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Introduction

Walking as Urban Practice and Research Method

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Walking in cities has a history as old as cities themselves. Walking predates urban settlement, of course, but it has always been a significant form of mobility in urban space. More than just a way of getting around, walking as a social activity was transformed by urbanization. Walking was fundamental to the new liberty of labor in cities. According to Tim Cresswell:

The idea of mobility as liberty and freedom would have made little sense in feudal society. In the early modern period, as cities grew and people were displaced from the land, the practice and ideology of mobility was transformed. New mobile figures began to inhabit the landscapes of Europe. Mobility as a right accompanied the rise of the figure of the modern *citizen* who was granted the right to move at will with the bounds of the nation-state. (2006:15, emphasis in original)

The freedom to move from place to place—migration—was an important part of the politics of modernism in Europe, and the meaning attached to mobility changed the way ordinary people regarded the use of urban space. The ability to move around the city was understood as an important aspect of being a free man or woman.¹

Walking remained a practical activity, by and large, but it was also increasingly associated with a way of living in the city, a way of extending the so-

¹ Men and women experienced this freedom differently, to be sure. In fact, one of the most visible manifestations of patriarchy is the control by men over the mobility of women.

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cial realm beyond, and between, home and work. Walking connected the new rhythms of urban life to the reconfiguration of urban spaces. The birth of the “nocturnal city,” for example, is the story of walking as quotidian mobility and the desire of authorities to control it (Schlör 1998). Discussing walking in nineteenth-century Europe, Joachim Schlör (1998:240) notes, “Nocturnal life in London and Paris, and in its beginnings in Berlin as well, begins to push ‘outwards’ into the streets. And it is precisely the public presentation of vice that becomes the dominant theme of debate about the city.” This discourse produces the idea of the “dangerous classes,” who circulate at night. The police and other moral enforcers struggled against the new kind of urban walking. According to one police chief: “There are three terrible enemies with which our age has to struggle almost everywhere . . . namely, *the proletariat, crime and prostitution*” (quoted in Schlör 1998:184, emphasis in original). The “danger” comes from the unauthorized uses of everyday mobility. Walking was a part of urban crime, to be sure, but also of collective political action. Walking was a form of agency.

The everyday mobility of the “dangerous classes” is an important part of the history of walking in cities. The places where poverty and street labor intersected with vice and crime were well-known neighborhoods, both for the people who lived in them and those who did not. In London, for example, the parish of St. Giles, site of the hospital for lepers, later a plague zone, and still later an infamous London slum, has long had the reputation of transience and mobs (Ackroyd 2009). The parish church was along the route where the condemned were taken from London—on foot, it should be noted—to be hanged.

Not all walking is as notorious as this. But everyday mobility is part of the vernacular urban landscape, where ordinary urban dwellers live. It is part of the repertoire used by the relatively powerless against the designs of the relatively powerful. But because this everyday mobility lies far beneath the circuits of capital and its control network, and the powerful social forces created by the flows of capital and information, it has been largely unnoticed in sociology. As the editors noted elsewhere, “Local politicians, workers, shoppers, protesters, busy commuters, tourists, *flâneurs*, panhandlers, urban ethnographers—these social actors and many more occupy the city streets as an essential part of their quotidian routines. Everyday mobility on the streets and public spaces of neighborhoods is such an ubiquitous part of urban life and culture that it is often overlooked” (Shortell and Brown 2014:1). As a social activity, walking is very much hiding in plain sight. While much has been written of “car culture” with regard to U.S. cities, there is relatively little on pedestrian culture. While sociology has investigated desegregation busing as part of the history of race relations in the United States, there is much less scholarship on walking as a context for intergroup interaction. But walking, in everyday and spectacular forms, is a significant part of urban rhythms and practices.

