

The socialities of everyday urban walking and the 'right to the city'

Abstract

This paper explores the socialities of everyday urban walking. The paper begins from the starting contention that a wide range of social and cultural theory, urban planning, and transport literatures position walking as a practice that unproblematically encourages 'social mixing', 'community cohesion' and 'social interaction'. Through the analysis of in-depth interview and diary data from research on urban walking in London, this paper engages with a series of underexamined questions. What for example is the nature of social interactions on foot? Who are they with, what initiates them and how do they unfold? How do these interactions relate to how we understand the relationship between walking and urban space? Attention is drawn to verbal and non-verbal interactions of strangers as they walk and to the significance of the practical accomplishment of walking together. However, an examination of the discursive organisation of diary and interview data extends existing work concerning the practical organisation of everyday pedestrian mobilities by considering the significance of participants' accounts of their walking experiences. This analytic move foregrounds a counterposition to dominant discourses surrounding everyday walking practices that is situated in the context of broader concerns with everyday urban politics and the 'right to the city'. This approach contributes to a clearer engagement with the socialities of urban walking whilst raising important questions concerning the ways in which particular walking discourses inform urban scholarship. The paper concludes that in the promotion of walking as a form of low-carbon active travel greater account should be taken of pedestrian encounters.

Key words: Walking; encounters; urban space; everyday life; urban politics; 'right to the city'

Introduction

The relationship between walking and the city is multiple and complex, with engagements ranging from the rational and planned to the poetic and sensual. Social encounters are of particular significance for the ways in which pedestrian practices unfold. However, as Ingold and Vergunst (2008) highlight, 'that walking is social may seem obvious, although it is all the more remarkable, in this light, that social scientists have devoted so little attention to it' (2). This paper engages with this concern through an exploration of the social dimensions of contemporary urban walking. An examination of qualitative empirical data collected as part of a wider study on urban walking in London is drawn upon to develop the argument that mobile interactions on foot can be better understood through a focus on the social accomplishment of walking. The paper argues that this form of engagement enables alternative perspectives to emerge that counter the dominant discourses surrounding urban walking practices across social and cultural theory, urban, planning, and transport literatures. In particular, it is contended that the promotion of walking as a form of low-carbon mobility and mode of active travel should not only place emphasis on the built environment, safety, and the health implications of walking but take greater account of how pedestrian encounters relate to the multiple ways in which walking is engaged with, understood, and promoted.

The paper starts by considering a range of writings concerned with the social aspects of walking including work on new urbanism, the politics of streetscapes, public space, and walking as a method to understand the city. This critical discussion is then used as the basis for posing a series of underexamined questions. Who are urban pedestrians interacting with? Who initiates these encounters, how do they then unfold and why do they matter. Furthermore, despite these interactions occurring as people walk, to what extent does walking have a role in facilitating them? Lastly, how do these interactions relate more broadly to how we understand the relationship between walking and urban space? Whilst work within interactional mobility studies has long been concerned with the interrelations between talk and embodiment in mobile social interactions (see McIlvenny et al., 2009, 2013), the field of mobilities has re-engaged with classic work in sociology as a means of developing a 'new vocabulary for contemporary mobility analysis' for understanding the 'facework and flow' of urban mobile practices (Jensen, 2006). In line with such approaches, attention is drawn in this paper to the verbal and non-verbal interactions of strangers as they walk, the significance of things that mediate these exchanges, and the practical accomplishment of walking together. However, in examining the discursive organisation of the diary and interview

data, the paper moves on to counter the romanticised discourses that often surround everyday walking practices. This analytic focus not only extends existing work concerning the practical organisation of everyday mobilities such as walking but contributes to a clearer engagement with the socialities of urban walking in the context of a broader series of concerns with everyday urban politics and the 'right to the city'. The paper concludes by engaging with the implications of how particular walking discourses inform urban scholarship.

Research context: new walking studies and pedestrian policy

Over the last fifteen years, there has been a growing interest in walking as method and practice. This is reflected in a range of interdisciplinary workshops and networks, conference sessions, and edited collections exploring walking as both a topic and mode of social research. These engagements with walking are multiple, with it being understood and conceptualised in numerous different ways. From a transport perspective there is work that considers walking in relation to the promotion of active travel within the broader context of sustainability debates (Pooley et al., 2013; Tight and Givoni, 2010). Other related studies have considered the role walking plays in children's everyday lives such as the journey to school (Ross, 2007; Murray, 2009; Pooley et al., 2010). There is work that engage with the multiple types, forms and characteristics of peripatetic movements in specific contexts such as tourist practices (see Edensor, 1998), contemporary art (see Butler, 2006; Phillips, 2005; Pinder, 2001; Rendell, 2006), and rural settings (see Wylie, 2005). There is also work that provides historical accounts of walking via its multiple manifestations over time (see Solnit, 2001; Careri, 2002). Other commentaries engage with peripatetic activities as modes of generating collaborative knowledge (see Anderson, 2004), or as a means of apprehending the landscape, city or 'self' (see Ingold, 2004; Macauley, 2000; Wylie, 2005). Furthermore, there are those who draw upon the concept of the flâneur and pedestrian movement as a means of 'reading' the city (see Benjamin, 1983; Rossiter and Gibson, 2003; Solnit, 2001), or as a form of urban emancipation that opens up a range of democratic possibilities for the everyday pedestrian to disrupt the 'rational plan' of the city (see De Certeau, 1984).

