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towards Habitat III a gender perspective

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**towards Habitat III
a gender perspective**

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Where is women's right to the night in the New Urban Agenda? The need to include an intersectional gender perspective in *planning the night*

Sara Ortiz Escalante

Abstract

Based on a literature review of research conducted on *planning the night-time*, this paper argues for the need to include in the new urban agenda an intersectional gender perspective in planning the urban night. The paper analyses the existing research on how gendered bodies have been conceptualized in planning and at night, how urban planning has approached the nocturnal sphere, and how fear and safety affect women's mobility in the nightlife. The literature review reveals that the role of planning in relation to the nocturnal sphere has been to regulate and control what happens at night and



"We can be strong, we can do it together, the night is ours"
(Author: Lara Mazagatos, <https://laramazagatos.wordpress.com/>)

Abstract

who has the right to the night city, but *planning the night* lacks a gender and intersectional perspective, element that challenges the everyday/everynight life of those people who, due to productive, care and reproductive work, use the city after dark on a regular basis. The paper finishes advocating for including in the New Urban Agenda diverse gendered bodies in planning the night, expanding the debate of planning the night beyond the night-time economy of leisure and consumption, and making visible women's role in planning the night.

KEY WORDS

Gender, planning, night, fear, mobility

Dov'è il diritto delle donne alla notte nella Nuova Agenda Urbana?

La necessità di includere una prospettiva di genere intersettoriale nella pianificazione della notte

Sulla base di una revisione della letteratura di ricerca condotta sulla pianificazione dei tempi notturni urbani, questo articolo sostiene la necessità di includere nella nuova agenda urbana una prospettiva di genere intersettoriale nella pianificazione della notte urbana. L'articolo analizza la ricerca esistente su come i corpi di genere sono stati concettualizzati nella pianificazione e durante la notte, come la pianificazione urbana ha approcciato la sfera notturna, e come la paura e la sicurezza influenzano la mobilità delle donne nella vita notturna. La rassegna della letteratura rivela che il ruolo della pianificazione in relazione alla sfera notturna è stato quello di regolare e controllare ciò che accade durante la notte e chi ha il diritto a vivere la città di notte, ma la *pianificazione della notte* manca di una prospettiva di genere e intersettoriale, elemento che sfida la vita quotidiana, diurna e notturna, di quelle persone che, a causa del lavoro produttivo, di cura e riproduttivo, utilizzano la città regolarmente dopo il tramonto. L'articolo termina sostenendo l'inclusione nella Nuova Agenda Urbana dei diversi corpi di genere nella pianificazione della vita notturna, ampliando il dibattito sulla pianificare della notte al di là dell'economia notturna del tempo libero e del consumo, e rendendo visibile il ruolo delle donne nella pianificazione della notte.

PAROLE CHIAVE

Genere, pianificazione, notte, paura, mobilità

Where is women's right to the night in the New Urban Agenda? The need to include an intersectional gender perspective in planning the night

Sara Ortiz Escalante

Introduction

The history of planning has omitted the contributions of women, people of color, Indigenous people, LGBTQ2S+ and other groups historically excluded from power structures and decision-making (Sandercock, 1998; Fainstein and Servon, 2005). Under the umbrella of planning for the public interest, often seen as a single, universalistic and standardized interest, for a century planners were oblivious to the diversity of realities in our society, and replicated inequalities, privileging the most powerful (Healey, 1997; Fainstein and Servon, 2005). In particular, women have been excluded and restricted at night-time because of how their bodies are socially defined and controlled. The night has been historically conceptualized as a forbidden and dangerous time and space for women (Wilson, 1991; Hooper, 1998). Therefore, women transgressing this imaginary and using the space at night are still seen as out of place in many social contexts.

