CHAPTER 8

Cleanness, Order and Security: The Re-emergence of Restrictive Definitions of Urbanity in Europe

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The time to talk about cleanness, order and security has returned: during the past decade, discourse on the urban realm, with respect to its health and unhealthiness, has found new expressions in recent policies of managing public urban space. While there is clearly a quest for clarity and certainty behind the triad of cleanness, order and security, this contribution takes a closer look at the surface phenomenon, which is becoming generalised in Swiss and European towns. Specifically, the so-called *Wegweisungsbestimmungen* in German-speaking countries are examined in order to illustrate the discourse of 'health' and the city, and how these two have been related historically and in the contemporary.

These *Wegweisungsbestimmungen*, bylaws that allow custodians of the law to send people away from specifically defined public spaces, indicate where the process of defining and redefining urban space is headed. They provide the police with the power to restrict certain people from remaining in urban areas, without the need to provide evidence of an offence. These laws relate to the use of urban public space in general and are aimed at tackling the much invoked 'crisis' of the city. This 'crisis' is seen as the outcome of processes of social transformation that are accelerated and condensed in cities. Through these processes, the city has become the primary site for the production of cultural meaning.

Harshening police legislation is intended to maintain if not improve 'order and security'. This practice of 'cleaning' by displacing unwanted people is paralleled by another, thematically and aesthetically linked form of control over space: increasing attention to waste management.

Such developments call for a renewed discussion of the dangers associated with urban spaces and places and related security needs. A better understanding is needed of perceptions and emic strategies regarding the use of urban public space, and of the city as a place of unexpected encounters. Using a historical perspective, this contribution analyses the contemporary discourse on the city for *topoi* and characterisations of cleanness, sanitation, health and morals that determine perceptions and practices of urban space and places. In the critique that has accompanied the urban evolution towards modernity, health and the city have always been fundamental mutual references, mirroring society and space. A more microscopic look at everyday urban life will reveal, on the one hand, varying discourses and representations, and on the other hand differing individual practices and perceptual habits. Such an examination reveals how an official discourse of unacceptable living conditions contrasts with the 'natural' ways in which the cities' inhabitants experience and deal with the concrete inconveniences and disorder of everyday life. By examining Swiss, and more broadly European, policies that aim to increase control over public urban space, this chapter analyses the ideologies and power relations that underlie such policies. In practice, order, safety and cleanliness are achieved through the removal of unwanted persons, rather than garbage alone, disregarding the positive effects of chance encounters and a certain randomness in public space on urban liveability. Following a historical overview of discourse on social contagion and urban health, contemporary connections between urban space and morality are explored through the case of *Wegweisungsbestimmungen*, which are in turn situated in a broader European context, characterised by the reemergence of more restricted definitions of urban freedom.

Contagious elements and the epidemiology of social classes

A brief historical overview reveals the basis of contemporary understandings of terms such as cleanness and health. There is an observable shift from a view of air, water and soil as 'natural' pathogenic media, to the differential ascription of 'moral' pathogenicity and the spatial differentiation between social classes in the development of the modern city. There have been two major paradigm shifts in the development of modern urban health policy. The first was a shift in which water, rather than air, came to be seen as the

carrier of disease and death; in the second, disease transmission came to be seen as a social question, rather than one of fate.

Until the mid-nineteenth century, issues of hygiene were not a point of discussion, and the connection between individual lifestyle and risk of disease was not recognised. The belief that dirt carries disease only became established around that time, as a consequence of scientific attempts to understand causes of epidemics in the rapidly growing cities. As a result of increased economic interaction with the Middle East, the second cholera pandemic reached European metropolises in 1832. Mortality rates were staggering and in some cases, population losses were so dramatic that the urban population decreased by half. Cholera was a source of great fear and accelerated scientific attempts to comprehend the connections between disease and infection, specifically intensifying medical-scientific research on the mechanisms of transmission and the possibilities of prevention. In the eighteenth century, air was still considered to be the transmitting agent, with, interestingly, no real distinction between population classes. This changed in the nineteenth century, as water became viewed as the conduit for pandemics. New planning ideologies tried to reunite both the geographical and the social 'toilette', as French historian Alain Corbin (1982: 21) notes.

