

Teaching Gender, Diversity and Urban Space

An Intersectional Approach between
Gender Studies and Spatial Disciplines

A book series by ATHENA

Edited by Anastasia-Sasa Lada

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Teaching Gender, Diversity and Urban Space

Teaching with Gender. European Women's Studies in
International and Interdisciplinary Classrooms.

A book series by ATHENA

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Published by ATHENA3 Advanced Thematic Network in Women's Studies in Europe, the Graduate Gender Programme at Utrecht University and the Centre for Gender Studies, Stockholm University

“This book has been published with the support of the Socrates/Erasmus programme for Thematic Network Projects of the European Commission through grant 227623-CP-I-2006-I-NL-ERASMUS-TNPP”

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Introduction

Anastasia–Sasa Lada

“Teaching Gender, Diversity and Urban Space: An Intersectional approach between Gender Studies and Spatial Disciplines” is a collective volume which originated under the umbrella of ATHENA 2 and 3. It comes from the activities of one particular working group 1B “Gender, diversity and urban space.” The aim of this book is to present the theoretical framework and the development of diverse educational tools that deal with the introduction of gender and sexuality in Spatial Disciplines and with the concepts of space and urbanity in Women’s and Gender Studies. The initiative to set up this separate discernible activity with regard to “gender, diversity and urban space” stemmed from the recognition that the concepts of space, place and urbanity have a rather minor presence within European Women’s and Gender Studies. Simultaneously, there has been a rather “poor” development, if any, of the concepts of gender and sexuality(ies) within the “spatial” disciplines and in university departments. This concerns mainly architecture and urban/city planning and to a lesser degree geography which has done better, thanks to the hard work and long-term efforts of feminist geographers.¹ This “double” absence formulated the core questions of our activity and underlies the hypothesis behind our proposals for the development of educational and teaching tools to cope with it.

This volume brings together writers from within the working group and also invited feminist researchers with extensive experience of introducing gender issues within the spatial disciplines, such as architecture, geography and city/urban planning. Since the beginning of 80’s most of us have initiated a number of new courses and research with a feminist perspective, in our own departments and disciplines. Consequently, the selected articles can be read as an attempt at formulating an adequate body of knowledge and experience/ involvement that addresses a number of crucial issues which are related to the introduction of the concept of gender in teaching and research within the “spatial” disciplines, over the last thirty years or more.

¹ See L. Nelson & J. Seager Eds., *A Companion to Feminist Geography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005) for an excellent recent review

These issues might be addressed by the following questions:

- How have the concepts of gender and space been conceptualized so far within the feminist thought?
- How have the different modes of conceptualization about gender and space within feminism affected teaching?
- What types of theoretical and methodological problem are confronted by the introduction of gender in the “spatial” disciplines and where do these come from?
- How do we deal with the diversity and/or the empowerment of the students in the classroom?

The collection is organized in the form of an introduction and two sections. The articles in the first section are mainly theoretical and we can say that they work as a frame for the articles that compose the second section. Part two consists namely of articles that exemplify the development of teaching and research activities which introduce the concept of gender, mainly within the “Spatial” disciplines.

Part I

In her article “Playing with (in)difference? 30 years of gender and space” Jos Boys explores how feminist understandings of gender and space have been articulated and re-articulated over the last 30 years. This is, filtered through the specific context of her lived experience of London and the UK during this time. On the basis of experience of an earlier period she takes the opportunity to “talk back” to some contemporary feminist work, usually now called the third wave feminism. Speaking from a background in architectural education and community-based practice, she explores some different modes of conceptualizing gender and space *within* feminism, so as to address the limitations of a linear generational model of feminism for practitioners working in the intersections between feminism and their own discipline. For teaching and learning in particular, such an understanding offers many opportunities to ‘re-view’ the attitudes and assumptions on the basis of which much built space is designed; and to make this more explicit and discursive students. Her article suggests a critical but supportive mode of enquiry for engaging with the history and the contemporary theory of feminism in relationship to space.

In his article “Crossing methods, crossing epistemologies: How to make the research of the city perfectly queer” Giorgos Marnelakis addresses *some preliminary questions about queer research* and demonstrates a special interest in questions about researching the city. The main source of reference for this paper is William Haver’s (1997) essay “Queer research; or, how to practise invention to the brink of intelligibility.” Basing his article on this work, Marnelakis also draws from feminist literature that deals with epistemological, methodological and ethical questions of feminist research. Given that little has been written on queer research so far, his attempt mostly raises questions rather than providing answers and solutions.

He thinks of queer research primarily as a process that *cuts across* established boundaries in methodology, epistemology and the research praxis. This is a form of research that *de-familiarises* or, particularly in the context of the city, one that exposes incoherences, fragmentations and dislocations and leaves possibilities open for something new. Finally, he concludes that, while his task here was to address a number of questions for queer research, he thinks that what has been discussed perhaps raises questions relevant for any kind of research. And this is not because, to paraphrase Deborah Britzman, any research might *be* “queer,” but because something “queer” might *happen* to any research.

Part II

In their article “Research and teaching about gender in Spanish geography” Maria Dolors Garcia–Ramon and Anna Ortiz present an overview of gender geography in Spain. First, they focus on the developments of the research on gender and secondly on the practices of teaching. They review the research work carried out since the 1980s, focusing on five themes: the relation of gender and power in academic geography in Spain: the introduction of qualitative methods; the study of rural spaces; research on urban spaces; and studies in representation and postcolonial geography. Finally in relation to teaching they refer both to undergraduate courses, as well as to the graduate ones. They conclude by extolling the value of making greater efforts to integrate the work being done outside English speaking academia into the mainstreaming of international gender geography. In their case, this means that they believe that a hybridization of theoretical and empirical work from a position built upon

its own needs and concerns, should provide Spanish gender geography with the specificity and potential to contribute to the traditions being developed in the international framework.

In their article “Bringing in feminist pedagogy through student-led fieldtrips: A report from the Netherlands” Bettina van Hoven, Wike Been, Joos Droogleever Fortuijn and Virginie Mamadouh reflect on the use of fieldtrips, organized by students, in teaching feminist geography in the Netherlands. They place this evaluation in context through an analysis of the position of feminist perspectives in Dutch geography and a discussion of their joint attempts to offer a course in feminist geographies in the Netherlands. Indeed, despite what some outsiders might expect of a country known as progressive and liberal, it has proven extremely difficult to develop feminist approaches in Dutch geographies and to create and sustain such courses in feminist geographies at Dutch Universities. The authors think that the main reason for this situation is the fact that Geography in the Netherlands has a strong empirical and policy focus and is, in general, less ‘abstract’ and ‘critical’ than geography elsewhere, in particular, in the UK. Reflecting on the student-led fieldtrips in the context of feminist pedagogy, they feel that the fieldtrips have been a successful means of bringing in a more explicit feminist pedagogy into their own gender geography teachings.

In “Encouraging gender analysis in research practice” Deborah Thien begins by remarking that few resources for practical teaching or fieldwork exercises exist which address gender in geographical contexts. Her paper adds to teaching and fieldwork resources by describing an experience with designing and implementing a ‘gender intervention’ within a large-scale, multi-university, bilingual research project that brought together a group of (non-gender specialist) researchers and student research assistants. Providing detailed descriptions of a facilitated workshop and a field log exercise, she aims to offer specific examples of *how* researchers can keep gender on the research agenda. Substantive reporting of such details also works toward an open research process which allows for debate, methodological critique and ongoing revision. This in turn contributes to maintaining a relevant and rigorous qualitative research practice within geography.

Finally in the last paper “A “prototype” MA module on gender/sexuality, diversity and urban space” I discuss the aim of the initiative, the subject and the content of project launched by the multidisciplinary working group on

Gender/Sexuality, Diversity and Urban Space. Within the Advanced Thematic Network in European Women's Studies—ATHENA this group s met, worked with and developed a pilot project in the form of a “prototype” module at MA level on this theme, Cutting “across” or working in the “intersections” between feminism and the “home” disciplines is the core feature in the development of our proposals so far. It is also a feature of the existing courses, which have been collected and discussed within our working group. All of them can be found on the Athena website (www.athena3.org).

This volume is intended as a basic teaching material mainly in the field of the, so called “Spatial” disciplines and complementary within Women's and Gender Studies, anthropology, urban sociology and cultural studies, both in international and/or multicultural contexts. This collection can be used to enable the students to reflect on differences and similarities and to explore the ways in which gender/sexual identities are constructed and performed across space, in relation to issues of citizenship and migration, violence in the city and at home, prostitution, etc. The study of the multilayered, complex and contradictory situations in contemporary European cities where gender/sexuality intersects with other axes of difference and power is very crucial in the development of a multicultural teaching ethos. It also furthers the students' critical understanding when they face these contemporary issues in their everyday life both inside and outside the classroom.

PART I: CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF GENDER AND SPACE WITHIN FEMINIST RESEARCH

Playing with (in)difference? 30 years of gender and space

Dr. Jos Boys

This paper explores how feminist understandings of gender and space have been articulated and re-articulated over the last 30 years, filtered through the specific context of my lived experience of London and the UK during this time as a teacher and community activist. I want to take the opportunity to ‘talk back’ from the experiences of an earlier period to some contemporary feminist work (usually now called third wave feminism). Most of my research has concerned the different modes of conceptualisation we bring to material space through our bodies from our different locations and positions through time and place.¹ In this piece I want to explore some different modes of conceptualisation about gender and space within feminism, so as to address the limitations of a linear generational model of feminism for those working in, or learning at, the intersections between feminism and their own subject area (that is, not exclusively or primarily with feminism). This is relevant to both contemporary architectural education and practice because it introduces more recent generations to ideas that went before, whilst connecting to some of the best of recent practices.

From Matrix to Muf?

I will start with a brief look at two specific examples of radical architectural practice from England with the broader aim of opening up discussions around theory, education and practice. I will look first at the work of Matrix feminist architects practice (1979–1995) of which I was a co-founder and then the ongoing work of muf (1990–), now led by Lisa Fiori and Katherine Clarke.²

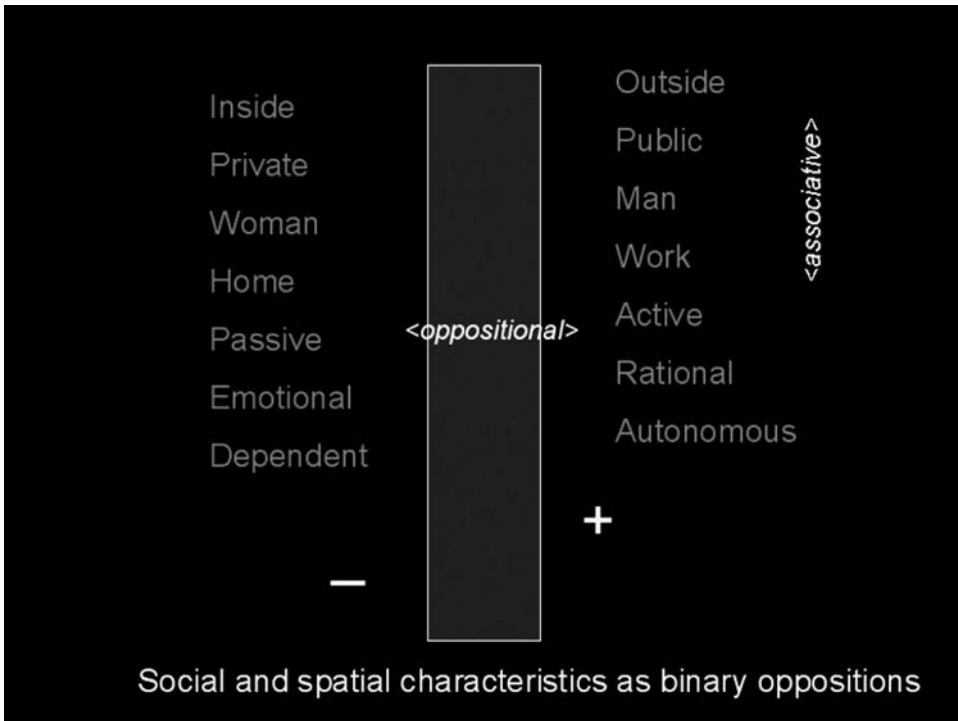
Both these practices have written about themselves. What is more, there is an ‘easy’ chronological and oppositional history to write about these two feminist architectural practices –one begun in the 1970s and one in the 1990s–

¹ Jos Boys, “Concrete Visions? Architecture, society and struggles over housing design 1830 – 2000 ” (Unpublished PhD diss., University of Reading, 2001).

² <http://www.muf.co.uk>

a version of events that contains some partial truth but obscures more than it reveals. I am much more interested in how both these forms of practice intersect with some aspects of contemporary feminism; what they offer to answer back to, connect with, speak differently of. This enables a 'sideways' and often complementary/complimentary critique of contemporary architectural teaching and learning methods which centre on creative disruption, performance and nomadism as modes of radical action.

The easy version is that Matrix worked to analyse how the binary oppositions between men and women were literally mapped onto, and represented through, material spaces; believing that the oppression of women could therefore be 'read off' the spaces of buildings and cities.



Aspects of Matrix's approach might be summarised as follows:

- Explicitly feminist in approach; challenging professional 'neutrality'
- Began from an analysis of binary oppositions in gender roles that 'locate' women predominantly as suburban housewives
- Explored how this operates through its actual (or attempted) mapping onto real space and through social roles and stereotypes
- Aimed to empower women as clients of buildings, through showing how to read plans, use models, be involved in design process
- Concentrated on building types that did not already exist such as women's' centres
- Aimed to involve more women in whole process including construction, engineering and design
- Aimed to combine design with research and design guidance

More recent critiques would see the work of Matrix (together with that whole feminist generation) as being very much within the Anglo-American feminist school. Difficulties are seen as being of several sorts; its inability to step out of binary oppositions (that is, in only being able to conceptualise change for women through reversals) and therefore starting from a belief in gaining equality with men focusing on 'making space' for women who lived and worked in a men's world. This is perceived as essentialising women, of getting 'Woman' mixed up with the diversity of women, of making assumptions about what women wanted, of 'speaking' for others, particularly from the position of the white middle-class women. It is seen as attempting to build its own alternative grand narratives, based on simplistic ideas about reversing oppressive power relationships, and of floundering –unsurprisingly– on the rocks of identity politics, as black, gay, working class women became caught in unseemly battles as to whose identity had been most oppressed.

As we know, Anglo-American feminism was increasingly perceived as being limited relative to an European, particularly French feminist tradition which emphasised 'difference' and 'écriture féminine' and explored difference itself as a form of practice, one that could include multiple voices, feminist, political, poetic and confessional (personal). In this reading, the idea of gender identity itself is seen as limited –an idealised, impossible construction in which we are all performers. What becomes interesting are the absences left out, such

that the potential for change can be best deployed and revealed through playful and disruptive enactments 'on and out', not merely in reaction to, existing patterns of power. One could easily see muf as an example of these new forms of practice;

- All-female practice deliberately refusing any simplistic framings as feminist and/or feminine
- Building in its own internal process of self-reflection and critique (particularly through the work of Kath Shonfield)
- Cross disciplinary, combining art and architectural practices interested in 'the relationships between the built and the lived' as a public realm – 'another order of events beneath the visible'
- Developed methods for engaged practice from specific situations to strategy and back to detail; challenging expert assumptions of detachment
- Interested in connecting the minutiae of the personal to social solidarity and community
- Consultative and collaborative procedures acknowledge difference
- Designs processes that may not have a built outcome
- Crosses architectural and art boundaries through constructive differences in approach

From Matrix to Muf?

It would thus be very straightforward to map out this shift through a series of binary oppositions in forms of approach between Matrix and muf:

MATRIX	MUF
Identity	Difference
Representation	Process
Map	Choreography
Product	Performance
Location	Relationship
Wants	Desires
Goal-driven	Undefined consequences
Fixed	Fluid
Oppositional	Multiple
'transparent' consultation	'lateral' consultation
Normative	Partial
Principles	Methods
Architecture	Spatial practices
Professional	Multi-disciplinary
Rational	Lateral
Ernest	Playful
Didactic	Non-didactic
Marxist	Lacanian

If these are the obvious –but partial– chronological and oppositional accounts of feminist/architectural practices between 70s feminism in England and what Rosi Braidotti,³ for example, calls new feminism materialism, how might we make different kinds of readings? The clichéd binaries it uses do express certain truths about change from the 1980s to the 21st century, but they also hide the things that both practices share – a complete commitment to engagement with, and participation of, non-experts and to exploring methods for enabling constructive dialogue (which face up to conflict and contradiction); a refusal to just accept the framework of conventional architectural practice; a real interest in redistributing resources towards those without; an increasing awareness of both the potential of creativity and the limitations of changing specific buildings and spaces to enable political change.

3 Rosi Braidotti, *Transpositions; on nomadic ethics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006).

The above diagram, then, over-simplifies many complex activities into binary oppositions, where the differences between Matrix and muf were/are not oppositional but sideways, overlapping, differently focused. When such 'commonsense' understandings are proffered, simply applying feminism to architectural education and related subjects, then students are likely merely to have their prejudices reinforced and their critical faculties blunted. So as an alternative I would like to begin exploring the intersections differently starting, instead, from societal shifts related to gender across this period.

Contemporary (in)differences?

When I began working with Matrix on research projects at the end of the 1970s, it was still possible to literally see gender roles mapped onto physical space as patterns of separation (women at home in the suburbs/men at work in the city); it was even easier to look back to 19th century Victorian England and see how these attempts to articulate gender difference through the design and control of material space had begun. This, in a wider world where material space was still articulated as neutral and objective.

“ The authors of this book belong to a group of feminist designers called Matrix. We are women who share a concern about the way buildings and cities work for women. Our training and our work for Matrix has helped us to look critically at our built surroundings...we want to share these skills with others to help us all develop an understanding of how we are 'placed' as women in the man-made environment and to use that knowledge to subvert it.”

Of course, by the 1980s, this was already an oversimplified picture; emphasizing the location of the white, middle-class suburban housewife and often leaving other groups invisible.⁴

At the beginning of the 21st century things are even more amorphous. Gender divisions are much more lightly etched into material space, social roles more layered, multiple.⁵ Conceptually, the older binary oppositions, where women were consistently ‘signed’ inferior to men (and where the ‘commonsense’ design and ordering of physical space was sometimes central to expressing the different ‘locations’ of men and women) have much less purchase. Social roles are more interchangeable, particularly before children are born. Many women are more financially independent, many more people live in different household arrangements beyond the nuclear family.

But –and there are two big buts– the stereotypes of what constitutes ‘Man’ or ‘Woman’ (that is, not the realities of any particular man or woman but an idealized and artificial social construct) continue to have impacts, as do stereotypical assumptions of class, race, age, sexuality, disability etc. Struggles over the veil, career women, late babies and same sex marriage all show just how central attempts to name gender and other relationships through a language of proper ‘commonsense’ still are; both in how we are represented and in the ‘ordinary’ patterning of everyday social and spatial practices. Just as importantly, core economic and social inequalities remain and, in some cases, have deepened.

The on-going shifting but also *structural* differences between women and men in their experiences of space –cultural, social, personal, economic, material– that this continues to produce have become submerged since the vocal civil rights movements of the 1960s and 70s. Instead, as my title suggests, there is a tendency to focus on disruptions (often playful) only at the local, situated scale, which act as commentaries on moments of gender difference, often crosscut with other issues. However serious the intentions of these kinds of intervention, it can leave underlying social and economic inequalities invisible and – however unintentionally – treated with indifference. Instead, relationships become local, partial, evocative and unexplainable.

⁴ Again, whilst there is an important truth here, it also blurs the considerable work done in the 1980s which was already critical of the emphasis on the white middle class housewife; see for example Jos Boys “Women and Public Space” in *Matrix 1984* and Jos Boys “Women and the Designed Environment; dealing with difference”, *Built Environment* 16/4 (1990): 249–256.

⁵ Angela McRobbie, *The Uses of Cultural Studies* (London: Sage, 2005).

We have lost a language/form of practice for engaging with/analysing social inequality or talking about social justice explicitly and at a more generalisable, resonant or politically galvanising level. This is particularly important in education where – in the UK at least – political discussion and community-based activities have decreased, both because of a shifting popular culture and because students are increasingly occupied with the financial difficulties of studying.

At the same time, we cannot pretend that Matrix/feminism was without limitations, its assumptions equally problematic. Radical architectural politics in the 1960s/70s/80s in England centred on defining precisely how (middle class white) women were ‘placed’ in society and then tried to redefine that ‘place’ architecturally. In the process the complex differences between women (and the unevenness of material space) could be lost or ignored; and specific design projects had a tendency to design from an essentialist and generic notion of ‘what women do’. The great strength of muf (and much contemporary radical practice in England such as EAST, Agents of Change, Fluid and CHORA) starts from its refusal to be ‘placed’ as either a form of practice or in terms of how building and urban participants might be defined.

“muf stuff has always been about making spaces to make work as well as about making spaces.

Their focus on the process involves a recognition of the political context of how projects are constructed, and reveals complex attitudes to design and creativity.(...)

...Practices of men are unlikely to be asked how their architecture or their methods reflect their gender, because theirs remains the standard.

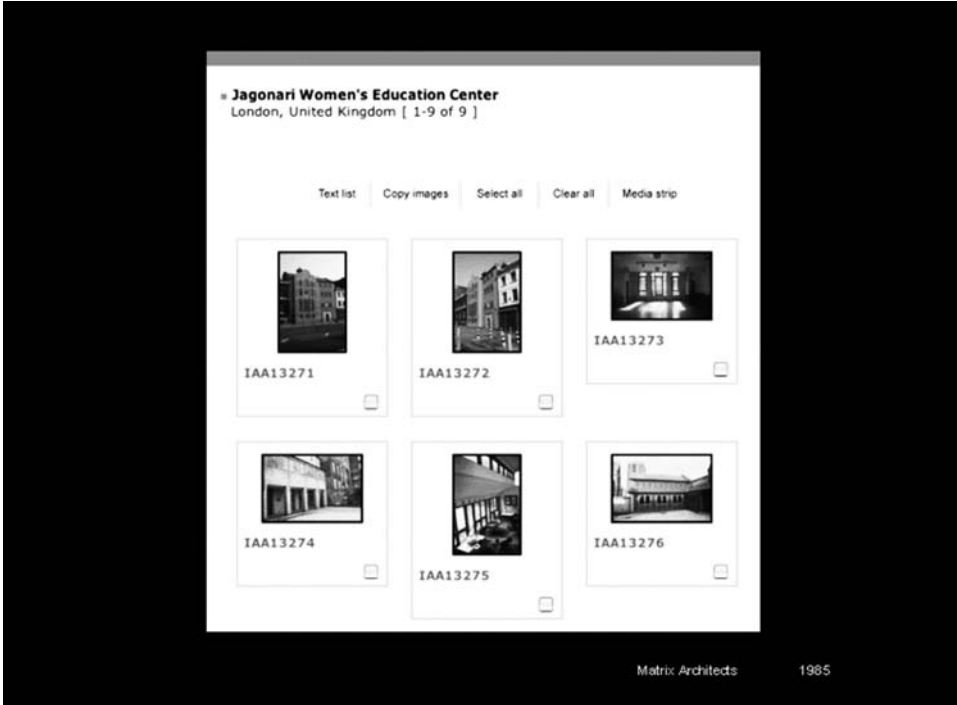
muf have to deal with people’s projections onto them, and then the disappointments that can sometimes follow.”

In this way the older forms of operation as observation/analysis/solution could be said to have been re-framed constructively as process/disruption/potential in both architectural education and aspects of its practice. But, at the same time, there is a recognizable void in contemporary feminism, in being able to understand or communicate how we each personally could find ways to act ethically in the world to a larger end than ourselves; and in articulating what might constitute viable, active forms of political participation towards real social change. For me, community based architectural practices – by the sheer situatedness and multiplicities of its operations – both exemplify the kinds of events and assemblages contemporary feminists imagine as a radical future; and yet do not ‘fit’ – in fact even critique – the theoretical notions of the disruptive and nomadic as performed forms of radical practice.⁶

***Re-visiting Matrix, Muf, and social processes:
Representational and performative practices***

In the early days of Matrix we were always being asked what a feminist architecture would look like. This desire for alternative representations was enormous. Our answer was to argue instead for a feminist process – direct participation with users and a design and building team that was not male dominated. At the same time, we were making representations – buildings, after all, have a form and stability, spaces must be mapped differentially and settings/facades designed.

⁶ Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001). Braidotti, 2006.



Buildings cannot not be objects/products. Here the radicality for us was in working towards new building types such as womens' centres offering the re-allocation of resources (land, facilities, space) to those who had not previously had access. This was underpinned by two (false) hopes: that such space could somehow come to life transparently in response to the users involvement, as if the designers could merely be neutral conduits; and that once built, that radical events would somehow be generated, come into being merely through the existence of new material spaces.

Part of my PhD research⁷ was very much about the shift from architectural design based on function and representation to a more cinematic approach based on desire and the performative – a shift that was already beginning in the 1980s in the work of architects such as Rem Koolhaas and Bernard Tschumi. In radical and community based work this has led to some very rich threads of participatory, performative and events-based design, of which muf is an inventive and endlessly creative and thoughtful example.

⁷ Boys, 2001.



Shared Ground, London 1996 - 2001

Here, though, there are tensions. The performative tends to resist the building as product. It is much more likely to lead to transitory practices, to operate as spatial and artistic intervention in public space –parks, festivals, small community buildings, as what *Atelier D'Architecture Autogeree (aaa)*, for example, call *urban tactics*– the closest probably architecture can get to non-representational practices. *AAA* do not make architecture they make space-events and participatory processes:

A “self-managed architecture” provokes assemblages and networks of individuals, desires and different manners of making. It is a relational practice, which is not always consensual but at times conflictual, and it is the role of the architect to locate confrontations and accompany subjective productions. Such as architecture does not correspond to a liberal practice but asks for new forms of association and collaboration, based on exchange and reciprocity. ([http:// www.urbantactics.org](http://www.urbantactics.org) accessed 01/12/06)

But at the same time as we can witness a definite shift from representation to performance in the ideas and practices of radical cultural intellectuals (and in feminist and critical theory more widely), it is important to recogni-

se that both representation and performative actions operate together as mechanisms through which we make sense of, and survive in, the world. One has not replaced the other; they merely shift in relative intensity and complexity. Stereotypical binaries and their representations have not disappeared from advertising or language or other media. And we have not just 'started' performing social relationships through everyday social practices, we have always done this. Rather we need to explore what constitutes the whole range of mechanisms through which gender and other inequalities are perpetuated and to begin to unravel how each works and can be challenged (see for example, Boys 1984); and to try and work out why different mechanisms come to dominance in different periods and situations (in academic theory or in everyday capitalist practices for example).

Identity politics and non-unitary subjects

It is undoubtedly true that Matrix and other feminist organisations fell apart in the 1980s through the conflicts and confusions of identity politics; that often did deteriorate into arguments over who was the most oppressed, (counter-pointed by the assumption that women would automatically work well together). The problem of seeing women (or men) as an essentialist category certainly happened sometimes; confusing gender stereotypes with the assumption of unitary subjects. Muf has been much more self-aware and sophisticated in thinking through its practices, and of opening up the interplay of different disciplines.

