

(Un)Welcome Encounters? The case of the Grandhotel Cosmopolis: A space for guests 'with' and 'without' asylum.

Marielle Zill

*Department of Geosciences, Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands
m.o.zill@students.uu.nl*

Abstract

This paper illustrates the sites and effects of encounters between citizens and asylum seekers in different microspaces. While work on encounters has largely focused on 'more deserving' others, this paper analyses encounters with society's abject, 'unwelcome' others. Building on feminist theory, I argue for the incorporation of a non-hierarchical understanding of difference into research on encounters, in order to recognize the multiplicity of individuals. Given a decline of spaces for 'multiple publics' to interact, this paper conceives of spaces for encounter as 'public' spaces. Insights into encounters occurring in such spaces are drawn from a case study of the Grandhotel Cosmopolis, a political art project in Augsburg, Germany. Findings are based on participatory observation, interviews and focus groups. The case illustrates not only how encounters were en- and disabled in its microspaces, but also how encounters initiate processes of learning and challenge situated perspectives.

Keywords: encounters, spaces of encounter, asylum seekers, difference, public space

Introduction

*"Much more interesting than a group of like-minded people is a group of not like-minded people."
Joseph Beuys*

'How to live with difference?' appears to be one of the central questions of scholarship investigating encounters in urban settings. This scholarship is based in debates on multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism and conviviality (Freitag, 2013; Gilroy, 2004; Illich, 1973; Nava, 2013; Wise, Velayutham, & Macmillan, 2009) and reflects concerns of politicians and media of 'parallel lives' of minority groups (Nagel & Staeheli, 2009; Phillips, 2006). While debates on multiculturalism in the 1960s sought to acknowledge minorities 'right to difference', the last few decades evidence a shift towards assimilation and social cohesion (K. Mitchell, 2004). Geographical work on encounters partially mirrors these societal concerns by examining interactions between 'majority societies' and minority groups based on ethnicity, race, religion or sexuality (Andersson, et al. 2011; Clayton, 2009; Hemming, 2011; Houston, et al., 2005).

By opposing difference and 'the majority society', I argue that this debate implicitly runs the risk of positioning 'difference' as an element external and uncommon to our current societies.

Thereby, work on encounters 'with difference' ironically maintains a hierarchical understanding of difference (see Braidotti, 2011). This is reflected in the debate's prioritising of certain differences, while 'other' others, as represented by asylum seekers, remain largely absent from the debate. However, it is precisely these parts of society that are facing the highest levels of stigmatization and spatial exclusion (Bloch & Schuster, 2005; Hubbard, 2005; Hyndman, 2005). While research to a large degree thus focuses on 'desired encounters' with "more deserving" others (Sibley, 1998, p.94), the focal point of this research will be on the 'unwelcome' encounters with excluded individuals which constitute society's 'object' – asylum seekers (Sibley, 1995, 1998). Therefore, this paper poses the question of how and where such encounters can take place and how they affect both citizens and asylum seekers.

By placing the focus on 'object' others, this research emphasizes the importance of recognizing the multiplicity of subjects and a non-hierarchical understanding of difference for geographies of encounter. This understanding is not an argument against forms of political representation, but against the idea that social groups are defined by an inherent identity, rather than through a relational positioning of groups (Young, 2000). As a consequence, this paper argues against the notion of 'up-scaling' encounters to induce a positive perception of the entire minority group (Matejskova & Leitner, 2011; Valentine, 2008a) and for an understanding of 'meaningful' encounters which uncover the particularity of individuals. Next to placing 'object' others at the centre of research, this study also argues for a shift from only validating so-called 'meaningful' encounters to seeing encounters as meaningful in themselves. This move is provoked by a closer examination of the nature of public space. Previous research has pointed to an increase in privatization and securitization of urban public spaces, leading to a recession of spaces that offer the ability for a heterogeneous public to interact (Iveson, 2007; D. Mitchell, 2003). Drawing on the work of Fraser (1997) and Young (2000), this paper argues that spaces which provide for different encounters are 'public' spaces and as such constitute a vital element for democratic societies.

Insights into 'unwelcome' encounters are drawn from a case study of the Grandhotel Cosmopolis, a space providing for encounters between asylum seekers and citizens; in its own terminology, 'guests with and without asylum'. It is located in a central part of the city of Augsburg, southern Germany and conceived as a 'social sculpture', based on the ideas of German artist Joseph Beuys. The Grandhotel is an attempt at including all members of society in the production of art, by extending the notion of art to the transformation of society and viewing every person as an artist capable of performing this transformation (Grandhotel Cosmopolis, 2014; Beuys, 1985). The project was initiated in September 2011 by local artists and activists, who converted a former home for the elderly into a 'Grandhotel' which offers beds to 56 asylum seekers and 44 tourists and includes 13 artist's studios. The building itself is owned by the protestant church, who rents out different parts of the building to the non-profit organization Grandhotel Cosmopolis e.V. and to the local administration of the state of Bavaria, the 'Regierung von Schwaben', who administers the district's asylum centres. As such, the Grandhotel is both an official asylum seekers' centre, as well as a hotel and cultural space.

The data was generated through participatory observation, semi-structured interviews and focus groups discussions. Participatory observation in the Grandhotel Cosmopolis was carried out from November 2013 until March 2014 on daily basis. During this time, I assumed the position of a volunteer and took part in events and helped perform daily tasks. Next to participatory observation, 17 interviews with volunteers and six interviews with asylum seekers were conducted. Volunteers were selected to represent a broad variation in age, background and length of participation in the

project. Interviews were conducted in German, English or with the help of a translator. Interviews with asylum seekers conducted in English are marked with [o] for original, all other interview excerpts were translated from German. The interviews were transcribed and coded manually. Two focus groups were arranged, with 12 participants in the first and 8 participants in the second focus group. Both were held in open, public spaces of the Grandhotel and were transcribed manually.

The contribution this paper is seeking to make is both theoretical and empirical. As such, I will first provide an argument for the incorporation of a non-hierarchical understanding of difference into work on encounters. Recognising the multiplicity of difference also necessitates an inquiry into the heterogeneity of spaces of encounter. Thereafter, I will discuss the results of the empirical findings, starting out with a redefinition of encounters prompted by the research. This is succeeded by a description of the encounters occurring in various microspaces of the Grandhotel. In addition, the research also pertains to spaces of exclusion, as well as to factors disabling encounters in the Grandhotel. Before concluding, I will outline the effects of encounters on asylum seekers and volunteers.

