

## IN SEARCH OF A CRITICAL DIALOGUE: INTERROGATING THE INTERPLAY OF EVERYDAY LIFE AND PUBLIC SPACE

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### Abstract

This paper explores the intricate theoretical interconnections between “everyday life” and “public space” and its methodological framework is grounded in critical theory, particularly its method of critique. The relationship between everyday life and public space is multifaceted, encompassing routines, temporalities, and social practices. Understanding the theoretical connections between the notions of “everyday life” and “public space” is crucial for designing spaces responsive to individuals’ needs and behaviors. This paper argues that public spaces are shaped by everyday activities and, reciprocally, exert a profound impact on how people experience daily existence. By critically analyzing the seminal works of key theorists, such as Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, Georg Simmel, Erving Goffman on everyday life, and Hanna Arendt, Jurgen Habermas, Richard Sennett, and Chantal Mouffe on public space, the paper demonstrates this reciprocal relationship. Moreover, this paper contends that for designing socially sustainable and vibrant public spaces, it is crucial to acknowledge and navigate the theoretical connections between “everyday life” and “public space.” This conceptual dialogue not only reveals emancipative practices but also includes the design of environments responsive to diverse individual needs. By recognizing the potential for creativity, and meaningful social interactions in everyday life, and by supporting the emergence of resistance mechanisms through their designs, architects and designers can contribute to the transformation and empowerment of public spaces.

**Keywords:** Public Space, Everyday Life, Critical Theory.

## ELEŞTİREL BİR DİYALOG ARAYIŞI: GÜNDELİK HAYAT VE KAMUSAL ALAN ETKİLEŞİMİNİN SORGULANMASI

### Özet

Bu makale, “gündelik hayat” ve “kamusal alan” arasındaki karmaşık kuramsal bağlantıları araştırmaktadır ve metodolojik çerçevesi eleştirel teoriye, özellikle de eleştiri yöntemine dayanmaktadır. Gündelik hayat ile kamusal alan arasındaki ilişki, rutinleri, zamansallıkları ve sosyal pratikleri kapsayan çok yönlü bir ilişkidir. “Gündelik hayat” ve “kamusal alan” kavramları arasındaki kuramsal bağlantıları anlamak, bireylerin ihtiyaçlarına ve davranışlarına yanıt veren mekânlar tasarlamak açısından önem taşımaktadır. Bu çalışma, kamusal alanların, gündelik faaliyetler tarafından şekillendirildiğini ve karşılıklı olarak insanların gündelik varoluşu nasıl deneyimledikleri üzerinde derin bir etki yarattığını savunmaktadır. Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, Georg Simmel, Erving Goffman gibi önemli kuramcıların gündelik hayat üzerine ve Hanna Arendt, Jurgen Habermas, Richard Sennett ve Chantal Mouffe gibi kuramcıların kamusal alan üzerine ufuk açıcı çalışmalarını eleştirel bir bakış açısıyla analiz ederek bu karşılıklı ilişkiye ortaya koymaktadır. Bu makale, sosyal açıdan sürdürülebilir ve canlı kamusal alanlar tasarırken, “gündelik hayat” ve “kamusal alan” arasındaki teorik bağlantıları anlamadan ve bu bağlantılar arasında ilişkiler kurmanın önemini savunmaktadır. Bu kavramsal diyalog sadece özgürlleştirici pratikleri ortaya çıkarmakla kalmaz, aynı zamanda farklı bireysel ihtiyaçlara yanıt veren ortamların tasısını da içerir. Mimarlar ve tasarımcılar, gündelik hayat içinde yaratıcılık ve anlamlı sosyal etkileşime dayalı potansiyellerin farkına vararak ve direniş mekanizmalarının ortaya çıkışına tasarımlarıyla destek sağlayarak kamusal alanların dönüşümüne ve güçlenmesine katkıda bulunabilirler.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kamusal Alan, Gündelik Hayat, Eleştirel Teori.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Everyday life is the primary context in which people experience public spaces, whereas public spaces involve the social spaces where people interact with each other and with their environment in the context of everyday life. These two intertwined notions are much more important today, especially after the pandemic, in which how to create spaces that facilitate positive social interactions and strengthen community bonds become a current debate<sup>i</sup>. The theoretical connections between the notions of “everyday life” and “public space” are important for various fields that mainly focus on the issue of space such as urban studies, sociology, geography, and especially architecture. In terms of the discipline of architecture, exploring the theoretical connections between “everyday life” and “public space” is important for creating environments that are responsive to the needs, behaviors, and experiences of the individuals who inhabit them daily. Moreover, understanding how people engage with public spaces in everyday life can inform user-centered design approaches, ensuring that architectural interventions align with the lived experiences of the users. The theoretical connections between “everyday life” and “public space” can allow architects to understand the ways individuals perceive and experience spatial environments and design spaces beyond “abstract space”s, which is coined and defined by Henri Lefebvre (1991b:31-52) as a capitalist apprehension of space for enclosing an emptiness.

By considering the importance of thinking about how to design public spaces that are more socially sustainable, equitable, and vibrant, this paper aims to built theoretical connections between the notions of “everyday life” and “public space”. Thus, it employs a methodological foundation rooted in critical theory, notably its method of critique. For firstly deconstructing “everyday life” and “public space”, then creating new theoretical relations between these notions, this paper critically examines the seminal works of key theorists such as Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, Georg Simmel, Erving Goffman (for everyday life), and Hanna Arendt, Jurgen Habermas, Richard Sennett, and Chantal Mouffe (for public space).

