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Underground with a Public address

PROLOGUE OR “REMEMBER THE HOMELESS”

One warm summer's day when I was walking past the premises of a private housing company in Göteborg I noticed that someone had scribbled “remember the homeless” on the wall, right beside the entrance. When I passed by the housing company half an hour later – this time equipped with a camera to immortalize the image – the words had been washed away. No picture was taken, but every time I pass the building I see the words – “remember the homeless.” These words, anonymously written, continue to haunt the city of Göteborg. Even though they were wiped out that summer day – can you see the words all over the city – on walls, rocks and trees. I would argue that these words written on both public and private surfaces bear witness of the city underground and the conflicts over space and vision that takes place in cities today.

Public space and the underground

Cities have always been central meeting points for different populations. The Greek concept of agora catches a basic outline of public space in the city, as a place for assembly, a marketplace and a place for spectacle and entertainment. As a physical meeting place, public space serves as a place for strangers to meet as well as a place for differences to be represented. With this perspective, the public space of the city becomes a place where the conflicts and inequalities of society are acted out. As Don Mitchell puts it: “public democracy requires visibility and public visibility requires material public space” (Mitchell 2003:148).

Fundamental to ideals of public space is that public-ness in itself – as belonging to the public – is something good. This is the basis of the consequential differentiation of public space from private, exclusive space. At the same time, public space has never been fully inclusive – historically, the use of urban public space has always been contested by different social groups with different interests. But the argument goes deeper than the historical process – that is, public space is created in the struggle between inclusion and exclusion. In order to be inclusive, it also serves to exclude. Historically, these processes and struggles have taken different shapes. Today, the struggle is between an urban renaissance on one hand, where public space as a meeting place is re-valued and promoted, and on the other hand, public space is also highly controlled and regulated in order to maintain it in the name of security and safety (MacLeod 2002). In this article, I am interested in what is defined by authorities and the capital as that or those, which do not belong in public space and are continually excluded from the city. What I call the underground grows out of conflicts

over public space and the aim of this chapter is therefore to analyse and investigate what I define as “urban underground”. It means an investigation of sites of conflicts in contemporary cities that produces these undergrounds.

The Spectacle of the City

The Spectacle is not a collection of images; rather it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images (Guy Debord, Society of the Spectacle).

What seems to be a paradox dominates the discussion on the city today. On the one hand researchers, urban planners and politicians, celebrate an urban renaissance, where public space is re-valued and promoted as an important meeting place. City centres all over the globe are developed in order to provide safe and friendly environments for consumption and recreation. On the other hand, the death of the city is proclaimed with the argument that public spaces in many cities are privatized and only accessible for a few, not for the many. Representing two different perspectives on the city, the arguments should not be interpreted as being opposites but rather as being different sides of the same coin – cities become more attractive by upgrading city centres and displacing that or those who do not fit the image.

One of the most obvious changes in civic politics during the last decades is the turn towards what have been called *cultural strategies*. These manifest themselves in various ways – from cultural gentrification to different “life quality projects”. An important aspect of this development is that public spaces in the city centre are increasingly seen as part of regeneration strategies, where the focus is on developing positive images of the city centre. Common to these strategies is the importance accorded to *visual symbols*. Sociologist Sharon Zukin argues that:

urban landscapes have slowly been reclaimed by vision – the power to frame spaces as aesthetic objects. The progressive democratization of vision enables all groups, in all areas of the city, to challenge each other over the power to frame public space with their own visual symbols (Zukin 1997:206).

In her book, *The Culture of Cities*, Zukin argues that cities use culture as an economic base for the symbolic economy of the city. In other words, culture can both attract capital and be used as means for framing space. The production of space is thus also the production of visual representation. That means that in order to market the image of a city, the city space must be framed in an attractive way to lure foreign investors and tourists to it.