Modern cities offer more ways to engage in everyday mobility than earlier urban forms did. The presence of systems of public transportation, and the

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proliferation of private options beyond personally owned automobiles—what we might call semiprivate transportation—have made walking less singular;² it is now part of a tool kit of everyday mobilities in the cities discussed in the research contained in this volume. Though contemporary urban dwellers may walk less—less often and fewer miles—this does not mean that walking is less important as a social activity. Technological advancements have made walking more of a choice. For example, Sonia Lavadinho (2014) demonstrates how walking is part of the mobility repertoire of hypermobile people in order to balance range and speed in a multimodal urban context. Both Hilary Ramsden (2014) and Federica Gatta and Maria Anita Palumbo (2014) identified new practices of walking in cities that reflect intentional efforts to “get to know” the city (for fun or for profit), to take it less for granted.

As was the case in earlier periods, walking reflects the systematic inequalities that order contemporary urban life. Walking has different meanings for different groups of people, in part because it reflects different motives and different mobility resources. For elites, mobility reflects a lifestyle choice: “Those ‘high up’ are satisfied that they travel through life by their heart’s desire and pick and choose their destinations according to the joys they offer” (Bauman 1998:86). For the powerless, mobility is often forced; the poor and vulnerable are sometimes running away from something or toward something better. Of course, there are some for whom mobility is denied entirely—by imprisonment or by segregation (Ohnmacht, Maksim, and Bergman 2009). Our contemporary moment of globalization has made travel across borders easier than ever before, but not equally easily for everyone. “Some of us enjoy the new freedom of movement *sans papiers*. Some others are not allowed to stay put for the same reason” (Bauman 1998:87).

The inequality manifest in the “big mobility” Zygmunt Bauman discusses is recapitulated in “small mobility” of the everyday variety. Walking can be a way of temporarily “taking possession” of urban space, and therefore, an assertion of agency by the relatively powerless against official forms of authority.³ At the same time, walking can make the relatively powerless more vulnerable, as well. It increases exposure to street crime for those residents of poorer, high-crime neighborhoods, who learn strategies for walking as a result. As important, it

² Consider the controversies surrounding new mobile apps linked to new forms of car service (Chen 2012; Irwin 2014; Scott 2014).

³ The protests that occurred in Ferguson, Missouri, in August 2014 are a compelling example of this. The mass collective action by residents of the majority black town protesting the homicide of an unarmed black youth by a white police officer often provoked additional violence by police (including the state highway patrol and later the National Guard), who were aggressively focused on maintaining control. The protests were often described in the media as “riots”—as urban protests often are—but when one considers the context, they were clearly the result of long-standing issues of racial inequality. The repeated attempts by protesters to occupy the streets in defiance of municipal authorities constituted an important form of social agency. The protesters were saying, in a manner, that we’ll be in the streets until the injustice is addressed.

increases exposure to aggressive urban policing, which poses a different kind of danger (Vitale 2014a, 2014b).⁴

Motility and Mobility

Walking is usually associated with everyday life. As such, we tend to view it as an activity that is instrumental and habitual (or as phenomenological sociologists would say, pretheoretical), as so many everyday routines are. Indeed, it is fair to say that most walking is done with purpose (even if the purpose is recreation) and without much reflection on walking as such. In this regard, it is tempting to view walking as only minimally social or cultural. But that would be a mistake.

Walking invokes a number of important social processes, and I want to note some of its important qualities here. The chapters that follow consider in more detail how walking intersects with sociological dimensions such as gender, race and ethnicity, social class, and power.

It is important to start with the distinction between motility and mobility. According to Vincent Kaufmann, motility “can be defined as the capacity of a person to be mobile, or more precisely, as the *way in which an individual appropriates what is possible in the domain of mobility and puts this potential to use for his or her activities*” (2002:37, emphasis in original). That capacity is a combination of access, skills, and appropriation. *Access* refers to the choices available. We can characterize this aspect of motility as a relative quantity of resources, so that it is meaningful to speak of more than or less than when comparing individuals. Some urban dwellers have more options for getting from one place to another. Kaufmann (2002:38) notes that *skills* “refer to the *savoir-faire* of those involved.” This includes physical capacity, of course, but also knowledge of the operations necessary for a mode of mobility. Even walking on the sidewalk in a large city requires a practical knowledge of traffic and pedestrian norms. Urban dwellers have different expectations with regard to different kinds of social actors (tourists, the elderly, parents with strollers, and so forth); this represents a sophisticated knowledge of the use of public space. Finally, appropriation concerns an individual’s sense of his or her access and skills in a particular situation. “Appropriation is constructed through the interiorisation of standards and values, and as such has to do with gender and the point reached in a person’s life course” (Kaufmann 2002:39). We would add social class position to the list of factors, as well.