In parallel to a growing academic interest in walking, there has been a general shift in the UK and other countries to re-orientate transport planning from facilitating private car use to encouraging low-carbon forms of transport such as walking and cycling (see DETR, 1998, 2000; DfT, 1996). For example, in the UK a series of policy documents were published in 2004 that coincided with the launch of the first national 'Walking and Cycling Action Plan' (DfT, 2004) and firmly positioned

walking as a healthy and low-carbon mode of transport that benefits 'the community' and is 'good' for 'business' (CLP, 2001). The London walking plan was a product of the then Mayor, Ken Livingstone's, 'vision' to make London one of the world's most walking friendly cities by 2015. The plan detailed the benefits of, and potential barriers to, walking. Its stated aim was to encourage walking and, in doing so, provide benefits which included 'a greater use of public transport; a better environment; social inclusion; healthier lifestyles; an improved economy' (TfL, 2004: 15). With the arrival in office of the subsequent Mayor, Boris Johnson, a new 'Mayor's Transport Strategy' was introduced (GLA, 2010). This document also sets out a series of recommendations to improve the walking environment, including better pedestrian access and quality of information for wayfinding. Despite there being many other issues relating to how and why people walk (see Middleton, 2009, 2010, 2011a,b), the dominant theme informing both Mayoral administrations was the unverified premise that with appropriate built environments and public information, people will make more healthy and sustainable transport choices.

These academic and policy concerns with promoting pedestrian movement provided the context for a wider study on urban walking focusing on the social dimensions of moving on foot, the relationship between walking and the built environment, and the many different types, forms and characteristics of walking. The research took place across a transect through the inner London boroughs of Islington and Hackney, allowing the walking experiences of different groups of people to be explored. A mixed method approach was adopted including a postal survey, experiential walking photo diaries, and in-depth interviews (see REFERENCE TO AUTHOR, for further discussion of the research setting and discursive analytic approach). In addition to obtaining a broader picture of the walking patterns of residents across the Islington and Hackney transect, a postal survey enabled participant recruitment for the collection of walking photo diaries and in-depth interviews. Notwithstanding the selection of a random sample of addresses, it was notable as surveys were returned that a high proportion of respondents were in 'professional' occupations. Hoggart et al. (2002) note several limitations of postal surveys of this kind that include respondents tending to be those within higher income brackets and with a more 'formal' educational background. A similar situation emerged with respect to the ethnic mix of respondents, with 90% of respondents classifying themselves as 'White British', 'White Irish' or 'Other White Group' and only 9% responding across all other ethnic groups. This limited detailed investigation of social variations across the transect in terms of issues associated with pedestrian movement, levels of wealth,

social deprivation or ethnicity. However, the study provided a range of qualitative data for a detailed examination of the social dimensions of walking discussed in this paper.

The diary task involved participants providing details of their walking patterns by noting down the date, time, how long, and where they walked, for consecutive days in one week starting on a day of their choice and then providing an accompanying account of their pedestrian experiences. A camera was also given to each diary participant for them to take photographs of anything that struck them as significant or interesting. Both the diary and any photographs were then used as a discussion prompt in the follow-up interviews, a method referred to by Zimmerman and Wieder (1977) as the 'diary, diary - interview method'. At one level, the value of using photographs as static representations in capturing movement of any kind can be questioned. However, rather than using the photographs as visual records of residents' walking patterns, particular attention was paid in the analysis to how participants actively constructed accounts of their images. The photographs were not positioned as stand-alone data that could be analysed as if they provide some external and neutral perspective on walking. Rather, the photographs were analysed as resources in the construction of participant's accounts concerning their pedestrian movements. They provided an alternative modality to talk or text that allowed participants to create a variety of positions concerning their walking experiences. In other words, the photographs were understood as objects that mediate the production of 'knowledges' of walking that are context specific (Latour, 2005; Middleton and Brown, 2005).

The socialities of walking emerge as significant features in the pedestrian practices of the 36 research participants¹. The following discussion draws upon a selection of the diary and in-depth interview data as a means of exploring these experiences in further detail. The data extracts presented in this paper were chosen in order to exhibit a diversity of research participants in accordance with age, gender and socio-economic status. In particular, analytic attention is given to the discursive organisation of participants' interview and diary accounts (see Edwards, 1997; Potter, 2004). First, the following section provides a wider context to situate such concerns by paying close attention to the multiple ways in which the socialities of walking have been engaged with across a range of different spheres.

¹ 18 – 29 years (14%); 30 – 39 years (41%); 40 – 49 years (17%); 50 – 59 years (14%); over 60 (14%).

Pedestrian socialities

It is widely acknowledged that the New Urbanist planning movement emerged in North America in the 1980s as an antidote to automobile dominated, residential suburban sprawl. Uniform developments consisting of houses built in neotraditional architectural styles began to appear in many US, Canadian and European cities throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. The fundamental principles of the New Urbanist movement concern what are positioned as 'liveable' spaces at a human scale. Planning regulations see the enforcement of on-street parking and the location of 'commercial and civic centres at a walkable distance from most homes, and zone activity spaces for mixed – rather than single – use purposes' (Falconer Al-Hindi and Till, 2001: 191). Streets and public spaces are key design elements of the New Urbanist built environment; 'Streets have an overt social purpose. They are thought of as public space' and 'are designed to encourage street life, since any increase in pedestrian activity is thought to strengthen community bonds and promote sense of place' (Talen, 1999: 1364). There is a significant emphasis placed on walking, with the design of the built environment considered as fundamental to its encouragement. This focus on the built environment and travel behaviour is a strong reflection of New Urbanist thinking that 'the built environment will increase the likelihood of community-orientated behaviours, such as walking, and these behaviours will in turn enhance community-orientated attitudes, such as neighbourhood attachment' (Lund, 2002: 303). However, there is also scepticism concerning the relationship between neighbourhood design, travel behaviour and developing a sense of community. For example, Talen (1999) rejects this relationship by stating that 'our current understanding of the relationship between town design and sense of community is largely without empirical basis, and is therefore deficient' (1362), as such 'it would be difficult to conclude that new urbanists' claims to foster a sense of community via neighbourhood form are substantiated by social science research' (1369). Furthermore, Kellerman (2006), in the context of an exploration of personal mobilities, observes that 'it has been questionable, whether walking on the street, being directly exposed to fellow walkers, encourages or discourages any kind of social contact' (90).