In this context, the next section will explain the methodological and theoretical framework. Subsequently, the discussion will delve into the core element that both notions share, which is the concept of “space”. It will be followed by an exploration of their underlying key concepts and culminate in concluding remarks.

<sup>i</sup> After the pandemic, several architectural competitions have been announced for designing public spaces that play vital roles in rebuilding social cohesion and community bonds by considering daily practices. For examples please visit these sites:  
<https://www.archdaily.com/949088/seoul-city-architectural-ideas-competition-preparing-for-the-post-covid-19-era>;  
<https://www.archdaily.com/973405/snohetta-wins-competition-to-revitalize-urban-square-in-helsinki>

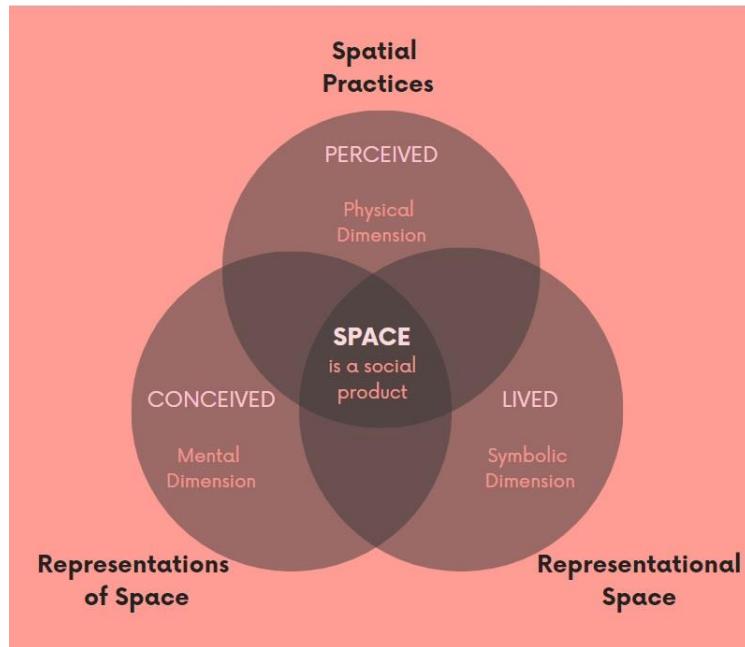
## 2. METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CRITICAL THEORY

The methodological framework of this study is structured by critical theory and its method of critique. Critical theorists posit that individuals are subjected to a subtle yet pervasive form of control over their thoughts and actions. This control, exercised through various societal mechanisms, permeates everyday life, manifesting through institutions and cultural products. The insidious nature of this control lies in its normalization; it becomes so deeply ingrained that it goes unnoticed by society.

Critical theorists challenge this status quo, rejecting the notion that societal control is inevitable or unchangeable. They advocate for critique as the primary method to expose and dismantle the mechanisms of domination (Geuss, 1981; Dant, 2003). They argue that critique serves a dual purpose: it not only enhances our understanding of society but also empowers us to bring about positive change. Thus, the critical theory with its method of critique is central to this paper.

## 3. THE NUCLEUS OF THE “EVERYDAY LIFE” AND “PUBLIC SPACE”: “SPACE”

In his treatise “The Production of Space,” Henri Lefebvre (1991b), laid the foundation for a comprehensive theory of space with his treatise “The Production. At the heart of his argument lies the assertion that every society produces its own unique space, which he refers to “social space” (Lefebvre, 1991b:33). Social space encompasses the intricate interplay of individual social actions and the cultural tapestry of societies. Lefebvre (1991b:31-52) critiqued the erosion of social space in modern societies, resulting in the emergence of “abstract space,” a phenomenon he attributed to a powerful tool for domination. He argued that Cartesian logic, with its apprehension of space as a geometric abstraction, played a pivotal role in this transformation. Lefebvre (1991b), challenged this notion and asserted that space is not merely a geometrical construct, it is socially produced. Space, therefore, is not only a material product it is also a social product. According to Lefebvre (1991b), the formation of the abstract space in modern societies involves three crucial moments of production, each doubly determined. His twofold theory of space encompasses three dialectically interconnected dimensions, collectively termed spatial trialectics (Figure1).



**Figure 1.** Diagrammatic description of Lefebvre's spatial trialectics.

The first triad consists of “Spatial practices”, “Representations of space” and “Representational space”. “Spatial practices” refer to the networks of interaction and communication that animate everyday life in a given space, emphasizing the physical dimension. “Representations of space” encompass scientific knowledge, theories, codes, and signs that shape the understanding of space, as well as the maps, plans, and designs produced by technocrats, architects, and urban planners that represent the mental dimension of space. Finally, “Representational space” transcends the physical realm of spaces themselves, encompassing their symbolic representations, such as divine power, logos, the state, or masculine and feminine principles, representing the symbolic dimension.

The second triad comprises “perceived”, “conceived” and “lived space”. “Perceived space” emerges from the collective production of spatial activities within a society, encompassing residential, work, and leisure activities. “Conceived space” takes form through the knowledge, signs, and codes of technocrats, architects, and urban planners, shaping idealized spaces that regulate and prescribe patterns of spatial practices within society. “Lived space” represents the direct experiences of users. It encompasses the potentials for resistance against the conceived spaces and the endeavor to reclaim social spaces.

