls 1997, 768). Rawls stresses that public reason does not address all political discussions, but only to the public political forum: the discourse of judges; the discourse of government representatives; the discourse the candidates for public offices. The limitations of public reason refers both to (a) its content and (b) its method (Charney 1998, 98-100): (a) the reasons put forward in the justification process shall be those that appeal to political values or to the values of a political conception of justice – what it is considered a public good or a public danger; and (b) adherence to general principles of reasoning, criteria of relevance and rules of proof.

Bohman (1995, 258-259) does not accept Rawls' idea that there is solely one public reason and several non-public reasons which belong to the background culture, contrasted with public political culture. Public reason will not be based on a comprehensive moral doctrine or on a specific conception of what is right because such reasons do not have a public domain. The neutrality of public reason comes precisely from avoiding such non-public moral claims. However, the neutrality of public reason and the impartiality of overlapping consensus may lead to forms of impartial universality and to a political culture of the majority group (Bohman 1995, 257-260). The problem noted by Bohman (1995, 255-259) is that, in a pluralistic society, public reason can be unstable and disputed in terms of its scope, especially in the context of cultural diversity and the conflicts generated by non-public reasons. He suggests a review of the liberal approach so that public reason would be considered plural, plurality that would promote a common deliberation concerning conflicts and not collective goals.

Bohman considers Habermas’ perspective on deliberation as an alternative to Rawls’ because it does not limit the topics of the debate and allows establishing the difference between political and non-political during the deliberation process, not prior to that. By enlarging the access in the deliberation field, public reason becomes more dynamic and thus avoids the objection of excluding minority groups (Bohman 1995,
those that do not fall within the type of reasonable reasoning from Rawls’ model - or citizens considered unreasonable. However, Habermas’ model also becomes problematic as it is based on rationality and on the capacity of abstraction (neutrality and impartiality).

The Rawls-Habermas dispute starts from the problem of legitimacy and its relation with public justification, because without establishing, in an acceptable way for everyone, the limits of public reason and the differences between reasonableness and unreasonableness, then the justification based on public understanding is not sustainable (Bohman 1995, 265). While for Bohman the rawlsian ideal of public reason is an unrealistic standard for many political conflicts because it excludes diversity, for Habermas it is a substantial problematic issue since its outcome - legitimacy - may not necessarily be fair. Both Rawls and Habermas consider that justice is primarily concerned with the relationship between citizens and that they must agree upon the characteristics of the relationships of a fair society (Laden 2011, 140). The main difference between the two authors also regards the distinction between acceptance / acceptability, where Rawls’ justification model generates only acceptance (Laden 2011, 151). For Rawls, the outcome of public reason is not automatically correct or true, but reasonable and legitimate (Rawls 1997, 798), allowing legitimacy to divert from fairness - but this estrangement from fairness has to be moderate, otherwise legitimacy itself becomes corrupted (Freyenhagen 2011, 332) - fact caused by the procedural conception according to which the agreement on the decisions should be based solely on the fairness of the proceedings (Cohen 1997, 409). Habermas considers, however, that an unjust law is illegitimate and that legitimacy must be compatible with valid moral rules (Finlayson 2007, 153-157). His model argues that valid moral rules (leading to acceptability) should be set prior to engaging in the political discourse and not within public reason. In Between Facts and Norms, Habermas stresses that "deliberative politics acquires its legitimating force from the discursive structure of an opinion- and will-formation that can fulfill its socially integrative function only because citizens expect its results to have a reasonable quality" (Habermas 1992, 304).

Public reason does not prohibit the plurality of opinions (only if they are reasonable), but imposes compliance with legitimate political decisions, even if some citizens do not consider so, by virtue of the majority principle (Rawls 1997, 798). This last aspect is criticized by Habermas (1995, 128), who considers that thus the public
reason does not represent an exercise of citizens’ political autonomy, but only a nonviolent way to preserve political stability. In his conception, legitimacy depends on recognizing private individuals as potential contributors in the discursive processes that lead to the drafting of laws (Johnson 2001, 45). Audi’s argument against the legitimacy generated by the majority opinion takes into account that this may lead to the opposite of liberal democracy and cannot guarantee the observance of basic rights, the majority being able to adopt a constitution that would legitimize restricting these rights (Audi 1997, 171).

For Friedman, legitimation resulting from the exclusion of unreasonable citizens is itself unreasonable because it does not take into account the conditions which have determined them to be unreasonable – e.g.: exposure to unjust/unreasonable institutions (Friedman 2003, 165). Such exclusion not only does not fail to remediate a previous injustice but serves to perpetuate the factors that determine citizens to be unreasonable. Furthermore, considering the fact that Rawls believes that agents are reasonable (public) and also rational (private), this might lead to the association between unreasonable and irrational, which would result in the exclusion of citizens on the basis of race, sex, class or based on implicit biases (Friedman 2003, 170-173).

According to Rawls, unreasonable citizens are excluded because they hinder the process of deliberation. Quong proposes that unreasonable citizens should be tolerated if their comprehensive views are compatible with public reason (Quong 2004, 320) and if it does not infringe the others’ rights to equality and freedom. The intervention / coercion / exclusion of unreasonable citizens must not violate the general principles of justice (the persons are free and equal) and has to be performed only when unreasonable views attack the ideals supported by public reason - the intervention / the exclusion has to be made also through public justification (Quong 2004, 331-333).

Although the revision of the theory from Political Liberalism enables a flexibility of the content of public reason, the inclusion in it is still conditioned by reasonableness and justification outside the comprehensive conceptual frameworks (Morgan-Olsen 2010, 233-235). The problem noticed by Morgan-Olsen is that there are two categories of new concepts: those belonging immutability to the comprehensive doctrines, and those that even if occur in a comprehensive framework, they can be separated from it and included in the public justification process. If the constraints of public reason fail to consider the second category, then it will exclude from the process of deliberation
individuals who should have been included – and this is what Marion Young calls 'external exclusion'.

Morgan-Olsen's objection to the limitations of public reason refers to the fact that the concept is based on conceptual exclusion when it claims that reasons which are not supported/accepted by all participants involved in the deliberation should be rejected as nonpublic. Even if the broader version of public reason developed by Rawls after PL starts from the idea of allowing the addition of new grounds, this does not change the problem of conceptual exclusion because even the newly introduced grounds in public reason must be accepted by the general public, otherwise will be dismissed as unreasonable by the majority of citizens (Morgan-Olsen 2010, 229). For Rawls, the reasons are non-public or not depending not on their novelty, but on their support from the general public – this was issue brought to the forefront by Habermas when he criticized Rawls' model as one which is based on the tyranny of the majority.

While Rawls considers that the limited scope of public reason, the restriction of reasonableness and the consensus of reasonable comprehensive doctrines represent the most effective method of political legitimacy, the feminist critics reject all three elements, whilst Habermas focuses primarily on the first, proposing as an alternative his deliberative model and the importance of civil society (through public sphere) in the choice of topics submitted to public debate and in their classification as political or non-political.

The theory of public reason raises several conceptual oppositions, namely: public political justice/comprehensive perspectives, political/ethical, citizens/persons, reasons of the public sphere/reasons of other spheres - and all are based on the distinction between public and private (Charney 1998, 98). The feminist critics focus mainly on three antithetical pairs: political/non-political, public/private, reasonable/unreasonable.

The main problem raised by feminists concerning reasonableness starts from the fact that Rawls "introduces in this concept the distinction between political and private" (Baehr 1996, 58). Although Rawls mentions in Political Liberalism that the public/non-public distinction is not synonymous with the public/private one (Charney 1998, 98), we can at least split the elements of the three conceptual couples in two main classes: political – public - reasonable and non-political – private – unreasonable. Rawls considers that the private sphere cannot be characterized by reasonableness, but by
rationality, since the criterion of reciprocity (which underlies reasonableness) is limited to the political field (Laden 2011, 147 and Finlayson 2007, 156), and also because the reciprocity requirements have no philosophical nature and may not be applied to comprehensive doctrines. Replacing the reasonableness of the private sphere with rationality may be an evidence of avoiding any accusation of unreasonableness of the private field or of the comprehensive doctrines, allowing thereby the overlapping consensus of comprehensive doctrines which in fact are not reasonable (e.g.: the consensus of sexist comprehensive doctrines), but which, until they are involved in the process of public justification, can not be characterized so, but only rational or irrational. The removal of private conceptions from the public reason is an ideal that does not reflect the evidence of reality.

The liberal conception on the public – private distinction insists on the existence of certain delimitation between them, the latter being protected from the coercive state intervention. Rawls transposes this distinction in the form of political - non-political. In his conception, the public reason is distinguished from the non-public one in regards to their domain: the non-political is determined by the background culture, which is opposed to the public political culture. Responding to the critics on the limitation of the public reason, *The Idea of Public Reason Revisited* allows the non-public reasons to be accepted in the deliberation process as long as they are accompanied by public reasons which will support any comprehensive doctrine (Morgan-Olsen 2010, 232). However, this permissiveness does not refer to the translation of comprehensive arguments in reasonable political arguments, but to the acceptance of new public reasons which support certain comprehensive doctrines, according to liberal perspective that does not accept the intervention of the political / the state in private areas.