As the science of medical hygiene developed, so did urban sanitation policies, a set of measures aimed to improve urban hygiene. The term 'sanitation' began to emerge not only in medical reports, but in the writings of social reformers, architects, business people and journalists as well. The deodorisation of public space, a measure derived from the miasma theory around 1800, led to sanitation policies that might appear quite modern, including the recommendation to demolish fortresses and widen streets, so that air could flow freely into the city.

In Paris, around 1800, recommendations were made, in the interest of deodorisation, to build large squares and wide streets, tear down the old city fortifications and clean the city regularly. Citizens became obligated to sweep in front of their door, while garbage collection and public toilets emerged as new institutions. The remodelling of Paris by Hausmann can be seen as a first instance of gentrification, as it drove the poor out of the city centre and, since they were an unattractive sight, forbade them to spend time in the newly created boulevards. Twenty years earlier, plans had been discussed in which beggars and convicts would have to work as road sweepers, following the example of Switzerland. Corbin (1982: 126) quotes a 1780 report by Antoine L. Lavoisier, who wrote admiringly that Bern was the cleanest city he had ever seen. Every morning, 'convicts chained to the shafts [pull] large four-wheel carts through the streets … female convicts are tied with longer and lighter chains to the carts … partly to sweep the streets, partly to load the refuse'.[2]

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2. Corbin cites this proposal by Abbé Bertholon from Montpellier.

Early notions of urban health

As a modern idea of health evolved, so did the idea of individualised, 'industrialised' Man (Dauskardt and Gerndt 1993). This concept of Man emerged in close relation to notions of cleanness and security, linked to the origins and the reshaping of the modern city. Authorities focussed on the triad of dirt, disease and immorality, as they began to imagine a clean population. The history of the Modern city shows how the discourse of Modern plagues has always located these problems in towns. In the nineteenth century, the catalogue of nuisances encompassed bad air, diseases, epidemics, the masses, poverty, dirt and death. In the twentieth century main concerns came to include migration, traffic and pollution. In both historical periods, 'the urban question' was essentially identified with the issues of property and security. These two terms are paradigmatic and lead in a fairly straightforward way to the ambiguous term of 'sanitation' (*Sanierung*), which, in the context of conflicts over the use of urban space, has a semantic relation with *Wegweisung*.

The term sanitation and its variants have been used in historical and contemporary contexts with regard to urban buildings and infrastructures as well as people. The ambiguity that the term has retained is apparent in the contexts of its use.[3] Its use began to occur in Europe towards the end of the eighteenth century, with the emergence of urban health policy. In the nineteenth century, social reform, mass rural-urban migration and ensuing urban conditions aroused scientific interest and led to the development of new academic disciplines, shaping a common basis for health and urban planning policies. The enormous influx of people from the countryside following industrialisation forced municipal authorities to take measures to prevent the worsening of unhealthy conditions in their overpopulated low-income neighbourhoods. The population of Berlin, for example, went from 200,000 inhabitants in 1820 to twice that in the course of twenty years (Korff 1985: 345).[4] In Paris, the population increased from one to two million between 1841 and 1870 (Girouard 1987: 297).[5] The policies following migration to the cities shaped urban development throughout Europe from the second half of the

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3. Interestingly in German *Sanierung* and *Assanierung* are synonymous. However, the latter word is rarely seen, and more often in the formerly Austro-Hungarian Eastern Central European context. See Keberlova (2002).
4. In the 1830s, Berlin's population increased annually by 6,000 to 7,000 inhabitants, but by the 1840s this tripled to 18,000 to 20,000 per year (Korff 1985: 345).
5. New York went from 200,000 inhabitants in 1830 to 7 million in 1930, while Chicago went from fifty inhabitants in 1830 to 3,376,000 in 1930 (Girouard 1987: 303).

nineteenth century on. Prague, Vienna, Cologne, Paris, Caen – to list just a few well-known examples – were subject to massive restructuring, intended to systematically clear the congested medieval city centres, replacing them with new, profitable and hygienic buildings. In Switzerland, this process occurred on a smaller scale due to the lack of large cities.