Employing the concept of spatial trialectics, Lefebvre (1991b), defines space as a social product, continually produced through the interplay of the three triadic dimensions. Not only space is produced by the interaction of these triads, but the triads themselves are also shaped by space. Based on this premise of spatial production, Lefebvre (1991b), succinctly defines abstract space as the spatial

manifestation of capitalism, characterized by the disintegration and self-destruction of towns and urban spaces. According to Lefebvre (1991b), the space of capitalism embodies instrumental rationality, fragmentation, homogenization, and commodification. Hence, he defines abstract space as “the devastating conquest of the lived by the conceived, by abstraction” (Wilson, 2013:366). Lefebvre asserts that capitalists and state actors are primarily concerned with the quantifiable aspects of space, such as size, width, area, location, and profit, rather than the lived experiences of everyday life or the preservation of spaces imbued with memories. Lefebvre (1991b), attributes these preferences to the legacy of mathematicians' logic, which conceptualizes space as a mere void, a container, or a geometrical abstraction. Inheriting these attitudes towards space, capitalists and their interests have engendered an abstraction of space, creating an abstract shell for everyday users. This abstract shell alienates users from the very spaces they actively produce through their everyday spatial practices. In this context, Lefebvre (1991b) argues that the control exerted over lived space through abstract space is inherently problematic. This control alienates us from our everyday lives by creating spaces of alienation, and by imposing homogeneous, global, and quantifiable spaces (Lefebvre, 1991a; Wilson, 2013).

In addition to presenting a comprehensive theory of space, Lefebvre's seminal work, “The Production of Space” also aimed to elucidate the path towards reclaiming social space from the clutches of alienation. He emphasized the need for social space to encompass both mental and physical dimensions, stating, “Social space will be revealed in its particularity to the extent that it ceases to be indistinguishable from mental space (as defined by the philosophers and the mathematicians) on the one hand, and physical space (as defined by practico-sensory activity and the perception of nature) on the other” (Lefebvre, 1991b:27). In this regard, Lefebvre identified modern societies' public spaces as the spaces where the alienation is particularly acute (Wilson, 2013). In order to resist the spaces of alienation and reclaim the social space, Lefebvre (1991b:52; 2009:195) proposed the concept of “differential space,” an alternative spatial apprehension that prioritizes use value over exchange value. This redefinition of space, according to Lefebvre, holds the potential to resist the homogenizing effects of abstract space and foster a heterogeneous, desalinated space (Wilson, 2013).

Lefebvre's work suggests that the design of public spaces should prioritize the freedom of users' lived spaces, fostering a diversity of activities and practices that reveal social relations and transform alienated everyday life (Lefebvre, 1971; 2013; Mitchell, 2003). Moreover, Lefebvre recognized the “right to the city” for diverse publics, advocating for their involvement in public spaces not merely as consumers of “products and consumable material goods” but also as participants in “creative activity” (Mitchell, 2003:18). In this sense, Lefebvre (1971) not only acknowledged the mundane aspects of everyday life but also perceived a latent potential within it by means of creativity, ignited by the

rejection of the rationalized practices of abstract spaces. Here, it is possible to state that this potential lies in the apprehension of public space.

Building upon Lefebvre's emphasis on resistance mechanisms, this paper advocates for a critical dialogue between public space and everyday life. Hence, the subsequent section will delve into an exploration of the underlying key concepts of everyday life and public space, establishing theoretical connections.

#### 4. KEY CONCEPTS OF “EVERYDAY LIFE”

Everyday life is perhaps the most familiar notion to us. It is the domain from which we draw answers to questions like “How is your day?” or “What did you do yesterday?” The possible responses to these questions stem from the lived experiences of our daily lives. In other words, when we recount our day to someone, we typically focus on the experiences, emotions, and outcomes rather than the events themselves. It is possible to state that everyday life encompasses a diverse range of lived experiences across different cultures. Given its culturally constructed nature, how can we define the notion of “everyday life” and identify its key concepts? Rather than seeking a universal definition, this section will delve into the works of pioneering theorists, exploring their diverse perspectives and critiques, to decipher the key concepts embedded within the term “everyday life”. By considering these critiques, it is possible to derive two conceptual explanations of the term “everyday life”. The first emphasizes the routine nature of everyday life, characterized by its quotidian spatial and temporal rhythms (Lefebvre, 1991a; Simmel, 1998). The second conceptualization positions everyday life as a generative site of capitalist relations, highlighting the prevalence of boredom and banality (de Certeau, 1988; Fiske, 1989). The latter also acknowledges the forms of resistance that emerge within everyday life against the reproduction of capitalist relations.

By considering these two conceptual explanations, theoretical discussions on everyday life can be organized around three key concepts. The first group perceives everyday life as a liminal experience, divided into distinct compartments offering diverse experiences. The second group views everyday life as a choreographed social reality, while the third group conceptualizes it as the realm of social practices.

##### 4.1. Everyday Life: As a Limbo

The fragmentation of different temporalities in the everyday transforms it into liminal spaces between the compartments, likewise, being in limbo. Before delving into these compartments, it's crucial to define the overarching concept of these temporalities, namely “everyday”. While it's tempting to

simply define “everyday” as the time of routine, Lefebvre (1987) offers a more nuanced perspective: “a set of functions which connect and join together systems that might appear to be distinct”. He further elaborates on this definition by considering the notion of everyday as a product of the era we inhabit, where production engenders consumption, and consumption is manipulated by producers, who also control the intellectual, instrumental, and scientific means of production (Lefebvre, 1987). Moreover, by means of industrialization the time for everyday is divided into public time, associated with work or school, and private time, associated with home life (Bennett, 2005). However, beyond these shared time assumptions, the question of who’s everyday we are talking about becomes crucial. When we consider the diverse social categories such as gender, sexuality, and ethnicity, it becomes apparent that everyday life holds simultaneously different meanings, durations, temporalities, and spaces within society. Since, the quotidian experiences of individuals and groups shape how they experience everyday life.

