In praise of urban walking: Towards understanding of walking as a subversive bodily practice in neoliberal space

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Abstract
Focusing on the steps that literally and metaphorically guide us today, this paper takes walking as its main subject and establishes it theoretically as a form of subversive bodily movement. If contemporary sociological and humanistic treatments of walking show that this everyday practice has not been completely overlooked, the gap opens at the level of thinking it in relation to the dominant social order and its spatial and temporal manifestations. As we argue, in the hegemonic neoliberal context, walking has the potential to manifest itself as a practice that breaks with the existing logic of both space and time. Through the methodological application of the cat’s cradle game, we develop a theoretical argumentation to ground walking as a bodily practice that requires different space and different time. Emanating from the body, it opens to the space and time of enjoyment – a heterotopia erected in relation to the current neoliberal hegemony, but in the manner of a crack, a path that carries the projection of a possible alternative.

Keywords
walking, neoliberalism, neoliberal space, neoliberal time, body, space of enjoyment

Introduction
Smart watches, smart rings, smart necklaces, smart bracelets, smart shoe clips, smart glasses, numerous applications on our smartphones and other wearable devices based on collecting, storing, monitoring and analyzing data about one’s health and/or fitness...
are becoming an increasingly ubiquitous part of our daily lives. They have established a lucrative market that is expected to grow and strengthen in the future given the presumed increase in consumer demand for control over their health. This kind of technology is supposed to make our lives more manageable, healthier and less stressful. By using measurement as its central mechanism, it promises to save our time and make us more efficient and productive at work (Salecl, 2020: 128–129). Cederström and Spicer (2015) have articulated the pursuit of health and happiness demanded of us today as a wellness syndrome. As they develop, concern for the well-being of the individual has become a modern moral demand, an imperative that establishes happiness and health as an ideology, a natural obligation, as it were, that directly ascribes moral goodness to happy and healthy, that is successful individuals. The same is true in the opposite direction, for those who do not care about their personal well-being are labeled as a threat to society, as lazy, indecisive, harmful, in short, morally bad. The main implications of the modern moral imperative, such as the depoliticization and individualization of broader social issues, will not be discussed further here, but let us take it as a starting point for the next exercise in sociological imagination. Suppose we accept and believe in the allegedly benevolent dimensions of the above technology, ignoring the awareness that in the long run we will fail by definition, that we will be even more miserable while feeling even more guilty. Suppose we want to be “good” citizens who have decided to take care of at least the minimal hygiene of our well-being by installing a pedometer app on our smartphones and that we now walk every day with the awareness and anticipation of the result displayed on our device when we arrive at our destination. What if, instead of commodifying our own steps and stumbling over our almost inevitable defeat, we stumbled over something else?

