THESE ARE OUR STREETS
WE WILL OCCUPY THEM
WE ARE HERE. WE ARE GROWING.

Photos: Author

Beursplein as b/orderland?

**Street reflections on the complexities of "right to the city"
and significance of everyday "drama"
and struggles in public space to urban politics:**

Case of the occupy movement and Beursplein Amsterdam

by

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"...The urgent necessity for democratic deliberation today is that people concentrate upon, rather than "surf" over, social reality."

– Richard Sennett (spaces of democracy)

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Beursplein as b/orderland?

Street reflections on the complexities of "right to the city" and the significance of everyday "drama" in public space to urban politics:

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Summary

In this thesis I firstly examine key concepts of Lefebvre's writings on 'Right to the city' and literature on Europe's borders, to link them to the everyday b/ordering practices at an urban public space - Beursplein Amsterdam, amidst the actions of the Occupy movement. In following the actions around the occupy movement at the Beursplein Amsterdam I ask, "Who is/are the 'we'(s) claiming and/or 'occupying' the square (in this case Beursplein)? And how does the 'we'(s) change (or not) and/or is changed (or not) by the diverse time-spaces of the plein?" I use the concept of "performative action" from performativity theory to analyse the everyday political struggles of b/ordering at the Plein. Further, I argue for the significance of everyday politics of visibility around 'being seen' (or not) and 'seeing' (or not) amidst multiple b/orders of urban life to urban politics. I do so through narratives, conversations and my own reflections emerging during my fieldwork. By bringing to fore the multiple borders, contestations and conflicts of everyday 'drama' and the internal b/ordering of democratic movements such as Occupy, around being at the square that I witnessed and found myself part of, I hope to highlight the complexities of centrality and coming together of 'inhabitants' (whom Lefebvre believes have the first and foremost 'right to the city') towards subverting the often undemocratic and exclusionary spatio-temporalities of 'capital' and 'the state'. I argue that the Beursplein comes to resemble a b/orderland, where multiple 'we'(s) are perpetually struggling with and against each other in the everyday drama of performing and/or subverting b/order.

Chapter 1 Introduction and brief overview

1.1   Introduction

The topic of my thesis is urban b/orderlands. I am interested in applying the concepts of bordering and ordering (b/ordering) practices often associated with territories at the peripheries of national space, to centres of national space - the city centre. In a seemingly globalising, flat world of free market ideals, are cities truly global, unbounded, borderless and cosmopolitan as they are made to seem, be it in the media or all the hype of urban entrepreneurialism and city marketing or in academia? Cities are being rated as global based on a number of aspects of liveability, but how much do such ratings talk to the diversities of urban populations and the often forced footloose-ness of asylum seekers or illegal migrants or nomadic subjects or the poor? As international industrial-capitalistic trade and industrialised urbanity that is required to sustain the same continue to spread rapidly apparently blurring state borders in the increased flows of people, goods, information, etc, in fact, b/ordering practices only seem to multiply in the heart of urban spaces.

That cities are the laboratories for implementing the latest technologies of border control is no more a shocking revelation. In fact, 24/7 surveillance of behaviour under CCTV cameras and preparedness of citizens to surprise 'identity' checks anytime anywhere (previously associated only to situations of crossing national borders) are some of the 'accepted norms' of everyday life, a condition sustained, to a large extent, by the discourse of securitisation of national space based on fear. Borders are everywhere, at railway stations, airports, internet cafés, along motorways, in malls, at streets (Rumford, 2008). And cities indeed exemplify b/orderlands.

This is probably also one of the reasons that recent developments in border studies have begun rerouting away from the material and physical dimensionality of state borders, such as border guards, barbed fences etc, to that which goes beyond what meets the eye, in the various forms of interpretation and representation that b/orders embody (Houtum, Kramsch, Zierhofer, 2005, & Houtum, Berg, 2003). Border objects being irrelevant per se more focus is being put on the objectification processes of bounded spaces informing and influencing people's everyday spatial practices. B/order is viewed as active verb (b/ordering space), rather than as objective reality (Houtum, Kramsch, Zierhofer, 2005).

Linking this notion of b/ordering to urbanity, so-called 'public spaces' exemplify borderlands. As Balibar powerfully argues, every public space ('within' national territory) is, by definition, a political space, when it is 'mapped' by sovereign powers or imposed by economic forces presupposing a geography of memberships and representation, of unified and isolated territories, but also when 'used' and 'instituted' by civic practices, debates, forms of representation, social conflicts (Balibar, 2009). Given the hegemonic territorializations of space and categorizations of 'identities' of collective subjects (around citizenship) within structures of power by state monopolies, exclusionary b/orders of identity and space lie at the very heart of Europe's political space, in the very constitution of the modern nation-state. Territories then, as Balibar points, combine in a single unity the institutions of (absolute) sovereignty, the border, and the government of populations. Borderlines which make a clear distinction between the 'national' and the 'foreigner' express sovereignty as a power to attach populations to territories and categories to human identities in a stable, regulated manner (Balibar, 2009). Under these conditions, public spaces of national territories remain constantly haunted by the possibilities of 'deviant outsiders' or 'nomadic subjects' resisting such territorialisation, who stubbornly situate themselves in 'counterpolitical' or 'antipolitical' spaces, thereby requiring increased regulation, constant vigilance, strict punishment towards deviance, or soft power for compliance, often internalised and implemented by citizens themselves but nevertheless dependent on the agents of governmentality (Foucault, 1991) - the police.

Public spaces exemplify such absolute borders around citizenship and territorialised behaviour despite the simultaneous flows that follow such territorialisation that tend also to stubbornly follow highly rigid and exclusionary notions of space and identities. That subjects themselves are caught between the attractiveness and unbearability of such projects of compliance and deviance from normative political space, can be seen in the everyday frustrations, abidance and struggles in public spaces. In a sense the tricky part of political spaces of hegemonic, democratic states is that people have to confront with often being caught in borders belonging to the state that in turn belongs to them, in a sense seemingly of their own making, though not necessarily so.

Public spaces are then important sites to such political tensions emerging from diverse b/ordering practices of territorialisation and deterritorialisation of places and people in and of the state and economic forces, and the subsequent conflicts around deviations from the same. They are places where boundaries are negotiated, imposed, blurred and struggled over every day.

Public space as (performative) social space

Borders and boundaries are negotiated everywhere all the time, and most importantly in social discourses, narratives and everyday practices and actions. The meanings of boundaries are not necessarily created only at so-called border areas but very much within the space of political itself (Balibar, 1998). In fact, for an absolute external b/order to exist, equally absolute internal b/order(ing) is essential. Boundaries being related to identities of which spatial identity is critical, we can hardly ignore the role of states today in dictating and 'managing' predetermined spatial identities of people both internally and externally. That citizens 'belong' to a bounded absolute notion of space (national territory) and are expected to behave in certain ways 'within' this space (which spreads beyond land to even air-space and water-space), points to the significance of national centers as crucial sites for b/ordering practices. They are sites onto which abstract spaces of 'banal nationalism' and capital are projected, with the state very much controlling social practices, actions and the ideological apparatus that links them together (Passi, 2001). States indeed still play a powerful role in the popular politics of everyday place-making and in the creation of naturalised links between people and places.

The production of 'space', and in this case, 'public space' as social space reflects asymmetrical power relations (massey, 1993) in that some actors (mostly related to the state and entrepreneurial in nature) are more actively participating in the production of space/scale while most people are passively 'consuming' and reproducing them. And further, that specific state institutions responsible for maintaining territoriality and perceptions of public space such as the police, city municipality, are active agents in the production of 'public space' in national centers add to greater asymmetries of power (Paasi, 2001). Daily time-spaces part of the production processes of so-called 'public space' are only dominated by b/ordering practices of the state and capital.

Nevertheless, there is also an urgent need for a radical view on places and identities, more so within academic circles that challenge rather than follow or reinforce such hegemonic notions of space and identity as regulated and fixed. That asymmetries of power exist, but exist under constant threat and contestation given the very changing nature of human identities and places, more so, amidst the 'scapes' of flows of agents crossing over or falling in between rigid lines of territory and categorised identities, needs greater advocacy, more so today. That boundaries of identities and space/scale are being constantly defined, negotiated, struggled over, consumed, resisted, blurred and lived out within the daily time-spaces of social actions and practices, to begin with, needs attention.

In this regard, performativity theory has contributed significantly towards challenging hegemonic, predetermined, fixed notions of identity by highlighting the role of "performativity" to the very emergence, reiteration and subversion of identities and borders, be it of gender, sex, nationality, or public-private realm (Butler, 1990, 1993, Honig, 1995, 1992, 1993). It attacks head-on the notion that there exists any *apriori* ontological status apart from the various performative acts constituting identities (Kulynych, 1997). Political communities then emerge through performative action rather than representing a constant, bounded, achieved entity based on self-evident truth. Further, performative actions of political participation even in democratic societies are seen as agonistic expressions that stretch beyond, rather than restricted to deliberative rationality, (Kulynych, 1997) where politically engaged individuals act *and* struggle both with *and* against each other. Bonnie Honig combines Butler's account of performativity theory and Hannah Arendt's agonism, to introduce such an agonistic politics of performativity. Assuming that identities are never seamless, it basically opens up the realm of democratic politics to agonism and performative action rather limit it to highly rationalised deliberative consensus-building among stable communities assumed within the political spaces of the nation-state apparatus.

Public space from the notion of Honig's agonistic politics of performativity emerges whenever people act and struggle with *and* against each other in concert. The very notion of private or public is then caught in this 'agonistic politics of performativity' rather than as clearly demarcated and agreed upon realms. The very notion of a predetermined, stable "we" is struggled over in the everyday realm of performative action comprising equally of subversive actions of new beginnings as much as that of reiteration and submission of older practices. B/ordering practices in and of (private) public space then emerge from everyday acts and struggles by politically engaged individuals both with and against each other (Honig, 1995).

Linking this notion of politics of performativity to b/ordering practices then acknowledges the tensions and struggles of the 'othering' processes itself. B/order(ing), rather than occurring between homogenous and achieved entities of 'we' against 'them', emerges and is always becoming in the struggles with and against each other. Daily time-spaces of urban politics are only dotted with such conflicting and associative everyday performative actions and struggles, be it around state surveillance, touristic consumption, national symbolism, bottom-up resistance movements, chance encounters, regulated and unregulated flows and practices of people (citizens/immigrants/ asylum seekers/nomadic subjects, etc), amongst others. City centers are where all these multiple b/ordering practices as performative actions and struggles swarm together. Everyday urban rhythms emerging amidst such

actions and practices, then serve as windows for geographers and social scientists wishing to understand the dynamic nature of the same.

In delving into this topic of urban b/orderlands emerging through the various b/ordering practices constituting production of 'public (private) spaces', I mainly look at some dominant everyday b/ordering practices (as performative actions) part of production processes of Beursplein, a square part of the centre of Amsterdam city. Standing as an iconic site to the emergence of the first stock exchange in the world, symbolic of Dutch colonial-capitalistic economic success associated with the East India Company and Amsterdam's historical development as a modern trading city, the square is as political a public(private) space as can be. It continues to serve as an important everyday place for diverse purposes, right from state and private policing to public demonstrations and protests, to global stock market flows, to private advertising and touristic consumption, not to forget, as a place of dwelling, apart from other everyday banal practices of passers-by. That the square has been recently claimed by a people's movement (the self-claimed 99%) such as 'occupy' made this study more interesting due to the tensions between the diverse time-spaces and key actors at the plein around the same. I try to explore what the everyday socio-spatial (performative) actions, practices, discourses at the square reveal about b/ordering practices, given the situatedness of the square amidst global and local politics of place-making. That the square continues to be produced as a historical, social, political, economic site of global, national and local significance in its everyday actions and practices, be it in the lightning speed financial transactions zipping in and out of the cables of the stock exchange building across the urban networks, or in actions, practices of touristic consumption, or in the architectural symbolism or slogans of city marketing, all part of everyday urban struggles makes it interesting for b/order analysis. That often conflicting and complementary 'othering' inherent in the territorialisation and de-territorialisation processes of producing a place that is situated at the confluence of many 'us' and 'them' (such as, citizens versus tourists, national versus global versus local capital and labor flows around the stock exchange, capital versus non-capitalistic exchange, agents passively consuming versus those actively producing, territorialising agents such as police, municipality versus deterritorialising agents such as tourists and moving dwellers, citizens versus immigrants, and most recently 'occupiers' versus agents of state and capitalistic trade) makes it far from a utopian cosmopolitan place where borders melt into thin air. Given the multiple meanings and continued significance of b/ordering to the everyday production processes of Beursplein-making, it is an intriguing space for studying the complex processes of urban b/order(ing)s that continue to blanket city spaces.