But at the same time, for many of us, it was clear that different women located themselves *in relation to* gender stereotypes, through various and complex personal narratives and strategies. What is more, the inherent location of community-based work meant that non-unitary subjects could not be avoided. In fact, much of the writing and practice of Matrix, in its engagements with multiple others, the analyses of the complexities of subject positions and the fragile alliances that had to be built, explored these issues of complex differences. The difficulty for Matrix, I suggest, was not so much in assuming a unitary subject – 'Woman' – whose oppressions could be mapped onto space directly, as in some participants' *desire* for unitary subjects (to be a unitary subject themselves with a singular identity). And, where the characteristics of 'women' or 'men' appeared to be inscribed into material landscapes, for

example, in aspects of domestic design, this could be articulated as ‘true’ and oppressive by some feminists and as merely attempts to ‘name’ genders differently (mediated by complex processes often with unintended consequences) by others. Again, then, this is not about a historical shift from unitary to non-unitary subjects either ‘out there’ or within radical practices. It is about the underlying pulls and pressures to take up different positions individually, socially and culturally. So, for instance, we are currently seeing a pull to the stability of ‘foundational’ states more generally politically through the growth of fundamentalist religions, but simultaneously the expansion of alternative open-ended politics around radical social activities such as the green movement.

The questions then become –is the non-unitary subject automatically ‘better’ than the unitary, or the ‘Other’ inherently more ethical than the dominant position as Braidotti, for example,⁸ implies? Or rather, as I am suggesting, if we are all variously unitary/non-unitary and dominant/other across a multiplicity of positions and locations, how do we individually attempt to act ethically, agree at least momentarily to articulations of value or engage politically and dynamically around, for example, inequalities? Braidotti makes a strong argument for working through transversal alliances but –like old style feminism– there is an implicit assumption that, whilst there will be conflicts and contradictions, a shared purpose will automatically be found which will tend to the positive and progressive. In my own research I have suggested that it is precisely here – in the spaces in-between different positions in given situations – that need exploring more carefully, so as to precisely unravel patterns of attempted naming and (mis)recognitions and the resonances, mismatches, gaps and unintended consequences where socio-spatial practices intersect.

⁸ Braidotti, 2006.

Theoretical and concrete bodies

Grosz⁹ and others¹⁰ look to figurations of the body as steps towards a non-linear rendering of the subject in its deep structures not as mere metaphors but rather as markers of concretely situated historical positions. To explore this further, Braidotti¹¹ examines ‘others’ as non-unitary subjects in contemporary society

The ‘others’ are not merely markers of exclusion or marginality, but also the sites of powerful and alternative subject positions. Thus, the bodies of others become simultaneously disposable commodities and also decisive agents for political and ethical transformation. To think the simultaneity of these opposite projects in a non-dialectical or nomadic mode of interaction requires a shift in perspective and adequate cartographies.

What is most interesting to me here is the extent to which playing abstractly with theoretical bodies in much contemporary feminism somehow takes precedence as a mode of conceptualisation over hearing the narratives of actual concrete bodies, of real people. This is not suggesting that ‘ordinary’ accounts are more authentic than critical renditions. But individuals and groups do live the simultaneity outlined above in their bodies everyday – they do not perceive a need for a shift in perspective, rather they need their accounts recognised and supported.¹² What is more we need to understand the processes through which these bodies are enabled to act politically at whatever scale. These issues were not ignored by earlier versions of feminism. English researchers such as Cynthia Cockburn, Valerie Walkerdine, and Carolyn Steedman were exploring the contradictions and complexities of lived experiences in relation to essentialist images of women and the working class in the 1980s; looking at how these images were played out to different effects in different conditions.

⁹ Grosz, 2001.

¹⁰ Donna J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991). Judith Butler, *Bodies that matter: on the discursive limits of ‘sex’* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

¹¹ Braidotti, 2006, 44.

¹² See, for example the ‘situated’ accounts of Cynthia Cockburn, *Brothers: Male Dominance and Technological Change* (Pluto Press, 1983) and *The space between us: negotiating gender and national identities in conflict* (Zed Books, 1988); Valerie Walkerdine, *Democracy in the kitchen: regulating mothers and socialising daughters* (Virago, 1989) and *School-girl Fictions* (Verso, 1990); and Carolyn Steedman, *The Tidy House: little girls writing* (Virago, 1982) and *Landscape for a Good Woman: A story of two lives* (Virago, 1986).

They wrote carefully situated accounts which tried to understand precisely how social change was or could be generated through the accumulation of individual acts of acceptance, refusal, challenge and adaptation. Feminists such as these urgently require re-discovering.

Transparent and translatory processes

I am suggesting that some contemporary feminism, in its interest in the playful, the disruptive and the nomadic is avoiding some of the big difficulties of issues of societal value and ethical responsibility. In Grosz's¹³ work for example, the logic through which an idea and its translation into built form are connected remains unclear:

The thing, matter already configured, generates invention, the assessment of means and ends, and thus enables practice. The thing poses questions to us, questions, about our needs and desires, questions above all about action: the thing is our provocation to action and is itself the result of our action. But more significantly, while the thing functions as fundamental provocation (...) it also acts as a promise, as that what which in the future, in retrospect, yields a destination, or effect, another thing.

She offers us the assumed good of potentiality in form but without suggesting any content. Creative action becomes implicitly a lateral, intuitive and poetic intervention which by asking questions or making disruptions is automatically of value. I question this. Cultural production on these grounds is likely to remain impenetrable (obscure, pretentious) and *not* obvious to many of its supposed audiences, despite a supporting belief in its own openness and popular engagement. Some contemporary critical art practice might be seen as falling into this difficulty.¹⁴ In the everyday world, where muf practices architecture (in its broadest sense) their knowledge and experience makes for clarity about the likelihood of compromised intentions, the messiness of differences between concrete and theoretical bodies in everyday life, the requirement of making difficult, partial and uncertain decisions about value, and both the life-affirming potential of hauling some creative improvement into existence and its associated exhaustion. Acknowledgement and

¹³ Grosz, 2001, 168.

¹⁴ Jane Rendell, *Art and Architecture: A Place Between* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006).

engagement with these complex conditions offers a much richer version of re-thinking and 'doing' gender, diversity and space.

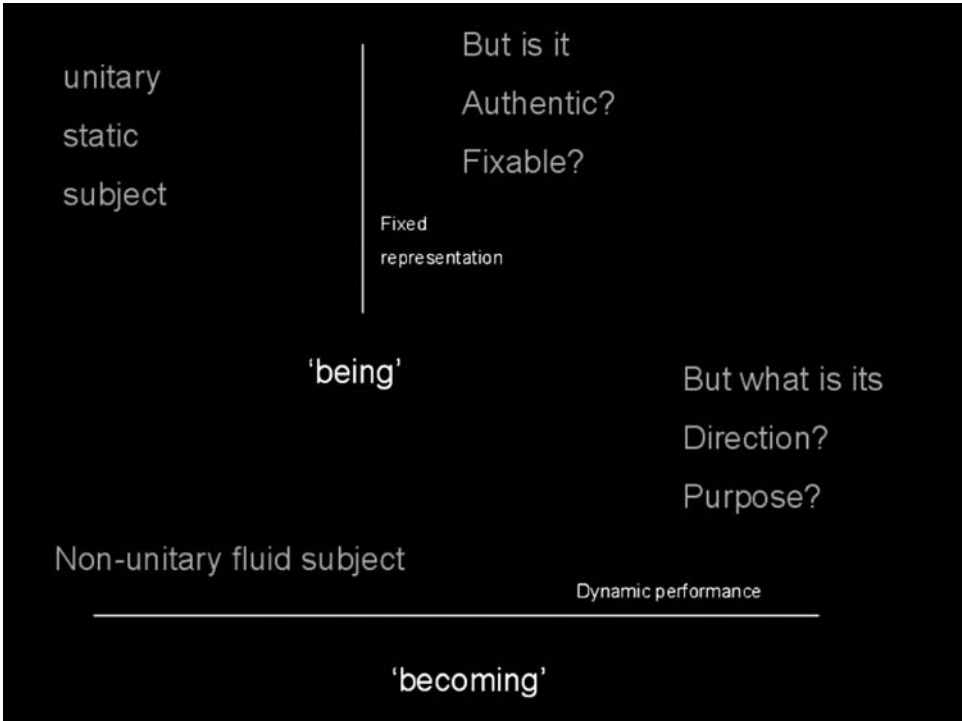
But it can be argued that the closer art-architecture as a process gets to architecture as a built product (something which it cannot avoid) the more we have to question the validity of socio-spatial critique framed only as the fluidity of intersection between buildings as things and buildings as critical processes. For Grosz, there can be a refusal of explicit judgements of 'good' or 'bad' forms of disruption or of resulting consequences; that is, of *value*. On many occasions, architects do not have this luxury. They must make compromised decisions about what works and what doesn't, and for whom.

Present actions/future possibilities

Elsewhere¹⁵ I have argued that there are several difficulties in literally attempting to build the underlying structure of binary oppositions (men/women, outside/inside, public/private, rational/emotional) into material space. In attempting to use these to create a reflective representation between social characteristic and material spaces there was always a problem; first in how to recognise truth from falsehood, and second in how to 'stop' change so as to enable meanings to remain fixed. How could we be certain that any individual or society 'honestly' expressed in its appearances what was really happening underneath or that a certain 'truth' could have any longevity? This was still worrying the post-modern Fredric Jameson¹⁶ as much as it worried Hume and other 18th century British aesthetic theorists. More recently the shift in interest towards event-based and performative practices and theories appears to make these problems of representation or stabilisation disappear. This, I suggest is a mere sleight of hand; the construction of a different conceptual map, which reveals new relationships and makes others invisible. We have moved, I suggest, from an idea of 'being' –a subject with 'thingness' which must be represented– to an idea of 'becoming' which indicates instead a movement and a process (see diagram).

¹⁵ Boys, 2001.

¹⁶ Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).



But whilst this move to process conceptually may not have the problem of a vertical boundary, it does have an horizontal one –duration. For many of these contemporary feminist writers, duration produces both new dynamic patterns and potentiality because it is marked automatically as positive. It does not differentiate between mind and body, or body and action. It thus offers a resonant analogy for human life envisaged as in a continual state of ‘becoming’. But duration also has its own problem conceptually when applied to space. It may not need to have ‘authenticity’ or predictability of representation but, if movement is not only to be random or accidental, then it does have *direction(s)* and *purpose(s)*. It has a *trajectory*. I would argue that conceptualising how to share a wider political value of direction and purpose beyond the unsaid or the personal thus become the most interesting questions for contemporary cultural, educational and architectural theory when it takes a spatial/embodied turn.

Here we may be able to learn from community-based architectural practices which have always had to work on multiple fronts, and offer up potentialities over which they don’t have much control. These are not inherently radical practices, just particular forms of operation. How, then, can we better

articulate what transforms them into politically progressive practices, and what evidence can we provide in support of such an argument? Coming to this via architecture; the disruptive idea, whatever it is, must of necessity have *content*, and a *physical manifestation*, it must be *a concrete proposition*. It must contain a prediction about what is likely to happen, and accept and undertake complex processes of translation between idea and realisation. It must engage with concrete, lived bodies not imaginary ones. Yet in much contemporary cultural and critical practice (because radically adapted or transformed forms are these days framed as needing to be non-didactic, contingent and provisional) discussion of the ideas behind their content in fact become invisible, unspoken, implicit, generated –as if secretly– from inside the cultural baggage and concerns of the subject discipline or academic location itself. Value judgements that have to be made, modes of conceptualisation about what art or architecture is ‘for’, or what languages it employs do, yet again, what they did during modernism, they disappear. I want to suggest that such a framing is as much about the anxieties of cultural intellectuals as it is about changes ‘out there’. Cultural intellectuals, still implicated in the failings of modernist grand narratives, fearful (rightly) of speaking for others, are also over-anxious about statements of belief or principles, about accepting their ethical or social responsibilities. This has impacted as much on what can be talked about in education (and how it is talked about) as it has on theory or practice.

Ethical practices and the responsibilities of the cultural intellectual

The recent history of feminist thought has rightfully refused the essentialising of Woman, of being seen to speak for others, or define rules/principles/ideals from the position of ‘Woman’. Braidotti¹⁷ is very clear how this is an ethical position in itself. In writing, such a refusal is possible; in design practice as I have said, such moral high ground is often impossible to take. One has to take responsibility for analysing a situation, predicting future events and performing a translatory act between idea and result. One has to accept that much will go wrong or have unintended consequences. In teaching and learning students have to be supported in developing the confidence to act ethically, creatively and appropriately under these (difficult) conditions.

¹⁷ Braidotti, 2006.

I think the difficulty here lies not so much in the outside world, but in the positioning that academic life entails; namely in being willing to make explicit the responsibility, partiality (and privilege) of the cultural intellectual, in accepting the marginality and specificity of these cultural and creative forms of practice in relation to social change; and through critically reflecting on the processes of translation and attempted 'naming' that they embody. In the processes of making such high level academic authorship invisible – whatever the refusals of judgement making – the power to offer proposals for change, to evaluate relative difference and effectiveness does not disappear, it merely remains (unspoken) by the cultural intellectual.

An equality of negotiation between and across different positions and assumptions is therefore avoided. Theory remains separate to the messy day-to-day realities of the world; except inasmuch as it enables intellectuals to have a model for viewing that world, and methods for engaging with the public which appears radical (by offering disruption) but, in fact, avoiding many of the salient, and politically urgent, issues.

Teaching, learning, gender and space

For me, finally, speaking from a background in architectural education and community-based practice, underlying processes of becoming of non-unitary subjects can be framed relatively easily (if simplistically) – we are all participants who try to make sense of, and survive in the world, conceptually, socially, personally, materially, culturally. Material space is just one of the means (mechanisms) through which we attempt to do that as a continual dynamic and never settled process that is framed by both self-interest and interdependences, by both a desire for stability and for change. We do not live the binary oppositional stereotypes of gender etc; we live our relationships to them. From this understanding what is interesting to explore further is the relationships between different lived worlds, the changing patterns of recognition/refusal, absence/presence and belonging/lack-of-fit experienced from different positions, locations and contexts, and how different

socio-spatial practices come to be repeated, refused, adapted or challenged.¹⁸ This is what, to me, 30 years of feminist work around gender and space has to 'offer back' to contemporary feminism.

For teaching and learning in particular, such an understanding offers many opportunities to 're-view' the attitudes and assumptions through which much built space is designed; and to make this more explicit and discursive with students. It suggests a critical but supportive mode of enquiry for engaging with the history and contemporary theory of feminism in relationship to space. It provides an argument for challenging some of the limitations of some contemporary moves in architectural design education towards playful disruptiveness for its own sake as a design method. It offers a way of working, centred on asking students to explicitly take an ethical position and find methods to maintain integrity, whilst being deeply aware of the necessity for provisionality, messy compromise and of the need to value small successes. And, finally, it suggests ways forward towards a type of community engagement which can operate both at the local scale, and more globally by enabling (carefully situated) generalisations about lessons learnt, and the potential for effectiveness elsewhere. Thus we can begin again to articulate what might constitute viable, active forms of political participation towards real social change, which recognise and support the diverse and often contradictory accounts of particular individuals and groups, without losing a connection to, and critical analysis of, underlying wider patterns of social inequality and discrimination. Ultimately this is neither about 'being' or 'becoming', it is about doing and about getting somewhere better.

¹⁸ I was particularly interested in my PhD in how one might begin to write an account of these situated moments of recognition and non-recognition, particularly in relationship to modernist housing estates in England in the 1960s and 70s. My more recent research has begun to explore how these theoretical figurations intersect with other concrete bodies, particularly through issues of disability by working with disabled and deaf artists www.architecture-insideout.co.uk. I have also been involved with another group of artists-architects, called taking place, which is exploring what might constitute feminist spatial practice through both events and more recently design interventions (<http://www.takingplace.org.uk> and also http://www.gendersite.org/pages/the_changing_shape_of_gender_and_the_built_environment_in_the_uk.html accessed 10/12/08, for case study.)

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Crossing methods, crossing epistemologies: how to make the research of the city perfectly queer

Giorgos Marnelakis

Prologue: The “queer” in queer research?

In an essay that primarily seeks to question the “queer” subject, Elizabeth Grosz suggests that there is an ambiguity about what the term “queer” in queer theory – or, for what my main concern is about here, in queer research – refers to. She notes that, apart from the fact that the “objects” of speculation are queer, the most interesting thing about queer theory (or research) is that *the knowledges produced, the ways in which these “objects” are treated are also queer*.¹ However, while research concerned with queers has flourished in many disciplines of the humanities and the social sciences, literature that deals with methodological, epistemological and ethical questions of queer research has not yet been sufficiently developed; thus, the second and most interesting meaning of the term “queer” in queer research is far from clear or self-evident. *What is queer about the knowledges that queer research produces?*

This essay will try to address, in a necessarily fragmentary and incomplete way, some preliminary questions about queer research, with a special interest about questions concerning the research of the city. The main source of reference for this paper is William Haver’s essay “Queer research; or, how to practise invention to the brink of intelligibility.”² Based on a reading of (and an exchange with) this work, I will also draw from feminist literatures that deal with epistemological, methodological and ethical questions of feminist research, but also, I will use urban research on “public sex” to think over specific questions. Given that little has been written on queer research so far, my attempt here will necessarily mostly raise questions rather than provide answers and solutions.

¹ Elizabeth Grosz, “Experimental Desire: Rethinking Queer Subjectivity,” in *Space, Time, and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 249, n.1.

² William Haver, “Queer Research; Or, How to Practise Invention to the Brink of Intelligibility,” in *The Eight Technologies of Otherness*, ed. Sue Golding (London: Routledge, 1997), 277-92.

An unobjectifiable sociality and spatiality

In one of the first influential attempts to map queer theory, Michael Warner argues that the energies of queer studies in general have come more from rethinking the subjective meaning of sexuality than from rethinking the social.³ In this attempt, I will draw from Haver's paper⁴ in order to think particularly what is queer about queer research, with my starting point being precisely a rethinking of the social, and, for my own purposes, a rethinking of the spatial as well.

Haver suggests that many thinkers and philosophers, in various ways, have recently articulated "a new thought of the social."⁵ First, for Laclau and Mouffe,⁶ the concepts of subjectivity, identity and community fix the social field in the normative idea of "society"; thus sociality is to be theorised as a specific resistance to such objectifications. Further Negri's label of "communism" includes the idea of a "dionysian labour"; that is, (queer) acts and practices that always surpass the productive processes of what is regarded by the social sciences as "culture". So, for Negri, sociality is, according to Haver, "always also something other than its objectivity."⁷ Blanchot, moreover, thinks of an "unavowable community," that is a being-in-common which is only possible through an "existential destitution." On the other hand Nancy's meditation over an "inoperable" or "unworked" (*désœuvrée*) community refers to a non-supportable sociality which is not determined by the operations of (any) culture. According to Haver this is the idea, of an "anarchic community" with no ontological grounding; namely "community as the being-in-common of singularities irreducible to the concepts of individual or subjective identity."⁸ Meanwhile for Agamben, this particular kind of being-in-common is in any way intolerable to the state. Furthermore, reading Butler's theory of the performative construction of beings and with reference to Hardt's thought of the "constitution of being" as a "materialist practice,"⁹ Haver argues that if "being" does not exist outside of or before its articulations, to be is nothing but a certain "be-ing at the limit."¹⁰

³ Michael Warner, "Introduction," in *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*, ed. Michael Warner (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), x.

⁴ Haver, "Queer Research."

⁵ *Ibid.*, 279.

⁶ All authors discussed in this paragraph are cited in *ibid.*, 279-81.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 279.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, 280.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 281.

Haver's point is that the ways in which the humanities and social sciences usually conceptualise the social field—through notions such as “society,” “subjectivity,” “identity,” “community,” “culture”—are inadequate, restrictive and, perhaps, misleading, insofar as they seek to objectify a *heteroclite* (queer) sociality which is essentially and necessarily unobjectifiable. He insists that there is always a *surplus* or *supplement* of acts, arts, protocols and practices that cannot be perceived and captured by these familiar analytical tools. Hence, based on all the above readings, Haver puts forward the thesis that the social field cannot possibly be reduced and fixed to the concept of “society” in order to become an adequate epistemological “object” of and for the social sciences.¹¹

What does this new idea of the social mean especially for the specificity of the urban situation? Haver mentions the “city” as “irreducible to the object of urban planning,”¹² but he does not elaborate very much. There is, arguably, a recent new concept of the spatial as well, which is not unrelated with the above mentioned new idea of the social and can also be useful as a starting point for my attempt to think about queer research of the urban. For example, Doreen Massey, criticising previous approaches to the question of “spatiality” within continental philosophy and French structuralism, argues that space, far from being a closed and totally connected system, is *always* in the process of becoming, *always* unfinished and *always* containing a degree of the unexpected and the unpredictable.¹³ She suggests that disruptions, fragmentations and dislocations are “inherent in the spatial,”¹⁴ particularly in the turbulent spaces of the city. And if, as Wilson has claimed, the city is experienced and conceived by means of multiple contrasts (such as public/private or centre/margin),¹⁵ arguably, there are city spaces that are neither public nor private, neither central nor marginal;¹⁶ there are, moreover, imagined and symbolic spaces that are

¹¹ Ibid., 279-81.

¹² Ibid., 281.

¹³ Doreen Massey, “Philosophy and Politics of Spatiality,” in *Power Geometries and the Politics of Space-Time* (Heidelberg: Department of Geography, University of Heidelberg, 1999), 27-46; Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005).

¹⁴ Doreen Massey, “Spatial Disruptions,” in *The Eight Technologies of Otherness*, ed. Sue Golding (London: Routledge, 1997), 223.

¹⁵ Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* (London: Virago, 1991), 8.

¹⁶ See, for example, Gordon Brent Ingram, “Marginality and the Landscapes of Erotic Alien(n)ations,” in *Queers in Space: Communities, Public Places, Sites of Resistance*, ed. Gordon Brent Ingram, Anne-Marie Bouthillette and Yolanda Retter (Seattle: Bay Press, 1997), 27-52.

no less real than “real” spaces.¹⁷ In short there is always, as Sue Golding has put it, “the elsewhere”¹⁸ that is “an impossible spatiality. It is impossible not because it does not exist, but because it exists and does not exist exactly at the same time.”¹⁹

Could one say that this impossible “elsewhere” is the *supplement or surplus* of heteroclitic (queer) spatiality? Be that as it may, it has been argued that the conventional methods of mapping the urban are partial and incomplete for they usually tend to tame confusion and complexity, bringing them into one story.²⁰ The city (or the urban field), like heteroclitic sociality, is in a very similar way essentially and necessarily unobjectifiable.

For Haver the question that raised through this new idea of the social (and, I could add, of the spatial) is *what counts as intelligible*? He suggests that the social sciences must, in fact, refuse this idea in order to protect their epistemological foundations; for this concept of sociality is on the brink of what they can think.²¹ Haver does not reject social sciences altogether and, of course, I have no such intention either. Nevertheless, I want to take up his suggestion that it is essential to recognise the specific *limits* of social sciences, given that this heteroclitic and multiple sociality (and spatiality) escapes any straightforward objectification.

¹⁷ Michael Keith and Steve Pile, “Introduction: The Politics of Place,” in *Place and the Politics of Identity*, ed. Michael Keith and Steve Pile (London: Routledge, 1993), 9; see also Pat Califia, “The City of Desire: Its Anatomy and Destiny,” in *Public Sex: The Culture of Radical Sex* (San Francisco: Cleis Press, 1994 [1991]), 205-13.

¹⁸ Sue Golding, “Quantum Philosophy, Impossible Geographies and a few Small Points about Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Sex (All in the Name of Democracy),” in *Place and the Politics of Identity*, ed. Michael Keith and Steve Pile (London: Routledge, 1993), 210.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 206.

²⁰ Massey, “Spatial Disruptions,” 221; see also Fran Tonkiss, “A to Z,” in *City A-Z*, ed. Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift (London: Routledge, 2000), 1-3.

²¹ Haver, “Queer Research,” 281.

Acts of objectification

Based on the considerations above, Haver suggests that queer research is constituted, first of all, “in and as an attention to a heteroclite sociality,”²² It does (or must) not think “society” as a plurality which is known and/or knowable and, therefore, controlled and/or controllable; rather, the social field is thought of in queer research “as essentially uncontainable proliferation, as multiplicity.”²³ For the case in point, the queer research of the city is (or must be) similarly attentive to the dislocations discussed above, to this kind of “impossible” spatiality. Haver refers to the new queer geography²⁴ and suggests that it is, indeed, concerned with those who populate “the interstices of the city,”²⁵ that is, “the homeless, the prostitute, the injecting drug user, the queer, the person living with Aids, the *Lumpenproletariat*.”²⁶

However, research concerned with the interstitial city is not necessarily queer research. Of course, Haver suggests that the social sciences have not completely forgotten the existence of queer populations, but he argues that “social science has objectified [them] only in terms of deviance, perversion or nihilism; in terms, that is to say, of a merely negative relation, a non-relation, to productive culture.”²⁷ This is not to say that these populations stand somehow outside of culture,²⁸ nor that they do not have their own, sometimes very specific, rituals and economies; it is to say that, as Haver argues, although they are located within capitalist economies, they do not obey the logic of production.²⁹

Here, I would like to consider very briefly how these who inhabit the interstices of the city have been objectified, taking my clues from the case of so-called “public sex.” Recent studies by Moran and McGhee³⁰ and Mort,³¹

²² Ibid., 283.

²³ Ibid., 278.

²⁴ Haver cites Paul Hallam, *The Book of Sodom* (London: Verso, 1993); Sue Golding, “The Address Book,” in Paul Hallam, *The Book of Sodom* (London: Verso, 1993), 168-73; and David Bell and Gill Valentine, ed., *Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexualities* (London: Routledge, 1995). See also Gordon Brent Ingram, Anne-Marie Bouthillette and Yolanda Retter, ed., *Queers in Space: Communities, Public Places, Sites of Resistance* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1997).

²⁵ Haver, “Queer Research,” 282.

²⁶ Ibid., 281.

²⁷ Ibid., 282.

²⁸ See Marilyn Strathern, “The Nice Thing about Culture Is that Everyone Has It,” in *Shifting Contexts: Transformations in Anthropological Knowledge*, ed. Marilyn Strathern (London: Routledge, 1995), 153-76.

²⁹ Haver, “Queer Research,” 283.

³⁰ Leslie J. Moran and Derek McGhee, “Perverting London: The Cartographic Practices of Law,” *Law and Critique* IX, no.2 (1998): 207-24.

³¹ Frank Mort, “Mapping Sexual London: The Wolfenden Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution 1954-57,” *New Formations* 37 (1999): 92-113.

examining the reports of “the Wolfenden Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution” in London during the 1950s, present the processes of official mapping of “public sex” from the perspective of the state and law. This particular point of view, Iris Marion Young has suggested, is supposed to represent the “objective” and impartial perspective of normative reason which—by means of excluding affectivity, feeling, desire, passion and all those aspects of Man associated with her body—expresses a *ratio*, a common human measure, *one* unified general will.³² From this perspective, the reports of the Committee conceive the anonymous sexual encounters between men in terms of “importuning or soliciting for immoral purposes” and “gross indecency;”³³ that is as social pathologies, as a disorder that contradicts the already established order of the law. These legal, dispassionate mappings produce the bodies who engage in sexual encounters as “juridical objects of observation and analysis”³⁴ and they install a particular “truth” about them as common-sense—what de Certeau calls “the establishment of the real.”³⁵

Given this official dogma, the main vein in sociological research on impersonal “public sex” has been, as Lieshout suggests, the tradition of studies of “deviant behaviour.”³⁶ To take one of the classic examples, Laud Humphries, in his research on “tearoom trade” in the US, after dedicating his work to his wife and children for their “encouragement and love,”³⁷ states that his first task was to become familiar with “those circles,”³⁸ emphasising his distance and detachment. Outlining the main concerns of his study, Humphries claims that he seeks, on the one hand, to *describe* these practitioners and their practices and, on the other, to *explain why* and *how* these people engage in these activities.³⁹ The pursuit of “objective validity”⁴⁰ is a central principle of his research.

