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Production of heterotopias as public spaces and paradox of political representation: A Lefebvrian approach

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Abstract
Over the recent decades, both the requirements for and the affordances of public spaces have been an unavoidable and growing discussion in the spatial sciences literature. This growing discussion and research have been articulated through the argument that public spaces have been eroding under the neoliberal conditions and the capitalist mode of production. However, from the insights of social sciences, as the physical setting to be included in socio-political life, public spaces appear exclusionary for some as a timeless fact. Although historical public spaces have been idealized and envied, they appear as ideal places for a privileged spectrum of the societies to learn how to rule and to teach the rest how to obey rather than to allow them to be included in the public sphere. Considering the meaning of to be public, this study claims that this is the paradox of public space, which becomes evident in contemporary rising social struggles for public spaces in the form of occupy movements. In this context, this study aims to anatomise the paradox of public space from also the insights of social sciences in the conditions of representative democracy. As the main contribution of this study, we introduce a re-interpretation of Lefebvre's multi-triads and operationalize his concept of heterotopia to offer a deeper understanding in revealing the paradoxical production of public spaces. We conclude that the social production of a heterotopia is the manifestational realization of an ideal public space and the dissolution its paradox for only a temporary period of time.

Keywords
Production of space, Public space, Political representation, Heterotopia, Occupy movements.

1. Introduction

Beginning from Agora of the ancient Greeks, public spaces have been the major components of cities for centuries and have also become a major issue for design professionals and researchers especially over the recent decades. Desired features and design parameters for a better public space have been discussed from the domain of spatial sciences repetitiously. However, since the turn of the millennium, especially following the crisis of 2007-2008, a significant amount of critiques also emerged from a realistic perspective emphasising the false romanticization of historic public space and their contestable existence as a representational tool of power, which this study claims that it is the paradox of public space (Robbins, 1993; Iveson, 2007; Madanipour, 2010; Berman, 2012). In parallel with this tendency, the main motivation of this study is to develop these rising critiques further with knowledge from also the insights of social sciences. Based on this motivation, our main research question is: "How can the paradox of public space and its social production be anatomised and dissolved?"

To answer this question, in Section 1, we review the recent critiques and reveal that public spaces have always been a matter of struggles between different publics and have been exclusionary places for a large spectrum of the societies as a timeless fact. Discussing the semantics of being public, we develop further the paradox of public space together with discussions on contemporary occupy movements and the paradox of political representation (Pitkin, 1967; Runciman, 2007). In this context, in order to offer a deeper and practical understanding of the paradox of public space and its social production in a given urban pattern, we introduce a re-interpretation of Lefebvre's (1991; 2003) multi-triads and operationalize his concept of heterotopia in Section 2. In conclusion, we suggest a number of conditions for the paradox of public space to be occurred and dissolved.

2. The phantom of public space and the paradox of political representation

Since the 1970s, increasing numbers of studies dealing with spatial sciences have focused on the issue of spatial requirements and importance of public spaces in everyday urban life. In fact, as it is well known, this period overlaps with the abandonment of Keynesian economics in most countries and the rise of neoliberalism. Indeed, this new socio-economic and political turn reflected itself in urbanization eventually, which has been driven by the spatial organization of the brutal capitalist system, especially by means of privatization of urban space. This conjuncture has forced urban designers and architects to re-evaluate both the requirements for and the affordances of public spaces as the main physical settings of everyday life. In accordance, changing typologies and functions of public spaces in a given urban pattern and their publicness has become an unavoidable and growing discussion in the literature.

This conjuncture after the 1970s reflects the desired features of public spaces to be achieved in the proposed definitions such as:

- composed of the presence of other people, activities, events, inspiration, and stimulation (Gehl, 1987),
- a common ground for people to perform functional and/or ritual activities either as a part of daily routine and/or periodic festivities (Carr et al., 1992),
- places that belong to a community, not developers/investors or police and traffic wardens (Tibbalds, 1992).

The main reason in the background of this growing research and discussion is the argument that public space has been under threat from the modern urban life that is characterized by the capitalist mode of production, consumerism, privatization, restrictive regulations on public space, controlling and militarizing public space through security measures, police force and/or high tech security camera systems, social exclusion from public space and related politics (Demir Kahraman & Türkoğlu, 2017).