In delving into how everyday space is 'being b/ordered' and struggled over by all the multiple actors with and against each other significant to the production of 'Beursplein', I structure my investigation around the question:

Research question: "Who is/are the 'we'(s) claiming and/or occupying the Beursplein?"

While this question might suggest an inherent assumption that a coherent "we" exists *a priori* thereby needing investigation, this is not my intention. I ask this question to rather look at specific practices and collective performative action(s) giving rise to an emerging and becoming "we", rather than looking for a "we" already predetermined and pre-existent.

Viewing the plein as emerging out of the everyday practices, collective (performative) actions, discourses and narratives, I look for b/ordering practices in the everyday narratives, actions, discourses and practices at the square. How absolute are the b/ordering practices in the everyday? How might everyday rhythms around for instance, day-night, rain-sunshine, open-closed space (such as tents) influence this notion of 'we', thereby reflecting the performative, social, discursive and vulnerable nature of boundaries? To understand this relation between the moving time-spaces and b/ordering practices at the plein, I ask

Sub-question: How do(es) the 'we' (s) change (or not) and/or is changed (or not) by the time-spaces of the Plein?

In following these questions I try to critically explore every day b/order-making at the Plein, between multiple actors key to the politics of everyday place-making, namely the police, city-municipality, workers of private corporations and consumers, moving dwellers, passers-by, the occupy movement, and all these actors and their diverse performative actions caught in a power relation to the architecture of the square itself. My main research objective is to gain insights into the everyday b/ordering practices of urban space.

1.2 Brief outline

In the following chapter (chapter 2), I briefly discuss some of the theoretical concepts underlying my investigation, structured around themes of 'spaces of democracy', 'places of democracy', 'right to the city', 'urban borderlands' and 'b/Order(s) as socially, performatively produced'. This chapter introduces some key theories, academic debates and concerns relevant to the topic of urban borderlands and b/ordering practices and actions, while making clear the position taken in this thesis towards analysing everyday practices.

In Chapter 3, I describe the methodology, in terms of the site selection, methods of data gathering and analysis. Basically, it talks of how I structured my investigation and analysis to come to the reflections and discussions that I do at the end.

In Chapter 4 I give a brief overview of the historic-spatio-materiality of the built environment of Beursplein, the main site of my investigation, (in Soja's terms 'first and second space' descriptions of Beursplein). I argue that the built environment plays a significant role in structuring daily rhythms at the square as well as provides a dramatic setting to the b/ordering actions and struggles lived out at the Plein.

In Chapters 5 I focus on Beursplein as a place of order emerging from the everyday practices of surveillance and discipline undertaken by the police and city-municipality that inevitably border other practices considered 'abnormal'.

In Chapter 6 I deal with the everyday lived spaces at the Plein that struggle with and resist actions and practices of order of the police and municpality, (or in Soja's terms, "Thirdspaces of becomings"). I divide the chapter into three main sections namely, 'Thirdspaces of b/orderings of police and moving dwellers', 'Beursplein as rebel place' and finally, 'Beursplein as consumption place'. Here I introduce actions and practices of agents crucial to production of 'Beursplein', while analysing how they b/order in relation to other practices at the square, and the diverse time-spaces of the Plein.

And finally, in Chapter 7 I summarise the arguments in the previous chapters and argue for the case of Beursplein as a b/orderland given the everyday struggles of multiple 'we's not only with and against each other but also in relation to the built environment. I argue that multiple 'we'(s) occupying and/or claiming Beursplein are caught in a 'politics of visibility' and 'drama' in their multiple b/ordering practices and highlight the significance of everyday struggles to politics of place-making. In all this I urge for confronting everyday b/ordering practices we are all part of in producing space and making place.

Chapter 2 Theory Chapter

2.1 Spaces of democracy

Spaces of democracy have always been elitist and exclusionary right from where it is most popularly understood to have originated in the greek polis up until today's space(s) of democracy consumed by the divisionary mechanisms of nation-states, capital and neo-liberal politics. In the greek agora, women and slaves were not even considered as part of the 'public' participating in political discussions (Senett, 1995), and today, with the nation state and corporations emerging as the most dominant political forces, spaces of democracy not only carve out their own exclusionary borders around capital (such as gated communities), citizenship (versus immigrant), and nationality (versus 'foreigner'), but also seem to further ride on so-called 'primitive' borders around class, caste, race, religion, color, to name a few. Amidst all the undemocratic spaces of so-called 'democratic' countries, the emergence of the Arab Spring points to the stubborn democratic spaces of revolution emerging out of the fissures in what are known as 'authoritarian' regimes.

The Arab Spring has been much talked about in the media, academia and among political diplomats of the EU and USA for its implications on international trade and spread of democracy. In most of the political rhetoric of international relations however we can observe that 'democracy' is not always referred to as a continuous process of organising societies, but is rather a highly loaded term, often used to legitimise undemocratic practices. It is marketed as a product by so-called 'advanced' democratic countries as a carrot to 'developing' countries needing 'catching-up' on one hand, while on the other we see political elites of authoritarian regimes wishing to gain mileage from the idea of democracy towards eventually strengthening control over people. I say so-called 'advanced' countries because 'it' (democracy as a product rather than as a process) is marketed and softly asserted (through strict requirements and regulations as can be seen in EU's foreign policies), despite contestations and crisis around the same within the very countries who claim to be the experts in it such as those in the EU and USA. In all this the stubborn and challenging elements of practising 'rule of, by and for the people' with all its contestations and continuous struggles in political space is often ignored and less discussed.

Further, the recent economic crisis has not only put rising unemployment levels and growing inequalities, but also declining democracy in the face of neoliberal policies, back on the agenda of urban social movements such as the Indignados, democraciarealya! and the Occupy movement in these very countries. A 'Crisis of democracy' seems to be the common cry of all these resistance movements claimed by the people (the so-called "99%") standing against dominant political-economic systems they can no more relate to, that nevertheless continue to structure their lives.

2.2 Places of democracy:

The historical city of Athens located its 'democratic' practices in the town square and the theatre, both places of high social relevance to its people, and emblematic of the city. As Senett observes, these sites and their architecture played a significant role in the kinds of democracy that emerged and were practised. While the square stimulated citizens (of whom majority of the people who were slaves and women remained excluded) to move beyond their personal concerns and acknowledge the presence and needs of other citizens, the theatre helped citizens to focus their attention and concentrate on decision making. He argues that these very competitive people of Athens connected their practices of democracy very much to architecture. Though we need to be extremely wary of the exclusionary bordering(s) of Athenian democratic practices, what is nevertheless interesting and relevant to democratic practices and social movements today is precisely the 'places' of such political practices (Senett, 1995).

In the recent uprisings of people such as the 'Arab Spring', 'Indignados' and the Occupy movement, the significance of urban centres can hardly be ignored. As Lefebvre and more recently David Harvey have argued, revolution in our times has to be urban – or nothing (Lefebvre, 1995 & Harvey, 2012). Seeking for centrality in either opposing authoritarian rule or the bourgeoisie or decisions of the state driven by neo-liberal ideals or in demanding and practising 'real democracy' (democraciarealya) we cannot ignore the role of Tahrir Square, Madrid's Puerta del Sol, Barcelona's Placa de Catalunya, New York's Zucotti park and Wall Street, London's St Paul's Cathedral and Finsbury square, and Amsterdam's Beursplein, to name a few, as important sites both symbolically and practically towards mobilising huge numbers of ordinary people to make their collective voices heard.

¹Protestors at Tahrir Square

What has also been most impressive about the nature of these movements such as those part of the Arab Spring and Occupy is the speed with which they have spread across cities in terms of not only capturing the imagination of people but also in triggering huge numbers to act in response and in relation to each other by taking to squares and streets.

The increasing speed at which urbanisation processes are spreading across the globe (Harvey, 2012 & Lefebvre, 1995), alongside the growing disjunctive flows of people, goods and information across urban networks (Appadurai, 2001) places urbanity at the centre of most major political struggles. Democratising urban space, one can then say, stands central to democratising political space.

Tracing the places of democracy in Athens to now, we do see that time and again the 'city square' has continued to be reclaimed for public debates and demonstrations in cities of the west, while modern theatres on the other hand, have predominantly melted away from the open-air spaces of the Pnyx used for debates and deliberation to the increasingly rigid and privileged spaces of ticketed consumption. This has also made many artists to increasingly step out of the theatrical stage and place themselves in public space. However, taking the notion of spatial design or architecture of public spaces as influential to practices of democracy further, **we can then look at the square itself as a stage or theatre within**

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¹ Source: http://cpj.org/blog/2011/02/government-lies-are-exposed-in-egypts-tahrir-squar.php (7/6/2012)

which urban politics unfolds today. If formal city theatres, one might argue, have predominantly left the political stage, we need to ask if the urban square has left the theatrical stage. The central role of urban squares and streets to the recent staging of protests, demonstrations, public opinion and debates, despite strict regimentation and regulation around the same point to the role of public space, specially the square, as still crucial to geographies of resistance, demonstrations and bottom up practices.

However, this is only one side of the story. As much as the urban landscape continues to be marked by bottom-up practices, resistances, protests, social movements and local civic initiatives in and around public space, it is hard to ignore the top-down institutional, legal, political and administrative systems and hierarchies of power marking urban public space with certain objectified qualities that dominate and control daily practices (Harvey, 1989). Urbanisation processes seem to develop alongside repressive technologies designed to control and regulate perception and behaviour in public space. And there is indeed then a constant tension, as Harvey notes, between form and processes and between object and subject. In this respect 'the urban' itself, comes to exemplify borderlands today as reflected in all the regulations and deviances in and around (private) public space.

2.3 Urban b/orderlands

Today's borderlands no longer simply symbolise territorial markers of distinct societies. Instead, they spill everywhere and multiply in the heartlands of national space (Balibar, 1998, p.220), right in the center of cities, amongst disjunctural flows of different speeds, scales and differentiations of social interactions at various scales, and undemocratic territorialising and colonising of urban space by powerful corporations and state/supra-state/inter-state/international institutions. The city centre is indeed where multiple social borders emerge, co-exist, collide, conflict, get blurred and shift – be it of citizenship, race, language, colour, gender, nationality, identity, commodity, information, knowledge, capital, class, money, power, etc. Frontier zones emerge from the interactions of these various flows (Sassen, 2001) right here in urban space.

While the boundary between the urban and the non-urban is increasingly blurring, the borders emerging in and through 'the urban' are only multiplying. On one hand, where the city ends is itself an impossible question today given the rapid innovations in transport and communication technologies and inter-city competition as an "external coercive power" pushing cities towards often repetitive and serial reproduction of certain patterns of development (such as "world trade centers", "IT parks", shopping malls, etc) (Harvey, 1989). On the other hand, cities are the laboratories for latest technologies of regulated control, monitoring behaviour and movements of people, in the digitised forms of 24/7 border control such as CCTV surveillance, and gated spaces of consumerism, which are

increasingly hard to differentiate from formal national/supranational borderlands in their assumed status of militaristic control.

Surveillance cameras at Amsterdam Central Station
Source: Kolar Aparna

City municipalities are critical agents in implementing exclusionary bordering practices of the state and supranational corporations and institutions. Further, the hegemonic institutions of the state around nationality and citizenship continue to restrict many city-dwellers from having a say in the urban environment they live.