Encountering Difference and Representation

Geographies of encounter appear to have fallen prey to a hierarchical understanding of difference in relation to subjectivity: For instance, how to “develop the capacity for living with difference” (Valentine & Sadgrove, 2012; Valentine, 2008a) or even “the challenges of living with difference” (Bannister & Kearns, 2013) imply that we have previously lived without difference, while reproducing an image of a homogenous society. Drawing on feminist and critical theory, I argue however that such an understanding endangers any movement toward societies which recognize the full range of existing differences.

Although Valentine has argued for the integration of ‘intersectionality’ into work on encounters (Valentine, 2008b), scholarship still largely ascribes difference to ethnic, religious, sexual or racial ‘others’. To move beyond this understanding, I draw on Braidotti (2011, p. 75) who claims that “difference is not a neutral category, but a term that indexes exclusion from the entitlements to subjectivity: to be ‘different from’ means being worth ‘less than’”. Difference is thus connoted with pejoration, which in turn serves to assert sameness. “By extension, otherness is defined in negative terms as the specular counterpart of the Subject. [...] This results in making an entire section of living beings into marginal and disposable bodies: these are the sexualized, racialized, and naturalized others”.

Braidotti (2011) proposes a redefinition of difference in the form of a three level process. Level one is the differentiation between the universal subject and its other. This other is ‘Woman’ in feminist theory and acts as an institution and representation. On a second level, Woman as a representation can be distinguished from real-life women, who are multiplicitous, embodied subjects. The third level of differentiation is to acknowledge the differences within each woman and accords for the complexity of the embodied structure of the subject. This third level hence makes reference to the particularity of every-body and that any particular body exceeds representation. The merit of this scheme is the move beyond dualistic structures of thinking, which make the particularity and singularity of every-body visible – a nuance which is often lost in debates on “boat people” (O’Doherty & Lecouteur, 2007). Encounters in geographical research have thus been built on a misconception: They were encounters between society’s universal subject and its Other, not between particular, multiplicitous individuals. The Other is robbed of agency, it is elevated and

subordinated at the same time – but not a fellow human being. The majority subject is then the prejudiced, powerful, undifferentiated individual. Both hide the particular human subject which is multiplicitous and constantly subject to change.

In differentiating between individuals and representation, Braidotti's framework sheds new light on notions of 'up-scaling' positive encounters with difference. 'Up-scaling' describes a process in which an encounter with a member of a minority group changes the perception of the entire minority group. However, empirical research shows that is mostly not the case for 'positive' encounters; rather, individuals tend to exclude the individual marked as 'different' from the minority group (Valentine, 2008; Matejskova & Leitner, 2011). Yet, the concept of 'up-scaling' equates a particular individual with a political representation and as such, fails to recognize the particularity and multiplicity of the individual. Exempting an individual from a social group during an encounter could thus also be read as the recognition of an individual's particularity. Instead of changing a representation to include positive connotations or removing stereotypes attached to it, what needs to be challenged is the idea of a social group existing as an identity and undifferentiated whole (Young, 2000).

Spaces for Encounter – Spaces for Publics?

In a recent publication, Amin (2013, p. 75) connected the question of rights with debates on encountering difference. Drawing on Lefebvre's (1996) notion of 'right to the city' as "the right of all its inhabitants to shape urban life and to benefit from it", Amin contends that "the conferral of universal rights [should be seen as] a first step towards recognizing urban multiplicity". This connection of rights with encounters is particularly pertinent to encounters between asylum seekers and citizens of a city. A space of non-hierarchical encounter between different people must offer them the same rights, the same means to participation. Amin (2013, p.78) designates such a space as 'common ground', "understood as a gathering of equals, a meeting ground and a shared turf". While both Amin's and Lefebvre's notions leave the question of rights within a city a 'black box' (Attoh, 2011), the notion of 'common ground' helps distinguish spaces with differing rights and rules of conduct.

To move beyond simplistic conceptions of 'public' spaces, I distinguish between 'public space', 'the public/ a public' and the 'public sphere' (Staeheli, Mitchell, & Nagel, 2009). While 'public space' is used to refer to physical spaces, the 'public sphere' denotes "the metaphorical space in which dialogue and action circulate in the construction of publics" (ibid., p.634). More, Fraser (1997) differentiates between 'the public' and 'a public'. While 'the public' signals the idea of a singular public, 'a public' allows for the existence of multiple publics. Fraser (1997, p.80) in particular argues that an image of a singular, public sphere represents "a departure from, rather than the advance toward, democracy".

Therefore, Fraser argues for conceiving not of 'the public', but 'multiple publics'. Rather than being a sign of the fragmentation and decline of 'the public', the appearance and formation of multiple publics can contribute to a more democratic society. In the case of a singular public, "members of subordinated groups would have no arenas for deliberation among themselves about their needs, objectives, and strategies. They would not have venues in which to undertake communicative processes that were not, as it were, under the supervision of dominant groups" (1997, p.81). These competing publics then necessitate interpublic discursive interaction in virtual and material public spaces. The need of multiple publics for spaces of discursive interaction hence

turns the discussion full circle: Encounters with difference can thus be seen as contestations between multiple publics in public spaces. More, public spaces are *made public* through the heterogeneous encounters it enables (see also Merrifield, 2012). Spaces of encounter are then public spaces, spaces in which opinions and beliefs can be contested and exchanged, understandings and misunderstandings challenged or reinforced.

Alarmingly, however, it is these public spaces that are being eroded (Mitchell, 2003; Sorkin, 1992). As Mitchell (2003) argues, a politics based on interaction has been banned from the public spaces of the city; “corporate and state planners have created environments that are based on a desire for security more than interaction, for entertainment more than (perhaps divisive) politics”. As a replacement, ‘pseudo-public’ spaces are being established, which are privately owned and market driven. They are carefully designed and regulated, even in terms of ‘controlled’ diversity, rather than “[promoting] unconstrained social differences”. For more, “even as new groups are claiming greater access to the rights of society, the homogenization of ‘the public’ continues apace, since the sort of diversity that pseudopublic spaces encourage is a diversity bound up in the unifying, levelling, homogenizing forces of commodity, brand-oriented consumption” (ibid., p. 139).

As a result, these trends “imply the increasing alienation of people from the possibilities of unmediated social interaction and increasing control by powerful economic and social actors over the production and use of space” (ibid., 140). Hence, designating certain urban spaces as ‘public’ is a misrepresentation; work on encounters should therefore pay attention to the laws and regulations underwriting these spaces which allow for the exclusion of certain ‘undesirable’ differences from these sites. Geographical debates reflect this argument – other kinds of encounters with marginalized differences, such as asylum seekers, the homeless or prostitutes are strikingly absent. Worrying about the ‘romanticization of urban encounters’ is thus pertinent; rather than the urban being a space for multiple encounters, it appears as if there is a worrying decline of public spaces for encounters with multiple publics. Future research should thus highlight spaces that are still accessible to multiple publics and enable unmediated social interaction. The heterogeneity of publics present in the Grandhotel Cosmopolis indicates that this space could represent such a space for different publics to encounter and interact.