In Prague, the focus of the sanitation (*Assanierung*) was Josefstadt, an old Jewish neighbourhood. In the process, and in accordance with the anti-Semitic climate of the late nineteenth century, the poor population was evicted. In this manner, the sanitation came to include a 'rectification' of the population, to be followed by other gruesome measures, including those under Fascism in the 1930s and 1940s. More recently, *Assanierung* or ethnic cleansing featured in the International Court of Justice's cases on genocide in former Yugoslavia. Such examples demonstrate the lethal nature of the double meaning of 'cleansing'.

Topography and morals

The sources available on nineteenth century urban development show how, increasingly, a connection was made in the consciousness of the general urban bourgeoisie between topography and morals. In these early urban studies, investigative and controlling activities were intertwined.[6] Similar to other statistics related to ideas of a national economy during the Enlightenment (Rolshoven 1991: 41ff), this new type of social research saw itself as providing a rational disclosure of reality in order to optimise socio-political interventions. In its terminology and its aim, the survey – a basic urban research tool from the outset – demonstrates how methods of recording and control merged (Lindner 2004: 11).

Fundamental to the connection between urban space and morality was the dependence and the lack of rights ascribed to the non-propertied classes: a process of ascription necessary to legitimise the process of civilisation. We can only consider ourselves civilised if we construct an image of what is uncivilised. The development of urban settlements supported this process as industrialisation led to a more marked urban pattern of socio-spatial segregation than ever before. Dividing the proletariat from the bourgeoisie in urban space produced a 'geography of inequality', which increasingly minimised encounters between the social classes in public space (Sambale and Veith 1998: 38). This was not the case

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6. Lindner (2004: 13) points to this connection as part of the 'panoptic regime' described by Foucault.

everywhere, and some cities in the northern Mediterranean were exceptions. The industrial town of Barcelona, for instance, is held as an example of integration due the concept of to its urban planning, promoted by the Catalonian urban planner Ildefons Cerdá in the nineteenth century (Hofer 2005).

By the end of the nineteenth century, urban water supply and sewage disposal installations were remodelled. Tap water and water closets became heralds of modern living, and as the bourgeois and the working classes became segregated, differences in lifestyle and health increased. Dirt (as the absence of water) and disease began to be linked to character and lifestyle, as physical work, poverty and dirt were seen as causally related. As Edwin Chadwick, a leading British proponent of the concept of sanitation, wrote in 1842: 'The hotbeds of fever and the places of physical disrepair are at the same time the sites of moral corruption, of untidiness and of crime' (quoted in Lindner 2004: 20).

Medical and moral discourse merged, as surveys of canal workers' health were followed by surveys of prostitutes' health, and swamps of fever and swamps of sin were seen to coincide (Lindner 2004: 25). Earlier urban studies aimed to document social disorder and to remedy the deleterious consequences of the overcrowded neighbourhoods and housing in which the poor population lived. It was noted, even before the March Revolution of 1848, that a crowd of people could also represent revolt, and that ideas and practices hostile to the existing society could be as contagious as physical disease (Lindner 2004: 27). With increasing frequency, scholars pointed to the 'danger of social vapours', or social infection (Corbin 1982: 69). The bourgeois became increasingly worried by the social, more than the natural causes of disease, as risk of infection became understood in literal as well as figurative terms.