A second feminist criticism addresses the issue of autonomy. Friedman considers that the exclusion of unreasonable persons from the deliberation pool leads to their coercion without any consent from them, the result being the violation of the freedom, equality and autonomy of citizens (Friedman 2003, 163). For Rawls, however, a broad political concept and a narrow non-political conception endanger the citizens’ personal autonomy because it restricts their freedom to build a life of their own choice (Baehr 1996, 60). Iris Marion Young believes that Rawls’ emphasis on public autonomy requires the removal of particular demands and viewpoints, which leads to ignoring personal autonomy (Johnson 2001, 50). Habermas rejects prioritizing a form of autonomy at the
expense of the other, and includes both forms in the process of legitimacy (Finlayson 2007, 150 and Johnson 2001, 51), where the public sphere represents the framework in which the demands of personal autonomy are discussed.

Regarding the distinction between the political and the non-political, Okin raises the question who and where establishes the limit between the political and the non-the political borders, and if we should rely on the normative or on something else. Habermas' answer is that we should not leave it up to the normative - rejecting thus the model set out in *Justice as Fairness* because it deprives citizens of having an active role in the legitimation discourse (Laden 2011, 143), because the limit is not a fixed one, but can be changed and established by citizens in the their quality of active agents - and here Habermas refers not only to voting, but also to participating in the public discourse through the public sphere (Baehr 1996, 61-62). Civil society has a central role, because it brings to the forefront issues that belonged to the non-the political until then, and turns them into political issues.

**Habermas and the limits of rationality**

While for Rawls legitimacy is the one that prevails, for Habermas justification is more important, the dispute between the two representing the result of Rawls' affiliation to deliberative liberalism, and Habermas' to deliberative democracy. Deliberative democracy focuses on political justification, understood as an ideal procedure of political deliberation in which participants acknowledge their mutual equality through cooperation (Cohen 1997, 412-413). For Habermas, those who participate in discourse "have the obligation to justify any appreciation and judgment regarding what decision should be made to those who will be affected " (McMahon 2002, 122) by the decisions taken following the deliberation.

The deliberative democracy model proposed by Habermas, discourse ethics, encompasses elements from both the liberal perspective as well as from the republican perspective. Its specificity is that "it invests the democratic process with normative connotation stronger than those found in the liberal model but weaker than those found in the republican model" (Habermas 1992, 298), namely it prioritizes the process of formation of political opinions and the formation of the will, but without leaving the constitution in the background. For Habermas, deliberative politics should not rely on citizens who act collectively (the republican conception), but on the institutionalization
of the communication procedures and conditions and on the interaction between institutionalized deliberative processes and informally formed public opinions. The inclusion of the latter in the communication field, alongside with the institutionalized forms of deliberation (choice and legislative decisions) leads to transforming the influence of opinions and of communicative power into administrative power (Habermas 1992, 298-299).

Habermas argues that the deliberative democracy model avoids exclusion in the field of deliberation precisely because the legitimacy of decisions is generated by the interaction between the communication field from the outskirts of political power and the administrative power (Habermas 1992, 356) – but as Marion Young underlines, his model refers only to external exclusion and does not take into consideration internal exclusion. According to Habermas, the forming of institutionalized opinions has to be caused by communication contexts from the public sphere, civil society and private sphere, otherwise the opinions of experts or representatives of the administrative system will be prioritized at the expense of citizens (Habermas 1992, 351-352). Legitimacy is thus ensured through the public acceptance of the procedures by which the drafting of laws or of political decisions is responsive to the public opinion formed in the public sphere (Dryzek 2001, 656).

Civil society, although it does not have a clear or delimiting definition, includes non-governmental and non-economic connections and voluntary associations. The civil society is composed of associations, organizations and movements that communicate and spread in the public sphere their reactions to the repercussions of some political or social problems, repercussions which are found in the private sphere. These associations have an open and egalitarian form of organization, its public consisting of citizens who seek acceptable interpretations for their social interests and experiences and which express their will to influence the forming of the institutionalized opinions (Habermas 1992, 366-367). Civil society should not be confused with market activities nor the private sphere, although it is correlated with the latter, its goal being the institutionalization of those features of the discourse which must generate legitimacy (Thomassen 2010, 119).

The voluntary associations that form the civil society do not have a hierarchical shape and that is why they can not become the locus of the political power (Thomassen 2010, 120). They can, however, influence the political decisions from the public sphere,
turning the communicative power into administrative power, and thereby the public sphere can become a binding agent between the political system and the private sectors. For Habermas, the civil society (independent from the economic area / lobby and public administration) represents the basis of autonomous public spheres.

Starting from the dualistic theory of the civil (the defensive and the offensive aspect), Marion Young considers that the second function of the associative activities aims to influence political or economic policies, which makes the offensive function of civil society to be translated in the form of the public sphere (Marion Young 2000, 163).

The public sphere implies unrestricted inclusion and equality, which prevents any process of exclusion (Habermas 1992, 374). Habermas identifies three types of actors within it: those who represent political parties or pressure groups, those who have to build their identity within the public sphere (e.g.: the social movements which must first self-identify and self-legitimize) and the media representatives who collect and select what information will be presented (Habermas 1992, 375-376).

Habermas raised the issue of the proper/realistic/proportional illustration in the public sphere of the civil society actions in the context of the emergence and development of mass communication. Thus, it is outlined a third actor in the democratic process of opinion formation: mass media (which brings with it the issue of gatekeeping, the private interests of media companies, political associations, etc.). Habermas recalls that in the present society we often meet a public sphere dominated by the media, but this does not lead to the exclusive identification of the public sphere with the media field – such an interpretation would not allow civil society to have an influence on the political system. Protest movements or the controversial presentation of the proposals initiated by the public sphere constitutes a way to gain a place on the public agenda dominated by the media (Habermas 1992, 379-381).

Habermas highlights the distinction between civil society and the public sphere: the first includes institutional factors (e.g.: NGOs) while the second is a broad framework in which the first takes place and also includes other elements (e.g.: media) but it does not include and it is not defined as an institutional mechanism. Civil society has the role to determine the directions of discussion in the public sphere - either brings to the forefront rejected themes considered until then irrelevant by all / most citizens, either discusses / rejects some political decisions and invites participating in debates regarding their alternatives.
The critics of Habermas’ model refer mainly to the fact that he takes into consideration solely one public sphere. Nancy Fraser considers that the singularity of the public sphere ensures the dominance of certain actors and leads to the exclusion of the less privileged (Marion-Young 2000, 171). Habermas’ argument is that in the mass society a multitude of public spheres would cause the impossibility of making a decision in accordance with their requirements (which can be conflicting). However he accepts Fraser’s critique in the form of underling counter-publics as the main fields of critical publicity (Allen 2012, 824).

**Inclusion and communicative democracy**

Regarding the Rawls – Habermas dispute on legitimacy, Marion Young frequently emphasizes that inclusion represents the basic condition of legitimacy in democratic politics (MarionYoung 2000, 36), and that inclusion can become a tool for stopping political inequalities caused by social or economic inequalities. Democracy must be characterized by political equality (Marion Young 2000, 52) - all those affected by policies should be equally included in the decision making process and should have equal opportunities in influencing the outcome of the deliberation process. However, Marion Young does not conceive inclusion as formal and abstract equality, but as the explicit recognition of social differences and as encouragement that different groups which differ from the majority to express their needs, interests and perspectives under conditions of reasonableness - where 'reasonable' means being willing to listen to others, to accept their influence and not to resort to violence (Marion Young 2000, 38, 48) - and publicity (Marion Young 2000, 119).

In *Inclusion and Democracy*, Marion Young identifies two types of exclusion: external and internal. External exclusion can be found in ways through which individuals and groups that should have been included in the decision making process are left out, and often they are not aware of this phenomenon on time. The most obvious form of external exclusion is that which generated by economic and political differences, where those with political and economic advantages dominate the process - which makes the results of such a process illegitimate (Marion Young 2000, 54).

Internal exclusion is more difficult to observe and less analyzed by democratic theorists, since the terms of the discussion appeal to assumptions and meanings that not all the participants share and also favor certain styles of expression. Overcoming the
obstacles of external exclusion and gaining their presence in public - through the presence in the media and the dominance of the public discussion on an issue, citizens still encounter another form of exclusion from those more powerful – the ignoring or ironizing of their claims and causes. The fact that citizens are formally included in the deliberation process does not guarantee that they will be treated equally or with the same consideration (Marion Young 2000, 53-55).

If the rawlsian model can be rejected because it excludes diversity (through the limits of public reason and reasonableness), Habermas’ communicative model operates at the opposite pole. However, Marion Young criticizes this aspect because it focuses on emphasizing the differences (Marion Young 2000, 18). Another critique to Habermas’s model concerns the emphasis of his deliberative model on the rational argument, considering that the standards of rationality are subject to new conflicting interpretations (Bohman 1995, 254). Whilst external exclusion can be identified in Rawls' model from *Political Liberalism*, Marion Young considers that Habermas’ model is incomplete because it allows internal exclusion.

