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SOCIAL HISTORY OF URBAN SPACE

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Urban space as a research problem emerged first in sociology in the 1920 in the works of the Chicago School of sociology. Since then the main concern in this field has usually been the diverse patterns of residential segregation and the related population moves in modern urban setting. Urban ethnography which had close links with Chicagoean sociology, however, focused on single urban subcultures, those of the poor, the deviants or the local élite.[1]

Urban space, in fact, can also be approached from an entirely different perspective. In this case it is viewed as a scene of very diverse private and public activities. Then not just the everyday practice, but the notions and values shaping this attitude need to be examined. In this study I am going to apply the latter concept of urban space by looking at the varied forms of public social spaces in past urban history, and some of the characteristic notions and practices relating to the public domain in a highly stratified urban world.

THE NOTION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACE

Ever since the mid-18th century, the separation of the public from the private sphere has been a universal process in a great part of Western Europe and North America. This meant that the scope of sociability found in domestic circles was less and less tolerated in public. By contrast, private matters came to be identified with intense personal interactions made possible by the home and the family alone.[2] Since an entirely new meaning and code of personality seemed to emerge in the wake of this eminent transformation, there occurred profound changes both in the scope and the function of urban public domain and its spatial equivalent. These processes took place first and most pervasively in some European metropolises, like Paris and London. As a result, various scenes of metropolitan public

[1] HANNERZ, Ulf: *Exploring the City. Inquiries towards an Urban Anthropology.* New York, Columbia Univ. Press 1980.

[2] This problem has elaborately been addressed in an influential book by Richard SENNETT: *The Fall of Public Man.* New York, Vintage 1974. A good recent summary of the argument has been provided by Tamara K. HAREVEN: "The Home and the Family in Historical Perspective," *Social Research,* Vol. 58, No. 1 (Spring 1991), pp. 253-287.

sphere, above all the *street* gradually transformed into an impersonal, a "neutral" place which tended to exclude most forms of sociability. The shift is quite obvious if one makes a comparison either with the European Middle Ages, the Early Modern Period, or some non-European "less civilized" contemporary cultures. As Philippe Ariés wrote in his seminal book: "The medieval street, like the Arab street today, was not opposed to the intimacy of private life; it was an extension of that private life, the familiar setting of work and social relations... It may well be that this private life took place as much in the street as in the house, if not more."[3]

The increase in the sense of individualism, and the growing need for privacy on the one hand, the development of material life and the progress of "civilization" (as discussed by Norbert Elias)[4] on the other hand, broadened the gap between the world of the privacy and the public. This was supported or even hastened by several basic peculiarities of modern urban life: the growing chaos, disorder and the rudimentary physical environment characterizing the new urban centres especially during the initial phase of industrial revolution. Owing to all these features, the nineteenth-century city could not meet the increased demands and was thus gradually identified with an alien, inferior or dangerous world. This was why "at the end of the nineteenth century it (the city) may well have been perceived as a bigger threat to the individual than it had been at the beginning".[5]

The fast-rate unregulated evolution of urban-industrial settlements soon created a need for ordering the urban landscape; this was urged by some of the Continental monarchs and was carried out by the group of urban reformers. The notion of town planning was born at around the 1850s: the great rebuilding project of Paris, the first of its kind, started as soon as Napoleon III came to power by restoring the monarchy in France. In the following nearly two decades the renewal of the French capital, organized and managed by baron Haussman, had established the model of modern metropolis that was immediately emulated everywhere else. On this project, David Pinkney remarked: "Napoleon's and Haussman's revival of classical city planning... demonstrated that a big city can be beautiful, even magnificent, and gave heart to all who rebelled against the drab ugliness of industrial cities and against the chaos of the spreading metropolises of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It also demonstrated to city planners of whatever persuasion that civic architecture must be conceived on a grand scale,

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[3] ARIÉS, Philippe: *Centuries of Childhood. A Social History of Family Life.* New York, Vintage 1962, pp. 341-342.