At the same time, it is not only the b/ordering and re/bordering practices of the state that dominates urbanity. In the transition from the modern metropolis to what Soja calls the postmetropolis, a major reconfiguration of boundaries and borders that define and confine urban life can hardly be ignored. Many more layers of borders and boundaries engulf city life. What he calls as the epidemic spread of security obsession is as much part of the 'new urbanism' as much are increased flows of people, capital,

information and commodities associated with neo-liberal globalization. The carceral city obsessed with maintaining the boundaries between purified notions of 'we' and 'they', insider and outsider, familiar and stranger, Soja argues, is very much part of the fluidities of globalization and postmodernity. (Soja, 2005)

In this changing landscape of blurring boundaries of the urban alongside the urban exemplifying borderlands, it becomes important to clarify the meaning of urbanisation processes. Harvey's (1989) broad definition comes useful:

"***Urbanisation should, rather, be regarded as a spatially grounded social process in which a wide range of different actors with quite different objectives and agendas interact through a particular configuration of interlocking spatial practices.***"

Among the most critical spatial practices of such urbanisation processes today is 'b/ordering'. Neoliberal politics have a direct impact on public spaces. And as Low and Smith (2006) phrase it "Control of public space is a central strategy of neoliberalism". Constraints and regulations around who has access to what spaces and how, apart from heavy restrictions on movements, gatherings, demonstrations and activities in public spaces increasingly aim to mute the voices and freedom of the very people who live here.

Further, the shift to what Harvey calls urban entrepreneurialism (1989) assertively places private-public partnerships, rather than city dwellers, at the forefront of decision making around 'construction of place'. All this points to a serious democratic deficit in the urbanisation process itself, bringing us to the most important question of "To whom does 'the city' or 'urban space' belong?

2.4 Right to the city

Lefebvre's seminal essay on 'Right to the City' stands more than relevant today with respect to grappling with these issues of democratising urban space in an increasingly militaristic, consumption-driven, and neo-liberalist form of globalising world. It has become popular in geography and other social sciences precisely because of this, and has also been explored beyond academia in dealing with conflicts over housing, against patriarchal cities, for participatory planning, and against social exclusion in cities more generally, to name a few (Purcell, 2002).

Lefebvre is primarily concerned with the **dominance of capital and state control** over the production of urban space, advocating for a right to the city that most importantly, if not solely, belong to the

inhabitant. The right to the city is conceived to further the interests of the whole society and most importantly of all those who inhabit. It calls for empowering urban inhabitants.

In elaborating on this notion of right to the city, he talks of **two broad rights, namely:** right to participation (having a central role in any decision that contributes to the production of urban space) and right to appropriation (right of inhabitants to physically access, occupy, and use urban space – to be physically present in the space of the city; but to also produce urban space so it meets the needs of the inhabitants; right to full and complete usage of urban space in the course of everyday life (Lefebvre 1996, p.179).

If cities are built to fulfil our social needs, Lefebvre urges for viewing needs beyond individualistic ones driven by the so-called society of consumption. Thus needs for wasting energies in play, symbolism, imaginary and creative activity need to be seen as equally or even more important to urban society. When we think of our daily social interactions outside private spaces, it is increasingly difficult to experience interactions and exchanges not involving any financial transaction or commercial value. To Lefebvre, the 'Urban' is very much places of simultaneity and encounter, where priority is on use value and exchange, where exchange does not go through exchange value driven purely by profit motives. Lefebvre stresses on the **importance of use value** rather than urban space as private property, as a commodity to be valorised by capitalist production process to which such rights stand against.

"*the right to the city is like a cry and a demand...a transformed and renewed right to urban life*." – Lefebvre, H (1995).

In working towards the realization of an urban life based on the above elements and more towards our heart's desire Lefebvre points to the importance of the working class as the social carrier and above all, all those who 'inhabit' the city as crucial to such transformations of the urban into an oeuvre (Lefebvre, 1995).

As Purcell (2002) argues, Lefebvre imagines and advocates a new urban politics of the inhabitant. It radically challenges and rethinks the current structure of both capitalism and liberal-democratic citizenship. Membership in the urban community is earned simply by living out **the routines of everyday life** in the space of the city. Lefebvre calls them 'citadins' instead of citizens – fusing the notion of citizen with that of denizen/inhabitant.

Also important is Lefebvre's notion of space that stands complimentary to his notion of right to the city. Production of space, according to Lefebvre occurs within a trialectics of perceived space, conceived space and lived space. His "spatial trialectics" model includes three fields namely 'perceived space' (Spatial practices, or physical space), 'conceived space' (representations of space, or mental space) and 'lived space' (spaces of representations, or social space) that are in constant interaction with each other thereby creating and producing what comes to be space itself and the patterns that follow. (Soja, 1996)

Source: Soja, (1996, Thirdspace, p. 74)

To Lefebvre, our perceptions, conceptions, everyday improvisations, emotions, feelings, abstractions, symbols are all, at one and the same time, crucial to producing space and the meanings we attribute to it in the process of living and interacting. In this model, the dynamics between the fields of physical space, mental space and social space all together contribute to the production of space. Physical space (perceived) refers to the materiality of social interaction in terms of the tangible sensory aspects of life that we can touch and feel. Mental space (conceived) includes all the specific abstractions we attribute in our attempts to suitably reflect over the material reality be it artistic representations like photography, painting, sketches or scientific tools such as maps, graphs, theoretical models, plans, or cultural ritualistic or symbolic abstractions etc. And finally, social space (lived) is the lived space of people with all our lived out experiences, imaginations, feelings, fears, emotions attached to space/place (Harvey, 2004). These three fields in relation to each other contribute to what he calls production of space. At the same time, Lefebvre insists that each of these "fields" of human spatiality be seen as simultaneously real and imagined, concrete and abstract, material and metaphorical (Soja, 1996, pp.65). He insists the model does not end, but is continuously open to expansion of spatial knowledge (Soja, 1996, pp.61) In this thesis I primarily focus on the 'narratives' and actions as part of everyday lived spaces at the square.

Viewing space as socially produced rather than activities occurring 'in' space, production of urban space is quite central to his arguments of right to the city. In this sense it can be said that it is a call for 'citadens'/inhabitants to claim their rights to the city by being central agents in the active production of urban space itself.

Most importantly, Lefebvre's notion of 'right to the city' calls for an urgent need to shift power away from dominant structures of capital and liberal-democratic states, and beyond the indirect and institutionalised rights of citizens to state decisions influencing social processes, towards a rights to inhabitants around free participation in the production of urban space itself. As Purcell observes, it is a call for a radical restructuring of social, political, and economic relations, both in the city and beyond.

Now Lefebvre's call is very broad and quite ambiguous on precisely how might these restructurings occur and how would the issue of scale be tackled while doing so, amidst blurring boundaries of 'the urban' and 'the city'. It is, nevertheless, a very useful framework to look at the complex political struggles of everyday life towards democratic reformation. By applying the above ideas from Lefebvre's right to the city to my study of Beursplein Amsterdam and the everyday struggles and spatio-temporalities around using the square amidst the actions part of the Occupy movement I hope to highlight the complexities of living out such rights through the everyday lived experiences and multiple b/orders crucial to producing urban space at the plein. I focus on the right to appropriation of space as one of the fundamental rights critical to democratising urban space, seen through the **everyday spatio-temporalities of the square** around usage and reclamation.

2.5 Urban B/orderlands as Third space

Building on Lefebvre's spatial trialectics, Edward Soja offers an epistemological framework of space, in his concept of Thirdspace. Aiming to move beyond the longstanding tendency of modernist thinking and development of spatial knowledge focussed on objective material space and rationally interpretable re-presentational space, Thirdspace places the spatiality of existential being and becoming, as central to the production of space in theory-formation, empirical analysis, critical inquiry and social practice.

According to Soja, first space epistemologies focus primarily on the "analytical deciphering" of what Lefebvre calls the perceived space, the material "physical" spatiality that is comprehended in the absolute and relative locations of things and activities, sites and situations, tending to privilege objectivity and materiality – the built environment. Second space epistemologies are immediately distinguishable from the worlds of firstspace epistemologies by their explanatory concentration on conceived rather than their perceived space. It is the interpretive locale of the creative artist and artful

architect, the utopian urbanist seeking social and spatial justice through the application of better ideas, good intentions, etc. It is the imagined geography that tends to become 'real' geography with the image and representation coming to define and order the reality. And finally Thirdspace emerges from the duality of first space-second space, as a limitless space of possibilities, based fundamentally on the ontological trialectic of Spatiality-Historicality-Sociality.

In attempting to explore the b/ordering spaces of Beursplein this framework of Soja serves useful to ground my analysis in a trialectically open manner, as one that rejects any claims to creating a 'whole' of all the simultaneities and complexities of geographies part of the becoming of Beursplein's human geographies.

2.6 B/Order(s) as socially (performatively) produced:

I base my analysis on the notion that b/orders are most importantly socially produced (Soja in b/ordering space). This perspective not only challenges the permanence and stability claims of most borders, but also points to the significance of everyday practices, actions, narratives, interactions and discourses to the continued existence and transformation of identity-formation via b/order(ing) and boundaries of human geographies. It is also the reason why they are the focus of my analysis. That b/orders rely on everyday repetitive performances, narratives, practices and/or sudden deviations in the same to constantly mark and un/re-mark who and what belongs or not to 'we' and 'they', points to the highly fluid yet persistent spaces of b/ordering and b/order-crossings. This is also the notion advocated by performativity theory that emphasizes on identities as performatively produced (Schrift, 2000) rather than representing a pre-given or constantive. I use Bonnie Honig's 'agonistic politics of performativity' to briefly introduce the significance of 'drama' in everyday struggles of b/ordering actions and practices of agents. Honig combines Butler's performativity theory and Hannah Arendt's agonism to advocate an agonistic politics of performativity. For instance, interpreting Hannah Arendt's reading of the American declaration of independence as coming into being in the performative rather than from some constantive reference to a self-evident truth, Bonnie highlights the role of performative speech-act, in the declaring of "we" in the constitution, as the real source of the authority of the newly founded republic. In the performative action of pronouncing and announcing the famous phrase "We hold these truths to be self-evident," it is argued that it is the "we hold" rather than the "self-evident truth" that brings into being a new political community. Further, Honig also argues for the distinction between public and private to be seen as the performative product of political struggle, hard-won and always temporary (Honig, 1995).

Agonistic politics of performativity of Honig advocates a political space of agonistic tension between the private and public, in which politically engaged individuals act *and* struggle both with *and* against

each other in their performative actions and struggles (Honig, 1995). This is relevant to my study of everyday b/ordering practices at Beursplein because of its emphasis on performativity and agonism to the everyday politics of place-making. Given that struggles in everyday public (private) space is not always settled through rational deliberation between *or* against actors but is perpetually contested and emerging in the performative, this perspective allows me to bring to light the irrational aspects of negotiating b/orders in the everyday actions at the square that are always struggling with *and* against each other. Further, the significance of performativity lends well to understand the dynamics of protestors, in this case those part of the occupy movement.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Selection of case:

Influenced in part by the Arab Spring and the protests and movements in Spain such as "democraciarealya!" and the "Indignados", the protests part of the Occupy movement received much media attention starting with Occupy Wallstreet in New York's Zucotti Park beginning September 17, 2011, before it soon spread to many different cities. A word like "Occupy" as a working slogan for a movement is bound to capture any geographer's mind for its explicit spatial connotation. Claiming to be the "99%" in a system run by the "1%", an important aspect of the occupy movement has been to physically 'occupy' specific public spaces in big cities (of symbolic significance, such as wall street, beursplein, streets in financial districts or opposite WTCs, etc) with tents. By performatively declaring a strong 'we' through speech-acts such as "We are the 99%" and stubbornly enacting performative actions of physically being at public spaces, a new political community emerges. Though the movement has been criticised for having less clearly formulated goals and no strong leadership, there is no denying that the act of physically taking over squares and streets by people thereby disrupting dominant spatio-temporalities of the state and capital critical to production of urban space, makes it interesting and significant.

As the name symbolises "occupy" is a shout to reclaiming spaces and places from the hierarchical structures of neo-liberal thinking, back to the self-claimed 99% who feel their voices are unheard and consciously silenced. The word "Occupy" signifies the continued importance of space and place to social movements and collective urban consciousness. "Occupy" reiterates the significance of geography to socio-politico-economic goals and ambitions of people, as it has always been.

Site:

In finding a site exemplifying the aspects of 'urbanisation', 'b/orderlands' and 'theatre of urban politics' discussed so far towards addressing the issues of democratising urban space, the Beursplein Amsterdam seemed particularly intriguing to me especially amidst the occupy movement, which was at its peak (in terms of public and media attention) when I began thinking of a thesis topic. I was curious how so-called 'democratic' social movements such as occupy reclaim city squares and streets vis-a-vis the local setting and how this might attract people to indeed come together and reclaim the square for democratic practices. It seemed an interesting opportunity to participate in and observe how the dominant everyday spatio-temporalities at the square might be disrupted, enhanced, co-adopted or subverted in the actions part of the occupy movement towards reclaiming the square, the city, and urban life back to the people. Though during the course of my fieldwork the tenting camps so crucial to the spread and popularity of the occupy movement were evicted there were nevertheless interesting actions towards reclaiming the square by everyday dwellers and the 'occupiers' themselves that have given me many insights to base my reflections and conclusions on.