Sparks fly or they don’t: Defining Encounters

Within geographical scholarship, two types of encounter can be made out: On the one hand, the ‘fleeting’ or ‘everyday’ encounters that are ascribed to urban public spaces (Laurier & Philo, 2006a, 2006b; Thrift, 2005). On the other, more long-term, sustained contact is seen to arise from common activities (Amin, 2006; Ellis, Wright, & Parks, 2004; Matejskova & Leitner, 2011). Following Valentine (2008), fleeting encounters associated with public spaces should ‘not be romanticized’ in the sense that proximity alone could transform values. Nevertheless, other research does point out potential effects of these fleeting encounters such as practicing tolerance toward others (Bannister & Kearns, 2013) or negotiating the shared use of common space (Sennett, 1996).

The concept of the encounter is hence directed towards a particular outcome. If it is deemed ‘meaningful’ (Valentine, 2008) by a subject not yet defined, an encounter should change values and generate respect for so-called ‘others’. Defining an encounter by its outcome however obscures what happens during an encounter, raising a number of questions: Is it possible to determine elements that demarcate an encounter? More, who is the subject judging the encounter as to whether or not it can be deemed meaningful and what are the norms underlying this judgement? If

an encounter is not judged on its outcome, does it necessarily have to change values? The second focus group discussion held with volunteers of the Grandhotel prompted a redefinition of an encounter, which is less focused on the outcome and hence loses its normative connotation:

Michael: "Why don't you let an encounter be something lively, where I don't have to define what that is. That we don't let an encounter be pre-defined by some intellectual or social needs. Can't an encounter be something unpredictable, something voluntary, something open? Because when I predefine what an encounter is, then I'll be unhappy if it ends up being something different than what I imagined it to be."

Sophie: "But then you don't need a Grandhotel."

Michael: "No, that's exactly when you need the Grandhotel. But I don't have to predefine what should be the outcome of an encounter. What I can do, is offer a space where people encounter each other and what happens there does not have to be predictable, because it can or is allowed to be something lively, something, that has to do with the liveliness of the people that encounter each other. And then sparks fly or they don't, that's how it works, isn't it?"

To Michael, an encounter is something that should not or cannot be predetermined; instead, an encounter is something open and unpredictable. According to him, the only thing that can be done is offer spaces that provide the potential for people to encounter each other. This openness and unpredictability of an encounter is reflected in Leitner's (2012, p. 830) definition. To her, an encounter can "both inscribe and shift existing boundaries between individuals and collectives".

An additional aspect highlighted by Michael's definition is the importance providing opportunities for encounter. In this sense, a 'voluntary, open' encounter gives people the choice to encounter, providing them with more agency. While encounters cannot be predicted, individuals can still choose to enter certain spaces that make encounters more likely; granting them a certain degree of power over the encounter itself. This redefinition of encounters also moves the debate away from finding ideal conditions for 'meaningful' encounters and towards the spaces that enable or disable encounters for multiple publics.

Encounters in microspaces

While some scholars see spatial proximity as a factor inducing contact in spaces such as buses or cafés (see Laurier & Philo, 2006a, 2006b; Wilson, 2011), others argue that proximity is not enough to promote contact (Valentine, 2008a). Yet, research has paid little attention to factors other than spatial proximity that enable interaction between different people. My fieldwork suggests that there may be a number of factors enabling interaction. While bodily encounters remain dependent on spatial proximity, the encounters in the Grandhotel displayed additional factors enabling contact. One such factor was participating in a common activity, as has been suggested by Amin (2013). Since art is a cornerstone of the Grandhotel, making and listening to music was an activity that both asylum seekers and volunteers liked to engage in. An example of such an encounter was recounted by Renate, a volunteer of about sixty years of age.

During a 'staircase concert' to celebrate the official opening of the hotel rooms, Renate got into contact with a Chechen girl of about ten years of age. The excerpt displays how Renate, herself

a cellist, was moved by this encounter and through her contact to Sara, was able to meet her parents and learn more about their background. Renate also described that the contact she had with the family was very warm, yet still difficult, since they did not speak a common language. Although she considered it to be a very important encounter, difficulties such as communication or differing expectations accompanied it, demonstrating the complexity of encounters.

“I had contact to a child, Sara, she really wanted to learn how to play the cello. That really touched me so much, that I tried to find a cello for her to practice on. I managed to borrow a children’s cello, I tried to give her lessons. But organizing these lessons was difficult. I tried to get into contact with the family, but communication was almost impossible. But I think we had a very important encounter, I met her family in their rooms, that was something that was important to Sara, it took a lot of time for me, because I was supposed to sit there and eat and be there. We tried to communicate with everything... with time and eating and the children. And we made drawings and I learned a lot about her family that I wouldn’t have otherwise.” (Renate)

Research also indicated that making music constituted an activity that was particularly well suited for getting to know each other. Harald saw the reason for this in the fact that making music did not require the exchange of many words. By making music together, he got into closer contact with the musicians Farzin and Parviz, two former asylum seekers from Afghanistan and now volunteers.

“Everyone knows Farzin, Parviz is also relatively well known, but they would be different people to me had I not made music with them. Not that that was so many times, that was just two or three sessions, but you just get to know each other that way, that is my experience. And you get to know yourself.” (Harald)

Harald saw common activities as a way that enabled people to ‘get out of their head’ and distract from everyday problems. More, he thought that ‘making something together’ revealed more about a person than a conversation would. This corresponds with research undertaken by Askins and Pain (2011) who emphasize the importance of materiality for enabling encounters. My findings suggest that engaging in a common activity and ‘making things together’ is an important way to get into contact, but also, as in the case of Harald, to get into ‘direct contact’ via shared materials. Harald’s quote also highlights that common activities do not only help to get to know another person, but that such encounters can be a way ‘to mirror ourselves’ through common activities.

“Everyone has the need to do something, do something with your hands or be part of some whole. [...] My experience is, that doing things together is a good way of getting to know each other. Because you can tell each other all kinds of stuff, but when you make something together, then you’ll get to know each other even better. [...] Because you are in direct contact; when you’re able to talk well, then you can present yourself well, and who can prove what you’re talking about... You often don’t even know yourself what you’re talking about, if that coincides with who you really are. But when you do something together, you get to know each other and you learn to be responsive to somebody... and learn where our personal boundaries are and can mirror ourselves through our common activities.”