[4] ELIAS, Norbert: *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation.* I-II. Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkampf 1982. Hungarian edition: *A civilizáció folyamata.* Budapest, 1987.

[5] BEDARIDA, Francois - SUTCLIFFE, Anthony: "The Street in the Structure and Life of the City, Reflections on Nineteenth-Century London and Paris," *Journal of Urban History,* Vol. 6, No. 4 (1980), p. 387.

that the relationship of buildings to each other is at least as important as the design of individual structures."[6] The example was followed first by Vienna (1857), later by such Central European capitals like Budapest (1870).[7]

Town planning, in all these instances, meant a physical *and* social rearrangement of historical cityscape: since each of the cities involved were capitals, the functional division of the space into various zones served both symbolic and practical purposes. Not dealing too much now with this problem, I would only mention that an unambiguous distinction was made among the part of the cities where the buildings of the municipal and state authorities were to be located and other public buildings were to be found, and the territories accommodating great masses of the urban citizens; very close to some part of the latter (occupied by lower-class tenants) were located the industrial sites including the constructions both of the productive and supplier industries. The hierarchical position of each of these main architectural components in the socio-spatial structure of the city, and their respective cultural meaning in the "text" of modern urban entity, were adequately manifested (beyond the topography) by the sheer physical outlook of the single artefacts (the buildings, the spatial arrangement etc).[8]

Modern urban planning was closely associated with the bifurcation of public and private. This is clearly visible either in the new spatial order of urban landscape, and the divergent architecture characterizing the public and the private (tenement houses) buildings.[9]

The nineteenth-century metropolis brought a novelty by creating new forms of street, the *boulevard* and the long and wide *avenue*. As they came to dominate the street network, the transformation of urban milieu into an impersonal public domain where everybody is "stranger" living amid "strangers" received additional impetus. "The distinctive sign of nineteenth-century urbanism..., the boulevard"[10] and the avenue brought about the primacy of vehicular traffic over the

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[6] PINKNEY, David H.: *Napoleon III and the Rebuilding of Paris*. Princeton, New Jersey 1972, p. 220. See also Anthony SUTCLIFFE: "Architecture and Civic Design in Nineteenth Century Paris." In: HAMMARSTRÖM, I. – HALL, T. (eds.): *Growth and Transformation of the Modern City*. Stockholm 1979, pp. 89–101.

[7] On Vienna, the most important analysis is by Carl E. SCHORSKE: "The Ringstrasse, Its Critics, and the Birth of Urban Modernism." In: Idem., *Fin-de-Siécle Vienna. Politics and Culture*. New York, Vintage 1981, esp. pp. 24–62; On Budapest see Péter HANÁK: "Verbürgerlichung und Urbanisierung. Ein Vergleich der Stadtentwicklung Wiens und Budapest". In: Idem., *Der Garten und die Werkstatt*. Wien, Böhlau 1992, pp. 17–59.

[8] The meaning and the cultural function of urban planning especially in terms of the capitals, have interestingly been analysed by John H. TAYLOR: "City Form and Capital Culture: Remarking Ottawa." *Planning Perspectives*, 4, (1989), pp. 79–82.

[9] BERMAN, Marshall: *All That is Solid Melts into Air. The Experience of Modernity*. New York, Simon & Schuster 1982, p. 159.

[10] To the concept of mid-19th century modern urbanism as it was embodied by Baudelaire's Paris (perceived and "interpreted" through the gaze of the flâneur, Baudelaire himself) see

pedestrian interests. The new pattern of street life encouraged the control of the diverse moves of individuals in order to effectively coordinate the uninterrupted urban dynamism. The endeavour to a completely rational use of public urban space including the maintenance of the ceaseless movement both of human masses and the mass-produced consumables, rendered the strolling and comparable forms of sociability to be dysfunctional, deemed to be restricted. The eagerness for controlling the "moving chaos" resulted in the invention of the traffic light, applied first in the United States around the early 20th century, "a wonderful symbol of early state attempts to regulate and rationalize the chaos of capitalism".[11]

Modern urbanism as it was surfaced in the decades around the mid-19th century was soon identified by many with the overcrowded street and boulevard traffic which did not know spatial and temporal bounds as spilling over into every urban place to impose its tempo on everybody's schedule, thereby converting the urban setting into a "moving chaos".