One important aspect of the branding of cities is the renewal of the waterfront of many cities, including Göteborg. As part of the transformation from an industrial city, the waterfront represents not only a new area for economic development, but also a new urban iconography that can represent the identity of the city. Many waterfront redevelopment projects over the globe are also

significant in the way they are planned and governed – many times in conflict between public and private interests (Harvey 2001, Lund Hansen et. al 2001). The global trend is that waterfronts are planned as a thematic, highly choreographed and branded form of place-making, where there is a blurring between private and public space (Goodwin 1993, Evans 2003). In a study of the transformation of the waterfront in Melbourne, Kim Dovey reveals how the understanding of the public changed during the process, and became equalled with economic interests, and public debate was replaced by advertising and slogans about the new “innovative city” (Dovey 2005). The concepts of creative and innovative cities are one of the newest place-marketing strategies following the influential work by Richard Florida (2005). In a study on the renewal of Copenhagen, Lund Hansen et al. (2001) argues that the discussion on the creative city in Copenhagen suppresses the social costs of the transformation of the city centre. Their study reveals a competition between municipalities to attract the so called “economically sustainable populations” on the one hand and a displacement of socially and economically marginalized populations on the other.

The awareness of commercially attractive public spaces among politicians and businessmen creates a need to regulate and control the city centre. The presence of obviously homeless people, street crime and graffiti are all potential threats to the credibility of the image of the city marketed by those in power. The consequence is the emergence of various public and private initiatives to “clean up” city centres. There are several examples today of this increasing practice. The proposed prohibition of begging in Stockholm a few years ago; the police’s zero tolerance experiments; the suggested reconstruction of Sergels Torg in Stockholm, a square notorious for its narcotics trade; and the creation of a *Innerstaden Göteborg* in the city centre of Göteborg to reinforce shop-owners’ interest in a commercially attractive city are just some of them. At the turn of the year 2004, it was also decided that the penalties for those who “scribble” should be increased, and the police have been given the right to carry out what is called “preventive body search”, i.e. the right to search without previous suspicion of committed crime. Common to several of the proposals is that their point of origin is crime prevention. Crime – or threats against the order of public space – should be prevented before being committed. Roy Coleman argues that control today in cities is “strategically entwined with, and organized around, visualized spectacles that promote ways of seeing urban space as benign, ‘people centred’ and celebratory” (Coleman 2005:132).

Designing public space in a way that facilitates the supervision of them is one way of maintaining control. Oscar Newman (1997) coined the concept of “defensible space” to describe and analyse how crime can be designed out and order created. Central to this perspective is the quest for real and symbolic borders that define an area as well as enhancing the possibility of surveillance. Shopping malls are examples of spaces open to many, but not to everybody, and private security guards control their borders. They are examples of a domestication of public space, which reduces the risks of unplanned social encounters and promotes social homogeneity (Jackson 1998). Design can also work through zoning, where places in the city are designed for different

purposes. Many concepts have been developed to describe these spaces such as purified space or interdictory space (Flusty 2001, Sibley 1988), which all point out places that are designed for a single function, often consumption. The growth of preventive strategies should be understood in the context of dismantling the welfare state. According to Franzén (2001) it is not so much about reducing crime as *redistributing* it in space.

It is precisely aesthetics and prevention that form the basis of what has become known as the zero tolerance policy or the “Broken Windows Model”. The model is based on a visual metaphor – the broken window. The idea is that if you don’t fix every single broken window and apprehend the perpetrators, all windows will soon be broken and the consequence will be increased serious crime. It is about creating order – everything that can be perceived as deviating from “the norm” – everything that creates uneasiness – is regarded as crime. Some examples are begging, being drunk, sleeping on the street, urinating in public, and painting graffiti. It is not that such acts are necessarily regarded as serious offences in themselves. It is because their presence signals decay and incites more crime. New York was the first city to implement it and the model has spread to Mexico City, Paris, Glasgow, Essen, Tampere and Stockholm among others.

Critics have more or less shattered this model, principally because its consequences single out those who are already vulnerable – the poor and the homeless. Also, there is nothing that demonstrates that zero tolerance towards minor offences will reduce or stop serious crime. What the model does do is create an illusion of order, and the reasons behind its enormous influence in practical city politics – in spite of all criticism – probably has to do with it being based on the importance of an ordered and commercially attractive public space.

It is from this perspective we may speak of a commercial *aesthetization*, rather than *politization*, of public space, which will also imply a shift in its significance. That means that the/to battle for the street is not only a battle for property and space, but also for meaning, appearance and perception. Battles for the street also suggest that the same public space can have competing and mutually exclusive significances for different actors.

CITY UNDERGROUND

Walking and sleeping the City

In the novel *Ripley Bogle*, the author takes his readers through a journey of the streets of London. It is a written map and a testimony of how the city feels on your body when you literally have to live on its pavements. If anyone knows the city, author Robert Wilson argues it is its rough-sleepers:

They know its stones, its pipes and bricks and doorways and pavements. [...] That’s the

beggar's ground-level slice of London, his close-up, his particularised urban view (Wilson 1989:19).