³² Iris Marion Young, “Impartiality and the Civic Public: Some Implications of Feminist Critiques of Moral and Political Theory,” in *Feminism as Critique: Essays on the Politics of Gender in Late-Capitalist Societies*, ed. Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), 65.

³³ Moran and McGhee, “Perverting London,” 207-8; Mort, “Mapping Sexual London,” 99.

³⁴ Moran and McGhee, “Perverting London,” 211.

³⁵ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 185.

³⁶ Maurice van Lieshout, “Leather Nights in the Woods: Locating Male Homosexuality and Sadoomasochism in a Dutch Highway Rest Area,” in *Queers in Space: Communities, Public Places, Sites of Resistance*, ed. Gordon Brent Ingram, Anne-Marie Bouthillette and Yolanda Retter (Seattle: Bay Press, 1997), 341.

³⁷ Laud Humphries, *Tearoom Trade: A Study of Homosexual Encounters in Public Places* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1970), v.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 34.

He approaches his “objects” through the practice of “passing as deviant,”⁴¹ but he is quick to emphasise that he adopts the particular role of the *voyeur*, the “watchqueen,”⁴² because it was suitable for him as “the only lookout role that is *not overtly sexual*.”⁴³ Further, with a little help from “friendly policemen,”⁴⁴ Humphries traced the licence plates of the tearoom participants’ cars and gained access to them in order to conduct interviews. This sample was added to the over-all sample of a social health survey, so the interviewees did not know that they were also giving information for the “tearoom trade” study. In other words they were not approached as anonymous sex practitioners but “as *normal* people, answering *normal* questions; they were part of a *normal* survey.”⁴⁵ In this way, Humphries claims, the interviewees avoided stigmatisation. Although his work is, indeed, sympathetic towards those persons, it is also clear that the dividing line between researcher and “object” of study is sharply drawn, with the former representing rationality, objectivity and normality, whereas the latter stands for corporeality, subjectivity and deviance. Here, the “micrological etiquettes of anonymous public sex”⁴⁶ are (*not*) being captured by means of questions of who, what, why and how these bodies do what they do; these bodies, that is to say, have become totally objectified.

Haver goes on to suggest that a possible way to begin to think hetero-clite sociality, in all its multiplicity, as unobjectifiable is to ask “not what or who bodies *are*, or *why* bodies do what they do, but, simply enough, enquire as to what bodies can *do* in their infinitesimal, microscopic negotiations of their empirical existentiality.”⁴⁷ The argument here is that queer research must be attentive to such acts (the rituals of cruising and impersonal “public sex,” for example) as existential bodily practices that *happen*. This is because they constitute this *surplus* or *supplement* of sociality and thus cannot be reduced to an “object” to be understood in familiar terms. Haver argues that these acts, insofar as they are unauthorised and not grounded in any sort of ontology, point to “the invention of the social, the ethico-political and of the cultural altogether.”⁴⁸ Here, this *surplus* or *supplement* is not thought of as cultural,

⁴¹ Ibid., 25.

⁴² Ibid., 26.

⁴³ Ibid., 28, emphasis added.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 38.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 42, emphasis added.

⁴⁶ Haver, “Queer Research,” 283.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 282.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

nor yet as a pre-cultural “nature.” In addition it is not simply an outside-of-culture, but a subtraction, an un-working of the work of culture: “[i]t is the unrecognizable face of the stranger each of us is at the brink of pleasure—or death.”⁴⁹ Leaving death aside, for our purposes here, ⁵⁰ we could say accordingly that what is at stake in that *surplus* or *supplement* to which queer research is attentive is the possibility of an *erotic* sociality. Moreover the “interstices of the city” can arguably be thought of as the “impossible” (in Sue Golding’s sense) sites of such an *erotic* sociality. Thereby, what concerns queer research is *not* queer subjectivity or culture, *not* queer sexuality, sexual identity or sexual practices, but *erotics* (and here, it would be enough to note that it makes almost no sense to talk about queer *erotics*, because it has been convincingly shown⁵¹ that *the erotic as such, in its very essence, cannot be anything but queer*).

Objectivity and positioning: the “queer standpoint”?

How, then, does queer research deal with the *erotic surplus* or *supplement* of sociality? In the light of what has been discussed above, any act of objectification would evacuate that *erotics*. Moreover while Haver clearly argues that queer research is to refuse “epistemological objectivity,”⁵² at the same time he does not reject the thought of objectivity *per se*. On the contrary, he speaks of the *erotic surplus* or *supplement* as “a sociality which in its material existential objectivity can never be objectified as an object for perception and knowledge.”⁵³ The use of the notion of objectivity remains somewhat opaque in Haver’s paper and, drawing from relevant debates in feminist theory, I would like here to discuss *whether* and *in what ways objectivity could be thought of in queer research*.

The first thing to consider is the fact that, as Sandra Harding has put it, because of the ways in which it has been deployed by the discourses of “objectivism,” objectivity has become “a mystifying notion.”⁵⁴ According to this notion, knowledge is best produced by means of value-free, impartial, dis-

⁴⁹ Ibid., 283.

⁵⁰ For an approach that implicitly, though clearly, draws our attention to how the work of culture is undone in the brink of death see Sue Golding, “Pariah Bodies”, in *Sexy Bodies: The Strange Carnalities of Feminism*, ed. Elizabeth Grosz and Elspeth Probyn (London: Routledge, 1995), 172-80.

⁵¹ See, for example, Elizabeth Grosz, “Labors of Love: Analyzing Perverse Desire (An Interrogation of Teresa de Lauretis’s *The Practice of Love*),” in *Space, Time, and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 155-71.

⁵² Haver, “Queer Research,” 283.

⁵³ Ibid., 281.

⁵⁴ Sandra Harding, “Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What Is ‘Strong Objectivity?’” in *Feminist Epistemologies*, ed. Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (New York: Routledge, 1993), 71.

passionate and disembodied approaches,⁵⁵ which, for objectivism are the prerequisites and standards for “maximizing objectivity.”⁵⁶ Here, objectivity principally means value-neutrality and this myth is, as Beverley Skeggs—reading Gouldner—has suggested, variously supported and reproduced; for “not to be objective is to be seen as unmanly [*sic*] or lacking in integrity.”⁵⁷ For these objectivist discourses, objectivity is supposedly achieved by the knowing “subject” (or the researcher) through the performance of what Donna Haraway calls the “god-trick;”⁵⁸ that is, the view from above abstracted from any partiality and particularity. As I tried to show in the previous section, *this* is the perspective adopted by approaches such as Humphries’, *this* is the claimed viewpoint of the state and the Law, but also *this* is “the official dogma of the age”⁵⁹ altogether.

This notion of objectivity has been rejected by Harding and Haraway, amongst many others, and it is *this* “epistemological objectivity” that, Haver thinks, queer research must refuse. Nonetheless, several feminist theorists, while criticising the discourses of objectivism, have re-deployed the thought of objectivity in a specific way. The feminist theory of knowledge known as “standpoint epistemology” has shown that *all* attempts to produce knowledge are embodied and historically, socially and politically located; that is to say that the knowing “subject,” always stands in a particular *objective* position. Thus, any knowledge claims can (or cannot) be objective with regard to a particular and specific situation.⁶⁰ Thus, whereas Harding’s notion of “strong objectivity” places the knowing “subject” (that is, the theorist or the researcher) “on the same critical, causal plane” as the “object” of knowledge,⁶¹ for Haraway “feminist objectivity means quite simply *situated knowledges*.”⁶² According to Haraway, the “view from somewhere,”⁶³ that is, the specific and embodied, partial perspective makes the processes of knowledge production apparent and accountable, promising “embodied objectivity.”⁶⁴

⁵⁵ Sandra Harding, “Feminism, Science, and the Anti-Enlightenment Critique,” in *Feminism/Postmodernism*, ed. Linda J. Nicholson (New York: Routledge, 1990), 87.

⁵⁶ Harding, “Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology,” 70.

⁵⁷ Beverley Skeggs, *Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable* (London: Sage, 1997), 33.

⁵⁸ Donna J. Haraway, “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,” in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (London: Free Association Books, 1991), 189.

⁵⁹ Sandra Harding, “Feminism, Science, and the Anti-Enlightenment Critique,” 88.

⁶⁰ See Harding, “Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology.”

⁶¹ Harding, “Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology,” 69.

⁶² Haraway, “Situated Knowledges,” 188.

⁶³ Haraway, “Situated Knowledges,” 196.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 194.

Could one speak of “queer objectivity then?” Can this *erotic surplus* or *supplement* of sociality be thought of as the “queer standpoint?” Is queer research situated in the interstices of the city? Here, it must be made clear that, for feminist theorists, the standpoint is *not* a given and/or owned position. Recent interpretations of the standpoint theory emphasise that feminist research *takes* rather than *has* a standpoint;⁶⁵ hence, a standpoint is about processes and not about things, a project and not an inheritance.⁶⁶ While Haver does not mention the notion of standpoint, he also thinks of the heteroclitic sociality to which queer research is attentive as a “that-towards-which”⁶⁷ and speaks of queer research as a movement towards this erotic surplus or supplement.⁶⁸ I would argue that the notion of “embodied objectivity” is a useful one for queer research, insofar as it is not committed to objectivism and therefore does not seek to objectify the unobjectifiable; rather, it is about taking responsibility for a particular objective positioning. Moreover if, as in the case of queer research of the city, this particular objective location is precisely a dis-location or “the elsewhere”, then queer research could be said to take an “impossible” (in Golding’s sense) standpoint or, better yet, to make an ongoing movement towards an impossible standpoint which is perhaps never fully achieved.

Queer research as an act of interruption

If, as discussed above, queer research is attentive to this *surplus* or *supplement* of sociality, and given that this *erotics* has been evacuated and objectified by rational and disembodied studies such as Humphries’, there is a concern here about the relation between the knowing “subject” (or the researcher) and the unobjectifiable “object” of research. In what ways does the researcher approach this *erotics*? Haver makes a considerable and brave effort to think queer research as praxis. He suggests that the appropriate question to ask is not what queer research *is* but rather what queer research *does*.⁶⁹ So far so good. However, what he proposes as the praxis of queer research is clearly illustrated by the epigraph

⁶⁵ Sara Ahmed, Jane Kilby, Celia Lury, Maureen McNeil and Beverley Skeggs, “Introduction: Thinking Through Feminism,” in *Transformations: Thinking Through Feminism*, ed. Sara Ahmed, Jane Kilby, Celia Lury, Maureen McNeil and Beverley Skeggs (London: Routledge, 2000), 17.

⁶⁶ Beverley Skeggs, “Feminist Ethnography,” in *Handbook of Ethnography*, ed. Paul Atkinson, Amanda Coffey, Sara Delamont, John Lofland and Lyn Lofland (London: Sage, 2001), 432.

⁶⁷ Haver, “Queer Research,” 283.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 288.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 284.

at the very beginning of his paper where he cites the following passage from Michael Hardt: “Bring the body out from the shadow of mind, bring practice out from the shadow of theory, in all its autonomy and dignity, to try to discover what it can do.”⁷⁰

There are several problems here that I would like to discuss. First, Haver, in his attempt to refuse a rational approach to *erotic* sociality, in fact, re-inscribes the mind/body distinction the other way around. He certainly makes clear that queer research is not to abandon “conceptuality”⁷¹ and he is right to emphasise “the essential difficulty of thinking,” arguing that there is always a *surplus* or *supplement* of conceptuality, an *erotics* of thinking which is the limit of what counts as thinkable.⁷² Nevertheless, in order to “bring the body out from the shadow of mind,” he begins to think of mind and body as two distinct, autonomous entities; the mind appears to be conceived as what the body is *not*. He writes: “If the only possible relation of thinking to that about which it thinks is a relation of a knowing subject to an object, and *if that relation can only be articulated as the relation of an (ideally) adequate representation and conceptualization of the object to consciousness*, then the relation of queer research to that about which it thinks is not a relation.”⁷³ The assumption here, it seems to me, is that any thinking subject is merely and only “mind-driven” and that this subject’s consciousness is somehow disembodied. The very process of thinking and knowing that Haver describes does not involve the body at all; consequently, queer research must not, for Haver, be part of this process. But if the *erotic surplus* or *supplement* that concerns queer research is neither natural nor cultural, that is, *neither merely bodily nor only a matter of mind*, how is it to be approached if “mind” is devaluated and excluded in this way? I will return to this.

Secondly, based on this assumption, Haver conceives “knowledge” as a merely conceptual process, as “theory” apparently opposed to “practice.” Thus, in his effort to think queer research as praxis and in order to “bring practice out from the shadow of theory,” he proposes that queer research is “less a knowledge or the production of knowledge than it is a pragmatics, an interruption in the production of knowledge.”⁷⁴ In this context one might well ask

⁷⁰ Michael Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), cited in *ibid.*, 277.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 283.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 290.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 283, emphasis added.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 284.

why this “production of knowledge” cannot possibly be interrupted by (queer) *knowledges* again? Here Haver puts forward the notion of pragmatics as a kind of antidote to knowledge. The problem with this formulation is not only that queer research as praxis is not said to produce knowledge, but, perhaps most importantly that the processes of knowledge production which queer research is supposed to interrupt are believed to be non-praxis. As the production of “knowledge,” here, means merely the manipulation of concepts, ideas and intellectual engagement, so queer research, as far as Havers is concerned, does not seek to produce knowledge.

While of course, I have no specific prescription for how to research this *erotic surplus* or *supplement* of sociality, I doubt that the best thing one can do is to re-invent the mind/body and theory/practice distinctions in reverse. Although I will try to think of queer research as an act of interruption, as Haver proposes, I want nonetheless to reconsider the framework that he sets. First, as Grosz argues, the body (and, for the case in point, I refer to the body of the researcher) should be understood as “the very ‘stuff’ of subjectivity.”⁷⁵ If the knowing subject in the discourses of objectivism has figured as a disembodied subject, the feminist critiques of objectivism discussed above make clear that this subject has always only been particularly embodied. Thus to claim a non-relation to the process of thinking and knowing, in order to activate the body, would be to fail to realise that the body, if tacitly, has always been an active producer of thought and knowledge. As Grosz has put it, “[k]nowledges are a product of a bodily drive to live and conquer. They misrecognize themselves as interior, merely ideas, thoughts, and concepts, forgetting or repressing their own corporeal genealogies and processes of production.”⁷⁶

Following on from this consideration, I would argue that, rather than claiming not to produce knowledge, what is at stake for queer research, is to explicitly recognise that the body is *also* a tool for (queer) knowledge production and research. If queer research is attentive to the *erotic surplus* or *supplement* of sociality, distinctions such as mind-*versus*-body should make no sense. Precisely because this *erotics*, as Haver suggests, surpasses the categories of “nature” and “culture,” it cannot be approached merely by “bringing the body out from the

⁷⁵ Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), ix.

⁷⁶ Elizabeth Grosz, “Bodies and Knowledges: Feminism and the Crisis of Reason”, in *Space, Time, and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 37.

shadow of mind.” Grosz’s notion of *psychical corporeality*⁷⁷ is, I think, extremely useful in order to think productively about how to attend to that *erotics*. Also if, as Harding points out, the “objects” of knowledge are shaped by the “same kinds of social forces” as the knowing subjects,⁷⁸ queer research might arguably be said to be attentive *to erotics with erotics*. Anthropologist Esther Newton has underscored the importance of *erotics* for the research praxis,⁷⁹ yet, even in very recent attempts to offer a supposedly “queer methodology” for research, this topic is emphatically referred to as “controversial.”⁸⁰ Thomas Csordas suggests that the new conceptualisations of the body in anthropology and, more generally, in social theory raise the question of how the body should also be thought of as a tool for research. He argues, moreover, that this methodological issue should enter the contemporary debates about ethnography.⁸¹

Furthermore, I want to argue that the best—if not the only—way to interrupt the production of knowledge is, again, precisely *by means of* producing new knowledge. In his attempt to conceive queer research as *praxis*, a view of which I am firmly in favour, Haver fails to recognise knowledge itself as praxis: “Knowledge is an activity; it is a *practice* and not a contemplative reflection. It *does things*.”⁸² And indeed, Haver’s own text is paradigmatic of such an activity that “does things.” However, as his paper shifts in emphasis from knowledge to pragmatics, Haver does not deal at all with the problem of textuality. For if queer research can be said to be an “erotic pragmatics,”⁸³ it is also a text, a piece of written work. Could it possibly be something else? And if the (*erotic*) interactions in the research process are “gone before they happen,”⁸⁴ how does the *erotic* becomes text? Grosz argues that all knowledges have their own specific *textual corporeality* that usually goes unacknowledged⁸⁵. Once again, this question remains totally absent from the debates of so-called reflexive ethnography.⁸⁶

⁷⁷ Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 22.

⁷⁸ Harding, “Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology,” 64.

⁷⁹ Esther Newton, “My Best Informant’s Dress: The Erotic Equation in Fieldwork,” in *Margaret Mead Made Me Gay: Personal Essays, Public Ideas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000 [1992]), 243-57.

⁸⁰ Travis S.K. Kong, Dan Mahoney and Ken Plummer, “Queering the Interview”, in *Handbook of Interview Research*, ed. Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein (London: Sage, 2002), 239-58.

⁸¹ Thomas J. Csordas, “The Body’s Career in Anthropology,” in *Anthropological Theory Today*, ed. Henrietta L. Moore (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), 184-5.

⁸² Grosz, “Bodies and Knowledges,” 37.

⁸³ Haver, “Queer Research,” 288.

⁸⁴ Ruth Behar, “The Vulnerable Observer,” in *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 7.

⁸⁵ Grosz, “Bodies and Knowledges,” 37.

⁸⁶ Newton, “My Best Informant’s Dress,” 245.

How then could queer research develop an *erotic* textual strategy; and for what audience? In the process of criticising the currently dominant modes of enlightenment pedagogy, Haver poses the question of whether academia can still be the proper site of queer research.⁸⁷ Indeed, if “anger”, for example, is not considered to be a legitimate academic textual strategy,⁸⁸ how can *erotics* be one? Here, although again I do not have a definite answer, it seems to me that if queer research is to be thought of as an effective act of interruption in the production of knowledge, it *must* be developed within the academia. Indeed, as Haver recognises,⁸⁹ projects in queer research (and not merely research about queers) have been undertaken by social scientists within the academia and, some of them, have been effective acts of interruption in the knowledge production processes.

An act of interruption

In what follows, I will discuss Gayle Rubin’s research into “the Catacombs,” a fist-fucking club in San Francisco in the 1970s,⁹⁰ in order to consider some of the questions raised in the previous sections. Here, I do not mean to suggest that this is *the* “ideal” queer research. Besides, this work does not claim to be queer and it was conducted and first published before the recent re-deployment of the term “queer.”⁹¹ I choose this particular work, for, as I will try to show, it *is* an act of interruption in the proper production of knowledges.

This piece of research is concerned firstly with a being-in-common, which cannot be described as merely a part of the “leather community” in San Francisco, though, of course, it is not caught up outside it either. While Rubin does not avoid the use of the term “community,” it needs to be said that in her view community is a being-in-common which “understands diversity as a gift, sees anomalies as precious, and treats all basic principles with a hefty dose of scepticism.”⁹²

Further, the Catacombs could be said to be located in the interstices of the city, on the threshold between public and private. The Catacombs began,

⁸⁷ Haver, “Queer Research,” 289.

⁸⁸ Michael Keith, “Angry Writing: (Re)presenting the Unethical World of the Ethnographer,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 10 (1992): 551–68.

⁸⁹ Haver, “Queer Research,” 281.

⁹⁰ Gayle Rubin, “The Catacombs: A Temple of the Butthole,” in *Leatherfolk: Radical Sex, People, Politics, and Practice*, ed. Mark Thompson (Los Angeles: Alyson Books, 2001 [1991]), 119–41.

⁹¹ See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Foreword: T Times,” in *Tendencies* (New York: Routledge, 1994), xi–xvi.

⁹² Gayle Rubin, “Of Catamites and Kings: Reflections on Butch, Gender, and Boundaries,” in *The Persistent Desire: A Femme-Butch Reader*, ed. Joan Nestle (Boston: Alyson Books, 1992), 478.

not as a premier sex club, but as a birthday present from Steve (the owner) to his lover.⁹³ It was located in the basement of Steve's house and, while it was a place where one could meet strangers, the events there were not open to everyone. Rubin describes the Catacombs as "[an] underground establishment where twentieth-century sexual heretics could practice their own rites and rituals in a situation that was insulated, as much as possible, from the curious and hostile."⁹⁴ Particularly for the being-in-common in the Catacombs, Rubin, referring to the "mixed-gender/mixed-orientation" sex parties, writes: "[T]he parties created a comfortable atmosphere in which diverse populations could observe one another, appreciate their mutual interest in kink, and discover what they did have in common."⁹⁵

Further, Rubin, in any case, does not seek to establish a "wounded identity as an epistemological object;"⁹⁶ rather she pursues an "anthropological understanding"⁹⁷ of particularly located *erotic* practices. She does not present fisters as "deviants," nor is she merely sympathetic towards a marginal sexual culture. On the contrary she is very careful not to evacuate the *erotics*. She writes: "The Catacombs environment enabled adults to have an almost childlike wonder at the body. It facilitated explorations of the body's sensate capabilities that are rarely available in modern, western societies."⁹⁸

Rubin's account is objective, not because it performs the "god-trick," but because it comes from a particularly located partial perspective. Rubin knows very well that "all data are dirty"⁹⁹ and makes clear nature of the research processes and her own personal involvement. She is familiar with the place and with the people "who called it home;"¹⁰⁰ she belongs to the Catacombs' regulars. After the closing of Catacombs, because of Steve's sudden death from heart attack, she stored some of the movable equipment in her apartment.¹⁰¹

She was also involved in the attempt by Steve's lover to re-open the Catacombs in another place.. She writes: "I learned some precious lessons

⁹³ Rubin, "The Catacombs," 122.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁹⁶ Haver, "Queer Research," 278.

⁹⁷ Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality," in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale and David M. Halperin (New York: Routledge, 1993 [1984]), 15.

⁹⁸ Rubin, "The Catacombs," 128.

⁹⁹ Gayle Rubin, "Sexual Traffic" (interview with Judith Butler), *Differences* 6, nos.2+3 (1994): 92.

¹⁰⁰ Rubin, "The Catacombs," 135.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 132.

there, and I feel lucky to have had the privilege of sharing in the experience. Even though its focus was on the male body, the Catacombs gave me a greater appreciation for my own, female body.”¹⁰²

Finally, Rubin’s text, though it does not occlude the *erotic*, is couched in a conventional academic style while writing about unconventional acts and practices. As becomes clear from her text, this strategy, I think, has the power to de-familiarise and make strange (or queer) what one thinks to be (and expects from) an academic text.¹⁰³ Thus, while it certainly produces new knowledge, at the same time, it is something other than a reproduction of “proper” academic business.

Epilogue: Cutting “Across” – implications for teaching

According to Eve Sedgwick, the word “queer” derives from the Indo-European root *-twerkw* and means “across.”¹⁰⁴ To return then to Grosz’s remarks with which we began the introduction, queer research may not, in fact, at all be characterised as “queer” merely because the “objects” of speculation are queer.¹⁰⁵ I have tried to think of queer research primarily as a process that *cuts across* established boundaries in methodology, epistemology and the research praxis. To sum up, I would say that a research that *de-familiarises* or, particularly in the context of the city, a mapping that exposes the incoherencies, the fragmentations and the dislocations is valuable, for it leaves possibilities open for something new.¹⁰⁶ And if one might wonder what the use of opening up possibilities is, as Butler puts it, “no one who has understood what it is to live in the social world as what is ‘impossible’, illegible, unrealizable, unreal, and illegitimate is likely to pose that question.”¹⁰⁷ Finally, I have to say, while my task here was to address a number of questions for queer research, I think that what has been discussed perhaps raises questions, for any kind of research. This is not because, to paraphrase Deborah Britzman, any research might *be* “queer,” but because something “queer” might *happen* to any research.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² Ibid., 139.

¹⁰³ See Haver, “Queer Research,” 291.

¹⁰⁴ Sedgwick, “T Times,” xii.

¹⁰⁵ Grosz, “Experimental Desire,” 249, n.1.

¹⁰⁶ See Massey, “Spatial Disruptions,” 223.

¹⁰⁷ Judith Butler, “Preface 1999,” in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), viii.

¹⁰⁸ Deborah Britzman, “Is There a Queer Pedagogy? Or, Stop Reading Straight,” *Educational Theory* 45, no.2 (1995): 162.

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PART II: TEACHING GENDER WITHIN THE “SPATIAL” DISCIPLINES

Teaching and research on gender in Spanish geography

Maria Dolors Garcia–Ramon and Anna Ortiz

In 1989 in *The Journal of Geography in Higher Education* Linda Peake coordinated an excellent overview of the state of the art of international feminist geography.¹ In Spain we said that while significant progress had been made in research, little had been done to introduce gender issues into the curriculum and this is still true nowadays, as we will see later. The starting point for an interest in the topic of gender was, on one hand, some informal contacts with the Group WGSG (Western Geography Student Conference) at the IBG (Institute of British Geography) at Durham in 1983, as well as the impact of the book *Geography and Gender* (1984). Moreover, several review works in Spanish, authored by Spanish women geographers, that presented the main results and accomplishments in the Anglo-Saxon world along this line were very important for the introduction of the topic into Spanish Geography.² Quite early on an important event that gave visibility to this approach within Spanish Geography was the organization of a Round Table on Gender and Geography at the Regional Conference of the IGU in Barcelona in 1986. This was coordinated by J. Monk (University of Arizona) and Gemma Cànoves and Maria Dolors Garcia-Ramon (Autonomous University of Barcelona) (As far as we can remember it was the first “official” act organized by the IGU specifically on gender.) This event provided a really international impetus to this approach that was not limited to Anglophone gender geography and this has been one of the characteristics of gender geography in Spain.

Nevertheless we have to say that Spanish work on gender possesses distinctive features of consonant with the national geographical tradition. While gender geography, even as it drew early inspiration from the British and

¹ Linda Peake, “An Overview of Feminist Geography in the 1980s,” *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 13/1 (1989): 85. Maria Dolors Garcia–Ramon, “Geography and Gender in Spain: New Lines of Research and Teaching,” *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 3/1 (1989): 110–112.

² Aurora García Ballesteros, “El papel de la mujer en el desarrollo de la geografía”, in *Liberación y utopía*, ed. Maria Ángeles Durán (Madrid: Akal, 1982), 119–141. Ana Sabaté, “La mujer en la investigación geográfica,” *Anales de Geografía de la Universidad Complutense* 4 (1984): 275–282. Maria Dolors Garcia–Ramon, “El análisis del género y la Geografía,” *Documents d’Anàlisi Geogràfica* 6 (1985): 133–143.

American work, started as an outgrowth of work by geographers interested in radical and Marxist perspectives in the discipline: it has thus had more of a social orientation. Additionally, although it represented a rupture with earlier Spanish work, it has maintained a more empirical than theoretical tradition. The rupture has been expressed not only in terms of content, but also through methodological innovations, especially through the introduction of qualitative methods that initially met with some resistance but today are beginning to be commonly accepted in Spanish geography.

