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ABSTRAKT

Das Gehen in einer urbanen Umgebung ist in vielen Diskursen präsent, angefangen bei der historischen Flânerie, die das Gehen mit dem Wert von Freiheit und Inspiration verknüpft, bis hin zu modernen Diskursen über Voyeurismus, Disziplin und Überwachung, Spektakel, Diskriminierung und Mechanismen der Maginalisierung. Dennoch ist das Gehen selten im Kontext politischer Ausdrucksformen detailliert diskutiert. Die Literatur über Proteste reduziert das Gehen in der Regel auf eine inhärente Form politischer Artikulation.

Gestützt auf die Konzepte des Ultradétournement, der Assemblage und politischer Theorien zielt diese Arbeit darauf ab, das Gehen als eine subversive und kollektive Praxis zu erörtern. In diesem Akt nutzt die politische Geste die Ästhetik des Alltags, um die soziale Ordnung zu pervertieren.

Als Ausgangspunkt dienen queere-feministische künstlerische Praktiken, die als 'Zweckentfremdung des Gehens' betrachtet werden könnten: das translokale Projekt "Mis(s)placed woman?" von Tanja Ostojić und die Prozession "Eating Europe" des Vereins Maiz. Durch die Kombination von analytischem Material - Archivressourcen und Interviews - erforscht diese Studie das politische Potenzial dieser Praktiken in diversen Kontexten. Indem sie die spezifischen Spaziergänge als Abweichungen von der öffentlichen Ordnung in der städtischen Umgebung versteht, erforscht diese Arbeit die Materialität des Gehens, seine symbolischen Gesten, die (Un-)Sichtbarkeit des Körpers, die Rolle von Affekten und die Korrelation von Gehpraktiken mit politischen Subjektivitäten. Die Auseinandersetzung mit zwei Fallstudien, ergänzt um experimentelle Gehforschung, zielt darauf ab, den Diskurs über das urbane Gehen zu vertiefen und seine Bedeutung im Rahmen des feministischen Diskurses in der Stadtforschung zu erkunden.

ABSTRACT

Walking in an urban environment is present in many discourses, from the historical flânerie, linking walking with the value of freedom and inspiration, to modern discourses on voyeurism, discipline and surveillance, spectacle, discrimination, and exclusionary practices. However, walking is rarely discussed in the context of political expression. Literature on protests usually reduces walking to an inherent mode of political articulation.

Drawing on the concepts of ultradétournement, assemblage, and political theories, this thesis aims to discuss walking as a subversive and collective practice. In this act, the political gesture utilizes the aesthetics of everyday life to disrupt social order.

As a point of departure are taken queer-feminist artistic practices that could be considered as 'hijacking walking': a translocal project „Mis(s)placed woman?“ by Tanja Ostojić, and the procession “Eating Europe” by Maiz association. Through the combination of analytical materials - archival resources and interviews - this research delves into the political potential of these performances within a situated context, encompassing both past and present. By understanding the particular walks as a perversion of public order in the urban environment, this thesis explores the materiality of the walk, its symbolic gestures, (in)visibility of the body, the role of affect, and the correlation of walking practices with political subjectivities. The engagement with two case studies, complemented by experimental walking research, aims to expand the discourse surrounding urban walking and explore its significance within the realm of feminist inquiry in urban studies.

Keywords: walking, performance art, activism, dissensus, embodied research, assemblage

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1. INTRODUCTION

Walking is often associated with unrestricted inspiration in Euro-Western traditions or „other heteronormative, solo perambulations“ (Springgay & Truman, 2018, p. 131). At the same time, walking is a subject of diverse fields of social research, in ethnography (Vergunst, 2010), sensory ethnography (Pink et al., 2010), cultural geography (McCormack, 2014; Vannini & Vannini, 2017) and is discussed as the bodily practice in everyday life (Lorimer, 2016; Middleton, 2011, 2018) with its relation to aspects such as gender, race, social status, class, ethnicity, age, sexual identity, among others (Heddon & Turner, 2012; Martinez & Gois, 2022). A central theme in walking research across disciplines is dedicated to place and embodiment. Moreover, walking exposed to artistic experimentation brings a profound dimension to the discourse. Walking is not only an act of traversing physical space; it is also a method of aesthetic exploration and introspection (Burckhardt, 2015; Hawkins, 2020).

Furthermore, walking frequently serves as a crucial element in the expression of dissent, enabling groups to champion reform by articulating the claim for social, political, and religious transformation. Viewing walking through the lens of a political utterance, authors from diverse urban-related fields have investigated its involvement in social justice movements and urban protests (Dikeç, 2017b; Hatuka, 2018). However, addressing issues of equality in urban spaces goes beyond mere legislative solutions. The socially oppressive character of public space calls for alternative approaches to collective action. What other forms of intervention could address these challenges?

RESEARCH OUTLINE AND THESIS STRUCTURE

In line with Ranciere's 'Politics of Aesthetics,' I direct attention toward artistic practices of urban subversion (Mould, 2015). Within these practices, performance art remains a field with insufficient research, and its relationship with the urban „lack sustained exploration in performance studies, urban studies, and human geography.“ (Solga et al., 2009, p. 4).