Post-World War II saw a shift in capitalism's focus from colonizing nations to colonizing the quotidian experiences of individuals. This shift prompted some philosophers and theorists to explore the potential of everyday life as a site for resistance against the sufferings of capitalism. The upheavals and depressions of the postwar era opened the door to a deeper examination of human experiences in the shadow of capitalism. Williams (2002) argues that the ordinary events of society are immanent to the formation of the culture of societies, and everyday life is a culturally constructed domain. Similarly, Hall (1980) contends that the quotidian experience of people's daily lives influences the ideologies, cultures, and structures of society. On the other hand, ideologies and structures also shape the quotidian experiences of society. The latter point emphasizes the intricate relationship between individual experiences in everyday life and broader social structures.

Beyond the term “everyday”, “moments” and “rhythms” are also inherent to the nature of everyday life. In his seminal work the “Critique of Everyday Life” Lefebvre (1991a) argues how capitalism creates equal units of work time and leisure time. According to Lefebvre (1991a), individuals experience specific moments in specific spaces, such as workspaces, resting spaces, and leisure spaces. Leisure space serves as a sub-space of the workspace, ensuring preparation for a working time by enabling certain consumption practices. Lefebvre (1991a) refers to this as the colonization of everyday life that results in banality.

The repetitive nature of these moments triggers boredom in society. According to Simmel (1998), the lived common experiences of modern daily life bring a “blasé attitude”, a sense of detachment and apathy, to the lived common experiences of modern daily life. In other words, it is individualism through the pursuit of uniqueness in the Metropolis life as a result of the modernization process

(Simmel, 1998). This individualism, arising from the pursuit of uniqueness in the Metropol life, leads to a struggle for uniqueness within the confines of absolute boredom. On the other hand, Siegfried Kracauer (2002) identifies “boredom” as a key feature of modern daily life in Weimer Germany in 1924. However, unlike Simmel, Kracauer (2002), views boredom as a creative condition for generating new forms of resistance. Guy Debord, a leading theorist of Situationist International (S.I.), shares Kracauer's belief in the creative potential of boredom. He argues that everyday life triggers productive boredom, which can fuel the pursuit of new forms of resistance through ephemeral situations (Debord, 2002).

Thus, the fragmentation and compartmentalization of everyday life, along with the pervasiveness of boredom, create a liminal space where individuals navigate between distinct temporalities and experiences. However, this liminality also holds the potential for resistance and creative expression. Individuals can reclaim their agency within the everyday by recognizing the power of their experiences and challenging the structures that shape them.

#### 4.2. Everyday Life: As a Choreography

In 1959, sociologist Erving Goffman declared in his book “The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life” that everyday life is a grand performance of society that is shaped by individual performances (Goffman, 1959). He defines performance as a mode of behavior or activity in the daily life. He posits that we are all actors playing various roles in our lives before our audiences, which include our family, friends, and colleagues. However, we are not consciously aware that we are in the middle of a performance. This unconscious nature of our performances leads Goffman (1959) to regard the social reality of everyday life as a performance. Here it is possible to state that Goffman and Debord share the same idea that everyday life is choreographed. Debord states that in everyday life, “everything that was directly lived has moved away into a representation” (Debord, 1994).

It is crucial to emphasize that the conceptualization of everyday life as a choreography emerged from the profound societal transformations witnessed during the 1960s. The widespread student revolts, demonstrations, and peace movements the Vietnam War, as well as various movements and actions related to women's rights and gay rights, led to the questioning of many intrinsic values. For instance, the May 1968 student revolts in France were sparked by a text titled “On the Poverty of Student Life”, which was published and distributed to the students of the University of Strasbourg with the

cooperation of Situationist International (S.I.) (Members of the Situationist International and some Students of the University of Strasbourg, 1966)<sup>ii</sup>.

McDonough (2002) and Wark (2011), agree that Debord and the S.I. were heavily influenced by Lefebvre's ideas about everyday life. This influence stemmed from Lefebvre's 1957 article "Revolutionary Romanticism" (Lefebvre, 1957). Sharing Lefebvre's critique of everyday life, S.I. sought new ways to intervene in everyday life by creating ephemeral situations. In "The Society of the Spectacle" Debord (1994), who was the leader of S.I., criticized the everyday life of modern society by addressing the modernity had transformed daily life into a grand spectacle, with images circulating incessantly and society acting as spectators. For instance, advertisements in modern society not only promote the product itself but also promise uniqueness, ethics, and status. As a result, the spectacle infiltrates social relations in everyday life, fostering alienation.

In here, it is important to note that S.I.'s concept of alienation differs from Marx's theory of alienation in work and labor. S.I.'s alienation refers to the alienation from art and everyday life. According to S.I., alienation in everyday life breeds boredom, represses the creative power of society, and separates art from everyday life. He writes about the alienation in the everyday life in "The Society of the Spectacle" as follows:

"Separated from his product, man himself produces all the details of his world with ever increasing power, and thus finds himself ever more separated from his world. The more his life is now his product, the more he is separated from his life" (Debord, 1994: 47).

Thus, the main aim of S.I. was to emancipate society from the spectacle by revolutionizing everyday life. In order to reach this, Debord states that S.I. should act as both an "artistic avant-garde" and an "experimental investigation of the free construction of daily life" (Debord, 2002b:159).