Observation and interview/conversations schedule:

31/3/2012	Saturday	12.00-21.00
16/4/2012	Monday	14.00-18.00
20/4/2012	Friday	12.00-18.00
26/4/2012	Thursday	17.00-19.00
8/5/2012	Tuesday	15.00-18.00
21/5/2012	Monday	16.00-18.00
24/5/2012	Thursday	15.00-17.30
10/6/2012	Sunday	18.30-20.00

3.2 Research question

Who is the 'we' claiming the square and/or 'occupying', in this case, the Beursplein?

Sub-question:

How does this 'we' change (or not) and/or is changed (or not) by the diverse time-spaces of the Plein?

3.3 Method, data gathering and analysis

I mainly structured my method(s) of data gathering by being physically at the square, actively observing everyday interactions and rhythms at the plein, participating in some actions part of the occupy campaign, and having prolonged conversations/interviews with some key agents in the everyday production processes of 'the beursplein', that has been however limited to the timeframe of my

research. Agents and their actions, stories, perceptions gathered during fieldwork are central to the analysis.

Also, Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis serves as a very important and interesting tool for my study attempting to link everyday rhythms of the plein around questions of right to the city. For this it cannot be neglected that being physically there has been essential for a good understanding of the area:

'*…to grasp a rhythm it is necessary to have been grasped by it; one must let oneself go, give oneself over, abandon oneself to its duration'* (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 27).

I used the dairy method to document my reflections and observations. The dairy method helped me to document qualitative and experiential aspects of the research, since it was mainly based on narratives, conversations and observations. Finally, I use the photo-essay format that serves as a visual context to further enhance my analysis based largely on narratives and everyday practices of agents.

3.4 My moving body:

During the research period I was confronted with a number of issues around my own presence and participation in the processes I observed, and in relation to the people I interacted with. How am I present in the spaces I wish to analyse? Am I an objective researcher gazing at her 'research subjects'? Am I an active participant? Am I a witness? This was indeed a struggle. On one hand I had the clear objective of producing a thesis report based on my experiences within a fixed timeframe and on the other hand I had the urge to actively engage, become the many 'we's being produced at the Plein, as well as passively observe the everyday practices and rhythms at the Plein. With regard to participating in the political spaces opened by occupy, I asked myself, who am I? Am I a concerned citizen? Am I a foreigner? Am I simply a concerned individual curious to participate in a social movement wishing change?-questions to which I was unable to find clear answers.

Also, though I did not explicitly seek out for conversations around nationality and nations, I was confronted with the fact that my presence almost always triggered an interest around India. That my body represents a presupposed geography however varying, subjective and transient, most importantly in the minds of people I interacted with was quite striking. Further, though I never thought it to play a big role given that my fieldwork was in the city-centre, my gender, that I am a woman, did matter in the spaces I entered and participated, such as amongst the moving dwellers living at the Plein, who were all mostly male. This might point to the issue of liveability of city streets for female moving dwellers.

"Every ambitious exercise in critical geographical description, in translating into words the encompassing and politicized spatiality of social life, provokes a ... linguistic despair. What one sees when one looks at geographies is stubbornly simultaneous, but language dictates a sequential succession, a linear flow of sentential statements bound by the most spatial of earthly constraints, the impossibility of two objects (or words) occupying the same precise place."

- Edward Soja (1989)

'The earth is in effect one world, in which empty, uninhabited spaces virtually do not exist. Just none of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. That struggle is complex and interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about forms, about images and imagining.'

- Edward Said, (1993, p.7)

Chapter 4 First and second spaces of 'Beursplein-making'

'Beursplein' – (*beurs* meaning 'exchange' and *plein* referring to a square) is a square situated in the centre of Amsterdam city, flanked by three main buildings and the street of Damrak running from the Central Station to the Dam square and beyond at the fourth side. Of the three buildings, one is the 'Beurs van Berlage', what was previously Amsterdam's stock exchange building, now a cultural centre for events and exhibitions with a café, the second is a functioning office of the joint stock exchanges of New York Stock Exchange and Euronext (combining Lisbon, Amsterdam, Brussels, Paris and London stock exchanges), and finally the third is a building belonging to the high-end departmental store, Bijenkorf. A part of the square, as of today, is also reserved for bicycle parking run by the municipality.

Historical spatiality of the built environment

Emerging out of the flourishing colonial trade of the Dutch East (and later West) India Company during the 17th century as a place where stocks of the company were for the very first time traded publicly, the Beursplein stands today as a spatio-historical symbol of the emergence of capitalistic trade and the significant form of 'organisation' and exchange around it – the public limited company and the stock exchange. The presence of two main buildings, both related to the stock exchange, is crucial to such symbolism that continues to structure and trigger, to a significant extent, the kinds of socio-spatial activities and imaginaries at and beyond the Plein.

The historical Stock exchange building critical to the materiality and symbolic place-making of Beursplein was built between the years of the late 19th century to 1903 by H.P.Berlage. Popularly known as the father of modern architecture in the Netherlands (Rovinelli, 1984) for this iconic stock exchange building, Berlage is however lesser known as the pioneer of socialist Dutch modern architecture and his building of the Diamond Workers' Union (Hobsbawm, 1980) in 1899.

Moving away from the historicism that marked late 19th century Dutch architecture towards a style based on reduction of ornament, structural rationalism and primacy of space, Berlage's stock exchange building very much reflected the spatial rationalisations that came with industrial-capitalistic trade. However, Berlage himself had highly democratic ideals embedded in his style and ideology of architecture. Viewing his brick walls as symbolic of people's collective power, he believed the mass to be more powerful than the individual in creating democratic reformation that he himself was seeking at this time ('*als enkeling nietig, als massa een macht.*')[2] or 'As individual void, as mass powerful.'). "Eenheid in veelheid" (Rovenelli, 1984) or "Unity in Plurality" was another one of the core-principles he believed crucial to a work of art nevertheless relevant to the creation of a just and equal society. Spatial justice

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[2] http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beurs_van_Berlage (26/6/2012)

and plurality, one could say, was very much part of Berlage's conceived space which he hoped would materialise in his architecture and its future usages.

His design of the stock exchange building was meant as much for civic purposes and meetings of the members of the labour movement (many of whom were 'homeless' at that time), as for functional purposes of the commodities and stock exchange transactions it was meant to serve.

Beurs van Berlage (Stock exchange building of Berlage) at Beursplein[3]

Being a symbolic figure for the sibling relationship of the mass movement of socialism and the cultural and artistic avant-garde movement representative of 'modernity' and 'progress' within European arts during the last decades of the nineteenth century, Berlage struggled to retain art within the rationalised engineered spaces and place-making of Amsterdam's capitalistic trade and profit motives. His stock exchange building, he hoped would come to stand for the improvement of labor conditions of the masses (Hobsbawm, 1980, Zarzar, 2010).

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[3] http://www.beursvanberlage.nl/fotogalerij/ (26/6/2012)

The following poem of literary Albert Verwey, carved at the southern entrance of the building (also the side facing the square) reflects Berlage's and his collaborators' philosophical ideals of art and architecture in steering human relations beyond rationalised lines of trade towards 'wholistic' exchanges.

"Als voorhoofd strekt de steen op de ingangsbogen   *"The entrance keystone is like a forehead's crown*

't verstand des handels breke in heldre lijn   *knowledge of trade stems from it in lines most clean,*

Daar uit tusschen zoo mensch als dingen zyn   *And yet, between both men and things*

Veel omgangsdaden die 't bestaan beoogen"   *there are various exchanges that give existence form""*[4]

- Albert Verway

They hoped to create a wholistic place where art, economics, politics and society would come together. However, Berlage's and his collaborator's ideals clearly came in the way of the stock market ideals flourishing in this very building. Within a span of ten years, the trading at the stock exchange grew so rapidly that it was eventually allocated a new building on another side of the Plein (in 1914) (Beursplein 5), and Berlage's iconic building stands today as a historical UNESCO monument reserved for exclusive cultural activities and exhibitions, often requiring high security and privileged passes or tickets. Clearly Berlage's ideals embedded in his architecture stood counter to the ideals of stock market driving the city's political-economy.

The newer stock exchange building that emerged adjacent to Berlage's building at Beursplein 5 was designed by Jos Cuypers, also known for his churches, mostly the cathedral in Haarlem. This building was his first secular structure that nevertheless has strong influences of the traditional church buildings he had designed before (reference: capital monument), except that prominence was given here to the god of trade, Mercury. Unlike Berlage's ideals, this building would herald the re-emergence of the heydays of 17th century trade, rather than confronting the dark years of huge inequalities that had been haunting the city for some time. Prioritising tradition and trading efficiency as opposed to artistic innovation and philosophical ideals of an equal society, the new building was much preferred by the stock holders association. Unlike Berlage's simple, less ornamental relief attempting to look beyond the

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[4] (http://www.beursvanberlage.nl/assets/Sheets/Engels/Brochure-General-Beurs-van-Berlage-II-English.pdf) viewed 26/6/2012

rationalised lines of trade between men and things, the highly ornate tympanum of this later stock exchange building reflects the high symbolism and belief attached to trading rational itself.

Stock exchange building at Beursplein 5, Source Kolar Aparna

The high symbolism attached to trading and exchange based on capital for capital's sake signified in the tympanum of the stock exchange building facing the square, in a way, stands representative of the

dominant b/orders that continue to define human relations and imaginations today. It reflects the symbolic geographies and b/ordering around 'capital', 'territories' and 'resources' dictating socio-spatial imaginaries. For this reason, it requires some attention and engagement.

The central figure(s) representative of the organisation of the stock exchange, right of which is Mercury, the god of trade with a bag of money, and left is Fortune, directing the flows of capital with a firm hand, stand as powerful symbols and as a reminder to passers-by regarding the central role of money and capital flows in linking people across places. Also, the much talked about global-local relations, in terms of the city or local space itself changing in relation to an expanding trade network across the globe that Amsterdam was experiencing at this time can also be read through the representations in the lower section of the mural. On one hand, local space and place is represented by the two figures at the feet of the central figure, each symbolising Amsterdam's rivers Amstel and the Ij, leaning over the old Amsterdam city seal depicting a cog ship. On the other hand, to the right of mercury are three figures representing the organisational aspects of the trading business, but more importantly, below of which are three more figures at the lowest level, whose central figure is depicted holding a Globe, flanked by one extracting rubber and the other mining (Kroeze & Nillissen, 2000).

Now there are many ways one can read the symbolism of the carvings here, but from a critical geography point of view, the 'geography-making' inscribed in these symbols are most interesting. The above figures symbolise the de-territorialisations and re-territorialisations of capitalistic trade and geographical symbolisms backing the same, emerging at this time that continue to colour human geographies today. On one hand, Amsterdam the rhizome-city (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) with its ever growing trading networks and on the other hand the symbolism and re-territorializations that come with it such as the city-symbol on the typanum, the rationalised spaces of the stock exchange building, and the world itself as "mappable", condensed and simplified in the representation of the globe as something that can be 'held' in one's hands, are geographies that continue to blanket human imaginaries and interactions today.

The very shift from a people's building that Berlage envisioned to the rational, efficient building overpowering and b/ordering the masses from access and information regarding its activities, nevertheless impacting their lives, speaks of uneven geographies that was to emerge. Such b/orderings continue to haunt struggles of today seen in the massive economic crisis as a result of unaccountability and greed of a few financial traders.

Also, that places are rewritten in terms of strong symbols marking the b/order between outside and inside towards regulating trade and profits, as was the case in the creation of 'colonial subjects' and 'citizens' part of trading relations at these times, while at the same relying on an ever expanding mission

of extraction of resources encapsulating the whole globe in its symbolism, is reflected here. In fact the world itself is b/ordered here with trade and capital standing central, while the figure with the globe is at a lower level. In a sense, geography itself is subordinated to the rationality of trade. These highly symbolic representations of trade continue to haunt not only relations between people but also relations between people and places very much today that are also being struggled over at the Plein itself. This is reflected in the declared search for alternative symbolisms to the Beursplein beyond the stock exchange perceived as part of an otherwise impoverished system by those part of the occupy movement at the Plein which I shall soon deal with.