Accordingly, the street was able less and less to accommodate the varied manifestations of social life. The boulevard, the image of which was aptly characterized by that of the "desert" at the end of the 19th century,[12] was increasingly complemented by a couple of distinct public or semi-public "micro-spaces". Bridging the gap between the individual privacy and the faceless impersonal collectivity, as embodied by the street crowd, a large number of organizations – social associations – grew up with their own separate spaces. Or, a host of activities pursued individually, but amid the strangers, those of public consumption (in restaurants, pubs or cafés etc.), of entertainment (in theatres, circuses, panoramas, movies) or other leisure pursuits, and the travelling itself with railway station, bus terminals, airports were to multiply the public places. The micro-space of that kind was defined by an excessive functionalism and specialization. Several of them were available to all, in principle, but their users were regularly recruited from a much smaller, well-defined social circle.

The obvious tendency in the growing specialization of micro-spaces had a lot to do with the gradual process of divorce between the home and work. Living within the bounds of a city meant, at the same time, a definite separation or even alienation from the nature, too, and this was responsible for the spread of the cult of nature. This took the form of creating resort places within the boundaries of urban settlements or the ever growing habit of visiting the nature (the forests, the hills, the lakes) outside the urban environment.

Walter BENJAMIN: "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century." In: Idem., *Reflections*. New York, 1978, pp. 156–159.

11 BERMAN, Marshall: op. cit., p. 159.

12 ZOLA, the novelist, applied this term to Paris, cf. Anthony VIDLER: "The Scenes of the Street: Transformations in Ideal and Reality, 1750–1871." In: ANDERSON, S. (ed.): *On Streets*. Cambridge, Mass. 1978, p. 100.

The new and specially urban attitude towards the nature led to the creation of urban public parks, available to everybody, and the adoption of the custom of outings. The urban public park originating, in most instances, from aristocratic or ruler's hunting forests, or the private (baroque) "English garden", turned out to be a characteristic nineteenth-century urban public institution. Its meaning and the way used by park visitors greatly varied from country to country, from city to city. In demonstrating the possible variety of urban public park I would mention the contrasting example of Central Park in New York City, and the Városliget in Budapest.

Central Park, opened in 1859, was envisaged and designed by Frederick Law Olmsted. His project could show us the agenda of moral reform and uplift that characterized the New York élites, attached to notions of stewardship. "Olmsted believed that by using landscape art imaginatively he could create an urban environment that would encourage a gratifying naturalness in social relations and would preserve a welcome sense of psychic freedom for urban dwellers hemmed in by large buildings, dirty factories, and social routine."[13] What is more, Central Park was conceived by Olmsted to be a place strictly controlled in order to train the "public" in the gentlemanly taste and manners. For this end a whole set of rigid rules and special park policy were introduced. Along the political shifts during the second part of the century, the dominant notion of the park as an island in a commercially oriented, culturally inferior urban wilderness, gradually faded away and turned out to be an illusion.[14]

Looking at its counterpart in Budapest, the Városliget was gradually transformed into an English style garden between 1816 and the 1880s. The meaning attached to this project is indicated by the term: "national garden". Christian Heinrich Nebbien, a park planner of German origin, intended to establish a public garden for all the inhabitants of Pest town with their active participation. His second basic principle rested upon the need for a *national pantheon.* The park was therefore devised as the framework of individual monuments to be erected there, ones dedicated to the major historical personalities of Hungary. The Városliget when completed by the end of the century, met the demands both of representing the national spirit and magnificence, and providing diverse cultural, entertainment or ceremonial facilities. The park's appeal was boosted by its

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[13] BENDER, Thomas: *Toward an Urban Vision.* Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press 1975, pp. 184–185.