Engaging in a common activity also had important effects on asylum seekers. Hamid, a father in his thirties, worked as an electrician while living in Afghanistan. During fieldwork, Hamid worked together with Werner maintaining the electricity and the internet of the Grandhotel. When asked about the difference between his arrival and now, Hamid replied:

“When I was here the first time, I felt like a stranger. But now, Werner comes and says, the internet doesn’t work, please repair it, and I go, I know what to do, I know everyone and I feel like this is my family here, not like a stranger. And that is a big difference between the first day and now. Because now, I know everyone, and I know what to do when the electricity goes out. And when it goes out, they just have to tell me where to go and it makes me happy to fix it, because now I know how it works”. (Hamid)

Next to shared activities, a second factor enabling encounters between asylum seekers and volunteers was the provision of help. In most cases this was related to daily activities, such as translating letters or accompanying people to the doctor. These encounters were described as spontaneous and rarely pre-arranged. While constituting a regular form of contact, it rarely led to intimate encounters. However, as Benjamin explained, he did not necessarily regret not getting to know asylum seekers that well this way, since the stories he had heard about their lives were quite disturbing to him. Nevertheless, he emphasized that he would be willing to listen, if somebody showed the urge to tell them about their past. Benjamin’s statement expresses that people cannot or do not always want to go beyond a superficial encounter, particularly if this involves being exposed to emotions that are hard to deal with.

“Mostly it’s about help, mutual help, what is good, but I don’t really get to know these people that well. What I also think though, is that that’s also good. Because some of these people really have bad lives...”. (Benjamin)

Having people available for help in daily needs was also mentioned by asylum seekers as being an important difference to other asylum centers. In fact, for Hamid it was said to be one of the most beneficial differences. The help offered by volunteers led Hamid think of the Grandhotel as ‘his flat’, rather than an asylum centre and made him feel at ease where he lives.

However, providing help was also seen to lead to an unequal relationship between the helper and the helped and to reinforce societal representations of ‘refugees’. Mutual help was perceived to be a possible solution to overcome these unequal power-relations. More, it was seen as a necessity by one volunteer, who argued that only through the help of asylum seekers were they able to justify the existence of certain spaces, such as a common sewing studio.

Simone: “I think we should stop saying, we need to help the refugees, that’s again this ‘refugee’ thing. I think we should instead ask them for help. I know that of myself, that that gives me strength, when I know I can help somewhere.”

Sophie: “I think it’s the same for them. When you go upstairs and knock on a door and say, you need help-. [...] Because in reality, you actually need help, cause it is your sewing studio that is empty!”

Lisa: "Right. That signals a certain idea of worth to the other, this feeling that he's (sic) helpful and not this, you are a burden thing, you have to leave. You always signal that when you tell someone, I'd like to help you somehow, that just makes someone look small."

(Second Focus Group)

The focus on the production of encounters also enabled a distinction between their different settings. Drawing on Amin (2013), these microspaces can be divided into 'spaces of co-presence' and 'spaces of collaboration'. The first category refers to spaces providing for spontaneous, unforeseen encounters that are not pre-determined in any way. The second category refers to spaces which are turned into a space for encounter by organizing a common activity. Still, these distinctions are not mutually exclusive; spaces of co-presence can be turned into spaces of collaboration and vice versa. Three spaces for chance encounters have emerged from the data. These are the staircase, the café/bar and the laundry room. Their only commonality however is their capacity for creating chance encounters; they are not comparable in any other way due to their different location, layout or function.

The staircase was seen as one of the most important sites of the house. Positioned centrally in the Grandhotel, it is accessible to volunteers and guests 'with' and 'without' asylum and reaches from the basement to the attic, connecting the floors of asylum seekers with the floors of the hotel rooms. Hence, all people living or working in the Grandhotel have to pass through this space to reach another part of the building. Volunteers saw the staircase as a 'neutral space'; a space that did not belong to any group. The stairway therefore enabled a certain 'normality' of contact, according to volunteers. The stairway also afforded the possibility of 'just meeting', where extended conversations were not necessary. Paul, a founder of the project and daily volunteer, saw the staircase as "the highlight of the house":

"When I come in, go up the stairs, I meet someone. I don't necessarily have to start a long conversation with that someone. But just, good morning, hello. And with some, how are you? If I have time and am up for it. And that was it. But that is the first step towards normality. What I mean is normality that our guests aren't used to. Just being greeted in a friendly manner, being asked how they are doing, they aren't used to that. And this normality of encounter in my view is immensely important. Because that has something to do with feeling comfortable where you are. I feel comfortable, I don't feel pressured by too many questions, I feel like I'm treated normally ... just as if I were meeting somebody else. And I think that this normality is incredibly important for the house, and that's happening in the staircase." (Paul)

Paul's view of the staircase as a 'neutral ground' that does not specifically belong to one group or another resonates strongly with Amin's (Amin, 2013) notion of 'common ground'. Just as in Amin's observation, the staircase is a site "for a gathering of equals, a meeting ground and a shared turf" (Amin, 2013, p.18). In contrast to other urban spaces associated with encounters, such as a street, a park or a café, the staircase of the Grandhotel is frequented by a relatively closed group of people. It is thus a question of future research to determine how open a 'common ground' can be in order to function as a 'meeting ground' of equals.

The second focus group revealed an apparent mismatch between the expectations and perceptions of asylum seekers' needs on the one hand and the requests of individual asylum seekers on the other. For instance, both focus groups discussed the relative 'emptiness' and lack of contact

in the common sewing studio. The excerpt reveals that while some volunteers perceive the idea of offering a common sewing studio as potentially beneficial, it was not frequented a lot by asylum seekers during the time of fieldwork. It remains unclear if this is due to inefficient communication or a lack of interest on the side of the asylum seekers. It does however display that offering a collaborative activity targeted at a certain group or members of this group based on one's own situated perception of this group's needs is not always a successful strategy.

“Well, I can only speak for the [sewing room], that sadly, we don't have a lot of contact [to the asylum seekers of the house]. ... In the last three weeks, a man was there with his son, we were asked to shorten his trousers. That's not really the idea, that we do that, but of course we'll do it. But the idea is that they do that themselves. But it was very intense and very nice, because his German was very good. We thought though that people would come more often”. (Simone)

The challenge is hence, as volunteer Sophie framed it, 'to meet the people where they are', rather than 'imposing some activities on them that they have to adjust to'. Thus, a central difficulty in organizing collaborative activities between asylum seekers, volunteers and visitors from the outside was meeting the needs of asylum seekers, without predefining what was best for them. The difficulty of 'meeting asylum seekers where they are' also surfaced during an interview with a family father from Iran.