This study claims that theoretical idealization of public spaces and defining them as open and accessible for all does not coincide with the practical realities more than ever today. On the

other hand, publicness, although it has been told that it has been lost in neoliberal urbanism, has always been a matter of struggles and so public spaces have always been exclusionary places for some throughout history.

The roots of the discussion of publicness arose from insights of social rather than spatial sciences, especially since the 1950s under the post-war conditions after the WWII. In social sciences, the term "public sphere" is used to describe aspects that reach beyond the physical limits of publicness, addressing its inherently political nature.

To be public, which is essentially making the public realm, is a matter of to be seen and heard in the material human world: to be included in the political life. In other words, every conversation performed by private individuals, who assemble to form a public body compose a portion of the public sphere, which mediates between society and state (Arendt, 1998; Habermas, 1974).

Thereby, as the centres of everyday life and the places in which the public sphere has been produced and re-produced, public spaces appear as purely political. Yet, despite the legalization of free speech, press and assembly for everyone, even liberal public sphere and so the space was open to everyone only in principle (Iveson, 1998); in reality, society has been polarized by class struggles, so the public has been fragmented into a mass of competing interest groups; multi-publics (Fraser, 1990). The relations between multi-publics, which are the struggles between dominant and counter publics, produce and re-produce both the public sphere and so space (Demir Kahraman & Türkoğlu, 2017).

Having this concern, Madanipour (2010) notes that the claims of different publics over space contest the others, and the struggle between them causes a simultaneous process of inclusion and exclusion, and this is why he asks "Whose public space?" Standing on this very spot, Robbins (1993) also poses a fair question: "for whom was the city once more public than now; for workers, women, lesbians and gay men, in other words, for the differences, minorities and the poor?"

Today, the main problematic aspect of the arguments for a better public space is that they have been articulated through narratives of loss and reclamation (Iveson, 2007). The result of this narrative loss has been a degree of false romanticization of historic public spaces (Madanipour, 2010), which becomes "a phantom[1] , never actually realized in history but haunting our frameworks for understanding the present" (Iveson, 2007).

In parallel, Berman (2012) also criticises as a timeless fact that public spaces have been a stage for the common people as subjects. The emergence of public space – Agora – as the place of appearance and inclusion into the political life dates back to the Hellenistic period of Western history and the emergence of the conditions of the first known democracy in the world; Athenian (Direct) Democracy. In other words, Agora became important enough to be shaped by the conditions of democracy.

Agora, literally meaning, "the gathering place" was the centre of both socio-political and commercial life. Surrounded by commercial stoas and other administrative, cultural and religious structures, Agora was alive with people meeting, moving, talking and even just being present perpetually (Thompson, 1954). Yet, like the direct democracy itself, Agora was not a pluralist one. Although direct democracy has seen as a participatory model for all citizens regarding decision-making process (Urbinati, 2006), it is also often criticized as excluding women, slaves, old, children and foreign people from citizenship rights (Raaflaub, Ober, and Wallace, 2007). In other words, the tools and the rights to create the public sphere were in the hands of the young free Greek males who were allowed to be involved in political life in the public space of the Agora as the dominant publics (Martin, 2013; Mitchell, 2003).

In fact, beginning from Agora of the ancient Greeks, public spaces have been an ideal place to learn both how to rule and how to obey (Berman, 2012), but not exactly to be included in the public sphere and to be heard for the common people and here we claim that it is the paradox of public

[1]*Kurt Iveson (2007) used the term "Phantom" after Walter Lippmann (1925) and Bruce Robbins (1993).*

space. As Berman (2012) emphasizes, although Athenian Agora has often seen as a place where people could feel "at home" like Socrates, yet it was also a place that could kill him. In other words, the first democratic space of the world and so the democracy appears as a dream to be imagined, and this has been the romance of public space.

Today, this romance becomes evident considering rising social struggles for public spaces especially following the crisis of 2007-2008. Various Occupy Movements might be seen as the signals of a paradigm shift in also urban planning that recently defined as "occupy urbanism" (Pak, 2016).

In this very point, we should emphasise the paradoxical nature of the act of occupation of a public space turning back to its theoretically idealised definitions; "if they are open and accessible for all in practice, then why it is called as "occupy"[2], or should we understand the meaning of the act in the language like it is used on a toilet door writing "occupied" but meaning "in use" temporarily?"