The presence of Berlage's building as a monument now standing for touristic and privileged spaces of consumption, alongside a more traditional and efficiently built stock exchange that has only expanded ever since, reflects the hopes and tragedies of socialist ideals against the rapid expansion and occupation of capitalistic ideals at the plein.

Apart from the two buildings, the building of the Bijenkorf – an upscale departmental store for consumer products, towers and b/orders the square architecturally, materially, symbolically. These three buildings (b) order, to a large extent, the kind of spatio-social activities that occur at the Plein both directly and indirectly. They stand as strong symbols that set the stage for the kind of socio-economic-political practices and imaginaries unfolding at the square.

By controlling space directly through security apparatuses implanted at the Plein around private activities that spill over outside their buildings, such as advertising, private exhibitions, etc. the presence of these buildings and the kind of activities and time-spaces occurring inside impose themselves outside onto the rhythms at the Plein as well. The lived spaces of these buildings in their repetitive routines and formalised behaviour are part of the everyday lived spaces of the plein. The square also serves diverse purposes for those working in these buildings, such as for a smoke-break, meeting friends and family after work, security-guards chatting up with the police or other passers-by, etc. The opening and closing times of the stock exchange frames, to some extent, the kinds of activities unfolding at the square.

Also the strong symbolism and overpowering presence of the buildings indirectly influence the perceived space of the plein. The 'we' symbolised in the carvings of the new stock exchange building signify the trading community, only a small section of the city dwellers. These dominant buildings operating within highly regulated, pre-determined time-spaces contribute significantly to the controlled nature of exchanges and everyday life unfolding and 'allowed' to unfold at the plein.

**Police van and Security guard in front of the stock exchange building,**

Closing hours of the Beurs van Berlage Café and the stock exchange producing evening rhythms at the Plein, Source: Kolar Aparna

That neither of these buildings talks to the conditions of many people in the city, more so during times of deep recessions and economic 'crisis', is reflected in all the political movements and protests occurring in the space outside these buildings at the centre of the Plein, and most recently with the Occupy movement.

**Gathering part of occupyamsterdam at Beursplein
Photo Eva de Falk, Source[5]**
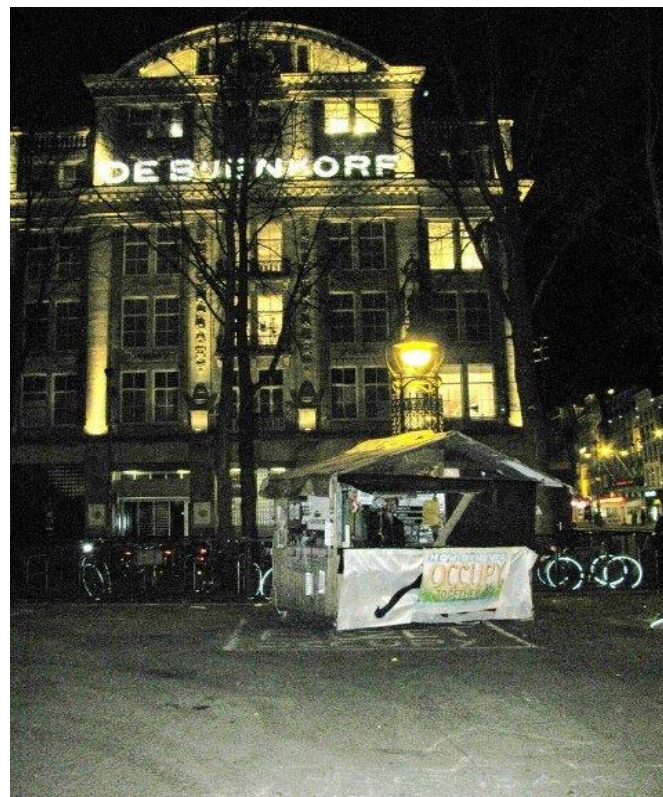
**Temporarily built Occupy info-stand at Beursplein sits in contrast to the grandeur of
the Bijenkorf building at the back Source:[6]**

[5] http://www.foliaweb.nl/studenten/3925/ (accessed on 5/7/2012)
[6] http://www.occupyamsterdam.nl/wp-
content/uploads/2012/04/556179_399983560029140_100000524974861_1425313_1481342118_n1.jpg?9d7bd4
(viewed 27/6/2012)

These buildings that fill in the dominant physical-material-built environment at the square with the strong symbolism carried in their architecture are quite central to the politics of Beursplein-making, nevertheless always gaining meaning in and through everyday interpretations, practices and discourses. Verwey's poem continues to stare at people, urging to look beyond the neat lines of trade towards deeper and more meaningful exchange. Berlage's brick walls standing for the power of the mass continues to gain meaning when the square is reclaimed and used for exchanges beyond commerce, capital and profit. And the symbolism of the tympanum of Beursplein 5, with its god-like imagery to stock market trading, might seem ridiculous amidst the recent global economic crisis and chaos caused by the meaningless speculations of financial markets.

Most importantly, they provide the dramatic setting necessary, be it for collective political action or the exhibitionism of individualistic consumption or regimentation around the highly speculative business of stock markets and exclusionary spaces of capitalistic exchange. This makes Beursplein, as I argue in the following sections, **a theatre where the everyday politics of urban life unfolds - a theatre of b/orderlands.**

Chapter 5 Beursplein as place of Order

"...It was a matter of organising circulation, eliminating its dangerous elements, making a division between good and bad circulation, and maximising the good circulation by diminishing the bad."

– Michel Foucault (2007)

In his most provocative text on the history of 'governmentality' and the mechanisms of power as entwining in technologies of security, Foucault takes the example of development of towns (in western Europe) in the 18th century. He observes that the suppression of city walls made necessary by economic development leading to the situation that towns could no longer be closed in the evening, or closely supervised with respect to daily comings and goings, created a problem for allowing surveillance. Security then became a matter of organising circulation, differentiating between the 'good' from the 'bad' circulation and maximising the 'good' circulation by diminishing the 'bad'. Foucault's analysis of the development of security mechanisms alongside the changing economic geographies of cities in the 18th century stands relevant to the development of Beursplein as a place of order that continues very much today. These mechanisms of security amidst flows meant for 'economic development' continue to b/order and mark urban spaces today.

The Beursplein stands precisely as such a 'securitised' space of circulation and surveillance, at the ego/kernel of urbanity. The historical-spatiality of the plein emerging amidst flows of commodities, people, capital, and continuing to be so today, while at the same time, bringing to the fore the issue of security that lies at the heart of the 'art of governmentality', places the acts of organising 'good' flows against 'bad', and daily 'surveillance', as key everyday practices. In this sense Beursplein is less a bounded territory and more a 'securitised' space.

In asserting the art of the state's splendour in '**visible order**' (Foucault, 2007), the police are key agents in producing a 'Beursplein of (b) Order'. The sheer visibility and everyday performative acts of surveillance by the police at the Plein is meant to create a space of terror requiring security and surveillance. However, the presence of the police clearly signals safety for some and danger for others. (Bickford, 2000)

Daily police patrolling at the Beursplein, Source: Kolar Aparna

"..to govern a state will therefore mean to apply economy, to set up an economy at the level of the entire state, which means exercising towards its inhabitants, and the wealth and behaviour of each and all, a form of surveillance and control as attentive as that of the head of a family over his household and his goods."

– Michel Foucault (1991)

Each and every act conducted at the Plein needs to pass the eyes of the 'attentive' father figure of the Plein – the police. The police patrol regularly day and night in and around the Plein, marking it as a space of 'security', a space of 'order', a space of border in the sense of choosing the 'good' from the 'bad' (be it people/objects/behaviour).

Police inspecting 'people and things' at Beursplein

Source: Kolar Aparna

Further, in distinguishing 'good' from 'bad', hygiene is a key aspect in the everyday politics of place-making. Surveillance and keeping out objects, people and behaviour considered 'dirty' at the Plein, a responsibility shared by the municipality cleaners and the police, brings a strong aspect of disciplining and order in their everyday practices at this b/orderland.

"They tell me my clothes are dirty....." – moving dweller at the Plein referring to the police.

"..Disciplinary normalization consists first of all in positing a model, an optimal model that is constructed in terms of a certain result and the operation of disciplinary normalization consists in trying to get people, movements and actions to conform this model, the normal being precisely that which can conform to this model and the abnormal that which is incapable of conforming to the norm."

– Michel Foucault (2007)

I will soon delve into how these practices of order in fact border in often conflicting ways with practices of other agents also crucial to everyday rhythms at the Plein. But, that the police and the municipality cleaning services work with the notion of 'disciplinary-normalization' of public space, modelling Beursplein as 'normal' when laws and rules are obeyed and 'abnormal' when not, gives birth to a certain predictable and disciplined sociality unfolding at the Plein.

The police and municipality workers represent the state, the 'we' of the state, 'we' as the father figures and caretakers of the society, working for the 'common good', the common good being, as Foucault points, essentially obedience to the law (Foucault, 1991), all the while devised to ensure the priveleged rights of the affluent class while b/ordering away the emerging multiplicities of everyday life. Beursplein in this respect is a place of order. Daily patrolling, surveillance and 'cleaning' acts of the police and municipality ensure most importantly a regulated space. And from this emerges a b/order. As crossing state borders is increasingly made seemingly barrier-free and "border-control-free" (though it is not entirely so) within EU space, border control then multiplies here in the city centre. Constant checks for identity-proofs of people considered 'suspicious' hanging out at the square are conducted by the police. If mobility is encouraged on one hand within the EU space, 'dwelling' in urban spaces occurs under heavy surveillance (same tension of increasing flows leading to increasing surveillance noted by Foucault).

The borders of ordering practices by the police and municipality agents is most articulated in the struggles with *and* against the practices of the occupy movement (occurring since October 2011) at the square, and whom I call, 'moving-dwellers' at the Plein, which I deal with in the following sections. I use the terms 'moving dwellers' because of the uncertainty of the dwelling situation of the people here occurring amidst constant surveillance, evictions and regulations to their actions, but nevertheless

crucial to the everyday rhythms of the square in their usages, actions and perceptions. The practices of the two groups - occupy and moving dwellers (the borders between the two however, are in flux or constantly shifting) stand head on against the everyday practices of order imposed on the Plein by the police and the municipality workers.

B/orderings of police and moving dwellers

In his powerful essay on Europe's borders Balibar (1998) mentions psychoanalyst André Green's notes around *being* a border, "One can be a citizen or an expatriate, but it is difficult to imagine **being** a border." In this in-betweenness of being neither citizens nor expatriates, neither 'inhabitants' with a house nor tourists, neither 'occupiers' protesting nor working class proliteriats, these people, whom I call 'moving dwellers' exemplify being a border that Balibar refers to.

Policeman waking up 'moving dwellers' at Beursplein
Source: Kolar Aparna

'Being a border' is what these people live, perform and experience every day and every second of their lives.

"*They (the police) don't want me in jail now because it's more paperwork for them. I am an expense to them. They let me sleep here till the weekend but I am now here for 6 months. I live outside for a long time now and I am used to it.*"

"The police sometimes come and wake you up at night asking you to find another place."

"They ask me to leave tomorrow. But what is tomorrow?"

"Rules and money – that's what they are busy with…. I make my own rules"

"There is something about the prison that I cannot get sleep, maybe the a/c or the sounds – its dead silent there!"

"I hate to live in a house for a long time"

- narratives by moving dwellers

The dominant role of state agents in controlling public space to the extent of regulating people's appearances (such as clothes), everyday actions (as basic as cooking and sleeping) in lines of 'hygiene' and towards maintaining a certain 'aesthetics' of how the city should look via the police, threatens the very core of what Lefebvre's ideas on the right to the city stands for. That dwellers must have full right to produce everyday life according to their aspirations, desires and needs is extremely threatened here.

That everyday one has to play a 'hide and seek' game with the police for simply being at the square threatens this fundamental of human rights. Like Harvey rightly notes, we seldom hear of the right to the city in all the hue and cries around basic human rights, in terms of the freedom to make and remake ourselves and our cities more after our heart's desires (Harvey, 2012). That those living at the square cannot even sleep here or boil tea together when they meet in the evenings for a chat after the day's wanderings stands against this freedom.