“Spatial mobility,” Kaufmann (2002:40) continues, is “a phenomenon that revolves around four main forms: migration, residential mobility, travel, and daily mobility.” These four forms represent a typology along two dimensions, duration and relation to the “living area.” Short duration activities within the living area are daily mobility, and those outside the living area are travel. Long

⁴ Indeed, the initial confrontation between the police officer and Michael Brown in Ferguson was prompted by pedestrian activity—walking in the road instead of on the sidewalk.

duration activities within the living area are residential mobility, and those outside it are migration.

Since our topic is walking in cities, we will focus on the daily mobility type. Urban walking could be part of the other types, as well—tourists certainly walk in cities and some mobility resources are surely related to migration—but the relation of motility to mobility will be adequately illustrated with a discussion of daily mobility. Kaufmann points out that specific instances of mobile activity can represent more than one type. But the kinds of activities that the contributors analyze in this volume mainly concern mobility of short duration in a fairly restricted geographic area. Daily mobility is embedded in specific parts of cities—neighborhoods and other places.⁵

The ability and willingness to use one's motility (to appropriate a specific daily mobile activity) puts walking squarely in the realm of urban culture. Kaufmann notes, "Motility thus defines not only a propensity for mobility in terms of intensity, but also a propensity to realize certain forms of mobility instead of others, and to maintain a pace of life more or less oriented toward short temporal durations" (2002:44). Allowing for constraints resulting from social inequalities, this view preserves the agency of the urban dweller, in recognizing that he or she makes choices based on available resources and preferences. In this regard, we can consider the transition from motility to mobility to be a matter of specific lifestyles. Kaufmann (2002:45, emphasis in original) concludes, "In this context, *the acquisition of motility and its transformation into mobility is built through the compromises made between aspirations, projects and lifestyle and is linked to multiple logics of action.*"

Bringing Pierre Bourdieu into the discussion enables us to understand how motility/mobility is structural as well as phenomenological. Individuals make decisions about how to acquire and appropriate motility, but these decisions are not merely instrumental choices. One of the logics of action, then, derives from the norms of social groups. In any social location, some kinds of mobile activities are more valued and others are less valued. Patterns of daily mobility reflect social preferences and tastes as well as the desire to exchange one's "mobility capital" for specific forms of everyday activity. The decision to walk to work or to walk for leisure, for example, may reflect the availability of another resource: time—a form of conspicuous consumption, of a sort. One sees this in spaces where social classes combine but do not integrate; distinctions of daily mobility manifest in "parallel play" as Judith DeSena (2009, 2012, and Chapter 8 in this volume) has shown in her research on Greenpoint in Brooklyn.

The ability to appropriate possible mobilities for speed also reflects class and status differences. Faster and more direct forms are generally more valuable, and therefore not equally available to all urban dwellers. In global cities, where the

⁵ I am using *place* here in the urban culturalist sense, of urban spaces that are invested with particular emotions, such as love or fear, and therefore meaningful as specific parts of the city. Places are the parts of an individual's mental map of the city.

cost of living continues to rise faster than most incomes, daily mobility certainly manifests structural inequality and, increasingly, class segregation.