[o]“You know, really, waiting is hard. You don't know, what's going to happen, you don't know, what should you do, you don't know your future. It's hard. For me, when I was eighteen years old, I started the [high level educational training]. I was working, every day, I was at my job, so here, waiting is really hard. Nothing to do as wait wait wait. It's hard. I realize, I start work, it will be better for us, if you stay at home all the time you will be sick.” (Karim)

Still, the interviewee perceived the activities that were offered as helpful and that this was an important distinction between the Grandhotel and other asylum centres:

[o]“Yes, for sure, helping us, other Heims, they don't have these things, and they are really sad, they have many problem with their Heim, but thank God, we are here. First, when we came here, we didn't know this place, we didn't know the people who are here. But here, is good also for my sons, they have many young people here, they can talk to them, have a conversation, they can find some friends, same age, it is good also for them.” (Karim)

While the collaborative activities the Grandhotel is offering may ease the burden of waiting, the focus group and interview excerpts reveal the different goals and background of asylum seekers and volunteers. As a consequence, some activities were based on the perceived, rather than the actual needs of asylum seekers. The difficulty of recognizing the situatedness of one's own perspective made it hard to provide activities that pertained more to the asylum seekers needs and goals, such as helping them to stay in Germany or to find work.

Micro-exclusions

In contrast to spaces of co-presence and spaces of collaboration, the Grandhotel also exhibited microspaces where relatively few encounters occurred. Originally, the founders of the Grandhotel planned a 'total mix' of the rooms of asylum seekers, hotel guests and artists. This idea was however prohibited by insurance regulations and the state administration. In order to be recognized as a state-run asylum seekers centre, the halls of asylum seekers had to be as similar to a regular asylum accommodation as possible. From the viewpoint of the state, the Grandhotel is thus seen as a regular asylum accommodation. The rooms of the asylum seekers are hence spatially separated from the hotel rooms and constitute one of the most secluded and regulated spaces of the house.

Marked with 'private' signs, these spaces were mentioned to be sites volunteers' would not feel comfortable entering, since it was perceived to be asylum seekers' private space. More, it was said to be impossible 'to encounter each other at eye level there'. During the second focus group, the participants talked about the possibilities for increasing the interaction between volunteers and asylum seekers. Entering the spaces of the asylum seekers to knock on their doors was however not an option for Fabian:

"I can't just go to someone and ask, do you need help. Or likewise, hey, I'm drawing a picture, do you want to help me? Because it's just artificial. For me, it's almost painful if I'm not on eye-level with someone. So, for instance, with the children, I've had one or two encounters with Rose, where I know, ok, if I want to see her, I'll go to her room and tell her, hey, we are doing this and that, don't you want to join, just like with a friend. And to anybody else that would feel a bit weird." (Fabian)

Fabian thus feels uncomfortable entering spaces declared as private and would only do so if he was friends with someone living there. Other volunteers also mentioned that they would not knock on an asylum seekers door at random. This indicates that a personal connection with an asylum seeker has to be established for volunteers to enter the halls of asylum seekers. Therefore, chance encounters are not very likely to happen in these spaces. In this sense, the halls of asylum seekers constitute microspaces of exclusion within the building. As observed by Sibley (1995, 1998), spaces of exclusion are not in all cases harmful to minorities. While the corridors might be seen as segregated spaces, the separation of these spaces also provided asylum seekers with a degree of privacy, which prevented tourists, hotel guests and most journalists from entering. This point was particularly important for political refugees.

Karim: [o] "But they should not send me the same as other here, everybody can come here and go, this is one of our problem here. All the time, I told them [my sons], when you are at your room, you should lock the door, because we in stress. I know how much dangerous are them. I know. But maybe here, they say, oh nothing is going to happen, you should be relaxed..." (father)

Nouri: "A journalist came and he said, I want to talk to you. And I said, I can't. And he said, why not? I said, I have a problem, I can't talk. And he said, you are safe here. And I said, you don't understand. You can't grasp that." (son)

In this sense, the distinct separation of the asylum seekers rooms acted as a form of protection and security, rather than exclusion. Yet, as displayed above, this could not prevent all unwanted encounters. The encounter with the journalist was not only unwanted, but could have potentially

been dangerous for the asylum seekers had the journalist revealed information that led to the identification of the person. Spaces of exclusion can hence also be spaces of privacy and security, as the halls of the asylum seekers in the Grandhotel demonstrate. These spaces of exclusion also illustrate that the 'state enforced' segregation within the building did not lead asylum seekers to lead 'parallel lives' as the chapters on spaces of encounter illuminates. Although a situation of 'total mix' would have provided more opportunities for encounter, it would also have been harder to grant some asylum seekers their desired privacy and security.

Barriers to Encounters

While encounters with difference can be purposely avoided by individuals (Valentine, 2008), little has been said about factors preventing more intimate encounters the individual has little or no control over. The empirical research in the Grandhotel has highlighted some factors that influenced the level of intimacy of encounters. One significant barrier to more intimate encounters in the Grandhotel was the inability to communicate in a common language. While most asylum seekers in Augsburg are able to take German lessons, not being able to speak a common language is seen as a hindrance to seeking out and having close contact with 'different' others. This also held for volunteers, who expressed that although communication 'with hands and feet' was possible, insecurities in communicating remained and prevented more intimate encounters with asylum seekers.

"It's difficult with the language. Because, I was also sitting in the bar once and we were two people at the table, and then a guest with asylum came to sit with us, but we couldn't really communicate. Then there were a few minutes of silence and then he left again of course, after five minutes." (Steffen)

This was also expressed by a family from Afghanistan. To them, not knowing the language was the main hindrance for learning something and for getting into contact with people. Only in the presence of a translator they saw themselves able to have a deeper conversation with volunteers. Working as a translator for Russian, Lukas held that the inability to communicate also explained asylum seekers' absence in the café/bar, emphasizing how the fear of making mistakes prevented 'intensive communication' and the creation of 'alliances' between different groups.

A second factor that had a significant influence on encounters was the experience of emotional distress. Volunteers described how empathizing with the difficult situations some families were facing led them to 'go over their own borders' of emotional capability. These situations also caused tensions between asylum seekers and volunteers, since it was the volunteers' country that 'did not want them'.

"And I think you can't penetrate that deep into the psyche of someone who has gone through so much ordeal, of someone who has been in asylum centers for so long, without work, without family relations, fearing all the time for the wellbeing of his family. Sympathizing with someone who has been through all of that is very draining. Also this hopelessness... I've seen that some people experience the end of what they are able to cope with... they have an attitude of 'nobody can help me anymore' or 'your country doesn't want me'. And it's true in a way. You are also part of that country and that can lead to some tension". (Renate)

While some volunteers saw the necessity of distancing themselves emotionally from these experiences, others decided that this was not an option for them. As a consequence, some volunteers such as Paul chose not to be directly concerned with asylum seekers' fates in their volunteer activities and instead tried to contribute in other ways to the project. Paul explained that distancing himself emotionally would mean to close one's eyes to asylum seekers' often dire fates. Likewise, it was hard for asylum seekers to talk about what they have gone through, as Fariba explained.