Since the 1970s feminist planners and geographers have provided a wide variety of insights and contributions to planning theory and practice (e.g. Falú, 2009; Greed, 1994; Hayden, 1980; Leavitt, 2003; Muxí Martínez et al, 2011; Rahder and Altilia, 2004; Sandercock and Forsyth, 1992; Sandercock, 1998; Wilson 1991) that can be applied to *planning the night* and advance women's right to the city.

This paper is part of a doctoral dissertation¹ that examines how the everyday/everynight life (Smith 1990) of self-identified women working at night is considered and addressed in urban planning, looking in particular at two interrelated aspects of planning that affect women's everynight life: fear/safety and mobility. The research explores from an intersectional feminist analysis², how fear and safety perceptions are attached to sociocultural constructions of gendered bodies in public spaces and how these influence working women's mobility and right to the city at night. The research is currently collecting qualitative data through fieldwork in Barcelona, Spain. Although some preliminary results are available, the paper focuses on the theoretical framework to argue for the need of including a gender perspective in the New Urban Agenda, and particularly

Fig. 1 - Exploratory Walk with feminist organizations organizes during the II Congress of Women of Barcelona, Barcelona 2009 (Author: Col·lectiu Punt 6)



when planning cities at night.

The goal of the paper is to examine how the role of planning in relation to the nocturnal sphere has been to regulate and control what happens at night and who has the right to the night city. But little has been done to enable and facilitate the everyday/everynight life of those people who, due to productive, care and reproductive work, use the city after dark on a regular basis. At the same time, the paper reveals that *planning the night* lacks a gender and intersectional perspective. It has included the gendered bodies of the White young adult males, but continues excluding other gendered bodies: the bodies of women, particularly low-income women, women of color, migrant women, as well as trans people, and non-White men.

The paper argues for the need to include in planning the study of women's everyday/everynight life with the goal to; make visible how the diverse gendered realities have not been included in *planning the night* policies; give equal relevance to women's contributions in the paid formal and informal work, and the unpaid reproductive, domestic, care, and community work; and emphasize how the work of women at night is essential for keeping the world running during daytime. Finally, including a gender perspective in the urban agenda, and in particular in planning the urban night can push policy makers to respond to the needs resulting from women's double presence in the paid night-economy and the unpaid domestic and care work. Planning can contribute to transforming unpaid work into a social and collective responsibility instead of a burden that often falls on women's shoulders.

The following section includes a review of the literature that analyzes the interrelation between gender, planning and the night. The paper concludes with some reflections towards including in the New Urban Agenda a gender perspective in planning the night.

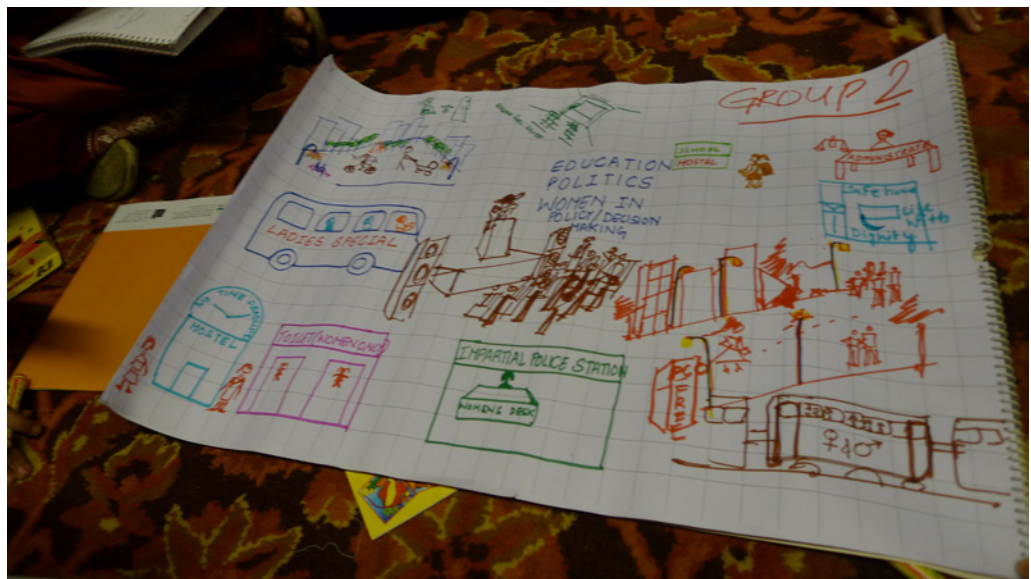


Fig. 2 - Collective mapping of a safer city for women, during the Third International Conference on Women's Safety, Delhi, 2010 (Author: Sara Ortiz Escalante)