In the early 1990s, Gunter Deming came up with the idea of how a trip over a concrete block could cause the trip of our minds as well. The art project Stolpensteine (literally, “stumbling stones”) was thus born, which continues to this day and whose main goal is to raise awareness and preserve the memory of the victims of the Holocaust. Stolpensteine are concrete cubes covered with a layer of brass and inscribed with the names and life dates of the victims of Nazi persecution. The artist still installs them in all major European cities, right next to the last place of residence freely chosen by the individual before persecution. ‘In these stones, our steps cross paths with those of others, those whose steps led towards the concentration camps. /…/ meaning becomes inscribed in your own steps’ (Horvat, 2019: 70). If, while armed with an app that counts our steps, measures our time, and perhaps even our heart rate, such a stumble makes us angry because it has slowed our pace and worsened our result, one may wonder, along with Horvat, how it is possible that we have become so indifferent to the tragic fates of others, and how even such a stumble keeps us incapable of recognizing the intertwined and shared reality of our steps? To paraphrase Simone de Beauvoir’s famous thought, one is not born, but rather becomes indifferent. In today’s hegemonic neoliberal model of social organization, we are indifferent not only to the content condensed in stumbling blocks, nor only to our fellow human beings, whom we increasingly see as our competitors, but also, for example, to space that we observe, listen to, smell, taste, touch, in short, inhabit less and less actively. Stumbling blocks, in other words, are not even noticed.
The main aim of this article will therefore be to focus on the steps that guide us today, both in the literal and metaphorical sense. Literally, we will be interested in steps, as we will focus on walking as one of the most commonplace forms of human movement. Metaphorically, however, we will be interested in the steps we take and the paths we choose, because we want to understand walking through the prism of the social sciences, that is, as a socially conditioned practice situated in the realm of everyday social practices, from which the socially universal can be identified and interpreted. Almost all of us walk, and yet it is rarely possible to trace the contextualization and interpretation of this movement at the level of its meaning in everyday life. Walking is something that is mostly unreflectively assumed, a movement that is part of our everyday life and to which, as such, we do not pay excessive attention in our thinking. However, it is precisely doubt and the questioning of the supposed self-evidence of social phenomena that are the fundamental motivations of critical thinking and critical theory, which seek to go beyond the positivist belief in the obviousness of the subject under consideration and show how it can be established as such in the first place. In this sense, we will not consider walking instrumentally, at the level of movement, which is the primary or most primitive way for humans to move from point A to point B, nor will we count steps and calories or measure distances travelled. Guided by the question of what happens when we treat walking as a social fact and think of it in relation to existing materializations of time and space, we will try to consider walking on a theoretical, conceptual level. Walking always communicates something; as a body technique it can never be entirely natural, but has its everyday uses and, like language, dialectical and other nuances (Amato, 2004: 4; Sideri, 2014: 93). It has not been entirely overlooked in the context of the social sciences, but the research gap opens up at the level of thinking it in relation to the contemporary social order and its spatio-temporal actualizations. By locating and thinking the inherent characteristics of walking through the contemporary ‘social contract’, we will attempt to articulate how walking can be understood as subversive. As it is a form of movement that requires a socially and otherwise unrestrained body, appropriate space and appropriate time, we will show why walking is a bodily practice that opens itself up to different spaces, different times and, by extension, different social frames.

**Socio-historical contextualization of walking – A literature review**

Just as it is true that linguistic reality is the only possible meaningful human reality, it is also true that humans inhabit that reality as upright, bipedal beings. Bipedalism is a human universality, but even if walking is (almost) universal to humans, that does not mean it manifests itself as socially unconditioned. Marcel Mauss, who is considered one of the first to establish walking as a subject of serious social research (Ingold and Lee Vergunst, 2008b: 1), treated this bodily practice as a specific technique of the body, that is the way in which ‘from society to society men know how to use their bodies’ (Mauss, 2006: 70). The concept of habitus was crucial for Mauss in understanding the social formation of various bodily practices, within which he recognized that they differ between different societies and are therefore not natural. There is, then, a history
of walking that conveys ideas about who walks and how, what their manner of walking means, with whom they walk, at what speed, on what occasion, and under what conditions. At the level of our embodied identities, walking is conditioned by various aspects such as gender, race, social status and class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, etc. 

By classifying different types of walking and taking into account the socio-historical context, we can learn a lot about the dynamics of the social relationship to the body and to space, the relationship to the community, society and the world (Amato, 2004: 16). The (Western) history of walking, presented in more detail by Amato (2004) and Solnit (2000), shows us that walking has always been a complex and heterogeneous social practice that condenses both negative and positive connotations. If one of the first lines of social status and class ran precisely through the distinction between those who sat, received goods, and ruled, and those who walked, worked, fought, etc. (Amato, 2004: 20), walking was later also established as a form of contemplative and aesthetic experience of nature (Amato, 2004: 100; Solnit, 2000: 85–86), as a specific branch of tourism (Amato, 2004: 120–121), and as mountaineering, many organizations and associations, especially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, were also founded around walking activity (Amato, 2004: 207–208; Solnit, 2000: 153–168). In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, walking was also practiced by athletes who were indifferent to the environment and focused mainly on performance (Solnit, 2000: 131). Walking in circles for several days became a sport known as pedestrianism and reportedly produced the first prominent athletes in the United States in the 1870s and 1880s (Algeo, 2014). In such competitions, walking was reduced to the mere activity of proper physical movement, the function of achievement, of ‘pure’ walking distanced from space and experience, which as such demonstrated that the richer experience and value of walking lay precisely in its ‘impurity’, the encounters, sensory experiences and ideas it could trigger (Solnit, 2000: 132). If, on the one hand, there were those who, in the process of urbanisation, turned away from the city and set out into nature, on the other hand the rapid development of cities created other forms of walkers who practiced walking in the city. From cultured and disciplined pedestrians, ‘window shoppers’, those who walked to work at an accelerated pace, to flâneurs and flâneuses, demonstrators, lovers of strolling and promenading, etc. (Amato, 2004: 153).