At the same time this perspective and knowledge of the city is hardly ever recognized. On the contrary, homeless people are actively planned out of the city, in plans for redevelopment of cities.

Wright argues that marginalization of poor people from the city centres is expressed in the rhetoric of redevelopment as well as charity talk. He analyzes this process of marginalization through the concept of authoritative strategies which

Are employed to establish a place as "proper", as a place within which understandable and controllable things happen. A "proper" place is a place where social events occur that are understandable to authoritative decision makers. Conversely, to be "out of control" or "out of place" is not to be in a "proper" place. As bodies considered "out of place" by housed society, the homeless are subject to the continual gaze of authority to ensure that their actions will not violate "proper" social boundaries (Wright 1997:181).

This process happens on different levels. In his book, Wright points to three relevant authoritative strategies: exclusions, repression and displacements. Exclusion refers to actions that exclude people from narratives, discourses or particular places, sometimes through repression which is forcible removal or harassment for occupying a certain space. Wright argues that exclusion and repression are the most common strategies that take place on the streets or in shopping malls. Examples of this are the extensive surveillance in shopping malls where many homeless people are refused permission to enter the mall or police sweeps, where people are removed or arrested because they have begged or been drunk in a public space. But exclusion can also take place through gentrification and renewal. Decaying industrial or working class neighbourhoods are converted into residential zones for the middle class. Frequently, this also means a change of residents as well as a transformation of the area in accordance with an implementation of the habits of the middle class. In a study of the regeneration of Raval in Barcelona, Monica Degen uses the sensescape to capture the transformation of the area. She argues that "who or what is seen, heard, touched, tasted and smelled is connected to questions about what is included and excluded in the experience of public space" (Degen 2002:22). Regeneration means, according to Degen, a transformation of the sensescapes that are expected to substitute existing spatial practices in a place with new ones. Sharon Zukin calls this process a "pacification by cappuccino" when public spaces are revitalized by upgrading their status and expanding their uses for consumption (Zukin 1996). The results are most often not only a displacement of former working class tenants, but also a change of public. Homeless people are almost always the first ones to be removed in these processes.

Another strategy is displacements which refer to "strategic actions to relocate the causes of conflict from one source to another" (Wright 1997:183). Wright argues that the discourse on homelessness as an individual problem, due to deviant behaviour, is displacement of issues con-

cerning poverty and inequalities. Media and authorities play important roles in maintaining these images but it can also be through legislation, one example being the criminalization of homelessness in the United States. These images are also reinforced through the contrast between public space and private space. People without homes have no option but to live their private lives in other peoples' public spaces, where they risk being seen in situations which they would rather hide from other people's gaze. Wright (1997:40) argues that the mere presence of homeless people in the city, and their activities such as sleeping and eating in the streets, urinating in parks etc, signal that they are in the wrong place doing the wrong things. They become symbolic dirt in the sense of Mary Douglas (1966), that is, "out of place".

But authoritative strategies do not go without resistance. They are continually contested, negotiated and disrupted. Wright uses de Certeau's distinction between *strategies*, which are related to institutions and structures of power and *tactics* which are used by individuals to create space for themselves in an environment defined by strategies. In contrast to strategies, tactics rely on temporal features such as "seizing the moment". One example of a tactic used by homeless women in Sweden was to distance themselves from the stereotype of the homeless women – the bag lady – and to melt in to the crowd by doing that (Thörn 2004). The symbolic importance of dirt was significant. All the interviewed women talked about the importance of being clean and wearing new clothes if possible, as a way of melting into the crowd. Anna, a young homeless woman, argues that:

I think that we are even more cautious about our personal care, you know. Because many think that if you are homeless then you wear torn jeans and are dirty, you know. But it is actually the other way around. You always wear new clothes. And if you can't do laundry you have to steal something new ... That is our thing ... that is the only thing that we can do. So there is absolutely no one who sees me downtown and thinks 'she has nowhere to live. That is the only time I can melt into the crowd (Thörn 2004:195).

By being clean, Anna turned the public space into a *temporary refuge* from being seen as homeless – she became an anonymous stranger among other strangers. But homeless people can also use their status as homeless to question their situation. In March 2004 a homeless couple placed a bed at Sergels Torg, Stockholm, at the most hectic time of the day and started to have sex. The purpose of their action was to protest against the fact that homeless people don't have a private space.