One of the moving dwellers in fact sits with a paper from his lawyer friend that claims his rights to sleep outside as part of the Universal declaration of human rights (UN) and EU laws on freedom of movement and choice of 'where' to live. But he tells me it does not keep the police away. However, it also highlights the stubborn performative spaces of resistance threatening the seemingly powerful position of the police lived and struggled over every day.

"**Anything that makes it even a little bit comfortable for us is taken away.**"
- moving dweller speaking of the difficulty of having a stove at the plein

"**Three is maybe a crowd to the police.**" – moving dweller

That activities and behaviour at the square have rigid borders constantly under the surveillance of the police threatens the spontaneity of everyday life at the plein so crucial to Lefebvre's thinking. That those living at the plein, who in fact bring life and spontaneity amidst the predictable flows of

municipality vans, police, tourists, stock-exchange workers, and passers-by, do so under the most threatened conditions is surely a cause of concern to the kind of urbanisation processes and spatial practices emerging amidst strict regimentation around what is 'allowed' and 'not allowed' in public space, based on a politics of fear rather than any real threat to social life. The Plein is constructed as a 'prickly' space for occupation and inhabitance (Bickford, 2000), that is nevertheless resisted every day. In this process of the police and municipality acting on behalf of securing the freedom and security of some people at the price of others' the becoming of Beursplein as a democratic realm tolerant to the presence of multiplicities of perceiving and perceived others is extremely threatened (Bickford, 2000).

"Representational space is alive: it speaks. It has an affective kernel (noyau) or centre: Ego, bed, bedroom, dwelling, house; or: square, church, graveyard. It embraces the loci of passion, of action, of lived situations, and this immediately implies time. Consequently, it may be qualified in various ways: it may be directional, situational or relational, because it is essentially qualitative, fluid, dynamic."

– Lefebvre (1991: 42)

Chapter 6 Beursplein as Thirdspace: Becomings of lived spaces

In this chapter, I look at the everyday rhythms, practices, discourses lived out at the square by some key agents significant to the multiple meanings and processes contributing to the production of 'Beursplein', and the multiple b/ordering practices with and against each other emerging from the same. I do not claim to have an exhaustive list of practices and agents active to the production of 'beursplein', but only seek to analyse those that emerge to be in tension with each other in the lived everyday spaces of the Plein during the time of research. Beursplein as a dwelling place, as a rebel place (Occupy!) and a place of consumption are some of the diverse meanings emerging from the everyday practices observed at the Plein in tension with and against the Beursplein of Order discussed in Chapter 5. I search for articulations (spatial-social) of 'we' lived out by agents occupying and/or claiming the Plein, and attempt to analyse how this might change and/or be changed by the diverse time-spaces of the Plein.

6.1 Thirdspaces of b/orderings of police and moving dwellers

6.2 Occupy Amsterdam: Beursplein as rebel place

    6.2.1 B/orderings of occupy and city-municipality

    6.2.2 B/orderings of occupy and moving dwellers

    6.2.3 Symbolic place-making: Beursplein as "Un-Must-Meeting Place"

    6.2.4 Thirdspaces of b/orderings of occupy and moving dwellers

    6.2.5 Dynamics of 'being seen' and 'seeing'

6.3 Beursplein as consumption place

6.1 Thirdspaces of b/orderings of police and moving dwellers

Despite the absolute borders of the state seen in the powerful performative actions of the police and municipality agents, they are nevertheless entwined in the everyday struggles of negotiating diverse meanings and purposes for which the square is used.

"*I am 52 years in Amsterdam.*"

"*The policeman in uniform is the one in jail, not me, because the uniform jails his imagination. I am breaking more than 42 rules every day....*"

"In uniform he (the policeman) behaves differently and I don't like him. When he changes his clothes we are friends."

- Narratives by moving dweller

What is interesting is the relationship between the 'moving dweller' and the policeman in relation with the time-spaces of the square. The 'we' of the 'police' versus 'deviant subjects' (in this case, the moving dweller) is crossed-over in the varying time-spaces of working hours and non-working hours of the police. During working hours when the policeman is in uniform the two share a hostile relationship which seems to blur when he is not in uniform. The uniform of the police then stands as a symbol for the embodied b/order in the relationship between the policeman and the moving dweller. That the uniform demands a certain 'normative' behaviour from both sides stands as an objective symbol for 'othering' in an otherwise fluid relationship. While in uniform that the policeman performs routine time-spaces of order, and when not in uniform that the time-spaces of the square re-emerge as a meeting place, for everyday chats and temporary friendships, signify the third spaces of performative b/ordering practices here. It challenges the binary of police versus deviant subject, and opens up a third space of becoming and shifting political identities through the time-spaces of the plein and working hours of the policeman. Further it points to the agonistic politics of the moving dweller and the police caught in a struggle always with *and* against each other in their performative practices representative of, most importantly, **being** a border. The above narratives also reveal a certain subversion of Foucault's 'Panopticonic' gaze of the prison, given that the 'dweller/moving dweller' often visiting the jail for breaking rules, such as sleeping at the plein, in fact, perceives the policeman himself to be jailed with his imagination.

In all this we see that the diverse time-spaces of the Plein play a crucial role caught in the '**politics of visibility**' lived out by the police and the moving dweller.

"*When its sunny people are all outside and so are the police. But when it rains the police don't come..... I don't like the sun.*" – moving dweller

That a square when it is raining or sunny, shifts dominant performative practices from those of order to those of dwelling is an interesting aspect to the politics of 'being seen' (for both the police and moving dweller) or 'seeing (or not)' (in this case, the police) played out, lived out at this b/orderland.

6.2 Occupy Amsterdam: Beursplein as rebel place!

The Beursplein has recently also served as a symbolic and strategic site for the occupy movement in Amsterdam, precisely because of the significance of the square as a historical as well as contemporary global financial centre in light of the public anguish against banks and the financial trading system seen guilty of causing the recent global economic crisis. The role of the internet and social media can hardly be ignored in the rapid spreading and popularity gained by the movement. However, what is interesting is how this cross-national, cross-urban social movement largely fuelled by digital social media networks manifests in local spaces, both real and imagined.

The obvious geographical connotation in 'Occupy' places space at the heart of political struggles. The selection of 'sites' for situating the actions of the movement (most importantly, physically 'occupy'ing public space), has been central and part of imaginaries both local and beyond - across mostly digital-urban-networks. Occupying digital public space (on the internet) has, in fact, been equally crucial to occupying physical public space, for the spread of the movement. In this sense occupying beursplein physically has happened simultaneous to occupying beursplein in the digital space. That there has to be one website dedicated to occupyamsterdam[7] referring to beursplein has been as much of a challenge as retaining a powerful 'we' occupying the physical Beursplein for the people participating in the movement.

The everyday practices of the Occupy movement oppose head-on the time-spaces of order imposed by the state and capitalistic institutions at the square. As the name suggests, it is a cry to reclaim public spaces and everyday life towards one that is open to collective time-spaces of city dwellers and inhabitants for public debate, discussions, conversations, protests and actions. It is a demand to break the monotonies of order and predictability of social life in public spaces towards unregulated, uninhibited and more meaningful social interaction. It is an attempt to challenge the assumed passivity of the public in so-called public space. During a time of economic crisis, the symbolism of the square as a centre representative of the heydays of capitalistic growth reflected in the built environment, only

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[7] http://www.occupyamsterdam.nl/

seems to fuel such 'antipolitical' or 'counterpolitical' actions given the jarring gap between reality and such representations.

Lefebvre's 'right to the city' refers to this very cry against the crisis of a withering everyday life in the city that is also a demand/command by city dwellers towards creating alternative urban life that is more meaningful and playful, but, as always with Lefebvre, conflictual and dialectical, open to becoming, to encounters and to the perpetual pursuit of unknowable novelty (Harvey 2012). Given the high symbolism and practices of Beursplein as a place of order organised around surveillance and disciplined capitalistic exchange, everyday life at the plein is produced by assymetrical power relations, with agents such as the police, security, municipality workers and private corporations dominating everyday practices of production while most other agents are passively consuming or reproducing the same (as they are expected to). However, since October 2011, the Beursplein is actively being imagined and produced as a place of rebel, place of active gathering, place of democratic deliberation, place of dwelling, place of 'occupying', standing precisely against the dominant practices that impose predictability and order at the Plein.

Occupy stands for the spaces of heterotopia Lefebvre refers to, as foundational for revolutionary trajectories. Heteropias of Lefebvre unlike Foucault's heterotopia, points to the spaces of possibilities embedded in the everyday urban social space, from where 'something different' emerges when disparate heterotopic groups suddenly see, if only for a fleeting moment, the possibilities of collective action to create something radically different. Occupy stands for these spaces of possibilities opened by the coming together of disparate groups, both physically and virtually, who nevertheless feel part of similar if not the same urbanisation processes of growing social inequality and b/ordering practices of neo-liberal globalization (Harvey 2012).

While the traditional centrality of the city as seen in the greek agora is long dead the urge for centrality has not been more stronger than today, fuelled only more so by the increasing fragmentation of urban space. The coming together of people across squares of Cairo, Madrid, Athens, Barcelona, Madison, Wisconsin and Zucotti park, only points to this rekindled urge for centrality so crucial to geographies of revolution. However, Lefebvre himself kept his optimism of everyday life always in tension with his awareness of the realities of dominant practices of capital and the state. In the *Urban Revolution,* the idea of heterotopias (urban practices) is in tension with (rather than as an alternative to) isotopy (the accomplished and rationalized spatial order of capitalism and the state). The isotopy-heterotopy difference he argues can only be understood dynamically (Harvey 2012).

**Poster on the 'occupy-info-stand' at Beursplein,
Date:31-3-2012 Source: Kolar Aparna**

Most importantly, the occupy movement opens a new political space in the public realm through its powerful performative acts. To begin with as seen in this very popular slogan,

These are our streets

We Will Occupy Them

We are Here. We are Growing

it is hard to ignore the strong declaration of "we" the self-claimed "99%". A "We" emerges in this strong speech-act alongside the declared performative actions of occupying streets to reiterate the same. It further reconfigures borders of democratic politics to the 99% versus 1%. In declaring we the 99% will occupy streets and public spaces and are growing, it invites for more performative actions to fill this space. However, streets are already filled with everyday performative political actions which have to be struggled with and against each other in the emergence of alternative political spaces.

6.2.1 B/orderings of occupy and the city-municipality

By standing against the 'normative' time-spaces of the square, around discipline and order predominantly dictated by state b/orders and capitalistic exchange and rhythms, it is then interesting to observe how the actions of 'occupying' Beursplein, change and/or are changed by the diverse time-spaces of the Plein.

The time-spaces of occupy in producing a Plein for gathering and socio-political exchange in the late evenings during weekdays, stood in constant tension with the time-spaces of cleaning undertaken by the municipality during the same time-space. I witnessed such tensions during one of the late evenings of my fieldwork. The fixed rhythms of the municipality cleaning vans were challenged and changed by the presence of the 'occupiers' standing stubbornly in the centre of the square constructively engaged in building a board for carrying messages. The passively-aggressive slow movement of the municipality van in cleaning the space being simultaneously used by people at the square in this case, as part of the occupy movement, reflected the dominant b/ordering of the municipality against bottom-up practices of city dwellers towards centrality and active production of urban space as a space after their own desires, towards meaningful exchanges outside state and capital b/orderings. The actions part of occupy stood to challenge and change the time-spaces of the municipality cleaning rhythms at the Plein.

Further, a certain playful-ness marked the interactions of the policeman and an 'occupier' in producing beursplein as a place of order versus as a common space for alternative political practices.

"**No more tents.**" – policeman to 'occupier'

"**No, no, no tents.**" – occupier laughingly while continuing to build a structure for public demonstrations.

That the policeman himself a bit caught in the hegemonic structures of the policing institution thereby sensing a feeling of empathy towards participants of the occupy movement while living out his duties of 'cleaning up' such deviances was expressed in the light-hearted tone of the policeman and the mocking response of the 'occupier' tolerated by the policeman, that I observed. This also reflects the thirdspaces of struggles created in the interactions between performative practices seeking for regulated and stable identities (such as by the police) with those resisting the same (those part of occupy).