Existing social science and humanistic research on walking can be broadly divided into inquiries that take walking as its research object and those that use it as their method. Among the fields in which walking has gained prominence in recent decades, Middleton (2011) highlights the field of transport studies or transport geography, in which nevertheless walking rarely appears as a practice considered at the level of its meanings. Not only are these usually completely overlooked and walking is perceived as a homogeneous, taken-for-granted practice, but it is often treated in a simplified way along with cycling as a form of sustainable transport (Middleton, 2011: 92). Such treatments of walking could be placed within the framework of so-called purposive walking, which Wunderlich (2008) distinguishes from discursive and conceptual walking, explaining it as walking that is performed as a necessary activity while moving towards the desired destination. As a form of quotidian or everyday mobility (Shortell, 2016), walking is here reduced to mere mobility, one of the modes of locomotion. However, at the level of reflection on the emancipatory potentials of (urban) space,
walking emerges as a practice that fits into the shift from thinking about the material forms of space to thinking about the social use of space, emphasizing the need to take into account mental images, perceptions and feelings (Middleton, 2011). Such forms of walking are also conceptualized as discursive and, in contrast to purposive walking, are characterized by spontaneity, communication and synchronization between the physical and psychological rhythms of the individual and the rhythms of space (Wunderlich, 2008: 132). However, an additional dimension of critical knowledge formation establishes a conceptual way of walking that can be understood as meaning production through the reciprocal dialectic between body and environment, for example psychogeography and various artistic appropriations of walking (Wunderlich, 2008: 133). Walking as an artistic practice is discussed in more detail by Careri (2017), who identifies three important milestones in the framework of art history where a specific way of practicing walking represented a turning point, namely dadaism, surrealism and situationalism. Within the latter, psychogeographical ways of exploring space were also developed (Debord, 1955), in particular two techniques, namely dérive and détournement, as a way of alternatively exploring space, the relations between the material and social environment and people’s actions and thoughts (Shortell and Aderer, 2014: 110). Although art uses walking in a variety of ways and also as a means of resisting contemporary social acceleration and alienation, Middleton points out that such forms of walking have no greater parallels with more common, everyday urban rhythms and habits or sensory dimensions of walking experiences (Middleton, 2011: 97).

We can approach walking as an everyday practice by reflecting on the everyday experiences of pedestrians through the ‘pathological’, a deviation that breaks with our habitual relationships to the world and as such can illuminate aspects that otherwise often remain hidden. Such an approach is taken, for example, by Lee Vergunst (2008), who reflects on the connection between space and individual movement through slips, trips, situations in which we get lost, in short, by the many mistakes that happen to us when we walk and that can make us aware of the way we get to know the environment through tactile physical experience. Another way of thinking of the ordinary ‘from the side’ is, instead of physically slipping, to occupy the environment that has ‘slipped’. For example, Edensor (2008) explores the potential effects of walking in ruins. If the urban environment is defined by a set of rules that teach and impose appropriate behaviour on us, ruins are the space that, through different, disordered materiality, reinforces the possibilities of free and playful walking experiences. Moreover, among the ‘pathological’ ways of experiencing space through walking, we can highlight those that occur neither when space offers either enriched or further impoverished sensory experiences, nor when our feet slip, but when everyday social life itself slips. For example, when streets are emptied, public buildings and spaces are closed, tourists disappear, that is, when we experience space through the negative and all that is suddenly gone. Globally, such an opportunity was present during the recent pandemic triggered by COVID-19 when, in trying to experience all that could no longer be perceived and experienced, we could use the pathological situation to sharpen our understanding of what was otherwise ignored (see Kosec, 2020).