#### 4.3. Everyday Life: As a Realm of Social Practices

Michel de Certeau focuses on the domain of practicalities in everyday life and sees it as a battleground between two forms within the domain of practices in everyday life, which are strategy and tactics. In other words, De Certeau asserts that everyday life is a realm of social practices encompassing two forms: "strategy," the dominating tools of power, and "tactic," the resistance mechanisms that develop against strategies (de Certeau, 1988:xix). In this sense, he describes everyday life as a complex set of interrelations where both capitalist production relations and the entire associated social structure are reproduced. According to de Certeau (1988), everyday life embodies possibilities and clues for

<sup>ii</sup> The Situationist International (S.I) was founded by a group of theorists, poets, painters, and students in 1957, who shared the idea that everyday life was choreographed under the effect of the interwoven relation of art, culture, and socio-economic system. The group was dissolved itself in 1972.

alternative practices of liberation. In this regard, de Certeau views everyday life as a realm of creativity and resistance.

Similarly, Fiske defines everyday life as “micro-politics” that resists the institutions of power (Fiske, 1989:9). Both de Certeau's (1988), “tactics” and Fiske's (1989) “micro-politics” refer to the resistance mechanisms that subvert daily routines, such as taking a shortcut on the grass rather than using the designated pathway. Michel de Certeau's “tactics” and Fiske's “micropolitics” are standing side by side in their apprehension of everyday life. Thus, it can be said that both de Certeau and Fiske accept everyday life as a realm of social practices that foster creativity and resistance. In a similar vein to Lefebvre's differential space, and to de Certeau's strategy and tactics along with Fiske's micro-politics, Debord and S.I. resist to abstract space of state power. In this regard, by using the method of “unitary urbanism” they criticized the bourgeois culture and the abstract spaces of high modernism (Sadler, 1998; Debord, 2002b). In the first issue of Internationale Situationniste journal (June 1958) “unitary urbanism” was defined as follows: “The theory of the combined use of arts and techniques as means contributing to the construction of a unified milieu in dynamic relation with experiments in behavior” (Debord, 1958). Through this method, S.I. aimed to break the passivity of individuals in the everyday life of a capitalist society and establish a new spatial politics of resistance using revolutionary spatial devices such as “psychogeography,” “derive,” “detournement,” and “situations” (Debord, 2002b)<sup>iii</sup>. By means of these devices, S.I. aimed to disrupt the passivity of individuals in the everyday life of a capitalist society, create a transformation, and foster a new spatial politics of resistance against abstract space.

Therefore, everyday life can be defined as a complex interplay of relationships, where capitalist production relations and broader societal relations are reproduced. It encompasses social encounters

<sup>iii</sup> According to Wark, S.I.'s tool of “*derive*”, was influenced by Lefebvre's work and leisure division in the spaces of city (McKenzie Wark, 2011: 23). In his *Critique of Everyday Life* Lefebvre posits that capitalism creates equal units of work time and leisure time. Consequently, individuals live certain experiences in certain spaces such as workspace, resting space, and leisure space, according to these divided times. Leisure space serves as a sub-space of the workspace, ensuring preparation for working time by enabling certain consumption practices. Wark argues that, through the practice of *derive*, S.I. utilizes the spaces of the city beyond their designated functions. Thus, the term “*derive*” can be considered as a Situationist version of *flaneur*. Like *flaneurs*, *derivers* stroll the city streets to experience the effects of modernization. However, Sadler (1998) distinguishes *dérive* from the random strolls of *flaneurs* along the boulevards of Paris. He explains that the *dérive* involves tactics such as playful-constructive behavior and awareness of psychogeographical effects. *Dérivers* allow themselves to be drawn by the city's attractions and the encounters they find within it, guided by psychogeographical factors, to cultivate entirely new and authentic experiences. Another revolutionary tool of the S.I. was the *psychogeography*. In the Situationist Definitions (1958) “psychogeography” was defined as “the study of the specific effects of the geographical environment (whether consciously organized or not) on the emotions and behavior of individuals” (Debord, 1958). According to Sadler, psychogeography was also an artistic activity of the S.I.; however, rather than being confined to conventional gallery spaces, it was conducted on the streets, observing and intervening in everyday life (Sadler, 1998:69). The final tool of S.I. was “*détournement*”, an abbreviation of “*détournement* of pre-existing aesthetic elements” (Debord, 1958). S.I. criticized the bourgeois culture by mapping new forms of geographical environment and creating new visions of the city through this tool. A “*détournement*” involved a collection of disrupted artistic products, images and texts that were integrated into a new ensemble to disrupt the spectacle in everyday life and subvert the bourgeois culture. In 1959, Debord outlined two fundamental laws of *detournement*: the first being the loss of the original nature of each “*detoured*” product, and the second being the organization of a meaningful body in which each product acquires a new nature (Debord, 1959).

that reveal and define public spaces. Public spaces, in turn, play a vital role in shaping everyday life, providing settings for social interaction, community engagement, and individual expression. In this regard, it is possible to state that the conceptual dialogue between “everyday life” and “public spaces” has the potential to offer publicness in which people encounter the political. Therefore, the conceptual dialogue between the everyday life and public space with their relationship to potential publicness is important to consider for revealing alternative and emancipative practices as well as designing spaces that are responsive to the needs and behaviors of individuals. Thus, considering the importance of designing socially sustainable, equitable, and vibrant public spaces, the next section delves into the key concepts of public space, seeking to establish theoretical connections between “everyday life” and “public space”.