Signing the City

In cities more and more characterized by commerce and privatization, the presence of graffiti on its walls brings several political dilemmas to the fore. What is private and what is public? Who has the right to ownership and power? It also illuminates an ongoing conflict in many cities – the

conflicts between writers/graffiti artists and the authorities. In many countries including Sweden, graffiti is considered a serious felony.

The strong symbolic significance that graffiti has acquired must be understood in the context of the transformation of urban public space and the visual change in city politics. It is under these circumstances that graffiti acquires its ensuing political role. By definition, graffiti always calls into question the meaning of what is public and where the limits of the right to free expression are drawn. Graffiti may be said to live off its environment, how graffiti can be understood depends on the surface on which it is written and the surroundings. Graffiti, in other words, changes the significance of the buildings and the spaces on which it is written. Consequently, it gives another perspective on the aesthetization of city space – and it therefore has been seen in political and commercial circles as “visual pollution”. But the question

Whether graffiti constitutes an “enhancement” or “defacement” seems to depend on whose property is being written on, and who is doing the writing and who judges the results. Thus the question of whose world will be “written over” and whose writing will prevail, is never a pure aesthetic question (Hagopian 1988:109).

In his book *Taking the train: How graffiti Art became an Urban Crisis in New York City* Joe Austin discusses how graffiti in New York of the 1970s came to both symbolize and be a measure of the city’s decay. In other words, the presence of graffiti came to signify something else – the presence of crime, drug abuse and “maladjusted youths”. Consequently, in the early 1970s, war was declared “against graffiti”, with the aim of eliminating it from the streets. According to Austin, the war against graffiti may be said to have been “successful” on one level, as the general public have been “taught” to perceive the presence of graffiti as a threat – as a sign of lawlessness. All graffiti is taken as an aggregate and is understood in the same way – as a crime. But it is also here, he says, that the war against graffiti has been a complete failure. The unrelenting attitude towards graffiti and the labelling of all graffiti as causing damage has also made possible the development of so-called street bombers – the kind of graffiti most difficult for the authorities to control, as it takes very little time to carry out. At the same time, the graffiti artists who execute work that takes much time and space to finish are marginalized. In this way the war against graffiti gives birth to a paradox – relentless warfare by the authorities only nourishes those whose resistance is just as relentless. The fight against graffiti, according to Jeff Ferrell, should be understood as a fight for expression. Graffiti constitutes a questioning of who owns and defines the city – a question that is not only political and economical but also aesthetic. What place is given to various forms of expression? Who decides where to draw the line between “acceptable aesthetics” and “visual pollution”?

In the essay *ZAST ONE Writing and Property* the German graffiti artist ZAST develops his view on graffiti and the act of writing tags. For him graffiti is a way of reading and writing the city.

Tagging is a language that needs to be read and understood rather than viewed as beautiful or ugly. If read like this graffiti tells stories about contest over space in the city:

All graffiti are narrative in that they attempt to tell alternative stories about places. These stories, at their most basic, signal the failure of the public sphere to incorporate them. [...] We need to be able to read the writing on the wall, for in these opaque and arcane inscriptions, we can find both the limits of public discourse and the outlaw voices that threaten in order to be heard. (Back, Keith & Solomos 1999:98–99)

Interrupting visions

In the year of 2000, the French graffiti artist Zevs went to New York to perform his project *The Homeless and the Shadows*. One night he sprayed white colour around a homeless man and his possessions. The day after the man was gone, but the “shadow” remained. The uncanny resemblance with police painting when a murder has been committed was not a coincidence. The shadow could be read as a sign of a committed crime. But it also begs the question of which crime? The crime the graffiti painter makes every time he paints in public space? The crime every homeless person commits when sleeping on the streets – an action that is illegal in New York? Or, from another point of view – the crime that the city commits when its citizens are forced to sleep rough? Zevs’ art, or vandalism, depending on perspective, consciously endeavours to address and question our views of crime. His intervention in New York are part of Zevs’ bigger art project “art as a crime scene” where the purpose is to question a naturalized city landscape, in which the presence of homeless is taken for granted, for example.