Semantics and restricting public space

The bourgeois mentality which functions as the heritage of the concept of sanitation led to moralistic as well as practical, infrastructural measures. Realising the 'clean city' is, then, more than the pragmatic attention given to garbage. It is also an aesthetic imperative that considers which city inhabitants are legitimate within the projected image of the city. In this, expressions of spatial control, which also form the basis for sanitation, become manifest. In recent years, discussions on the use of urban space indicate the emergence of newly articulated discriminatory discourse. While this is not new either in Europe or the Americas, the economic developments of late modernity frame such discourse in a new manner. In German-speaking countries, a central term in this is the neologism *Wegweisung* ('sending away'). This ambiguous term, with many potential

applications, has become part of the semantics of the urban space that frames our linguistic and physical movements (see also Rolshoven 2008).

The *Wegweisungsbestimmungen*, the regulations for sending people away, are legitimised by notions of security, order and cleanness. These regulations are partly new, and partly reactivated bylaws, which had been declared obsolete in the era of progressive modernist urban policy. The possibility of sending people away involves curtailing civic liberties, including the freedom of assembly and freedom of action. In Germany, for instance, a vagrancy law (*Landstreicherparagraph*) that defined non-residence as an offence, was created under Nazism but invalidated in the early 1970s. Yet the proposed – but recently rejected – constitution of the European Union calls for the reintroduction of this kind of laws.

In recent times, the idea of *Wegweisung* was especially observable in Switzerland, where these regulations were decreed in several cities as part of municipal police laws.[7] In Bern, for instance, they were applied in particular to the main train station and its surroundings. But in general the term has proliferated in the German-language countries. In Switzerland, Germany and Austria, a *Wegweisung* is a provisional court order prohibiting a potentially violent husband or father to come near his wife or children. In Switzerland, the term *Wegweisung* is also an act of the immigration police (*fremdenpolizeiliche Massnahme*), concerning the rejection of applications for asylum and usually accompanied by expulsion from the country. In Switzerland, *Wegweisung* also refers to expulsion from school (*Schulverweis*), an issue of increasing concern. In Germany, in contrast, the official term for being expelled from school is in some cases Rückholung, implying that those who skip classes must be brought back to school, if necessary by the police. In Austria, *Wegweisung* is also applied to the removal of trespassers in prohibited military areas (*Militärbefugnisgesetz*).

While the term, notion and practice appear rather Swiss, they are in fact quite international. In certain parts of Austria, unwelcome loiterers are persecuted by a contested *Landessicherheitsgesetz* passed in January 2005, whereas in Germany this group falls partly under the road-safety laws.

7. Bern, the Swiss capital was one of the first cities to decree such laws in 1988. In 2004 and 2005, 967 *Wegweisungen* were issued with 2,435 charges (Grünes Bündnis Bern 2006). The total revision of the police regulations in St. Gallen was accepted on 5 June 2005 with a surprisingly clear vote with 66 per cent voting in favour, despite the intense debate. Under the new regulations, the suspicion by itself of a threat to security and public order is sufficient for up to fourteen days of imprisonment. The town's police commander argued that St. Gallen was to become the region's safest and cleanest town. See *Die Wochenzeitung* 24, 16 June 2005, p. 6.

In certain areas, the police are already known for the semi-illegal practise of apprehending vagrants, transporting them to the edge of the metropolitan area and abandoning them there. Such actions are known in police insider terms as 'junkie jogging' or the 'Frankfurt city-cleaning policy'. There is a broader European trend to create new legal bases for such practices, but this is accompanied by a movement to strongly oppose this trend, through political and other means. For instance, a German law passed in 2002, the Prohibition of Entering and Loitering (*Betretungs- und Aufenthaltsverbot*), aimed in particular at the 'punk scene' in the Karlsruhe Kronenplatz, had to be repealed eighteen months later following an Administrative Court decision.[8]

In France, the law is changing towards more restrictive regulations. A decade ago, the Mayor of Strasbourg Catherine Trautmann, together with Pierre Bourdieu, Salman Rushdie and Toni Morrison, publicly called for a reinstatement of the traditional role of cities as spheres of civic freedom. Yet, more recently, a new treaty was signed in Strasbourg, ensuring coordination between local and national police, and giving the municipal police more liberties, particularly to prosecute unwanted groups – the marginal public (*le public marginal*) of beggars, drunks and loiterers – and remove them from public space. Again, this is an illustration of the aim of establishing cleanness and security.

