The residential normalization of public spaces. Towards a post-punitive regulation?

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1. Introduction

Over two decades ago, Smith (1996) coined the concept of *revanchism* to describe the rise of the punitive city. This term has been used across the globe to describe the punitive policies that guide the production of public spaces. Referring to the criminalisation of poverty, minorities and homeless people, it has been a useful concept to analyse mechanisms of control of undesirable people and behaviours. However, the concept of punitive control can limit our understanding of a less visible power present in public spaces, which also regulates undesirable behaviours. Through the example of a contested public space in a residential neighbourhood of Montreal, this article aims to reveal how these subtle forms of power appear in public spaces. I particularly want to examine the way in which social control is embedded in the social and symbolic meanings associated with space, as much as it is enacted through physical repression.

Firstly, I will examine how a punitive approach has been established as an analytic framework in the study of exclusionary dynamics in public spaces, and will argue that this approach ignores ordinary public spaces and their everyday uses. I will then discuss the notion of home, in order to understand the relationship between people and their environment. In the second part of the chapter, I will demonstrate how power relations within a residential neighbourhood result from conflictual dwelling practices in public space, using Shaughnessy Village in Montreal as a case study. Finally, I will conclude with reflections on the impacts of a symbolic transformation of the landscape, and on the subtle forms of power that are inscribed in the values of space.

2. Conflict and exclusion in public spaces

2.1. The limits of the punitive framework

At a time when globalisation is accelerating, an important transformation of territories is emerging (Sassen, 1991), particularly with regards to urban spaces. Indeed, with the reduction of borders and the contraction of space-time, urban spaces are being recomposed, and the ways in which cities are produced are also evolving. These urban transformations have often been perceived as the result of neoliberalisation processes. If neoliberalism has firstly been investigated with reference to national and supranational trends, it is more and more analysed through its impacts at different scales, from the global to the local. As Peck and Tickell argued, neoliberalism "seems to be everywhere" (Peck and Tickell, 2002: 380) and has

favoured competition between cities and territories: "the neoliberal offensive also helped to usher in, and to legitimize and enforce, a new regime of highly competitive interlocal relations, such that just about all local social settlements were becoming tendentially subject in one way or another to the disciplinary force of neoliberalized spatial relations" (Ibid: 386). In order to face the economic restructuring and the uncertainty of the global context, many local governments have been constrained to engage in place-marketing, budgetary cuts and austerity. Then, neo-liberal policies have been introduced into urban governance (Harvey, 1989; Hall & Hubbard, 1996; Brenner & Theodore, 2002) generating a kind of "urban entrepreneurialism" (Harvey, 1989) based on public-private partnerships, privatisation of public services, surveillance and social control, flagships developments, etc.

In the context of this increased urban competition at a global scale, image has become an important tool in the production of cities. As a result, urban planners, policy makers and property developers aim to create "good business climates" (Harvey, 1989) to attract capital, investments and tourists. Following this logic, all signs of decay, crime or poverty, which undermine the image of a harmonious urban ideal, must be erased. Obviously, this context favours the criminalisation of poverty, as a means of controlling and designing the image of a city. Criminalisation has, thus, become a method of preserving the visual and symbolic value of public spaces (Mitchell, 1997; Wacquant, 2004). It includes the increasing prohibition of behaviours associated with homeless or marginalised people: sleeping on the streets, panhandling, drunkenness, etc. Furthermore, all behaviours which oppose the desired "glamour" image of the city become subject to regulation and control. In this way, access to the city as a whole is more and more restricted for many marginalised groups – homeless people (Zeneidi, 2008), street youth (Parazelli, 2002), skateboarders (Malone, 2002; Németh, 2006), graffiti artists (Ferrell, 1993), informal vendors (Crossa, 2009) or prostitutes (Hubbard, 2004) - whose mere presence within the public space is often punished.