Seeking to counteract the categorization of performance art as just another art branch at neoliberal city's service, this thesis aims to shed light on subversive walk as a practice „aiming at giving a voice to all those who are silenced within the framework of the existing hegemony“ (Mouffe, 2008, p. 12). By delving into political aesthetics in urban spaces, I aim to examine the intersections between performance art, activism, and the renegotiation of societal dynamics. The research centers on the concept of a subversive walk as a political performance, examining what urban studies can learn from performance artists and which political potential is embedded in their practices.

Specifically, this investigation set two research questions:

- 1) How do feminist performers utilize a subversive walk in public space to raise political questions?

- 2) How can subversive walk serve as a method in urban studies to understand better power relations in public space?

In order to answer them, the study examines three different modes of *subversive walk* conducted as:

- a. an art project by a performance artist
- b. an art project by an activist group
- c. a method in human geography by students within the university's educational framework

By analyzing subversive walk as a political gesture, this thesis carefully considers the significance of the context. In order to become intelligible, a political intervention must engage with the symbolic field in a meaningful way. To explore this aspect, the thesis draws on the concepts proposed by Chantal Mouffe and Jacques Rancière. Additionally, through the lens of assemblage theory, the subversive walk is analyzed as a collective practice of constitution and cultivation of political subjectivities, building alliances, and finally, as a method to affect and to be affected.

The structure of this thesis begins with a review of the literature tackling three important fields: walking discourse, political theories relevant to the urban domain, and feminist perspective on public space. Chapter 3 provides a conceptual framework of the investigation as well as discusses the chosen methodology. Chapter 4 examines an ongoing trans-local project developed by the artist Tanja Ostojić, Chapter 5 scrutinizes a procession organized in 2013 by an Austrian NGO Maiz, and Chapter 6 delves into experimental workshops I conducted at the University of Bern in Switzerland. Chapter 7 summarizes insights from all investigations, responses to research questions and provides conclusions arising from the research process.

2. THE UNBEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF WALKING AND OTHER LITERATURE

2.1 ART WALK IN PUBLIC SPACE

„Of course, I knew it had to be read this way - after all, everyone knew how the authorities nervously check everything strange and unusual.“

(Teresa Murak on her walk "Procesja" from 1974 in: Zmyślony, 2016*)

THE WALKING FIGURE – HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

In the 19th century, a new phenomenon emerged in literature—the figure of the flâneur. This character, made famous by writers like Charles Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin, was critical of the fast-paced modern life and reveled in the leisure of the bourgeois class. In the former context of the growing rapidity of urban life and technology-driven culture, the flâneur

philosophy served as evidence of resistance and the pleasures found in a simple leisurely stroll. The personified flâneur was a “disembodied eye (that) wanders through the city ‘invisibly’ and untouched” (Meskimon, 1997), „gazing on other people’s reality with curiosity, with detachment, with professionalism... as if that activity transcends class interest as if its perspective is universal... reconnoitring, stalking, cruising the urban inferno“ (Sontag, 2021). An early urban sociologist Georg Simmel has seen in flâneurial ability to be anonymous an intrinsic feature of urban life.

However, many feminist researchers questioned the professed universality of both anonymity and freedom of movement. Sara Ahmed, in “Strange Encounters” (2000), describes how some bodies come to be seen as “other” or “out of space,” criticizing “the assumption of mobility as a choice, as implied in de-classed, de-racialized theories of nomad subjectivity” (Carrera Suárez, 2015). The objectification or exclusion of women from public spaces is strongly emphasized in the discussion around flâneuse – the female flâneur. According to Elizabeth Wilson (1992), the efforts of the Victorian state to control the mobility of women, i.e., juridical punishment for walking “at wrong places” and “at wrong times”, excluded women from the flâneurial freedom of strolling the city. In many geographies, the suspicion of prostitution has been a controlling mechanism that disabled the establishment of flâneuse as a cultural figure equal to its male counterpart (Wilson, 2019). Is it debatable whether the establishment of the figure of the ‘flâneuse’ could contribute to the feminist discourse or if its emergence would be possible, considering its significant emphasis on visibility? For Rosalyn Deutsche, focus on the visual aspect is highly problematic, as she states, “distancing, mastering, objectifying – the voyeuristic look exercises control through a visualization that merges with victimization of its object” (Deutsche, 1996, pp. 213–214).

A significant for this research body of literature is built around psychogeography and the French group Situationist International. Developed around 1960, their methods like ‘détournement’ or ‘dérive’ - a ‘drifting’ defined by aimless wandering and embracing unpredictability. It was interpreted in two ways: as unconventional exploration and as embodied resistance against the capitalist lifestyle (Waxman, 2010). Seeing in urban life a spectacle, a separating and distancing experience of passive observation (Debord, 1967), the Situationists elevated walking into a tool for unsettling human perception and an expression of political liberation (Wark, 2011). Of special note is ‘détournement,’ a tactical maneuver employed by the Situationists – the practice of recontextualizing or altering elements of cultural spheres - such as images, texts, or symbols - to break down the political “status quo” had a significant public. Détournement has influenced various artistic movements, such as punk, graffiti, and street art, focused on exposing power structures present in mainstream culture.