"I don't do it on purpose, because I don't want to. I don't want to distance myself. I know that from previous work I've done, this distancing, and that isn't good for me. That is not good for people, and not for the other person. [...] I don't want to get into a situation, in which I have to do something, so that I have to distance myself so much that I can't look at myself in the mirror when I come home. I don't want that, so I have to make a decision for myself." (Paul)

"It's not easy to talk about a bad experience. For example myself, I had to give an interview for television once, and I said, I'm sorry, I can't talk about that, I don't want to think about that again, that is so difficult. When I talk about that, those experiences come up in me again, and I have to think about all that again and it stays with me for two or three days and to forget about that again isn't easy." (Fariba)

Therefore, an image of the Grandhotel as a space for instant access to stories of asylum seekers is a misrepresentation. While some volunteers learned about the histories of families, this was knowledge gained through trust and long-term relationships with the individual in question. Emotional boundaries of sympathizing with or narrating an experience highlight the borders of mutual understanding between asylum seekers and volunteers and exhibit a clashing of different worlds that is often hard to bridge.

As an external factor mediating encounters, volunteers named the local state administration responsible for the asylum tracts of the house. During the first focus group volunteers expressed that they did not have an overview over where new people had moved in. This circumstance was attributed to the local state administrators, who apparently did not want to hand out lists of new people to the Grandhotel because "they don't like us". Mike concluded that he saw the actions of the state administration as the main factor preventing encounters. Miranda, a daily volunteer, also stressed Mike's point:

"I think, that they are not only not supporting the project, but that they are actively working against it. Those people [asylum seekers] live with us in one house and we can't even use the notice boards to leave any kind of messages [in the hallways of asylum seekers]. We live in one house and there aren't even emergency hotlines they can call. [...] There is no emergency number of the [administration] on those notice boards, because that's not wanted. There is also no number of us in there, because that's not wanted. So it's desired that they stay in their rooms and don't ever come out of there." (Miranda)

For Mike, the actions of the local administration are symptomatic for actions taken on a larger scale. More, while volunteers admitted making mistakes regarding the way they talked to the officials,

they emphasized being the party that always signaled the will to collaborate. Parviz, a former asylum seeker and now volunteer, explained this situation through the different goals of the Grandhotel and the local state administration.

“That goes further even. The official administrations are all against us. Whether that is the [local administration] or the office for foreign affairs, they’re all the same. But we were always the ones holding out our hand, saying, hey, we have an idea, we’d like to work together with you. And then they took it and chopped it off.” (Mike)

“Grandhotel has the plan to treat people well here and to let them have a good life. But the foreign affairs office and everywhere, they make everything difficult, so that you say, I don’t want to stay here, I want to leave Germany. That is their intention.” (Parviz)

Not only were these parties described to have different goals, but the local administration was perceived to try to discourage asylum seekers from getting into contact with the volunteers. More, he thought that this was because the local administration was afraid of ‘the Grandhotel’. He attributed this to the fact that the asylum seekers could report to the media if a problem between the asylum seekers and the local administration occurred.

“The boss and the janitor say, you’re not allowed to have contact to the people of the Grandhotel. That’s why they’re afraid of the Grandhotel. You shouldn’t say, this is Grandhotel, you should say this is an asylum seekers’ center, not Grandhotel. They are afraid of the name ‘Grandhotel’! [...] They say, if we don’t do our job that well, they will tell the media of the Grandhotel about it, then they’ll do something against us, that can’t be good.” (Parviz)

Vacation from the Ego: The Effects of Encounters

While earlier research primarily focused on reducing prejudice against minorities, little emphasis was placed on less prejudiced people. Yet, effects on this group should be considered as just as important, for they constitute habits and practices of the everyday negotiation of living with difference (Noble, 2013). One result of frequent encounters with asylum seekers was a perceived ‘normality’ of contact between these groups. These ‘routine’ encounters reduced initial inhibitions and allowed for more ease during the encounter. For Miranda, this meant lessening ‘fears of touch’ (*Berührungängste*), a German expression used to refer to situations when the outcome of contact with people is feared or uncertain. Miranda stated however that this was not because she was afraid of asylum seekers, but because she was unsure about the right way to behave, mirroring Sennet’s (2004, p. 22) “anxiety of privilege”. Birgit voiced similar concerns, but held that problems could be solved if people ‘met on one level’.

*“In the first moment, of course, I was afraid of contact [*Berührungängste*], even me, not because I was afraid of them, but because I was afraid of doing something that did not show them enough respect, where I would hurt them. [...] I’m less afraid now to use my hands, no matter what language they speak. [...] Now I know, hey, they’ll understand, and if not, then that’s bad luck. And now I’ve acquired this normality, and that’s how it [my behaviour] has changed.” (Miranda)*

“I always thought, oh, I don’t want to say anything wrong or do something that might be misunderstood, I think everyone knows that. But that is actually no problem, as long as you meet on one level.[...] I think that now, I don’t overthink the situation, I just think, you just have to fall into or dive into an encounter without thinking too much about it. Just be yourself and let the other person be himself and then just communicate in one way or another without spending too much time thinking about nonsense”. (Birgit)

Maria, a volunteer in her forties, held that ‘more normal relations’ was a direct effect of intercultural encounters and would eventually lead to a stronger society. Her statement resonates with earlier arguments on the potential of encounters as a means to engage with situated positionalities, and, while involving agonistic relations, could lead to more democratic societies (Fraser, 1997; Mouffe, 2005; Young, 2000).

“Because everyone can learn from each other. And you can do that when you’re in an inter-cultural environment. Because everyone has different viewpoints and thinks differently and feels and sees different things and I just think you can learn from that. It might be a bit uncomfortable in the beginning, but if you let yourself be part of that, it’s truly invaluable”. (Maria)

Volunteers also recounted how they built personal relationships with asylum seekers living in the Grandhotel. Lukas mentioned that he had worked in a ‘normal’ asylum center before. Whereas he did not establish close relationships with asylum seekers in regular accommodations, he saw the asylum seekers he worked with in the Grandhotel as ‘part of his family’. The familial atmosphere was also mentioned by asylum seekers of the house, as in the case of Semra, a young mother from Mazedonia. She saw the differences between the Grandhotel and other accommodations she had previously lived in in the increased contact she had with people.