With regards to the exclusion of homeless people from public spaces, many authors have observed a generalisation of punitive policies carried out by the authorities. Using the example of New York, Smith (1996) has successfully shown the shift in the urban governance of minorities and poor people. Through the reclamation of public space by middle classes, a punitive regulatory system has been introduced in urbanism:

> This revanchist anti-urbanism represents a reaction against the supposed "theft" of the city, a desperate defence of a challenged phalanx of privileges, cloaked in the populist language of civic morality, family values and neighborhood security. More than anything the revanchist city expresses a race/class/gender terror felt by middle − and ruling-class whites who are suddenly stuck in place by a ravaged property market, the threat and reality of unemployment, the decimation of social services, and the emergence of minority and immigrant groups, as well as women, as powerful urban actors. It portends a vicious reaction against minorities, the working class, homeless people, the unemployed, women, gays and lesbians, immigrants (Smith, 1996 : 211).

As zero-tolerance policies have spread across the world (Aalbers, 2010; MacLeod, 2002: Swanson, 2007; Crossa, 2009), many authors have used Smith's concept of *revanchism,* or

Don Mitchell's *non-right to the city,* to describe the neoliberal governance of homelessness. However, De Verteuil and al. (2009) have shown that researchers, driven by a desire to link homelessness issues with debates on gentrification and urban restructuring, have focused solely on the repressive aspects of policies targeting homelessness. Without denying the value of this perspective, these authors criticise the fact that Smith's concept is based on a specific context in the US and argue that it fails to take into account other existing methods of urban management, especially the breadth of policies addressing homelessness. Other authors have shown that responses to homelessness have not all been "uniformly hostile" (Laurenson and Collins, 2007: 650), and argue that some of them are in fact supportive of homeless people. Through the research they carried out in Wellington, New Zealand, they outline the fact that, even though punitive policies exist, the city has taken "a positive approach to reducing homelessness by providing appropriate housing and support as an alternative to life on the streets" (Laurenson and Collins, 2007: 660). This demonstrates how urban homeless policy is "rarely entirely – or even wholly– punitive" (May & Cloke, 2013). In this way, investigating the combination of punitive and supportive policies in the governance of homelessness in San Francisco, Murphy (2009) talks about a post-revanchist geography. These emerging reflections are a call for researchers to pay closer attention to supportive homeless policies and look beyond the punitive framework of urban management for a more accurate understanding of homelessness in public spaces. De Verteuil and al. (2009) conclude their article by encouraging researchers to engage with others actors, such as welfare officials, voluntary sector organisations and homeless people themselves. These encounters can provide key insights for understanding the power relations that influence urban policies, with an analysis that looks beyond the punitive regulation of homelessness and reveals the realities at play in the sharing of public space.

Despite the diversity of these analyses, most of them rely on a political view of neoliberalism, defined as a set of political practices. Neoliberalism "[…] has become the name for a set of highly interested public policies that have vastly enriched the holders of capital, while leading to increasing inequality, insecurity, loss of public services, and a general deterioration of quality of life for the poor and working classes" (Ferguson, 2009: 170). But beyond this conception, some authors define neoliberalism as a rationality "linked less to economic dogmas or class projects than to specific mechanisms of government, and recognizable modes of creating subjects" (Ferguson, 2009: 171). As Larner argues, neoliberalism is often "understood as either a unified set of policies or a political ideology" and there is a "complete silence on the techniques of neoliberalism, the apparently mundane practices through which neoliberal spaces, states, and subjects are being constituted in particular forms" (Larner, 2003: 511). For Isin (1998 : 173), neoliberalism is not "about less government but about shifting the techniques, focus and priorities of government" and should be defined as a "series of technologies of power". In this way, the individual is no longer perceived as a subject of intervention but as "an active agent of decision and choice" (Ibid: 175) and a subject of government. Thus, individuals have constantly to make the best choices about many aspects of their everyday life: "[…] Neo-liberal strategies of rule, found in diverse realms including workplaces, educational institutions and health and welfare agencies, encourage people to see themselves as individualized and active subjects responsible for enhancing their own well

being" (Larner, 2000: 13). In this way, the increasing participation of citizens in the planning of their neighbourhood can be seen as a way for individuals to govern themselves, looking for a better quality of life. By focusing on neoliberalism as a policy or as an ideology to analyse the current transformations of urban planning practices, many geographers have downplayed the evidence that space is also produced through the actions of the subjects at a micro scale. In order to understand how neoliberalism has been diffused in ordinary practices, it is also important to focus on the "bottom-up" production of local places.