It is also true that attention to gender studies within geography and the presence of women geographers is unevenly distributed in Spanish universities.³ But there are two well established research groups working on gender – one in Madrid and the other in Barcelona with strong steady relations with women geographers in the faculties at five additional universities (Girona, Santiago, Valencia, Sevilla and La Coruña). It is clear that, without a doubt, these two groups, have provided the impetus for and been a unifying force in gender studies within geography in Spain. The Group from Barcelona offers an interesting example of the strategies that have been adopted to advance gender studies. It was created in 1987 and formally recognized by the administration of the university in 1995. From its initiation, this Group was directed by Maria Dolors Garcia-Ramon, an established full professor. This situation contrasts with that in some other countries where those attempting to introduce gender research and teaching are junior scholars and it probably has helped the introduction of a gender approach in Spanish geography. The Barcelona group consciously adopted strategies that would advance and consolidate its position. These included: incorporating several members of the department, including young researchers and graduate students; seeking external research funds (regional, national and international); developing competitive scholarly records by publishing in refereed journals, nationally and internationally; teaching specialised courses in gender; establishing a modest degree of documentation centred on themes related to its research; presenting research at international meetings; forming a supportive local informal network; and by going abroad themselves and inviting foreign geographers into the department, establishing contacts with geographers outside Spain.

³ Hermínia Pujol Estragués, “La presència de les dones en la geografia acadèmica: un estat de la qüestió al tombant del segle,” *Treballs de la Societat Catalana de Geografia* 57 (2004a): 221–236. Hermínia Pujol Estragués, “De la geògrafa absent a la geògrafa desapareguda?: el professorat de geografia a les universitats públiques de Catalunya,” *Documents d’Anàlisi Geogràfica* 43 (2004b): 135–152.

In this overview of gender geography in Spain we will focus first on the development of the research on gender and afterwards on the practices of teaching. Our review of the research work carried out since the 1980 will not be exhaustive but will take up five themes: the relation of gender and power in academic geography in Spain; the introduction of qualitative methods; the study of rural spaces; research on urban spaces; and studies in representation and postcolonial geography.⁴ In relation to teaching we will refer both to the undergraduate and graduate courses.

Development of gender research within Spanish geography: Gender and power in academic geography

In the 1980s, several studies were carried out which examined the presence and status of women in geography as well as their scientific production as indicated by publications in specialised journals.⁵ Numerically speaking, women's presence was relatively high compared to other more established disciplines and also to women's representation in academic geography in a number of other countries. This was due in part to the fact that university degree programmes in geography were not created until the late 1970s and that they were heavily teaching-oriented. Women's status, power and level of scientific production in the discipline, however, were rather low. Some years ago, this topic was re-examined and it was found that although the Law on University Reform (LRU) had contributed to raising female geographers' academic status, there were signs that the discipline is becoming more male-dominated, in terms of both professors and students.⁶ This most likely reflects the fact that our discipline is becoming more and more professional and technical, and it is widely understood that women are less inclined to choose technical and scientific university majors and professions. Within this increasingly competitive and masculine context, new research in progress examines the experiences linked to women's

⁴ For a more detailed state of the art see Maria Dolors Garcia-Ramon, "Geografía del género" in *Tratado de Geografía Humana*, ed. Daniel Hiernaux and Alicia Lindón (Barcelona: Anthropos, 2006), 327–355; Fabià Díaz, Maria Dolors Garcia-Ramon and Anna Ortiz, "Enderering Spanish Geography," *Belgeo. Revue Belgue de Geographie* 3 (2007): 323–333; Maria Prats Ferret, "Sexo, género y edad" in *Las Otras Geografías*, ed. Joan Nogué and Joan Romero (Valencia: Tirant Lo Blanc, 2006), 493–510.

⁵ García Ballesteros, 1982; Sabaté, 1984; Margarida Castañer and Núria Centelles, "La mujer y la geografía universitaria española," *Documents d'Anàlisi Geogràfica* 14 (1985): 73–88. Maria Dolors Garcia-Ramon, Margarida Castañer and Núria Centelles, "Women and Geography in Spanish Universities," *The Professional Geographer* 40/3 (1988): 307–315.

⁶ Maria Dolors Garcia-Ramon and Hermínia Pujol, "La presencia de mujeres en la geografía académica: ¿Hacia una masculinización de la disciplina?" *Cuadernos de Geografía* 75 (2004a): 91–101.

professional career and their strategies in reconciling work and family as well as in obtaining promotion and power. This research is based on in-depth interviews and also draws upon male academic's accounts in order to compare the "masculine" and the "feminine" professional career.⁷

Introducing qualitative methods in Spanish geography

In many Spanish universities geographers have continued to work within the framework of traditional regional geography, although it has been updated through the introduction of new technologies, in particular GIS. Applied approaches to environmental studies have also been brought to it. Gender studies mark a break with these approaches, not only in their conceptual orientation but in introducing qualitative methodologies that were initially resisted but are today beginning to be accepted.

Qualitative methods have their origins in phenomenological theory which concerns itself with subjective experiences with the intent of defining and interpreting everyday lives. This methodology, drawing for example, on in-depth interviews, life histories, and participant observation,⁸ was exemplified early in Spanish work by García Ballesteros.⁹ Although some early gender research on rural women drew on census data and quantitative methods,¹⁰ it clearly revealed the limitations of such data as a means of representing women's work. This prompted a turn to qualitative methods, especially of in-depth interviewing. These methods permit researchers to present and validate subjectivity, personal meanings, contextual knowledge, and individual perspectives, as well as offering the possibility of creating a dialogue between the researcher and the subject.¹¹

The Gender Group at the Autonomous University of Barcelona as well as the one in Madrid took the initiative to introduce qualitative methods quite

⁷ Herminia Pujol Estragués, Anna Ortiz Guitart and Maria Dolors Garcia-Ramon, "La presencia y la carrera profesional de las mujeres en la geografía académica. Estudio de las peculiaridades del caso español," *Estudios Socioterritoriales* (2009, forthcoming).

⁸ Aurora García Ballesteros, "Métodos y técnicas cualitativas de investigación en geografía social" in *Métodos y técnicas cualitativas en geografía social*, ed. García Ballesteros (Barcelona: Oikos-Tau, 1998) 13–26.

⁹ Aurora García Ballesteros, "Espacio masculino, espacio femenino? Notas para una aproximación geográfica al estudio del uso del espacio en la vida cotidiana", in *El Uso del Espacio Cotidiano*, ed. García Ballesteros (Madrid: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 1986), 13–27.

¹⁰ Montserrat Solsona, "El problema de la medición del trabajo de la mujer," *Documents d'Anàlisi Geogràfica* 14 (1989): 149–169.

¹¹ Ana Sabaté, Juana María Rodríguez Moya and Maria Ángeles Díaz Muñoz, *Mujeres, espacio y sociedad. Hacia una geografía del género* (Madrid: Editorial Síntesis, 1995).

early and has used that approach in an array of studies¹² which are reported on in the sections that follow regarding rural and urban research. The group's work has contributed to Spanish researchers' growing recognition of the legitimacy of qualitative methods.

Gender and processes of rural and regional restructuring

In keeping with the rural tradition of Spanish geography this avenue of research has been important for many years. Studies have mainly been undertaken by the gender groups which emerged at the end of the 1980s at the Complutense University of Madrid and the Autonomous University of Barcelona. Two main lines of research were developed, both examining women's work in the rural environment: women's contribution to work on family-run farms and the role of women in the economic diversification of rural areas. Within the former line of research, a series of studies on women's contributions to family-run farms in different regions is worth mentioning. These demonstrated that women's contributions to work are quite important when all the real work (both productive and reproductive) is taken into account. Women's work on farms is discontinuous, irregular and highly diversified, so that many of the productive tasks are difficult to separate from household work. It is therefore difficult for these to be taken into account in agricultural statistics which thus poorly reflect women's work. The research showed that the survival of family-run farms in Spain hinges on women's participation, both in areas where agricultural activities are more marginal and also in areas where agriculture is intense and

¹² Mireia Baylina, "Metodología cualitativa y estudios de geografía y género," *Documents d'Anàlisi Geogràfica* 30 (1997): 123–138. Mireia Baylina, "Metodología para el estudio de las mujeres y la sociedad rural," *Estudios Geográficos*, LXV, 254 (2004a): 5–28. Asunción Blanco, "Teletrabajo, género y territorio: una comparación entre Cataluña, Ardèche y Quebec" (PhD diss., Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2005). Alba Caballé, "Aproximación al marco teórico y metodológico en la investigación de geografía del género," *Cuadernos Geográficos* 27 (1997): 7–27. Alba Caballé, "Gènere, agroturisme i context regional a l'Estat Espanyol" (PhD diss., Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1998). Gemma Cánoves, "Trellall invisible, explotació agrària familiar i aportació femenina: el cas de Girona" (PhD diss., Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1990). Anna Ortiz Guitart, "Uso de los espacios públicos y construcción del sentido de pertenencia de sus habitantes en Barcelona," in *Lugares e imaginarios en la metrópolis*, ed. Alicia Lindón, Miguel Ángel Aguilar and Daniel Hiernaux (Barcelona: Anthropos, 2006), 67–83. Maria Prats Ferret, "Temps i vida quotidiana de les dones de Barcelona" (PhD diss., Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1997). Maria Prats Ferret, "Geografia feminista i metodologia: reflexió sobre un procés d'aprenentatge paral·lel," *Cuadernos de Geografía* 64 (1998): 313–323. Aurora García Ballesteros, 1998.

competitive.¹³ The research has also contributed to theoretical debates concerning the [‘division between productive and reproductive labour by making it clear that any attempt to explain women’s work in this context had to take into consideration the patriarchal control of the work process and the ownership of the means of production.’¹⁴ In sum, these studies offered significant ideas regarding the cultural construction of masculinity and femininity in the rural contexts of different Spanish autonomous communities. We should also note that the comparative approach adopted in these rural studies, involving research at multiple sites, has been one of the hallmarks of Spanish geographic work on gender. Since geographers are especially interested in differences between distinct spaces,¹⁵ this approach also enhanced the identification of the work as *geography*, both within and beyond the discipline.

Because the agricultural sector in Spain has been losing ground in the past fifteen years, it was crucial to inquire what has been and is the role of women today in the process of rural restructuring since understanding this is necessary for designing rural policies. One of the earliest studies centred on the processes of economic diversification, especially on the location of light industries. This research demonstrated that very important factors when attracting industry were the advantages provided by women. This included their value as lower-cost labour and the perception that they tended to engage in conflict less than was the case in connection with male labour.¹⁶ Later, other types of activity were examined in different Spanish autonomous communities. Some of these were innovative, such as rural tourism¹⁷ and telecommuting¹⁸

¹³ Maria Dolors Garcia-Ramon, Josefina Cruz, Isabel Salamaña and Montserrat Villarino, *Mujer y agricultura en España. Género, trabajo y contexto regional*. (Barcelona: Oikos-Tau, 1995). Maria Dolors Garcia-Ramon and Josefina Cruz, “Regional welfare policies and women’s agricultural labour in Southern Spain” in *Women of the European Union. The politics of work and daily life*, ed. Garcia-Ramon and Janice Monk (London: Routledge, 1996) 247–262.

¹⁴ Cristina Nieto Figueras, *Las empresarias rurales malagueñas. La respuesta de las mujeres al mercado laboral* (Málaga: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Málaga, 2004). Cristina Nieto Figueras, “Las mujeres y el cooperativismo en los procesos de desarrollo local: algunos ejemplos de la provincia de Málaga, *Documents d’Anàlisi Geogràfica* 47 (2006): 31–52.

¹⁵ Maria Dolors Garcia-Ramon, Montserrat Villarino, Mireia Baylina and Gemma Cánoves, “Farm women, gender relations and household strategies in the coast of Galicia,” *Geoforum* 24/1 (1993): 5–17.

¹⁶ Ana Sabaté, “Industria rural en Toledo: la incorporación de las mujeres al mercado de trabajo,” *Anales de Geografía de la Universidad Complutense* 12 (1993): 277–288.

¹⁷ Gemma Cánoves and Montserrat Villarino, “El turismo rural en Cataluña y Galicia, una alternativa o complemento a la explotación familiar: Las mujeres sus nuevas protagonistas”, in *Los turismos de interior. El retorno de la tradición viajera*, ed. Valenzuela, M. (Madrid: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 1997), 353–368.

¹⁸ Blanco, 2005

and some more traditional, such as jobs in agro-industries or at home.¹⁹ In particular, informal home industry has been studied in various autonomous communities.²⁰ The work carried out by women in such settings is characterised by being informal, labour intensive, and barely remunerated. Nevertheless, it cannot simply be regarded as marginal or as representing the survival of forms of work bound for extinction. In many cases the practice of working at home puts down roots into new soil and constitutes a show of resistance against the competitive pressures of the market. In this context, women are seen as the best candidates for work in the home because they are identified as being more dependent than men on local employment opportunities. They are also perceived socially as more adaptable and docile. In this sense they constitute a social and human capital that is crucial to rural and local development.²¹ As researchers committed to equal opportunity, we must not marginalise their role (even if it is of this type), rather we must make these women more visible and condemn the specific circumstances in which they must do their jobs and insist on the need for a substantial change in gender roles and relations.²²

In the present decade, two topics have been examined which fall within the theoretical framework of inter-gender relations and the environment. First, in an attempt to answer the question whether men and women have a different relationship with the production of biological foodstuffs, work has been done in the field of ecological agriculture, namely on women's participation in the different phases of production.²³ The results demonstrate that women producers are in a position to fully profit from their advantages and play a leading role in an emerging sector in rural areas. A second area of research has studied the roles of rural women in natural resources management

¹⁹ Maria Dolores García-Ramon and Mireia Baylina, *El nuevo papel de las mujeres en el desarrollo rural* (Barcelona: Oikos-Tau, 2000). María José Prados, "Trabajadoras de segunda clase. Mujer y empleo en el sector agroalimentario andaluz," *Trabajo* 4 (1998): 171–186.

²⁰ Mireia Baylina and María Dolores García Ramon, "Homeworking in rural Spain: a gender approach," *European Urban and Regional Studies* 5/1 (1998): 55–64. Mireia Baylina, "Invisible work and exclusionary space: too many challenges for homeworkers?," *Hagar: Studies in Culture, Polity and Identity* 5/1 (2004b): 53–67.

²¹ Baylina, 2004b. Antònia Casellas and Pallarès Barberà Montserrat, "Capital social como estructura de análisis. Validaciones en perspectiva de género y territorio". *Cuadernos de Geografía* 78 (2005):177–190. Montserrat Pallarès, Marta Pallarès and Antoni Tulla, *Capital social i treball de les dones als Pirineus: el cas de l'Alt Urgell* (Barcelona: Institut Català de la Dona, 2003).

²² Mireia Baylina and Isabel Salamaña, "El lugar del género en geografía rural," *Boletín de la Asociación de Geógrafos Españoles* 41 (2006c): 99–112. Ana Sabaté, "Rural development is getting female: old and new alternatives for women in rural areas in Spain," *Antipode* 34/5 (2002): 1004–1006.

²³ Rosa Maria López García, "La agricultura ecológica como una alternativa también para las mujeres," *Actas del X Coloquio de Geografía Rural en España* (Lleida: Universidad de Lleida, 2000), 490–498.

and sustainable development, especially in regions with conservation areas.²⁴ Emphasis is placed on the consequences for women of current policies for rural development and nature conservation that have been implemented by various public administrations, both in Spain and in the European Union (This is being examined mainly via the Leader programmes that are part of initiatives to revitalise lagging regions.). It is important to continue work on both lines of inquiry in order to have at our disposal the elements needed to design rural development policies that take into account these recent processes which are so closely linked to the environment.

Gender, time, work and urban spaces

The earliest urban studies centred on female mobility, especially in terms of commuting to work, a research topic with deep roots in the field of geography.²⁵ The study of women's schedules in the city was undertaken as early as the 1990s, inspired by the debates coming from the Italian left wing.²⁶ Given the challenge of the massive influx of women into the labour force as well as the rigidity of lifestyles and schedules in cities, especially in southern Europe, an attempt was made to consider how women managed their time. Moreover an attempt was made to study the schedules of businesses and services and their appropriateness in light of the demand, with the aim of providing recommendations aimed at fostering greater freedom and equality in the use of time. For the city of Barcelona, it was shown that there was fierce competition to find time for both productive and reproductive work, for leisure activities and activities at night: However the time spent on productive work clearly emerged as the most important and the most rigid, around which all the other times were organised, thus creating a feeling of anxiety and "time famine" in people. Based on the recommendations the study generated, the Barcelona Town Hall initiated a series of policies that proposed a series of changes in the timetables for services, facilities and shops on an experimental basis, in one Barcelona neighbourhood. In a subsequent phase of action, "Time Banks" have been organised in various neighbourhoods in order to exchange time benefits. The issue of making work

²⁴ Elisa Canosa et al., *La mujer y la conservación de la naturaleza en España: su papel en la gestión de los recursos naturales y en el desarrollo rural sostenible* (Proyecto del Instituto de la Mujer, 2000).

²⁵ Muñoz Díaz, María Ángeles and Juana Rodríguez Moya, "Spatial variations of the female and male labour force participation in the Madrid Metropolitan Area," *Espaces, Populations et Sociétés* 1 (1989): 43–52.

²⁶ María Prats Ferrer, María Dolors García-Ramon and Gemma Cànoves, *La mujeres y el uso del tiempo* (Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Sociales, Instituto de la Mujer, 1995). María Prats Ferrer and María Dolors García-Ramon, "Emploi du temps et vie quotidienne des femmes adultes à Barcelone," *Espace, Population, Sociétés*, 1 (2004): 71–79.

schedules more flexible was also a central point in the study of women's work in the retail sector in metropolitan areas; however, in this case, it is a type of flexibility that does not benefit not women but only the companies.²⁷

Studies of female citizens' movements or women-led movements have also approached the role of women in defending the urban environment.²⁸ This work has involved comparative regional research on actions designed to protest about environmental risks (with regard to the presence of industrial waste) in municipalities in various autonomous communities. This work has revealed that women's views of the environment were quite different from usually accepted rigid, androcentric views. It has also suggested the need to define the concept of environment more broadly in order to encompass a conceptualisation that is much more closely tied to the consequences of environmental impacts on daily life (on health, on our surroundings, on our families' well-being, and so forth).

Another recent avenue of research involves analysing a series of urban planning actions undertaken in the past fifteen years in Catalan cities of varying sizes.²⁹ Women have been absent from urban planning, not only as users of public spaces, but also as urban planners. The research examined a series of actions that were aimed at rehabilitating urban spaces and which had included among their objectives the fight against socio-spatial exclusion. These actions were examined first by analysing the concepts and strategies underlying these actions, and second by looking at the nature and degree of the real impact of these measures on social and gender exclusion. In addition to comparing different sites, an important focus in these studies has been the integration of social characteristics such as ethnicity and age as they intersect with gender.

²⁷ Anna Ortiz Guitart and Maria Dolors Garcia-Ramon, "The fixed term contract, the Spanish route to flexibility? Women in the retail sector in the Barcelona region," *Economic and Industrial Democracy: an International Journal* 21/3 (2000): 311–333.

²⁸ Mercè Agüera Cabo, "L'activisme femení en conflictes ambientals: Reflexions en clau femenina i apunts per a la gestió del medi," *Documents d'Anàlisi Geogràfica* 51 (2007): 13–37. Josepa Bru, "El medi està androcentrat. Qui el desandrocentritzarà? Experiència femenina, coneixement ecològic i canvi cultural," *Documents d'Anàlisi Geogràfica* 26 (1995): 271–276. Josepa Bru, "Spanish women against industrial waste: a gender perspective on environmental grassroots movements", in *Feminist Political Ecology*, ed. D. Rocheleau, B. Thomas Slayter and E. Wangari (London: Routledge, 1996), 105–124.

²⁹ Ariadna Cucurella, "La perspectiva de gènere en el disseny i l'ús d'espais públics urbans: el cas del Parc dels Colors de Moller del Vallès (Barcelona)," *Documents d'Anàlisi Geogràfica* 49 (2007): 119–138. Ariadna Cucurella, Maria Dolors Garcia Ramon and Mireia Baylina, "Gender, age, and design in a new public space in a Mediterranean town: The Parc dels Colors in Moller del Vallès (Barcelona)," *European Spatial Research Policy* 13/2 (2006): 181–194. Fabià Díaz, Maria Dolors Garcia-Ramon and Abel Albet, "Old and New Migrant Women in Can'Anglada: Public Spaces, Identity and Everyday Life in the Metropolitan Region of Barcelona," *Research in Urban Sociology* 9 (2008): 263–284. Anna Serra i Salvi, "Vida quotidiana en un espai urbà transformat: el Mercadal de Girona des d'una perspectiva de gènere," *Documents d'Anàlisi Geogràfica* 49 (2007): 161–180.

The research carried out to date has focused on four types of measure: reassessing public spaces, public transport, housing, and promoting the functional and social complexity of urban spaces. The potential of public spaces as an integrating force has been shown, as has the fact that their design is a crucial element in fostering the presence of women and also a crucial element in an effort to overcome their traditional social and spatial isolation; in short, to encourage the processes of emancipation. In considering differences within groups, as well as between males and females, these studies question the hegemony of the knowledge of professional planners who assume “absolute” values in physical design and do not take into account cultural diversity, relations of power within communities, or how the perceptions and identities of the users might differ from their own. It would be interesting to delve more deeply into this line of inquiry because the planning of public spaces from the perspectives of human diversity could be an important step toward creating socially and culturally meaningful spaces, and ultimately toward achieving more inclusive participation in city life.

One particular line of research on uses of public spaces has focused on boys and girls, seeing the spaces as educational sites and places of learning in everyday life. One of these³⁰ situates the research in mid-sized Catalan cities. It demonstrates without doubt that play spaces are basic in the development as much for children as for adults and are sites where children observe, question, and contest traditional gender roles. . This observation is especially pertinent in Spanish cities where public space is so much a part of everyday life and where gender norms have been so little transgressed. The research concludes that not only planners and architects should be involved in design, but also that specialists such as child psychologists, teachers, and children themselves should be incorporated into initiatives by municipal governments. The same authors have also carried out research on the conceptual and methodological links between gender geography and children’s geography. Both geographers highly value subjective knowledge and qualitative techniques while both place and daily life are central concepts in their research.³¹

³⁰ Mireia Baylina, Maria Prats and Anna Ortiz, “Geografía de la infancia: espacios de juego en ciudades medias de Cataluña,” *Geographicalia* 50 (2006a): 5–26. Mireia Baylina, Maria Prats and Anna Ortiz, “Children in playgrounds in Mediterranean Cities,” *Children’s Geographies* 4 (2006b): 173–83.

³¹ Mireia Baylina, Anna Ortiz Guitart and Maria Prats Ferret, “Conexiones teóricas y metodológicas entre las geografías del género y la infancia,” *Scripta Nova. Revista Electrónica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales*. 270/41 (2008), <http://www.ub.es/geocrit/sn/sn-270/sn-270-41.htm> (accessed February 2009).

The interest in difference has also turned to aspects of sexuality within cities as shown by interesting studies by García Escalona³² and Santos.³³ Both authors highlight the connections between sexuality and processes of gentrification as well as how the appropriation of urban spaces forms part of an empowerment strategy for these groups. Recently, Fernández³⁴ suggests a method to classify different gay visibilities within the context of Spanish cities.

On representation: colonial travellers, cultural borders and gender identity

At the end of the 19th century colonialism, and its ideological justifications, frequently exemplified in travel writings, became a crucial component of a nascent geography. If it is true that the study of travel writing has been incorporated into the historiography of the discipline in recent years, it is also the case that the contributions of travel writers and explorers have been significantly undervalued. But recent postcolonial and feminist studies aim to evaluate the contribution of travellers –especially of women– to colonial discourse as this literature offers a less monolithic vision of this discourse. In fact, some of the women travellers transform their own identities through colonial contact, seeking to supersede cultural boundaries and establish a non-hierarchical contact with other women living in overseas environments. The ambivalence of the relationship between the world of the coloniser and the colonised is more frequently observed in writings by women travellers than in the writings of men who were serving colonial administrators.³⁵ Recently research was being carried out on the role of geography in colonialism

³² Emilia García Escalona, “‘Del armario al barrio’: aproximación a un nuevo espacio urbano,” *Anales de Geografía de la Universidad Complutense* 20 (2000): 437–449.

³³ Xosé Santos, “Espacios disidentes en los procesos de ordenación territorial,” *Documents d’Anàlisi Geogràfica* 40 (2002): 69–104. Xosé Santos, “Espacios disidentes homosexuales” in *Las Otras Geografías*, ed. Joan Nogué and Joan Romero (Valencia: Tirant Lo Blanc, 2006), 511–526.

³⁴ Víctor Fernández Salinas, “Visibilidad y escena gay masculina en la ciudad española,” *Documents d’Anàlisi Geogràfica* 49 (2007): 139–160.

³⁵ Abel Albet and Maria Dolors García–Ramon, “Isabelle Eberhardt: complicity and resistance towards the colonial project”, in *Männerherz Bewahren: 130 Stimmen zum Werk von Isabelle Eberhardt*, ed. Magdalena Tzaneva (Berlin: LiDi EuropeEdition, 2007), 149–156. Maria Dolors García–Ramon, “Gender and the colonial encounter: European women’s travel narratives from the Arab world,” *Environmental and Planning D: Society and Space* 21 (2003): 653–672. Maria Dolors García–Ramon, Abel Albet, Joan Nogué and Lluís Riudor, “Voices from the margins: gendered images of ‘otherness’ in colonial Morocco,” *Gender, Place and Culture* 5/3 (1998): 229–240. Maria Dolors García–Ramon and Abel Albet, “Donne viaggiatrici e resoconti di viaggio nell’Africa del Nord,” in *Turismo al maschile, turismo al femminile. L’esperienza del viaggio; il mercato del lavoro; il turismo sessuale*, ed. Elena dell’Agnese and Elisabetta Ruspini (Padova: CEDAM, 2005), 113–137.

in the Spanish Protectorate of Morocco³⁶ and on the role of Spanish travellers –men as well as women– to the construction of colonial discourse in Africa.³⁷ One important focus of this research has also been the analysis of the images of women that appear in men's travel narratives,³⁸ images that confirm the orientalist gaze of most of the travellers. Finally, we should mention that new research topics are emerging that adopt postcolonial and postmodern perspectives.

Gender identity has been one of the main foci in postcolonial interpretation of extra-communitarian women migrants to Spain³⁹ while Bru⁴⁰ has adopted a postmodern approach to research on the theme of the gendered body in relation to nature and landscape. Rural landscapes are also the subject of an interesting international comparison between Spain and Norway as the authors examine –through two life style magazines– how gender identities are the main asset in the process of selling the countryside to urban dwellers.⁴¹

Teaching gender at the undergraduate and the graduate level

As we have already mentioned, while significant progress has been made in research, little has been done to introduce gender issues into the geography curriculum, despite the publication of an excellent textbook on gender by Ana Sabaté, Juana María Rodríguez and María Ángeles Díaz⁴² from the Complutense University of Madrid. Nevertheless, some developments in teaching are noteworthy. Geography courses are taught at 26 universities but only

³⁶ Joan Nogué and José Luis Villanueva, España en Marruecos (1912–1956): *Discursos geográficos e intervención territorial* (Lleida: Editorial Milenio, 1999).

³⁷ Maria Dolors Garcia-Ramon, Joan Nogué and Perla Zusman, *Una mirada catalana a l'Àfrica. Viatgers i viatgeres dels segles XIX i XX (1859-1936)* (Lleida: Pagès, 2008).

³⁸ Rosa Cerarols, "El viatge "en masculí" i la dona en els relats de viatges al Marroc colonial" in *Una mirada catalana a l'Àfrica. Viatgers i viatgeres dels segles XIX i XX (1859-1936)*, ed. Maria Dolors Garcia Ramon, Joan Nogué and Perla Zusman (Lleida: Pagès Editors, 2008), 277–320. Rosa Cerarols, Maria Dolors Garcia-Ramon, Joan Nogué and Perla Zusman, "El viatge "en masculí" i la dona en els relats de viatges al Marroc colonial" in *Una mirada catalana a l'Àfrica. Viatgers i viatgeres dels segles XIX i XX (1859-1936)*, ed. Maria Dolors Garcia Ramon, Joan Nogué and Perla Zusman (Lleida: Pagès, 2008), 27–49.