However, the lack of reflection on gendered experiences is a point of critique by feminist researchers; as Morag Rose stated: an “uncomfortable undercurrent of misogyny and neocolonialism lurks within much psychogeography and has since its inception” (2015, p. 150). Dérive’s tactics were criticized for producing a tourist gaze that amplifies the gap between observer and observed (Massey, 1994; Richardson, 2015). This gap is claimed to perpetuate the

dichotomy between nature and culture, stigmatizing certain bodies as subhuman or „out of place“. As individuals are encouraged to pay attention only to unconventional elements, it can inadvertently reinforce power imbalances and reaffirm normative imaginaries onto bodies (Springgay & Truman, 2018, p. 94).

The realm of walking is thrived by distinct heritages. For instance, while walking is frequently portrayed as intrinsically revolutionary and a strategy for challenging urban environments, it frequently overlooks factors such as race, gender, disability, and others. “Figures like the flâneur and the practices of the *dérive* become common tropes, often assuming that all bodies move through space equally” (Springgay & Truman, 2018, p. 6) “but race, gender, sexuality, and ability are not corporeal skins that are attuned into only at particular moments, such as on a *dérive*, nor can they be flung aside innocently” (2018, p. 95).

A connector to the most recent theories on walking as embodied experience is Michel de Certeau’s “The Practice of everyday life.” The subject ‘Walker’ is contrasted with his counterpart ‘voyeur’ - a middle-/upper-class figure. While bringing their own experiences, background, and knowledge in interpreting the surroundings, the ‘walker’ becomes the author of their own city story (de Certeau, 1984) – a concept often discussed in semiotics and anthropology. The self-reflective and body-oriented sensitivity of ‘walker’ resonates with many feminist approaches. However, as argued by Rehana Ahmed, „de Certeau's configuration of the ‘walker’ fails to account sufficiently for the localization and constraint of movement that generally characterize the lives of the working-class inhabitants of a city“ (2002, 22).

The most recent theories and approaches from post-colonial and gender studies reshape the discourse on walking in the urban context. A contemporary critical discussion on walking takes into analysis intersectionality (Martinez & Gois, 2022) Also, the walking figure is being rediscussed: Isabel Carrera Suárez proposes the figure of *pedestrian*: an urban artist–chronicler of the present who acknowledges their genderized/racialized/queer body (Carrera Suárez, 2015).

To summarize, the canon of walking literature with the frequently referenced figures omits the lessons offered by critical race scholars, feminists, postcolonial critics, and others. Futuring more equal and sensible walking practices, Springgay and Truman appealed that „walking researchers need to stop returning to the flâneur to contextualize their work (...) while there are important strategies deployed by the *dérive*, it is imperative that researchers who use this technique in their work, remain critical and not assume that it is automatically radical. Some bodies literally walk on foot for miles carrying laundry, water, or other commodities“ (2018, p. 56).

2.2 THE URBAN

"Urban space is the product of conflict. (...) The lack of absolute social foundation (...) makes conflict an ineradicable feature of all social space." (Deutsche, 1996, p. 278)

While walking in the symbolical sphere has become a mindful way of perceiving the landscape or a desirable healthy habit, walking is also intertwined with deep social and spatial inequalities in the urbanized environment. The urban is created by uneven development processes that involve rounds of accumulation, commoditization, and biased investments (Brenner, 2019). This ongoing historical process of accumulation and dispossession requires active maintenance and performance in which the city's history, present, and future are “constantly being brought into being, contested, and rethought. (...) Urbanism is produced through relations of history and potential, i.e. of the multiple and interrelated temporalizations - of capital, social relations, cultures, materials, and ecologies” (McFarlane, 2011, p. 652) that create the city. Those processes, although fluid and seemingly open to possibilities, always have a political dimension as political „subjectivity is formed (...) in relation to the processes of urbanization that it encounters and affects unevenly“ (Katz, 2021, p. 598).

This chapter examines a set of political theories to lay the ground for further engagement with the question of how walking can intervene in the possibilities of urban becoming, and of becoming in the urban.

2.2.1 HEGEMONY AND SOCIAL ORDER

As a point of departure, I take definitions of the key concept of two political philosophers that are helpful to contextualize the urban: Chantal Mouffe and Jacques Rancière. Besides many similarities between their systems of thought, Mouffe focuses more on the institutional and ideological aspects of politics, discussing the potential for change from within and integral to the institutional framework. In contrast, Rancière remains committed to anarchist theoretical tradition and, instead of institutions, emphasizes the stance independent of institutional structures.

The concept of Hegemony, which Mouffe builds upon the thought of Antonio Gramsci, refers to the dominance and control exercised by a particular social group or class over others in society. According to Mouffe, this dominance is not solely based on economic power but includes cultural, ideological, and political aspects. Mouffe's understanding of hegemony emphasizes the role of unavoidable conflict in shaping the prevailing social order, which tends to establish a fixed set of rules. „What is at a given moment considered to be the ‘natural’ order – together with the ‘common sense’ that accompanies it – is the result of sedimented hegemonic practices” (Mouffe, 2008, p. 9). It is important to highlight that for Mouffe, every social order is „based on some form of exclusion“ (Mouffe, 2008, p. 9) because of the unavoidable division we/them, that constitutes the order.