However, there is a category of actors not mentioned in the studies on the punitive regulation of homelessness: the residents. I argue in this chapter that in the actual participatory context, residents play an increasing role in the production of public spaces. Through their involvement in urban planning, they can influence the lives and practices of homeless people. By advocating for the safeguarding of a cosy residential neighbourhood, public spaces can consequently become less open or comfortable for the homeless people. Though it may not result from revanchist intentions, the transformation of public spaces by residents can reinforce the exclusion of homeless people. For a better understanding of this issue, it is useful to bring in Padisson and Sharp's analysis (2007). By questioning the success of the "end of public space" proposal, they point to a concentration of research on city centres, on central and iconic public spaces (Padisson and Sharp, 2007) in which the effects of neoliberal policies are extremely visible. As a result, many studies on the geographies of homelessness focusing on central public spaces restrict the view of what is happening in more banal and ordinary public spaces:

> "As persuasive as are the arguments of the discriminatory and disciplinary effects of what Brenner & Theodore (2002) define as the 'projected spaces' of the entrepreneurial city, such an interpretation tends to over-emphasize particular types of public spaces and their exclusionary implications at the expense of the reality that cities are defined by a diversity of public spaces" (Padisson and Sharp, 2007: 89).

Arguing that public spaces function at different scales, they make a distinction between the city-wide (and beyond) and the neighbourhood scale. Whereas city-wide public spaces are often anonymous, local public spaces are places of social interactions, involving not only different forms of behaviour and sociality, but also a specific and intimate relationship of local people to that place. In this chapter, I postulate that the involvement of residents in the production of residential public spaces engenders new forms of regulation. I wish to question more specifically the impacts of the transformation of the landscape on the practices of homeless people within public space.

In order to grasp the ways in which the regulation of residential public spaces differs from a punitive and repressive management, it is important to understand the relationship between people and their environment. The following theoretical points explain my conception of *home* and *dwelling*.

2.2. Dwelling as the creation of spheres

This research relies on the idea that public space can neither be reduced to an economic value included in urban competition, nor to a political place of debate. Public space is also a *dwelling* place. Especially in residential neighbourhoods, it is a truism to say that public spaces are integrated within dwelling practices. That is why domestic space cannot be only conceived as a walled space like an apartment or a house. It is above all a space in which human beings are able to build their own world and where their ontological security is at its maximum (Hoyaux, 2004). In this way, ontological security involves not only urbanism or architecture but a complex world of meanings that human beings experience through interactions with their *milieu.* Giddens defines ontological security as "the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action » (Giddens, 1990: 92).   In geographical terms, it refers to the appropriation of a place which people trust, and through which they can secure a sense of identity. For many years, geographers and psychologists have been showing the existential importance for human beings to have a place for themselves. In a beautiful sentence, Berque sums up this idea: "there is no being without a place of being" (Berque, 1997). In this perspective, we should accept that "home" is not only a house but is also constituted within public space. Particularly for homeless people, the appropriation of public space is extremely important because it is one of the only ways for them to build an ontological security. In her study of a homeless community in Seattle, Dooling (2009) clearly describes the importance of the place where they live. One of the homeless people she interviewed relates how the camp in which he was living was the only type of family he had ever known. Following an eviction of the camp, he moved inside. He now has a roof on his head but has lost his only social network, and still considers himself homeless. By expressing the fact that some homeless people prefer to stay outside, Dooling does not however romanticise homelessness. As shelters are often experienced as spaces of violence and constraints, many homeless people prefer to stay in public spaces. It is the only place where they are able to a find a dwelling space they can share with others and experience a sense of home.

The concept of dwelling is grounded within phenomenology and especially in Heidegger's reflections. Describing how humans are being-in-the-world, he uses the concept of dwelling to define the way in which humans are related to earth: "To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell" (Heidegger, 1993: 349). In this way, building is an activity that comes after dwelling (and not a means for dwelling): "we build and have built because we dwell, that is because we are dwellers" (Ibid: 350). Then, dwelling is perceived as an anthropological dimension of human beings that includes both a material and existential relation to earth. But, despite its philosophical interest, this phenomenological conception of dwelling does not include social interactions and it finally misses the dynamism of this activity of dwelling.