While most deliberative democracy followers assume that state institutions are the primary place of deliberation, the proponents of discourse ethics give more importance to the civil society and believe that this should be considered the principal place of deliberation. Marion Young's model, communicative democracy, takes into account both state institutions and civic institutions as potential places for the democratic communication between citizens and also between citizens and public officials. Communicative democracy recognizes the main deficiency of deliberative models, namely that any deliberation process should proceed only after all participants accept and understand the premises that underlie the discussion. Marion Young builds her model starting from the fact that a particular audience may seem to have common concepts / understandings with others, but these concepts actually do not contain the needs of that audience (Marion Young 2000, 36-37). In order to avoid any type of internal exclusion, the author proposes three modes of communication: greeting, rhetoric and narrative.

The greeting (or public acknowledgment) refers to political gestures by which those who are in conflict and want to find a solution to it *acknowledge* the others as being included in the discussion. The lack of public recognition is found in situations where certain individuals or groups who have tried to outline their arguments in a
political discussion are depreciated or ignored. Another sign of the absence of public recognition is the fact that certain groups or social sectors are addressed to in the third person, never in the second person, and this is because they are either are considered the either subject of the debate or its problem (Marion Young 2000, 57-62).

The rhetoric implies the distinction between what is said in a discourse and how is said and motivated the shift from reason to opinion (Marion Young 2000, 54, 69). Marion Young rejects the exclusivism of the rational discourse at the expense of the rhetorical discourse and this represents the basis of the main objection she has on discourse ethics.

The rational discourse, proposed by Habermas, consists in universalistic, impartial and neutral arguments / reasons that focus on logical connections. Discourse ethics considers that the rational discourse has a communicative function (reaching agreement with the others), while the rhetoric discourse has a strategic function - manipulation at the will of the interlocutor (Marion Young 2000, 63). Marion Young rejects Habermas’s conception, emphasizing that the rational/ argumentative can also be used for manipulative purposes, the truth of an argument being generated by the truth of its premises (Marion Young 2000, 79). Moreover, according to critics sensible on difference, the rational argument may be constructed by or in favor of white educated men (Dryzek 2001, 660), and thus such rationality, in fact, masks a systematic bias.

Bohman, following the same direction as Marion Young, believes that both Rawls’ and Habermas’ versions are too restrictive regarding the public agreement (Bohman 1995, 263). If for Rawls the universality and singularity of public reason (accepted by all) is built "by an act of monologic imagination " (McMahon 2002, 117) - the veil of ignorance, which leads to both types of exclusion identified by Marion Young, Habermas appeals to the universality and neutrality of dialogical constructed rational arguments, by the participation in the deliberation of all those likely to be affected by the outcome of political decisions. The fact that the latter introduces dialogue as a means of forming moral principles in a collective manner (McMahon 2002, 112) does not guarantee the avoidance of internal exclusion phenomena or dominance of the discourse by advantaged or majority group. In addition, the conditions of the discourse offered by Habermas focus on noninterference (no one is entitled to intervene in the right of participants to speak and to be heard) and allow easing the requirements for participation: anyone may enter in the discourse (Chambers 1995, 167), but this does
not guarantee that all those affected by outcomes of decisions will also engage in the process of deliberation.

Habermas does not accept the introduction of the rhetoric in the model of communicative action since he associates it with perlocution (Marion Young 2000, 66) and strategic action, and communication that aims to produce certain effects on receptors distorts communicative interaction. As Heath recalls, the essential difference between speech acts and strategic action is given by the fact that the commitments undertaken represent an action for the former, while in the second case commitments are only asserted (Heath 2001, 94). The feminist critique considers that 'the puritanism' proposed by Habermas suggests the contradictory separation of two spheres of action (Pajnik 2006, 388). However, Marion Young claims that the rhetoric should not be framed solely in the area of result oriented actions, but that this, along with narrative and greeting, have the main purpose of attaining understanding and changing the opinions and values of others. Actions aimed at influencing the beliefs of others are considered by Habermas understanding oriented actions (Heath 2001, 80), which allows the introduction of the three elements of the communicative democracy.

The narrative is a way of reducing internal exclusion generated by different understandings on certain assumptions, experiences or values. Marion Young's argument for introducing this element is the fact that different perspectives are selectively embedded in the public discourse depending on the dominant paradigms (Marion Young 2000, 71). Still, the narration of situations from the perspective of the excluded group does not warrant the legitimacy of its demands, and thus political communication also requires general normative arguments (Marion Young 2000, 74). Therefore the narrative must be supported by fixed norms, and only thus can influence the values of the opposing parties involved in the discourse.

Communicative democracy does not propose replacing arguments by greeting, rhetoric and narrative, but including them alongside rational arguments. The greeting precedes the reasons put forward in the discussion, because if the parties do not mutually recognize each other, they will not listen to the other's arguments. The rhetoric accompanies arguments, customizing them through style and tone. The narrative plays an important role in complex arguments and leads to a better understanding of the differences of perspective (Marion Young 2000, 79). The three modes of communication
lead thus to the inclusion in the democratic discourse of those having different views than the majority and correct the existing bias.

Marion Young distances herself from the central importance that Habermas gives to the civil society and the public sphere. Although she stresses that within civil society the marginalized individuals can express their perceptions in a way that is incompatible with the predominantly rational and neutral terms used in the political discourse and that the purpose of civil society is to promote social justice (Marion Young 2000, 155-158), she considers that institutional actors have an equally important role, because the voluntary associations are not able to solve disputes in which economic agents are involved, for example.

**Conceptual exclusion**

For Morgan-Olsen, exclusion can be reduced to the problem of difference in the conceptual resources because problems of marginalized groups are difficult to conceptualize as their experiences are not recognized in the public discourse (Morgan-Olsen 2010, 214-217). Starting from the hermeneutic injustice resulted from conceptual exclusion, he identifies two other forms of exclusion (similar but not identical to those proposed by Marion Young): exclusion within the group and public exclusion.

The first level of conceptual exclusion is the one within the group and it is found in the situations in which individuals encounter difficulties in expressing and transmitting their requirements even in the group that shares a relevant set of experiences (Morgan-Olsen 2010, 218). The exemplary situation in which we identify this type of exclusion is sexual harassment and the difficulties of individuals to develop the conceptual framework that will be accepted and understood by all the members of the group. Morgan-Olsen emphasizes that before starting any form of political activism, the respective group must solve their exclusion problem at this level, to elaborate their concepts (underpinning the public demands) based on the experiences specific to individuals that are part of the group. Morgan-Olsen’s proposal to address the issue at group level completes Marion Young’s model, which focuses mainly on public exclusion. The narrative, rhetoric and greeting can thus be included in the techniques which would generate the drafting and acceptance of the problems and specific requirements of the group.
At the second level we find public exclusion generated by the decreased likelihood that the requirements of the group (after overcoming the first level) will be taken into consideration or understood by the general public (Morgan-Olsen 2010, 215). The exemplary situation of public exclusion can be found in debates on abortion (Morgan-Olsen 2010, 222-223), where the general public uses different concepts in the interpretation of the pregnancy issue and ignores the experiences of those who are likely to be or have been in a position of having an unwanted pregnancy.

The exclusion problem in the case of civil partnership in Romania
While in the case of sexual harassment we can still identify forms of exclusion at the group level, in the case of same sex marriage this level was overcome (Morgan-Olsen 2010, 219). In Romania the issue regarding the demands of the LGBT community has been approached at group level through the involvement of NGOs since the 90s. The most important such engagement has been represented by the Association Accept, by organizing support groups, facilitating access to counseling (psychological, legal and medical) and small events for the LGBT community.

At the level of public exclusion mentioned by Morgan-Olsen, Accept had an important role in the repeal of Article 200 in 2001. Also the organization of the annual march of diversity (GayFest, renamed Bucharest Pride) aims both to strengthen tolerance, as well as to increase the visibility (www.accept-romania.ro/despre-noi/istoric) of these demands in mass media and in the public sphere. Given the mediatization of the festival, in 2006 Accept put for the first time on the public agenda the issue of marriage / partnership between people of the same sex.

In April 2013, at the initiative of Remus Cernea, a representative from the Green Party, the legislative proposal on civil partnership entered under debate (which applies both to couples of the opposite sex as well as to same-sex couples). This proposal was intended to give a statutory nature to people who live together, as an alternative to marriage. The legislative proposal was declined by the Senate in December 2013, unanimously rejected by the Judiciary Committee in March 2014 and in June 2014 it was rejected by the Chamber of Deputies.

In the explanatory memorandum of the law ( Romanian Senate website, http://www.senat.ro/Legis%5CPDF%5C2013%5C13L597EM.pdf, accessed December 4, 2014), the main arguments put forward aim to transpose in the legislative field the
evolution of society, as well as the evolution of the norms and values of equal rights and non-discrimination, the recognition of new types of families and couples. Moreover, according to the 2002 census, more than 3.9% of the population admitted that they were living in some form of consensual union with the partner and the 2008 surveys show an increase of up to 5.7%. The explanatory memorandum mentions the fact that the legislative proposal does not imply financial resources from the state budget, and that it will enable, thus, the legalization of a less expensive form than marriage for officiating a relation of partnership between two individuals, regardless of their sex.