The work of Danish architect Jan Gehl also places great emphasis on the relationship between the built environment and the sociality of urban walking. For Gehl (2010), 'in various combinations, the opportunities to see, hear and talk are a prerequisite for communication between people in city spaces' (134). His writings propose how cities should be planned at a more human scale and as 'cities for people'. Spaces designed to prioritise the needs of pedestrians over motorised forms of

transport are a fundamental element of Gehl's philosophy with 'walkable' and 'public spaces for a changing public life' held up as the ultimate urban planning goals. The association between walking and specific forms of sociality emerging from the New Urbanist agenda, and the work of those such as Gehl, form a powerful discourse, with particular significance for understanding the thinking that informs urban, transport and pedestrian policy. However, forms of urban planning are not the only perspectives to consider the social dimensions of walking in the context of urban space.

Concerns with walking and urban sociality are frequently embedded in work focusing on the politics of streetscapes. For example, Jonasson (2004) provides an empirical examination of a traffic intersection in Gothenburg as a means of understanding the micro interactions between pedestrians, cyclists, motorists etc. The notion of shared space can also be situated in the context of such concerns in relation to negotiations between different road users. Shared space is a form of street design whereby the physical barriers separating motorists and pedestrians are removed as a means of traffic calming. Increased interactions between different road users are central to the concept of shared space with a view to creating more convivial urban spaces. The underpinning philosophies of shared space are strongly linked to New Urbanist thinking, which places an emphasis on pedestrianised routes due to roads being considered as a significant barrier to social interactions and the creation of liveable streets (see for example Appleyard et al., 1981). However, as with New Urbanism, concerns have been raised in relation to the increasing support and implementation of shared space schemes across the UK. For example, Imrie (2012) questions the extent to which shared space is a suitable design feature of the built environment for more vulnerable road users, such as those with vision impairments. He argues that shared space is an 'auto-disabling' environment and has the potential to compromise the safety and well-being of these groups through increasing contact with motorised forms of transport. Furthermore, the concept of shared space is based on the underlying assumption that it is drivers who need to be socialised. This again results in walking being positioned as an implicitly idealised mode of transport due to the perceived potentials of the social interactions it may engender.

The significance of mobile urban encounters and the interaction of strangers as they negotiate the city on foot have also been emphasised within urban and social theoretical writings in the context of city spaces being conceived as 'open, civilising, and democratic' (Bridge and Watson, 2003: 369; see also Benjamin, 1983; Jacobs, 1972; Merry, 1981; Sennett, 1970, 1977, 1990). For example, Sennett (1970) draws upon the nature of encounters between pedestrian strangers in urban public spaces. He considers the social heterogeneity of public space in the city to offer 'radically open and unpredictable encounters' that are 'socially progressive and civilising' (Bridge and Watson, 2003: 369). For Jacobs

(1972) urban sidewalks are vital elements to public trust in cities. She contends how the interactions between strangers as they walk the city streets are fundamental to building such trust as 'the trust of a city street is formed over time from many, many little public sidewalk contacts' (67). However, the writings of those such as Sennett and Jacobs not only romanticise urban walking practices but are characterised by a lack of empirical data on how these forms of urban sociability actually emerge or are accounted for by pedestrians themselves.

Concerns with people's rights to move in, through, across, and between different places are fundamental to understandings of everyday urban mobility, because 'the capacity to move is central to what it is to be a citizen' (Cresswell, 2009, 110). The links between walking encounters and urban sociability can be thought about more closely in relation to the 'right to the city' and the everyday tactics of urban pedestrians. Much has been written concerning the 'right to the city' with some of the most influential work emerging from the work of Lefebvre (1970, 1991). For Lefebvre, citizenship and political belonging emerge from the notion of the 'right to the city' in the form of inhabitance as opposed to formal citizenship status. These 'rights' can be considered in two interrelated categories (Purcell, 2003). The first is the right to appropriate space in terms of inhabitants having the right to occupy, use, work, live etc. in specific city spaces. The second is the right to participate in decision-making at various political scales in the production of urban space. It is the former category that has most relevance for the context of this paper. The politics of urban walking have been more directly engaged with in the seminal work of de Certeau (1984) in relation to pedestrian 'tactics' as a form of resistance to the 'strategies' of urban planners.