³⁹ Blasco Jiménez, Beatriz Cristina and Ángela Redondo González, Ángela, "Mujeres inmigrantes en la ciudad de Madrid: algunos aspectos sobre su inserción laboral, conciliación familiar y salud," *Anales de Geografía de la Universidad Complutense*, 27/2 (2007): 59–76. Ruth M. Mestre Mestre, "Dea ex machina. Trabajadoras migrantes y negociación de la igualdad en lo doméstico. (Experiencias de ACUDE-VIMAR: ecuatorianas en Valencia)." *Cuadernos de Geografía* 72 (2002): 191–206. Claudia Pedone, *De l'Equador a Catalunya: el paper de la família i les xarxes migratòries* (Barcelona: Editorial Mediterrània, 2006).

⁴⁰ Josepa Bru, "El cuerpo como mercancía," in *Las Otras Geografías*, ed. Joan Nogué and Joan Romero (Valencia: Tirant Lo Blanc, 2006), 465–491.

⁴¹ Mireia Baylina and Ninna Gunnerud Berg, "Selling the countryside and rural visions in Norway and Spain." *European and Urban Regional Studies* (2009 in press).

⁴² Sabaté, Juana María Rodríguez and María Ángeles Díaz, 1995.

three courses on gender are offered at the undergraduate level at the University of Girona, at the Complutense University of Madrid and at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (on course in each). The title of these courses is “Geography and Gender” and the syllabi deal with basic theoretical concepts and afterwards with a geographical analysis of the central and peripheral countries from a gender perspective (see an example of the syllabus in Annex 1 that includes some of the assignments). At the graduate level, the case differs somewhat as courses on gender have been taught at least eight universities, often in interdisciplinary programs (i.e. both universities of Barcelona and Madrid, Girona, Valencia, Salamanca and Santiago de Compostela). In this case the programmes vary a lot according to the research interests of the staff (see an example in Annex 2). It is also noteworthy that in the last 18 years 16 PhD theses (and at least twice as many MA thesis) on specific topics of gender and geography have been defended – most of them in Barcelona. In an ongoing research project –based on in-depth interviews of 55 staff (women and men) in Spanish geography departments– it is clear that some instructors introduced the topic into other regularly taught courses, though the syllabi only occasionally make explicit reference to gender. Most of the women interviewed say that it is impossible to deal with topics such as population, labour market, daily life, mobility and poverty, for example, without referring to gender.⁴³

Nevertheless it is worth mentioning a remarkable international experience in teaching gender in which the Autonomous University of Barcelona participated. It was the Erasmus intensive course on Gender and Geography that was funded by the European Union and that ran for eight years (1990-1998). Six European universities were involved (Amsterdam, the Autonomous University of Barcelona, the National University of Athens, Roskilde, Durham and Sheffield). The course was aimed at graduate students as well as advanced undergraduates. This collaboration, by bringing together the international team of instructors, led to the development of a high-quality advanced course covering the main themes in the field with an emphasis on the cit.- Building on the very different academic traditions in geography that participants have experienced, this intensive course forced students and staff to deal with and learn about differences of approach (methodological as well as theoretical) and to think about why feminist geography has evolved differently in each country.

⁴³ Pujol, Ortiz and Garcia-Ramon, 2009.

The stimulus provided by the course played an important role in establishing gender as one of the research specialities in some departments as is the case in the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

Finally, one of the reasons for the lack of gender courses and the unbalanced situation between research and teaching in Spain is the inflexible curricular system. Introducing new gender courses in the curricula competes directly with already well established subjects as well as with new ones (this competition for resources has not taken place in the same way with the research on gender). It has to be considered that, on the one hand, the Spanish-curricular system is quite restrictive and limits the number of courses as well the options for students; and on the other hand, the development of gender geography in Spain from the mid 1980's coincided with the development of the new technical approach in Spanish geography (professional geography, GIS, etc.) and the strong pressure to introduce new subjects along this line into the curricula.

Final thoughts

The near future might bring some changes. For the first time in many decades, the number of students in geography has dramatically decreased in Spain due, partially, to the fall of the birth rate about 20-5 years ago. It is too soon to evaluate the impact of this but, perhaps and hopefully, the reduction in the number of geography students (although in a way bad news for geography) will ease the competition for jobs. New openings in secondary teaching positions will also be available as cohorts that entered the profession in the 1970's and early 1980's are retiring. This new job market context might prove to be less rigid and less utilitarian. And perhaps, more theoretical or "useless" approaches to geography (like gender geography, cultural geography and the like) may find room in a new type of Spanish academic geography that could afford to be more critical and broader in scope and thus, more gender-aware.

It is true that our contribution to gender study has been more empirical in nature than theoretical, but our future challenge is to combine this rich tradition of empirical studies with our own original reflection. It is clear that gender geography from English speaking countries has played a very important role in the initial development of gender geography in Spain as well as in other regional contexts. But, in spite of common origins and continuing strong in-

fluences, different models of gender geography are emerging in the world.⁴⁴ Thus, we advocate making greater efforts to integrate the work being done outside English speaking academia into the mainstreaming of international gender geography. In our case, a hybridization between theoretical and empirical work from a position built upon our own needs and concerns, should provide Spanish gender geography with the specificity and potential to contribute to the traditions being developed in the international framework.

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⁴⁴ Fabià Díaz, Maria Dolors Garcia–Ramon and Anna Ortiz, “Enderering Spanish Geography,” *Belgeo. Revue Belgue de Géographie* 3 (2007): 323–333.

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Appendix 1

UNIVERSITAT AUTÒNOMA DE BARCELONA
(AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF BARCELONA)

GEOGRAPHY, GENDER AND TERRITORY
Spring 2006
Prof. Maria Prats Ferret

Aims of the course: To introduce the gender approach to geography students. It will deal with some of the main theoretical concepts as well as with a selection of empirical studies from different world regions

Syllabus

From women's geography to feminist geographies: main theoretical concepts.

- The core (rich) countries from a gender perspective: work and daily life in rural and urban areas.
- The peripheral (poor) countries: production, reproduction and development.
- Other topics of interest for the gender approach: the use of time in the city, environment and sexuality.

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Example of assignment (related to topic 2 of the syllabus)

Activity (to be carried out in groups between 2-4 persons)

Choose one of the two following activities:

- Observation of daily life in an urban place from a gender perspective
 - Examples of places to carry out the research: streets, plazas, parks, cafés or bars. railway stations, market places, shopping centers...
 - You have to make observations on design and regulations of the place, gendered use of the space, interactions and feelings of belonging...
 - Think about reasons that explain your observations

- Spaces of fear in the neighbourhood
 - Ask the collaboration of some people (from 2 to 4) who live in the neighbourhood (look for different sex, age, ethnic group, etc.).
 - Ask them to identify their personal spaces where they feel fear on a map of the neighbourhood (streets, plazas, parks etc. that is the places that they try to avoid during the day or the night) and why.
 - Think about how to explain the maps.

On the basis of the information gathered write a short essay (3 pages and possible appendixes) that should include the objectives, the context and positionality, methodology and conclusions.

Appendix 2

UNIVERSITAT AUTÒNOMA DE BARCELONA (AUTONOMOUS
UNIVERSITY OF BARCELONA)

GENDER, SPACE AND SOCIETY: FROM THE GLOBAL TO THE LOCAL
Spring 2005

Prof. Maria Dolors Garcia-Ramon

Syllabus

- Questioning a geography without sex and gender: theoretical and methodological contributions from different approaches
- Reinterpreting Orientalism and the history of geography: recent feminist contributions
- The role of women's travellers: a postcolonial geography perspective
- An international survey of scientific production on gender and eography: towards some regional models of gender geography?
- Power relation and gender relations within academic geography
- Rurality and gender: new masculinities
- Invisible work in the rural family unit? The family farm, rural tourism, etc.
- Towards a new look at the city from a gender perspective
- Feminist geographies of the environment
- Globalization and Gender: international migration and transnational families
- Geography, gender and different methodologies

Basic Bibliography (besides the 2-3 articles that we will discuss every week in the classroom)

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Bridging in feminist pedagogy through student-led fieldtrips: A report from the Netherlands¹

Bettina van Hoven, Wike Been, Joos Droogleever Fortuijn, Virginie Mamadouh

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Introduction

In this paper we reflect on our use of fieldtrips that were organized by students in teaching feminist geography in the Netherlands. We contextualize our evaluation both with an analysis of the position of feminist perspectives in Dutch geography and also with a discussion of our joint attempts to offer a course on feminist geographies in the Netherlands. Indeed, despite what some outsiders might expect of a country known as progressive and liberal,² it has proven extremely difficult to develop feminist approaches in Dutch geographies and to create and sustain such courses on feminist geographies at Dutch Universities. Geography in the Netherlands has a stronger empirical and policy focus and is, in general, less ‘abstract’ and ‘critical’ than geography particularly in the UK. In addition, popular perceptions of gender issues and emancipation in the Netherlands suggest that the emancipation question has been largely solved. Students considering taking the Gender, Culture and Space course as part of the bachelor curriculum in geography then are likely to have a more quantitative than qualitative, and a more applied than theoretical orientation. At the same time, they will not have been much confronted with issues of exclusion and inequality on the basis of gender, unless they are from an ethnic minority background.

¹ A full length version of this paper appears as “Teaching feminist geographies in the Netherlands: learning from student-led fieldtrips”, *Documents d’Analisis Geografica*.

² At least until recently. See Ian Buruma, *Murder in Amsterdam; The death of Theo van Gogh and the limits of tolerance* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006) for the discussion of the two recent political murders (Fortuijn in 2002, Van Gogh in 2004) and the changing political debate about multiculturalism and tolerance.

Feminist geography in the Netherlands

Feminist geography in the Netherlands currently seems to lag behind the United Kingdom and the United States in terms of researching gender issues and including gender perspectives in teaching geography. In both the UK and the US, feminist geography has moved from making women visible (e.g. 'On not excluding the other half')³ to a critical engagement with underlying political structures and a strong theoretical focus. Dutch Geography does embrace the diversity of human experience but is still somewhat in denial in relation to the significance of feminist thinking (and teaching) in Geography. This has not always been the case. As Linda Peake has demonstrated in an overview of feminist geography teaching in 1989, Dutch geography was one of the forerunners. The University of Amsterdam introduced an elective course 'Geographical Women's Studies' as early as 1983, followed by the departments of geography at the Universities of Utrecht and Nijmegen. However, feminist geography teaching was initiated by feminist students and by staff with part-time and/or temporary positions and most initiatives disappeared after a few years. The group of feminist geographers at the University of Amsterdam initiated an international network for gender studies in geography⁴ as part of the ERASMUS programme of the European Union. Between 1990 and 1998 this network organised a one week intensive course 'Geography and Gender' each year. The network was a joint program of 6 European universities, characterized by varied and innovative teaching methods in a multicultural setting.⁵ The program ran successfully for several years, but, after its eighth year, capitulated to the lack of financial support. In 2004, a new attempt at reviving gender studies in geography was initiated at the University of Groningen where a course was organized as a result of the creation of a temporary Chair in Gender and Geography: Gender, Culture and Space.⁶ In spite of positive evaluations by students and a considerable number of student registrations for the course to begin with, in its second year it was already

³ Janice Monk and Susan Hanson, "On not excluding half of the human in human geography," *Professional Geographer* 34 (1982): 11-23.

⁴ Joos Droogleever Fortuijn, "Internationalising Learning and Teaching: a European experience," *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 26/3 (2002): 263-273.

⁵ Maria Dolores Garcia-Ramon and Janice Monk, "Infrequent flying: international dialogue in geography in higher education," *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 21 (1997): 141-145.

⁶ Bettina van Hoven, "'Can you write a memo on why we have to do gender, please?' An experiential account of teaching gender geography in the Netherlands," *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* (forthcoming).

struggling, retaining only five Master students. In 2006, therefore, the last gender course in geography in the Netherlands was on the verge of disappearing. The transformation in feminist geography in the Netherlands from forerunner to lagger-behind can be understood in relation to the specific characteristics of Dutch academic geography on the one hand and the Dutch policy context on the other. First, Musterd & De Pater⁷ characterised human geography in the Netherlands as an applied and practical science, historically strongly imprinted by spatial planning and regional-economic policy rather than an interest in socio-cultural processes. Overall, Musterd and de Pater characterise Dutch geography as “wary of the post-modern slant” and “cling[ing] to the practical, social relevance of their discipline”.⁸ Second, gender issues are not very prominent in social and political debates and the overall discourse maintains that the emancipation question has been more or less solved. Moves for emancipation are primarily targeted at ethnic minority women and women in developing countries: at ‘other’ women. As a result, students who are considering taking elective courses are not very inclined to elect a course on gender and geography. The lack of attention given to emancipation and gender issues in the public debate and the lack of personal experiences of gender discrimination further discourage participation in a gender course. It is in this context that lecturers of the Faculty of Spatial Sciences in Groningen and the Department of Geography, Planning and International Development Studies of the University of Amsterdam took the initiative to organize a feminist geography course as a joint programme. It is important to emphasise that this paper is the co-production of three lecturers and one student on this course. The paper thus responds to calls to include student voices in published research as a “logical extension of feminist pedagogical practices”.⁹

⁷ Sako Musterd and Ben de Pater, “Eclectic and pragmatic: the colours of Dutch social and cultural geography,” *Social & Cultural Geography* 4/4 (2003): 549-563.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 555.

⁹ Kelly Coate Bignell, “Building feminist praxis out of feminist pedagogy: the importance of students’ perspectives,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 19/3 (1996): 316.

Feminist pedagogy and the entrepreneurial model of education

Feminist pedagogy is understood to be concerned with gaining an insight into gender relations and making these visible.¹⁰ There is an explicit mission to stimulate social change in society at large but also in the classroom. Therefore, an important aspect of feminist pedagogy is to actively involve students, and to make use of experiences grounded in their own life-worlds in the teaching programme as such experiences are perceived as a learning resource for all. Using students' own experiences as learning resources highlights the role of positionality in producing knowledge and helps illustrate ways in which the personal is political. By taking up individual students' experiences and, in turn, linking these to the literature, it is possible to identify underlying mechanisms which may affect gender-differentiated experiences in different places (around the world) in similar ways. Last but not least, using personal experiences is beneficial in attempting to raise consciousness and ultimately "transform [students] from passive recipients of knowledge to active knowers who see themselves as agents of social change".¹¹ Several authors have pointed at difficulties in achieving this aim of empowerment and mobilisation. Large classes make it challenging to involve students actively and invite them to discuss their own experiences. Even in small classes, students may resist speaking freely, for example, due to underlying expectations that their lecturers are the experts or due to the fact that they will receive a mark for their course which they do not wish to jeopardize by being confrontational.

In the discussion of barriers to implementing feminist pedagogy, the masculine model of teaching and learning has been much criticised. In this model, students are judged based on the degree to which they understand and reproduce the lecturer's (or course handbook's) definition of truth. Although independent thinking is encouraged, it is encouraged once the "official interpretation" is thoroughly understood.¹² This masculine model is appropriate in the context of developments which force higher education "into the entrepreneurial spirit of the market". Lambert and Parker¹³ note that this "banking

¹⁰ Michelle Webber, "Transgressive pedagogies? Exploring the difficult realities of enacting feminist pedagogies in undergraduate classrooms in a Canadian university," *Studies in Higher Education* 31/4 (2006): 453-467.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 455.

¹² Jen Marchbank, Gayle Letherby, Kay Lander, Angela Walker and Andrea Wild. "Empowering and enabling or patronizing and pressuring? Opening dialogues between staff and students," *Gender and Education* 15/1 (2003): 79.

¹³ Cath Lambert and Andrew Parker, "Imagination, hope and the positive face of feminism: pro/feminist pedagogy in 'post' feminist times?" *Studies in Higher Education* 31/4 (2006): 471.

concept of education” reduces teaching and learning “to the act of teachers depositing knowledge *in* or *upon* students for them to store and reproduce, leaving no opportunity for dialogue, critical exploration, reflexivity and praxis.” Ultimately, they claim, students are reduced to consumers and teachers to providers of a service (see also Parker and Jary¹⁴ on the ‘McUniversity’). The Gender, Culture and Space course therefore aims to combine feminist geography as content with feminist pedagogy that focuses on participatory learning and teaching and on relating personal experiences to theoretical knowledge.

Course approach and organisation

The course was a joint program of the University of Groningen and the University of Amsterdam and was taught partly in Groningen and partly in Amsterdam, by lecturers of these universities and guest lecturers from abroad. Specifically, the course aimed to explore ways in which gender roles, gender relations and gender identities are defined differently in different societies and how women and men are put in different positions in different societies. In addition to a general introduction to gender in geography, the course included cases based on ongoing research at both universities.

Considering the travel requirements for the students (the train ride between Amsterdam and Groningen takes approximately 2 hours and a half) the course was organized over four full days, rather than as two hours per session per week. Two days were spent in Groningen and two days in Amsterdam so that students had to travel only twice. This facilitated a variety of teaching methods including lectures; discussion initiated by viewing a documentary, and by analyzing gender aspects of army websites and body counts websites and war pictures awarded in the World Press Photo contest; out-of-classroom observation exercises, and the student-led fieldtrips. The group of students was diverse being made up of third-year bachelor students and master students, geography students and students from other disciplines (psychology, heritage studies, anthropology, planning), and Dutch students and exchange students from other countries in Europe and the US. This diversity provided the opportunity to include issues of cultural, national and academic diversity in the discussions.

¹⁴ Martin Parker and David Jary, “The McUniversity: Organization, Management and Academic Subjectivity,” *Organization* 2/2 (1995): 319-338.

Assignments

Students received several assignments throughout the course ranging from an ungraded ‘ice-breaker’ assignment and reading assignments to a graded essay and take-home exam. Master students were required to conduct a project on gender-differentiated experiences in the workplace ‘university’ as well. In addition to developing an understanding of relations between gender, space and society and being able to explain concepts addressed during the course, our aim was to involve the students’ personal life-worlds and experiences. The ungraded assignments gave opportunities for this. For example, students were asked to share responses to questions regarding their personal and academic background, as seen through a ‘gender lens.’ In addition, every meeting involved a literature assignment that allowed students to use their own experiences in making sense of the literature. These assignments offered students an entry point for sharing some of their own experiences and left it up to the student whether this would be an example/ observation or an opinion/ disagreement. The fact that the assignments did not receive a mark contributed perhaps towards creating a space for personal opinions. A third type of ungraded assignment was the ‘student-led fieldtrip’. In the remainder of this article we focus on the content and evaluation of these fieldtrips.

Student-led fieldtrips¹⁵

For this assignment, students were asked to develop a fieldtrip in their university town (Amsterdam or Groningen) taking gendered aspects of the city into account. They were asked to pay special attention to the intersection of gender with other characteristics that impact on processes of inclusion and exclusion such as age, sexuality, race and ethnicity, ability, social class etc. The students formed three groups: one in Amsterdam and two in Groningen (of which one was comprised of third-year bachelor students and one of master students). The students had a considerable amount of freedom in shaping the fieldtrips according to their own thoughts and wishes: they could determine the route, themes and way of discussing these themes as long as they were related to gender and as long as the total length of the fieldtrip did not exceed one hour. This format allowed the students to include their own experiences and thoughts related to gender.

¹⁵ Wike wrote this section discussing and reflecting on the student-led fieldtrips. She did this with the help of other course participants who communicated their experiences to Wike by email.

The way in which the students developed their fieldtrips shows that the format of the assignment did indeed encourage the students to include their own experiences and preferences. The students indicated that they started to develop their fieldtrips by brainstorming about which specific neighbourhood to pick and about the gendered spaces located in this specific neighbourhood. Students often came up with locations which represented a gendered space to them, because they were personally familiar with the location. John, for example, explains:

The pool centre is a place I often visit myself. Therefore I know from my own experiences that more men than women visit the place (John, male, Groningen).

^{16, 17}

The students felt that leisure locations in general are often gendered because the public using the location is primarily male or female. The quote above about the pool centre highlights this experience. Interestingly, the representation of a location in the media also led to its inclusion in the route, even though students did not have personal experiences of the location. This was the case, for example, for the selection of the neighbourhood in which the Amsterdam fieldtrip took place, i.e. the Bijlmer (in Amsterdam Southeast). Anne notes:

We came up with the Bijlmer, because of its reputation as a dangerous, woman-unfriendly Area (Anne, female, Amsterdam).

The Bijlmer, a high rise extension neighbourhood constructed in the 1970s, has a negative reputation that reaches beyond the city, as is illustrated by the national press and television.¹⁸ The neighbourhood is well known because a plane crashed into the middle of it in October 1992. Because of the extensive media attention continuing long after the plane crash, even students from Groningen would have some expectations about the place. This distinguished the fieldtrip in Amsterdam from the fieldtrips in Groningen; the students from Groningen taking part in the fieldtrip to the Bijlmer had some expectations beforehand, while the students from Amsterdam probably did not have such expectations in relation to Groningen.

¹⁶ The names used are fictional.

¹⁷ Students were asked to answer some open questions about the student led fieldtrips by email. Quotes found in this section originate from replies to this email.

¹⁸ Paulle, 2005.

In addition to personal familiarity and media representation, students selected locations because of the public interest they believed particular places to serve, for example the public library or the market place. Students experienced these locations as gendered, because the public and/or the people offering the service (at certain times of the day and at certain days of the week) were primarily male or female. A format the students used to discuss this male/female bias were small, 'on the spot' investigations of how many men and women were seen at the particular location performing a certain activity. By asking these questions, the environment was directly part of the topic under study. The focus on the visibility of certain characteristics, like gender, shows that the students mainly think about the actual, physical occurrence of men and women at specific locations when they think about 'gendered spaces' in their own environment. Students also focused on the 'physical', or embodied aspects when discussing the intersection of gender with other characteristics. For example, during the fieldtrip in Amsterdam, students pointed to the ethnic composition of inhabitants and visitors in certain space. This could be observed through the presence of people on the streets but also 'special purposes' buildings such as cultural institutions or the Hindu primary school *Shri Laksmi* we stopped by.

An explanation for the focus by students on visible (gender) biases in the use of places, is that these immediately visible issues distinguish fieldtrips from the discussions inside the classroom. The situation of physically being there, added elements to the analysis: the participants were able to smell, hear and see the topic they were discussing. For example, by visiting the Bijlmer in Amsterdam the participants could see and feel/ sense for themselves what the environment was like. Therefore, they could draw conclusions from a broader spectrum of observations than they would if the same discussion had taken place in the classroom. The experiential/ 'sensorial' dimension was an important input in the discussion whilst, at the same time, the 'rational' dimension remained significant since theories learned in class could directly be applied to the environment.

More general discussions about gender emerged when the students took the history of places into account, for example at the public library in Groningen. The public library is located in the city centre. However, until 1990 the building used to be occupied first by squatters, then a women's café and a women's library. After 1990 the building was transformed into the pu-

blic library and the women's café and library were moved to another location, subsidized by the municipality. Recently, the financial support from the municipality stopped because the municipality believed that the emancipation question has been solved. Without financial support, the women's library had to close. In re-telling this story, the students initiated a discussion about whether or not the emancipation question has really been solved and whether facilities such as a women's library are still needed in today's society.

More recent social developments were also mentioned in the discussions, for example the phenomenon of the 'Ladies Night'. The term 'Ladies Night' is used to promote certain activities by companies in the Netherlands. It is used both for activities where only women are allowed to participate and for activities where women for example enter free while men have to pay. Discussion about this phenomenon came up while visiting the cinema and the casino during the student-led fieldtrip in Groningen.

A kind of widely promoted gender discrimination, started at the Holland Casino in the Netherlands [...] and is now also used at the cinema's, in disco's and even soccer-clubs, and there are probably more companies willing to apply it: the Ladies Night (John, male, Groningen).

Not everybody agreed to this view. Whilst some students regarded the Ladies Night as a form of gender discrimination, others regarded it as a clever marketing trick: once you attract the girls to come to your place, the boys will follow. In the discussion the Ladies Night came to symbolise broader processes in society, such as sexualization and commercialization and the way gender plays a role in these processes. As had already been the case during the fieldtrip in the department store, students had the feeling that gender is used as a marketing strategy. After the fieldtrip to the department store and the three student-led fieldtrips, the students came to the conclusion that gender plays a role in many domains of the society.

The combination of observations, personal experiences and abstract thinking within both types of fieldtrips, enabled the students to link their own experiences to more abstract processes, like migration and globalization and place these in a gender perspective. The two types of fieldtrips were complementary to each other. The first fieldtrip showed the students how they can analyze their immediate environment from a gender perspective. Because

se of the detailed questions to be answered during this fieldtrip, the students realized how gender can be analyzed in relation to the (physical) environment in which 'it occurs'. This knowledge could be used again during the student-led fieldtrips that they had to develop themselves. The student-led fieldtrip added to the experience of the first fieldtrip, for while developing the fieldtrip themselves students were encouraged to think about how gender (and other differentiating characteristics) played a role in their own city. This model also somewhat removed the pressure on them to give 'the right' answers. When it is a question of a person's own environment and interpretation, there simply is no "wrong answer", and this allowed for more free association and thinking, as well as discussion. On the other hand, because there was no central guidance in developing the student-led fieldtrips, the fieldtrips were often less theory driven and therefore lacked some depth. This was clear in the discussions which often failed to reach a higher level than the (simple) discussion of visible aspects. More time for discussion between the students and among students and staff during and after the fieldtrips would help to overcome this problem.

Conclusion

Reflecting on the student-led fieldtrips in the context of feminist pedagogy, as outlined above, we feel that the fieldtrips have been a successful means of bringing in a more explicit (when compared with previous years) feminist pedagogy into our own gender geography teachings. To reiterate, a key aim of feminist pedagogy, as mentioned above, is to actively involve students in the teaching programme and explicitly draw on their own lived experiences as a learning resource for all. The role of positionality in producing knowledge can be highlighted in ways easily understandable for students. Drawing on students' own experiences also helps illustrate ways in which the personal is political. Last but not least, establishing links between the experiences of individual students and the literature, can help identify underlying mechanisms which may affect gender-differentiated experiences in different places (around the world) in similar ways.

From the student views illustrated above, it is evident that the fieldtrip (more so than other assignments) facilitated students' input into the course using their own everyday experiences and interests. In addition, they were able to contextualize these experiences, at least to some degree, in relation to theo-

ries explored in the classroom and in the course handbook. Having said that, it must be noted also that the way in which the course was organized prevented students and lecturers from thoroughly discussing and reflecting on their experiences after the fieldtrip due to lack of time. Nonetheless, the student views show that, in spite of their previous perceptions of gender issues as ‘belonging’ to minority women, students experienced that gender does play an important role in their everyday lives in particular and in Dutch society in general. Therefore, we might conclude that student-led fieldtrips may support raising consciousness and help “transform [students] from passive recipients of knowledge to active knowers who see themselves as agents of social change.”¹⁹

Whilst the use of student-led fieldtrips as a way of engaging students (and their everyday experiences) is relatively easy to organize, if time can be made available for such an exercise, we would emphasize that it can only be seen as a beginning in the attempt to engage with feminist pedagogy. Indeed, in our case, the course overall remained largely influenced by what the lecturers considered to be important, which was determined by their research – and perhaps personal backgrounds. In addition, the course still complied with standard assessment methods through essay writing and an exam at the end of the course. This may be an area for experimentation in the next academic year whereby students may, for example, have a greater influence on the themes central to the course and/ or help shape the course assessments.