She argues, however, that hegemony is not a fixed and unchanging structure but is instead subject to contestation and conflicts. The additional structural movement comes from identities that are not fixed but fluid, being constructed and cultivated in the symbolic field. She emphasizes it by saying that „there is no essential identity, but only forms of identification“ (Mouffe, 2012, p. 631). Thus, hegemony is not something that can be eliminated entirely, but it can be challenged and transformed. The relation between actors or groups in conflict might be

“antagonistic” – as a relation between enemies, constituting *the political*. In Mouffe’s view, the main task of democratic politics is to sublime this relation into an “agonistic” (*politics*), where “the adversaries share a common symbolic space and they recognize, to some degree, the legitimacy of the claim of their opponents” (2012, p. 633).

The “common symbolic space” and acknowledgment of the claim’s legitimacy are the pivotal points in Mouffe’s concept of democracy. In contrast, Rancière does not pay enough attention to the matter of recognition and legitimacy of the claim in the conflict, thereby heaping criticism of his theory, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Indubitably every hegemony position is not stable but “always exposed to the risk of being subverted” (Laclau et al., 1997, p. 3) and “challenged by counter-hegemonic practices” (Mouffe, 2008, p. 9). According to Mouffe’s concept, many conflicts can be outspoken and cultivated within democratic institutions, including courts and legislation mechanisms – they will be, to some extent, staged there. Similarly, public space becomes an agora, a “battleground” where various hegemonic projects clash, with no chance of ultimate reconciliation. However, the range of conflicts, and their potentiality, goes beyond the possibilities of legislation. As Judith Butler stated, „various forms of gender regulation and social hierarchy and exclusion work through domains of power that are not reducible to law” (Heckert & Butler, 2011, p. 3), which means that the „forms of resistance and claims to freedom we make cannot be fully conceptualized within the rubric of law” (2011, p. 3). This remark opens the symbolic field and the role of activism and aesthetics in the expression of political positions toward the formulation of conflicts that cannot be tackled through legislation. Mouffe acknowledges “aesthetic dimension in the political” and „political dimension in art”, that “play a role in the constitution and maintenance of a given symbolic order or in its challenging” (Mouffe, 2008, p. 11). For her, aesthetics and “critical art” belong to strategies of *dissensus* that bring to light what the dominant consensus tends to hide and erase.

While Mouffe does not underestimate the role of aesthetics in reshaping the symbolic field, her concept does not distinctly examine how aesthetics can influence political perceptions and social change. For this, Rancière’s politics of aesthetics offers a better exposition of the relationship between activism, aesthetics, and politics.

Rancière provokes discussion around democratic politics, claiming that democracy is a very rare phenomenon. His ‘true’ *politics* consist of ephemeral moments of disagreement, protest, and *dissensus*. Only the disruptive expression of a political claim by those ‘who have no entitlement to rule’ constitutes his *politics*. The disruption of assigned roles in the given order leads to “le partage du sensible” (Rancière, 2004), the division of the ‘sensible’, a reconfiguration of power relations. The redistribution of the sensible “establishes the borders between the visible and the invisible, the audible and the inaudible, the sayable and the unsayable” (Rancière, 2004, p. 93). The political claim is thus characterized by the expression of what cannot be thought, said, or shown within the given order by those who have no formal claim to equality.

„Politics exists when the natural order of domination is interrupted by the institution of a part of those who have no part. This institution is the whole of politics as a specific form of connection. It defines the common of the community as a political community, in other words, as divided, as based on a wrong that escapes the arithmetic of exchange and reparation. Beyond this set-up there is no politics. There is only the order of domination or the disorder of revolt.“ (Rancière, 1999, pp. 11–12)

Rancière sees the prevailing social order as an anti-democratic and anti-political structure aimed at preserving existing patterns of inequality. Social order is described as a “system of coordinates defining modes of being, doing, making, and communicating” (Rancière, 2004, p. 93), shaping the ways in which individuals and groups interact and participate in public life. Social order involves the regulation of identities, roles, and positions within society. It defines how individuals are assigned specific roles, professions, and social categories based on norms and conventions. This regulation contributes to the maintenance of social hierarchies. Rancière compares it to police order, which maintains the domination of power. His police order is not executed by the police or army (not only), but by the institutions of neoliberal Western societies that operate upon the principle of consensus. This account of ‘democracy’, as something overtaken by capital, that has been substituted by the consensual police order, fuels the critique of the depoliticized city (J. Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2014), urban managerialism and general post-political condition of ‘capitalo-parliamentary’ state (Badiou, 2008). What is at stake for Rancière, is his diagnosis of a lack of spaces of disagreement or points of disruption that could challenge the status quo and shape politics in a way that gives voice to excluded groups.

Of course, those general notions of democratic dissensus and disruptive disagreement are broadly welcomed by activists, artists, groups of protest, and scholars who are interested in non-institutionalized political practices. Rancière, among other political theorists emphasizing dissensus, seems to accelerate a discussion on overseen mechanisms in the field of urban studies (Dikeç, 2017a). While the growing interest in the theory of Rancière (Davidson & Iveson, 2015; Dikeç, 2007; Iveson, 2013) might be seen as a sign of very needed re-politicization of discourses, it is hard to omit the limitations of this concept pointed out by critical race scholars, postcolonial critics, feminists, and others. In her text “Quarreling with Rancière,” Holloway Sparks (2016) summarizes those voices providing a more nuanced reading of Rancière’s theory.