## 5. KEY CONCEPTS OF “PUBLIC SPACE”

In the literature on public space, the notion of public space is discussed in terms of two contexts, which are the “socio-spatial context” and the “political context”.

### 5.1. Socio-Spatial Context

The “socio-spatial context” explores public spaces in the material realm and examines their potential to reveal social dynamics (Goffman, 1959; Sennett, 1992; Mitchell, 1995). In a nutshell, it is possible to state that, scholars in this context deal with public spaces in terms of evolving societal relationships within the public sphere. For instance, Erving Goffman, who can be recalled as pioneer in this context, conceptualized public space as a dramaturgic space (Goffman, 1959). He argued that societal performances shape everyday interactions and relationships between individuals, and this leads to a choreographed public life (Goffman, 1959). Similarly, Richard Sennett defines public space as a grand physical system outside of the private (Sennett, 1992). According to Sennett, public space has experienced a decline as public life has transitioned from an extrinsic to a more intrinsic practice.

Don Mitchell also identifies the underlying cause of this erosion of public space in contemporary society, attributing it to the controlling mechanisms employed by power structures. In his article, Mitchell presents The People's Park in Berkeley as a case study, highlighting the ongoing struggle between activists who aim to reclaim public space and the forces that seek to restrict its usage. Since 1969, the park has served as a battleground for this conflict (Mitchell, 1995:115). Drawing from his analysis of the publicness of the park, Mitchell outlines two opposing conceptions of public space in contemporary society.

The first conception views public space as “an unconstrained space within which political movements can organize and expand into wider arena” (Mitchell, 1995:115). He aligns his definition of public space with this perspective (Mitchell, 1995:115-116). The second conception, in contrast, perceives public space as follows:

“Open space for recreation and entertainment, subject to usage by an appropriate public that is allowed in. Public space thus constituted a controlled and orderly retreat where a properly behaved public might experience the spectacle of the city [...] Users of this space must be made to feel comfortable, and they should not be driven away by unsightly homeless people or unsolicited political activity.” (Mitchell, 1995:115)

In this view, public space transforms into a controlled and orderly retreat where a well-behaved public can enjoy urban spectacles. Mitchell emphasizes that this space must cater to the comfort of its occupants, excluding unsightly individuals like homeless people or unwelcome political activities. Mitchell contends that the second conception, which prioritizes controlled recreation and comfort, is gaining prominence in contemporary society, and it is effectively “squeezing out” the more unmediated and political conception of public space (Mitchell, 1995:115-126). In order to explain the distinction between these two conceptions, Mitchell draws upon Henri Lefebvre’s arguments about “lived space” and “abstract space” (Mitchell, 1995:115).

## 5.2. Political Context

Within the political context of the public space discussions, a group explores the notion of public space, which is democratic, through four distinct models: “proletarian”, “feminist”, “agonistic”, and “discursive” (Arendt, 1958; Habermas, 1989; Fraser, 2004; Oskar and Kluge, 2004; Mouffe, 2007). The proletarian model defines public space through the lens of production relationships (Oskar and Kluge, 2004). It categorizes public space into three distinct spheres: dominant, alternative, and counter publics. Dominant public space refers to political public space controlled by the ruling classes. Alternative public space encompasses the discourses and actions that address the concerns of marginalized groups within society. Counter publics, on the other hand, are comprised of individuals who stand outside the dominant public sphere. It challenges the bourgeois public space and seeks to reconstruct it through the collective, productive, and anti-capitalist actions and discourses. The feminist model addresses the exclusion of women from the public sphere and advocates for the integration of issues traditionally relegated to the private realm into the public domain (Fraser, 2004). Similar to the proletarian model, the feminist model aims to reconstruct public space by incorporating previously excluded groups.

The agonistic model defines public space as a shared ground, where differences emerge and are shaped through political means among equal individuals (Arendt, 1958; Mouffe, 2007). Hannah

Arendt and Chantal Mouffe are prominent figures associated with this model. Hanna Arendt argues that human activity can be divided into three: the “private”, encompassing the “home”; the “social”, involving “work and labor”; and the “public realm”, where “political action” takes place (Arendt, 1958:45). According to her, activities related to daily life and labor do not belong to the public realm. For Arendt (1958), the public is confined to political matters, while non-political issues are considered as private. Arendt maintains a strict distinction between private and public, defining the “public realm” as the space for political action where “people acting and speaking together” (Arendt, 1958:198). For Arendt (1958), this togetherness is exclusive to men, as she states that only men can express distinctions within the public realm (Arendt, 1958:176). Yet, she acknowledges the importance of a plurality of differences in the public realm, as it fosters the appearance of different perspectives and ideas (Arendt, 1958:41). In that context, Arendt (1958:179) defines “public space” as a site of appearance where differences appear, but they act in concert with to reach a public opinion.

Chantal Mouffe, however, challenges Arendt's conception of the public realm in terms of the emergence of differences (Mouffe, 2013:9-10). Mouffe opposes Arendt's notion of cohesion among differences in the public realm, and instead introduces the concept of the “agonistic public sphere” (Mouffe, 2002a; 2002b; 2013:91). She refers to individuals within the public sphere as “agonists” (polemical adversaries) who are not “antagonists” (enemies) (Mouffe, 2013:41; 2002a:90) For her, the agonistic public sphere is characterized by agonistic relationships between these polemical adversaries. In this context, Mouffe (2007:3) defines “public space” as “the battleground” of the differences, where individuals engage as polemical adversaries, not seeking consensus or acting in concert. In contrast to Arendt, Mouffe views contestation as the driving force behind publicness, rather than consensus. In other words, Mouffe posits that agonistic relations, conflictual structures, and opposing viewpoints among adversary individuals constitute the public sphere, without any possibility of a final reconciliation. (Mouffe, 2007:3; Mouffe, 2013:138). Mouffe proposes the agonistic public sphere as the foundation of democracy in contemporary society, which she sees as dominated by neoliberalism (Mouffe, 2013:7). She contends that “critical art” practices and artistic critique are crucial elements in emerging an agonistic public sphere (Mouffe, 2007:4; Mouffe, 2014:69). She asserts that critical art has the potential to bring contestation to the forefront, contributing to the development of more democratic societies (Mouffe, 2007:4).