¹⁹ Webber, 455.

Appendix 1: The Course programme

Meeting	Time	Teacher	Theme	Teaching method
1	11-13	Joos Droogleeveer- Fortuijn and Virginie Mamadouh	Introduction	Lecture
AMS				
1	13-15	Bettina van Hoven	Introduction	Lecture
GRO				
2	11-17	Joos Droogleeveer- Fortuijn	Gender and paid and unpaid work	Lecture
AMS		Joos Droogleeveer- Fortuijn	Gender, space and everyday life	Fieldwork
		Tovi Fenster (<i>Tel Aviv University</i>)		Lecture
3	11-17	Linda McDowell (<i>Oxford University</i>)	Masculinities	Lecture
GRO		Bettina van Hoven	Masculinities	Reading seminar Video-based seminar
		Bettina van Hoven	Masculinities	
4	11-17	Katie Willis (<i>University of London, Royal Holloway</i>)	Gender and skilled international migration	Lecture
GRO			Gender and the city	Lecture
		<i>Janke Klok</i> (University of Groningen, Faculty of Arts) Students Groningen	Student-led fieldtrip	Fieldtrip
5	11-17	Virginie Mamadouh	Gender and the geography of war	Lecture
AMS		Ana Miškovska Kajevska (ASSR, University of Amsterdam)	Nationalism and feminism in the former Yugoslavia	Lecture
		Virginie Mamadouh Students Amsterdam	Gender and the geography of war Student-led fieldtrip	Workshop Fieldtrip

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Encouraging gender analysis in research practice

Deborah Thien

Introduction

Certainly, gender is no longer an unfamiliar concept thanks to the hard work of feminists inside and outside of academia –within geography, the substantial and long-term efforts of feminist geographers have been particularly effective in ensuring gender is a “valid analytical concept”.¹ But, despite this sustained feminist attention to gender conceptually, and despite a commitment to examining the issues for geographers teaching fieldwork (recent examples in this journal include Healey, Nairn, Panelli & Welch)² or geographers ‘doing fieldwork’,³ there are still few resources for practical teaching plans or fieldwork exercises which address gender in geographical contexts (exceptions include Madge, Raghuram, Madge & Skelton, Moss, Oberhauser).⁴

This paper aims to add to this set of resources by describing the design and implementation of a ‘gender intervention’ for a large-scale, multi-university, bilingual research project⁵ that includes a diverse group of researchers, team leaders, translators, and administrative staff; the project also brings together junior and senior faculty and student researchers, French and English speakers, and scholars from multiple social science disciplines. I was engaged as a postdoctoral feminist geographer to ‘bring gender’ to the project. For this intervention, I designed two major components: a facilitated workshop on gender and a ‘gender field log’ for use in field research.

¹ P. Raghuram, Madge, C. & Skelton, T., “Feminist research methodologies and student projects in Geography,” *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 22/1 (1998): 35; see L. Nelson & Seager, J., Eds. *A Companion to Feminist Geography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005) for an excellent recent overview.

² M. Healey, “Linking research and teaching to benefit student learning,” *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 29/2 (2005): 183–201. K. Nairn, “The Problems of utilizing ‘Direct Experience’ in Geography education,” *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 29/2 (2005): 293–309. R. Panelli & Welch, R. V., “Teaching research through field studies: A cumulative opportunity for teaching methodology to Human Geography undergraduates,” *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 29/2 (2005): 255–277.

³ D. DeLyster & Starrs P. E., Introduction: Doing fieldwork, *The Geographical Review* 91 (2001): iv–viii.

⁴ C. Madge, “Gendering space: A first year Geography fieldwork exercise,” *Geography* 79/4 (1994): 330–338. Raghuram, Madge & Skelton, 1998; P. Moss, *Feminist Geography in Practice: Research and Methods* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002). A. Oberhauser, “Examining gender and community through critical pedagogy,” *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 26/1 (2002): 19–31.

⁵ The NRE is the second phase of the *New Rural Economy Project* (NRE) of the *Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation* (CRRF). This project is identifying major factors contributing to capacity in rural and small-town communities, while also seeking to build community capacity to thrive in a changing rural economy (Reimer, 2006; Ryser, Halseth, & Thien, 2008).

In this paper, I present and evaluate responses to these feminist pedagogical and methodological strategies. The results demonstrate both the fruitful conversations and the difficulties that result from ‘bringing gender’ into research practice. The analysis suggests that addressing gender continues to challenge research practitioners and hegemonic notions of research practice. To acknowledge and address these challenges productively, I argue for the ongoing relevance of gender analysis in research and for the importance of detailing exactly how gender analysis can be introduced into research contexts, successfully and otherwise. The provision of explicit methodological strategies in material form (see appendices) adds to our teaching/research resources, and contributes to enhancing the rigour of qualitative research practices within geography.⁶

Resources for exercising gender

Within geographical literature, practical resources for developing a gender intervention are limited, but what is available is very useful. Raghuram, Madge and Skelton⁷ consider the implications of feminist research methodologies for student projects and seek to provide practical advice, including key questions for teachers and students, which are designed to “encourage the adoption of a feminist methodology.” The collection of feminist geographic research presented in Moss⁸ is supported by research tips in boxed sections at the end of chapters. For example, in England’s⁹ chapter on focus groups she includes practical strategies such as “think of ways to hear everyone speak.” Madge¹⁰ details a fieldwork exercise designed to introduce the geography of gender to first year undergraduate geography students in which the students visit urban shopping areas and explore the gendered shopping spaces.¹¹

⁶ G. Valentine, “Relevance and rigour: The advantages of reusing and scaling up qualitative data,” *Environment and Planning A* 38/3 (2006): 413–415.

⁷ Raghuram, Madge and Skelton, 37.

⁸ P. Moss, *Feminist Geography in Practice: Research and Methods* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002).

⁹ K. V. L. England, “Interviewing elites: Cautionary tales about researching women managers in Canada’s banking industry,” in *Feminist Geography in Practice: Research and Methods*, ed. P. J. Moss (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 213.

¹⁰ C. Madge, “Gendering space: A first year Geography fieldwork exercise,” *Geography* 79/4 (1994): 330–338.

¹¹ Madge notes that her exercise was adapted from a previous exercise (Monk 1988). Thanks to Gail Fondahl, UNBC, for sharing her field assignment based on Madge which I have amended for assigned fieldtrips to the shopping mall in both Northern British Columbia and Southern California. The exercise has many pedagogical benefits, including encouraging students to examine the ubiquitous geography of North American shopping malls and to consider the highly gendered and racialized elements therein.

Oberhauser¹² describes how students participate in feminist analysis through engaging in case studies of community-based organizations. Each of these resources provided some specific guidelines for how a 'gender intervention' might be designed. Drawing insights from these and other sources, including feminist methodologies,¹³ geographical research¹⁴ women's and community organizations¹⁵ and federal initiatives,¹⁶ I defined 'gender analysis' as encompassing an awareness of: gender differences; social relations between women and men; differential social realities, expectations, economic situations; and place-based gender 'norms', experiences, and practices.

For the NRE (New Rural Economy project, see footnote 117) gender intervention, I developed three overarching objectives: (1) to promote and enhance the use of gender analysis as a research strategy; (2) to explicitly consider gender where gender may be obscured in research tools, and (3) to encourage gender-aware fieldwork practices. To meet these objectives I worked in consultation and collaboration with local site researchers to modify site-specific survey instruments to increase attention to gender; for example, data disaggregation, an important means of identifying potential inequalities across different groups,¹⁷ was implemented on topics such as parenthood, safety, medical issues, and wages. Working together with the local team, I recommended additional research questions; for example, survey items on domestic violence services were recommended for incorporation into service-focused data

¹² A. Oberhauser, "Examining gender and community through critical pedagogy," *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 26/1 (2002): 19–31.

¹³ D. Spender, *Man Made Language* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980). D. J. Haraway, "Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective," *Feminist Studies* 3 (1988): 575–599. I. M. Young, *Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays in Feminist Philosophy and Social Theory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990). R. Behar & Gordon D. A., Eds, *Women Writing Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). S. D. Burt & Code L., *Changing Methods: Feminists Transforming Practice* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1995). D. L. Wolf, *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork* (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1996). A. Oakley, *Experiments in Knowing: Gender and Method in the Social Sciences* (London: Polity Press, 2000).

¹⁴ G. Rose, *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* (Oxford: Polity, 1993). L. A. Staeheli & Lawson, V. A., "A discussion of 'Women in the Field': The politics of feminist fieldwork," *Professional Geographer* 46/1 (1980): 96–102. M. Domosh & Seager J., *Putting Women in Place: Feminist Geographers Make Sense of the World* (New York: Guilford Press, 2001). J. Little & Morris, C., *Critical Studies in Rural Gender Issues* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

¹⁵ J. Darke & Cope A., *Trans Inclusion Policy Manual for Women's Organizations*. (Vancouver: Trans Alliance Society, 2002).

¹⁶ Status of Women Canada, "Gender-Based Analysis" (Retrieved April 4, 2005, from http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/resources/gba-evaluation_e.html).

¹⁷ M. E. O'Kelly, & Wook, L., "Disaggregate journey-to-work data: Implications for excess commuting and jobs–Housing balance," *Environment & Planning A* 37/12 (2005): 2233–2252.

collection instruments. An annual team meeting provided an occasion for further development of the gender objectives. To this end, I designed two exercises: a workshop and a gender field-log, both of which employ a feminist methodological strategy of reflexivity.

As a practice, reflexivity encourages researchers to explicitly consider their positioning within research encounters. Positionality has been defined as “describing the social and psychological *context* of historical and geographical agency”.¹⁸ Reflexivity seeks to acknowledge, in necessarily limited ways, that this context affects and indeed *effects* identities, and to consider the consequences of such upon all elements of research, including interview encounters, participant observation and analysis. As a strategy, reflexivity has received criticism for posing “unanswerable” questions to researchers about their own power, agency, and knowledge.¹⁹ Yet, while other interpretive models are available,²⁰ a critical reflexivity, acknowledging the inevitable partiality of any positioning²¹ continues to form a routine part of feminist methodologies, and indeed of qualitative methodologies within geography (see also Bondi, this issue). The ongoing value of reflexive practice is not to request that researchers generate definitive answers about matters of identity, their own or others; instead, the value is in the strategic method of ‘keeping in mind’ the dynamic place of identities, in all their social, political, cultural, spatial contexts, within research practice.

In designing a group workshop and individual research exercises, I aimed to give methodological attention to both the practices and the sites of this research project (namely the research group itself, in its collective and disparate places, and in the research ‘fields’) as the relational spaces where gender as an analytical, conceptual, and methodological process could be highlighted. The next section of the paper addresses these two interventions in more detail.

¹⁸ McDowell & Sharp, 1999, 206.

¹⁹ G. Rose, “Situating knowledges: Positionality, reflexivities and other tactics,” *Progress in Human Geography* 21/3 (1997): 311. Moss’s 2002 overview.

²⁰ P. Moss & Dyck I., *Women, Body, Illness: Space and Identity in the Everyday Lives of Women with Chronic Illness* (Lanham, Md., Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).

²¹ L. Bondi, “Empathy and identification: Conceptual resources for feminist fieldwork.” *ACME* 2/1 (2003): 64–76.

Putting gender interventions into practice: tools and techniques

The workshop

Twenty-five participants including site coordinators, researchers and administrative support staff participated in a 90-minute facilitated workshop on gender at an annual NRE research team meeting held over a long weekend. The forum was held at the start of the weekend meeting, ahead of the other items of research business on the agenda. This placing of the gender workshop at the top of the agenda was strategic, intended to provide a starting place from which people could reflect on gender (effects, experiences, relations, analyses) throughout the remainder of the weekend. In acknowledgment of the differential affects of gender and power which circulate in a diverse group, the workshop was designed to provide a safe and open forum for discussion and debate on gender through the employment of some specific techniques, including facilitation, group work, focused brainstorming and evaluative feedback.

As the facilitator, I opened the workshop with a brief introduction of my newly appointed role within the NRE project and some general comments about institutional (e.g. funding council, universities, and disciplinary) and local (e.g. departments, research teams) expectations for gender-aware research.²² This preamble was intentionally short; the decision to engage the team in an interactive workshop session instead of a lecture emphasizes facilitation instead of direction, reflecting feminist pedagogical critiques of knowledge production as a dominantly authoritative process.²³ Then, I circulated handouts which presented the statement “Gender affects research” and offered some guidelines for small and large-group discussion (see Figure 1). Participants were asked to take a moment to identify their evaluation of this statement on a five-point Likert scale which offered the following choices: strongly disagree, disagree, no opinion, agree, strongly agree.

Following their brief individual consideration, participants were invited to attempt (but were not required) to come to a consensus about this statement in small groups of four to five people. Group discussions offer an energetic and interactive forum which accommodates differing opinions, allows for

²² The team is bilingual (French and English) and all the written materials were made available in both languages; however, I presented the oral part of the workshop in English.

²³ Oberhauser, 2002.

misunderstandings and reformulations, and encourages participants to hone their persuasive skills.²⁴ In my classroom practice I routinely employ small-group discussion in particular, as a pedagogical technique in its own right, as well as, as a lead-in to larger-group (e.g. entire class) discussions. The small-group forum has all the benefits of the group format as described above, and has the added value of allowing for all of this to take place in a less intimidating setting; that is, thoughts can be expressed, considered, reformulated in a semi-private conversation, making a safe(r) space for participants to think through their ideas, identify any potential contradictions, clarify issues of contention, and discuss and compare experiences, before exposing these to the larger group. The workshop participants formed themselves into six groups. An eight-minute timeframe was indicated. This short timeframe was intended to encourage dynamic and focused brainstorming. One particular and unexpected issue was immediately identified: the problematic French translation of the English research materials (discussed in more detail below).

After their discussions, the small groups were invited to report back on their results to the larger group and these findings were recorded on flipchart paper (see Figure 2). The use of flipcharts to record data is a collaborative process that acknowledges knowledge-in-the-making, an emphasis on process that draws from participatory research models²⁵ and resonates with feminist critiques of geographical knowledge production.²⁶ Finally, workshop participants were invited to reflect on the workshop process, offering any feedback on the workshop materials. In addition, the gender field-log exercise (discussed in detail below) was circulated and feedback was solicited.

Workshop discussion: consensus, translations, and tensions

As the recorded flip-chart notes reflect (see Figure 2), the small and large-group discussions generated debate and some dissent over meanings and perceptions of gender and its relationships to research. Four out of six groups reported that they came to a consensus regarding their agreement with the statement 'Gender affects research'. Their responses ranged from 'Strongly Agree' (Groups

²⁴ J. Cameron, "Focusing on the focus group," in *Qualitative Methods in Human Geography*, ed. I.Hay (Victoria: Oxford University Press, 2005), 116–132.

²⁵ See M. S. Pains, "Cultural Geography in a new millennium: Translation, borders, and resistance," *Journal of Cultural Geography* 22/1 (2004):151–153.

²⁶ Rose, 1993.

1 & 3), 'Somewhat Agree' (developed as an additional choice by Group 2), to 'Agree' (Group 5). These groups raised a number of issues to support their case. For example, Group 1 argued for the gendered nature of researchers' perceptions of gender, and how this may influence feelings of safety in research settings, and noted that gender may also affect the ability of researchers to create rapport in a research encounter. Group 3 also suggested that gender affected research encounters and provided the example of interviews to suggest that women interviewing women created a different set of experiences and comfort levels for both researcher and participant than did women interviewing men or men interviewing women. Group 5 agreed that gender affects the rationale for and aims of research – that is, what one chooses to investigate and why – and argued that there is a gender component to research methods. However, this group expressed uncertainty about the usefulness of the statement 'gender affects research'. Group 2 suggested gender is one among many forces which may structure research relationships.

The remaining two groups (4 & 6) made no selection. Group 4 reported that their members could not come to a consensus; however, they noted that multiple factors, including language and ethnicity were important to consider in addition to gender. Group 6 argued that the statement 'gender affects research' offered only limited notions of gender and gender difference, and as such, did not adequately address related issues, such as sexuality. These concerns are also reflected in Group 5's query about the wording of the statement 'gender affects research', and Group 2's finding that the 5-point scale was too limited for their nuanced discussion. For a researcher/facilitator, this kind of feedback reflecting participants' thoughts on the usefulness of the method of data collection is invaluable.

Another important issue that was raised in the workshop was the literal translation of the French workshop materials. Maintaining documents in both English and French is a key aspect of the NRE project, so all workshop and field log materials were translated from English to French by the translator, a long-term member of the research team. However, the translations raised concerns among the French speakers on the team around the issue of an appropriate rendering of the concept 'gender'. Specifically, the French speakers on the team disagreed with the translator's rendering of 'gender' into the French 'sexe' –instead, they argued, 'genre' was more appropriate. This conversation precipitated a lengthy debate between me, on behalf of the Francophone team

members, and the project translator, who argued initially for maintaining the translation 'sexe'. As my French language skills are insufficient for such a task, I consulted a feminist translator. She offered the following view:

there is nothing wrong with translating *gender* with *sexe* per se. It was (and is) the traditional usage, now considered as relevant in biology or medical science. However, usage has vastly evolved over the last 10 years or so and to convey the feminist connotation, especially in academic circles, the word *genre* is now the norm. Even [the] adjective gendered has produced *genré* (gendered approach = *approche genrée*) and gender bender is *transgenre*. *Le genre*, as a social and anthropological notion in French, started in sociology in Europe around 1989. *Le sexe* is considered to refer to the biological fact. (...). Translating feminist materials is not an easy task.

Indeed. As our transnational email discussions progressed, the project translator came to agree with this language choice, and noted in an email:

I am glad that we went through this exercise. Language is constantly in flux and new words/expressions, as well as new meanings attributed to existing words/expressions are constantly being created. I now see the benefit in having a more neutral term such as "genre" used in an academic context.

While the 'neutrality' of the concept of gender is debatable, this positive, iterative process highlighted the practical aspects of translating a complex construct with social, political, cultural and spatial dimensions both literally and symbolically.²⁷ For this discussion alone, the workshop proved to be a valuable exercise.

Geographical discourse in Canada, as in other countries, is arguably dominated by one language: English. Within such a limited and hegemonic field for discussion, attending to issues and implications of translation is critical.²⁸ As Susan Mains²⁹ has argued: "If we want to engage with dialogues about difference and culture then developing the linguistic skills and financial support to do this is essential."

27 J. Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990). L. Bondi & Davidson J., "Troubling the place of gender" in *Handbook of Cultural Geography*, ed. M. D. Kay Anderson, Steve Pile & Nigel Thrift (London: Sage, 2003), 325–343. G. Valentine, "Theorizing and researching intersectionality: A challenge for Feminist Geography," *Professional Geographer* 59/1 (2007): 10–21.

28 R. J. Short, Boniche A. & Yeong Kim, P.L.L., "Cultural Globalization, Global English, and Geography Journals," *The Professional Geographer* 53/1, (2001): 1–11.

29 Susan Mains, 2004, 52.

Yet there are few concessions to this need;³⁰ instead, human geography journals have been critiqued for the lack of international content³¹ (a notable exception is the online geographical journal, ACME which accepts submissions in English, French, Italian, German or Spanish). To prevent gender from being ‘lost in translation’, the NRE team members worked together to identify a problematic translation, and invested time, money, and intellectual energy in translating materials in context. While language makes issues of translation explicit, arguably, gender is always productively approached as an exercise in translation due to its shifting meanings over time and across spaces.

The workshop was also noteworthy for what is not and perhaps cannot clearly be captured by flipchart notes: the tangible and intangible ways in which the introduction of gender is also the introduction of a gender politics. Gender analysis is accompanied, for better or worse, by expectations of feminist ideologies.³² The introduction of such politicized material (still) disturbs the status quo of academic claims to knowledge production, as well as long-established gendered hierarchies within the academy and beyond. In this workshop, tensions circulated in the room as people (student researchers, faculty researchers, team leaders, and other project members; men and women; senior and junior, and so on) advocated for their particular positions on the relationships between gender and research. These tensions, not easily set down on the flipchart, were nevertheless present and some people conveyed their analysis of these to me during the remainder of the long weekend team meeting and afterwards. For example, I received an email from one attendee, in specific reference to the workshop: “I was a little surprised not only that gender is still a topic of discussion but that it still seems to elicit a disturbing response.” Raising issues of gender is clearly still a matter of creating a ‘disturbance’. Gender remained a provocative topic throughout the four-day research meeting. In contrast to the email quoted above, I find it unsurprising that discussing gender generated such reactions within this group. Within academia, there is much invested in both identity and relatedly, in the identification of one’s relative status; as

³⁰ But see I. D. H. Shepherd, Monk, J. J. & Fortuijn, J. D., “Internationalising geography in higher education: Towards a conceptual framework,” *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 24/2 (2000): 285–298. J. D. Fortuijn, “Internationalising learning and teaching: A European experience,” *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 26/3 (2002): 263–273.

³¹ J. Gutierrez & Lopez-Nieva P., “Are international journals of Human Geography really international?” *Progress in Human Geography* 25/1 (2001): 53–69.

³² Moss, 2002.

Oberhauser³³ notes in reference to geography courses, “the inclusion of feminist issues [...] often questions identity and power.” It is noteworthy that students, relatively less powerfully positioned within the context of the research team, seemed to more readily offer their comments on gender outside of the public space of the workshop. For example, some students reported ongoing gender-based joking and commentary in their meeting notes. One researcher reported the following:

[There was talk] about the BBQ tomorrow night.... Joe³⁴ commented that “men only like to cook outside.” Then I got to thinking about why a woman could not help with the BBQing. I would have like to have helped out but was shy to say so because it seemed as though it was already decided who was going to be BBQing. After Joe’s comment there were a few snid[e] remarks about how there was a gender-specialist in the room.

As the ‘gender-specialist’, I was approached privately by two other student researchers who confided that their gender-related research interests had not been made welcome in the wider project. Their strategy in both cases was to do that research outside of the NRE project. Other students approached me to express their pleasure that gender analysis was at last becoming part of the project. Other reactions were less direct and took the form of ‘back of the room’ jibes and ‘humour’. As the body ‘bringing gender’ to the NRE, I was highly conscious of all the responses, whether positive and encouraging, dismissive or hostile. Additionally, as a new team member, with a freshly granted doctorate and one positioned as ‘the’ feminist scholar, I submit that my very presence was part of the gender dynamics at work. It was precisely my methodological intent to use the workshop as a forum to raise issues, concerns and debates about gender in research, in a kind of ‘clear the air’ strategy at the start of the research meeting. However, a more experienced facilitator, perhaps with a longer-term affiliation with the project, might have been better equipped to manage the tensions this forum engendered. In addition, a series of meetings over time may also offer better results. Gender is both ubiquitous and a complexly, heavily-weighted series of questions and concerns. Multiple meetings

³³ Oberhauser 2002, 21.

³⁴ Name altered.

can be “a particularly useful strategy when participants are being asked to explore new and unfamiliar topics or to think about an apparently familiar topic in a new way.”³⁵

Ultimately, I found the workshop format useful for acknowledging and accommodating a diversity of knowledges and experiences about gender and about research, encouraging reflexive thinking, and putting the objective of promoting and enhancing gender analysis into practice. While tensions were raised, these tensions had some productive outcomes, including the opportunity for some student researchers to convey their concerns about gender-related issues, the chance for the whole team to profit from an important multi-layered exchange about language translation, and the learning experience about facilitating gender-awareness afforded to me as facilitator.

Gender field logs

The second exercise designed for this gender intervention involved encouraging student researchers to reflect on gender as part of their summer fieldwork experiences. Existing NRE practice involves the research teams at each research site maintaining log books of contacts made, issues discussed, and researcher comments; therefore, I proposed a gender awareness exercise to be incorporated into these field logs. The exercise was designed to enhance researcher awareness of the ways in which gender may affect research. Field researchers were provided with an information sheet on gender, including hints for how they might think explicitly about gender in their fieldwork practice, and a selected reference list for further reading (see Figure 3, p. 1-2). The information sheet detailed ways in which research practices and outcomes may be affected by gender and gender relations. For example, gender may affect how questions are interpreted or answered; who is available to answer questions; individual or group sense of authority; and group dynamics (e.g. who is talking, who is listening³⁶).

³⁵ Cameron, 2005, 124.

³⁶ D. Tannen, *Gender and Conversational Interaction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

Gender may also influence perceptions of ‘safe’ or ‘unsafe’ spaces³⁷ or result in privileged or restricted access to certain spaces. Fieldwork itself has been steadily critiqued as a masculinist³⁸ or, at best, an ambivalent³⁹ practice.

The suggested tips for thinking explicitly about gender included: using the technique of reversal to consider situations from a differently gendered point of view; thinking about how use of space in a fieldwork setting might be gendered; considering how language is used in reference to gender; considering beliefs or perceptions about men and women, masculinity and femininity, and evaluating if gender may prevent or facilitate certain actions or activities. In addition to our asking researchers to consider these concerns of gender in their field logs, we asked them to complete an attached short questionnaire halfway through their fieldwork period (see Figure 3, p. 3). The questionnaire consisted of a series of ‘either/or’ questions, which they were then asked to further elaborate on:

- I do/don’t think my access to or experience of homes, other interview spaces, or other research spaces (e.g. my fieldwork accommodation) has been affected by gender
- I do/don’t think my gender is influencing the way my research respondents react to me
- I do/don’t think my gender is influencing how I relate to my research respondents
- I do/don’t think my research interactions have been affected by my respondent’s gender
- I do/don’t think my research interactions have been affected by my gender
- I do/don’t think about my personal safety during my research

These questions were designed to stimulate the researchers to consider if gender affects their research practice. Respondents were also invited to elaborate on their choice of responses, and to add comments, make observations or pose questions on the subject of gender and research.

³⁷ A. Mehta & Bondi L., “Embodied discourse: On gender and fear of violence,” *Gender Place and Culture* 6/1 (1999): 67–84. J. Little, Panelli, R. & Kraack, A., “Women’s fear of crime: A rural perspective,” *Journal of Rural Studies* 21/2 (2005): 151–163.

³⁸ Rose, 1993.

³⁹ J. P. Sharp, “Gender and geography: Feminist methodologies in collaboration and in the field,” *Progress in Human Geography* 29/3 (2005): 304–309.

Gender field logs discussion

Out of twenty-four possible respondents, nineteen completed gender field exercises were submitted by research assistants from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds (e.g. geography, sociology, anthropology). Of these, sixteen respondents identified as female and three as male (see Figure 4). This is clearly a significant weighting towards female research assistants. This did not, of course, produce a homogenous data-set in response to the gender-specific questions; however, the three male respondents almost uniformly indicated that their gender did not affect their research, with the exception of Student 5 who noted that he did think about personal safety in the field. On the whole, the questions generated a variety of responses from both the 'I do' and 'I don't' categories from all respondents, although the 'I don't' responses equalled or surpassed the 'I do' figures in almost every category (see Figure 4). For example, fourteen respondents indicated that their access to research spaces (homes, fieldwork accommodation, other research sites) was not affected by gender, and just over half of these (ten), noted that their research interactions had not been affected by gender.

For those who selected 'I do' answers, several issues were raised as researchers elaborated on their selection. For example, perceptions of public and private spaces, the suitability of topics for discussion, modes of interview engagements, and personal safety, were all seen to be affected by gender. One research assistant noted her experience of interview spaces as gendered places:

The majority of respondents have been very accommodating to our requests and have graciously opened up their homes and work spaces to us. If there is any distinction regarding our treatment by male or female respondents, I believe that it would be fair to say that females seemed more willing to share information. I also believe that we were welcomed into private homes in way[s] that two men may not have been. Our interviews with female[s] were almost always in their homes (one was held at a Tim Horton's) while interviews with males were almost entirely outside of the home (at a community centre, at a fire hall, at their place of work). Only one meeting with a male was held at his residence. While waiting for him to return from work, his wife probably shared more information in our informal chat than he did during the interview (Student 1).