Further on I will briefly review the Judiciary Committee debate on 5 March 2014 (available in video format on YouTube, at www.youtube.com/watch?v=RG7rFz5TL-s, accessed December 4th 2014), while taking into consideration the four theoretical approaches described above. The issues rising from the Judiciary Committee debate should not be limited to the appeal of religious views, despite being the most frequent and intrusive argument used by the opponents of the draft law. It must be brought to the forefront also the following aspects: the unequal argumentation time allowed to the parts involved in the debate, the limitation imposed on the number of speakers representing the supporters of the legislative proposals and their time (representatives of the civil society who spoke in the name of the people who could have benefited the new law); the fact that the religious representatives were in a larger number than those who spoke in favor of the people who needed the law1. Regarding the content of the arguments used by the opposed parties involved in the debate, the proponents of the law invoked reasons such as democracy, representation of every citizen regardless of his/her sexual orientation, equal legal rights, recognition and not just toleration, while the opposing side, meaning not just the religious representatives, but also the deputies, appeal to reasons referring to Old Testament, family values, moral values, Christianity, deviance, the destruction of society.

From the latter aspect it is clear that the two sides operate with terms belonging to different fields, the first are political public reasons, the latter are comprehensive worldviews. This can also be interpreted as a failure to translate religious views into reasonable political views, and also as a form of conceptual exclusion. There is, however,

1 There were four representatives of different religions, none of which was forced to limit his argumentation by the Committee’s president. The four representatives had more than 12 minutes for arguing their standing point against the law, while the three representatives from the civil society (the number was limited by the Committee’s president, in fact there were more people available to present their arguments) had a total of 6 minutes, each being limited to speak only 2 minutes.
a more problematic issue than the intrusion of religious officials in this debate over an ordinary law which has mostly positive economic implications (creating thus the same legal frame as marriage in case of social benefits, healthcare access, mortgage, etc.). I must highlight the fact that also the deputies which expressed their opinion against the draft law used arguments similar to the religious officials, such as the destruction of society and the promotion of deviant behavior.

From Rawls' perspective, the vote against legalizing civil partnership is legitimate as the procedure is legitimate, since it complies with the decision of the majority. On the other hand, the reasons invoked by some actors engaged in the debate stand out through unreasonableness, since they do not accept (based on reasons related to comprehensive doctrines - religion) the pleas raised by the advocates of the project. Another incompatibility of the public reason approach with the concerned subject is given by the fact that this subject is considered nonpublic because it assumes the involvement of the law in the organization of the private sphere.

From Habermas' perspective, this legislative project represents the influence of civil society on the public opinion and also the result of the subject's coverage in the public sphere. Habermas recalls that in order to fulfill its function of signaling social problems, the political public sphere should also include the communication that occurs between those possibly affected (Habermas 1992, 365). This, however, does not explain the massive involvement of the representatives of religion in the debate regarding the civil partnership as an alternative to marriage.

Both Rawls and Habermas focus on the nature of the reasons used in the political field. However, both approaches offer a flawed analysis when religious reasons are found in the middle of the issue. As mentioned in the first part of the paper, Rawls' approach to public reason is too restrictive and this applies also to the public appeals to religious beliefs. Habermas, following the direction drawn by Wolterstorff, allows the existence of reasons based or derived from religion since "requiring religious citizens to proffer secular reasons for their views would violate equality and lead to illegitimate outcomes" (Habermas in Walhof 2013, 227).

Habermas' view from Between Naturalism and Religion tries to reconcile the opposing approaches advocated by Audi and Wolterstorff, the strong restrictive and the weak restrictive versions of liberalism. Thus, the solution proposed is to distinguish between "the informal public sphere of democratic opinion-formation, on the one hand,
and the institutional decision-making public sphere, on the other hand" (Walhof 2013, 227). Habermas' view allows the appeal to religious reasons in the informal public sphere, but it prohibits it in the institutional public sphere: "political authority must be neutral towards competing worldviews, [...] only secular reasons count beyond the institutional threshold separating the informal public sphere from parliaments, courts" (Habermas 2008, 130). However, this ideal division of the public sphere does not have clear boundaries. In order to avoid the appearance of pure religious reasons in the institutional public sphere and also not to ignore to claims made in the informal public sphere, Habermas considers that the religious language could be translated into secular reasons and thus be a part of the official decisions. But another issue emerges from this translation proviso – asymmetry, since it demands "that religious citizens make an effort to learn and adapt", while "secular citizens are spared" (Habermas 2008, 136). Apart from that, as Walhof remarks, the translation proviso's failure is not only generated by the unequal effort among the two opposing sides, the religious and the secular one, but also by the fact that even in the translation of different languages there is an "interpretive dimension" (Walhof 2013, 233).

Considering the Judiciary Committee debate from the perspective just presented above, and taking into account that, firstly, both the religious representative and the deputies who opposed the draft law based their arguments on religious reasons, and secondly, that even the deputy who initiated the law started his pleading with a passage from the Bible which spoke about love and toleration, then we are found in the surprising situation where in fact the asymmetry is not favoring secular citizens, but the religious ones. The main secular reasons mentioned in the debate came from the three guest speakers who favored the draft law, all of them with a background in political activism and NGOs. Their claims (justice, the democratic representation of every citizen regardless of his/her sexual orientation, equal legal rights, recognition and not just toleration) did not rise any debate among the Judiciary Committee, but the recital of the Bible passage for supporting the law was criticized and even considered a blasphemy.

Stepping beyond the implications of religious reasons in the institutional and legislative field, I must stress the fact that the debate on legalizing civil partnership can be interpreted not just as a failure to translate religious reasons into secular reasons, but also as a form of exclusion.
Another interpretation of the debate on civil partnership corresponds to the model of communicative democracy, and the effects generated by the lack of the three types of communication modes offered by Marion Young. Among the reasons invoked for rejecting the draft law we can find the problem generated by the politics of difference: the destruction of the common good (family and society - plea raised by the church representatives) and weakening the national identity (Marion Young 2000, 84). But this common good (family, society) may be defined by a dominant group (in this case the proponents of religion) in a manner consistent with their experiences and perspectives. However, in the case of non-discriminatory legal treatment, the discussion should not be put into terms of difference or identity politics. As Marion Young underlines, in the case of same-sex partnerships, the requirements of equality in fiscal benefits, ownership and wage benefits should not be considered identity claims or recognition demands. Instead, these requirements represent the main demand of allowing someone to be different from the majority without suffering economic disadvantage on the basis of these private differences (Marion Young 2000, 107-108).

Taking into account Marion Young’s approach, the Judiciary Committee debate shows all the signs of a form of external exclusion (those affected are excluded, they are not allowed and they are not allocated time to present their arguments), but mainly internal exclusion: the arguments of the proponents of the legislative project are looked down upon, they do not receive the same argumentative space as the ones who are against the project (less minutes for those in favor). The absence of public recognition is suggested by the fact that those affected by the project are considered in the discussion as being absent – they become the subject or the problem of the legislative proposal. However, we can identify types of rhetoric from both groups under discussion, as well as narration (in a very limited extent).

Another form of exclusion in the case of the legislative debate is conceptual public exclusion, as formulated by Morgan-Olsen, most of the representatives of the Committee operating with concepts different than those of the initiators of the legislative project and ignoring the particularity of same-sex couples which are economically and socially underprivileged.

**Conclusion**
This short overview of the Judiciary Committee debate on civil partnership shows the need for adopting other approaches, besides those of Rawls and Habermas. The two models do not tackle all the problems that emerge in the democratic deliberation procedures. Inclusion remains an empty word when those affected by a certain political decision are not effectively participating in the deliberation process. The formal inclusion in the process of deliberation only hides the various forms of exclusion. Therefore, the case presented above surely does not represent a singular episode, which calls for more attention to the role of communication and the proper methods that should be employed.

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Urban Space and Queer Identities:
The LGBTQ Film Festival as Heterotopia

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Abstract
This article seeks to examine and critically discuss the dynamics between private and public space in an urban context, in relation to meanings and structures identified as components of queer identity and culture. Starting from theoretical interrogations regarding urban space and sexual identities, I will analyze the role and function of a specific socio-cultural practice: the LGBTQ film festival. Michel Foucault’s concept of heterotopia is central to the placement of the film festival in the larger context of urban queer identity formation. The division line between private and public is explored, as it facilitates the understanding of contemporary social attitudes and practices, while illuminating clashes of meaning and subjectivity in an urban setting.

Key Words: urban space • queer identities • LGBTQ film festival • heterotopia

Introduction
My aim in this article is to discuss and examine the dynamics between private and public space in an urban context, in relation to meanings and structures identified as components of queer identity and culture. The discussion originates with the occasion of the LGBT Film Festival Mix Odense 2014¹, part of the MIX international circuit, including Mix Copenhagen. A film festival focused on themes and topics that surround homosexuality and queerness in a contemporary context represents a landmark within local, national and international visual culture. I will examine what role the LGBT film festival plays using Michel Foucault’s (1997) concept of heterotopia, as an attempt to identify and explore modes of urban existence, and investigate various correlations between space, alternatives to it, and queer subjectivity. Zygmunt Bauman’s (2011) perspective on the public-private divide and its recent mutations represents another important point of inquiry, as it illuminates contemporary social attitudes, while allowing for debate and dialogue.