Useful insights into attempts to reveal the semantic aspects of walking and its potential to disclose the connection between body, time and space are also offered by less ‘out of
Among the most important features of walking that are useful for exploring space is the fact that walking is slow compared to other modes of locomotion and as such allows for a multisensory experience of space (Shortell, 2016: 12), lateral grasping of objects (Sennett, 2018: 184–185), more relaxed routines and practices of inhabiting space, interacting with others and understanding microsocial phenomena (Brown, 2016: 198). As an embodied phenomenon, walking allows us to get to know urban life through the interaction of bodies with space – walking means being outside, it is conditioned by both space and time, which are the necessary foundations of sensory experience. The immediacy of experience offered by walking is also the starting point of phenomenological anthropology, where the researcher is the subject of experience placed in the material context of his research (Vergunst, 2010: 376). When walking is used as a means to explore everyday urban rituals and habits, it is often discussed not so much through efforts that would use walking experiences to address walking itself, but through efforts that use walking as a method. As such, walking was already present in philosophical endeavours, where it emerged in Aristotle as an indispensable dimension of his peripatetic school (Tucker, 2020: 5). Since then, it has served as a trigger for philosophical reflections and reveries for various philosophers who did not so much think about the walking activity itself, but used walks as part of their daily routines (see Gros, 2014). The methodological use of walking has also always been part of ethnography, cultural anthropology, sociology, ethnomusicology, architecture and urban studies (Bajić and Abram, 2019: 32), but among the newer forms of walking methodology, go-along methods (Middleton, 2011: 98), such as walk-along interviews (Lashua and Cohen, 2010), have become established.

The briefly outlined research on walking is above all an attempt to place broader considerations on the social situation directly in everyday life and thus to connect more abstract theorizations with actual practices and, vice versa, to use sensory perceptions as a starting point for further reflections and thematizations (Bajić and Abram, 2019: 32). We can also turn in this direction as modern urban detectives, the so-called flâneurs or flâneuses (see Benjamin, 1997, 2002; Elkin, 2016; Tester, 2015). While the definition of this figure remains elusive (Gluck, 2003: 53) and the flâneur is sometimes understood as a prototypical consumer and at other times, for example, as an amateur sociologist (Tomanić Trivundža, 2011: 71), the activity of flânerie is most often appreciated as a combination of walking and careful observation. Originally, the flâneur was tied to a specific space and time, namely Paris in the mid-19th century (Benjamin, 2002: 417), but understanding this figure as a historical phenomenon does not explain its appeal in more recent conceptualizations. Taking the flâneur out of the original context and shifting the focus from the flâneur to the flânerie allows us to gain the potential of this activity for thinking and questioning the existing social condition. As developed by Tomanić Trivundža (2019), to preserve the analytical value of a wandering activity, it is important to maintain three dimensions: observation, critical reflection, and the transformation of reflections into appropriate texts. Such practice of walking, for which it is important to observe the city as if seeing it for the first time (Shields, 2015: 68), is thus different from the usual, everyday walk, as the accumulation of information during the slow pace of walking becomes the starting point for further critical
reflection. If the aim of modern flâneur or flâneuse is to illuminate and explain the current social situation through a particular micro-phenomenon, we will set ourselves the task of turning the perspective around. Starting from the macro level, namely the dominant neoliberal organization of social life, its spatial and temporal manifestations, which will be outlined in the following sections of the article, we will try to define and defend walking as a bodily practice that can under these circumstances be understood as subversive. In the concluding section, we will return to the practice of flânerie to emphasize the potential of walking in raising awareness of the current social situation.

**Methodological framework**

In our theoretical defence of walking, following Feyerabend’s (1993, 2008) argumentation of the principle ‘Anything goes!’ and in the spirit of social science approaches that are about interpretations, working with concepts, ideas and theories (Šterk, 2013: 855), we want to use a methodological metaphor derived from the game of cat’s cradle. As a methodological tool, the cat’s cradle has already been used by Haraway (1994) in her attempt to redefine discourses on technoscience. It is essentially a game where we use our fingers to form different and increasingly complex patterns with a string that travels from one player to another. The game is inherently interactive, essentially embodied, encouraging collaboration and disappearing without the relationships involved and without allowing contingency to invent new patterns. Haraway abstracts the rules of this game and applies them as a method to her attempt to intertwine different theoretical fields:

Cat’s cradle is about patterns and knots; the game takes great skill and can result in some serious surprises. /…/ Cat’s cradle invites a sense of collective work, of one person not being able to make all the patterns alone. One does not ‘win’ at cat’s cradle; the goal is more interesting and open-ended than that (Haraway, 1994: 66).

We will proceed through a similar eclectic interweaving, first reading and analysing and then bringing together otherwise separate social scientific and humanistic theories and thoughts. By linking them together, we aim to derive a conceptual and interpretive language that will help us make sense of the bodily practice at the heart of our research. If science and art can be interrelated (Feyerabend, 2008), and if one of the most important outcomes of art is precisely that it stimulates us to see familiar things differently (Mouffe, 2018: 77), then one of our goals will also be to open up a different way of looking at the all too ‘ordinary’.