The Use of Urban Space

Cities are places of strangers. Urban dwellers must spend significant amounts of time (and a significant variety of forms of interaction) in the presence of others personally unknown to them. As a result, urban life is structured by difference. Urban dwellers learn to interpret the signs of difference—and as these differences are usually hierarchical, the status order—as a part of their everyday activities. Urban dwellers are well socialized into this kind of visual literacy. Timothy Shortell and Konrad Aderer (2014:113) explain:

As groups practice their culture in local social spaces, through their quotidian mobility and performances of identity, they embed signs of their collective identity in those places. This is sometimes done intentionally, but most often is simply the by-product of people using and inhabiting urban space. These signs become meaningful to members of both the in- and out-groups—though not necessarily communicating the same thing to members of the majority and minorities.

We acquire this information through primary and secondary socialization and through the media. It is an important part of everyday life in the city; we are generally unaware of the process by which we read urban space even as it guides our behavior.

The differences that urban dwellers read are rarely parallel instances, where the value attached to one identity is equal to the value attached to another. As Bourdieu (1990) noted, because our social space is hierarchical, our public space is also. Jerome Krase and Timothy Shortell (2013:193) elaborate: “Because urban spaces are also subject to the effects of social inequality as class, racial, and ethnic hierarchies, societies often mark their urban territories with differential meanings, from slums and ghettos to ‘silk stocking districts.’”

Krase and Shortell (2011) apply Roman Jakobson’s structural semiotics to extend a distinction made by Erving Goffman (1959) between intentional and unintentional signs of identity. They explain the difference between *expressive* signs of collective identity and *phatic* signs. The former reveal the affective state of the producer of the sign; these are the signs we produce when we want to proclaim our identity, our pride of place (in the sense of geographical place or of status). The latter are signs produced as a by-product of ordinary activities. They are oriented to confirming in-group memberships and facilitating contact. Krase and Shortell note:

In addition to ethnic differences, class antagonisms also generate competition for the use and control of social space. In some instances, phatic

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signs of working-class life become transformed into expressive signs of middle-class “hipster” authenticity. Globalization encourages the appropriation of phatic signs for expressive consumption; the distance introduced by commodification tends to make the products empty of local, distinctive content—turning “something” into “nothing,” as Ritzer (2003) might say. Sometimes neighborhood residents push back against such encroachment and, in doing so, produce more phatic and expressive signs of their class identity. (2011:372)

As symbolic interactionists argue, we are interpretable objects for each other. The use of public space is very much a practice of “folk hermeneutics.” Walking is especially important for reading urban space because the pace is sufficiently slow to allow sensory intake. We can pay attention to the signs of collective identity while walking more effectively than other forms of quotidian mobility, such as biking or car riding.

Henri Lefebvre (1991, 1992, 1996) is one of the most important theorists of everyday life and of urban space. He saw the city as related to a particular organization of everyday life. Like other urban theorists, he uses the metaphor of language or text to describe the city. “The city *writes* and *assigns*, that is, it signifies, orders, stipulates,” he observes (1996:102, emphasis in original). As a site, the city mediates the “near order” of everyday life and its institutions (family, local groups) and the “far order” of the state and ideology. To decipher the city as text, one needs to know both the level of the everyday as well as the level of ideology and the organization of production. He notes that global processes have influenced the space and time of the city: “By enabling groups to insert themselves, to take charge of them [global processes], to *appropriate* them; and this by inventing, by sculpting space (to use a metaphor), by giving themselves rhythms. Such groups have also been innovative in how to live, to have a family, to raise and educate children, to leave a greater or lesser place to women, to use and transmit wealth” (1996:105, emphasis in original). Indeed, Lefebvre even offers a definition of the city as “plurality, coexistence and simultaneity in the urban of *patterns*, ways of living urban life” (1996:109, emphasis in original).

Lyn Lofland (1998) and Elijah Anderson (1990) have described social behaviors and strategies that effect a claim to public space. It is useful to think of these behaviors as strategic rather than habitual, even though that implies a motive in particular instances, because these patterns of behavior require social skill to enact. They are learned and reflect agency. Patterns such as incivility, uncooperative motility, exaggerated displays of confidence (swagger), and even grouping generate claims of possession. When behaviors appropriate to the private spaces (or less public) are introduced into public spaces, others generally interpret this to be a claim to that space (Anderson 1990; Lofland 1998).