The final model within the discussions surrounding public space in the political context is Jürgen Habermas's discursive model. Habermas, a critical theorist and member of the Frankfurt School, developed his discursive model from the cultural, social, and political exchanges that took place in coffee houses and salons during academic exhibitions (Habermas, 1989). He argues that between the 17th and 18th centuries, the bourgeoisie gathered in these cultural and social spaces, such as salons

and coffee houses, to engage in discussion (Habermas, 1989). Salons served as spaces for academic exhibitions frequented by courtiers and members of the academy, where “art criticism” flourished (Habermas, 1989:41). Coffee houses, on the other hand, were the preferred gathering places for the bourgeoisie, where they discussed literature, social issues, and the practices of state and politics (Habermas, 1989). Habermas (1989) conceptualizes all of these spaces as public spaces where public opinion and cultural critique are formed, and he defines public space as the sphere where public discourse occurs.

According to Habermas (1989), these spaces fostered critical breaks in the bourgeoisie's daily life through the communicative practices that occurred within them. He asserts that the “public sphere” emerged as a direct result of the communicative exchanges that took place in these spaces (Habermas, 1989:31-43). Within the “public sphere,” discussions related to public opinion flourished, leading to the formation of shared judgments (Habermas, 1989:27). He argues that the emergence of the “public sphere” triggered a transformation in the fundamental pattern of “representative publicness” (Habermas, 1989:5). He posits that, during the Middle Ages, all social relations were structured within the publicly represented feudal system (Habermas, 1989). According to Habermas (1989), the public notion during this period served as a representation of the lordship's power. In the 15th century, the public notion no longer represented but rather served the power of the monarchy, marking a separation between society and the state (Habermas, 1989). The 18th century witnessed the emergence of the “public sphere” through “critical reasoning,” initially expressed in the form of communicative letters and later through printed political journals, newsletters, and public talk. This evolution led to the association of the public with “public opinion” (Habermas, 1989:18-26). In this regard, Mitchell (1995), Orum and Neal (2010), and Barrett (2012) concur that Habermas defines the public sphere as a non-physical, discursive, and abstract space.

Within the agonistic and discursive models of public space, there are several key distinctions. The agonistic model views public space as a political arena for the expression and actions of a collective (Arendt, 1958; Mouffe, 2007). In this shared space, the experience of being together is crucial for the appearance of the differences. In this context, Arendt (1958) and Mouffe (2007) conceptualize the public in a pluralistic manner.

In contrast, Habermas's (1989) conception of public space does not emphasize the significance of differences. Fraser (2004), Mouffe (2007), and Mitchell (1995) agree that Habermas's public sphere excludes existing counter-publics, which encompass groups such as women, workers, immigrants, people of color, and LGBTQ+ individuals. Mouffe (2007; 2014) and Mitchell (1995) argue that Habermas's (1989) conception of the public sphere strives to achieve a universal consensus, which is

considered essential for democracy. Mitchell (1995) asserts that within Habermas's (1989) public sphere, public spaces served to mediate relationships between society and the state while excluding marginalized groups and ideas. In summary, the agonistic model emphasizes the role of differences in shaping public space, while Habermas's discursive model prioritizes consensus-building.

In addition, the nature of publicness in the conceptualizations of Habermas (1989) and Arendt (1958) introduces another layer of distinction between these two models. According to Arendt (1958), public space is exclusively concerned with political matters, distinct from the private spaces of individuals.

On the other hand, Habermas (1989) encompasses debates beyond the realm of politics, extending to social and cultural issues. Habermas (1989:127) attributes the emergence of publicness to the social interactions and debates among the bourgeoisie in cafes and salons. He states:

“The ‘social’ could be constituted as its own sphere to the degree that on the one hand the reproduction of life took on private forms, while on the other hand the private realm as a whole assumed public relevance. The general rules that governed interaction among private people now become a public concern.”(Habermas, 1989:127)

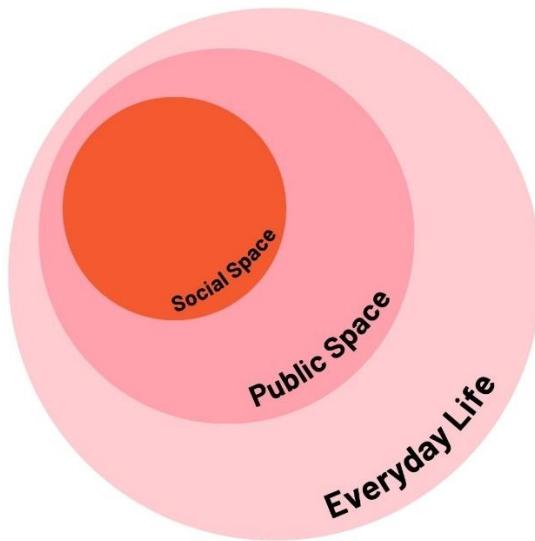
As this quotation implies, Habermas's (1989) discursive model expands the scope of public discourse to encompass social and cultural issues, while Arendt's (1958) conception of public space confines public discourse to political matters. This distinction reflects the differing perspectives of the two theorists on the nature and purpose of public discourse.