Here the 'we' symbolised by occupy – the so-called 99%, represented by a few people at the Plein actively coming together towards claiming this public space, stood head-on against the 'we' represented in and by the workings of the municipality also run by people of the city but nevertheless caught in a

complex hierarchical-bureaucratic framework of belonging to the same space requiring regimented rather than spontaneous action at, in this case, Beursplein.

While the city Mayor Eberhaard Van der laan even attended one of the general assemblies of Occupyamsterdam at the Beursplein to show his solidarity with the democratic ideals of the movement (which in retrospect seems a diplomatic act), the dominant practice of regulating public space by the state and police continues to push the place-making aspirations of people part of occupy and the moving dwellers at the square towards margins and eventual eviction. Further, the creative destruction processes part of capitalistic growth and the kind of urbanity that comes with it, continues to provide enough reasons (such as upcoming infrastructural projects) to the Burgemeester (mayor) and his team in justifying their push for evictions of occupy tents and any temporary/permanent presence of objects and people 'actively' producing the plein around their individual and collective aspirations conflicting with (city) state b/orders.

During the period of my fieldwork (between March and June 2012) with respect to the physical presence of the people and objects part of the Occupy movement and moving dwellers, I witnessed a gradual process of, first, the tents being evicted based on a statement issued by the municipality, that was then replaced by an 'Occupy-info-stand', that was also dismantled, which was then replaced by an open sculpture, which also was ultimately dismounted from the square due to reasons of anticipated constructions for an underground parking area at the square. The heterotopies of occupy and moving dwellers at the square stubbornly resisting 'total' eviction, alongside the isotopies of the state and capital around discipline in this case, is an everyday struggle. Every day there is constant surveillance, struggle, and resistance around who, what and how one enters, stays and leaves the square, once again highlighting the significance of 'politics of visibility' to everyday practices at this b/orderland. Further, the changing time-spaces of constant infrastructural constructing and de/re-constructing the city based on uncertain, changing, predatory needs of capitalistic growth and state splendour, as seen here, also creates a disruption in the everyday place-making of city-dwellers so crucial to processes of identity-formation. That a square used as a meeting place, gathering place, place of unregulated exchange, chance encounters needs to suddenly give way to a massive construction work thereby becoming inaccessible to these important everyday practices is not only something sad for its users, but is also a very tiring process to fight against.

As a person part of Occupy negotiating with the municipality for the erection and continued presence of the open sculpture replacing the Occupy info-stand, admitted,

"***It's very tiring for me, you know. Tomorrow again I have an appointment with the municipality and we will see how it goes.***"

6.2.2 B/orderings of occupy and moving dwellers

"These are our streets. We will occupy them" is a common slogan part of the occupy protests. But who in fact are the 'we' to whom streets belong? While Lefebvre urges that the city belongs first and foremost to all the 'inhabitants' or 'city-dwellers' passing through the everyday routines of the city, it seems to be more complex in reality.

In this case there was a clear bordering of actions and people part of 'occupy' and those living on the square in terms of physical access to the occupy tent/info-stand at the square restricted to only those "representing" the movement, which clearly those sleeping right next to it were not part of, either by choice or otherwise. It seemed to me that there were some unwritten rules at play here.

Occupy-"info-stand" (right) bordering 'dwellers/moving-dwellers' (left) at Beursplein, Amsterdam, Source: Kolar Aparna

Given that this very space was already being used by the people living here for their everyday rhythms, with a movement 'occupying' it and denying access to this part of the square and actions in and around it to the very people here there seemed to be a contradiction in the aspirations and actualities of the movement.

"*They (referring to occupy) want us not here as well because we give a negative image.*"

"*They (referring to occupy) come here to 'practice' democracy, but the one with the good argument is easily followed or agreed with.*"

"They speak to the police you know...finally this in only garbage all stacked up together."
(Pointing to the occupy sculpture)

- moving dweller

"People associate a negative image with occupy because of 'them'. They don't realise that these people were already a problem even before Occupy."

- occupier on moving dwellers at the square

Clearly there seemed to be an 'us' and 'them' already with the people living at and using the square for diverse purposes. What does this mean for so-called 'democratic' social movements? How might social bordering on the basis of 'negative image' be overcome towards democratic reform?

Sitting at a general assembly of Occupy Amsterdam, I was further confronted with the complexity of those at the square to come together. A sense of 'we' was difficult given that the notion of 'home' in relation to the usages and perceptions of the plein itself were conflicting amongst those of us present. Using the stairs of the Beurs van Berlage that was free during the closing hours of the café for discussion 'we' the people tried to come together. With commonly agreed verbal and non-verbal signs for communication and a rotating moderator it was an interesting exercise to move beyond our personal concerns and acknowledge the presence and needs of other inhabitants/dwellers. However, time and again the 'moving dweller' joined the assembly at his own pace (given that he was moving on roller skates), regularly breaking into loud screams and shouts (without following the codes of communication followed at occupy general assemblies) around the issue of the occupy tent/info-desk not being open 24/7 since he needed a place to sleep and would benefit from it being open. This was clearly an issue among majority of the people participating in the assembly, firstly because of the disagreements on 'how' he expressed his opinion, and secondly around the 'image' of the occupy movement, reflecting the borders of the occupy movement itself in terms of what actions were considered legitimate or not. Further it points to the complex spaces of democratic struggles caught in between rational deliberative practices of consensus-building versus emotional and non-rational expressions of political struggle.

What was interesting to observe was also how social borders tend to inevitably manifest in highly territorial ways. In this case, the keys to this temporary occupy tent/ info-stand became a political symbol around what 'occupy' as a movement stands for and whether it could be handed over to the 'moving dweller' seen as 'not representative' of the movement for various reasons. However, from the moving dweller's point of view, who voiced that he has been living at the plein and in fact been protecting the tent from police evictions, he had every right to live in the 'occupy tent/info-stand'.

Though this might seem as a known issue around problems of homelessness, the complexity of 'coming together' or centrality within the urban conditions we live today is indeed much more. The problem and responsibility towards the issues around so-called 'homelessness' is understood to be under municipality and state institutions rather than to be dealt with by all dwellers around conflicts emerging from the same. A Beursplein where 'homelessness' has always existed was now being confronted by city dwellers and users, in the screams and cries of the moving-dweller, which does not find place in the rational spaces of democratic deliberation and segregated coexistence of 'haves' and 'have-nots' in postmodern urban life. The agonistic screams of the moving dweller in communicating his urgent need for a shelter to all of us coming from the comforts of individual homes points to the significance of irrational expressions of socio-political struggles, and the jarring gaps of socio-economic differences of urban life that often live side by side.

"*I live in reality! You all have homes.*"

> \- moving dweller screaming at a general assembly of OccupyAmsterdam

Socio-economic differences between not only capitalists and labourers, but also the growing intolerance by those with private, secure, houses towards those wishing to live on the streets makes things worse. That a movement occupying streets to democratise it struggles to include the needs of those already living there, is a critical issue to be considered.

"*I am homeless.*"
"..*People do not tolerate the 'homeless'*"

> \- moving dweller

It reflects the vulnerability of 'we' the people.

Further, the dominant desires and practices to 'occupy' the square as a political action towards communicating a strong message of resistance was constantly being threatened by the time-spaces of the moving dwellers at the square who did not wish to be part of the movement but nevertheless continued living at the square. The 'we' of occupy as a social movement standing against dominant practices of the state and capitalistic greed by 'occupying' public space was being changed by the stubborn time-spaces of the moving dwellers being at the square but not wanting to be part of the occupy actions and practices, thereby threatening to break the same, and changing the same towards their own aspirations and interpretations.

Nevertheless, the aspirations towards shifting the symbolism of everyday time-spaces of the Plein from that of regulated order to that of meaningful encounters can be seen in the actions part of the Occupy movement.

6.2.3 Bottom-up Symbolic place-making:
Beursplein as "Un-Must-Meeting-Place"(Ont-moet-ingsplek)

The right to the city:

"should modify, concretize and make more practical the rights of the citizen as an urban dweller (citadin) and user of multiple services. It would affirm, on the one hand, the right of users to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in the urban area; it would also cover the right to the use of the center, a privileged place, instead of being dispersed and stuck into ghettos (for workers, immigrants, the 'marginal' and even for the 'privileged')"

- Lefebvre (1991 # 2342, translated in Kofman and Lebas, 1996, p. 34).

Occupy Amsterdam's presence at Beursplein began in the form of significant numbers of tents with people occupying most parts of the plein full-time (24/7) in October 2011. It signifies the coming to the centre of marginal time-spaces of dwellers falling outside or resisting the time-spaces of order at the Plein. However, the tents slowly diminished to lesser tents, to eventually an 'info-stand' along with one or two tents being allowed to remain open only during the day, till it reached the state of total eviction of all tents and even the 'info-stand' at the Plein by mid April 2012. Finally, what eventually stood for a major part of my research was an openly accessible sculpture, a collection of materials, open for everyday use that stood as a symbolic expression of reclaiming the Beursplein, rewriting it as "un-must (unregulated) meeting place". A call for producing Beursplein, as a place "where nothing has to happen" is a cry and demand of users to rights to a city of un-order, as can be seen in the manifesto part of the sculpture mounted at the Plein.

Manifesto part of Occupy sculpture at Beursplein Amsterdam, dated 16/04/2012, Source: Kolar Aparna

It reads,

"This sculpture wishes to give a positive reflection to our environment and each other,

especially to the Beursplein and be a symbol of how the stock exchange began and grew from

here in Amsterdam anno 1602

Searching for an alternative to our impoverished system, we, 'the Amsterdam's creative Joy

Society, (Amsterdaams creatief genootschap), here created a replacement of the present info

stand for the city of Amsterdam and occupy.

A place where nothing has to happen, where the possibility exists to experience yourself, each

other and for our environment and to realise that the occupy Amsterdam movement originally

represents this and has sown its seeds as such."

Open sculpture representative of aspirations of the Occupy movement in Amsterdam, dated 16/04/2012, Source: Kolar Aparna

Open sculpture representative of aspirations of the Occupy movement in Amsterdam, dated 16/04/2012, Source: Kolar Aparna

Driven by the desire to place a more open or 'less closed' structure, that at the same time, did not exclude people (including the moving dwellers) from accessing it, the above sculpture was put together by individuals part of the occupy movement in their struggle to continue to reclaim the plein without exclusionary b/ordering with those already dwelling here. After much negotiation with the municipality, a temporary 'permit' was granted to place this structure at the square.

"*We want a more open info stand. The previous one was closed and dark and gave opportunities for people to hide. We want something open. The sculpture is a temporary arrangement till the info-stand comes up again.*"
                                        - man from occupy taking responsibility for placing the sculpture at the plein

The sculpture is of high symbolic value as it represents the sense of loss experienced by city-dwellers (here referring to themselves as 'Amsterdam's joy society') in the rationalised and predictable flows in and beyond the square, part of what they experience as an impoverished system. That the city is identified as being deprived of places where 'nothing has to happen' and where one can truly experience oneself and the environment (the urban), without 'being' what one is expected to be within predetermined structures and regulations around behaviour in public space is clear in the manifesto. The sculpture stands as plea for a city of undetermined behaviour and encounters.

Most importantly we can observe that the right to the city is a notion that is constantly filled with meaning by people themselves. That without explicitly referring their demands to Lefebvre's arguments, city-dwellers continue to demand their right to make a city based on their own desires as mentioned above, further points to the relevance of the same in the public realm beyond academic circles. Lefebvre's ambiguous definition therefore seems rather apt.

However, the plans for construction of an underground line requiring digging up of the square driven by the creative-destruction logic of neo-liberal political economy continues to threaten the continued existence of this sculpture, in effect threatening spatial practices of city dwellers towards planting symbols for 'un-must, unplanned encounters' and threatening their right to appropriation and symbolic place-making.

6.2.4 Thirdspaces of b/orderings of occupy and moving dwellers

Ever since actions part of 'occupy' occupied the Beursplein, the moving dwellers already living at the square have been, willingly or unwillingly part of the movement. While the moving dwellers and 'occupiers' themselves claim to be separate from each other, they were both nevertheless caught in a constant struggle with and against each other as crucial agents resisting the predictable time-spaces of order at the square. Further, the otherwise strong space of everyday b/ordering between 'citizens'-'home-dwellers' and 'homeless' at the square was now opened up for crossing over. That those coming to the square to follow the actions part of occupy would inevitably encounter and interact with the otherwise stigmatised 'homeless' people (whom I refer to as moving dwellers) created a thirdspace of becoming. The common aspirations of creating time-spaces of unpredictability, chance encounters, freedom, creative expression, and collective desires shared by 'occupy' and the moving dwellers seems to blur the otherwise strong boundaries between the two in the everyday lived space at the square.