A gender lens in urban planning and the night-time

Analysing how a gender perspective has been included/excluded in *planning the night* implies looking at the research conducted on how gendered bodies have been conceptualized in planning and at night, how urban planning has approached the nocturnal sphere, and how fear and safety affect women's mobility in the nightlife.

Gendered bodies in planning the night

Feminist scholars have documented how gendered, racialized and sexually diverse bodies have been constructed and regulated through planning (Doan 2010, Green & Singleton 2006, Hooper 1998, Sandercock 1999). Women's bodies in particular have been conceptualized in the public sphere as a threat to social order, as a source of fear that "undoes the idea of plan" (Sandercock 2003, 30); but also as a vulnerable and objectified body to be dominated (Wesely & Gaarder 2004). This exclusion has been reinforced through historical connotations attached to women in public spaces, and the false public-private divide. For example, the term "public women" has been often associated with a prostitute, a 'not respectable' woman, being a sexual temptation to the male self-discipline, to the 'public man', which is perceived as the statesman (Wilson 1991, Duncan 1996, Hooper 1998, Massolo 2007). Thus, planning has been complicit in reproducing the oppressive public-private binary, that places women in the private realm associated with the domestic, the emotional, the embodied, the family, and the unpaid and informal work; and men in the public sphere of the production, the paid employment, the rationality, the disembodiment, the market, the state, and the power (Duncan 1996, Sweet and Ortiz Escalante 2010).

In addition to being androcentric, the public-private dichotomy is ethnocentric and oppressive against queer and trans people. It is ethnocentric because this dichotomy becomes even more limited when used in contexts of informal settlements where "home" does not exist because people live in a shack, a very vulnerable structure where doors cannot be locked or windows secured (Meth 2003). It is queer and trans oppressive when the sexual division of space force people to respond to hegemonic expectations of gender behaviour restricted to the male-female binary (Doan, 2010).

The reproduction of this binary and the exclusion of women from the public sphere become more evident when the sun goes down. Women have been restricted at night-time because of how their bodies are defined and controlled. The context, as well as women's intersectional identities, restrains their night activity. The night has been historically conceptualized as a forbidden and dangerous time-space for women. The expression 'woman of the night,' like 'public woman', is negatively charged and also associated with prostitution, disorder or being a "loose" woman (Patel 2010). Therefore, women transgressing this imaginary and using the space at night are still seen as out of place in many social contexts.

Including an intersectional gender perspective to the urban agenda can make visible a more fluid relationship between gendered bodies and the city (Milroy in Miranne and Young, 2000; Doan, 2010, Sweet and Ortiz Escalante, 2014), seeing bodies as a spatial

scale that connect public-private spaces, as a biographical space, a space of memory of violences, but also a space of resistance (Falú 2009, Vargas 2009). Looking at the body as a space of self-awareness and resistance, as a unique and private space, the first to be appropriated by us women, in order to be able to take ownership of other territories: the home, the neighbourhood, the city, the country (Falú, 2009; Vargas, 2009).