As an enclave of cultural production, the film festival isolates cinematic works and envelops them with particular discourses, inviting a necessarily alternative decoding. The structure and internal evolution of this socio-cultural phenomenon act towards the appropriation of certain segments of urban space and time, constructing an

¹ Official website: [http://mixodense.dk/]
alternative, timely place of reflection, consumption, and cultural interrogation. This allows the understanding of the film festival as a heterotopia, an aspect that will be discussed later, with focus on its mechanisms and relation to urban space, time, and subjectivity. The fine line between public and private reflects complex dimensions of social life. The public–private binary, inherited from the early experience of modernity, is contained within a larger web of such dichotomies fostered by contemporary urban space, and perpetuated by everyday performances: inside/outside, right/wrong, I/Other, center/periphery. These contrasting categories of urban existence stand as indicators of urban fluidity, of an inherent and contradictory placelessness of urban space, fragmentation, and interdependence of resulting fragments. In this context, films incorporate the self-reflective nature of urban life, attempting to simplify or complicate, hide or expose, perpetuate or subvert knowledge.

Through the medium of a dedicated festival, films descend to a street-level dimension, becoming a “knowledge-making institution,” (Lee 2011; Lee 2012) which embraces and celebrates an “elasticity of meaning,” (Ivakhiv 2011) opposing the static, seemingly impenetrable structures of the city.

In the first part of the article, the central notion will be the urban space, with questions regarding its particular ethos, and modes and structures that inform cultural production and social reflectiveness. The city is seen as both cause and effect of a myriad of meanings and vectors of identity formation and performance. Queer identities and homosexual performance will be particularly analyzed as inherent elements of an urban web of social existence, with critical focus on ontological boundaries between public and private spaces.

The second part of the article discusses the function of the LGBTQ film festival, as a cultural phenomenon, with social and axiological ramifications. The particular element of analysis is the MIX Odense film festival, a rather new festival, taken out of the big-city context, and brought into a rather small urban area (Odense is Denmark’s third largest city, a university center, with nearly 200,000 inhabitants). A few of the questions I will consider are: How does this festival incorporate local space and cultural activity? What features of urban life interact with the LGBT festival? What type of discourse does Mix Odense create about urban queer culture? Where does the festival stand along the borderline between public and private space? How does the LGBTQ festival incorporate practices of self-reflection and mirroring performed by the city, as a self-standing entity?
These matters will be addressed by looking at the meta-structure of the festival, in relation to artistic practices, audience production, and engagement with structures of the city.

Following these lines of inquiry, I seek to conclude that the line between private and public space in an urban display of homosexual culture is very fine, allowing for many intersections and juxtapositions of meaning, performance, and subjectivities. A segment of the real world of the city is taken over by the imagined world contained in a film festival, a heterotopia of sorts, which requires categorization and exploration, in order to be fully understood and instrumentally integrated in a genuine comprehension of queer urban subjectivities.

Space

Urban space is signification. It is a process, which reveals its own dense material and symbolic presence. The impact of this presence upon itself and upon those who reflect their existence in the city they inhabit is central to any effort of grasping the socio-cultural formative potential of the city. Urban space is interpretation – of values, of moods and desires, image and projection of what it has been and what is to become. Urban space is as fluid as time, flowing between compact structures of concrete and steel, glass and mirrors; a “liquid” entity floating among individuals, witnessing and inspiring their bonds (Bauman 2000). The city might seem a mirage, simultaneity of meanings and realities, which require either acute awareness, of place or self or a liberating merging with structures and mechanisms. Any given urban space has been endowed a pattern, but has not necessarily been given order. The city might appear to be a conglomerate of immutable elements, self-sustained by repetition – buildings reflect one another, individuals reflect their bodily image (and selves) in colossal mirrors, which seem to absorb urban life, only to return it to its former place, but not always its former structure. By projecting a state of being immovable, the city often creates an impression of being favorable to the development of a sense of place, of belonging, which ultimately reverberates in individuals’ self-recognition as members of a community. The concept of community follows an inherently human need to create clusters, symbolic (and often physical) territories of association and attachment, based on perceived commonalities. Mike Featherstone acknowledges this as element of a conflicting discourse on postmodern urban life (Balshaw and Kennedy 2000). In his
view, identities are composed and recomposed following a discursive practice of conflict and difference, which institutes fragmentation and disruption as necessary counterparts of community and solidarity.

Urbanism, urban experiences, heterotopia.

Historically, there is little doubt that cities in and by themselves could not have existed; take, for instance, the ancient city-states – the polis, incumbent upon it to foster the first traces of democracy. Millennial notions of citizenship and discourse appeared within the confinements of these archetypal “free cities”, influencing in their own right the very architecture of the city. The Agora, the place of gathering and democratic, free debate soon became a definitive part of the city structure, setting for centuries to come, the foundation for analyzing the relation between physical space and its cartographic representation, and the political space, rich in symbols that could at almost any time, materialize into powerful social and cultural structures. Nevertheless, the question of whether “physical structures follow political structures, or the other way around” has been and still is a good place of inquiry, when investigating the forces that might participate in the production of urban space (Daylight 2008). The relationship between community, as a main consequence of political relations, and the space to foster it is a rich and enlightening one; for one, it leads to a distinction between the structure of the city and the function the urban environment has. Acknowledging the unmovable feature of the former, one realizes the fluidity of the latter. However, this dichotomy still leaves room for discussion – are we to see the city as portrayed by a the cartographic representation – streets and neighborhoods, buildings and parks, alleys and sidewalks, all meandering and creating an independent entity, devoid of human element, or, on the contrary, is the city to be seen as created through the walks people take on the streets, the stories they created around buildings, the views they treasure and places they visit most? It seems that this is not an “either-or” type of situation, and a way of really understanding the city and how it is constructed is to find the middle ground between the two spheres of perception – the relation between the city and its inhabitants, the point of meeting between two probably equally important forces. Rather than focusing on the whole of the city as a result of a coming-together and complete merger of various elements, many scholars invite us to focus on the “urban experience” (Daylight 2008) as a process, a continuous struggle for “meaning and progress” (Campbell and Keane
This struggle for meaning lies underneath a deeper ontological and epistemological sphere, namely the construction of the city through discourse. This idea, bred at the school of post-structuralism, inspires the “reading of the city” (Campbell and Keane 1997) approaching the city as a text implies the search for meaning, for narrative as inherent to the urban experience. As a working definition, we are to understand the notion of discourse as “the manner through which the city is represented to us in language and related frames of reference and definition” (Campbell and Keane 1997). Such discourses have, the authors suggest, the role to “regulate” the perspective the viewers have of the city, employing the discursive act as a device of creating the urban reality, beyond its mere description. The American community created by the English colonists in the seventeenth century was seen to become “a City upon a Hill” an “absolute perfect place” (Campbell and Keane 1997) in other words, made visible in the light of its flawless existence, a vision of urban perfectibility, root of representations and screen surface for projections. Moreover, the newborn city was to be “made a story and a by-word through the world,” (Campbell and Keane 1997) constructed through both its narrative and various processes of interpretation. Despite its creation founded on a prescribed logic of visibility and legibility, the city grew into a kind of entity with no precise grammar, a narrative with no plot, a self-reflexive story more and more difficult to contain within the frames of epistemic capacities of individuals (as social subjects). Thus, the city was to be defined, just as the post-structuralist tradition would imply, by its fragmented characteristics, dissociative structures and a certain predisposition to deconstruction, as a consequence of the lack (or loss, thereof) of a unity of meaning and existence. This leads us to Michel Foucault’s notion of heterotopia, which has “the power of juxtaposing in a single real place different spaces and locations that are incompatible with each other” (Foucault 1997). It is in this process that we can observe the gradual transformation of space into a place, a physical entity endowed with a certain locality which becomes a common ground for “inner space” and “exterior space,” and manages, despite its apparent discordance, to foster community, insofar as “it provides the space for self-expression and the possibility for dialogue” (Campbell and Keane 1997).

**Space, Gender and Sexuality. Homosexual urban cultures.**

This alternative understanding of ‘community’ is informing of the relationship between urban space and sexuality. Sexual identities and performances inhabit the public space...
of a city, as simultaneous causes and consequences of particular communities. Homosexuals and lesbians, transsexuals, drag queens – these categories exist only on the basis of recognition, visual identification and labeling, necessarily carried out in a public space. Delimitations of categories might seem set in stone – the discursive regime generates various notion of truths regarding what a lesbian is, how a transsexual acts and so on, but it needs to be mentioned that the very public space that conspires to such restrictive structures of meaning is the same space that permits negotiation. Queer subjectivity makes use of the urban space, acting towards liberating performances, by re-reading cultural claims, inverting of knowledge, and challenging instrumental elements of normativity.