[14] This thesis is richly advanced and documented in Roy ROSENZWEIG – Elizabeth BLACKMAR: *The Park and the People. A History of Central Park.* Ithaca, Cornell University Press 1992.

serving as the staging ground for important nationwide exhibitions, such as the one of 1885 or the Millennial Exhibition of 1896.[15]

The outing was an other preferred way of pursuing the cult of nature. "Leisure patterns reflected not only changing opportunities and attitudes within the city – reads a study on the interwar Madrid – but also a new relationship to the environment beyond it. During this period outings to open spaces... became increasingly fashionable. Climbing, skiing and love of nature – 'naturalismo' – became part of the way of life of many people from the liberal bourgeoisie."[16]

The remarkable multiplication of distinct forms of public spaces could, in fact, loosen the restraint imposed upon public behaviour, yet still was unable to cancel the universal norm of a neutral public domain.

With greater emphasis on the rigid threshold between the private and public domain went hand in hand the higher degree of differentiation within the house. This is clear in middle-class housing especially in England and the United States. From the mid-19th century on the typical house resided by this social category was the villa, a semi-, or full-detached family house surrounded by its own ground which was private. This new housing form was frequently linked to the retreat from the city centre, the suburban residence, which even further increased the chasm between the female sphere of home and the male dominated world of work. The space was subdivided along the private-public differentiation even within these home. They were, as usual, divided into zones for the family and the servants (the household); the family rooms were further divided between generations and by gender. The family rooms were, as a whole, demarcated from the rooms maintained for receiving guests (the parlour), and the room used collectively, the dining-room.[17]

The spatial pattern outlined before was an exclusive attribute of the middle-class domestic culture of the age. The better fittings, the furniture with a superior appearance, and the ornamentation were all crowded primarily into the parlour. The result was an "ornamented scenery" which defined the parlour as an emblem for family identity, a mirror by which the social status of the family might be displayed to the outer world.[18]

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[15] GYÁNI, Gábor: "Social Uses of Public Space in Budapest 1873–1914." *History & Society in Central Europe*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1991), esp. pp. 69–76.

[16] FOLGUERA, Pilar: "City Space and the Daily Life of Women in Madrid in the 1920s." *Oral History Journal*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (1985), p. 53.

[17] DAVIDOFF, Leonore – HALL, Catherine: *Family Fortunes. Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780–1850.* London, Hutchinson 1987; CLARK, Clifford E., jr.: "Domestic Architecture as an Index to Social History: the Romantic Revival and the Cult of Domesticity in America, 1840–70," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 7 (1976).

[18] GYÁNI, Gábor: "Polgári otthon és enteriőr Budapesten" (Bourgeois Home and Interior in Budapest). In: HANÁK, Péter (ed.): *Polgári lakáskultúra a századfordulón* (Bourgeois Domestic Culture at the Turn of the Century), Budapest, 1992.

The parlour, despite all its elevated paraphernalia, was barely used as a scene of sociability. And this derived from the apparent gender differences in the attitude towards the public. Male members of the respected families showed a striking neglect towards "visiting the parlour". A pamphlet published in Budapest on "high society" in the 1880s wrote: "The gentleman frequents the club, the café, or possibly the pub to eat, drink, smoke and talk to men, and particularly play cards; but it is plainly against today's attitude to go on a visit."[19] Women were strongly linked to the home as mistresses, mothers and home-makers; they had at the same time a distinctive form of sociability embodied, above all, by the "visit", so alien to men. This required a daily task and meant regular contact among the female members of the middle-class families.

The growing number and the increasing functional specialization of urban micro-spaces were thus closely intertwined with a ritualized and gender patterned middle-class life style that emerged in the course of the 19th century as a result of industrialization, commercialization and capitalist development.