A vast number of loose movements have grown during recent years, which use graffiti and/or street art to reclaim public space and to protest against the commercialization of public spaces. They all work with different methods – false advertising, stencil graffiti, demonstrations etc. to resist and question city redevelopment. Their names often invoke their message – from *Reclaim the Streets*, *Space Hijackers* to *Visual Resistance*. All of these groups talk about taking public spaces back and using them as commons. It can be resistance against privatization of public space, the way public space is planned and controlled and what can and can not be seen in public spaces. They also use different methods, from street parties, squatting and art interventions.

These movements can be related to the tradition of the Situationist Movement from the 60s, an underground movement where the writer Guy Debord’s book *The Society of The Spectacle* (1994) was used as a manifesto for different interventions and interruptions in the city. Their aim was not only to reveal the play of power at work in the city but also the play of possibilities.

Krzysztof Wodiczko, the artist, works in this tradition. His art endeavours to make visible the city that is there but not seen immediately. One way of doing this is to think of the city as a text, a social and symbolic system that communicates itself to its citizens. The signs, symbols, buildings

and monuments of the city can be read as the biography of the city – that reflects the past as well as the present. According to the artist, the official city tells the history or the myth of the victors and therefore it must be “confronted and interrupted by the memory of the nameless or the tradition of the vanquished” (Wodizcko 1999:4). Wodizcko’s strategy is to confront the official buildings of the city with its own repressions – unmasking the unconscious of the building by means of projecting images onto buildings. It is images of hands, bodies, weapons, beggars etc. The purpose of the project is to make explicit the myths of buildings by making it visually concrete, in order to rewrite the meaning and symbolic power of the building. According to Wodizcko, the projections have to be done night time when assumptions are thrown into question and doubt:

The attack must be unexpected, frontal, and must come with the night, when the building, undisturbed by its daily functions, is asleep and when its body dreams of itself, when architecture has its nightmares (Wodizcko 1999:47).

Temporality is an important aspect of his work, since the purpose of the image is not to be thought of as decoration – it is not supposed to stay. Conversely, once you have seen the image on the building – even though it only was there for a short moment – it will change your experience of the building. The absence of the image is actually more powerful than the image itself.

In 1988, when the presence of homeless people on the street was an infected question in New York, Wodizcko designed and exhibited *The Homeless Vehicle*. The Vehicle was constructed in collaboration with homeless people. Designed like a mix between a supermarket trolley and a missile, on the one hand it provided a deliberate critique of the system that produces homelessness or evicts as Wodizcko name them. On the other hand, it was a useful space for basic needs: transportation, storing and shelter. The vehicle was designed to be practical and to provoke:

People in the middle class are well trained to consume. As good consumers, they know how to quickly and accurately evaluate the “value” of every new functional and symbolic form that appears before their commodity-tuned eyes. Many non-evicts were engaged and approached us to ask “What is this for?” These same people see evicted individuals every day on the street and never ask questions. Now they are provoked to ask questions.

The purpose of the vehicle was not to offer a solution but to challenge the city’s solutions to homelessness and provide homeless people with means to take up space in the city centre – a space that they many times are refused. The vehicle increases the visibility of the homeless and therefore dramatizes their right to the city space against a space organized for profit and control (Deutsche 1991).

From underground to gentrification and back again?

Urban regeneration is not only about luxury housing and shopping malls. Lately, many urban

planners have focused on what is called the cultural turn in urban planning. That is the idea that cultures and culture industries are vital to economics of the city. Nowhere is that more obvious than in the books by the new guru in urban planning Richard Florida. He has written several books on the creative class and his main argument is that cities need to develop strong cultural industries and a vibrant city milieu in order to attract the creative class that makes the economy run strongly. In the book *The rise of the creative class* (2002), Florida developed a “creative index”, which is a statistic model to quantify the success of various cities. The index points to various indices such as cultural diversity, gay culture, “talent”, i.e. how many individuals who hold a bachelor’s degree, employment in “creative industry sectors”. The index gives cities ratings or scores that helps compare and distinguish between more and less successful and creative cities. In Florida’s world, culture becomes a buzzword for successful city planning and symbolizes the sophisticated city.