In 2003, the British Parliament approved the Labour government's Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan, the wording of which immediately revealed its political function. Polls show, for instance, that every third citizen in the UK considers loitering young people a major problem.[9] The discourse on anti-social behaviour enables the legal prosecution of behaviour that is not necessarily criminal but that is considered a nuisance (Blair 2000; Hooper and White 2000). Anti-social behaviour, according to British law includes:

> nuisance neighbours, rowdy and nuisance behaviour, yobbish behaviour and intimidating groups taking over public spaces, vandalism, graffiti and flyer-posting, people dealing and buying drugs on the street, people dumping rubbish and abandoning cars, begging and anti-social drinking, the misuse of fireworks.[10]

8. See *Amtliche Bekanntmachung der Stadt Karlsruhe*, July 2002, §§ 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 49, 60 Abs. 1 u. 66, Abs. 2 des Polizeigesetzes von Baden-Württemberg (reproduced in http://www.heypunk.de/Artikel/punkverbot/, accessed 1 September 2006). For legal commentary on the Germany situation, see Hutter (1998); Simon (2001); Krebs (1991).

9. BBC Action Network, http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/actionnetwork/A2283824. Accessed on 16 August 2006.

10. Home Office, http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/anti-social-behaviour/what-is-asb/. Accessed on 16 August 2006.

Such definitions of anti-social behaviour share the connotations of the term *asozial* which was coined during the Third Reich (Sedlaczek et al 2004: 87ff). At the time, it indicated homeless, migrating and in part unemployed people, and implicitly allowed for them to be controlled, from registration to internment to annihilation. The term slowly began to lose this meaning in the post-war period, but after the 1970s, the word *asozial* started to become part of everyday language again and was increasingly used to denote young people, from hippies to punks. Adolescents, whether as individuals or groups, are most likely to be condemned for 'anti-social' behaviour in urban public space. A recent anthropological study in Graz described 'marginal' people as varied groups of mainly socially disadvantaged adolescents and young adults, including many from broken homes, as well as drop-outs and unemployed youth (Reiners et al. 2006: 22). These are joined by sympathisers from 'normal' circumstances – young people who approach them out of curiosity or teenaged rebellion – as well as drug users and those who have abandoned their original social context and for whom this kind of peer group functions as a survival mechanism (Reiners et al. 2006: 75–98). The symbolic dimension becomes evident when such small groups are compared to the total urban population. The core of these loose social groups numbers no more than some thirty people in Graz's city centre, compared to a total population of over 250,000. In Bern, the marginal group counts about sixty members, in relation to more than 125,000 inhabitants plus over 100,000 daily commuters.[11] Whether such groups are labelled as tramps, louts or punks makes little difference; these definitions follow local slang, regional taxonomic traditions or national jargon. Official language sometimes demonstrates the bureaucratic pains taken to neutralise discriminating terms, for instance the French acronym 'SDF' for *sans domicile fixe* (without permanent residence). Such efforts do not, of course, manage to negate the stigma attached to those considered undesirable in urban space.

Cultural change and urban transformation

To summarise briefly: the stigma attached to marginal urban groups and their framing as socially disruptive elements appears to be a phenomenon that has resurfaced in various European urban contexts. Depending on political ideology, municipal governments address marginal groups in different ways. The case studies described here demonstrate that cause and effect may become confused in the process. The British Anti-Social Behaviour Campaign, the French Fight Against Incivilities (Vidal-Naquet

11. Sources: www.graz.at; www.statistik.bern.ch; and www.pendlerstatistik.-admin.ch/. Accessed 25 and 27 August 2006.

and Tiévant 2005) and the Zurich Campaign for Safety, Intervention and Prevention, are all used to combat the phenomena of disorder. But are they really well-meaning initiatives meant to help urban residents deal with the burden of the increasingly heterogeneous urban population? Are they, so to speak, anti-uncertainty campaigns? Or are they repressive measures leading back to a pre-modern legal system in which the propertied classes determine the legal status of the individual, signifying a creeping infringement on the basic rights of the poor?