Peter Sloterdijk's *Spheres* could help us to link the existential dimensions of dwelling with the social relationships. For this philosopher, "being is never an isolated being […] Spatial being is always a co-existence" (Schinkel & Noordegraaf-Eelens, 2011: 12) and this close

coexistence gives rise to "a common interior within a common outside" (Sloterdijk, 2005: 347). Then, a sphere can only be created through the "sharing of an inside space with creatures of proximity" (Sloterdijk, 2011b: 132) and can be thought of as a socially created and self-animated space in which human beings can take refuge and protection from the outside world. In his trilogy, Sloterdijk argues that being-in-the-world is first and foremost « being-in-spheres » (Sloterdijk, 2011a : 52). That means that the ability of humans to "dwell" rests on the spheres they create around them: "To dwell refers to the creation of a dimension in which humans can be held" (Sloterdijk, 2011a: 31)[1]. Since the beginning of humanity, dwelling has been the activity through which humans produce their own space in order to protect themselves and evolve. The security that humans are looking for is always spatially located and it often takes a physical form. But, even if spheres are nowadays built and extended through walls, borders and the privatisation of home, these spherical geometries rely first and foremost on social interrelationships.

Thus, the creation of a social space between human beings can be found at different scales, from the relationship between a mother and her child right through to the nation scale. This importance of co-existence in the constitution of a sphere means that "real dwelling is only possible as "dwelling-together"" (De Bleekere & Gerards, 2013: 7). Thinking about dwelling through this spherology implies a focus on the social relations at stake in the constitution of shared spaces. In the last part of his trilogy, which is concerned with current globalising trends, Sloterdijk uses the metaphor of foam to describe the isolation and the interactions between human groups: "each bubble is a singular entity which is at once separated or isolated from other bubbles and connected to its neighbours through the membranes they share. The shared membranes imply co-fragility. If one foam bubble bursts, this will affect the neighbouring bubbles" (Borch, 2011: 31). Then, these reflections give us some keys to understand the relations of power included within the conditions of cohabitation in urban spaces.

What are the reasons for the extension of a sphere? And what are its impacts on other spheres? I argue in this chapter that the Sloterdijkian concept of spheres as a way of dwelling is a useful and inspiring analytic framework for understanding the role of public spaces in the conflicts between residents and the homeless. By focusing on the experience of space, this framework is useful to grasp the reasons that guide the regulation of residential public spaces. It also gives us keys for understanding the potential impacts of a symbolic transformation of the landscape on homeless people living in the neighbourhood.

3. Context and methodology

Shaughnessy Village is a residential and gentrifying neighbourhood in the west of downtown Montreal. It is also a focal point for the aboriginal homeless community in the city. The majority of aboriginal homeless in Montreal have come from the under-resourced north of the

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[1] All translations of Sloterdijk's quotations are from the author.

country for a variety of reasons, including health issues and prison sentences. Close to Cabot Square, the main park of the neighbourhood, the Children's Hospital is an institution where many aboriginal children come for medical treatment. The first contact for these families with the urban space of Montreal is Cabot Square and its neighbourhood. When the time comes to go back to their hometown, most lack the resources to buy a return flight, and in the end prefer to stay in the city. Thus, over time, these public spaces have become a symbolic place for homeless aboriginal people. They can meet people from their own community who are able to help them and with whom they share a common identity. A social worker explained me that Cabot Square "is their place, they like to be there… I think, from the beginning of the 90s, they've been in this neighbourhood" (Social Worker, SW3). Cabot Square has become a point of reference within the homeless aboriginal community: "people know that, and when they arrive in the city, that's the place where they meet" (SW1).

However, many residents contest the presence of homelessness in their neighbourhood. In fact, they feel they have been robbed of a public space that belongs to them. They do not enjoy walking past where homeless people are staying, places in which they do not recognise their identity as residents. As a result, the *Shaughnessy Village Association* (hereafter, SVA), created in the 1981, has been rejuvenated with the aim of regulating public space and transforming the identity of the neighbourhood. It is significant to mention that the neighborhood did not exist *per se* but has been named, and its perimeter defined, by the association. Referring to one of the oldest mansion in the area, this name aimed to create a sense of community. The goal was, and still is, to create an urban village in the city through the development of social interactions between the inhabitants: « the essence of the area is characterized by the Shaughnessy Village Association. It brings together a variety of Villagers to participate in events such as the annual Clean-up Day, various social functions and the annual charitable Holiday Collection[2] ». By creating a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood, social events and beautification practices (tree and flower planting, beautification contests, etc.) are supposed to make the environment better. While each inhabitant of the neighbourhood is invited to become a member of the association, it is a fact that most members are homeowners. The association also seeks to control the urban policies and projects related to the neighborhood.