**Initial step – From neoliberalism to the neoliberal subject**

Since the main purpose of this article is to recognize walking as potentially subversive, as silent protest and criticism that can go as far as attempts to undermine the existing political–economic system, we begin with a brief theoretical outline of what neoliberalism is in the first place. The concept of neoliberalism, which – especially since the crisis of 2007–2008 and the long recession that immediately followed – has saturated the
public sphere, seems so ubiquitous in economic, political, intellectual, media and everyday discourse that it is perhaps most surprising how little is understood about what neoliberalism actually is. Roughly speaking, neoliberalism is a multi-layered and complex set of heterogeneous, complementary and interdependent economic, intellectual, political and other social processes that operate both at the macrosocial level, where they intervene in and change the entire social fabric, and at the microsocial level, where they penetrate the existential dimension of the individual and our relationship with ourselves (Dardot and Laval, 2017, 2019; Foucault, 2010; Krašovec, 2016). A more detailed analysis of the existing ‘social logic’ goes beyond the scope of this article, but we will highlight the aspects that are useful for our efforts.

Various thinkers (Dardot and Laval, 2017, 2019; Foucault, 2010; Harvey, 2005; Schreiner, 2019) agree that the key target of neoliberalism is the welfare state, which provides for the redistribution of established income relations in the market and thus supposedly threatens the freedom of market processes, the freedom of private property and personal freedom. This does not mean that neoliberalism tends towards a lean state, but rather subordinates it to the unhindered functioning of the market, and to this end it subjects traditional liberal thought to many twists and transformations (Foucault, 2010: 117–121). Competition becomes a general social principle, along with the establishment of market mechanisms of regulation (Schreiner, 2019: 10) and the transformation of the social fabric into an entrepreneurial form (Foucault, 2010: 146–148). However, neoliberal rationality is not limited to the economic and political spheres, but extends to the level of individuals and their daily lives (Schreiner, 2019). This dimension is precisely one of the most important reasons why neoliberalism has succeeded and continues to be maintained despite its destructive effects at the individual, social and environmental levels. Namely, neoliberalism is not presented as something harmful, inhumane and cruel, but rather as something that is supposed to provide us with personal freedom, responsibility and autonomy (Schreiner, 2019: 21). Following Foucault (2003: 23–41) and his analysis of the internalization of power norms, it has been argued that the appeal of neoliberalism and the consensus we give it through our own behaviour presupposes its functioning at the level of desire, that is, at the level of the unconscious, which is the domain of desire and the field of affects.

In this context, one of the most fruitful, if not neoliberally specific, tools for attempting to think the relationship between individual and social character is still Freud’s theoretical apparatus. For psychoanalysis, which recognises in personal psychopathology a social symptom, the form of psychopathology that prevails in a given social order is a privileged entry point into the political struggle. In other words, the critique of libidinal economy is an essential component of the critique of political economy: ‘enjoyment is articulated like a discourse – it is an inevitable product of linguistic, economic, religious, epistemic and other types of symbolic bonds, which affect the human body’ (Tomšič, 2019: 10). The peculiarity of capitalism, when viewed from the perspective of the relationship between the libidinal and the economic, is that capitalism finds a way to subordinate the production of enjoyment to the production of surplus value. In capitalism, subjects themselves become the source of value; through statistical methods and evaluation procedures, they are reduced to positivistic data and, as such, susceptible to valorization (Tomšič, 2019: 27). If the capitalist imperative is not ‘accumulate in order to enjoy’
but ‘enjoy the activity of accumulation itself’, this means, at the level of the subject, the
tendency to multiply its own ‘value’ (Dardot and Laval, 2019: 72). The specificity of neo-
liberal subjectivity here arises from the internalisation of the class relation, which estab-
ishes a direct link between the way the individuals are led from without and the way they
are led from within (Dardot and Laval, 2017: 264). In neoliberalism, then, the individual
must behave like the market, be disciplined and submissive, competitive, entrepreneurial,
selfish, flexible, etc., which requires what Schreiner (2019: 25) summarizes in the need
for constant self-thematization, self-optimization, and self-presentation. An individual
as human capital must be treated like any capital, which does not tolerate any pause
and must be constantly in motion – value is maintained only by constant growth, and
endless growth can lead either to devaluation or to destruction, on the level of the indi-
vidual, therefore, to psychopathology.