URBAN PLANNING - DISINFECTION - SEGREGATION

In the process of disseminating the bourgeois code of public behaviour, the state and the local authorities played an active role by making the street life a neutral, an impersonal public domain. The supervision of urban dwellers public life gained much attention primarily in the parts of the cities, where the lower classes clustered. The aim leading the authorities in intervening in the life of the "uncivilized" and "dangerous classes", that of the manual labourers, obliged them to adopt the bourgeois code of behaviour. The cultural or mental split between the opposing classes in the city was expressed and further heightened by the extremely divided socio-spatial structure of these settlements; the segregation achieved partially due to the conscious rebuilding of most of the metropolises reached a level not known before. In this setting that was characterized by excessive social and income inequalities and cultural diversities, and by incessant population growth supplied by mass-size immigration, the cognitive technique or device left to rely on was more and more a matter of orientation by *spatial location*. As Lyn Lofland has clarified, the multiplication of the *strangers*, the increasing diversity of urban scene led to the fundamental alteration of how to perceive and identify each other. The new pattern of public recognition, she has argued, appeared in the way the city dwellers (the strangers) *ordered* the urban populace. The new spatial ordering replacing the *appearential* mode of communication of the preindustrial urban world, means that you are allowed to know

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[19] Quoted in Gábor GYÁNI: "Domestic Material Culture of the Upper-Middle Class at the Turn-of-the-Century Budapest". Paper presented at the Conference, *Constructing the Middle Class*, New York, 1993.

a great deal about the stranger you are looking at, simply because you know "who" is to be found in the particular location, in which you find him.[20]

The precise knowledge on the meaning of various urban locations (implying their ecological functions and social character) enables you alone to "read" the urban "text" correctly, when you are fully aware of *where* is what and who.[21]

The fact that there were a wide range of notions and usages of public place gave special importance of how to handle and control the embarrassing diversity. Municipal authorities began to view those showing obvious deviation from the bourgeois canon of public behaviour with growing suspicion. Their conscious efforts to separate the opposite classes concerning their residential locations, were also part of this strategy. The urban planners and reformers, commissioned by local and governmental politicians, made their best to establish distinct centres of all social and biological ills, every sort of pathology. The language and rhetoric of contemporary town planning, accordingly, were closely affected by medical metaphors. The planners, like Haussmann himself, considered themselves to be doctors of urban body being invested with the urgent task to remedy its many illnesses. The urban planning, in this view, was not infrequently identified with "the total act of surgery. 'Cutting' and 'piercing' were the adjectives used to describe the operation: where the terrain was particularly obstructed a 'disembowelling' had to be performed in oder that arteries be reconstituted and flows reinstated".[22]

The medical or socio-pathological discourse on contemporary urban life was not entirely devoid of any empirical evidence. One may readily think of the recurring cholera epidemics of the 19th century which primarily threatened the urban masses. Or, one can refer to the high mortality rates among the lower classes of immigrant urban communities which were so often been taken as a sign of their worsening living conditions as compared with the preceding rural life. Still, not this, but a distinctive cognitive style of the 19th century had the greatest effect on this discourse. Biology, as is well-known, provided the key at that time even for the social scientists in their endeavour to interpret clearly societal processes. Why? As Carlo Ginzburg pointed out, the medical and the human sciences of the time shared in the same cognitive strategy (technique) that was originated in the procedure of diagnosing a disease. By observing the symptoms of a single case, the physicist finally set up a diagnose by making a qualitative statement. In this he

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20 LOFLAND, Lyn H.: *A World of Strangers. Order and Action in Urban Public Space.* New York, Basic Books 1973.

21 On the "reading" the urban "text" see Peter BROOKS: "The Text of the City". *Oppositions,* 1977, pp.7–11; MARCUS, Steven: "Reading the Illegible". In: DYOS, H.J. – WOLFF, M. (eds.): *The Victorian City. Images and Reality.* London, Routledge & Kegan Paul 1973, Vol. 1, pp. 257–277.