But also an intersectional gender perspective in the urban agenda implies to incorporate the everyday/everynight life of women as a source of knowledge and a methodology. Examining the everyday life means giving equal relevance to the needs of the paid productive work and the unpaid reproductive/domestic/care and community work, to promote a more equitable gender division of labour, in addition to make visible women's contributions to the domestic and community economy (Healey, 1997; Gilroy and Booth, 1999; Bofill Levi, 2005; Muxí Martínez et al, 2011). There are few references to everynight life in the feminist literature about the everyday life. The only specific reference is from sociologist Dorothy Smith (1990) who talks about everyday/everynight life and from whom the concept of everynight is borrowed. Therefore, there is also a need to make women visible on the everynight life, and argue that the concept of everyday life needs to be extended to everyday/everynight life.

Planning the night-life

Night is a contested term that has been socially and culturally shaped through history. How night is conceptualized and when night begins and ends also differ across cultures, historical periods, and geographic locations. The spread of public lighting in the 19th century changed the meaning and use of the city after dark, and enabled the increase of night-life above all in urban areas, expanding the night-time economy (Melbin 1978, 1987, Schivelbusch 1988, Edensor 2013).

In Western societies, the night has been associated with fear, chaos, devil, sin, death and the dark side of society (Schivelbusch 1988, Palmer 2000, Edensor 2013); and the day with the creation of the world, God, the "good", the "safe". This Euro-centric, Western imaginary has associated the night with those people that transgress the rational order of society, with transgressive sexualities, practices, occupations and ideas, for example, prostitutes, revolutionaries, musicians, or drug dealers (Palmer 2000). However, in non-Western cultures, there are also positive perceptions of the night, where people use this time for community rituals, family events, or religious activities (Amid 2013).

Historical accounts of night-time use have also reinforced dualisms between day and night, good and bad, even feminine and masculine (Melbin 1987, Schivelbusch 1988, Palmer 2000). This simplistic dualism between day and night, has constructed them as opposite, obviating the diversity of each condition and how artificial lighting has complicated this binary, as well as legitimised conservative social and political agendas that



Fig. 3 - Body map on the impact of safety issues on women's bodies. Mexico city, 2013 (Author: Sara Ortiz Escalante)



Fig. 4 - People waiting the metro in Barcelona after a night out, Barcelona 2016 (Author: Sara Ortiz Escalante)

constrain access to the night for certain groups of people (Gallan and Gibson 2011).

In the planning field, most research on the night focuses on the so-called 'night-time economy'. This research has taken place mostly in Western contexts, particularly in the UK, and to a lesser degree, in the USA and Australia. These studies are focused on the 'night-time economy' of city centers that seek economic revitalization, with an emphasis on entertainment and leisure activities, generally associated with alcohol consumption. The term night-time economy was first used by Franco Bianchini from the creative cities organization Comedia Consultancy in the 1990s (Bianchini, 1995; van Liempt et al, 2014; Shaw, 2014). 'Night-time economy' initially referred to a multi-industry of night cultural production, in which alcohol and leisure would be a part of night activity (Shaw, 2014). However, most night-time economy policies have concentrated on the deregulation of alcohol and leisure consumption (Shaw, 2014; van Liempt et al, 2014), and become neoliberalization strategies for "cities re-inventing themselves as consumption sites" (van Liempt et al, 2014: 6). In sum, most research on the night-time economy looks at the consumptionist side of the 24-hour city in downtown areas, and at issues encountered such as violence and insecurity (Bromley et al, 2000; Thomas and Bromley, 2000; Bromley et al, 2003; Crawford and Flint, 2009; Beer, 2011; Evans, 2012; Eldridge and Roberts, 2013).

Some studies have included a gender perspective or a critical race and ethnicity analysis (Roberts, 2006; Talbot, 2007; Sheard, 2011; Waitt and Gorman-Murray, 2011; Roberts and Eldridge, 2012; Schwanen et al, 2012; Roberts, 2013). The studies on gender look at exclusion, inequality or access to the night-time economy. They reveal that the dominant mainstream forms of nightlife are male dominated and heterosexual (Chatterton and Hollands, 2003; Sheard, 2011; Hubbard and Colosi, 2013). For example, young women's access to the night-time economy has been in male terms, adopting heavy drinking and involvement in violence (Chatterton and Hollands, 2003; Waitt and Gorman-Murray, 2011), or assessing women's risk perception of sexual abuse (Sheard, 2011).