Anderson (2011) examined public spaces where diversity is tolerated, generally for the sake of commerce; he calls such spaces “cosmopolitan canopies.” In his analysis of Philadelphia, Anderson notes the fragility of these canopies.

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Ethnic and class differences reflect power hierarchies, and there are instances in which members of the more powerful group try to exercise their privilege to control public space. Just as inequality gives some urban dwellers more mobility choices, it also gives them more strategies for the use of public space. Advantages in the one are related to advantages in the other.

Despite this, Anderson explains, when cosmopolitan canopies function, they are often regarded as essential to the public life of the city; they are certainly significant to the economic life of central districts in contemporary cities. One of the most interesting aspects of cosmopolitan canopies is that they tend to flatten motility/mobility differences. Public parks and shopping malls allow members of different social groups (across racial and class hierarchies, according to Anderson) to engage in similar patterns of everyday mobility.⁶

Urban culturalist theory is a relatively new way to reflect on and to investigate urban space in which the focus is on “the *lived* culture of cities and not merely their economic or political ‘structures’ and demographic profiles” (Borer 2006:174). Studies have examined public, parochial, and private spaces. Michael Ian Borer summarizes: “Many of these studies have shown how place matters for individuals’ experiences of social life more than simply providing the background or setting for actions and interactions. In fact, we have seen how places can structure interactions between people and can act as identity markers for the people who inhabit, revere, and travel through them” (2010:96). Particular parts of cities are meaningful places—they have what we sometimes call “personalities”—and urban dwellers relate to them on this basis. The variety of places in a city is part of what makes it distinctive. As Borer (2010) reminds us, modern global cities are too big and too complex to be experienced in totality.

The meaning making of urban places is dynamic. This is partly the result of the flows of people and cultural practices that occur in the course of daily mobility. But it is also related to the connection between memories of a place and imaginings of its future—movement in space is always related to the passage of time. The meanings we attach to a place are always embedded in time, both specific time (now) and abstract or ideal time.⁷ This is especially important for how urban dwellers understand the vernacular landscape.

Toward a Sociology of Walking

Much of the social scientific work on urban walking begins with Walter Benjamin’s (1983) theorizing of the *flâneur*. John Rennie Short (2012:121) calls the

⁶ Not all parks or malls are cosmopolitan canopies, of course. Anderson compares some instances of both in Philadelphia to reveal how those that are not work to limit mobility for the less powerful (less affluent).

⁷ Nostalgia is an important part of urban life. Our feelings about a specific place are often colored by a sense of some idealized past, and this often orients us to some idealized future. Conflict between groups in particular neighborhoods often take particular forms as a result of differences in the ways groups relate temporally (real and symbolic) to the space.

concept “a lens for understanding and representing cities undergoing globalization.” For Benjamin, Charles Baudelaire was the original *flâneur* and his walking was a way of experiencing, and celebrating, the dynamic and sensual vitality of the modern city, represented by nineteenth-century Paris (Tester 1994). In contemporary cities, the dandy urban walker is joined by walkers of other types, some of whom have come from far away.

Short (2012) observes the arrival of an important new kind of urban walker: the global nomad. He explains, “Globalization’s inherent interurban quality facilitates a new kind of *flânerie*, that of the global nomad, as another process to serve the experiencing, charting, and the conferring of ‘globalizing’ to a city” (133). The kind of everyday mobility the global nomad engages in is situated in a different class location than the *flânerie* of the nineteenth-century aesthete. It comes from an altered cosmopolitanism, where the meaning of national identity is disconnected from particular nation-states. The global nomad is transnational and transurban.

Inspired by the *flâneur*, the contemporary researcher of urban life and culture can use walking as a method. Walking around urban spaces is a way of seeing them from the perspective of ordinary urban dwellers. Walking in urban neighborhoods can also be a form of “working the street,” that is, forming social connections with residents as a means for gathering ethnographic data (Brown 2012).