Quoting Fredric Jameson, Russell Daylight discusses the “placeless dissociation” specific to late modern and postmodern urban environment, further describing the individual’s inability to “map himself” – this is connected to an “alarming disjunction between the body and the built environment” (Daylight 2008). Given that the construction of identity begins with individuals’ relation to their own bodies, it becomes even more relevant within an urban environment – body-sized experience in the big city resembles the mythical story of Daedalus, who built the labyrinth and eventually could not find his own way out of it. Nevertheless, the theme of disorientation, displacement and perpetual movement within an unknown and unknowable environment might be proved rather frail when confronted with urban queer experiences. The very disorientation and sense of displacement that informs fragmented and disruptive contemporary urban subjectivities might prove beneficial for the formation of queer identities. Queer identities have been discursively defined as subverting, denaturalized and non-normative structures of sexuality, identified and categorized essentially within the public space. The city fosters the interplay of anonymous and distinctive sexuality, visibility and invisibility, here and nowhere, place and no-place, allowing queer subjects to explore their own selves, within and outside of space, in a perpetual in-betweenness that escapes categorization and restrictive encapsulation. In his informing article, Robert Aldrich discusses Homosexuality and the City, applying a historical view upon instances of urban habitation and sexual queerness. Making the case for the city as a favorable space for “subversive” sexuality, he writes: “Cities have provided venues where men who have sex with men (and women who have sex with women) can meet: pubs and clubs, café’s and cabarets. In times of clandestine homosexuality, public baths
and toilets, parks and back streets were especially hospitable to trysts” (Aldrich 2004).

The city is thus seen as a conglomerate of structures and meanings that allow phenomena, discourses and processes to coexist and interact with their counterparts. Violence and protests against violence, racism and freedom-rights manifestations, class and race segregation and attempt at inclusion – these binary existential instances rely on the possibility of urban space to be appropriated, redefined, integrated in discourses that can shift into counter-discourses. This may explain the paradox between an ontological containment that the urban space performs on senses and bodies and the sense of liberation and autonomy that homosexual identities find in a city. This urban ethos of countering and challenging the norm is inherent to gay cultures, as a double understanding of the city emerges: the city is seen as both “space and text,” (Aldrich 2004, 1728) granting access to discourse and offering a site for creative performance and investigation of identities.

As Michael Sibalis contends, a significant gay subculture depends on urbanization and its characteristic social structures, which allow the subculture to slide into counterculture and embrace counter-normativity (Aldrich 2004, 1728). In this sense, the homosexual couple, for example, as social element in a given urban scenario, may be seen as a site of transgression, as it challenges established heteronormative political and social understandings and it becomes an agent of queering the space it inhabits. The queer couple and the bodies that compose it are heterotopias, marked by the impulse to create “other spaces,” territories of performance that allows individuals to regain agency and reduce mainstream views that deem them incompatible. It might be argued that queer identities and everyday performances of queer subjectivity attempt a disintegration of the public-private divide, which more often than not has solidified acts of violence and homophobia. As George Chauncey argues, the historical “isolation” and “invisibility” forced upon homosexuals pervades contemporary mindsets, perpetuating and celebrating the endurance of the private-public binary: “the closet is a recent and time-bound construction, but it falsely conveys the impression that homosexuality took shape in private, rather than public spaces”(Cohen 1997).

In the following section, I will discuss the matter of the public-private dichotomy and the attempted queering of it, by focusing on questions of identity formation, the interplay of secrecy and public spectacle, and the re-appropriation of public sites and discourses by gay cultures. These points will resurface in the second part of the article,
where the LGBTQ film festival will be analyzed as an artistic and socio-political expression of these various theoretical points and as itself a heterotopia.

**Public and Private**

The perpetually modified (and essentially modifiable) public space paves the way for a new web of social relations, characterized by commodification, commercialization, and a seemingly universal struggle to set the border between public and private. Consequently, formation of self-identity and inter-subjectivity seems to be gravitating around this yet undefined and constantly transgressed border. Queer identities and urban subjectivities make no exception from being impacted by various political or creative processes that bombard the line between public and private with alternative meanings and structures. The underlying question regarding such transformations is in which circumstances could the individuals’ innate struggle for identity (and further assertion of it) be dependent on what authors Mimi Sheller and John Urry (2003) call the “hybridization” of the public and private life. This “hybrid” is described as the only functional understanding of contemporary society. The notion essentially proposes a conceptual break with the tendency to comprehend and define places and spaces as static. Spheres and spaces should be reanalyzed starting from the fluidity and “liquid” feature of modern life, which informs despatialization and the possibility of merging previously incompatible spaces. This hybrid public space needs to be understood as process, rather than structure. Consequently, urban identities stem from a flowing of the city, its meanings, symbols and self-assertions, rather than from clashes of subjectivities and static, immovable city structures.

In a short article from 2011, Zygmunt Bauman (2011) discusses his previously coined term of “liquid modern life”, in relation to the tendency to cross (in both directions) the line between private and public. Bauman takes a radically critical position towards this tendency, addressing the “confessional society” as an “inconceivable kind of society” (Bauman 2011), a threat to a functional democracy. This particular type of social arrangement of dialogue consists of virtually all private aspects of human life made public, in what eventually is an attempt of the individual to define himself and acquire a sense of selfhood. Secrecy undergoes a powerful process of transformation, alarmingly close to its own dissipation, given that “in order to exist, [secrecy] needs to be acknowledged by others” (Bauman 2011), and at the same time respected as an entity defined exactly by those borders between private and public.
Lately, Bauman observes, secrecy tends to dissolve under the willingness of more and more individuals to offer their particular lives and experiences as objects under the public’s scrutiny. Private aspects of human life become “shared property” (Bauman 2011), to be sold, bought, and consumed at ease. However, Bauman argues, individuals are not entirely victims of a seemingly oppressive mercantile system, but they themselves engage in a peculiar sort of self-exposure, as a device in creating (new?) self-identity: “We seem to experience no joy in having secrets, unless these are the kind of secrets likely to enhance our egos through attracting the attention of researchers and editors of television talk-shows, tabloid first pages, and the covers of glossy magazines” (Bauman 2011). In other words, the only type of secrecy desired in contemporary society is the one always on the verge of turning into a publicly consumed matter, a spectacle. Bauman clearly appoints a great ontological role to invisibility – the possibility of individuals to remain invisible, should they desire that, should remain a value of the contemporary world. The author speaks against self-exposure, which would reinforce the “assault on the public-private frontier.” This frontier is constantly pushed back by forcefully making visible aspects of private life that should remain invisible.

Visibility is a social category highly relevant in the construction of the social subject; it acts as both an ontological category, impacting the very formation of the self, and as an epistemic dimension, defining relations of power, aesthetics, politics and, by extension, knowledge. More clearly, “the field of visibility ... lies at the intersection of the two domains of aesthetics (relations of perception) and politics (relations of power)” (Brighenti 2007, 324). The social image is in part politically constructed, and it can be argued that it is just as much politically consumed. This implies a minimum of dialogue, the type that necessitates the split of the subject, being one and the other at the same time, in the attempt to interpret and decode symbols and images. A critical question here rests with the reliability of politically produced images. Necessarily, they come to the visible field of public sphere already infused with their lines of decoding, that is, at the very moment of their production, the mode of decoding and interpretation is designed and suggested through at different stages of the discourse surrounding them in the “field of vision” (Stuart Hall). The question to be asked here is how social images affect subjects' process of identity construction. How, for example, are urban queer identities enacted following an already encoded set of meanings, derived from various cycles of production, consumption and reproduction and what is the effect of these pre-
inscriptions on the individual? Social images associated with gay culture pervade understandings of it. There often is no first hand encounter of social knowledge – meanings are already put in motion, circulated within a field of visibility that drives on superimposed notions of difference and subjectivity. This regime of visibility establishes its own supremacy, managing to transform at will everyday public experiences into what Bauman calls “spectacle.” Judith Butler analyzes drag performances as intricate public experiences of one’s own body that essentially restore individuals’ positions as agents of their performative selves. Following a Foucauldian frame, Butler writes: “drag is a site of a certain ambivalence, one which reflects the more general situation of being implicated in the regimes of power by which one is constituted and, hence, of being implicated in the very regimes of power that one opposes” (Butler 2011, 85). Drag performances invert “heterosexual privilege,” challenging the idea of an “original gender,” thus attempting to regulate visibility and solve any underlining crisis of gender and sexual identity. The self-exposure, much condemned by Bauman, works, in this case, towards a grappling with anxiety, a socially constructed and perpetuated angst, which slowly dissipates when appropriated, performed and re-inscripted by individuals as queer subjects. In his historical analysis of gay culture in the first decades of the 20th century New York, George Chauncey discusses the “fairy,” a type of male homosexual performance identified through the 1930s. The fairy, Chauncey writes, was the “only visible role model for gay men.” However, some men refused to appropriate this image and “struggled to forge an alternative identity and cultural stance, one that would distinguish them from fairies and normal men alike” (Chauncey 1994, 100-101). This is yet another instance of the interplay of visibility and invisibility, which aids the construction of identities and counter-identities and rests on the endless possibilities of an urban space. The “drag queen” and the fairy are manifestations of subjective intentions, self-awareness and agency over the body. These practices actively invite a form of voyeurism, while embarking their subjects upon a quest for legitimacy. They act towards a collapsing of any clear distinction that might exist between private and public realms. These various performative instances act as signifying processes – they stand in as reminders and exhibits of private acts, which might as well have been carried out in public. A complication of boundaries occurs, which challenges the fine line between subject and object of looking, questioning norms and even inverting them. Gay culture expressed through various media – of which the queer body is one – finds thus in the
urban space a source and favorable site of negotiation, reclaiming of meaning through agency, and a recovering of discourse and performance. On this topic, Peter G. Goheen comments on the modern urban space and its various transformation with respect to human connections. He notes that while the modern city becomes inhospitable and its public spaces “are to be feared, even when they are full of people,” it may morph into a viable site for gay culture: “the practice [of gay culture] was often visible in public space where it found a certain sanctuary from attack. ... Public space was a crucial resource in gay culture” (Goheen 1998). The next section will analyze one particular manifestation of queer culture – queer film culture in the form of queer cinema gathered within a LGBTQ film festival. The analysis seeks to illustrate topics of sexual identity and use of urban space, the shifting boundary between private and public, and the connection between this cultural practice and formation of urban subjectivities.