Engagements with, and critiques of, both Lefebvre and de Certeau are multiple and extensive with the notion of a 'right to the city' having been mobilised in different ways. Within academic literature the concept has been drawn upon in contexts ranging from social movements and protest (Souza, 2010); segregation and gentrification (Smith, 1996); race and racial identities (McCann, 1999); gendered and feminist perspectives on new forms of citizenship (Fenster, 2005); and surveillance and social control (Hubbard, 2004). In the writings of Harvey (2008) he proposes that the struggles of the urban crisis should be addressed by adopting 'right to the city' as a 'working slogan and political ideal' as a means of contributing to a broader social movement necessary for the urban dispossessed to take back control. For Mitchell (2003), the key question is who has the 'right to the city' and its public spaces. He questions the 'tenuous nature of Lefebvre's 'right to the city' in arguing that any rights are dependent on concerns with public space. More recently, Purcell (2013) highlights how the meanings of the 'right to the city' are 'increasingly indistinct'. He moves on to suggest that through a close reading of Lefebvre's

original text emerges a radical understanding of the 'right to the city' that is an 'essential element of a wider political struggle for revolution' (142). In doing so he identifies a gap between Lefebvre's radical conception of the 'right to the city' and contemporary urban initiatives concerned with the 'struggle to augment the rights of urban inhabitants against property rights of owners' (142). Merrifield (2011) makes a related argument in pointing to the need to re-coup the radical potential of the 'right to the city' by moving beyond it to a 'politics of encounter' which it is not about asking for rights but 'just acting'. He concludes that this move 'is potentially more empowering because it is politically and geographically more inclusive' (479). The remainder of this paper considers the 'right to the city' in relation to mobility and the frequently contested use of urban space on foot as a means of opening up new ways of thinking about everyday urban politics. In particular, it enables the concept to extend beyond political slogans and an over-emphasis on social movements towards a focus on everyday micro-politics and practical policy concerns.

Questions of power also emerge from the 'right to the city' discourse. In other words, who can walk in certain urban spaces, and where, is mediated by a series of power relations. Concerns with power are prominent in Bauman's (1994) work focusing on the fear that can be experienced by the urban pedestrian; 'it is mostly about *passing* from here to there, as fast as one can manage, preferably without stopping, better still looking around' (148). The discussion goes on to argue that for those who cannot afford the security of a car, the 'street is more a jungle than a theatre. One goes there because one must. A site with risks, not chances' (148). The contradictions and complexities surrounding the practice of walking and questions of power are perhaps best exemplified by some of the academic writings on women's experiences in urban public spaces. For example, Wilson (1991) draws specific attention to how the city is a place of excitement and opportunity for women and not just a place to be feared. She describes how her mother planted within her 'a conviction of the fateful pleasures to be enjoyed and the enormous anxieties to be overcome in discovering the city' (1). She goes on to argue that 'women's experience of urban life is even more ambiguous than that of men, and safety is a crucial issue. Yet it is necessary also to emphasise the other side of city life and to insist on women's right to the carnival, intensity and even the risks of the city' (10). Bridge and Watson (2003) also describe not only some of the fears for women negotiating urban public space by foot but also women who found freedom roaming the streets. Concerns with race are also significant to any discussion of pedestrian power relations. Elijah Anderson has written extensively on race in US cities. His in-depth sociological accounts of inner city black America provide powerful insights into the ways in which people learn to negotiate public space (Anderson, 1999, 2003, 2011). Of particular relevance here is Anderson's examination of the 'code of the street' whereby a set of informal rules govern interpersonal behaviour.

When the 'codes' are broken in such contexts, the sanctions are high and often involve violence. Anderson argues that such 'codes' emerge due to a lack of faith in the police and judicial system resulting in people taking on greater personal responsibility for their own safety when navigating urban space. As the paper will move on to highlight, concerns with what it is to be a 'good pedestrian' are also replete with and premised on notions of power.

Walking the city has increasingly been adopted as a method for understanding urban space. For example, the concept of the *flâneur* has frequently been drawn upon as a 'method' for reading city spaces (Jenks and Neves, 2000; Nuvolati, 2014; Soukup, 2013; Tester, 1994) whilst being popularised in the recent growth of psycho-geography in the mainstream media as an approach for attempting to map the ambience and 'softer' dimensions of urban life (see for example, Self and Steadman, 2007; and Sinclair, 2003). For Sorkin (2009), 'walking is not simply an occasion for observation but an analytical instrument' (81). Across the social sciences there have also been growing concerns with mobile methods (Büscher et al., 2011; Fincham et al., 2010) with walking frequently being the mode choice adopted for 'go a long's' whereby the aim of the interview is to interact with research participants 'on the move'. There is an implicit sociality that can be associated with walking methods and the formal identification of walking as a research method has generated empirical data on a range of urban issues from urban regeneration initiatives (Ricketts Hein et al., 2008) to the significance of place for health and well-being (Carpiano, 2009). However, the mobile methods literature has a tendency to present walking methods as a means of producing superior knowledge or data to that of the static interview (cf. Hitchings, 2011; Merriman, 2013) which echoes the privileged and romanticised notions associated with walking and the wanderings of the *flâneur*.

Ethnomethodologists are concerned with the practical accomplishment of walking and the social interactions emerging from pedestrian practices. For example, Ryave and Schenkein's (1974) 'Notes on the Art of Walking' focuses on pedestrian movement as an on going 'situated' and 'practical' accomplishment. The research concerns the continual social and spatial negotiations that play out in pedestrian movement and the ways in which both lone and group walkers negotiate each other as they move. In the classic sociological work of both Goffman and Simmel the visual, or face-to-face interaction, is a key feature of everyday mobile encounters. For example, Goffman (1963) notes 'that while many face engagements seem to be made up largely of the exchange of verbal statements, so that conversational encounters can in fact be used as the model, there are still other kinds of encounters where no word is spoken' (90). For Simmel (1971), this type of indifference is a coping strategy for negotiating the sensory overload of the city. Goffman (1963) refers to this as 'civil

inattention' whereby strangers are registered but not recognised or acknowledged. However, Laurier and Philo (2006) draw attention to Goffman's overemphasis of gesture over talk in social exchange. They argue that gestures should not be taken outside of language and that language should be understood as 'intimately bound up with the likes of embodied gesture, and woven into the ongoing (procedural) conduct of practical life' (196).