Giampaolo Nuvolati (2014) compares the ethnographer and the *flâneur*, recognizing both similarities and differences. Most significant of these differences concerns the kind of knowledge of the city produced by their instrumental walking: “Normally in the *flâneur*’s activities poetic suggestions are permissible, while for the ethnographer the scientific description is required” (25).

Guy Debord (1957, 1958, 1961) and his Situationist colleagues tried to bring some revolutionary poetry into the scientific study of cities. They developed a walking method to explore possibilities for a new urbanism, centered around the *dérive*. Similar to the wanderings of the *flâneur*, the *dérive* is a different kind of mobility. *Flânerie* is an aesthetic practice; it is about producing a narrative of the city. In contrast, the *dérive* is an attempt to identify the characteristics of urban space that create the fields and vortexes that determine the rhythm and tempo of urban life.

The *flâneur* wanted to know the city, but the Situationists wanted to change it. The *dérive* was one practice in an effort to study the city using psychogeography. If the modernist city, dominated by the logic of mass consumer capitalism, could domesticate urban dwellers, they reasoned, then psychogeography might reveal ways to restore the untamed and unexpected qualities of urban life.

Iain Sinclair (1997, 2002, 2011, 2013) is the most prominent of the contemporary psychogeographers. Merlin Coverley (2010:122) describes his style as one in which “urban wanderer, local historian, avant-garde activist and political polemicist meet and coalesce.” As is fitting for the psychogeographer working in London fifty years after the Situationists predicted imminent doom for urban

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culture—based on their readings of the changes to Paris—Sinclair has a keen eye for the dystopias of neoliberal capitalist society. The practitioners of psycho-geography are more likely to be writers than urban researchers, but the concerns of both substantially overlap. I believe that this approach needs to be recovered as a part of urban ethnography (as a set of related techniques). The emphasis on everyday life and daily mobility is in keeping with the phenomenological and interactionist traditions I have described here.

In a similar way, Jean-François Augoyard (2007) recognized that quotidian mobility is like a text and applies a rhetorical analysis to reveal much about the meaning of vernacular urban space. He studied the walking patterns of a group of residents of public housing in Grenoble. He introduces the study by saying, “This work takes the *step* as its point of departure under a variety of headings” (2007:3, emphasis in original). He is, in a sense, asking his respondents to perform a kind of psycho-geography on their neighborhood.

Augoyard (2007:7) begins with the observation that the urban space that people typically know through usage is small and fragmented: “broken sections of neighborhoods scattered at the will of the fragmented activities that are our lot (work, domicile, leisure, consumption).” Our experience in these places is at odds with planners’ designs, even of more integrated areas such as a public housing complex, because usages are determined by forces broader than sanctioned activities and official uses.

Augoyard asked his respondents to take notes about their routine walks, and he then interviewed them about what they had recorded. His rhetorical analysis is partly about how the residents of the complex talked about their quotidian mobility. But its greater significance is the application of some categories of rhetoric to the quotidian mobility itself. “Through the practice of one’s walks, everyday life seems to take on the look of a language. The steps taken would expound spatiotemporal actions whose overall configuration would have a *style*. . . . Let us speak, rather, of a *walking rhetoric*” (2007:26, emphasis in original).

His main focus is on how different walking strategies enact ways of appropriating public space. In his view, “In fact, the qualification of appropriation depends neither on the quantity of the space traveled through nor on the constancy of territorial limits but, rather, on the degree of possibilities it includes. The ‘trace’ of a route signals an action and the way in which it unfolds in everyday time” (2007:16–17).

In individuals’ routine walks, Augoyard suggests, one’s sense of the meaning of space contains gaps. With regard to daily mobility—walking to and from work or school, walking to and from shopping, walking for leisure—not all parts of a walk are equally meaningful; some parts of the route are left out of the narratives the walkers construct. Augoyard terms this “ellipsis.” When our walks are structured by avoidance of specific areas, we substitute alternates for the avoided territory. This is “paratopism.”