This question brings us further to investigate "paradox of political representation" developed by Pitkin (1967) and Runciman (2007). Here, it is important to highlight first that there is more than one type of political representation; it can be actualized in many different forms such as voting, joining a political party, signing a petition and other spatial campaigning tools like demonstrations and meetings. However, in this study, "paradox of political representation" has been tried to be interpreted only in terms of social production of public spaces considering also the importance and the necessity of physical representation of humans themselves.

As the existing governmental system of modern states of today, what mainly distinguishes "representative democracy" from the "direct democracy" is the representative governments that had the effect of making it materially impracticable for the people to play a part in government and apparently even to be assembled. In fact, political representation has only been associated with the system of the election today (Manin, 1997).

Etymologically, the word representation derives from the Latin verb "repraesentare" of Roman law, yet, it was not an equivalent term used meaning "acting or speaking on behalf of someone else" as in the modern sense today. According to Skinner (2005), this basic meaning of the verb "repraesentare" was mainly "re-presenting something," which means "bringing something missing or absent back into the present" in the two main contexts of law and after art.

Vieira and Runciman (2008) explain the paradox of political representation based on representative democracy; although it is hard to know how democracy can work in practice, it is a purely political idea; however, representation is inherently ambiguous and paradoxical as it implies a presence and the absence that comes from the need to be re-presented simultaneously.

Questioning the paradox beyond its etymology and putting it in the centre of the understanding of democratic politics; Runciman (2007) notes that it allows for the idea of representation to be identified both with the view that representatives should take decisions on behalf of citizens, and citizens should issue their instructions to representatives.

In this very point, Pitkin (1967) puts forward one possible solution to the paradoxical nature of representation as "non-objection criterion"; "the substance of the activity of representing seems to consist in promoting the interests of the represented, in a context where the latter is conceived as capable of action and judgment, but in such a way that one does not object to what is done in his name." Here, "objection" allows a kind of "presence" for those who are represented. This presence is based on the ability to object to what is done on behalf of represented people. Thereby, "silence" appears as a kind of confirmation whereas the "objection" offers the "presence" for the represented. However, representation takes place when there is no objection to what someone does on behalf of someone else, and political representation starts to break down when the explicit objections are voiced (Runciman, 2007).

[2]The word "occupy" comes from the Latin word "occupare" meaning "to seize" (Bell, 2012, p. 216).
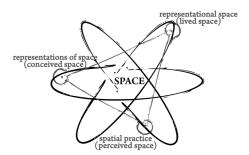
Figure 1. *Moments of (social) space.*

One might think of that whether the representation and so the representative governments are so fragile to be broken down because of explicit objections or not. However, the paradox of public spaces and why they are eventually "occupied" becomes clearer. In other words, why political power, the state or namely the representatives as the dominant discourse seek to reorganize, demolish, privatize, control, close or even militarize public spaces by police force also becomes revealed.

Here, we claim that in parallel to political representation itself, social production of public spaces is paradoxical as the places where the explicit objections are voiced potentially. This claim further requires reinterpretation of the production of space and operationalization of Lefebvre's concept of heterotopia to better understand the paradox of public space.

3. Social production of heterotopias as public spaces

As a philosopher and sociologist, Henri Lefebvre considered space as a social product that serves as a tool of thought and of action claiming that a given space is both instrument and subject of production and it is a tool of control and dominant praxis, namely the power (Lefebvre, 1991). He also called each contextualization of his famous triads as "moments of social space," which might be imagined like points in time or like a model of an atom that electrons hanging around the core; each has a gravitational force through its direction (one more than the other) producing the space. Though the production of space requires a process, the power of each gravitational force of each electron (context) would change presumably in time.

It gets clear in this diagram that what is conceived is not the same with what is lived and perceived, and/or vice versa; they are different moments of production of space and in terms of practical life; it is nothing but a paradox.

In other words, what Lefebvre drew is both the political and paradoxical nature of social space. In fact, he did not use the terms public and private. Instead, he preferred "social space" based on "social relations of production," and this relation grounds on struggle and so the production of space appears as a matter of politics.

In conceptualizing of triads, Lefebvre (1991) did not mention any historical periodization since they can be applied to any period of time. Here, he rather referred to the shifts between modes of production that each produces its own space to show the change of the triads in the capitalist mode of production; and it remarks the simplification of the Western history.