Florida’s methodology has been scrutinized by several researchers (for example Malanga 2004) but the interesting feature of his arguments is not so much whether they hold together from a scientific point of view, but how they have been received and used by city planners all over the world. Researchers from Australia, USA and UK analyze how Florida’s ideas are used as a new recipe for a successful economy with the consequences of displacement of poor, “uncreative”, citizens due to property market speculation, rising rents, and heightened surveillance and control. Gibson and Klocker (2005) draw the conclusion based on research in Australia that most often the idea is that the creative classes have to be imported – which is the explanation behind all the strategies to attract them. What remains silenced though, they note, is how this might cause divisions of labours as well as a de-politicising of the concept of culture. How do creativities such as graffiti, skateboarding etc fit into this economic script, they ask? Even though their critique is relevant, they underestimate the way that activities such as graffiti and skateboarding can be defined in one context as a cultural or illegal “underground” and in another context they can be drawn into the development they challenge. I would like to give two examples of this. The first one is Banksy, a graffiti artist who has gone from being an underground rebel to a hip star. Starting by doing graffiti at an early age, he now works with provocative and thoughtful stencil graffiti in many places all over the world. His work is recognizable by its style, even though he does not always sign it with his signature Banksy. Still there are few people who really know who he is, or if Banksy is a name of a graffiti crew. “His” paintings can be of a policeman doing graffiti, sprayed poetry on a wall or the text “this is not a photo opportunity” beside tourist attractions. Lately he has gone from doing graffiti to installations or “interventions” in public space, such as putting birds with a pirate flag on a CCTV camera. From being quite unknown to a wider audience, he has become more or less a cult figure. Recently a critique has grown against him based on the question of whether his art can still work as interference in public space or if it has become decoration. The SpaceHijackers network started to question his politics after he sold original prints for £25 000 and rumours

about engagement with PUMA, the shoe company. A letter to his website reveals the contradictions of his work in depth:

I don't know who you are or how many of you there are but I am writing to ask you to stop painting your things where we live. In particular xxxxx road in Hackney. My brother and me were born here and have lived here all our lives but these days so many yuppies and students are moving here neither of us can afford to buy a house where we grew up anymore. Your graffiti are undoubtedly part of what makes these wankers think our area is cool. You're obviously not from round here and after you've driven up the house prices you'll probably just move on. Do us all a favour and go do your stuff somewhere else, like Brixton. (Banksy 2005:20)

To explore the arguments further I would like to turn to my second example which is based on a study by Ocean Howell on Love Park in downtown Philadelphia. The park or plaza was completed in 1965, publicly funded and aesthetically intended to represent a broad public (Howell 2005). During the first decades, it was a lunch spot for local office workers but also a place for demonstrations and street games. In the 1980s, the plaza started to attract a homeless population as well as groups of teenagers with skateboards. Howell argues that in the 1980s, both the homeless and the skateboarders were defined as intruders. During the beginning of 2000 however, the images of the skateboarders had changed and they were praised instead for injecting a “hip image” into the city. This transformation of the skateboarders, from stigma to cool, needs to be understood in relation to the change of the political economy of the city from industrial to a cultural and symbolic economy. Howell describes how the park was portrayed during the 1980s and 1990s as a plaza stolen from “the average person” by dangerous and anti-social behaviour. In 2000, the city banned skateboarding and in Love Park, the ban was enforced by police sweeps. In 2002 the ESPN Games of skateboarding were held in Philadelphia and the city government was asked to let the games take place in Love Park, but they refused. Shortly before the games started, the city closed the park for a redesign. The Games generated an income of 80 million dollars for the city and by this time, a public debate on the presence of the skateboarders had started. In 2002, Richard Florida visited Philadelphia and made a comment on the debate on Love Park:

Skate parks are very important to young people, an intrinsic part of their creative culture, part of their identity. We should be expanding skate parks. To take the park away is to tell them that they are not valid. Big mistake. (Richard Florida quoted from Howell 2005:35)

In public debate, Howell points out that the skateboarders went quite rapidly from being portrayed as intruders in public space to becoming a sign and an indicator of whether Philadelphia would be able to handle the transformation from a industrial city to a creative one. The skate-

boarders' right to the city could be reclaimed within the framework of economic development but what about the homeless? If the right to the city coincides with economic benefits for the city, then in some contexts the presence of skateboarders as well as graffiti artists will not only be defended on economic terms but also institutionalized as instruments for urban development and with the risk, as in the Love Park story, at the expense of the homeless population who continue to be displaced from the park. Howell argues that if the culture industry

[n]o longer serves as just ideological legitimization for the economy but as the urban economy's main motor. With the creative class, we see not only "culture" that elides and naturalizes class inequalities but also class politics that elides and naturalizes class inequalities.