In order to collect the data, I used different qualitative research methods, the main one being interviews. More specifically, this research is based on 25 semi-structured interviews that I conducted in 2012. Interviewees included 8 public actors (police, urban planners, politicians), 4 social workers, 6 homeless individuals and 7 residents. The duration of these interviews was variable: from 45 min to 6h30. In order to approach and interview homeless people, I became involved in the activities of charities working in and around the neighbourhood. Moreover, as I aimed to understand the conflicts in public spaces, all the residents that were interviewed were involved in the SVA, which has been created for a re-appropriation of public spaces by residents. To provide a complete picture of the interconnections between the practices, the

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[2] Website of the association: http://www.shaughnessyvillage.org/

policies and the transformation of public spaces, I also carried out an analysis of complementary sources of data: urban planning policies, reports of SVA meetings and articles in the local media. Furthermore, different phases of observation, both in public spaces and in public meetings, were also part of my methodology.

4. Conflicting realities of *dwelling* in public space

4.1. Public spaces as home

In order to discuss the socio-spatial order that has resulted from the conflict between residents and the homeless community, it is important to understand the divergent ways in which public spaces of Shaughnessy Village have been integrated into the dwelling practices of these two communities.

Homeless people with whom I had discussions related a specific relationship they felt to the neighbourhood. By creating networks and a sense of place in the neighbourhood, the homeless people of Shaughnessy Village *dwell* in the neighbourhood as much as residents and experience this space as their home. This place is very important to them because it is a social place where they can build social relations. Public spaces in the neighbourhood are a meeting point: "[…] *it's like the only place for them, because that's where they all meet friends*" (Homeless person, H2). Here, they are socially recognised: "*I used to go there the first time when I came here... I know maybe all of them, the people who live in the street [...], lots of friends. Men and women. And everybody knows me*" (H5). Many refer to the term "*family*" to describe the solidarities and social links between them. "*It's like a family there, (...). If someone is missing for a couple days (...), we start to wonder where they are, what happened to them*" (H1).

In this way, the relational appropriation of the neighbourhood not only gives the homeless people a sense of belonging but also generates a sense of identification with the place. For many homeless people, the recognition they find through the occupancy of these public spaces is essential. It gives them some fundamental points of references with which to build their ontological security. Moreover, this appropriation engenders the creation of a protective space and participates to the edification of home. A homeless woman spoke of the security she has found there, much more than in other places she knows: "*I just want to be here, often if we can't go there, we go there on Viger Square [another square where homeless people often stay], I don't like it on there because it's dangerous, I don't like [...] I have my family there [in Cabot Square] so I'm not in danger, I feel more danger when I'm alone*" (H1). Thus, Cabot Square is very important for many aboriginal homeless people in Montreal, to the extent that some who were formerly homeless continue to regularly visit public spaces in the neighbourhood. Even though social services found an apartment for a woman who was homeless when she was pregnant, she continues to return daily to visit the square: "*I still hang out with them, I sit there with all them... I kind of miss it*" (H1). With time, many people within the homeless community feel at home in these public spaces, "*I'm coming here for*

more than 30 years, it's like home" (H4). "Home" is commonly used by the homeless people I met to describe their occupancy of the neighbourhood.

Through the relationships that homeless people have established in the public spaces of Shaughnessy Village, they experience a sense of family and social recognition, which gives a specific value to the neighbourhood. With the occupancy and everyday uses of these public spaces, they inscribe their own identity in the neighbourhood. Finally, they create a sphere that enables them to dwell in these public spaces and to elaborate and maintain their ontological security.