Few studies look at the production side of the night-time economy (e.g. Shaw 2014), despite the night has been always a time of production, and women have always been part of the nightlife as workers regardless of historical attempts to exclude them (Melbin, 1987; Patel, 2010; Lawson and Arber, 2013). Research on gendered experiences of night work is mostly found in other fields of study such as sociology or labor studies. This research has focused more on the physiological than in the social consequences of women's night work, and the few examples of research looking at social aspects are mostly quantitative (Lawson and Arber, 2013). The social research about night and shift work with a gender lens looks at the impact of women's night work in household relationships (Melbin, 1987; Garey, 1995; Lawson and Arber, 2013).

In general, research on planning the night overlooks night-time cycles outside of the downtown, without looking at other parts of the city or other type of night-time activities. Fewer studies are found about the people that use the night-time for non-leisure activities or in non-Western contexts (Patel 2010, Amid 2013).

Thus, planning the night has focused on a small part of the night-life: the consumptionist side of the night-time economy related to leisure and alcohol consumption in downtown areas of Western cities. In general, accounts of night-life have romanticized night users as a special group of the population, without acknowledging that the night is also a space of work, care and reproduction, a space of everyday/everynight life, without any glamour for those constrained to work the night shift.

In sum, there is a need to include in *planning the night* policies the production side of the night economy from an intersectional feminist perspective; that moves beyond downtowns to other neighbourhoods, working centers, towns, and homes; that breaks with the male centered night culture; makes visible night workers everyday/everynight needs and analyzes how planning can contribute to improve their quality of life and right to the city.

Fear, safety and mobility

Feminist planning research makes reference to the night-time in relation to issues of fear, safety and mobility. These studies look at how women's perceptions of fear increase at night (Valentine 1989, Koskela 1999, Pain 2001, Loukaitou-Sideris 2006, Dammert 2007, Falú 2009) or discuss how fear and safety restrict women's mobility (Atkins 1989, Ganjavi et al. 2000, Carter 2005, Whitzman 2012).

Fear and safety have been deeply studied in planning. "Planning and urban management discourses are, and always have been, saturated with fear. The history of planning could be rewritten as the attempt to manage fear in the city" (Sandercock 2002, 203). At the same time, research has demonstrated how fear and safety restrict women's mobility, particularly at night (Pain 1991 and 1997, Koskela 1999, Loukaitou-Sideris 2005).

In planning, many theories and interventions have focused on how to control and prevent crime through the design of the physical environment, such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) or Safer Cities programs. However, these initiatives respond mostly on crime committed by strangers in the public space. Feminists have criticized them for being gender blind, focusing only on the physical aspect of designing out fear and not including a social analysis of how safety is perceived differently by gender and other intersecting identities (Koskela and Pain 2000, Pain 2001, Sweet and Ortiz Escalante 2010).

Feminist planning research focuses on fear and safety instead of crime, because crime only refers to those violent acts recognized in legislation, which vary depending on the context. Instead, fear and safety are broader concepts that take a more complex approach of the impact of violence in people's lives, not only in the public space and by strangers, but also as a continuum between the private and the public sphere. Indeed, looking at fear and safety allows including sexual harassment on the street, "a form of

non-criminal street violence that has a remarkable impact on women's access to urban space" (Koskela and Tani 2000).

Fear can be defined as embodied emotional and practical responses of people and communities to violence concerns (Pain 2001, Koskela 2010). Fear is based on gendered power relations in spaces (Epstein 1998, Koskela 1999 and 2010, Dammert 2007) and reproduced in everyday life practices (Gordon and Riger 1989, Valentine 1989, Koskela 2010, Sandberg and Rönnblom 2014). Research from different fields such as sociology, evolutionary and developmental psychology or educational studies have documented how fear is reproduced in the socialization process through the replication of traditional gender roles that define women as vulnerable and men as strong and aggressive. This social production of fear is unfolded through formal and informal channels, from warnings received at home, to news in the media, daily conversations, or police crime prevention advice (Mackie 1987, Maccoby 1992, Valentine 1992, Stockard 1999, Dammert 2007, Koskela 2010).