In her book *Evictions*, Rosalyn Deutsche analyzes the relations between urban redevelopment and art. She argues that art should make visible the complex relations between urban regeneration, gentrification and homelessness, instead of naturalizing them. Taking the redesign of Battery Park, New York, which has been celebrated for the strong link between art, architecture and design, as an example, she claims that the consequences of rebuilding of the park have included not only eviction of former residents but also a displacement of the homeless. The art projects in the park, Deutsche argues, failed to consider the social and urban context for this development and therefore represented a harmonious and hierarchized space.

As a practice within the built environment, public art participates in the productions of meanings, uses, and forms for the city. In this capacity, it can help secure consent to redevelopment and to the restructuring that make up the historical form of late capitalist urbanization. But like other institutions it can also question and resist those operations, revealing the supposed contradictions of the urban process (Deutsche 1991:164).

Two artists who try to work against this development is the group of Hewitt+Jordan who produced a billboard text in 2004 for a site at Sheffield that states "The economic function of public art is to increase the value of private property". The billboard was one out of four in the art project "The functions of public art". The aim of the project the artists argue

Is to examine the tensions and contradictions that exist within public art practice; to explore how public art is integral to our culture and therefore how it functions in support of the dominant ideology. In order to reveal the hegemony within culture, we chose to describe how public art functions in the broadest of cultural contexts: economic, social and aesthetic.
(<http://www.hewittandjordan.com/work/vitrine.html>)

Hewitt and Jordan's project is based on slogans, and its purpose is to take sides, questioning and interfering with the function of public art. But they are also aware of the difficulties and contradictions inherited in art. On the one hand, the artist who doesn't want to display his art in

galleries risks being marginalized. On the other hand, given the cultural boom in many cities, there is a demand for artists working in public spaces, where they are seen as a cultural resource for creative thinking.

With a Public address

So how is it possible to understand such different forms of undergrounds as homelessness and street art? Are they undergrounds at all and in what sense? Talking of street art, graffiti and other forms of public arts, it is difficult to simply view them as underground. It all depends on the context. Some of the celebrated artists include as Wodzicko, who also works at the university doing his art or Banksy who started as an unknown graffiti writer and now has turned into a cult figure. Homelessness, I would argue, does not in itself form an underground at all. It is not a cultural underground – at least not in most European cities where homelessness is too dispersed and heterogeneous to form a stable underground with cultural preferences and lifestyles. It rarely consists of any criminal underground either, at least in the ordinary sense of the concept of stable networks and lifestyles. But on the other hand, we can see how homelessness is constantly viewed in popular discourse as a deviant lifestyle, if not a cultural underground, a criminal one, dealing with theft and drugs. And graffiti in most cities is viewed as both a cultural and criminal underground that has to be controlled.

My aim in this article has not been to discuss the lifestyles of graffiti writers or homeless people – the aim has rather been to elaborate and draw attention to what I call the city underground. The focus has been to shed light on the official vision of the city and how that vision is based on exclusions and repression which in turn created a space for resistance. The city underground is therefore a symbolic underground and my argument has been that in the era of regeneration and transformation of many city centres, homeless people are symbolically forced into the underground and become that which is there but can not, or rather should not, be seen. They become uncanny, in the sense of Freud, that which is repressed and ought to be hidden but comes into light. They have this position because they don't seem to fit new visions of branded cities at the same time as they are the consequences of redevelopment and gentrification. They are the waste products of the system rather than the failure of it. Their presence in public spaces challenges any sharp divisions between private and public space – they literally have to live their private life in what is public space for everyone else. And by doing so, they also become a reminder of the fragile nature of the home. The street art and the graffiti that I have discussed in this chapter, all work to make visible the contradictions and antagonisms of visioning public space. In other words, their work pinpoints the city underground, that which makes the orderly public space possible but is excluded at the same time. Their work addresses the public and provokes and questions power structures in the city. By doing so, they address a set of fundamental questions concerning life in cities such as “what is public space” – “a space for the public”? And “who is the public”? What

place is given to various forms of expression? Who decides where to draw the line between “acceptable aesthetics” and “visual pollution”? In all probability, there are no simple answers. There is no one order, one vision, about what an equitable public space would imply, but several different perspectives that all demand and need space. Perhaps that’s where we should go looking for the fundamental principle of public space – as the struggle for public space.

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