4.2. The homeless, 'out of place' in Shaughnessy Village

The importance in the homeless people's lives of the occupancy of public spaces in Shaughnessy Village is not recognised by the residents. On the contrary, they describe their presence in the neighbourhood as inappropriate, and fail to recognise the legitimacy of the homeless to stay there. They are not against homelessness *per se*, and some of them are even engaged in the resolution of homelessness in the city, but they consider these public spaces as an "extension of home" and consequently the presence of homeless people is perceived as "out of place" (Cresswell, 1996). In fact, most of the residents I interviewed refer to these public spaces as spaces of recognition where they often meet people they know, and with whom they share a similar way of life: "*When I walk through the neighbourhood, there's always somebody to say hello to because I know people from the neighbourhood. I feel good here because ... there is like a sense of solidarity and friendliness which has been built with time*" (Resident, R4). Public spaces are thus perceived as residential and familiar spaces between home and the wider city. The SVA is very active in upholding the neighbourhood's quiet and residential identity and describes this process as such: "These elements are put together in such a way that it is possible to be on a busy and noisy commercial street one moment and by turning a corner and walking a block, one is on a quiet residential street with mature trees overhead and buildings dating from the late 1800's"[3].

In this way, the presence of homeless people in public spaces stands in opposition to the values enshrined in the residents' idea of what Shaughnessy Village should feel like. Many residents do not recognise homeless people as legitimate inhabitants of Shaughnessy Village. They assert that their behaviours do not fit with the friendly residential atmosphere of the neighbourhood. Behaviours relating to alcohol and drug abuse or prostitution are perceived as incompatible with the values they associate with the neighbourhood. Through their presence and the activities they engage in, homeless people transform the residents' quality of life, and the family friendly atmosphere they are looking for. In fact, the visibility of the homeless community is a problem because it changes the image of the neighbourhood: "*A while ago, two of them were here, I know them, they're in a bad state. It's a shame, because it was a nice neighbourhood, I liked it because it was very authentic*" (R5). Residents thus consider the visibility of homelessness as a hindrance to their enjoyment of public spaces in the

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[3] Website of the association: http://www.shaughnessyvillage.org/

neighbourhood, and do not recognise the homeless community's own identity and sense of place within the landscape. As written in a report from the association, the homeless disturb the residential atmosphere: "at the present time, the number of these persons is going to reach a point in which their impact is determining the atmosphere of the milieu" (SVA report, 2008).

Homelessness is not considered as a source of physical insecurity, but as a threat to values of community and conviviality that would create a specific atmosphere in the neighbourhood. Associated with immoral and indecent behaviours, homeless people are seen as illegitimate in these public spaces, "*because it's disgusting now, I think that's a problem. It's not a problem with the park but... it's difficult to visit, because of the homeless*" (R2). In the discourses expressed by residents in the media, the public sphere or in reports, there is a recurrent association of homelessness with dirtiness and indecency. In fact, through their discourses, the residents portray homeless people as 'different'. This difference appears in opposition to a sense of residential normality they want to recreate in public spaces, and participates in the construction of symbolic borders between 'us' and 'them'. As Sibley has shown, "such borders and boundaries have been used to reinforce a moral order and separate ambiguous identities from those deemed safe and desirable" (Sibley, 1996, in Kerkin, 2003: 141). This categorisation is inscribed within power relations (Bourdieu, 1982), the association of homeless people to dirtiness legitimising their eviction in an attempt to clean up the neighbourhood: "*there were a lot of... not a lot but there were people sitting up on the streets and begging, this stuff (...) you know, the drunks on the streets or people sleeping under the porches, but that has cleaned up a lo*t" (R3). However, beyond discourses, these social borders are reproduced in the strategies elaborated to guide the production of public spaces.

5. A residential normalisation of public spaces

Through a number of lobbying strategies, members of the SVA have tried to influence public policies concerning the development of their neighbourhood, and of its public spaces especially. These strategies have included the monopolisation of participatory bodies, petition writing, but also the building of private relationships with politicians:

> We do have some say because we vote, we vote for the mayor... so we do have a certain say […]. We have very, very good relationships with the mayor, mayor Tremblay, who is also our borough mayor, so we meet with him every three months. We have very good relationship with elective city councillor, Sammy Forcillo, we ... I meet with him about once a month, we discuss many things, problems [...] and how he can help us. We have a little relationship with the province, and we are just getting involved with Marc Garneau, who is MP for the Federal (R3).