Researchers who did not feel that gender affected their research still commented that gender was an issue in the places of their research. One research assistant offered his observation:

I do not believe that gender has in any way affected the answers which have been given to me during my research in [community]. Furthermore, there seems to be a fairly equal division of power between genders in the [community] office. However, there are clear gender divisions in the community. Males are expected to work in the mill while females fill support roles (stores, bank, post office, etc) (Student 15).

This distinction between the effects of gender on research and the effect of gender in the place of research suggests that more discussion of such nuances would be valuable. Relatedly, other students noted a number of other factors that affected how researchers are responded to in research settings, including their affiliation with the research project and the university, their age, language, and ethnic identity.

In additional comments, one researcher noted the existence of more than two genders and pointed out that the questionnaire did not provide the space to conceptualize about gender in a more inclusive sense (e.g. did not encompass trans-gendered individuals). Another researcher noted that the study would benefit from a section addressing the influence of gender on interactions between researchers and their supervisors and fellow colleagues, a suggestion supported by the workshop experience described above.

Inviting researchers to actively reflect on their research experiences in this way was designed to encourage the development of their gender awareness in the field. These last observations indicate how an opened-ended call for comments, observations and questions can also produce valuable evaluative material. Such responses can be directed usefully into recommendations for good practice within large and small research teams, and highlight further areas for consideration. Overall, this exercise satisfactorily met the objective of encouraging gender-aware fieldwork practices within the NRE. However, as with the workshop, a longer-term method of reporting, with opportunities for ongoing revision of assessment tools might generate more substantive shifts in research practice.

The complexities of gender interventions: Conclusions and recommendations

The idea that gender as an analytical framework can be neatly imported into any research setting is an overly simplistic rendering of a complex conceptual process.⁴⁰ Further, the notion that any one person could ‘bring gender’ anywhere, to anyone, arguably confers an impossible level of power on that person.⁴¹ That is, such a task presumes both a universal representation of gender and the unproblematic transferability of knowledge. The most challenging aspect of implementing this gender intervention then was to develop concrete ways to communicate the *how* of gender analysis, to outline a practical, applicable method of gender analysis, while remaining aware of the limitations of such an agenda. These limitations include the potentially negative responses to or assumptions made about feminist epistemological or methodological frameworks. As Moss⁴² has remarked: “Feminism as a politics is sometimes difficult to grasp for those not already committed.”

This paper has described a gender intervention involving two specific elements: a gender workshop and a field log exercise. The challenge of this process was to translate the conceptual and experiential complexity of gender and the politics of gender analysis into substantive practices with the aim of enhancing gender awareness across a diverse research team. I choose to direct my energies toward the workshop and the field log as tangible sites for practicing gender awareness.

The workshop created a space to raise issues, concerns and debates about gender in research and the field log allowed for individual reflection on these same ideas and experiences. These methodological strategies both draw from feminist theorizations about reflexivity and also emphasise the significance of the multi-dimensional spaces of our research encounters. While reflexivity is far from unproblematic, a critical reflexivity can encourage thinking through research practice. However, thinking through gender is politically charged, being infused with particular (often feminist) meanings which shift over time and across spaces. In attending to gender, it is difficult to engender many tangible results, and gender analysis is more usefully conceived as a continuous and evolving process, rather than a fixed exercise involving a series of ‘either/or’ questions.

⁴⁰ Butler, 1990; Bondi & Davidson, 2003; Valentine, 2007.

⁴¹ See Rose, 1997.

⁴² Moss, 2002, 13.

Nonetheless, providing detailed descriptions of how researchers are trying to keep gender on the research agenda is part of that process, and adds to teaching and fieldwork resources. I have attempted to detail explicit methodological strategies, as well as to provide them in material form (see appendices), with the hope that these will add to such resources, and contribute to enhancing the rigour of qualitative research practices within geography.⁴³ Substantive reporting of such detail facilitates an opening up of the research process and creates a space for ongoing debate, methodological critique and revision.

⁴³ G. Valentine, "Relevance and rigour: The advantages of reusing and scaling up qualitative data," *Environment and Planning A* 38/3 (2006): 413–415.

FIGURES

1. Gender Workshop Exercise
2. Flipchart Data from Gender Workshop
3. Gender Field Log Information & Exercise
4. *Gender in the Field* Exercise Data

Figure 1: Gender Workshop Exercise

Thinking about **gender**

1. Please assess your level of agreement with the following statement:

Gender affects research

STRONGLY DISAGREE DISAGREE NO OPINION AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

2. Small Group Discussion (8 minutes)

In groups of 4-5 people discuss your selections and attempt to come to a consensus before reporting back to the larger group.

3. Large Group Discussion (5 minutes)

Where on the scale did your group settle and why?

Figure 2: Flip Chart Results of Gender Workshop

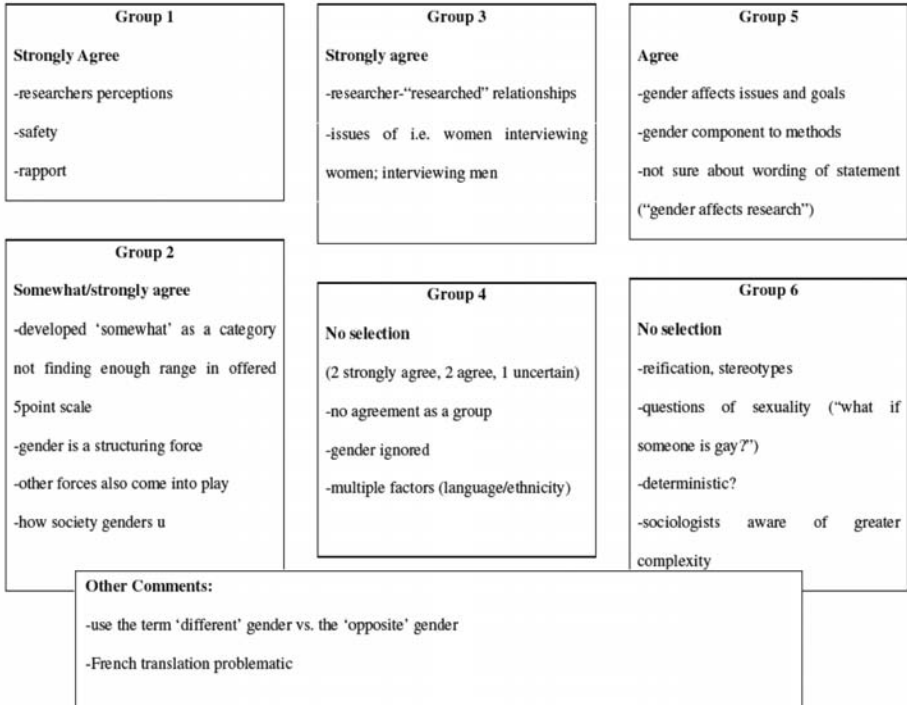


Figure 3: Gender Field Log Information and Exercise

THINKING ABOUT GENDER IN YOUR FIELDWORK PRACTICE

Deborah Thien, PhD (April 2005)

What is gender? Gender affects how we act, what we do with our lives, how we look, how we feel, and how and where we interact with others.

Gender can be broken down into a number of aspects:

- *Gender roles*: socially determined ‘rules’ about appropriate feminine or masculine behaviour (e.g. only women wear skirts, only men are action-oriented)
- *Gender presentation*: external demonstrations of gender (e.g. clothing, patterns of speech, behaviour)
- *Gender identity*: internal perceptions of self and identity in relationship to socio-cultural norms of ‘female’ or ‘male’ (e.g. identifying as more or less than, the same as, or different from perceived gender norms)
- *Gender spaces*: places that elicit experiences of gender or that are created by gender (e.g. a women-only centre, the girls’ or boys’ ‘side’ of a party)

All of these aspects of gender intersect to produce multiple outcomes.

Why consider gender in fieldwork?

Gender may affect:

- *Interviews*: how questions are interpreted and/or answered
- *Sample selection*: who is available for answering your questions
- *Power dynamics*: individual or group senses of authority (e.g. who is talking, who is listening?)
- *Mobility*: experiences of ‘safe’ or ‘unsafe’ spaces, privileged or restricted access to certain places
- *Analysis*: how you make sense of your data
- *Theory*: which ideas you give weight to

Gendering your field log As you complete the daily task of writing in your field logs, please note if or how gender is affecting your fieldwork. You will find some hints to help you on the reverse of this page. You will also find some references for further reading.

Exercise When you have completed **roughly half** of your fieldwork time, please complete the attached exercise. Again, make use of the information provided to assist you. Please attach this completed exercise to your field log.

Hints for thinking about gender in your fieldwork practice:

- Use the technique of reversal:
 - Imagine how an interview might have been different if you or your respondent had the opposite gender: Would you talk about the same things, in the same way? Would you relate to your interview respondent with the same degree of comfort/discomfort? Would you be conducting the interview in the same place, under the same circumstances?

- Think about your use of space in the fieldwork setting:
 - Do you walk alone at night?
 - Would you walk into a restaurant alone? A bar?
 - Do you feel comfortable/uncomfortable entering certain stores? Why?
 - Where are you holding interviews and why?
 - Are you comfortable/uncomfortable in your fieldwork accommodation?
 - Do you feel visible or invisible in the fieldwork community?

- Think about how you and those around you use language:
 - Would you apply the following words to both genders equally?: domineering, strong, courteous, sweet, courageous, gentle, devoted, kind, frank, pushy, noble, fierce, fearful, nervous, skittish, cute, silent, reserved...
 - Do you use the term “you guys” for groups of men and women?

- Consider what beliefs or perceptions you hold about men and women, masculinity and femininity:
 - How would you complete the following sentences: “Women/ Men are...”; If someone is masculine/feminine this means...”?
 - Have you ever felt you couldn’t or shouldn’t do something because of your gender?

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EXERCISE: GENDER IN THE FIELD

Please circle the appropriate response:

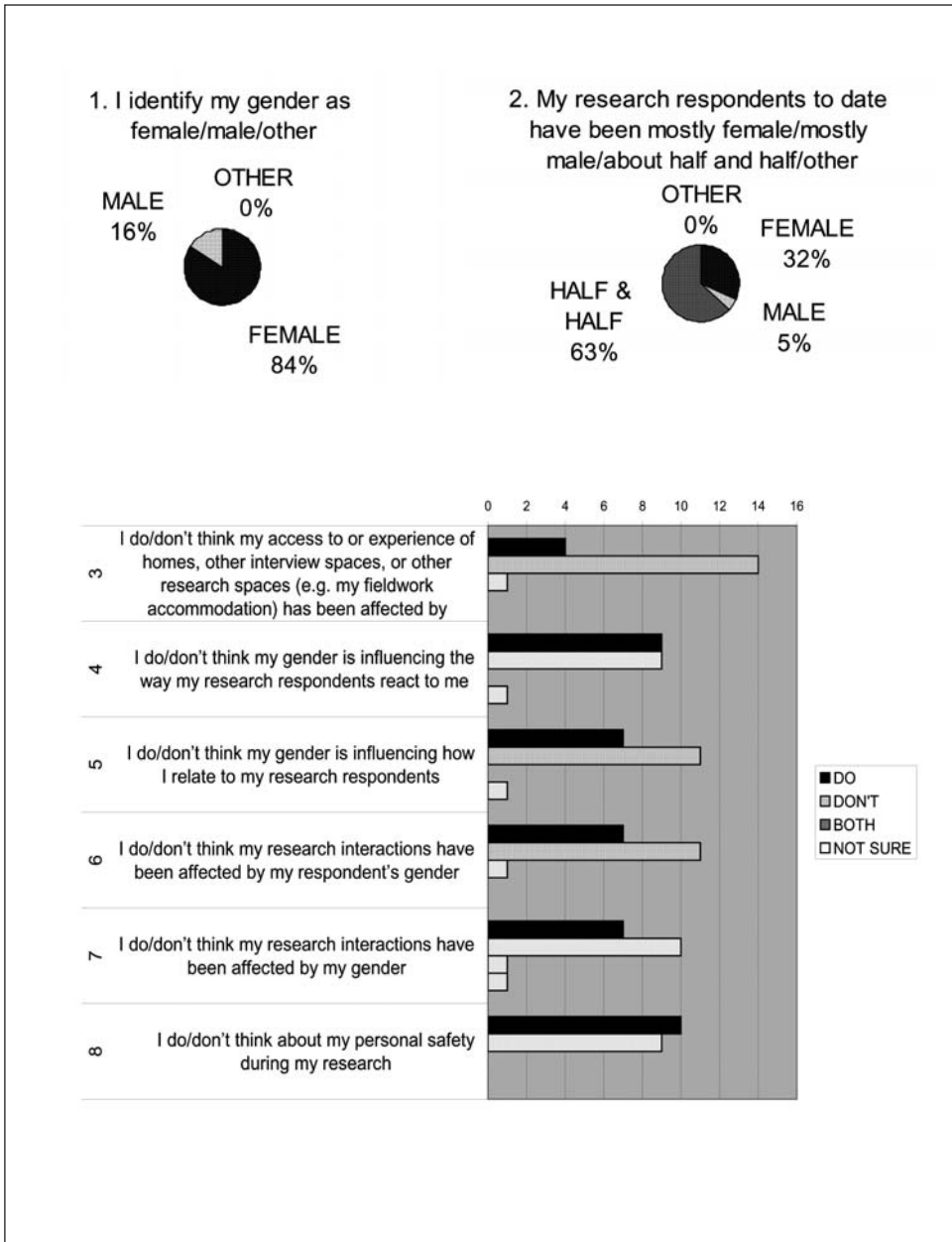
- 1) I am female / male
- 2) My interview respondents have been mostly
female/mostly male/about half and half
- 3) I do / don't think my access to or experience of homes, other interview
spaces, or other research spaces (e.g. my fieldwork accommodation)
has been affected by gender
- 4) I do / don't think my gender is influencing the way my interview
respondents react to me
- 5) I do / don't think my gender is influencing how I related to my
interview respondents
- 6) I do / don't think my interviews have been affected by my
respondent's gender
- 7) I do / don't think my interviews have been affected by my gender
- 8) I do / don't think about my personal safety during my fieldwork

Please elaborate below on your responses to statements 3-8 (please use the reverse of this page or additional sheets as needed):

Any additional comments, observations or questions you would like to make on the subject of gender and fieldwork?:

Thank you for your time –
 Your confidential responses will be summarized for future research practice.

Figure 4: Gender in the Field Exercise Data



Acknowledgements

My thanks to the NRE research team and my postdoctoral supervisor, Greg Halseth, for supporting my postdoctoral endeavours. The following people were an invaluable part of this research process: Laura Ryser, Chelan Hoffman and Shiloh Durkee. Thanks to Laurel Van de Keere for her research assistance in later stages of this project. My sincere thanks also to Liz Bondi, Joyce Davidson, Bettina van Hoven, Helen Jarvis and Avril Maddrell for their participation in the session, *Gender Interventions*, at the AAG, Chicago 2006, within which the first iteration of this paper was presented. Special thanks to my co-editor, Joyce Davidson. Finally, thanks to the anonymous reviewers and Avril Maddrell for their keen attention to this manuscript. Any errors of interpretation or explanation remain my own.

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A 'prototype' MA module on gender/sexuality, diversity and urban space

Anastasia–Sasa Lada

Introduction

“Gender, diversity and urban space” is one of the projects that originated under the umbrella of *Athena* –a Socrates Thematic Network Project bringing together over 100 Women’s and Gender Studies programmes, institutes and documentation centers across Europe. *Athena 2* (2003-2006) was awarded three years funding to enable *Athena* partners to continue and deepen their work, with a particular emphasis on the development of diverse educational tools within Women’s and Gender Studies across Europe.

Until now, issues of space and urbanity have been rather a minor presence within European Women’s and Gender Studies. Being an architect myself and a member of *Athena* network since its establishment in 1996, my intention has been to initiate a separate and discernible activity in regard to gender, diversity and urban space, within the activities of *Athena 2* and *Athena 3*. This activity developed in the context of one of the three main areas of *Athena 2* activities, called “Working from a core curriculum to a core European perspective”. Its aim is to set up a pilot project in the form of a ‘prototype’ module at MA level on gender/sexuality, diversity and urban space in a European perspective.

The subject matter of this module is the raising and articulating of the significance of spatiality and urbanity in the construction of gender and sexual identities and vice-versa. This thematic focus could be a way of exploring how sexual identities are constructed and performed across space, in relation to issues of citizenship and migration, violence in the city and at home, prostitution, etc. The study of the multilayered, complex and contradictory situations in contemporary European cities where gender/sexuality intersects with other axes of difference and power, is crucial to the development of a multicultural ethos and of new identities. This approach means that gender/sexuality is treated not as a separate category, but is introduced as an ‘intersectional’ point of view in which gender interacts with other axes of difference and power. It is an approach that therefore could provide a common ground for disciplines such as geography, urban sociology, anthropology, city planning and architecture where up until now Women’s/ Gender studies have played a minor role.

The aim of this project is to strengthen the links and increase the synergy between such teaching and research that focus on urban space and gender in the fields of geography, architecture, psychology, sociology and history. Indeed, the Athena partners working within 'Gender, diversity and urban space' come from a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds, university departments and parts of Europe. The disciplinary profiles of the participants range from anthropology, sociology, urban sociology, comparative literature, political science, philosophy, cultural studies, urban studies and architecture, geography, history of art and women's studies. In the attached map, one can see the disciplinary and cultural dispersal of the group members (figure 1 map of WG 1B members). In one way or the other, all the participants have developed courses in relation to the topic area of the project as a whole. These courses can be found, among others, on the on-line questionnaire we developed.¹

This paper will introduce readers to the aims of the project and give an indication of what we have achieved so far.

Why do we need this multidisciplinary/intersectional approach?

An approach which examines the role of spatiality in the construction of gender and sexuality and vice-versa is necessary if we want to introduce spatiality into women's/gender studies and simultaneously to introduce the gender/sexual dimension of space into the 'spatial' disciplines. Until now, disciplines interested in spatial questions, such as architecture and city planning, have not been particularly interested in gender issues. One could almost maintain that gender, especially the female one, if related to space and its design is seen as something 'impure' which spoils the abstract and neutral purity of the whole discipline. On the other hand, the discipline of Women's Studies has lately concentrated to a large extent on issues relating to identity, subjectivity or the various bodily differences. However, in doing so it has often ignored the questions related to 'space' and/ or 'place' with regard to these differences.

When studying spatial/urban issues, our project aims, to make use of the theoretical developments within women's studies. We intend to highlight the ways in which space and its use are invaded by various gendered norms and to focus on the ways in which the actual use of space requires, enforces or excludes certain types of gendered subject. The correlation of gender identities,

¹ www.let.uu.nl/womens_studies/athena, <http://www.athena2.org/index.php>, <http://www.athena3.org/>

sexualities and urban space is not something imposed from outside. Nor is it a question of a relationship between three, already constructed, matters or situations. Most probably, it is a relationship of interaction and co-construction placed within a greater framework of correlation and mediation where ethics, economy, ideologies and politics are intimately linked. It would be very convenient, if these (three) categories had a universal, fixed meaning, if they referred to a stable situation characterized by homogeneity, cohesion, resilience and definite allocated boundaries. But they don't, and never did.

Cities and sexualities both shape and are shaped by the dynamics of human social life. They reflect the ways in which social life is organized, the ways in which it is represented, perceived and understood and the ways in which various groups cope with and react to these conditions. The density and cultural complexity of cities has led to frequent portrayals of sexual diversity and freedom as peculiarly urban phenomena. Recently, gender research on the different meanings, concepts, representations, accessibility and usage of urban space and time has engendered a fertile discussion of the topics in hand. It has also led to the production of books, articles, conference papers, that relocate the analysis of urban space in relation to the construction of gender identities, sexualities and the contemporary appropriation of "urban" bodies. Questions asked are: who are the cities being planned for? what is the role of urban planning and architecture in the social construction of gender, sexual identities and sexualized bodies?; Also, despite the fact that there is a good understanding, so far, of the 'new' theoretical framework, the question is where we can 'place' the resulting content of our work on gender, diversity and urban space? For this theoretical understanding has not led simultaneously to the formation of similar courses, either within women's studies and/or in the 'spatial' disciplines. In other words, there is a 'poor' integration of this subject into the curricula of the European Universities.

Work plan

The project has taken three linked directions. The first is a mapping, analysis and evaluation of existing curricula and courses at the partner universities with regard to integration of diversity and space. This activity has also been extended to other departments and/ or universities that have courses and/ or programs on these issues from a feminist perspective. The second direction focuses on

the transmission of our experience of the development of a ‘prototype’ MA teaching module on gender, diversity and urban space that will be tested and evaluated. The partner universities involved will benefit from the pilot project and the outcomes of the evaluation which, as well as providing a foundation for the development of new modules, can be fed back into the existing courses and curricula. The third direction focuses on the implementation of the outcomes of this project in the development of new joint European MA programmes in Women and Gender Studies and into all TN activities related to curriculum development. In more detail:

1. Mapping the field: on line questionnaire

In order to collect information about existing courses relevant to the topic of our project, we decided to create an on-line questionnaire.² This questionnaire was prepared by Erna Kotkamp, member in ATHENA’s ICT-coordination, and was presented in her article.³ This on-line questionnaire, that was available to both ATHENA partners and non-partners, enabled them to add courses offered around the topic of gender, diversity and urban space. Not only does the questionnaire offer people the option of viewing these courses, but it also allows them to add and edit their own relevant courses. Until now, an impressive collection of 25 courses has become available. These courses have provided us with a first mapping of similar courses at many European Universities.

2. Working group meetings—open seminars

The gender, diversity and urban space working group has really taken off over the last years. We have had several meetings, and new members have joined as well. In addition to the general ATHENA’s meetings in Helsinki in May 2004 and Barcelona in May 2005, we have had two extra meetings, one in Thessaloniki in January 2005 and one in Groningen in December 2005. Parallel to activities of the working group, we organized, a one day open seminar within the Universities both of Thessaloniki and of Groningen. In these seminars, members of our group, invited speakers and PhD students presented theoretical and/or educational work that related to the topic of our working group. In many ways these seminars have had, a multiple effect in strengthening the interdisciplinary profile of our group. We have had the opportunity to

² http://www.athena2.org/1b2/all_courses.php

³ Erna Kotkamp, “The software independency of ATHENA. A brief overview of central ICT activities,” in *The making of European women’s studies*, Volume VI. May 2005, 16-25.

exchange and discuss our theoretical, educational and methodological origins and to establish a common ground by formulating similarities and differences. This was extremely necessary and helpful, given all our different discipline backgrounds. Moreover, feminist theories have been so formulated as to make our communication and exchange viable. Nevertheless, it was evident, at the same time, that the task of linking conceptual complexity and the necessity for educational diversity within European Women's Studies is only just beginning to be recognized.

3. Teaching module design

The MA teaching module 'Gender, Diversity and urban space' will provide a better understanding of the construction of gender identities within the context of contemporary European cities. The MA or PhD level prototype module course will be introduced either in Women's/Gender Studies Departments or in "Space related" Departments.

Basic structure of the course

The basic course structure will be organized in three thematic areas:

Introduction to:

- Space/Gender theories. Emphasis will be given to the approaches that juxtapose both

Core Course:

- Theories and perspectives from cultural politics and identities
- Cultural politics (sexuality, race, ethnicity), urban cultures, men's and women's life styles, urban experiences
- Questions of identity: gender identity as well as identity of place. Identity politics.

"Local Option" (focus on specific issues, local conditions)

Experience, production, representation and use of urban space. Ways of understanding urban space – New issues and changing situations: (in)security, fear, (im)mobility, (in)visibility, materiality, etc.

Duration of the course

We discussed two options that can be applied:
an expanded version of one cluster of eight weeks for each of the three parts of the course; a short version of one cluster of eight weeks for all the three parts of the course.

Most important questions to guide the design of the analytical course

In order to highlight and elaborate on the analytical course design the following important questions could be answered. The answers would be specific to the different context in which they are posed each time.

What is the aim for the design of the course?

- From what disciplines do we expect students to attend the course?
What would students be able to accomplish after the course?

What part does gender have in the course and why?

- How is gender conceived in the course? What would students be able to accomplish after the course with respect to gender and urban space?

What do we consider the added value of the courses for the discipline we work/teach in (humanities, geography etc)? Is it theoretical, methodological, practical? How does the course contribute to putting gender and urban space on the agenda of different disciplines? (e.g. is gender given a more important place, do some disciplines pay more attention to gender, is urban space made an issue in gender studies?)

What specific issues do we encounter in designing and teaching this course: in different disciplinary environments. Within different educational traditions? How do we understand and permit diversity in the design of the module?

Assignment suggestions

To conclude the course, a final written exam has to be designed that is in line with the specific design of the course. We prepared a list of assignments which can be selected and adapted according to context and need. The themes and sub-themes, that we propose should be elaborated on in the form of assignments, give some idea of the pedagogical and methodological identity of the course. For an analytical description of assignment suggestions see Appendix 1.

a. Urban space from various perspectives

Finding out about (possibly implicit) frames of reference. Men, masculinity, heterosexuality, youth, middle class identity, health and ethnic majority status may be some (possibly implicit) elements within a city's frame of reference.

- a.1 Public advertisements: observing masculinities, femininities, diversity
- a.2 Citizen's concerns: collect data from interviews with people living in the city

b. Gender and space

Observing diversity in how people use space and how space influences people's behavior

- b.1 Using space: extended options
Compare your observations to those of other students and the scientific literature on this issue and draw your conclusions from this.

c. Doing gender

Find out how you determine whether a person you encounter is female or male. What exactly makes you think the person is female/male? What do you take as "male only" cues, what do you take as "female only" cues?

- c.1 Normative dimensions of gender: Gender is not just about differences between women and men; it is about dominance, inequality, hierarchy to begin with
- c.2 Gender in institutions
- c.3 Gender in professions
- c.4 Gender and science

Developing new 'module' courses

In the academic year 2005–2006 the members of our project Dina Vaiou, Giorgos Marnelakis and Rouly Lykogianni introduced and ran a new course on 'Gendered Cultural approaches of Urban Space' in the Postgraduate Program: Urban and Regional Planning in the National Technical University of Athens. We are looking forward to discussing and evaluating its outcomes in the near future. You can find its analytical description in Appendix 2. Also, Réka Geambasu, designed a course on "Gender construction patterns in the complex modern cities" which is primarily addressed to sociology and/or anthropology students. Its analytical description can be found in Appendix 3.

Final note

This paper has presented and discussed facets of the work in progress with regard to the curriculum design concerning 'Gender, diversity and urban space' in a European perspective. Because of its international and collaborative nature, this project was and still is a great experience. What has not been discussed here is this great experience gained as members of an international collaborative team. We have met, discussed, planned and published consistently over the last three years, despite the fact that the actual output of collaborative work is always a fractional representation of the labour involved. As the negotiation of cultural, geographical and merely personality differences were part of our meetings, we have learned a good deal about the difficulties of international collaborative work along the way. In this type of activity, the group dynamic should be such a central object of inquiry. Indeed I would suggest that a reflexive process is inevitably a central part of collaborative feminist work that is interested in attending to geo-political inequality, particularly when geographical and linguistic borders are central to that endeavor.