There are also gender differences in reporting violence and fear (Pain 1997, Dammert 2007, Koskela 2010). The vast majority of violence against women happens in the private space and by known people (Stanko 1988, Valentine 1989, 1992, Pain 1997, Sweet and Ortiz Escalante 2010). The sexual and intimate nature of this violence contributes to the lack of report, because women are afraid of reprisal and because the violence is related intimately with their sexualized bodies (Koskela 2010, Falú 2011, Sweet and Ortiz Escalante 2014). On the other hand, experiences and manifestations of fear are gendered and reported differently. Women tend to fear sexual violence and rape, the type of violence that attacks their intimate body (Pain 1991, Falú 2011, Sweet and Ortiz Escalante 2014). In addition, women are more likely to adapt and restrict their everyday life because of violence (Pain 1991).

As previously mentioned, fear and safety affect women's everyday life and women's mobility, use and participation in the city (Pain 1991, Moser 2012), and these limitations become more acute after dark (Lynch and Atkins 1988, Atkins 1989, Pain 1991 and 1997, Koskela 1999, Ganjavi et al. 2000, Carter 2005, Loukaitou-Sideris 2005, Laub 2007, Morey 2007, Whitzman 2012). Feminist researchers have adopted the term "mobility" to push the boundaries of traditional transportation planning by examining the full suite of interacting and complex activities that involves the household, the community and the larger society, instead of viewing transportation as an individual choice of unidirectional trips from home to work that prioritize commute to paid work (Law 1999, Hanson 2010, Miralles-Guasch 2010). Studies on women's mobility patterns in the North American and European contexts have shown that women have a more sustainable, complex and diverse mobility patterns than men during the day (Grieco et al 1989, Grieco and McQuaid 2012, Hanson and Hanson 1980 and 1981, Hanson and Johnston 1985, Law 1999, Hanson 2010, Miralles-Guasch and Martínez-Melo 2012, Miralles-Guasch 2010, Sánchez de Madariaga 2013). However, women's mobility can be paralyzed at night because of fear of violence. After dark, women avoid certain parts of the city, do not use certain modes of transportation, or refrain from going out at all

(Atkins 1989, Ganjavi et al. 2000, Carter 2005, Loukaitou-Sideris 2005 and 2006, Whitzman 2012). The New Urban Agenda needs to respond to this paradox to guarantee women's full right to the city in both the day and night.

Towards including diverse gendered bodies in planning the night

This review leads to conclude that the role of planning has been to regulate and control what happens at night and who has the right to the night city. But little has been done to enable and facilitate the everyday/everynight life of people that use the urban night on a regular basis. Nightlife seems to be perceived as an exception, even for leisure, in spite of the fact that going out is a weekend routine for certain groups of people. Also, planning has supported the neoliberal model of maximizing the benefits of the night-time economy and addressing the problems that might interfere with this business, such as binge drinking, alcohol-related violence or neighbors' complains. In this sense, *planning the night* responds to neoliberal policies and disregards the needs of everyday/everynight life. Thus, in general it has ignored the everynight of those people who due to productive, care and reproductive work use the city after dark on a regular basis. At the same time, *planning the night* lacks a gender and intersectional perspective. It has included the gendered bodies of the White young adult males, but continues excluding other gendered bodies: the bodies of women, particularly low-income women, women of color, migrant women, as well as trans people, and non-White men.