In contrast to these forms of exclusion, combinatory figures involve redundancy. Augoyard notes, “Now, in examining people’s walks, one can see

that *the essential features of walking activity unfold in the mode of redundancy*" (2007:51, emphasis in original). Redundancy is an essential feature of everyday life: "This is probably the case for all forms of everydayness" (51). He notes a playfulness in walking, "metabole." "Metabole is always carried out in one's walks with a poetic, ironic, or playful tone to it. The space walked is valued for itself. The exhaustiveness toward which this form of redundancy tends expresses precisely the gratuitous character of the act" (52). The motive would seem to be to experience variety, "to diversify a site that can be walked in a multitude of directions" (54).

As an approach to psychogeography, or a phenomenology of urban walking, this rhetorical analysis could be quite useful. Urban dwellers may not realize how the decisions they make when appropriating their motility constitute a kind of text that structures the meanings that they attach to the activity. But seeing walks as "figures of speech" that use exclusions and redundancy can contribute to an ethnographic approach to quotidian mobility that places the urban dwellers' sense of place at the center of analysis.

William Helmreich (2013) notes that though New York has been the object of a great deal of sociological research, rarely does the research attempt to know the city as a totality. Toward that end, he devised a method to walk every street in every neighborhood in the city. He claims to have walked about six thousand miles. "I covered almost every block in Queens, Manhattan, Staten Island, Brooklyn, and the Bronx, including seldom-traversed industrial sections of the city" (2013:3). His method is auto-ethnographic combined with improvised unstructured interviews with some of the people he encounters.⁸

Helmreich makes a strong case for walking as a tool of urban ethnography. "Walking is critical to the task because it gets you out there and lets you know the city up close. However, you cannot merely walk *through* a city to know it. You have to stop long enough to absorb what's going on around you" (2013:3, emphasis in original). Walking is also a way to study walkers in the city, though that is not one of Helmreich's main concerns.

Like Lefebvre, Helmreich argues that to know a city you need to know its rhythms and cycles. He walked during the day and in the evening, during the week and on the weekends and holidays, when there is more activity on the streets. Of course, there is seasonal variation also. This approach is effective at focusing on everyday life. It is a part of the culture of New York that everyone lives, in varying degrees, but because it is everyday life, we often do not reflect on it as cultural practice. This is what he means by "the city that no one knows."

⁸ All ethnography faces the same dilemma: to balance breadth and depth. One reason that so few have tried to study a city like New York as a totality is because the choice of that kind of breadth comes at a sacrifice of depth. Helmreich spent four years on this project and collected a lot of interesting narrative bits, but the sociological analysis is thin and it is hard to get a sense of which details are part of patterns and which are unique. The research in this volume, like most of the literature, offers greater depth with less breadth.

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The strongest part of the study is the description of the patterns of intergroup interaction, the kind of everyday cooperation that characterizes all global cities. New York is a collection of many ethnic groups, the full range of races, of natives and immigrants, of different religious communities, and, of course, of different social classes. The city is not without conflict, but much of everyday life is a matter of implicit cooperation. New York is not a “melting pot” as much as a mosaic.

Using a much more modest auto-ethnographic approach—riding the B68 bus in Brooklyn—Krase (2012) arrives at the same conclusion. Krase investigated how people across social groups—ethnic, linguistic, religious, and racial—interact in the quotidian setting of public transportation. He suggests, “There is perhaps no better way to appreciate the embodied or inhabited nature of living with cultural difference . . . than by using public transportation in global cities such as Brooklyn” (2012:239). He continues, “We might argue that, in essence, multiculturalism is an unintended consequence of globalization” (239).

Along with greater attention to everyday mobility, urban researchers are focusing more on the embodied and emplaced nature of urban life. The urban culturalist perspective has called attention to the ways in which urban dwellers form affective attachments to particular places in the city, and that this is a key aspect of urban experience. We develop feelings about urban places in large measure as a result of the ways that our bodily senses mediate our routine activities in urban spaces. Sociologists, anthropologists, and geographers are elaborating on the complexity of these processes (see, for example, Adams and Guy 2007; Crossley 2006; Hsu 2008).