22 VIDLER, Anthony: op. cit., p. 90.

applied the unambiguous criteria of good and bad, the healthy and unhealthy, or the normal and abnormal.[23] When the concept was applied to the intricate matters of social life, it necessarily led to the practice that Michel Foucault called: "normalization".[24]

Back to our starting point, any negation or neglect concerning the basic bourgeois values, or the reluctance to adopt the new code of public behaviour seemed to be easily identifiable with something pathological or abnormal, worthy of persecution and annihilation. "In the minds of bourgeois social reformers, urban workers who emerged daily from their infested howels posed a menace which was, at once, biological, moral, and political, placing the whole society at risk... Not surprisingly, housing reform became a first priority for overlapping groups of reformers because it seemed the most promising way to disinfect and pacify the working classes."[25]

The result was simply a socially divided, highly segregated urban residential pattern. "Haussman's demolitions - Olsen remarks - did not wipe out whole neighborhoods but rather worked to isolate them one from another. Behind every boulevard, with its elegant facades and middle-class residents, lay intact an older, working-class Paris."[26] But even in the cities where similar projects were not implemented, "the hotbeds of the 'dangerous classes', the foci of cholera, crime", and political unrest were also interpreted in the same way. This policy of displacing the poor population to more distant parts of the city territory was a persistent agenda in London at around the mid-19th century.[27]

The growing social segregation seemed to be a universal process with two minor exceptions: Berlin and Budapest. James Hobrecht, the main promoter of Berlin Building Project of 1858, insisted on constructing tenement houses with mixed tenants recruited both from the middle class and the working class. Proximity, he argued in the 1860s, breeds the mutual and better understanding of the opposite classes which contributes to the social peace. As a result, the degree to which the social classes were segregated in this city remained on a low level, and exclusive proletarian residential enclave was hardly to be found here.[28]

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23 Cf. Carlo GINZBURG: "Clues and Scientific Method". *History Workshop Journal,* issue 10 (1980), esp. pp. 12–16.

24 FOUCAULT, Michel: *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison.* New York, Penguin 1979.

25 SHAPIRO, Ann-Louise: *Housing the Poor of Paris 1850–1902.* Madison, 1985, p. 159.

26 OLSEN, Donald J.: *The City as a Work of Art. London, Paris, Vienna.* New Haven, Yale University Press 1986, p. 147.

27 JONES, G.S.: *Outcast London.* New York, Pantheon 1984^2, pp. 167–168.

28 LIANG, Hsi-Huey: "Lower-Class Immigrants in Wilhelmine Berlin". In: LEES, A. & LEES, L. (eds.). *The Urbanization of European Society in the Nineteenth Century.* Lexington, Mass. 1976, p. 220.

Budapest despite the absence of an equivalent planning ideal, also showed great propensity for mixing the diverse social classes in space. One can observe the spread of a tenement house type, built in large number during the decades of the late 19th century, which accommodated both the socially better-off and inferior tenants. The landlord when living in his own housing property, tended to reside in the street apartment on the second floor; the high-rent dwellings were all located at the front side of the building on the lower floors. While the higher floors and rear of the tenements (at the court-side of the construction) were where the low-rent flats began to dominate with lower-middle class or sometimes working class tenants in them.[29]

Overall, concerning the possible varieties the nineteenth-century cities produced in terms of their ecological patterns, the common element in them were: the bifurcation of public and private; the multiplication of the meaning attached to public domain which was in conformity both with the social stratification and the functional complexity of urban space.

WHO DOMINATES THE STREET?

As has already been demonstrated, the maintenance or rather, the creation of a neutral public domain required to define: how to use the street properly. This implied the question: to whom the street belongs?

The concern with those events and human actions, not being wholly conformed to the prevalent notion on what is good, proper and morally accepted or what is not, was imposed on the city authorities. Having this responsibility they came to issue more and more bye-laws in regulating the street behaviour. The intention behind them was to render the street anonymous and neutral; this endeavour, however, met opposition from below.[30] The task of enforcing the regulations was entrusted to the urban police which was established everywhere at around the mid-19th century. The ordinary duty performed by every policeman was to represent the "moral order", the content of which being translated into everyday rulers of the bye-laws. They, the constables, the patrols etc. performed this duty of their own by constant surveillance both of men's and women's public behaviour. The prosaic intervention in everyday matters of the urban lower classes meant a permanent threat to the working-class neighbourhoods. The novelty in that systemized police supervision was the pressure of an unceasing surveillance. The technique that was applied here was creating an impression in all supervised that the policeman, the eye of power is ubiquitous. As Robert Storch reveals: "What pro-

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[29] HANÁK, Péter: op. cit.; GYÁNI, Gábor: "Budapest". In: DAUNTON, M.J. (ed.): *Housing the Workers, 1850–1914. A Comparative Perspective.* Leicester, 1990, p. 168.