In the context of mobility in the contemporary city, Jensen (2006) argues for the work of Simmel and Goffman to be used as part of a 'new' vocabulary for 'contemporary mobility analysis' in a diverse range of empirical cases as a means of constructing 'new everyday life mobility tales'. As previously highlighted, the practical accomplishment of moving together has been recently revitalised through work developing new ways of documenting and describing these concerns (McIlvenny et al., 2014) in contexts as diverse as moving through a revolving door (Weilenmann et al., 2014) and learning the Lindy Hop (Broth and Keevallik, 2014). Situating urban pedestrian practices in the broader context of classic ethnomethodological studies such as Goffman and Simmel or more contemporary interactional mobility studies helps develop an understanding of the nature of social encounters on foot and the organisation of pedestrian actions. However, it tells us less about the implications of such interactions in relation to broader concerns with everyday urban politics. As such, the following data analysis provides a more nuanced understanding of everyday pedestrian encounters through paying closer attention to not only the practical accomplishment of walking but also how pedestrians account for these practices. As such, particular analytic attention is given to the discursive organisation of participants' accounts of their pedestrian practices. This analytic focus highlights not only the significance of talk in social exchanges on foot but also the multiple ways in which people articulate and account for their pedestrian encounters. The remaining discussion illustrates how rather than attention focusing on the immediacy of the act of walking itself, an engagement with pedestrian encounters requires a far greater reflection on how people narrate and account for their walking practices. This perspective directly contrasts with a predisposition in much, particularly transport, research on walking to overlook the accounts of pedestrians themselves with the act of walking frequently presented as a largely self-evident phenomenon.

Walking encounters and urban sociality

Whilst the significance of social encounters in academic writings on walking and pedestrian policy is evident, a key concern of the wider study was how issues associated with urban sociality emerged in the walking practices of research participants. In other words, how, and to what extent do social encounters feature in the everyday practices of urban pedestrians; how are they accounted for; and how do they relate more broadly to understandings of urban sociality? It is by attending to such concerns which responds to calls by those such as Koch and Latham (2011) that urban scholarship should pay more attention to 'how public life in cities is put together'. As one might expect, the rhythmic and routinised nature of people's walking experiences are of considerable relevance to how social interactions on foot unfold. For as Ingold and Vergunst (2008) point out: 'walking is a profoundly social activity: that in their timings, rhythms and inflections, the feet respond as much as does the voice to the presence and activity of others. Social relations, we maintain, are not enacted *in situ* but are paced out along the ground' (1). For many research participants the routinised familiarity (Seamon, 1980) of people's walking patterns, particularly dog walkers, are key initiators of such pedestrian social encounters. It is the habits and routines that emerge through repeated pedestrian practices that make other activities, such as socially interacting with other urban walkers, possible (cf. Middleton, 2011a). What walking enables in comparison to other modes of transport such as travelling by car, is a greater diversity of social interactions. In other words, moving on foot provides a wider range of opportunities for things or events to interrupt and intrude upon the flow of people's movements. However, what also became clear in examining participant's accounts of the photographs is that the issues of time, space, embodiment and social interaction are not only emergent analytic categories reflecting the overall concerns of the research (see REFERENCE TO THE AUTHOR), these issues are also what can be termed as participants' concerns or 'members categories' (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Sacks, 1992). In other words, participants orientated their accounts of their photographs to these emergent issues. For example, Gemma is a lawyer in her early 30's who lives in Barnsbury with her partner and young family. Her account of the photograph she took of the local lollypop lady (see Figure 1) is constructed in terms of the social issues that can be associated with walking such as pedestrian movement facilitating verbal exchanges on foot.



"I just took a picture of this because I always say hello to this lady. The thing was that I didn't know the range of the photograph and I thought I didn't know how she'd feel if I took a picture of her so I took it in secret around the corner, so that's the lollypop lady there she serves the school which is just up the top".

(Interview – Gemma, Barnsbury resident, Islington)

Figure 1: Photo diary – Gemma, Barnsbury resident, Islington



“And that was a nice plant in Hoxton Square. There’s bars at the back there and the school is on this corner here, the White Cube is there. So it was a case of showing a nice square that gets a real mix of people using it actually because in the mornings when I got past there’s usually some guy with an old can of Special Brew sitting on there [the bench] but when I come home it can be everyone trendy comes out of the pubs and goes and sits there and they’ve got their designer beers”.

(Interview – Susannah, London Fields resident, Hackney)

Figure 2: Photo diary – Susannah, London Fields resident, Hackney

Susannah lives alone in London Fields and is also in her mid 30’s. As she made reference to the photograph she took of the plant in Hoxton Square that she passes on her way to and from work, she also accounted for its significance in terms of the social dimensions of walking (see Figure 2). In contrast to Gemma and her references to verbal exchanges, it is possible to understand Susannah’s account in terms of how she frames her photograph with respect to non-verbal interactions with strangers as she moves on foot. Yet the interview extract does more than highlight

the social issues that can be associated with walking. As she referred to the changing occupants of Hoxton Square throughout the day, Susannah's account draws attention to how these social issues relate to time. This begins to highlight the importance of understanding these issues not in isolation but in terms of how they relate to each other in the context of pedestrian movement (see INSERT REF TO AUTHOR).

In the following diary extract, Ken describes walking back from work with his young daughter.

"5.35 – 6.05 - Rather much slower walk home... Tilly insists on walking much of the way, and often turns and toddles off in another direction. But these walks are very significant to me as they are a simple way for us to spend some time outside with each other despite my working. She loves watching the kids playing soccer in the park".