I am neither willing nor able to answer this question here but can analyse the ambiguity of any possible answer. The much-discussed 'urban crisis' is related to processes of global transformation that are accompanied by fundamental uncertainties. The effects of the global economy are clearest in urban centres, where one encounters divided labour markets, the skewed socio-spatial distribution of wealth and poverty, expanding informal economies, and competition for urban space including inner-city gentrification. In short, urban spaces have become socially polarised, accompanied by the 'marginalisation of all those groups that do not figure in the representation of the economic centre as a global growth-machine with a secure future' (Berking 2002: 14). This image, which hides from view the losers within this growth, represents the legacy of the modernisation drive and demonstrates the inability of integration in post-Fordist cities.

The clean and safe city as a remedy

As outlined previously, the concerns of urban citizens and authorities shifted over time from fears of physical pollution to fears of social contagion, and contagion began to be understood in both in a physical-natural and a figurative-symbolic sense. This historical mentality is still recognisable in contemporary notions of sanitation, which still include moral measures that go beyond technical or aesthetic forms of urban planning. An examination of present-day ideas of a 'clean city' reveals how the pragmatic attention given to garbage implies a certain control over urban space prefigured by the concept of sanitation. A discourse analysis of the self-representations of European cities reveals the following parameters of the 'clean and safe city' of today.

First, there has been an observable increase in anti-littering campaigns, ranging from local slogans such as 'We keep Lower Austria clean!' to online fora such as Cleanuptheworld.org that take responsibility for keeping the entire world clean. Beyond practical matters of recycling, there have been conspicuous investments in the number, function and design of urban refuse containers. The formation of garbage patrols, monitoring the correct use of garbage containers or compost facilities, demonstrates the level of behavioural control sought. Another development is the discussions on the

feasibility of forcing delinquents, the unemployed, or asylum seekers to clean public spaces. A prominent example in the media was British singer Boy George's sentence, following drug possession, to do volunteer work for the New York garbage collection services (CNN 2006). Under the label of urban security, waste patrols and police and para-police patrols increasingly focus on dispersing aesthetically disturbing groups of people, assisted by video surveillance systems in public space. Since the early 1990s, and increasingly after 11 September 2001, Britain has become the West's most equipped nation with respect to video surveillance, installing 4.2 million CCTV cameras or 'one for every fourteen people' (Murakami Wood 2006: 8, after McCahill and Norris 2003). These help document and prosecute violations of litter laws and the prohibited loitering of specific groups in public space. Furthermore, current discourses from architecture and urban planning display a fondness for 'straightening' and 'clearing up', creating large open spaces and long open axes of boulevards and using 'the new simplicity' of openness and transparency as guiding principles.

To illustrate the tendencies above with an example, the controversies surrounding the redesigning of Graz's main square show how such attempts at 'clearing up' are accompanied by processes of gentrification and invisible mechanisms of exclusion, aimed at those who are different or considered bothersome social elements. The architects commissioned to redesign the square wanted to 'open' and 'clear', providing a new pavement and removing benches. The new square is popular with everyone, including a small group of young people, labelled punks, who love to hang out there on a daily basis. The Styrian parliament, under pressure from the Mayor of Graz – who had called the main square his 'living room' – felt moved to adopt a new provincial security law, which charges 'offensive behaviour' and 'annoyance' in the public sphere with fines up to €2,000 or fourteen days of imprisonment. This enables the police to remove people with force if necessary, while the names of violators are registered by the office of social affairs (Reiners et al. 2006: 22ff, 43ff). As in the Swiss towns of Bern, Zurich, Winterthur and St. Gallen, it is argued that such measures are necessary to ensure pedestrians' sense of security and a positive shopping atmosphere and to prevent shop owners from suffering losses.