[30] DAUNTON, Martin J.: *House and Home in the Victorian City.* London, Edward Arnold 1983, pp. 266–269.

duced this effect was the knowledge that the police were always near and likely to appear at any time. This, it seems, was – and still is – the main function of the pressure of surveillance."[31]

The surveillance of ordinary urbanites of that kind means a new type of "disciplinary power": like a "normalizing micro-strategy" (Michel Foucault), its main or exclusive focus is on cancelling a whole range of illegalities, multiplicities and minor deviations.[32] The incessantly vigilant gaze of a supervisor could afford to suit the demands if having trained enough to discern: what is correct and what is deviant. The measure to which it can realize the hidden meaning of chaotic urban "text" depends upon the visual capacity by which this world may be made intelligible and decipherable. How can the policeman, with a glance, discern the bad or good people, the morally acceptable or unacceptable actions. Hence the increased importance of unlimited availability of public places being under a constant control. Let's see one telling example. Budapest cofeehouse owners struggled with the authorities for acquiring some part of the sidewalks for their own (business) ends. A municipal statue in 1882 forbade the cafés and restaurants to enclose an area of the sidewalk with fences or flowers. The police which prompted the council in issuing this measure, argued that such enclosures might hinder them in supervising the life of the streets and would lead to immorality and indecency in public spaces. One of the main arguments applied was that with these enclosures the policemen would be unable to have a free look at the space monitored by them.[33]

The issue of how could a supervisor (whoever performing the function of a policeman) be trained to become familiar through his surveillance of the city, held some importance at that time. The most evident device for identifying the stranger's social and "moral" character was his physical outlook (the dress), and the place he was staying. "Those... who tried to define for the police whom to arrest – reads a study on nineteenth-century Philadelphia – placed great faith on dress as an indication of sociability... Thus, by adopting appearance as a guide, officers could quickly identify those who might threaten society's well-being and keep them under control."[34]

There is no place here to enumerate all those people and everyday activities held to be worthy of police scrutiny and persecution. The list is long, indeed,

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31 STORCH, Robert D.: "The Policeman as Domestic Missionary: Urban Discipline and Popular Culture in Northern England, 1850–1880". *Journal of Social History,* Vol. 9, No. 4 (1976), p. 487.

32 FOUCAULT, Michel: op. cit., esp. pp. 170–195.

33 GYÁNI, Gábor: op.cit. (1991), pp. 68–69.

34 JOHNSON, David R.: *Policing the Urban Underworld.* Philadelphia, Temple University Press 1979, p. 124.

involving many traditional popular forms of gamblings, leisure pursuits, or not the least, several economic engagements, like street trading.[35]

The struggle around and over the meaning and the use of public space, however, was more acute in cases when the actions had overt political overtones. Usage of the street by a social group in order to contest the domination of an other group, the regular users (and the rulers) of this public place; the cases of playing out the decisive social and political conflicts *on* the easily accessible public scenes; the symbolic content of occupying (expropriating) definite urban territories for displaying political programmes and demands – these are questions underlining the conflicting meaning and contradictory use of urban public domain. The *barricade* and the *street demonstration* may be mentioned as two major vehicles of that kind of spatially bounded public manifestation. What did they mean and how were they constructed – they are questions needing further consideration.

[35] On the control of street trading in nineteenth-century England see David R. GREEN: "Street Trading in London: A Case Study of Casual Labour 1830–60". In: JOHNSON, J.H. & POOLEY, C.G. (eds.): *The Structure of Nineteenth Century Cities*. London, Croom Helm 1982, esp. p. 139.