(Diary – Ken, Barnsbury resident, Islington)

Ken's diary entry is orientated towards the significance of walking in his daily routine in relation to how it enables him to spend time with his daughter, which is important to him because of his full-time job in the City. This account, and others, of walking together draw attention to the significance of the social dimensions of pedestrian movement but not in relation to unplanned social interactions with strangers, as some literature suggests. Rather, the value of the social aspects of walking lie in how it maintains existing social relations, in contrast to creating new ones. For example, this London Fields resident also reflects upon the value of walking together:

"Several times a week I walk my partner to work in the morning. This gives us time to be together having conversation in a way we don't get at home, where there is always something else to do. We have some of our best talks on our morning walks and often solve dilemmas or come up with creative ideas. We have a specific route we follow that avoids major roads & avoids the canal (too much bicycle traffic in the a.m. – also it's too difficult for 2 people to walk side by side when cyclists come by)".

(Diary - Lindsey, London Fields, Hackney resident)

Lindsey is an unemployed London Fields resident in her early 40's. Like many other participants, she positions being able to walk together, side-by-side, as particularly significant in her everyday experiences on foot. She frames her account in relation to how this provides her and her partner with opportunities *"to be together having conversation in a way we don't get at home"*, how they have some of their *"best talks"*, and *"often solve dilemmas or come up with creative ideas"*. However, more is at stake here. Lindsey also draws attention to the issue of cyclists and pedestrians by explaining how they have a *"specific route"* that not only *"avoids major roads"* but *"avoids the canal"* and the *"bicycle traffic"* as *"it's too difficult for 2 people to walk side by side when cyclists come by"*. The interactions and potential conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians is a recurrent theme emerging from the data and relates to broader considerations with the everyday politics associated with pedestrian socialities.

As previously discussed, the 'right to the city' concept has been mobilised in a multitude of different contexts including academic writings, social movements and public policies. The adaptation of, and diverse engagements with, the concept are often a far cry from its Lefebvrian origins. What is interesting in the data being discussed in this paper is that in contrast to abstract notions of the 'right to the city' being adopted as part of a broader analytical framework these very issues emerge as 'members categories' (Edwards and Potter, 1992; Potter and Wetherell, 1987). In other words, participants themselves orientate their everyday encounters on foot in relation to concerns with a 'right to the city'. This is exemplified in the below account as Dave, like many others, reflects upon encounters he has experienced with cyclists over the years:

"years and years ago a friend of mine, Stefan, and I used to walk along the canal on a regular basis, and cyclists used to come past and if they didn't ring their bell to warn you they were coming up... there was nothing worse than you're just walking along minding your own business and suddenly something whoosh's past you, even if it was safe or not. And we used to always scream at them 'get a bell!' and often they'd remonstrate but we didn't really care.

(Interview – Dave, De Beauvoir Town resident, Hackney)

Dave is a London Fields resident in his mid-50s who has lived and worked in the London borough of Hackney for over 20 years. Despite being a frequent cyclist, his account is framed around the confrontational nature of interactions he has had with cyclists whilst he is on foot (“...we used to always scream at them ‘get a bell!’ and often they’d remonstrate...”). At one level, it is possible to examine these tensions in relation to concerns with transport policy and the ways in which walking and cycling are frequently promoted together (DfT, 2004) with only minimal attention paid to the potential conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists (GLA, 2010). Yet there is more to participants’ accounts of these forms of pedestrian encounter that requires extending beyond concerns with how tensions are engaged with in urban and transport policy contexts. In particular, several accounts, such as Dave’s, are orientated to the multiple everyday tactics drawn upon in relation to the practical accomplishment of walking together. In particular, these accounts raise significant concerns with who has the ‘right’ to appropriate and move through different urban spaces and, more significantly, the micro geographies of how these spaces are actually moved through. This point is illustrated further in the following interview extract in terms of the reflections Ros provides on some of the everyday tensions between pedestrians and cyclists:

“the other day I was on a pedestrian crossing, my son was in the buggy, the green man was green and a cyclist shot through the red light and nearly took out the buggy, I yelled at him, “fool, can’t you see the green light is on red” and he started giving me loads and loads of agro so I just said “this is complete bull shit, your light’s on red”. I’m normally a cyclist and I find that it’s quite interesting when you get into those sorts of situations. At the same time, the two bike accidents I’ve had, the pedestrians just walked straight out into bike lanes with no warning”.

(Interview - Ros, De Beauvoir Town resident, Hackney)

Ros is an academic in her mid 30’s who lives in Hackney with her husband and young son. Her account describes an encounter she had with a cyclist whilst walking with her son in the buggy. She draws attention to the confrontational nature of this interaction, as the cyclist “*shot through the red light and nearly took out the buggy*”. This confrontation emerges from the ways in which the cyclist’s actions interrupt Ros’s expectations of her continual momentum over the pedestrian crossing. Ros’s account is an example of the potential dangers and conflicts between different

forms of traffic in urban spaces and the ways in which these encounters are not always successfully spatially negotiated (cf. Imrie, 2012 on visual impairment and shared space). Yet more is at stake in Ros's account. For as Wetherell (1998) argues: 'a focus on participants' orientations can be extremely revealing about the formation of subject positions' (410). Following Ros' reporting of how she "yelled" at the "fool", her account moves on to attend to the problematic of raising a complaint. In reporting such an event Ros is accountable for the basis of that reporting (see Edwards and Potter, 1992). The 'reasonabilities' of Ros's complaint, the 'reasons for' and 'being reasonable', are formulated in terms of how she is "*normally a cyclist*" and finds it "*quite interesting when you get into those sorts of situations*". Moreover, in reporting the details of her interaction and then point out how the "*two bike accidents*" she has had have been the result of pedestrians walking "*straight out into bike lanes with no warning*", she further makes the cyclist in question accountable for his actions. In other words, Ros is not one of those pedestrians who walk out with "*no warning*" and is therefore not at fault.