First, there is the "Absolute Space"; advantageous fragments of natural space to settle, which are soon populated. It is also the civil and religious space of agrarian population produced by peasants but managed by others (priests, warriors, etc.). Later, the preservation of the notion of family and what is sacred led the foundation of the political state, which remarks the "Historical Space."

"Historical Space" reflects the rise of representational space including religious and political symbolism that destroyed the absolute space and created the space of accumulation of the abstracts. But the shift to the feudal mode of production built its own "Medieval Space" tracing the representational spaces of the preceding and medieval town dominated the countryside, so does the bourgeoisie. Hence, "labor fell prey to abstraction," and capitalism realized its own relations of production, creating its own "Abstract Space."

"Abstract Space" functions as a commodity with its exchange-value as a set of things and materials that are formal and measurable; it is the instrumental space of the authority, which erase differences. It is not only about constructing more or increasing the exchange value, but it is also about destroying;
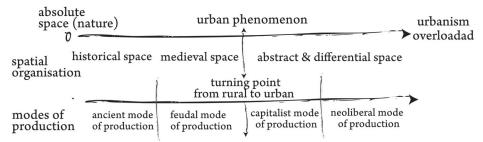
Figure 2. *Shifts between modes of production and their space.*

not only the built environment but also the preceding social relations and differences composed of memories and identities eliminating the representational space.

Critically, Lefebvre (1991) imagined the "Urban Revolution," which would lead humanity to change what they have into a better life, only with the production of differential space and that would be realized by the dissolution of abstract space.

Herein, "Differential Space" gathers differences towards the homogeneity of the abstract space of capitalism through appropriation and autogestion (Lefebvre, 2003; Harvey, 2014).

There are two important distinctions between abstract and differential space. First, production of abstract space is the production of exchange value, but production of differential space implies a shift of use value over exchange value. Second, abstract space operates by signs and codes, which are attributed to them, whereas differential space operates by experiences and appropriations. In fact, societies that produce differential space reflect their self-representation in it, which is a creative and political process.

Thereby, abstract space appears as a unity of lived and conceived spaces implying representations of space that coded by professionals and politicians while differential space appears as a unity of lived and perceived spaces implying spatial practice that appropriated by its users which would generate heterogeneous spaces and relations.

As Butler (2012) emphasises, Lefebvre (2001) used the terms autogestion and appropriation to define social struggles as political resistance that transformed from abstract concerns and demands into concrete attempts to produce new spaces in saying; "each time a social group refuses to accept
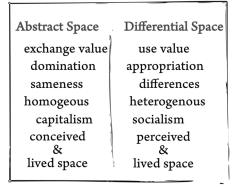

Figure 3. *Opposite characteristics of abstract and differential spaces.*

and forces itself to master its conditions of existence, autogestion is occurring".

Herein, appropriation of space appears as the modification of a given space to serve the needs and possibilities of a group who appropriates it, and it requires the notion of property but in the sense of possession. Although Lefebvre mentioned that a site, a square or a street could be an appropriated space, it is often a structure: a monument or building. Since he developed the term referring the right to inhabitation; "right to the city" and "right to difference"; in this understanding, appropriation of space occurs in the form of squatting.

In this point, Shields (1999) draws particular attention to that Lefebvre suggested squatting; slums, favelas, barrios, ranchos as re-appropriation of space; it is the birth of the tradition of "occupying" key spatial sites and buildings as a means of protest. Lefebvre (2001) gives the examples of squatting because, for him, differential space is the socialist space meaning the end of private property and domination of space by the power.

Under the real conditions of capitalism, Harvey (2012) contributes at the most level to the literature considering the influential occupy movements around the world as the examples of
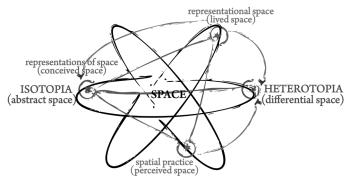
Figure 4. Production of heterotopia and isotopia.

heterotopia   isotopia

Figure 5. An urban context in Lefevbrian approach.