Since human beings cannot be reduced to economic value, we will use these starting
points to steer us in a direction marked by anti-value and enjoyment that is not servile but
subversive. Before we can intertwine it with walking, it is necessary to understand its
primary habitat, that is, space.

Progressing step – From neoliberal space and neoliberal time to
the space and time of enjoyment

In analysing space, we will follow Lefebvre’s conceptualization and first emphasize the
understanding of space as socially produced. Every society produces its own space,
which is essentially determined by the social system and its associated mode of produc-
tion (Lefebvre, 1991), from which it follows that there must also be specifics of neoliberal
space. Lefebvre, who placed the dialectic of space within a Marxist theoretical frame-
work, conceptualized space with a tripartite structure, namely spatial practice and the
space that is perceived, representations of space and the space that is conceived, and rep-
resentational spaces and the space that is lived (Lefebvre, 1991: 33–39). With such a con-
ceptual tool, Lefebvre then explained the historical transitions between different spaces,
defining the space of capitalism as an abstract space in which the dimension of the lived
loses importance and the dimension of conceived prevails. ‘Not only is it quantifiable as
geometrical space, but, as social space, it is subject to quantitative manipulations’
(Lefebvre, 1991: 352). Capitalism produces a space of accumulation, a space that itself
becomes a commodity and dominates over concrete and everyday practices of life.
Space flattens, it becomes a ‘simulacrum’ of a richer, fuller space, experience becomes
superficial and impoverished, society, in short, ‘chose to accumulate rather than to live’
(Lefebvre, 1991: 327).

If the value of space begins to be determined by the circulation of capital, however,
this does not mean that the use value of space is entirely lost – through exchange
value it is above all transformed into time (Lefebvre, 1991: 339). It should be mentioned
that time is also not something external to social structures. In capitalism, this is even
more obvious. The value of labour is defined as socially necessary labour time; what capi-
talists buy is literally time, not an end product – speed becomes the business imperative,
which is also condensed in the formula ‘Time is money’ (Rosa, 2015: 161–162). For the
Western societies of late modernity, which roughly coincides with the real-political implementation of neoliberalism and has been taking place since the 1970s, a certain crisis of time is characteristic, which does not only appear as a subjective feeling, but has a purely objective existence. In the context of social acceleration, Rosa presents the novelty of late modernity above all in the fact that it is not life but time itself that is out of joint: ‘/W/hat is “new” about the contemporary age consists in the fact that the tempo of social change has surpassed a critical threshold /…/ and therefore compels a pattern of time perception and time processing that can be described as the temporalization of time itself and hence as a detemporalization of life, history, and society’ (Rosa, 2015: 221). The consequences of such acceleration manifest themselves in individual and social fragmentation, the loss of the ability to integrate individual parts of reality into a coherent whole, the loss of intelligibility and crystallization that require a certain slowness – individual events are no longer formed and translated into a holistic historical story and experience, but take on the character of separate, fragmented episodes. Post-history therefore does not so much mean the end of the world, but the loss of meaning (Rosa, 2015: 273).

Let us look briefly at what the depicted changes at the level of time mean for the experience of space, illustrating the latter by the activity of movement, and also taking into account Lefebvre’s conceptualization:

/A/s long as we move forward on foot, we perceive space in all its immediate qualities, we feel, smell, hear, and see it. With the construction of roads begins the leveling of the terrain, the overcoming of hindrances, the manipulation of the quality of space. We no longer roam through it; we single-mindedly cut across it. With the invention of highways, then, space is already shortened, jammed together, faded out. Taking one’s eye off the monotonously unchanging road and glancing into space would be life threatening. /…/ Finally, whoever flies completely breaks loose from the topographical space of life and the surface of the earth. For him, space is only an abstract, empty distance measured by the duration of the flight (Rosa, 2015: 99–100).