The architectural work of those such as Jan Gehl, through design interventions such as designated pedestrianised areas, aims to reduce pedestrian related conflicts and hazards. Taken further, these designs could be argued to alter the dynamics of urban sociality in a manner that promotes certain kinds of 'rights to the city'. However, it is also possible, and more relevant in the broader context of this paper, to think through the 'tensions' between pedestrians and cyclists in terms of how they highlight particular mobility codes. For example, Jensen (2006: 155) highlights the significance of what Goffman terms the 'chicken challenge' (Goffman, 1972: 14) in less friendly street engagements, such as those accounted for by Ros, whereby a person can be systematically ignored and thus forced 'into a position of uncertainty'. More broadly Jensen discusses how these types of mobile urban encounters emerge from informal mobility codes and norms relating to mobile practices in the city. These types of mobility codes are something also reflected in Jonasson's (2004) work on traffic practices and the production of space as he points out how 'all traffic participants (including pedestrians) prefer continual movement to unexpected interruptions', how it is 'inappropriate... to interrupt a shared expectation of continual movement in space', and 'impolite to break the continual movement of a walking person' (44 – 45). However, what also becomes clear in participants' accounts is that through the ways pedestrian tensions and encounters are articulated a broader set of concerns emerge relating to what it is to be a 'good pedestrian' (cf. Middleton, 2010 on being a 'skilled and accomplished pedestrian'). Ros' interview extract is a clear example of how pedestrian identities emerge from how the practical accomplishment of what it is to walk together is accounted for. For as Jensen (2006) highlights:

'...the 'theatre of everyday life' is about production and re-production of identities and social order. Moving about either as pedestrian or as airborne jetsetter is a symbolic act of identity construction as well as it is an expression of action coordination with the physical movement...' (153).

However, focusing on the micro geographies of everyday encounters on foot reveals so much more than notions of being a 'good pedestrian' in relation to acquired walking skills equating to being an accomplished walker. In Pinder's (2011) engaging examination of walking as an artistic performance, he draws attention to the 'unsettling and provocative qualities' of walking practices and 'their ability to connect with current anxieties and political questions' (Pinder, 2011: 676). What becomes clear in participants' accounts of their experiences on foot is that articulations of what it is to be a 'good pedestrian' relate to a much broader everyday politics of urban social encounters. Such concerns are exemplified in the below interview extract as Charlie reflects upon his regular dog walking routes:

"But there's this certain route that I don't go anywhere near there because it was quite horrible, a lot of crack heads down Kingsland Road you know. And they weren't as nice as the homeless people that I used to hang out with or let my dog sort of chat to. That sounds really awful doesn't it but they're so aggressive and really, really vile and quite scary so if I'm walking with my suit on, you know, with a little fluffy white dog, you know I don't want to be on a main road where all those sort of dodgy people are hanging out."

(Interview – Charlie, De Beauvoir Town resident, Hackney)

Charlie starts his account by describing a route he avoids whilst walking his dog near his new home in De Beauvoir Town in Hackney because it *"was quite horrible"* and had *"a lot of crack heads"*. He directly contrasts this experience with the *"homeless people"* near his previous home in Highbury Fields, Islington who he *"used to hang out with"* or let his *"dog sort of chat to"*. Although Charlie moves on to acknowledge that what he is saying *"sounds really awful"*, he attends to this by placing a further emphasis on how the ways in which he finds these *"crack heads... so aggressive and really, really vile and quite scary"*. At one level it would be possible to align Charlie's account of his negative experiences of dog walking with those discussed by

Wilson (2001) on dogs such as poodles frequently being ‘... associated with deviant (human) sexualities, part of the social construction of the identity of the effeminate gay man...’ (133). Relationships between sexualities, space and place have been well documented elsewhere (see for example, Bell and Valentine, 1995; Browne et al., 2009; Knopp 1992), and more recent work has drawn upon mobilities informed approaches as a means of exploring the transformations of LGBT neighbourhoods in the Global North (Nash and Gorman-Murray, 2014). However, there has been much less explicit attention paid to the unfolding of pedestrian encounters in relation to broader concerns associated with the performance of sexual identities. For Charlie, tolerance of difference is a significant feature of his concerns with the everyday sociality of urban walking. Everyday gendered politics more broadly continue to be a key feature of pedestrian social encounters and serve as a further illustration of how actual walking practices connect to wider political concerns. For example, in the interview with Lindsey she was asked if she ever experienced any level of fear whilst walking her local area:

“I have the sense that when you’re in the area in the middle of the day and there are a lot of adults who are not wearing work related clothes, who are hanging out on the streets, I always feel more threatened, I feel like, people should have things to do – they should be going shopping, they should be working, you know what I mean during the day. Not mums with baby strollers, it’s mostly men, I feel more threatened by adult men and usually young adult men, doesn’t matter what race. Just sort of that young adult, not having anything to do kind of feeling, they often talk loud and take up a lot of space on the pavement, you can tell they’re not going to move over when you’re crossing them because they’re just making their statement

(Interview – Lindsey, London Fields resident, Hackney)