Furthermore, Habermas (1989) diverges from Arendt's (1958) conceptualization by incorporating the interests associated with individuals' daily lives into the public sphere. He contends that involving individuals' distinct experiences from their daily lives in the public sphere can contribute to the exchange of ideas on social issues. In this regard Habermas (1989) expands the concept of public space beyond political matters to encompass everyday experiences, enabling individuals to contribute their unique perspectives to social discourse. Therefore, the agonistic and discursive models of public space offer distinct perspectives on the role of differences, the nature of publicness, and the function of public discourse. While the agonistic model emphasizes the importance of differences in shaping public space, Habermas's discursive model prioritizes consensus-building.

## 6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper explored the theoretical connections between the notions of “everyday life” and “public space” through the lens of critical theory. Grounded in critical theory and drawing from the seminal works of pioneering theorists, it argued that public spaces are shaped by the everyday activities and interactions of individuals, and in turn, they have a profound impact on the way people experience everyday life. The relationship between everyday life and public space is a complex and multifaceted

one. Everyday life is a broad notion that encompasses routines that are dependent on the routines of time and social life and includes public space. It is also a latent and inclusive term that overlaps with social life. Public space, on the other hand, is a physical or non-physical space where social, political, and cultural action or discourse is produced. In this regard, this paper argued that the paramount context for individuals to encounter public spaces is embedded within the fabric of everyday life. In other words, public spaces delineate the social spaces wherein individuals engage in interactions with others and the surrounding environment, all within the overarching framework of daily existence (Figure2).



**Figure 2.** Social space, public space and everyday life.

Moreover, this study argued that the notion of “everyday life” has been dissected into three key concepts: as a limbo, a choreography, and a realm of social practices. Lefebvre's (1971; 1987; 1991a) exploration of the temporalities within the everyday, the colonization of moments leading to banality, and the subsequent emergence of resistance and creativity in the face of boredom, form a critical foundation. Goffman's (1959) dramaturgic lens and the societal transformations of the 1960s, as seen through the perspective of S.I. and Debord (1994) contribute to the understanding of everyday life as a choreographed performance. Additionally, de Certeau's (1988) emphasis on tactics as a form of resistance and Fiske's (1989) concept of micro-politics further enrich the exploration of everyday life as a realm of social practices, fostering creativity and resistance. However, the notion of “public space” has been examined within “socio-spatial” and “political” contexts. Goffman's (1959) dramaturgic space, Sennett's (1992) decline of public life, and Mitchell's (1995) analyses of public spaces underscore the socio-spatial context. In the political context, the proletarian, feminist, agonistic, and discursive models offer diverse perspectives on public space as a battleground for societal

relations, a platform for marginalized voices, a shared ground for political differences, and a discursive space for societal debates, respectively.

This paper highlighted the importance of recognizing the diverse and contested nature of public spaces. Public spaces are not neutral or apolitical; they are sites of struggle and contestation where different groups and interests come into conflict. It is, therefore, crucial to design public spaces that are inclusive and welcoming to all, and that reflect the diversity of the communities they serve. In this regard, Mouffe's (2002a; 2002b; 2013) concept of the "agonistic public sphere" provides a framework for understanding public spaces as sites of contestation and debate. By engaging in agonistic relationships with polemical adversaries, individuals can articulate and defend their diverse perspectives, fostering a more vibrant and democratic public sphere. Public spaces can be designed to promote social sustainability, equity, and vibrancy. By critically analyzing how individuals engage with public spaces in everyday life, architects and designers can create environments that foster meaningful social interactions, strengthen community bonds, and empower individuals to reclaim their agency. In this regard, Lefebvre's (1991b; 2009) "differential space" offers a valuable framework for understanding the potential of public spaces to foster social sustainability, equity, and vibrancy. By prioritizing the lived experiences of users and resisting the homogenizing effects of abstract space, differential spaces can empower individuals to reclaim their agency and create more meaningful social interactions. Moreover, de Certeau's (1988) and Fiske's (1989) conceptualization of everyday life as a realm of social practices highlights the potential for resistance and creativity within public spaces. By employing tactics and micro-politics, individuals can challenge dominant power structures and create alternative spaces for expression and engagement.

Therefore, theoretical connections between everyday life and public space are evident in the way both are shaped by power structures, societal relationships, and individual experiences. The liminal nature of everyday life, the choreography of societal performances, and the realm of social practices collectively influence the dynamics of public spaces. In turn, public spaces serve as settings for the enactment of everyday life, offering opportunities for social interaction, community engagement, and individual expression. In the pursuit of designing socially sustainable, equitable, and vibrant public spaces, it is imperative to acknowledge the interplay of the theoretical connections of "everyday life" and "public space". The conceptual dialogue between these notions not only reveals alternative and emancipative practices but also informs the design of environments responsive to the diverse needs and behaviors of individuals. As architects and designers navigate the complexities of these theoretical connections, they can be poised to create environments that not only reflect societal structures but actively contribute to the transformation and empowerment of individuals within the public sphere. By recognizing the potential for resistance, creativity, and meaningful social interactions within everyday

life and public spaces, the path can be paved for the emergence of environments that truly resonate with the diverse experiences of individuals in contemporary society. Thus, by critically analyzing the relationship between these two concepts, we can develop a more nuanced and informed approach to the design and planning of public spaces.

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