“The Grandhotel is completely different from a regular asylum center. I saw really horrible conditions [...] That is not life for me, that is just existence. The people that are under arrest and can’t leave the center or when the language barrier is so big and no help comes from the outside, these people are really on their own. I have already worked with refugees, but it has never been this close for me. That was always, somehow, the life of others. And I contributed somehow, but I never had personal contact with those people. Here, it’s completely different, here I have personal contact, here I see these people as my family. Here you have this family atmosphere, we eat together, we communicate with each other, we are friends, we also care for people who have already been deported. We- to me that is friendship. And real friendship lasts your whole life.” (Lukas)

[o] “Different in the Grandhotel, because in the Grandhotel have so many people. People- I feel, ich habe Frieden [I have peace], I don’t know. I feel good in the Grandhotel. Like my house. This is different. Nürnberg, I have appartement, but no have people. [...] In the Grandhotel, people in the Grandhotel is exactly one family.” (Semra)

Working together was also reported to enable both parties to learn from each other; confirming earlier findings of contact zones as ‘sites of learning’ (Lawson & Elwood, 2013). Young and elderly volunteers saw encounters as an opportunity for cultural exchange, with young people expressing

that it sparked their interest in other cultures. More, encountering asylum seekers was said to provide a different perspective than one's own, as reported by Michael. Correspondingly, Konrad gained a different insight into religious practices, when invited for tea by an Afghan mother. In her room, Konrad observed a preacher on Afghan television who started to cry. With the help of a translator, he was able to interpret the situation from a non-Western perspective.

"I like to get a different perspective than my own. Like vacation from your own ego. For me, that is part of being creative, to experience a kind of productive uncertainty, where you think, ah, you can also do it differently..." (Michael)

"And I thought, I saw that coming, this is going to escalate, what will happen, do you have to turn him off? And I asked [the translator], what has happened, why is he crying? And he said that he is just demonstrating his personal truth, so you can say, he is truthful, that is who he is, he is demonstrating his belief. Until he cries or screams – I've never seen that before." (Konrad)

Volunteers also appeared to be surprised about the level of hospitality some asylum seekers showed by inviting volunteers into their rooms for tea or to birthdays. Taking part in such events had a strong impact on some volunteers. More, the excerpts also demonstrate how previous experiences and circumstances mediate encounters; with the effect of conveying greater meaning to moments of everyday life. The excerpts also speak to the importance of mutual care, which help undermine perceptions of hierarchical relations between individuals.

"What really touched me was a little improvised dinner with Darja, with ten or twenty people, after we've written that petition, and that was- they can do things we can't [...], what we could learn from, this culture of hospitality. That uncomplicated moment, to just put that table there, and the salads and things she made, everything so delicious, and that atmosphere and dancing and so forth. I really liked that. And when Parviz and Farzin sang together shortly before the soup was ready. That's something I'll never forget. Those are really wonderful moments. Those are moments, where I think, now I know why I've lived." (Michael)

"And especially that kindness and openness that you experience when you get to know each other, like, when you are invited to Darja for dinner, as an example, that's so cool, because, perhaps you don't speak the same language and perhaps the overall situation is really bad, but in that moment, that's not that important, because you are together and you're happy you're together and you get wonderful food. And in that moment, they care for us and that is really, that is really exciting and cool... and even in such bad situations, those values are really too important to lose." (Birgit)

Not only did volunteers learn about different cultural practices, but they also reported new insights into the difficult situation asylum seekers were facing in the current moment. A volunteer in her twenties made clear that although she went to political events and was informed about asylum seekers' circumstances, she tended to suppress these thoughts after a while. Working in the Grandhotel however let it 'seep into her consciousness' and made it part of her daily life. Daily contact with people who have experienced hardship in their past made their lives and circumstances appear more real than any documentary or news item about them. By 'seeping into their consciousness', the Grandhotel hence affected volunteers' 'situated imagination' (Stoetzler & Yuval-

davis, 2002). Thus, in alignment with findings by Lawson & Elwood (2013) on class encounters, gaining new perspectives on the circumstances of asylum seekers contributes to the formation of a 'new politics of asylum' (Lawson & Elwood, 2013).

"It got closer because now I know people who are in such a situation. And here especially, here, you don't make a distinction between refugee and non-refugee, that's terrible in itself. They are all human beings and our friends. They're in a fucking bad situation, that we should change and that we want to change, but it is definitely closer now. You become more aware of the fact that that is something that should be changed. Because when I read about xyz in the newspaper and that is the only contact I have with that topic, well, the next headline will be there soon and the old one is forgotten. But this way, you're confronted with it on a daily basis and even if you're not confronted with it on a daily basis, you've had this encounter and that way it will stay with you." (Birgit)

Conclusion

In this paper, I have provided an in-depth examination of a unique space for encounters – the Grandhotel Cosmopolis. By providing a space for encounters between asylum seekers and citizens, this space not only constitutes an intervention in the politics of asylum and practices of spatial exclusion, but also illuminates new paths for future research. Drawing on feminist theory, I have argued that a hierarchical conception of difference runs the risk of reinforcing perceptions of 'majority' vs a 'minority' societies, while neglecting the multiplicity and particularity of individuals.

Moreover, my paper urges research to move beyond a conceptualisation of encounters 'in public' or 'in private' settings. Recent debates on the current nature of 'public spaces' indicate the decline of spaces providing for interactions of 'multiple publics'. Consequentially, I argue for conceiving of spaces for encounter as spaces affording the possibility for 'multiple publics' to interact. The Grandhotel provides an illustration of such a space for encounter, while highlighting potential barriers and difficulties pertaining to interaction and mutual understanding between asylum seekers and citizens, such as language and emotional distress.

The paper also emphasizes the importance of investigating different microspaces and their interrelations. The research shows that while Grandhotel can be referred to as a space for encounter, it remains crucial to distinguish between the different qualities of encounter its microspaces provide for. While the Grandhotel evidenced the existence of so-called 'common ground' in the form of the staircase, it is also the site of micro-exclusions, which are the corridors of the asylum seekers. While impacting the number of possible encounters, these spaces also acted as a form of protection against unwanted guests and conveyed necessary privacy to the asylum seekers living in the house.

The Grandhotel also illuminated how a conception of encounters as open and unpredictable shifts the focus from the outcome to the process of encountering, conveying meaning to the opportunity to encounter. By providing this opportunity, the Grandhotel Cosmopolis offers a space for reducing initial inhibitions and establishing normality in habitual interaction between asylum seekers and volunteers. In addition, the project confirms earlier understandings of spaces of encounter as sites for learning. Thereby volunteers were able to reflect not only on the situation of asylum seekers in Europe, but also on their own circumstances. The Grandhotel Cosmopolis thus helped challenge situated perspectives by affording encounters and thereby contributes to the formation of a new politics of asylum.