Walking is a significant urban activity, in part, because its pace is slow enough to draw in a multisensory experience. Much has been written about the importance of seeing the city and vision in urban interactions (Simmel 1924). Other bodily senses are being added to the picture in more recent scholarship. The city is experienced by its odors (Low 2006; Porteous 2006) and sounds (Bull 2000; Wissmann 2014), as well as its appearance. In general, we can think about this as “somatic work” of urban dwellers, or “the range of linguistic and alinguistic reflexive experiences and activities by which individuals interpret, create, extinguish, maintain, interrupt, and/or communicate somatic sensations that are congruent with personal, interpersonal, and/or cultural notions of moral, aesthetic, and/or logical desirability” (Vannini, Waskul, and Gottschalk 2012:18). This somatic work is guided by social norms, which urban dwellers learn through experience and socialization.

One of the most important contemporary researchers of urban walking as an embodied phenomenon is Jennie Middleton (2009, 2010, 2011). She has used walking diaries and in-depth interviewing to explore how walking is connected to the affective experience of time, space, and place (2009) as well as the material and technological aspects of everyday vernacular urban life (2010) in London. One of the most important insights of this research is the claim that “the intensification of certain senses at certain times that makes us aware of corporeal planes of experience” (2010:577). This is particularly significant for

understanding of the sociability of urban mobility, and especially how it can be deployed strategically. One of the most profound feelings of power comes from acting in mass actions in public space. However much one might be inclined to favor collective action as a political tactic, it is primarily in the movement of a large group of people in public space that one experiences social movement power as a material fact.

Theorizing on everyday life has established the importance of habitual, or pretheoretical, processes (Jacobsen 2009). Indeed, one could argue that this quality is the defining feature of “the everyday.” In quotidian mobility, the materiality of urban life is experienced through the interaction of bodies (the individual and others, usually strangers) with things and places, unfolding over time. Urban dwellers may not always be aware of why they make the mobility choices that they do, but these patterns are essential to the formation of affective bonds—positive and negative—to urban places. Middleton’s research shows “how decisions to walk are not only made up of factors relating to the built environment or people’s health, as frequently considered in the policy arena, but need to also be understood as intimately bound up with people’s day-to-day routines” (2011:2858). She continues, “Understanding habit as situated and part and parcel of the unfolding action of urban pedestrian movement enables the transformative potential of habitual walking behaviour to be realized” (2859).⁹ This becomes especially clear in Part IV of this volume. This transformative potential is vital to the public realm, as Lefebvre (1991, 1992) also noted.

As urban experience is multisensory and embodied, many urban researchers incorporate sensory research strategies into their tool kits. Sarah Pink (2009) has written more lucidly than anyone else on sensory ethnography. She notes, “One might argue that sensory experience and perception has ‘always’ been central to the ethnographic encounter, and thus also to ethnographers’ engagements with the sociality and materiality of their research” (10). As the researchers in this volume demonstrate, auto-ethnography is one way for urban researchers to more fully engage sensory research, because it puts researchers in the streets, as it were, with the people in the communities they study. It also puts the researcher in the everyday rhythms of the people being studied. Embodiment is about understanding both space and time as phenomenological and material. As Pink (2009:17) points out, connecting the sensing body with the landscape is a way to gain insight into “the constitution of the self and the articulation of power relations.” This is a necessary task to understand how the dimensions of race and ethnicity, gender, social class, and politics structure urban social life.

This volume is divided into four parts: race and ethnicity, gender, social class, and power and politics. A brief introduction to each part describes the chapters in the part and highlights their points of correspondence. Most of the

⁹ Middleton is interested in sustainable mobility. This is not a major theme in the present volume, though Kristen Williams and Amber Wiley provide some discussion of the topic in Chapters 9 and 10, respectively.

research presented here is focused on cities in the United States, but there are important points of comparison. A broader view, such as this, is necessary to develop a meaningful sociological understanding of walking as a form of quotidian mobility in urban spaces.

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