This last example shows how public space has increasingly become subordinated to private interests. The design measures implemented and the ensuing controversies attest to this in this and other examples, including the redesign of Bern's main station square or the decorating of Zurich's main shopping street with life-size lions, cows or teddy-bears. This international urban trend threatens to displace older models of urban planning, in which the city was envisaged as a community and a living space for heterogeneous groups. The presence of people from the margins of society contributes to social polarisation just by the idea that they might constitute a threat. Unlike their pre-modern precursors, the late-modern

urban tramps have an active command of their image and they claim their own place in society. Their public 'appearance' on the stage that urban space provides follows ritualised sequences and staged patterns, while the fact of an ever-present audience is taken into consideration. 'The people have to see that we exist', a Bern 'punk' told a journalist.[12]

We are perched on the threshold of a new spatial order that must also be newly negotiated. Society's increasing complexity brings about a corresponding differentiation of spatial functions, and administrative responsibility for public urban space has become problematic. The borders between public and private are increasingly blurred and open to redefinition, while a segregative tendency towards privatisation can be detected in the design of public spaces. As Hanno Rauterberg (2002) notes, in a plea for the sovereignty of the public sphere, the difference between one's living room and the market place has become increasingly vague. In renegotiating the organisation of competences and responsibilities in new spatial orders, ideally all stakeholders should be represented. In this process of negotiation, many planners and architects have functioned as stooges of the new urban spatial order, aiding what Swiss architect Elisabeth Blum has called 'practices of dropping solidarity'. Poverty and homelessness are made invisible through the cleaning and standardising of public space (Blum 1996: 20ff). In such a context, urban space no longer serves as a setting for encounter and exchange, but as an aestheticised space of transition. When architectural frames no longer facilitate meetings between those who belong and those who do not, experiences with and from the urban Other become impossible. Assessments of the Other are based less and less on immediate experience and knowledge, and drift into 'imagined knowledge' (Gans 1995), fostering prejudice and stigmatisation.

Conclusion

What are the parameters for urban health[13] with respect to socio-spatial qualities? How can cultural studies contribute to a more sensitive architecture and urban planning? Historically, the characteristics of modern cities have been their openness and the possibility of unexpected encounters. A 'non-directional communication in open social structures' (Selle 2002: 16) was seen as a defining urban feature. Architect and sculptor Christoph Haerle (1997: 187) argues that the architectural form of public space must be modelled on a degree of indeterminateness and anonymity. Such models must allow the actual uses of public space to deviate from

12. *Die Wochenzeitung* 48, 15 November 2004, p. 27.
13. The Athens Declaration for Healthy Cities proposed the improvement of the city dwellers' health on the basis of the four key principles of equity, sustainability, intersectoral cooperation, and solidarity.
See http://www.euro.who.int/AboutWHO/Policy/20010917_1.

what is intended and enable the experience of cultural diversity and Otherness. It is in these forms of public space that physical encounters along with communication and even socialisation can occur (Wilson 1992).

The central mission in creating a healthy city, then, is to provide a public sphere. Developing and maintaining it should be one of the core applications of local policy. Public spaces are the basis for the appeal of a healthy city as urban culture is defined, according to urban planner Klaus Selle (2002: 19), by 'liveability, aesthetic quality and use of the public spaces'. Local policy must, therefore, enable citizens to sustain experiences with the Other; following Lévinas (1999). Another central task in ensuring a healthy city is to inform, and this task should not be left to road safety laws and police orders. How to develop and maintain the quality of public spaces cannot be devised at by committees (Breckner 2001: 145) but requires an understanding of planning that is able to take an 'eye level' approach (Lang 2000: 59) to historically shaped perceptions of everyday life.

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Urban Pollution

Cultural Meanings, Social Practices

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