References

- Amin, A. (2013). *Land of Strangers* (p. 200). Hoboken: Wiley & Sons.
- Andersson, J., Vanderbeck, R. M., Valentine, G., Ward, K., & Sadgrove, J. (2011). New York encounters: religion, sexuality, and the city. *Environment and Planning A*, 43(3), 618–633.
- Askins, K., & Pain, R. H. (2011). Contact zones: participation, materiality, and the messiness of interaction. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 29(5), 803–821.
- Attoh, K. (2011). What kind of right is the right to the city? *Progress in Human Geography*. 35 (5), 669-685.
- Bannister, J., & Kearns, a. (2013). The Function and Foundations of Urban Tolerance: Encountering and Engaging with Difference in the City. *Urban Studies*, 50(13), 2700–2717.
- Beuys, J. (1985): *Reden über das eigene Land: Deutschland* (3), München. Retrieved from: http://www.menschenkunde.com/pdf/texte/geschichte_politik/beuys_deutschland.pdf
- Bloch, A., & Schuster, L. (2005). At the extremes of exclusion: Deportation, detention and dispersal. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28(3), 491–512.
- Braidotti, R. (2011). *Nomadic Subjects*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Clayton, J. (2009). Thinking spatially: towards an everyday understanding of inter-ethnic relations.
- Fraser, N. (1997). *Justice interruptus: Critical reflections on the “ postsocialist” condition*. New York: Routledge.
- Freitag, U. (2013). “Cosmopolitanism” and “Conviviality”? Some conceptual considerations concerning the late Ottoman Empire. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 17(4), 375–391.
- Gilroy, P. (2004). *After empire : melancholia or convivial culture?* New York: Routledge.
- Grosz, E. (1992) *Julia Kristeva*, in: E. Wright (Ed.) *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary*, pp. 194-200. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Grandhotel Cosmopolis. (2014). Konzept. Retrieved from: <http://grandhotel-cosmopolis.org/de/konzept/>
- Hemming, P. J. (2011). Meaningful encounters? Religion and social cohesion in the English primary school. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 12(1), 63–81.
- Houston, S., Wright, R., Ellis, M., Holloway, S., & Hudson, M. (2005). Places of possibility: where mixed-race partners meet. *Progress in Human Geography*, 29(6), 700–717.
- Hubbard, P. (2005). Accommodating Otherness: anti-asylum centre protest and the maintenance of white privilege. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 30(1), 52–65.
- Hyndman, J. (2005). Migration wars: refuge or refusal? *Geoforum*, 36(1), 3–6.

- Illich, I. (1973). *Tools for conviviality*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Iveson, K. (2007). *Publics and the City*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Laurier, E., & Philo, C. (2006a). Possible geographies : a passing encounter in a café. *Area*, 38(4), 353–363.
- Laurier, E., & Philo, C. (2006b). Cold shoulders and napkins handed : gestures of responsibility. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 31(2), 193–207.
- Lawson, V., & Elwood, S. (2013). Encountering Poverty: Space, Class, and Poverty Politics. *Antipode*, 00(0), 1–20.
- Lefebvre, H. (1996 [1967]) 'The Right to the City', in E. Kofman and E. Lebas (Eds.) *Writings on Cities*, (pp. 63–184). London: Blackwell
- Leitner, H. (2012). Spaces of Encounters: Immigration, Race, Class, and the Politics of Belonging in Small-Town America. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 102(4), 828–846.
- Matejskova, T., & Leitner, H. (2011). Urban encounters with difference : the contact hypothesis and immigrant integration projects in eastern Berlin. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 12(7), 717–740.
- Merrifield, A. (2012). The politics of the encounter and the urbanization of the world. *City*, 16(3), 269–283.
- Mitchell, D. (2003). *The right to the city: Social justice and the fight for public space*. New York: The Guilford Press. Retrieved from
- Mitchell, K. (2004). Geographies of identity: multiculturalism unplugged. *Progress in Human Geography*, 28(5), 641–651.
- Mouffe, Chantal (2005). Some reflections on an agonistic approach to the public. In Bruno Latour & Peter Weibel (Eds.), *Making Things Public* (pp. 804-807). London: Mit Press
- Nagel, C. R., & Staeheli, L. A. (2009). Integration and the negotiation of “ here ” and “ there ”: the case of British Arab activists. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 9(4), 415–430.
- Nava, M. (2013). *Visceral Cosmopolitanism: Gender, Culture and the Normalization of Difference*. Oxford: Berg
- O’Doherty, K., & Lecouteur, A. (2007). “Asylum seekers”, “boat people” and “illegal immigrants”: Social categorisation in the media. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 59(1), 1–12.
- Phillips, D. (2006). Parallel lives? Challenging discourses of British Muslim self-segregation. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 24(1), 25–40.
- Sennett, R. (1996). *The Uses of Disorder: Personal Identity and City Life*. London: Faber and Faber
- Sennett, R. (2004). *Respect: the formation of character in an age of inequality*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company

- Sibley, D. (1995). *Geographies of Exclusion. Society and Difference in the West*. London: Routledge.
- Sibley, D. (1998). Problematizing exclusion: Reflections on space, difference and knowledge. *International Planning Studies*, 3(1), p93, 8p.
- Sorkin, M. (1992). *Variations on a theme park: The new American city and the end of public space*. New York: Noonday Press.
- Staeheli, L. a, Mitchell, D., & Nagel, C. R. (2009). Making publics: immigrants, regimes of publicity and entry to “the public.” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 27(4), 633–648.
- Stoetzler, M., & Yuval-davis, N. (2002). Standpoint theory, situated knowledge and the situated imagination. *Feminist Theory*, 3(3), 315–333.
- Thrift, N. (2005). But malice aforethought: cities and the natural history of hatred. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 30(2), 133–150.
- Valentine, G. (2008a). Living with difference: reflections on geographies of encounter. *Progress in Human Geography*, 32(3), 323–337.
- Valentine, G. (2008b). Theorizing and Researching Intersectionality : A Challenge for Feminist Geography, (January 2013), 37–41.
- Valentine, G., & Sadgrove, J. (2012). Lived difference: a narrative account of spatiotemporal processes of social differentiation. *Environment and Planning A*, 44(9), 2049–2063.
- Wilson, H. F. (2011). Passing propinquities in the multicultural city : the everyday encounters of bus passengering, 43, 634–650.
- Wise, A., Velayutham, S., & Macmillan, P. (2009). *Everyday Multiculturalism*. (A. Wise & S. Velayutham, Eds.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Young, I. M. (2000). *Inclusion and Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.