Firstly, Sparks highlights the role of gendered, racial, and other identities in disruptive political movements. She suggests that ‘identifications’ and performances gain meaning by relating to established norms, and these norms are constructed by hegemonic discourses of gender, sexuality, race, and more. Thus, Rancière’s those “who have not part”, who cannot even appear as “speaking subject” (Sparks, 2016, p. 424) would not be able to establish an “intelligible political subjectivity” (Chambers, 2013, p. 37) without relating their subjectivity to the established norms – they would just not be heard. At the same time, the discourses are saturated with racism, sexism, heteronormativity, and colonialism, which troubles the possibilities of creating a politically legitimate voice. Sparks give as an example the protests of welfare mothers of color, that, at worst, were seen in public discourse as “deviants who required

paternalistic, invasive, and disciplinary correction” (2016, p. 428), and thus their activists’ disruption had no possibility to redistribute ‘the sensible.’ Following this a bit further, political intelligibility and visibility could potentially expose some oppressed groups to risk in particular contexts. This is discussed in “Poetics of Relations” (Glissant, 1990), where Glissant claims the ‘right to opacity’ - a condition of impenetrability and unintelligibility that stands for (post)colonial resistance against domination.

Secondly, unlike Rancière's portrayal of instant political subjectivation, Sparks contends that the development of dissident subjectivities is often a gradual process of „cultivating political subjectivities over time” (2016, p. 430). It involves rituals and bodily practices (Sparks gives an example of African American church meetings). Rancière’s idea of community is ‘insubstantial’, lacking a “necessary embodiment” (Bassett, 2016, p. 281). Sparks states that rather than by the spontaneous surprise, the subjectivations of disruptive movements worked historically “by slow accretion, reiteration, and citation” (2016, p. 430).

Finally, while Rancière celebrates moments of radical egalitarianism, Sparks suggests that movements may simultaneously engage with normative structures. She points out that disruptive movements often incorporate both radical and non-radical performances and identifications, giving an example of „civil rights activists [that] dressed and acted ‘respectably’ to mitigate the racial ‘trouble’ they were enacting” (2016, p. 430). Her examples of historical blending raise questions about Rancière's focus on newness and surprise in democratic politics.

Sparks' critique emphasizes the need to consider the complexities in assessing the success of democratic politics. Her nuanced reading enriches the exploration of how Rancière's and Mouffe’s concepts can be applied to understanding urban space, politics, and social movements.

2.2.2 THE INCLUSIVE CITY

Using the lenses of Mouffe and Rancière, the inclusive city is a concept resulting out of changes in hegemonic discourse or, in other words, of altering the police order by the acknowledged claims of marginalized groups. Given the many obstacles of the feminist movement, “persistently disciplined into a logic of domination” (Wingrove, 2016, p. 418) and historically being too often heard as a noise, as a “politically irrelevant blah blah blah” (2016, p. 418), the concept of the inclusive city serves as a beacon of hope and a platform for transformative change on a local level. Within this strain, urban agendas envision “more equitable access to the opportunities cities can offer regardless of age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, immigrant status, disability or any other factor, for all city dwellers” (Whitzman et al., 2013). With the growing common understanding of inequality and exclusion that do not affect all individuals in the same manner, inclusivity is being discussed in spatial, social and economic dimensions.

There are vibrant debates on urban politics tackling the issue of inclusivity, two of which will be reviewed. Firstly, *gender mainstreaming*, defined in 1997 by United Nations as the

“process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels” (United Nations, 1997, p. 2). In Rancière’s terms, gender mainstreaming is a top-down strategy for decentering the urban social order. The concept focuses on safety in the public and private domain or violence prevention, but also includes freedom from poverty, financial and environmental security and autonomy of girls and women. As Whitzman et al. notice, the recent years brought to this concept also a recognition that increasing safety “requires considerable work to change culturally accepted attitudes about women, including acceptance of violence and exploitation” (Whitzman et al., 2013, p. 5). This recognition puts emphasis on the importance of educational and cultural programs, offering “alternative lifestyle choices to men and boys” (2013, p. 5) or masculinity patterns that do not contribute to violence.

Also, *gender mainstreaming* evolves in relation to the shift within feminism. Feminist theories within the second wave were focused on macro-level power relations, viewing discrimination and violence as part of a larger societal system that undergirds women’s subordination (Gordon, 2018). The call for ‘a coherent subject for liberation’ (Lloyd, 1996), necessary for the formulation of Marxism-rooted theory, resulted in the creation of a fixed subject of ‘a woman,’ a symbolic figure under oppression and aiming for emancipation. This concept was and still is criticized for several reasons, among others: for focusing on white, middle-class women. Also, for not recognizing that the discrimination and violence take place at the micro-level, where particular women experience oppression at a number of intersections, cumulatively. Thus, instead of the idea of a unified female subject, feminist researchers and activists shifted their claims towards plural of diversified subjects. As Jana Sawicki repeats after Butler “feminist politics without a feminist subject is possible and desirable” (Sawicki, 1996, p. 166).