If we move to the level of the neoliberal specifics of space, it must first be said that just as neoliberalism does not represent a break with capitalism, neoliberal space does not break with the space of accumulation but acquires its own specifics within it. At the level of urban space, the neoliberal city ‘increasingly subordinates production to the requirements of finance capital, urban policy is oriented towards the entrepreneurial code of investment and debt repayment, and the urban landscape is primarily oriented towards attracting consumption’ (Ploštajner, 2015: 484). The neoliberal urban form of the space of accumulation is an entrepreneurial city that duplicates in the production of space the basic neoliberal laws along with their inequalities and contradictions. As the flip side of the spectacular forms, the purity and sterility of the built environment and the accumulation of wealth, the impoverishment of the complexity of the life of the local population and the disintegration of the common is manifested. Already Lefebvre wrote that the city cannot be understood as a company, since the latter tends towards a totalitarian form, while the urban upholds democracy (Lefebvre, 1991: 319). Less than half a century later, we are confronted with precisely the tendency for the city to be
run by entrepreneurs, and it is probably hard to find a better illustration of this than smart cities, which, again, present themselves as something that is supposed to make life easier, create a cleaner environment, eliminate crime, etc., but whose flip side is an additional reinforcement of the quantification of life, the restriction of alternative behaviours, increased control and punishment, and the exclusion of elements and people that might tarnish the image of the city or embody a barrier to the circulation of capital (see Sennett, 2018; Zuboff, 2019).

In this context, let us return to Harvey’s (2012: 4) statement that the question of what kind of place we want is inextricably linked to what kind of people we want to be and what kind of social relationships we want to cultivate, and respond to it with spaces of enjoyment. If the space of capitalism, together with its neoliberal satellite, is characterized by the instrumentalization, rationalization, and functionalization of space, the withdrawal from lived time and experience, the widening of the gap between space and body (see Sennett, 1996), and the consequent disappearance of spaces that ‘serve no one in particular (though they do bring enjoyment to people in general)’ (Lefebvre, 1991: 359); then enjoyment, whose essence is that it serves no purpose (Zupančič, 2000: 157), is precisely the dimension we need to stumble upon in order to emancipate both. Space, which has become lost in a neutral and monotonous meaninglessness, and enjoyment itself, which has been valorized in the existing mode of production. To design a model of the production of space that unites all the properties of space so that it can be perceived, conceived, and lived at the same time, the crucial starting point for Lefebvre was precisely the body: ‘The sense of space associated with the body /…/ is rudimentary. Our relationship to our body coincides with our relationship to space /…/’ (Lefebvre, 2014: 41).

Spaces of enjoyment are established primarily as spaces of use rather than exchange; spaces of quality rather than calculation; spaces that are primarily lived rather than conceived; spaces that insist on the cultivation of meanings, the joy of adventure, exploration, and the richness of the festival (Lefebvre, 2014: 19). Lefebvre laid the foundation for a path that could lead to the necessary social transformation in the body and enjoyment, which would no longer be a matter of economic exchange, but a matter of opening up to a sensual experience in which space is first and foremost directly lived, inhabited, and not sold or exchanged; in which sensual experience is what serves as the starting point for further reflection. What we want to develop from here is the argument that the movement of the body best suited to inhabit, appropriate, and explore space is precisely – walking.

**Concluding step – Walking towards space and time of enjoyment**

In the context of the present social situation and through the dimension of enjoyment, walking can appear as an expression of a specific subversiveness. It cannot be argued that walking is subversive in itself, but we want to suggest that it has some immanent conditions that can be understood as subversive relationally, that is, when we consider walking in relation to existing manifestations of time and space, both of which are essentially determined by the existing social system. As Solnit has already argued:
If there is a history of walking, then it too has come to a place where the road falls off, a place where there is no public space and the landscape is being paved over, where leisure is shrinking and being crushed under the anxiety to produce, where bodies are not in the world but only indoors in cars and buildings, and an apotheosis of speed makes those bodies seem anachronistic or feeble (Solnit, 2000: 12).

In other words, walking requires adequate space, adequate temporality, and a body that is not constrained by biological or social constraints (Solnit, 2000: 168). Speaking on a broader level, walking requires an adequate organisation of social life, an adequate social system that conditions both space and time and the way our bodies are used.