[3]*The concept of heterotopia is a medical term that describes a phenomenon occurring in an unusual place or a spatial displacement of normal tissue, which does not affect the development or organism as a whole (Sohn, 2008:41; Lax, 1997:115). It is introduced to the social sciences and urban theory for the very first time by French philosopher Michel Foucault, developed in "Des Escapes Autres" (1967) translated to in English as "Of Other Spaces" first in 1986 and as "Different Spaces" in 1998 by Hurley, but he never mentioned this concept in any of his writings (Hetherington, 1997:42, Saldanha, 2008:2082). Lefebvre's discussion on heterotopia engages Foucault; in contrast to Foucault's randomness, Lefebvre envisaged heterotopias from a political and historical perspective (Smith in Lefebvre, 2003: xii).*
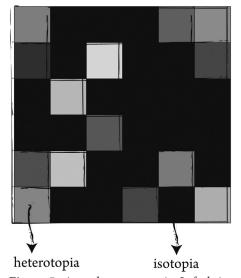
as the conceptual keys to explain the dissolution of abstract space: isotopia, heterotopia, and utopia.

Here, utopia appears a non-place, but it seeks a place of its own; it is everywhere and nowhere hanging in the air in an urban context, embedded in the idea of monumentality. It is real and fiction, present and absent, yet, it is not a realized heterotopia. Further, monumentality is the fullness of a space beyond its material boundaries; it is plurality without contradictions so it is here and there within a differential and contradictive reality of urban space as a dream on the unity of differences, which can be assumed as his ideal, imaginary, revolutionary and permanent thinking of socialist space (Lefebvre, 2003).

In this approach, isotopia also appears as identical places in neighboring order whereas heterotopia appears as the other place both excluded and interwoven in distant order. In this sense, isotopia refers to sameness as being identical, homologous and analogous; alongside them, there are different places as heterotopias (Lefebvre, 2003).

In other words, during the crisis of capitalism and democracy, what is left from the dissolution of abstract space is isotopia, what is produced for a temporary period is heterotopia, and what is imagined is plainly utopia.

Since competitive capitalism desirous of everything at the same time it produces abstract space, which is characterized by contradictions; quantity vs. quality, global vs. local, use value vs. exchange value (Lefebvre, 1991). This production is not stable, and these contradictions cannot be totally resolved, hence, abstract space cannot achieve full domination, and paradoxically this produces the differential space against itself (Harvey, 2014). To be more precise, apparently, isotopia corresponds to the "abstract space" while heterotopia corresponds to "differential space," and three moments of space end up with a dialectic tension between them in the capitalist mode of production.

Today, in the uneven conditions of capitalism and representative democracy, occupy movements appear as the examples of social production of heterotopic spaces that occur during

reclaiming the city and so the public space. Harvey refers Lefebvre's vision of "right to the city" and mentions his concept of heterotopia as a clue to continue the search for understanding the social production and the paradox of public space.

For Lefebvre (2003), social production of a heterotopia corresponds to the condition of anomie since he noted, "anomic groups construct heterotopic spaces, which are eventually reclaimed by the dominant praxis." Here, by anomic groups, Lefebvre obviously referred to the counter publics in opposition to the dominant publics. Thereby, while Harvey (2012) considers occupy movements as the social production of heterotopias, we further comment that it is the spatialisation of the struggles between counter publics and dominant publics.

Lefebvre (1991) pictured the concept of heterotopia[3] in a historical formulation of "marginality" as "differentiation." He categorized three "topias"

periods of crisis of domination when the counter publics appear capable of representing themselves and expressing their objections, yet, eventually reclaimed by the dominant publics.

Developing the concept of heterotopia in relation with isotopia, Lefebvre gave us the chance to understand an urban context as a whole. From Lefebvrian approach, it appears that public spaces also might become heterotopias for a period of time; in other words, an urban context is composed of either isotopias or heterotopias during the dissolution of abstract space and the crisis of domination.

Here, what Lefebvre focused on is also the production of space as a standardized commodity and its homogenous consideration in the capitalist mode of production. His critiques on the production of abstract/isotopic spaces overlap with the rising concerns after the 1970s, which argue that expected heterogeneity of public spaces has been violated by the capitalist and neoliberal practices more than ever in history. Further, like Harvey (2012), it is valuable to see his consideration of the social production of heterotopias (differential spaces) in the form of an act of occupation as the only way left to the differences (counter publics) today to make themselves visible politically. Also, it is significant to see that the struggles between dominant and counter publics overlap with the dialectic tension between isotopia (abstract space) and heterotopia (differential space). In fact, this study claims that what Lefebvre pictures is exactly the explanation of the social production of isotopias by the dominant publics and heterotopias by the counter publics producing their own representation through space.