As a part of this shift, feminist geography employed the framework of intersectionality to understand modes of discrimination causing inequalities. Theorized by Kimberlé Crenshaw intersectionality became a „successful tool for political and scholarly transformation“ (Puar, 2012, p. 50). It focuses on overlapping axes of oppression like gender, race, class, sexuality, disability, and religion, among others, that affect a social individual and is a theoretical framework aiming at the alteration of legal mechanisms (Crenshaw, 2013). Being closely intertwined with identity politics, especially in US context, intersectionality has its ‘brights’ and ‘shadows.’ It has “intervened in the legal and capitalist structures that demand the fixity of the rights-bearing subject and has also simultaneously reproduced the disciplinary demands of that subject formation” (Puar, 2012, p. 62).

Closer to this intersectional reading is the concept of the *right to the city* developed by Lefebvre (1968). This concept advocates for the collective and democratic reappropriation of urban space by its inhabitants to renew their rights to just life in the urban environment. It asserts that urban dwellers have the right to actively shape, use, and participate in the urban environment, challenging dominant power structures that often prioritize profit-driven urban politics. This concept lays the ground for many strategic documents. Among more general

frameworks, right to the city is seen as including in particular: “access to safe and healthy land and housing; the prevention of homelessness and forced evictions; access to essential services; access to other public services; the ability to move around the city in safety; access to safe and non-exploitative jobs and income” (Whitzman et al., 2013, pp. 5–6)., and on the top participation in the decisionmaking process in local governance and urban planning as a key element of agency in ‘inclusive city.’

Lefebvre's *right to the city* can also be seen as a foundational framework that provides the potential conditions for Rancière's *politics* to emerge. When urban inhabitants assert their right to the city as Lefebvre envisions, they create the space and conditions for the kind of disruptions and political contestations that Rancière discusses. The right to the city is thus a stage upon which dissensus and disruptive events can take place.

2.2.3 AESTHETICS AND SUBVERSION

„I did not say or mean >warning<“ (Chiara Fumai /video installation)

When Judith Butler states that political „agency is not always institutionalized or institutionalizable“ (Heckert, 2011, p. 3), they highlight the limitations of established legal and administrative systems. The query of “how to enter into regimes of power” (2011, p. 3) by social movements remains an open question. As “any hegemonic position is always exposed to the risk of being subverted” (Laclau et al., 1997, p. 3), there is consistently a potential for resistance and change within the hegemonic discourse. Although Mouffe does not provide an exhausting reflection on aesthetics in her work, her writings suggest that aesthetics is intricately linked to the realm of politics and the formation of identities/subjectivities within a society. She consider artistic practices as responsible for „constitution and maintenance of a given symbolic order or in its challenging“ (Mouffe, 2008, p. 11), which means, however, that uncritical and non-radical art contributes to the hegemonic order and that political orientation of art results out of its criticality. “Critical artistic practices can disrupt the smooth image that corporate capitalism is trying to spread, bringing to the fore its repressive character“ (Mouffe, 2008, p. 13). Cultural and symbolic expressions can contribute to the disruption of societal norms and the construction of new subjectivities.

Rancière's perspective is more radical, positing that politics operates only beyond legal institutions and resides within the realm of aesthetics (Rancière, 2004). His *politics* can be understood as the effort of an unrecognized group (*demos*) to gain equal recognition within the established social order through aesthetics. The political struggle is, in his opinion, an aesthetical struggle because it centers around how society is depicted and what is deemed acceptable to express or display within that societal representation. In Rancière's writings, the concept of subversiveness in aesthetics emerges as an impactful tool for challenging social order (*police*), disrupting established norms, and reshaping the discourse of power. Disruption, in the end, is *politics* (Rancière, 2004), and aesthetics is the mean to express dissensus.

Although dissensus could take many systemic forms of collective action, for example, civil disobedience, sit-ins, occupy movement (Dikeç, 2017b), or non-performative refusal (Honig, 2021), Rancière focuses foremostly on art, as art, in his view, can reshape the symbolic field and proliferate new imaginaries. He states that „the dream of a suitable political work of art is, in fact, the dream of disrupting the relationship between the visible, the sayable, and the thinkable without having to use the terms of a message as a vehicle“ (Rancière, 2004, p. 59).

While Rancière's theory is commonly interpreted as a fresh approach to political aesthetics, it has garnered an uncritical reception within the art realm. Oliver Marchart describes the „unrivalled success of his theory (...), as it allows antipolitical artists and curators to claim that what they produce or exhibit is political, even though it is entirely detached from any concrete project“ (Marchart, 2019, p. 14). The problem arises around artists' and curators' reading of Rancière: if any aesthetics is political, then every piece of art would be political. Thus, Rancière became a “cover-up for the antipolitical ideology“ (Marchart, 2019, p. 14) in the art field. Moreover, his proposed historical art regimes: ethical (ancient and medieval ages), representational (modern ages), and finally, his highly celebrated aesthetic regime (19th and 20th century) - that, in Rancière's view, is autonomous and can challenge the norms - do not provide any answer on how to differentiate politically disruptive, critical art from the aesthetical “business as usual” (Marchart, 2019, p. 14).

