**Abstract**

<ab>While breastfeeding mothers generally possess an official legal right of access to public places, the lived experience of breastfeeding mothers in public is marked by inequality and lack of autonomy. The motivating question of this article is, from the perspective of a breastfeeding mother, what characterizes an ideal—that is, equal and autonomous—public sphere in a liberal society? I explore in particular the issue of people, including breastfeeding mothers, who evoke discomfort or disgust. I argue that public and private spheres must be accessible in certain ways: first, every person must be able to occupy public space while embracing all significant aspects of their personhood; second, the comfort of others cannot weigh more than an individual’s own needs in public; finally, all people must be able to opt for privacy in a way that does not entail invisibility or coerced exclusion. In making this argument, I describe three main ways in which breastfeeding mothers respond to the antipathy of the public sphere: exclusion, accommodation, and affirmation. I end with an exploration of the ideal of public and private spheres defined by equality and autonomy and offer concrete steps that can improve the position of breastfeeding mothers in public.</ab>