SVA's activities aim at reinforcing the residents' legitimacy to dwell in the neighbourhood and impose themselves as the main actors in the regulation of the neighbourhood. Through their relationships with politicians, members of the association have succeeded in being influential and obtaining public money for different development schemes in public spaces in the neighbourhood. For example, automatic lights have been installed in back alleys, in order

to restrict the presence of homeless people there. Automatic lights *"come on as people walk down to stop the trend of people being drunk or doing drugs in the alleyways"* (R3).

Residents are also able to use the schemes provided by the municipality through *Tandem*, a programme promoting residential security. This programme promotes citizen participation, favouring a residential re-appropriation of public spaces. The SVA collaborates closely with this organism to organise activities and animations in the public spaces occupied by homeless people. They jointly organise a weekly market, movie screenings in the central square on summer nights, activities for children and yoga classes. In doing so, they aim to transform the values associated with the public spaces in the neighbourhood. As a community organiser told me, *"a big event would allow us to make space, to displace these homeless in order that the residents can re-appropriate this place"* (C1, Tandem).

The association also works with *Ecoquartier*, a municipal organisation that pushes for environmental actions. Together, they plant flowers and trees to "revamp" places that residents perceive as dirty and in which they never go because of the presence of homeless people. The main target of these actions is the beautification and the naturalisation of public spaces in the neighbourhood. However, this beautification only appears as a priority in places with a homeless presence. In fact, beautification and greenification aim at preventing criminal activities by reinforcing the sense of security and the residential atmosphere: *"that shows that there are residents and a preoccupation for cleanliness"* (R4).

All these actions lead to what we could call a residential normalisation of public spaces. Through a number of strategies, residents try to make the public space a mirror of their own way of dwelling. The aim is for space to reflect values shared among residents. Any threat to the residential atmosphere must be erased. This residential normalisation confirms the argument that public spaces are conceived and experienced as an extension of home. Indeed it highlights the processes involved in the extension of the residential sphere, and more precisely in the creation of a common interior (Sloterdijk, 2005), in which homeless people and their behaviours are not included.

The occupancy of public spaces relates to the desire for both the homeless and the residents to create common and secure spaces. The conflicts that emerge in these public spaces are related to dwelling practices that stand in opposition to one another. Consequently, residential normalisation of public spaces impacts the sphere that homeless people try to create, and threatens the ontological security which they built in public spaces of the neighbourhood.

6. Residential normalisation as a soft dispersal of the homeless community

Most of the homeless from the neighbourhood do not feel comfortable with these new developments and leave. Through the creation of a residential atmosphere many of the homeless community's points of reference disappear, and homeless people internalise a sense of being "out of place" (Cresswell, 1996). Indeed, the discordance between their own behaviour and the presence of children incites them to move out: *"sometimes, we don't want to drink in the front of the kids, so we move to the small park there or in the back alleys"*

(H5). They aim to reduce their own visibility in front of children: "*there're kids too that come so we don't want to... Be in respect, you know, we still have respect (...). When they have activities (...), we plan to do something else and to go somewhere else, hang out somewhere else*" (H1). In this way, the introduction of residential and family friendly values in the public spaces of Shaughnessy Village creates a natural movement of homeless people to other urban areas. A homeless person who recently moved out of the street speaks of this displacement: "*if there are things happening like that, I'm sure they gonna go somewhere (...), this space is basically their home, during the day I mean*" (H3). Beyond a feeling of being 'out of place', in the *wrong* place within this residential atmosphere, it is also homeless people's sense of "home" which is threatened by these changes: "*it's like being pushed out from my home, you have no choice but to leave. You even could stay but it's just like…*" (H1). The deployment of residential activities is perceived as a negation of homeless people's right to dwell in the neighbourhood, and more specifically as a non-recognition of these public spaces as their home. As we have seen, many social practices within public spaces are important for these people. The residential normalisation of space restricts these practices:

> "It's getting tough, yeah...It's like we're being forced to get out and find homes, I feel like when they have activities, we have to find something to do. So a lot of what we're doing is getting apartments, so when things do happen, we have a place to go" (PM1).