In order to redirect the existing neoliberal path that further accelerates time, reduces complexity and quantifies space, we have looked at spaces of enjoyment that bring the body (currently increasingly obsolete, transported or teleported) back into play and emerge from the lived – a category that is as neglected in abstract space as the spatial practices associated with it, and which offers an opening to counterspace as a possible alternative to the existing production of space. Turning towards different spaces that are also spaces of different spatial practices, towards spaces that take the body as their point of departure, means at the same time breaking with the existing use of time. As a form of place-making (Pink, 2007: 244–245), walking can be understood as a bodily movement that, in this context, has the potential to create alternative spaces and alternative conceptions of time – a heterotopia, in other words, which Foucault (1984) defines as a place that exists in relation to existing spaces, but in a way that contradicts them. A heterotopia represents the world within an existing world that has the potential to transform the latter, including through the dimension of time, as heterotopias can only fully function when individuals break with traditional time (Foucault, 1984: 6). In this sense, walking could be understood as a ‘subversive detour’ (Solnit, 2000: 12) from the existing social situation, since it sets its point of departure in the body and enjoyment, which no longer works for the system, but becomes a means of its transformation.

We can illustrate this by returning to flânerie as a specific form of walking and emphasizing its two dimensions, that is, the time required for this activity and its understanding as a way of resisting the prevailing division of labour. The aimless strolling characteristic of flânerie is time-consuming, and this idleness has been described by Benjamin (2002: 427) as a way for the flâneur to resist the division of labor. However, even if for the flâneur ‘the fruits of idleness are more precious than the fruits of labor’ (Benjamin, 2002: 453), such an activity of walking constitutes a ‘productive idleness’ (Tomic, Trivundža, 2019: 5296). An idleness that is not exempt from the existing relations of production, but seeks to turn them to the flâneur’s advantage, that is, the production of texts that have the potential to address and question the existing social situation. In this sense, flânerie can be understood as excluded inclusion, ‘a deliberate counter rhythm to the regular and quotidian patterns of everyday life in the city’ (Middleton, 2011: 97) or an activity in which one takes ‘time to enjoy and to learn from the street’ (Bairner, 2011: 372).

Of course, not all forms of walking and not all walks are subversive, or, following De Certeau (1988), not all walking constitutes a tactical resistance and deliberate disruption of the city’s rational plan. However, in the context of aspirations that understand space not as a tool of empty movement, that is, as something formed primarily in the function
of its mere traversal, but above all as something appropriated, used, inhabited and experienced, walking can be positioned as a bodily technique that potentially demands the return of its forgotten or neglected dimensions. It is a fundamental bodily movement that allows for a multisensory experience of space: ‘the experiencing body is central to the production of place as it determines place through its movement in and physical multisensorial engagement with environment’ (Pink, 2007: 245). Moreover, by walking we can appropriate the right to slowness, for in its manifestations time slows down. Since walking corresponds at the same time to the appropriation of space that respects its use value, in the sense of enabling spatial richness and heterogeneity, of shaping and cultivating community and the common, it can be said that walking does not retreat from what is perceived and experienced, but lives these two dimensions directly.

If space and time of enjoyment are an attempt to articulate an alternative way of producing space and to break with the prevailing linear conception of time, and if their production must go through the body, then walking is the form of movement that can be constitutive of both, since it enables both bodily and reflexive interactions with space as well as stepping on the emergency brake in Benjamin’s sense. Saying this, and returning to the introduction, we do not mean to deny the possibility that, like any other practice, walking and our steps can become commodified. As already stressed, walking is not inherently subversive. However, it is conditioned by dimensions that – in relation to the existing social order, its spatial and temporal manifestations – can manifest as subversive. Perhaps the first step in becoming aware of this can be the very situation in which, while practicing flânerie, we stumble over a concrete block that also causes our minds to stumble.

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Notes

1. This is not to suggest that the technology mentioned is something inherently harmful, but we are paying particular attention here to its hegemonic promotion, use, and dominant direction of development. In contrast, it can be used subversively and appropriated in playful and creative ways (in the context of walking, see Meneley, 2019).
2. We should add here that not all bodies are abled bodies. Elaborating ideas that take into account the perspectives of injured or otherwise disabled bodies is important and necessary, but we leave these and other aspects of our embodied identities aside for the most part in this article, as our focus is rather on the specific relationship between walking as such on the one hand, and the existing social order and its spatial and temporal manifestations on the other.
3. Solnit, for example, devotes part of her book on the history of walking to problematizing the dominant role of men in it (see Solnit, 2000: 232–246); for an emphasis on how walking can be conditioned by race, see Cadogan (2016).

4. In the context of sport, this direction was taken, for example, by Giulianiotti (2002), who defined four ideal types of modern spectator identities and articulated the flâneur as the post-modern consumer spectator.

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