Moving dwellers at "Un-Must-Meetingplace"("Ont-moet-ingsplek") part of Occupy, Source Kolar Aparna

Moving dwellers at the "Un-Must-Meetingplace"("Ont-moet-ingsplek") part of Occupy
Source: Kolar Aparna

Passers-by stopping at the ont-moet-ings plek and in conversation with moving dwellers, Source: Kolar Aparna

6.2.5 Dynamics of 'being seen' and 'seeing':

From the perspective of the municipality and the police responsible for monitoring the square, that the open-structure of this sculpture allows one '**to see**' all activities occurring at the square as opposed to closed tents that hide actions, and at the same time, that it stands as a symbol of the occupy movement to '**be seen**' in a central urban, public space from the perspective of the 'occupiers' (note the painted words on the sculpture: '**See me Read me Feed me**'), is a key factor in these processes of place-making of 'Beursplein'. The plein then serves as a 'theatre' where actors are caught in a power relationship not only with each other in hiding and appearing amidst the borders of the police versus resisting agents, but also in relation to the architecture of the square itself that creates a setting for everyday drama around b/ordering. The tall, grand and dominant presence of the buildings of the stock exchange overlooking the square makes actors present at the square to appear rather small but also exposes every action to '**being seen**'. Further, that 'seeing' is actively facilitated as part of the dominant design and usage(s) of the plein, in the availability of benches at the peripheries of the square, the seating arrangements of the café occupying the plein, complimented by the constant touristic flows who enter the square with their fixed 'gaze', makes actors' actions at the plein part of a constant tension between spectators and performers, and 'being seen' (or not) and 'seeing' (or not). Beursplein as a place of everyday consumption, in the reiterative acts of 'consumption' passified by the 'touristic-consumer gaze' is another crucial aspect in contributing to the everyday politics of visibility lived out at this theatre of b/order.

6.3 Beursplein as consumption place

"...The urgent necessity for democratic deliberation today is that people concentrate upon, rather than "surf" over, social reality."

– Richard Sennett (1995)

One of the biggest b/ordering practices in public spaces today is in and around acts of consumption. That consumerism increasingly occupies and b/orders both physical and social spaces around 'haves' and 'have-nots' is the biggest threat towards creating spaces for democratic deliberation in public space. The passivity of consuming in public space tends to distance people not only from each other according to what they consume and how (in the unwritten codes of interaction around consumption), but from experiencing the multiplicities of becomings of everyday life. Especially at the Beursplein the everyday practices of consumption (at the café or at the benches used as sitting places for the fast-food sold at the opposite side of the Damrak, or by the tourists consuming the architecture and 'everyday life' at the square) and the dominant collective 'gaze' of such practices at the square seems to possess people with a certain passivity. 'Surfing-over' rather than actively engaging in the 'live' social reality seems to be the dominant social norm unfolding at the square each day. While one cannot ignore the role of resting places, places to unwind and where one can simply 'do nothing' in an increasingly stressful and crowded city life, there is an equally important need for spaces of chance encounters turning into active collective social production and meaningful interactions between anomic groups in an increasingly fragmented urban field. The Beursplein is indeed a space where the diverse segments of Amsterdam's moving urbanity end up by chance. However, the passivity and the strong gaze of 'consumption' clouds interactions and behaviour at the square from becoming 'something different' that Lefebvre longs for in the heterotopic spaces of the city. Actions and practices of consumption tend to border against actions and practices that actively claim and participate in the production of everyday life. In this case, though a few passers-by and 'consumers' stopped to enquire about the occupy movement and converse with the moving dwellers at the Plein, predominantly tourists and consumers at the Plein tended to 'observe from a distance' rather than actively engage in the actions unfolding at the square around the occupy movement. Further active agents at the plein such as the 'occupiers' and 'moving dwellers' were constantly struggling against the now-and-then privatising of this so-called 'public space', occupied by private corporations for advertising or consumption purposes.

B/ordering café activities at the Plein, Source: Kolar Aparna

Passive consumption at café at comfortable distance to moving dwellers at Occupy sculpture, Source: Kolar Aparna

Everyday acts of 'seeing' and 'consuming' at Beursplein,
Source: Kolar Aparna

Private advertising campaign occupying Beursplein, source Kolar Aparna

Chapter 7 Beursplein as b/orderland?

Concluding reflections

As Lewis Mumford observed,

'***the city is a theatre of social action and everything else – art, politics, education, commerce – only serve to make the social drama...more richly significant, as a stage-set, well-designed, intensifies and underlines the gestures of the actors and the action of the play.***" (Mumford, 1937)

Beursplein is no doubt a theatre to the everyday social drama unfolding in the interlocking b/ordering practices of multiple we(s) struggling not only with and against each other but also in relation to the built environment. It emerges as a theatre of b/orderland given the significance of bordering and/or ordering practices to the everyday politics of place-making be it of the state, or the stubborn practices of resistance and improvisations of users (in this case, moving dwellers, and 'occupiers') or the passive acts of consumption bordering with actions of creative and symbolic production of everyday place. Everyday performances discussed so far speak much of the bordered existence of agents at the Plein (Rivera-Servera & Young, 2011). Beursplein is a site of tension between the desire for order and regular policing of flows of bodies and things that nevertheless are constantly resisted and subverted. Geographies of power and resistance are played out everyday in the very making of Beursplein as a private-public realm of order, dwelling, rebel/resistance, struggles and desires. The geographies of alternate power written through the resistances, struggles and desires of the multitude that Hardt and Negri (2000)speak of, can be very much seen in the everyday actions and struggles of the moving dwellers and the occupy movement at the Beursplein I have so far dealt with.

Beursplein, during the period of my research, was being claimed and occupied by these multiple we(s) struggling with and against each other every day. 'We' represented by the police in uniform constantly patrolling the square every day stood as a strong symbol of a **Beursplein of order and security**, b/ordering against all other practices "outside norms". Yet, the police and the moving dwellers living at the Plein are also caught in a constant struggle with and against each other in performing what they both embody most – that of "**being a b/order**". The time-spaces of working and non-working hours of the police changes the dominant time-spaces of the Plein from that of (b/)ordering to that of dwelling/meeting place, as seen in the shifting relations of hostility and friendship between the policeman and the moving dweller. Also, shifting time-spaces of the Plein when sunny or raining changes the 'we'(s) occupying and claiming the square, from the police to the moving dwellers. All this reflects the struggles and transitory time-spaces of b/order and dwelling at the Plein.

Amidst this **drama of visibility** or 'hide and seek' around shifting time-spaces of the Plein by the moving dwellers and the police, emerges another powerful 'we' challenging the dominant ordering practices at the Plein, declared by the occupy movement and claiming the square as 'ours' (the so-called 99%). "We are the 99%" - the slogan of the occupy movement, is most importantly a strong performative speech-act. "These are our streets. We will occupy them. We are here. We are Growing", is powerful in reiterating a strong 'we' the people. At the same time, living out the 'who' of this 'we' at the Plein has been more complex. While the time-spaces of protests, 24/7 physical occupation at the square as part of the above declarative speech-act changed the everyday time-spaces of order and discipline at the square by resisting the same and using the square for collective motives of deliberation, discussion, and protest, authoritative rhythms of capital eventually took over in evicting such acts of resistance and symbolic place-making by city dwellers and users at the square.

Yet, Beursplein has also been re-written as an **'un-must-meeting place'**, where unregulated 'we(s)' come together to experience each other in manners not already predetermined, as seen in the manifesto at the open sculpture constructed by those part of the occupy movement. It is a cry for a city of un-order, a city of un-must meeting places. Urban space where un-order rather than order dictates encounters, where the possibility exists for people to experience each other without the big brother watching over them, where chance encounters can spontaneously lead to serious exchange without struggling in a politics of 'visibility' around the same, is urgently demanded.

Further, the time-spaces of protests and collective deliberation and discussions part of the occupy movement was being changed by the chaotic, stubborn time-spaces of moving dwellers at the square refusing to outwardly participate in the movement while all the time looking for ways to join and benefit from the resistances to order at the plein performed as part of occupy.

Finally, 'we' the consumers continued to contribute to the politics of visibility dictating everyday struggles at the plein through the predominantly passive 'gaze' upon active practices unfolding at the Plein, subtly bordering themselves away from participation in the spatial practices they consume.

As can be seen in all the narratives, descriptions, meanings, practices at the Plein discussed so far, the politics of place-making of Beursplein is highly contested in the everyday lived-out struggles of negotiating conflicting meanings part of unequal power positions towards divergent uses and practices of diverse agents claiming and/or occupying the square. B/ordering practices at the square between the 'we'(s) of the police and moving dwellers, 'occupiers' and moving dwellers, 'consumers' versus active producers of lived spaces of Beursplein, are caught in an everyday politics of visibility around 'being

seen' (or not) and 'seeing' (or not) struggling against and sometimes capitalising (in the case of touristic consumption and policing actions) on the symbolic b/order-making of the built environment and the historico-spatiality of the Beursplein towards fulfilling different socio-political ends. In all this the Beursplein comes to emerge as a b/order-land where everyday 'drama' around hiding and intended exposing, meeting yet separation, hostility and hidden friendships, 'open' versus 'closed' spaces, order versus un-order, 'seeing' versus 'being seen' as lived out by multiple agents, constitutes a major aspect of the everyday socio-political space.

Exclusionary perceptions of 'we' and 'they' in the everyday lived space of the plein, such as between the police and moving dwellers or occupiers and moving dwellers give birth to divergent associations and interpretations to the same material objects. For instance, the key to the Occupy info-stand that stood as a symbol of revolution to the 'occupiers' was perceived to be a symbol of b/order by the moving dweller who did not have access to it. Also, the uniform of the police stands as a material object b/ordering the behaviour and interaction between the policeman and the moving dweller from one of order and discipline to one of chatty temporary friendship practised at the square.

Further, these everyday struggles point to the vulnerability of b/orders be it of the state or capital or social movements relying on every day practices and performances that reiterate or challenge or cross-over the same. By being aware of everyday practices of b/ordering (intended or unintended) it is possible to subvert them. That they are socially produced and are therefore fluid spaces, open up the possibility to easily move around and experience the plurality of urban spaces leading towards eventual tolerance towards the same.

There is an urgent need to actively embrace plurality of uses and practices mainly by agents of the state, but also by everyday users (city dwellers), rather than seeking for 'order' and 'purification' of unpredictable elements in public space. In this thesis I could only scratch the surface of everyday lived spaces at the Plein to bring to light the subtle everyday b/ordering. That borders being socially produced are negotiated most importantly in the everyday space also points to the urgent need for awareness of the everyday b/ordering we are all part of in order to subvert and avoid the often exclusionary and destructive (physically or otherwise) ways in which they tend to manifest.

While spaces of democracy are indeed everywhere waiting to explode, what is of concern with the kinds of neo-liberal urbanisation processes of today is the passivity and tiredness among dwellers that comes with it - that majority of dwellers are simply either too tired or too passive in commanding rights to a city of their making and desires is worrying.

Further the issues of internal b/orderings of social movements such as occupy need to be more seriously addressed rather than being clouded by ideological pursuits of revolution. Any urban revolution of today has to deal with the complexities of 'coming together' or 'bringing together' of people belonging to an increasingly fragmented urban field. B/orders of race, language, nationality, age, gender, income, social status, and those still caught in struggles over historic colonial occupations that continue to unmark identities and people till today, will have to be seriously addressed rather than turned a blind eye by urban social movements or the so-called multitude in fighting against power geographies of global sovereignty (Hardt & Negri, 2000).

As a municipality worker working at the Beursplein vociferously admitted to me when asked about what he thought of the 'occupy' movement unfolding right in front of him every day,

"Blanke mensen zijn asocial." ("White people are asocial.")

The most significant contribution of border studies to urban studies and human geography is precisely in its ability to hold a mirror to b/ordering practices often forgotten or assumed to have disappeared in all the clout around neo-liberal globalization.

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