Those misunderstandings open up a broad discussion on what makes aesthetics politically disruptive. Rancière tried to define it in „Dissensus“: “critical art should aim to reshape perception and drive transformation. This involves three steps: (1) the creation of sensory 'strangeness,' (2) „development of an awareness of the reason for that strangeness“ (Rancière, 2015, p. 142), and (3) mobilization of individuals based on that awareness (2015, p. 142). Those three steps should be the means by which disruptive political art and visual practices operate. While the ‘strangeness’ is a rather indisputable element of such practices – it could be reached by disidentification with political subjectivities, confusion of identities, construction of new ones, or subversion of social norms, awareness belongs to rather troubling terms. Especially when Rancière confuses in another text that „political art cannot work in the simple form of a meaningful spectacle that would lead to an ‚awareness‘ of the state of the world. Suitable political art would ensure (...) the production of a double effect: the readability of a political signification and a sensible or perceptual shock“ (Rancière, 2004, p. 63). The second view is closer to the remark of Judith Butler, stating that representations of “*vulnerable groups* reproduce paternalistic power and gives authority to regulatory agencies” (Butler, 2020, p. 185). Nevertheless, Rancière's utilization of the word ‘awareness’ is to the same degree misleading as his notion of ‘perceptual shock.’

It is useful to take a closer look at the economies of shock in aesthetics. Performance theorist Rebecca Schneider has explored the notion of shock and transgression inherent in the avant-garde movement. Linking contemporary performance art with the economy, Schneider writes:

„late capitalism appropriates, incorporates, and consumes transgression into fashionable chic at such a rapid pace that the subversive impact of transgression has become impossible. I find it telling (...) that the avant-garde and the option of "shock" that it championed should die just as women, artists of color, and gay and lesbian artists began to make critically incisive political art under their own gender-, race-, and preference-marked banners.“ (R. Schneider, 2013, pp. 3–4)

Similarly to Schneider, Mouffe warns that transgression in aesthetics can easily be recuperated by established powers, and shock alone cannot maintain art's critical political role. She argues that excessive transgression does not necessarily make something more radical, as transgression does not equal radicality (Mouffe, 2008, p. 13).

To sum up, Rancière's notions of ‚awareness‘ and ‚perceptual shock‘ edge many problems already broadly discussed in the theoretical field. For Marchart, Rancière's theory is even inadvertently reinforcing a lack of explicit politicization within the art field (2019, p. 14). Nevertheless, Marchart identifies a possible act of radical (non-shocking) transgression, recalling all the historical events when artists left their practices of “socially engaged art,” “participatory art,” or “public art” and joined an “endless stream of protest“. This passage from art to politics is called by him a “Davidian moment“ (Marchart, 2019, p. 17).

Just as Mouffe and Schneider challenge the notion of excessive transgression as a path to radicality, the subsequent exploration delves into the performances of political becoming upon the streets, where the process of inclusivity and exclusion, hegemony, and resistance takes center stage.

2.3 THE STREET AS A PERFORMER

The street is a modern symbol of public space and, in a broad sense, of public life. It is often “romanticized and celebrated as a site of authentic political action, as a place of inclusiveness where people can come together and therefore as inherently democratic spaces“ (Valentine, 2001, p. 171). It has also been argued that public space and “the street” enable marginalized social groups to become part of public life, and thus the street is essential as a site of democratic processes. This conceptualization of the public is grounded, as an example, in the works of Hannah Arendt and Jürgen Habermas, who envisage the ideal public space in a consensual way, as a space without exclusion (Mouffe, 2008). However, not only geographical research proves public spaces function in an exclusionary way (Bell et al., 1994; Binnie, 1997; Duncan, 1996; Kobayashi & Peake, 2000; Massey, 1994; Thomas, 2005), but also political philosophy delivers theories undermining the inclusive ideal. Chantal Mouffe argues in her agonistic model that “public space is the battleground where different hegemonic projects are confronted, without any possibility of final reconciliation“ (2008, p. 158). This model considers that exclusion is, by definition, a feature of public spaces as they are “always striated and hegemonically structured“ (Mouffe, 2008, p. 158) – to just contrast them with the concept of “smooth”, non-hierarchical spaces (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) that cannot apply to the political realm. Following this, the street is an active agent that performs and executes Rancière's social

order. The understanding of public order of the street as a hegemonic order, that is always established on some form of exclusion, intersects the discourse around *othering* and oppression(s), which will be discussed in the further part of this chapter. Before that, I will first shed light on theories of performativity in human geography, as those seem essential to theorize “the street”.

2.3.1 GENDER PERFORMATIVITY

„Gender is a scaled economy: it is a mode of regulation, management, and control.“
(Russell, 2020, p. 3)

The body of works that emerged in the late 1990s and in the first decade of the millennium, known as non-representational theory (Allen & Thrift, 1997; Thrift, 2008; 2000), renamed by some researchers to ‘more-than-representational’ theory, turned the attention of geographic disciplines from textual representations onto performing arts and performance of everyday life itself. Emerged out of it “performative geographies” (Rogers, 2018) put embodiment at the center of analysis.