The importance of public spaces as a protective sphere is revealed by the anxiety felt by some of the homeless people concerning the activities organised by residents: "*I mean, they have that every year I think (...). It's ok but there's a lot of crowd, you know. I don't know, me I get... I don't know what it is, but I don't like to be restricted, I'm anxious when I can't get out...*" (H6). This anxiety clearly relates to their dwelling sphere feeling constricted, to the decline of its protective function and of the wellbeing it created. It relates to a loss of trust in the place they considered home and therefore to a reduced ontological security. Many worry about these changes: "*it's been a long time they live there you know, I don't know exactly what's gonna happen if it happens like that, I don't know if it's a good idea too. Cause all the people, like homeless, depend on here...*" (H5). In fact, the homeless community have a strong and existential relationship with these public spaces. As a result, the transformation of the meanings associated with these spaces limits homeless people's ability to appropriate and to identify themselves with these spaces. Homeless people are not forbidden to be in the neighbourhood, but the transformation of public spaces displaces their sense of home and constitutes a denial of their right to the city. Rather than repressive actions targeting homelessness, it is the symbolic transformation of the landscape in which they dwell that leads homeless people to leave.

However, in addition to this "soft dispersal", a punitive regulation is still functioning in central public spaces in the city where homeless people eventually have to go. In order to improve the quality of life of Montreal residents, public authorities have established new by-laws forbidding sleeping in parks. As a result, tensions have appeared between homeless people and the police:

> "Even my boyfriend was hit by the police, he told me, a couple times, (...) and he's got

big scars on his head from them...from the police. And we took him at the hospital, where he was partly shaved and had stitches, that's what happened (...) and he told me there were like 10 people, and he had big scars on his head" (H1).

Another person refers to the harassment of homeless people in the city:

"They don't like people homeless, no, no ... They don't do anything, and they harass them, yes they do it, they harass them and they rip them off and do nasty things, I had all my ID, they took my ID, destroy it, they did nasty things, and I was really polite with them and they were, especially in the east, very nasty, dirty and cheap" (H6).

7. Conclusion

The residential normalisation of public spaces creates expectations about behaviours that are tolerated or not, about people who are welcome or not. Through the transformation of the symbolic values associated with public spaces, residents create a common sphere, which encompasses these places. Actions of beautification and greenification and other cultural activities produce a new form of regulation of public spaces. Restricting the ability for homeless people to create a sense of home, this normalisation pushes them to leave for other places in the city, in which they don't have the security that they found in Shaughnessy Village. The residential normalisation of public spaces is a subtle form of power, less visible than the punitive control of homeless people and minorities but equally significant. When public spaces are included in practices of dwelling - established as a home by the homeless community and as an extension of home by residents - new ways of regulation appear. Besides the entrepreneurial governance of iconic public spaces, researchers should therefore analyse the power relations at play in banal and ordinary practices of dwelling. Inscribed in the social and symbolic significations of space, these subtle forms of power in public spaces echo the notion of "ambient power" defined by Allen. For him, "when the form of power exercised has an unmarked presence, it is the manner in which the space itself is experienced that is the expression of power" (Allen, 2006: 8).

For an in-depth analysis of these forms of power, Sloterdijk's theory is relevant. As we have seen with the case of Shaughnessy Village, the concept of spheres is fruitful to analyse and understand the modalities of the sharing of public spaces. Bringing to light the mechanisms through which human groups secure and spatialize their own existence, this theoretical concept is useful in order to link the ontological uses of space with the relations of power in urban space. These relations of power are in fact related to the extension of different spheres. Within this perspective, the analysis of urban conflicts should include the analysis of the deep significations of the practices of public space. Then, this theory of spheres allows us to suggest other explanations about exclusion and conflict in public spaces than the simplistic vision of intolerant city dwellers putting out homeless people. That also gives us keys to understand what exclusion exactly means for homeless individuals: not only the expulsion from a place but the loss of home, the bursting of a sphere in which they dwell. Thus, thinking with the concept of sphere could be a means to explore in greater depth the relations of domination in public spaces, which, in turn, points to the necessity to reconsider the importance and the promises of the integration of Sloterdijk's reflections within urban studies.

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