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Appendix 1

GENDER, DIVERSITY AND URBAN SPACE: ASSIGNMENT SUGGESTIONS

Prepared by Ine Gremmen

GENERAL REMARKS

A final exam or paper to round off the course has to be designed in line with the specific design of the course in question. Apart from this, some suggestions for assignments to be selected and adapted according to context and need are listed below. Some ideas behind the assignment suggestions below are added in italics.

URBAN SPACE FROM VARIOUS PERSPECTIVES

Finding out about (possibly implicit) frames of reference.

Men, masculinity, heterosexuality, youth, middle class identity, health and ethnic majority status, may be some (possibly implicit) elements within a city's frame of reference.

Arrange for a wheelchair ride for half an hour, at least, in a city's centre.

- What are your experiences as a driver, and as a passenger?
- What obstacles and opportunities do you encounter, i.e. how are you being facilitated or hindered?
- What do these obstacles or opportunities stand for i.e. what is implicitly taken as the frame of reference in the city centre's design/structure/characteristics?
- What is left out, not taken into account?

Collect all the findings and draw conclusions on what is and is not taken into account. What is the (explicit or implicit) frame of reference in the city centre's design/structure/characteristics?

URBAN SPACE FROM VARIOUS PERSPECTIVES: EXTENDED AND ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- Add doing some shopping
- Arrange for a walk with a child's buggy
- Add taking a bus or a metro
- Take a hospital, a children's day care centre, a home for the elderly, a shopping mall as the site for this assignment
- Arrange for a walk through the city centre (or other site) with a blind person or with a person who is deaf. Or let yourself be blindfolded and accompanied
- Focus on sounds/noise or on what can be smelled, as well.
- Walk around trying to imagine that you are a homeless person.
- Walk around trying to imagine that you are an illegal immigrant.

PUBLIC ADVERTISEMENTS

Observing masculinities, femininities, diversity

- Collect data on public advertisements you find in the city, e.g. bill boards.
- Where do you find the advertisements?
- What (implicit and explicit) messages do they contain?
- To whom are they directed?
- What kinds of people are represented in the advertisements? Who is being left out?
- In what context and how are people represented?
- What role does sexuality play in the advertisements?
- Compare your data to those of other students and draw conclusions. Do you observe any trends?

CITIZENS' CONCERNS

Collect data from interviews with people living in a city.

Determine what issues you want to focus on, like, most generally:

- What do they find most important about living in a (this) city, and why?
- What do they like about the (their) city?
- What do they feel should be improved?

Or, focus on more specific issues (e.g. housing, sexuality, age, mobility, safety etc.), like for example:

- In what respects do the citizens feel safe in this city and why?
- In what respects do they not feel safe in this (their) city?
- What would they need to feel safe in this (their) city?

Determine how you may get the best information on these issues and how you will analyse the material.

Write a report on your findings explaining what they are, how you found them and what conclusions you draw from them.

GENDER AND SPACE:

Observing diversity in how people use space and how space influences people's behavior

- Observe people sitting in a park or waiting for a bus or train etc.
- Focus on their bodily posture.
- Do you see any differences in how different groups of people (women, men, elderly people, youngsters) are present in, and use the space?
- What opportunities or obstacles does the space offer to people?
- Can characteristics be determined that provide both obstacles and opportunities at the same time (e.g. to different people)?

Compare your observations to those of other students and draw conclusions.

USING SPACE: HOW CHILDREN USE SPACE AND HOW SPACE MAY DIRECT CHILDREN'S USE OF IT

Observing diversity and observing interactions between space and people

- Observe a children's playground for at least half an hour, e.g. at a day care centre or a school.
- Focus on how children use the opportunities the playground offers.
- Do you see trends in (groups of) the children's behaviour, e.g. in their use of the margins or the centre of the playground?
- Do you see examples of using the space creatively, i.e. in unexpected ways (what was your expectation?)?
- How do adults (if present) react to children's use of the space by the children (e.g. encouragement, corrective behaviour)?

USING SPACE: EXTENDED OPTIONS

- Compare your observations to those of other students and to the scientific literature on this issue, and draw conclusions.
- Compare your findings with the findings for another playground. What differences could be made by the design of the playground, the adults' behaviour, the children's characteristics? Specify both the differences and the changes a new design might result in.

DOING GENDER (1)

Genitals do not play a role at all in daily life when determining whether a person is female or male; once you have categorized a person, clues suggesting an opposing conclusion are easily fitted into the original perception.

Find out how you determine whether a person you encounter is female or male. What exactly makes you think the person is female/male. What do you take as 'male only' clues, what do you take as 'female only' clues?

One way of carrying out this assignment is by observing people who are in front of you in public transport, especially when you do not see them fully.

Once you have determined whether the person is female or male, list the person's characteristics that might fit into their being a member of the opposite sex, as well (e.g. could a person of other sex wear the same clothes, shoes, haircut etc., could they have the same postures, facial expression, behaviour etc.).

Write a report on your findings, compare your findings to those of other students, and draw conclusions.

DOING GENDER (2)

Not knowing whether a person you encounter is female or male illustrates how being able to make this distinction seems to be quite important for smooth daily interaction. This can make us have to rethink views like: To me a person's being female or male is irrelevant, I always treat women and men the same/ equally, etc.

What happens when you interact with (not just observe) a person whom you are not able to quickly classify as either female or male (in babies and small children you may find relatively easy examples). Describe your experiences, compare your findings to those of other students and draw conclusions.

DOING GENDER (3)

Stereotypes can be easily reinforced

Get into a bus or tram through the back door (if legally possible) without taking notice of the driver's being male or female. Make a student colleague get onto the bus while observing the driver's sex. What clues does either of you get about the driver's sex from the driver's style of driving? Compare your findings afterwards and draw conclusions.

DOING GENDER (4)

Gender is actively (re)produced in all interaction between participants, that is in this case, not only by the observer, but by the person observed, as well. Femininity and masculinity are plural. Whenever the terms feminine or masculine are used, we have to explain what they are taken to mean.

Observe people for at least half an hour in a place of your choice, e.g. in a bus, at a train station, restaurant, class room, hospital waiting room. Detect at least three different types of feminine women, and masculine men. Explain why these types of people are to be considered feminine and masculine respectively. Go on to determine what sorts of behaviour these persons engage in order to convey their femininity or masculinity.

Compare your observations to those of other students and draw conclusions.

NORMATIVE DIMENSIONS OF GENDER

Gender is not just about differences between women and men, it is about dominance, inequality, hierarchy, to begin with.

Observe people for at least half an hour in a place of choice, e.g. a bus, restaurant, class, hospital. Try and find women who do not behave in a feminine way and men who do not behave in a masculine way. Explain on what grounds you conclude that these persons are behaving in an unfeminine and unmasculine way respectively.

What is implied about femininity and masculinity as norms for behavior?

Compare your observations to those of other students and draw conclusions about the normative/prescriptive dimensions of gender.

GENDER IN INSTITUTIONS

- * *Gender is not just a (multiple and variable) characteristic of individuals, it is an element of institutions as well (e.g.: occupying powerful positions requires that a woman displays the characteristics of males who now occupy these positions, or: 'it is power that corrupts people, whether they are male or female').*
- * *Arguments in favour of gender equality and inequality can both be based on presumptions of difference (e.g. 'women and men are psychologically or biologically different') and also on presumptions of sameness.*

Divide the student group at random into two groups in order to organise a debate. One group argues in favour of the standpoint that sociology – or geography, architecture, the country's way of being governed, the world – would look different if, from now on, women would occupy the leading positions. The other group argues in favour of the standpoint that nothing much would change at all

Or: one group argues in favour the idea of women architects/geographers etc. would make a difference, and the other group argues in favour the idea that women would make no difference at all.

Or: one group argues in favour of women choosing to be treated by women doctors, while another group argues in favour of the belief that the doctor's being female or male makes no difference whatsoever.

Summarize the arguments, and draw conclusions.

INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSIONS OF GENDER: POLICY ANALYSIS

Gender inequality is not (just) something (some) men may want and try to preserve, it is an element of institutions, unconscious behavior, habits, etc. as well.

From a gender perspective analyse, a local administration's policy concerning housing in a city of your choice. As your material for analysis, you can take official policy documents, and/or local council meetings' minutes, newspaper articles, radio and television programs on the issue, interviews with 'stakeholders', etc.

Explain the gender perspective you take, to begin with. Go on to ask

- What are considered the main issues (e.g. the local policy's main aim, the main problems to be solved) and why?
- What policy measures are being inferred from these considerations (e.g. the solutions to the main problems)?
- What explicit and implicit views on housing are implied in this policy?
- What issues, if any, are being marginalised or left out?
- What are the policy's effects? To what extent have these effects been intended or unintended? How does the policy affect different groups or parties differently?

From the gender perspective you have taken, describe how could the policy be improved.

INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSIONS OF GENDER, POLICY ANALYSIS: EXTENDED OPTIONS

Analyse the history of the policy under research: how has it come into existence, what debate has been waged around it, what parties have participated in the debate and how have their considerations, arguments and standpoints been (or not been) taken into account in the debate?

INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSIONS OF GENDER, POLICY ANALYSIS: ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Analyse, from a gender perspective, the local administration's policy on local park design, environmental issues, traffic & mobility, prostitution, refuges for battered women, illegal housing, homelessness, tourism, industrial areas.

INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSIONS OF GENDER, POLICY ANALYSIS: ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

What could a policy for the prevention of sexual harassment on public transport look like? Describe this policy's background views, goals, strategies, implementation, and evaluation. Compare and evaluate different options, like, for example, separate transport vehicles for women and men or an information campaign.

GENDER AND SCIENCE

List five books or articles considered of central importance for your discipline.

- How many of them are they written by women, how many by men?
- Select two issues/problems that the authors consider central for your discipline.
- How are these issues/problems formulated?
- What counts (and does not count) as an appropriate approach to these issues/problems? What methods are considered essential to find answers to these issues/problems? What views of science/knowledge, what views of the world and what views of human beings are implied in the authors' approaches?
- Would a gender perspective alter the issues/problems, the answers, the methods, the views implied in the authors' approaches? Explain both the gender perspective and the differences it might make.

DESIGN ASSIGNMENT SUGGESTIONS

[Zaida's Muxi exhibition in Barcelona]

Discuss what a house without gender would look like and design such a house.

Compare the designs by different students and draw conclusions.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

What would a city's central park – or bus station – without gender look like?

GENDER AND PROFESSIONS

Observing implicit and/or explicit masculinities and femininities in professionalism [Zaida's exhibition in Barcelona]

Collect and analyse advertisements in which professionals of your discipline (e.g. architects) are represented.

- In what spatial context are the professionals represented?
- In what relational context are the professionals represented?
- What personal characteristics do the professionals display?
- What message do the advertisements contain?
- To whom are the advertisements directed?
- Does sexuality play a role in the advertisements, and, if so, what role does it play?
- Are women professionals represented differently from men professionals?
- How would these advertisements change if designed from a gender perspective? Explain the gender perspective, as well.

GENDER AND PROFESSIONS

Finding out about sex segregation in professions

Collect data on

- how many women and men at your university have graduated in your discipline during the last 15 years
- how many women and men have been fulfilling the positions of lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor, full professor, faculty board member, and university board member
- find out whether the number of students who have got their degree, who have finished a dissertation, and who have a relevant number of years of experience is reflected in the academic positions held by women and men

Write a report on your findings and discuss possible explanations for your findings. For example, do you see any trends (e.g. by sex) in the proportions of professionals holding the positions studied?

GENDER AND PROFESSIONS: EXTENDED OPTIONS

Collect the data for several universities in your country, and/or nationally, and/or for Europe.

Extend the data collection to the state of affairs in the three main contexts in which professionals of your discipline are employed.

GENDER IN PROFESSIONS

Gender inequality is not (just) something (some) men may want and try to preserve, it is an element of institutions, unconscious behavior, habits, etc. as well.

Collect personnel's advertisements and formal descriptions of relevant functions like architect, manager of an architectural design company, assistant, associate and full professor of sociology, geography etc. Can the requirements described be linked symbolically, normatively, or practically to women, men, femininity and masculinity, and if so, how? Would these functions be equally accessible to women and men candidates, and why/why not?

Compare your findings to those of other students and draw conclusions.

GENDER AND PROFESSIONS: SEARCHING FOR EXPLANATIONS

Collect interview material with regard to their study and professional career. from students and professionals in your discipline.

Determine carefully what your central questions will be (e.g. finding out how the 'glass ceiling' or 'tokenism' works for women; finding out about the role gender plays in the normative definitions of professionalism, etc.)

Determine carefully, as well, how you can collect data on your issues (note, for example that people may not be eager to explain or 'admit' that they have been discriminated against or treated unequally).

Some examples of issues that you may ask questions about in the interviews might be

- Why did one opt for studying this discipline?
- What does one want to achieve?
- How does one experience studying this discipline (opportunities, obstacles, positive and negative experiences, aspects that they like, dislike etc.)

- What were important (positive and/or) negative events, and why?
 - Why did one choose this profession/job?
 - How did one get it?
 - What does one want to achieve in it?
 - How does one experience fulfilling ambitions? (opportunities, obstacles, positive and negative experiences, aspects that they like, dislike etc.)
 - What does the organisation and/or team one works in look like?
 - What does one think professionalism in this profession/job requires? (What is a 'good'/'real' architect, sociologist, geographer, etc.?)
 - Does one expect / Has one experienced that having children influences one's career, and, if so, how?
 - Would one do things differently if given a second chance, and, if so, what things would one do differently and how?
- Etc.

Write a report on your findings, relating them to the scientific literature on the issue, and draw conclusions.

In your report, describe the theoretical perspective and the methods you have used to collect and analyse the material (e.g. discourse analysis), as well.

GENDER AND CYBERSPACE

Collect common sense ideas about how girls and boys, women and men design and use ICT.

(As methods of data collection, you can, for example, use short interviews, popular media materials, advertisements, etc.)

- What symbolic connections are being implied in your material between ICT and gender (femininity, masculinity)?
- Which common sense ideas can be sustained, or have to be rejected, on the basis of scientific literature on gender and cyberspace?

Write a report on your findings and discuss possible explanations for them.

Appendix 2

NATIONAL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS
POST-GRADUATE PROGRAM: URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING
Academic year 2005-06

GENDERED CULTURAL APPROACHES OF URBAN SPACE

Dina Vaiou, professor

Giorgos Marnelakis, lecturer

Contribution by Rouli Lykogianni

1. PRESENTATION

The course is an introduction from a gender perspective to critical approaches to urban space as they have developed in recent years in the context of cultural studies. The analysis, study and interpretation of multiple cultural practices in urban space constitutes a cross-disciplinary object for cultural approaches, with 'loans' from a number of scientific fields and areas of research (urban sociology, human geography, anthropology, history, philosophy, critical theory), leading to a dynamic destabilization of strict boundaries among such fields. In this context, the experience/s, meaning/s and use/s of urban space are re-constituted in terms not only of class divisions, but also of gendered identities and of a series of other socio-cultural characteristics, such as sexuality, 'race' and ethnicity. From such perspectives, the dominant discourse on the city and urban life – based as it is on the 'normal group' of heterosexual, white, able-bodied, middle class men – is radically challenged and new synthetic approaches to the subject matter are (re)worked.

It is clear that such approaches to urban space place special emphasis on cultural practices concerning the constitution of identities, meanings, representations and modes of everyday life in the city. This emphasis does not necessarily lead to a distancing from material aspects of urban life, as these are expressed through socio-spatial inequalities and broader economic transformations. On the contrary, what is at issue are new readings and interpretations, where the individual and the social, personal experiences and institutional practices, geographical scales between global and local are examined together, without presupposing an a-priori hierarchy.

The course aims to help explore and understand the complexity of the problematic briefly exposed above.

2. LECTURE PROGRAM

a. Basic concepts and methodological questions

1. Course presentation
Space, place, gender: Approaching three not so obvious concepts
2. The critique of binaries and problematisation of the 'subject'
3. Feminist theory and the 'cultural turn'
4. Questions of methodology: Research practices and processes of knowledge production
5. 1st SEMINAR
Presentation of bibliography by the students

b. Intersections of three approaches to the city

6. Feminist approaches to urban space
EASTER HOLIDAYS
7. Lesbian/gay and queer approaches to urban space
8. Gender perspectives meet post-colonial approaches
9. 2nd SEMINAR
Presentation of bibliography by the students

c. Gendered practices and experiences of the city

10. Aspects of the 'public/private' binary in the city
11. The paradox of 'public' and 'private', 'impossible geographies' and the space of the closet
12. 'Communities', 'nomadism' and the hard experiences of women migrants in the city
13. 3rd SEMINAR
Presentation of bibliography by the students

3. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to follow lectures and take part in seminars. They have to (a) prepare a term paper of 4000-4500 words and (b) present an agreed part of the bibliography in the seminars. For each of the three groups of lectures a number of texts are proposed that cover the topics and help prepare the term paper.

For the term paper, each student will choose a cultural artifact (eg. film, TV series, novel, poem, musical piece, painting, photograph, comic, graffiti etc) and will try to identify, with the help of relevant literature, the ways in which such an artifact pre-supposes, contributes to construct, reproduces and/or challenges established ideas about gender and sexuality in the city.

Appendix 3

Gender, Diversity and Urban Space

1B ATHENA 2

Geambasu Réka

Course Design

GENDER CONSTRUCTION PATTERNS IN THE COMPLEX MODERN CITIES

The course – as developed below⁴ – is primarily addressed to sociology and/or anthropology students. It aims to highlight some key issues within a deconstructivist approach to concepts of both of gender and urban space. Primarily, it attempts to question essentialist considerations and interpretations of female and male behaviour patterns, and at the same time, it's equally important goal is to present and conceptualise cities as a gendered social space which is both created and constructed in gendered terms, and which – through its seemingly unquestionable material structures – also reproduces gender (and other forms of social) inequalities.

Although there are several linguistic constraints in selecting the readings for the students, I have also included some non-English – mainly Hungarian – books and articles, as well. The reason of doing this was a very conscious ambition on my part to include within the course the issue of constructing and reconstructing gender within the East-European socialist and post-socialist urban space.

As far as the practical aspect of students' involvement is concerned, they are required to read at least one book/article for each topic in order to pass the examination and also to choose at least two practical, empirical activities from the five offered, and to conduct at least two pieces of research.

⁴ I have to emphasise from the very beginning that given my professional background – that of a sociologist and an anthropologist – I was not able to offer readings others that those which dealt with the city, the urban sphere as a social space. I have no knowledge whatsoever in the field of geography, architecture and so on, therefore I do not feel myself entitled to develop an entire, 8-week course. During the sociological research I have conducted so far, the city primarily appeared as a site of cultural, social, sexual and class diversity, in which individuals and groups of individuals negotiate their individual and collective identities and statuses. In my syllabus I only intend to develop some of the possible themes, topics and approaches that could contribute to a final version of the course.

1. GENDER INEQUALITIES AND HOUSING ISSUES IN MODERN CAPITALIST CITIES

The first part of the course draws the students' attention to the ways gender structures modern society, creating and enforcing inequalities through – often unobservable – social, economical and cultural mechanism. The first book contains a macro sociological analysis of stratification, offering theoretical and methodological concepts for the analysis of gender inequalities. The other readings are key texts in deconstructing the gender-blind approach to urban space, which assumes that since most women's daily lives are restricted to the private sphere, their problems are seen as non-existent. This formerly mainstream scientific view is challenged by the thorough analysis of women's private life – that is, the everyday life in blocks of flats, homes and gardens, and even in the workplace.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Crompton, Rosemary and Ann Michael, eds. *Gender and Stratification* Polity Press, 1986.

Stevenson, Anne, Martin, Elaine and O'Neill, Judith. *High Living: A Study of Family Life in Flats*. Melbourne University Press, 1967.

Darke, Jane, Ledwith, Sue and Woods, Roberta, eds. *Women and the City: Visibility and Voice in Urban Space*. Palgrave, 2000.

Gullestad, Marianne. "Home decoration as popular culture. Constructing homes, genders and classes in Norway." In *Gendered Anthropology*, edited by Teresa Del Valle, 128-162. New York: Routledge, 1983.

STUDENTS' EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Besides reading, students are required to do some empirical work on their own, also possible in groups. Since one of the key readings of the first part concerned a structural macro-level analysis of society, they will be asked to search for statistical data that show evidence of gender inequalities within their own societies. For this, most probably, they will need some statistical knowledge, in order to be able to understand the tables and figure, and to interpret its meanings.

2. WOMEN IN SMALL SCALE (ETHNIC) COMMUNITIES WITHIN MODERN CAPITALIST CITIES

The second topic refers mainly to women's roles and statuses within minority and/or marginal groups, or workers communities that live in the western parts of Europe. The readings included are texts that were written as a result of anthropological inquiries, as an attempt to describe and understand the nature of defining womanhood and manhood and ways of constructing and managing kinship ties in these communities.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Back, Les. "Gendered participation: masculinity and fieldwork in a south London adolescent community." In *Gendered Fields: Women, Men and Ethnography*, edited by Bell, D. Caplan, P. and Karim, W.J, 215-234. New York: Routledge, 1993.

Young, Michael and Willmott, Peter. *Family and Kinship in East London*. Peregrine Books, 1986.

Gans, Herbert J. *The Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian-Americans*. New York: The Free Press, 1962.

STUDENTS' EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

In this part of the course, students are required to carry out an elaborate piece of anthropological research in one of the communities that live in their cities, be it an ethnic, sexual or, professional one. They are supposed to carry out both participative observation and interviews in order to be able to understand the meanings attached to the concepts of gender.

3. THE FATE OF GENDER EQUALITY IN THE SOCIALIST URBAN SPACE

Socialist ideology aimed at the redefinition of patriarchal gender relations, both within and outside the private sphere. Through its employment policy, it planned not only to secure equal access to labour for both men and women, but also for women to be represented at the highest level of economic and political management. However, the real situation was far from that of the ideological programmes. The readings listed below aim at revealing several micro-social aspects of the way "real communism" affected individuals' lives.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Harbova, Margarita. "Die architektonischen Zeichen des Sozialismus – Entpersönlichung, Entfremdung, Gigantomanie." In *Sozialismus: Realitäten und Illusionen. Ethnologische Aspekte der sozialistischen Alltagskultur*, edited by Roth Klaus. Wien: Verlag der Instituts für Europäische Ethnologie, 2005.

Popova, Kristina. "Stories upon Fabric: Popular Women's Needlework in the mid-20th Century Bulgaria." In *Gender Relations in South Eastern Europe: Historical Perspectives on Womanhood and Manhood in the 19th and 20th Century*, edited by Jovanovic, Miroslav and Naumovic, Slobodan. Belgrade-Graz, 2002.

Nemes, Ferenc and Szelényi Iván. *A lakóhely mint közösség: The Neighbourhood as a Community*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1967.

Verdery, Katherine. "From Parent-State to Family-Patriarchs: Gender and Nation in Contemporary Eastern Europe." In *What Was Socialism and What Comes Next?* Verdery, Katherine, 61-83. Princeton University Press, 1996.

STUDENTS' EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Students are required to interview people – both men and women – who have experienced socialism, on one of the following topics: gender roles and relations within the family, the abortion law in Romania, women's access to paid labour, neighbourhoods as important communities within cities.

4. REDEFINING GENDER ROLES AND STATUSES IN POST-SOCIALIST CITIES

After the collapse of socialism, gender became – even at the level of official discourse– one of the markers of hierarchy and inequality in society, which also contributed to the social and economic differentiation of competing individuals. The texts that are suggested for reading were all written by East-European scholars, based on fieldwork done in this part of the continent. The articles are a result of the analyses made on the issues of gendered experiences of post-communist social and economic transformations.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Csizmady, Adrienne. *A lakótelep: The Neighbourhood*. Budapest: Gondolat Publishing House, 2003.

Papic, Žarana. “Postcommunism and Gender: Ethnic Wars, Nationalist Mutations and the Social Positions of Women in Serbia.” In *Breaking the Wall*, edited by Anastasoae, Viorel, Köncei Csilla, Magyari, Vincze Enikő, Pecican Ovidiu. Kolozsvár: EFES, 2003.

Dushku, Judith R. “Romanian Women Tell Transition Tales: Oral Histories of Romanian Women of the Post-Communist Decade.” In *Gender Relations in South Eastern Europe: Historical Perspectives on Womanhood and Menhood in the 19th and 20th Century*, edited by Jovanovic Miroslav, Naumovic Slobodan, 245-266.. Belgrade-Graz 2001.

STUDENTS’ EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Similarly to the former section, students are once more required to take a close look at the small scale lives of individuals living in their home societies, paying special attention to cultural and social mechanisms for constructing and re-enforcing unequal access to resources, on the one hand, and on the other, the impact of both socialist heritage and capitalist influences on the very definition of gender.

5. THE MAKING OF CITIES – WOMAN ARCHITECTS

The last section of the course is somehow different from the former parts, as it proposes a more practical view of those who are responsible of “creating” and “transforming” the city, that is architects. Belonging as they do to a predominantly male dominated profession, women representatives architects can – and do – own up to their being “male” and “female” styles of designing buildings, as well as competition for material and symbolic resources within the architectural community.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Simon, Mariann. Valami más. *Beszélgetések építésznőkkel: Something Else. Talking with Woman Architects*. Terc Publishing House, 2003.

STUDENTS' EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

In addition to interviewing both man and woman architects, also other actors of the institutional city planning activity can be interviewed – employees of the city hall, real estate agents and so on. The purpose is that of understanding the gendered construction of a profession and its possible change.

PARTICIPANTS IN ACTIVITY 1B

Mimi Chatzisavva, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece

Sylvette Deneffe, Universite Francois Rabelais, Tours, France

Suzane Frank, Humbloldt University, Berlin, Germany

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Activity 1b2

Gender diversity and (urban) space members

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- Comparative arts and cultural studies
- Sociology, European Ethnology
- Gender Studies
- Philosophy



Map of WG 1B members

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Teaching with Gender

How can educators (teachers, professors, trainers) address issues of gender, women, gender roles, feminism and gender equality? The ATHENA thematic network brings together specialists in women's and gender studies, feminist research, women's rights, gender equality and diversity. In the book series 'Teaching with Gender' the partners in this network have collected articles on a wide range of teaching practices in the field of gender. The books in this series address challenges and possibilities of teaching about women and gender in a wide range of educational contexts. The authors discuss the pedagogical, theoretical and political dimensions of learning and teaching on women and gender. The books in this series contain teaching material, reflections on feminist pedagogies and practical discussions about the development of gender-sensitive curricula in specific fields. All books address the crucial aspects of education in Europe today: increasing international mobility, the growing importance of interdisciplinarity and the many practices of life-long learning and training that take place outside the traditional programmes of higher education. These books will be indispensable tools for educators who take seriously the challenge of teaching with gender. (For titles see inside cover.)

Teaching Gender, Diversity and Urban Space

This is a collective volume presenting a theoretical framework and diverse educational tools that can be used to incorporate gender and sexuality into Spatial Disciplines and the concepts of space and urbanity into Women's and Gender Studies. The book was conceived in recognition of the fact that the concepts of space, place and urbanity have a rather minor presence within European Women's and Gender Studies. Likewise, the concepts of gender and sexuality(ies) are poorly covered within the "spatial" disciplines and university departments. This "double" absence is the *raison d'être* of this volume and underlies our proposals for developing effective educational and teaching tools in this field.

The study of multilayered, complex and contradictory situations in contemporary European cities, where gender/sexuality intersects with other axes of difference and power, is crucial to the development of a multicultural teaching ethos and will facilitate students' understanding of these contemporary issues both inside and outside the classroom.

The books are printed and also published online. Contact athena@uu.nl or go to www.athena3.org or www.erg.su.se/genusstudier to find out how to download or to order books from this series.