The Film Festival
Cinema is essentially a public form of art. Although reviewers and critics many times set as focal point of film its subject matter and various artistic and technical choices, the meeting with the public constitutes a just as significant part. For its mere existence and endurance as masterpiece or just cinematographic hit, film depends on consumption – the moment when the public is somehow appropriated by the film and becomes an audience is essential for the successful completion of the cycle of production-distribution-consumption. Films act as socio-cultural reflections and points of emergence for values and meaning, but this instrumentality is fulfilled only following recognition and acknowledgement from the audience. When gathered and celebrated under the auspices of a film festival, cinema acts at its utmost public feature. The film festival is about films just as much as it is about audiences. Organizing a film festival and participating in one brings together individuals from across society, in an effort to reduce distance, create community, and participate in a self-reflection of the world itself. As Adrian Ivakhiv writes, cinema is “a means by which the world has become other from itself,” an instrument of both mirroring and challenging knowledge (Ivakhiv 2011). The underlining otherness of cinema might appear simultaneously hostile and favorable – it complicates the process of meaning making through visual representation and codification, but it manages to “present the world to itself” in a manner that invites intersubjectivity. In this sense, cinema is an instrument of identity building, juggling
space, time and knowledge. Cinema creates alternative spaces, inverting and challenging the real ones, while allowing a more real understanding of them. Ivakhiv refers to cinema as to a “space of discontinuity,” a site of placelessness that nevertheless reflects realities it appropriates (Ivakhiv 2011). Can it be argued that a film festival seeks, among other things, to reduce discontinuity and solve the issue of placelessness, by grappling with space the specific manner it does? Film festivals offer particular ties with time and space – they are temporary phenomena, occupying relatively isolated areas of a city. However, the film festival transcends these ties by becoming at the same time despatialized and atemporal. In their effort to review the discipline of film festival studies, Marijke de Valk and Skadi Loist note that “film festivals are sites of intersecting discourses and practices,” (de Valk and Loist 2009) producing a rich flow of images and overtones that eventually engender a “particular manifestation of the way that space is produced as practice” (de Valk and Loist 2009) The film festival appropriates already existing space, but it consequently produces new meanings by applying specific takes on visibility, the public-private divide, community and identity. If structural and conceptual repetition is often the central feature of the city, mirroring itself into expansion in time and space, then the film festival, among other cultural phenomena, represents a short disruption. The film festival breaks down an established pattern and invites inhabitants of the city to become participants into an interplay of (re)production and consumption – of films, but also of their own urban routine, their role and function in the community, the uncertainty of being inside and outside the city at the same time. To enter the rhythm of a film festival is to exit, shortly, the urban rhythm – constituted by time, various sites or frames of mind. A film festival hails the general public of a given city into becoming audiences – an act of self-aware separation from a large body of autonomous individuals and identification with a select community. Conversely, communities are also able to appropriate the commoditized film festival, engaging at various levels – the film festival is a medium that carries and distributes cultural products under certain codes, but it is in itself a cultural product, to which the audiences may be producers. By its capacity to create, claim, and maintain for a given period a particular site (mental and physical) within the city, the film festival may be identified as Michel Foucault would describe heterotopia: a culture’s impulse to create “other spaces” (Foucault 1997) These features of a film festival point to its tight involvement with the urban space. Moreover, it can be argued that the LGBTQ film festival is a subgenre that illustrates the
most the heterotopic role of the film festival in formation of urban subjectivity. With its specific subject matter and history of connecting political and social issues with artistic practice, the LGBTQ film festival aims at developing a relation between cultural event and political framework. In this sense, the festival becomes a “counter public sphere,” an inversion of Habermas’ well-known concept of “public sphere.”\(^1\) In recent years, however, the LGBTQ film festival has been endowed a rather central position in Western culture, following similar political trends of integrating gay culture issue in mainstream socio-political discourse. The vector has shifted, from the festival being a tool of resistance through artistic practice, to being a celebration of such historical resistance, and a reinforcement of community. However, the LGBTQ film festival can still be analyzed as a particular social and artistic phenomenon that affects the urban space, and invites audiences to critically reflect upon the structure and meaning of various sites within the urban layout. Part of this impact on the city may be identified when looking at how the film festival attempts various negotiations on the public-private dividing line.

2.1 The Film Festival: Urban Engagement and Participation. MIX Odense 2014.

As Ger Zielinski writes, “the concept of heterotopia helps show how sexual identity and community mark and distinguish such [LGBTQ] festivals from others” (Ger 2012) In his analysis he goes further to identify essential conceptual features of heterotopia as they appear in the practice of film festivals on queer topics. In this section, I will attempt to apply this frame to the MIX Odense LGBTQ film festival. My aim is to investigate the role of this particular cultural phenomenon for the development of urban subjectivity, following a manifest intention to complicate the assumed distinction between public and private.

As the first country in the world to grant permission of legal union between individuals of the same sex (1989), Denmark has a tradition of highly prioritizing the civil rights of LGBTQ individuals. Same-sex activity has been legalized as early as 1933, but it is only in 2012 that same-sex marriage law came into effect. Odense is the third largest city in the country, with a population of circa 200,000, and temporary home to thousands of international students every year. The city is an interesting blending of old and new. Intense Danish traditions and social norms collide with diverse and often

\(^1\) Craig Calhoun, “Habermas and the Public Sphere” (The MIT Press, 2000). Briefly, the public sphere is to be understood as “a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be ormed.” Public sphere lays the basis for a democratic forum, where “access is granted to all citizens”, thus ecoming a manifest structural entity in all instances of conversation, from the mere dialogic monologue an individual may produce, to the most complex processes of public debate.
contrasting cultures, due to high numbers of immigrants from around the globe. However, the meeting of the two elements does not produce disruption, but, to the contrary, is easily turned into a celebration of diversity, cultural curiosity, and unique views on life. In this urban space with a particular ethos, the MIX Odense film festival represents yet another celebration of diversity and creativity. The festival is an extension of the MIX Copenhagen festival, and the both resonate with MIX New York Queer experimental film festival, thus participating in a larger dialogue and pool of transnational cultural production.

The festival took place during four days – 8 – 11 October 2014, and was hosted by several venues. An underlining feature may be identified at this point – the nomadic character of the festival. By involving multiple venues, the festival engages in a half-way isolation as a practice. It refuses the visual metaphor of a one-place enclave, with steady boundaries that reinforce difference, and embraces the fluidity of the city space. A mix of mainstream and alternative venues for cinema screening is generated, which functions as resistance of classification and breaking of boundaries. If alternative spaces might cultivate a sense of secrecy, containing gatherings that are outside of public display, the choice to conduct the festival in multiple sites challenges the traditional divide, inviting the public in what might be considered obscure space of performance and existence. Conversely, by using high-traffic social places like a cinema, the festival seeks to reach mainstream audiences. The private-public division that might have been in place for this type of festival is blurred in this case, and substituted by a hybrid form of urban engagement: the multi-placed festival creates a sense of being outside of the city, while forcing attendants to use the city as space that contains their bodies and movements. At this point, the film festival acts as heterotopia – it “presupposes a system of closing and opening that both isolates them and makes them penetrable” (Ger 2012). The festival is open to the public, yet the simple physical admission does not grant a full admission in the sense of identification with the community. As a discursive practice, the film festival employs codes and canons that inform and direct participation.