In brief, as the spaces of political representation, heterotopias are produced by the actual presence of counter publics and remark the plurality, yet they disappear just after the appropriation of the physical space ends and/or when suppressed by the dominant publics to make it end.

From this approach, social production of heterotopic spaces overlaps exactly with the emergence of public spaces as the places of ideal enabling to appear in the material human world in the sense of inclusion into the political life. To be more precise, as Cenzatti (2008) emphasizes heterotopias appear as the spaces of confrontation, which are produced through the social struggles between different publics. Here, it is revealed that the social production of a heterotopia is the manifestational realization of an ideal public space and the dissolution its paradox for only a temporary period of time when Lefebvre's two moments of space (lived and perceived) gain enough force to appropriate the third (conceived).

4. Conclusion

Above, we have discussed the contradictions between theoretically idealized definitions of public spaces and practical realities together with rising critiques on these contradictions. Integrating knowledge from the social sciences, we have developed this discussion further and revealed the paradox of public space.

Out of this discussion, it appears that as the physical setting in which the public sphere has been produced and as the centres of everyday life, public spaces have been exclusionary as a representational tool of power. Since being public is a matter of inclusion in the political life and decision-making process, social production of public spaces have always been in the hands of a privileged spectrum of the societies who were allowed to shape the public opinion and rule as the dominant publics. Further, since neither domination nor publicness is possible in isolation and since power requires the justifiable obedience, public spaces full of crowds who are the objects of domination, appear as paradoxical to the extent until objects become subjects.

In fact, this argument is directly related to the paradox of political representation. The simultaneous need for the absence and presence of other publics for the continuity of the representation of the dominant is explained by the paradox of political representation. Representative democracy system indicates the same paradox because representatives need the presence of people to be elected; however, they need the absence of people to represent

them simultaneously. Representation starts to break down when the explicit objections are voiced, in other words, when people prove their direct representation ability (publicness) giving the message that either they do not need representatives or elected representatives no longer represent them. The only solution to the continuity of the domination in some kind of balance is silence. Otherwise, the dominant confront with the possibility of losing control.

This point remarks a greater problem that representative democracy as the existing governmental system of modern states of today itself appears paradoxical since non-objection contradicts with the essence of both the concepts of publicness and democracy. Besides, it proves that the paradox of public space is a timeless fact since although developing a comprehensive understanding of democracy has taken hundreds of years of human history; overall social mechanism remains the same without the plurality.

Since the power is not stable, the counters of today might become the dominants of tomorrow. In accordance, the changing relations between multi-public drive the transformation of the public sphere and its spatial and semantic reflections on public spaces, because the moments of social space are also not stable and social production of space grounds on these relations.

Thereby, an abstract space cannot be achieved full domination, and that creates differential space through appropriation and autogestion of counter publics, which remarks a crisis.

In the capitalist mode of production, dissolution of abstract space appears as the dissolution of the domination and obedience. Herein, production of heterotopias as public spaces (differential spaces) relies on the human capacity to become the subjects of political action and discourse. However, since this capacity remains temporal being suppressed for the continuity of the domination, and since heterotopias of differentiation is eventually reclaimed by the power, what remains after a heterotopia disappears is the paradox of public space and political representation.

Today, from the M-15 in Puerta del Sol Square – Madrid to the Egyptian Revolution in Tahrir Square – Cairo and from the OWS in Zuccotti Park – New York to Occupy Gezi in Taksim Republican Square – Istanbul, occupy movements can be exemplified as the social production of heterotopias as the spaces of confrontation that temporarily occur during periods of crisis of domination. They are the manifestational realization of ideal public spaces and the dissolution the paradox for only a temporary period of time when Lefebvre's two moments of space (lived and perceived) gain enough force to appropriate the third (conceived).

As long as heterotopias are reclaimed by the power turning back into the abstract spaces of domination and as long as the permanent thinking of pluralist democracy is not achieved, the unity of differences will remain as a dream to be imagined; the utopia. Again paradoxically, it might be said that domination requires the production of heterotopias to prove and corroborate itself reclaiming them. Yet, as professionals from the domain of spatial sciences, our awareness of the struggling relations between multi-publics and their spatial or semantical reflections might also be useful to dissolve the paradox of public spaces providing the opportunity to confront the publics as the base to achieve ideal public spaces and so the pluralism.

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