Lindsey starts her account by drawing attention to the expectations associated with moving through certain spaces and places at specific times of day and the experiences of fear which can emerge when these expectations are not met. For Lindsey, she feels “*more threatened*” when “*adults who are not wearing work related clothes, who are hanging around out on the streets... during the day*”. At one level her account could be argued as a challenge to what have become dominant discourses in urban and pedestrian policy in terms of increased fear at night and the perceived threats of groups of teenagers on the street. In other words, a challenge to ‘everyone who speaks

about the night [and] assumes this knowledge as self-evident' (Blum, 2003: 143). However, there is more to be said about Lindsey's account, particularly in relation to social encounters on foot. As Lindsey explains that it is "*mostly men*", and "*usually young adult men*", who she feels most threatened by she draws attention to how these feelings emerge from the way these groups of young, male adults appropriate space. In other words, they "*take up a lot of space on the pavement*" and are unlikely "*to move over*". Lindsey's concern is with stationary groups of young males who disrupt her flow of movement, from which her feelings of unease emerge. Whilst Lindsey's continual movements on foot are far from a 'shared expectation' due to the nature of the social encounters she experiences ("*you can tell they're not going to move over*") they highlight the significance of the spatial politics of pedestrian encounters, particularly in relation to how participant accounts orientate to such concerns. They also relate to concerns with power.

Towards an everyday politics of urban walking

Elsewhere it has been argued that greater attention needs to be paid to the social and cultural geographies of everyday walking practices and for a closer alignment between new walking studies and more applied empirical work (Horton et al., 2014; Middleton, 2009, 2010, 2011a). This paper has taken forward and developed such concerns within the broader context of the socialities of walking. In doing so, both policy and academic concerns with the sociality of walking have been taken as the starting point for engaging with a series of underexamined questions in relation to the nature of everyday pedestrian encounters. What this discussion has illustrated is that greater attention needs to be paid to the complexities of the social dimensions of walking. For as Jensen (2006) argues, '... the basic ways of getting about in the city by no means are trivial features of urban life. They express a material and practical dimension as well as an important symbolic dimension, because the socio-spatial relation is a dialectical dynamism of great importance' (153). In line with classic ethnomethodological studies on walking (Ryave and Scheinken, 1974; Wolff, 1973), and more recent interactional mobility studies on moving together (see for example McIlvenny et al., 2009, 2014), this paper has highlighted the significance of the practical accomplishment of walking together. It is this focus that has made apparent some of the emergent tensions between both pedestrians themselves and other urban walkers and cyclists whilst also bringing to the fore issues concerning what makes a 'good pedestrian'. There is cycling research that has engaged with similar concerns in relation to 'good' and 'bad' cycling and the 'cycling citizen' (Aldred, 2010) but contemporary pedestrian practices have yet to be considered in these

terms. Furthermore, there have been calls to pay greater attention to the significance of how we move to relationships between cultural identity, citizenship and the state (see Spinney et al, 2015). In particular, how mobility actively constitutes citizen relations and the role that 'styles of movement' have in shaping forms of citizenship for mobile publics. What makes a 'good pedestrian' is a powerful discourse emerging both anecdotally and through much of the data collected as part of the wider research. There is certainly scope to consider these issues further in terms of how they relate to broader concerns with the promotion of low-carbon mobilities and active travel agendas.

The paper has also sought to analyse the discursive organisation of diary and interview accounts of peoples' pedestrian experiences and in doing so has further highlighted the significance of the micro politics of pedestrian urban encounters. It is these emergent concerns that counter discourses in some academic writings that romanticise everyday walking practices. However, of what significance are these counter narratives, why do they matter and why should attention be drawn to the nuanced ways in which they contradict romanticised discourses of walking? Much urban scholarship has focused on the relationship between urban politics and the city (see Allen and Cochrane, 2010; Brenner et al., 2011; Davidson and Martin, 2014; McFarlane, 2011). Whilst concerns with walking have a long tradition of being situated in relation to the micro politics of everyday life, this tends to be through a very particular lens associated with the work of theorists such as de Certeau (1984) and his seminal work on walking. de Certeau's understanding of the 'tactics' of pedestrians as a form of political resistance against the planners and architects of the city has been well rehearsed in multiple contexts. However, a discussion of the empirical material in this paper has drawn attention to the politics of the social dimensions of walking. In particular, the discursive approach adopted in the analysis of the data presented highlights the significance of how people articulate their everyday pedestrian practices and how these experiences are frequently framed in relation to emergent everyday politics such as how people appropriate space on foot and broader concerns with the 'right to the city'. These concerns warrant closer attention particularly insofar as how pedestrian social encounters relate to the production of urban political subjects. Whilst there are bodies of work within mobilities scholarship concerned with the politics of mobilities (see for example, Adey, 2006; Cresswell, 2010) there has been less explicit emphasis within urban studies on the associated everyday politics of low-carbon urban mobilities. This paper demonstrates an opportunity for work on low-carbon mobilities to engage with critical urban scholarship as a means of thinking more closely about the politics of everyday mobility practices such as walking. Considering the 'right to the city' in relation to mobility and the frequently

contested use of urban space on foot opens up new ways of thinking about everyday urban politics. As highlighted throughout this paper, it enables the concept to extend beyond political slogans and an over-emphasis on social movements towards a focus on everyday micro-politics and practical policy concerns. As such, concerns with promoting walking as a mode of low-carbon active travel in both academic and policy arenas needs to not only consider the built environment, safety, and the health implications of walking but take greater account of the significance of pedestrian encounters to how everyday walking is engaged with, understood, and promoted. This paper has demonstrated that everyday articulations of urban pedestrian socialities are fundamental to the further development of such understandings.

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