A New Urban Agenda should include diverse gendered bodies in planning the night, and expand the debate of planning the night beyond the night-time economy of leisure and consumption, and make visible women's contributions to the different night-time economies, and in other parts of urban areas beyond city centers. Taking feminist contributions such as the analysis of gendered bodies as a spatial scale, looking at how gendered bodies feel, perceive, experience and resist the urban night will enable a better understanding of the role of fear and safety in women's everyday/everynight lives, as well as the use of the everyday/everynight life as a source of knowledge and methodology can help make visible the experiences of women working at night.

Planning the night policies need to include bodies as a spatial scale to de-emphasize the public-private divide and understand how fear perceptions are experienced and felt by women, as well as to include women as subjects of change and transformation that need to be present in all the phases of planning from diagnosis to evaluation. The use of bodies as a space can help also emphasize the continuum between private and pub-



Fig. 5 - Woman waiting the train in Barcelona, Barcelona 2016 (Author: Sara Ortiz Escalante)

lic spaces, and highlight the embodied gender experiences of the home, the community, the neighborhood or the city. Also, the feminist questioning and deconstruction of the public-private divide can be applied to the day-night dichotomy, which is also constructed and helps perpetuate patriarchal conceptions of women's place in society. In relation to that, adding everynight to the study of everyday life and time-space can help make visible the mundane and routine activities of the night, and challenge the imaginary of the night as a time-space of exception and transgression. Also, *planning the night* policies have to respond at how fear, safety and risk affect women working the night shift, including an intersectional analysis that breaks with essentialist accounts of women's and men's fear. In parallel, looking at notions of risk of women night workers can provide nuances to the debate on the right/privilege to taking risk. Finally, *planning the night* policies have the obligation to respond to the women's mobility paradox. It is unconceivable that in general terms, women have a more sustainable, complex and diverse mobility than men during the day, yet it can be paralyzed at night because of fear of violence. There is extensive research that illustrates this paradox and urban planning policies have not paid the attention this issue deserves.

In addition, women's everyday/everynight life experiences need to be incorporated in *planning the night* policies as a source of knowledge and methodology. Women's experiences need to be heard and included in planning to learn how everyday/everynight life works, in all its spheres (productive, reproductive, community and personal). The inclusion of women's everyday/everynight life will help plan better communities with the goal to make the unpaid, domestic and care work a social and collective responsibility, something we need to respond to as a society, as a local community, as a municipal government, as a region or as a state, and not something that a person, a family or a household has to deal with without external support. This would help value domestic and care tasks and remove the burden of this responsibility from women's shoulders.

Also, examining the routines of women at day and night, the types of activities they develop, with whom they develop these activities, at what times and with which transportation mode will help understand: the role of mobility in the accessibility to night-life, the contributions of night workers to the paid and unpaid night-time economy, the negotiation of mobility in the private space, the role of public transportation, as well as women's forced mobility and immobility. In sum, examining the life of women at night can help make visible women's use and appropriation of the night territory, reclaim their ownership of the night, and promote the idea that more women can use it, independently of their purpose.

ENDNOTES

¹ The title of the dissertation is *Transgressing space and time: Planning the everyday/evernight life of women nightshift workers*. This research studies how the everyday/evernight life of self-identified women working at night is considered and addressed in urban planning, within the boundaries of the Barcelona Metropolitan Region. Using feminist participatory action research (FPAR) as a methodology, this project also explores how women nightshift workers can influence planning policies and practices. The research is developed in coordination with Col·lectiu Punt 6, and in collaboration with Fundació Àmbit Prevenció, the women working on the nightshift at Bellvitge Hospital, the Women's Secretariat of the CC.OO. Union in Barcelona, Ca la Dona, and Irdia. 24 women working on the nightshift in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona are co-researchers on this project. This research is supported by the University of British Columbia Public Scholar Initiative, and the City of Barcelona.

² The term 'intersectional feminism' disrupts essentialist conceptions of being a "woman" and looks at how different structural sources of inequality such as gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexual identity, disability, origin, and migration status are socially constructed and interrelated (Crenshaw 1991).

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