Along with the particular appropriation of urban sites it performs, the film festival develops a specific connection with time also, thus marking another element of a heterotopia. As Foucault puts it, heterotopias become “slices of time,” proposing a “break with traditional time”(Foucault 1997). The film festival, in this case, spreading over four days of screenings and adjacent events, is a fleeting entity, not directed
towards the eternal. Participation in the film festival is a once in a year occurrence, which interrupts only shortly the flow of urban time. The LGBTQ theme makes the festival into a tool of intense, albeit short, visibility, serving a particular matter, in this case sexual identities and queer subjectivity. A dividing line can be observed here, involving the fleeting time of the festival and the rest of time as counterparts. The choice to isolate a topic in a condensed temporal frame generates necessarily a long-term connection with the rest of time – the short-lived discourse of the film festival may produce ripples in the collective memory of the community, thus reinforcing intersubjectivity and a sense of established belonging. In this sense, the film festival answers to another feature of heterotopia – “it admits the possibility of history and change,(Ger 2012)” by creating a spatial and temporal frame to follow local or national politics, on particular matters. The MIX Odense festival, for instance, is a creatively manifested example of a national history of democratic and inclusive attitude towards sexual minorities. The blurring of the public-private reduces invisibility that crippled sexual and gender minorities in the past (and still does, in different parts of the world). Public sites of the urban space foster self-involvement with one’s own visibility, endorsing the emergence of the “confession society,” characterized by self-surveillance and self-affirmation. As noted above, Zygmunt Bauman speaks strongly against this social trend; however, it is worth questioning the role privacy (individuality, autonomy, self-definition, and self-assertion) as it is carried out in a public sphere. In the case of subversive performances of identity, it is not privacy becoming violently public, but a performance of privacy set in motion by the subject within a public space. Counter-discourses on body and gender emerge, as acts of reclaiming agency over one’s own subjectivity. Privacy, explored at a public level, becomes a tool of liberation and manifest subjectivity.

The LGBTQ film festival carries, as Ger Zielinski writes, following Bakhtin, “the promise of the unruly carnivalesque”, as it is centered on the “festivality of sexual identities” and the necessary transgression of the public-private binary (Ger 2012). The sense of otherness peaks in this feature of the film festival, supporting the argument that the LGBTQ film festival may be considered a heterotopia of deviance1, closely connected, at a political level, with the city: the festival needs city council approval and recognition of legal terms. As Zielinski observes, “the carnival does not just happen, but is awarded

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1 Explain all categories.
permission from a higher authority” (Ger 2012). By receiving permission and functioning without any interventions, Mix Odense festival is instrumental for the cultural community’s impulse to “create other spaces,” thus working as a heterotopic mirror that juggles presence and absence, putting in motion “mechanisms of recognition of resemblance, empathy, identification, repulsion” (Ger 2012). These mechanisms articulate and redraft the role and place of audiences in relation to the film festival. Essentially, the film festival is a non-commercial cultural event – films are screened for purposes other than financial gain, which differentiate clearly the audience from mere consumers. However, the viewing act is a form of consumption, endowed with non-commercial values. The LGBT film festival invites a threefold consuming practice. Firstly, audiences engage with the films – they aesthetically enjoy or critically analyze the subject matter of each film, and establish intertextual ties with other productions. MIX Odense film festival screened a total of six films, accompanied by events such as a writer talk, a concert, and opening and closing receptions. These elements came together as a discourse, underlining current and historical issues such as the civil status of homosexual couples or crises of identity in young people, and enveloped them in a metadiscourse of participation and awareness. This leads to the second level of consumption, which refers to the festival as itself a product – all elements are tied together, and perceived in dialogue with each other, constructing a wider narrative. The third level or participatory consumption involves the audience as both consumers and products of the process. If the cinema in general is a site of examining how knowledge of the world is created, then it can be argued that participation in a film festival becomes a site to examine how intersubjectivity is created through artistic practice and involvement. In this sense, the film festival, set in a space favorable to exploring urban subjectivity, acts as a heterotopia, “a space that has a function in relation to all other spaces that remain” (Foucault). Although it employs an apparent isolation, the film festival, and the participation patterns it generates, reaches into other zones of social and intersubjective engagement. The inherent heterotopic celebration of difference emphasizes the possibility of coexisting divergent subjectivities, which underlines attempts at queering the urban space, as an expression of queer identity.

To conclude, The LGBTQ film festival is an artistic phenomenon, with enhanced social and political correlations. In itself and through the cultural products it puts forward for consumption, the festival participates in the larger web of cultural life of the
city, incorporating local space in a manner that allows participants to place themselves in space and time, in relation to their identity and subjectivity. MIX Odense may be seen as a discourse on queer urban culture, and not only a representation of it. Through means specific to such practices (selection, programming, organization), the film festival reflects upon its own role and hails the public into becoming community-aware audiences. The film festival represents a merger of private issues and public life, using various city spaces as both source and projection site of various enunciations it articulates, visually and discursively. The LGBTQ film festival acts as an instrument of self-reflection and mirroring performed in an urban setting, as means of constructing, interrogating, or investigating subjectivity. The festival plays in the dichotomy of here and there, being an enclosed space, a tool of “othering,” subverting, or challenging norms and established meanings. The LGBTQ film festival is an illustration of heterotopia, a place within the fluid space of the city, which is simultaneously celebrated and challenged in relation to its role for establishing and reinforcing queer bonds and identities.

**Conclusion**

The city contains its inhabitants; it directs their routines, shapes their bodies and interferes with their movements. Nevertheless, the city often succumbs to strong ties, kinship, and undeniable identities. In Jennie Livingston’s documentary *Paris is Burning*, Pepper LaBeija, mother of the House LaBeija, articulates the endurance of kinship and community, celebrating the city as an open stage for performance and formation of identity: “New York is wrapped around the name LaBeija.” This article sought to investigate vectors and forces behind such relationships between urban space and queer identity building. A theoretical examination of the dynamic of public-private showed that this boundary stands to be challenged, as individuals seek self-affirmation and reclaiming of visibility. Modern urban spaces redraft the dividing line between private and public, allowing queer identities to appropriate public space as a hospitable site for performance of private issues. If some critics would argue that this is symptomatic of a crisis of privacy and demise of a coherent public space, it can, however, be maintained that the urban structure prevails despite this disruption. Moreover, various transformations of visibility prove to be beneficial, as they produce hybrid sites, which in turn host processes of inversion of established meanings, subversion of
heteronormativities, and allow challenges to established modes of understanding gender and sexuality. Public manifestations of such intents – among which, the LGBTQ film festival – thrive as the private-public boundary is blurred, suggesting that alternative practices and meanings successfully define the meeting point between urban spaces and queer identities.

The concept of heterotopia, applied to the LGBTQ film festival, as symptomatic for queer urban culture, brought to light characteristics of this phenomenon that help understand its role in a larger narrative of the relationship between the city, formation of identity, and artistic practice. The film festival acts as a coming together of private matters and public life, as it appropriates city spaces in a twofold manner: as both source and projection site of various enunciations it articulates, visually and discursively. The LGBTQ film festival represents an invite to self-reflection and mirroring performed in an urban setting, as means of constructing, interrogating, or investigating subjectivity. As an illustration of heterotopia, the LGBTQ film festival simultaneously celebrates and challenges the role of urban spaces and the role they play in creating and maintaining queer bonds and identities.

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Book presentation:


"In *Rethinking Feminist Interventions into the Urban* (2013), Linda Peake and Martina Rieker embark on an ambitious project to explore the extent to which a feminist re-imagining of the twenty-first century city can form the core of a new emerging analytic of women and the neoliberal urban. In a world in which the majority of the population now live in urban centres, they take as their starting point the need to examine the production of knowledge about the city through the problematic divide of the global north and south, asking what might a feminist intervention, a position itself fraught with possibilities and problems, into this dominant geographical imaginary look like. Providing a meaningful discussion of the ways in which feminism, gender and women have been understood in relation to the city and urban studies, they ask probing and insightful questions that indicate new directions for theory and research, illustrating the necessity of a re-formulation of the north-south divide as a critical and urgent project for feminist urban studies.” (source: http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415518819/)


“This paper is the first scientific approach in the area of geography of perception. Mental geography is the world inside of the mind of each and every one of us. It contains maps of more or less detailed routes, interesting or dangerous places and even emotional spaces. People cannot relate to the whole physical space at the same time. Our perceptions allow interaction only with a small part of space, the one in front of us. However, we know what lies behind us and more than that, we know what it looks like other parts of the city, even in other countries. These concepts are applied to the capital city of Romania resulting a number
Cities and Sexualities (2011) By Phil Hubbard, Routledge

"From the hotspots of commercial sex through to the suburbia of twitching curtains, urban life and sexualities appear inseparable. Cities are the source of our most familiar images of sexual practice, and are the spaces where new understandings of sexuality take shape. In an era of global business and tourism, cities are also the hubs around which a global sex trade is organised and where virtual sex content is obsessively produced and consumed. Cities and Sexualities (2011) offers a wide overview of the state-of-the-art in geographies and sociologies of sexuality, as well as an empirically-grounded account of the forms of desire that animate the erotic city. It describes the diverse sexual landscapes that characterise both the contemporary Western city as well as cities in the global South. The book features a wide range of boxed case studies as well as suggestions for further reading at the end each chapter. It will appeal to undergraduate students studying Geography, Urban Studies, Gender Studies and Sociology.” (source: http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415566476/)
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