It must be, however, added that geographers have already engaged in the past with concepts and vocabularies rooted in performing arts. Erving Goffman’s (L. Schneider & Goffman, 1964) theorization of social life as theatre used performance-related terms as metaphors for social phenomena. Joan Riviere and Luce Irigaray linked femininity with social performances (Gregson & Rose, 2000), with Riviere suggesting that the mask, which means performance itself, is “the feminine”. Most notable is the contribution of queer theorists, especially Judith Butler. Their “Gender Trouble” (Butler, 1990) demystified gender as identity that is constituted by repetitive, everyday life performance rather than something that is attached to the body. In other words, gender identity is constituted and naturalized by performative routine, instead of imaginaries of gender identity as being only performatively expressed. The introduction of constitutive character of (gender) performance resulted in broad discussions around identity, subjectivity and agency. Butler’s theoretization of performance was declared “crucial for critical human geography concerned to understand the construction of social identity, social difference, and social power relations, and the way space might articulate all of these” (Gregson & Rose, 2000, p. 434). Gregson and Rose suggested performativity, as “the citational practices which reproduce and/or subvert discourse” (2000, p. 434) also as a concept to rethink the constitution of spaces. Their understanding of public space goes beyond the image of a passive stage for gender performance. Rather, what shapes the identity of space and constitutes it as, for example, “straight” or racialised (Thomas, 2005) are the regulatory social practices and performance of everyday life with their ongoing repetitions.

This call for applying performative theory to space, brought vast research outcomes, especially when investigations were built upon established foundations of queer studies, like, for example, the critique of compulsory heterosexuality (Rich, 1980) underlying social relations. In the highly discussed article “All hyped up and no place to go” (Bell et al., 1994) authors

employed the theory of performativity to the exploration of non-normative sexual identities and the spaces that are constructed or challenged by them. One of their conclusions of the conducted research states that “the street (...) is not an asexual space. Rather, it is commonly assumed to be ‘naturally’ or ‘authentically’ heterosexual” (Valentine, 1996, p. 145 after Bell et al. 1994) or as Binnie remarked, the street is actively produced as (hetero)sexualized (1997, p. 223). Gill Valentine focused in her other article mainly on “the street,” arguing that “repetitive performances of hegemonic asymmetrical gender identities and heterosexual desires congeal over time to produce the appearance that street spaces are normally or naturally heterosexual spaces. The heterosexuality of the street is, however [...], an insecure appearance that has to be maintained by regulatory regimes (from harassment and violence, to jeers and stares)” (Valentine, 1996, p. 146).

The articles aiming to incorporate performativity into geographic inquiry (Duncan, 1996; McDowell & Court, 1994; G. Rose, 1997), have been intensely discussed. Lise Nelson alleged in her evaluative essay that many of them, by uncritically “transcribe[ing Butlerian] abstracted subject into geography, limit how we can conceptualize the linkages between emerging identities, social change, and spatially-embedded, intentional human practice” (Nelson, 1999, p. 331) and plaid for a “more thoughtful and nuanced use of performativity” (1999, p. 331). Similarly, while commenting performativity of space, Phil Hubbard suggested in his research of geographies of prostitution that the sexualized identity of space is rather complicated. Furthermore, heterosexuality, even if hegemonic in public spaces, is “far from being unified and monolithic system” (Hubbard, 2000, p. 193). Rather every place would have site-specific power relations, exclusions and exceptions. He argued for the necessity „to decouple (and subsequently reattach) notions of how heterosexuality serves to confine and oppress from a consideration of the dynamics of patriarchy, racism, capitalism and ageism” (Hubbard, 2000, p. 212). This intersectional approach, already well established in human geography, leads to the question: who is oppressed in public space? Is fully inclusive public space possible to exist?

2.3.2 OTHERING

As discussed above, oppression in public spaces and on the streets is in the focus of urban and geographical inquiry. Aiming to draw a bigger perspective, I will elucidate two urban-relevant theories that seek to explain the social mechanisms of exclusion in public spaces.

Theory of Iris Marion Young has often been examined in the discourse on justice in urban geography (Barnett, 2012; Iveson et al., 2018). Her exploration of oppression categorizes and divides it into five “faces”: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. All those faces are evaluated as predominantly structural and apply to relations with states and administration. They affect public spaces indirectly, as they make it more difficult for some groups to access and contribute to public life. Besides, the last “face of oppression” – violence - matters at the highest degree in the theocratization of the street. According to Young, all violent acts like xenophobic violence, racism, homophobia, harassment, etc. are directly related to street hierarchies and feelings of belonging (Young, 1990, p. 63). For Young, similarly

to Mouffe, it is the differentiation of we/them, interior/exterior, that constitutes the formation of a social group. While critically discussing the aggregate model of groups, Young states that “problems of prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, and exclusion exist because some people mistakenly believe that group identification makes a difference to the capacities, temperament, or virtues of group members” (1990, p. 46). Thus the relation between members might – but does not have to – link group identification with oppression towards the “other”/them/exterior. In distinction to states or ruling-class repression, that “have desire to maintain group privilege or domination”, violence in public spaces “is motivated by fear or hatred” of marked groups, in particular of women, people of color, gays etc. Drawing on psychoanalytical theories of Julia Kristeva, Young reconstructs the logic „that makes some groups frightening or hateful by defining them as ugly and loathsome bodies“ (1990, p. 63) and discusses “political importance of feelings of beauty and ugliness, cleanliness and filth” (1990, p. 11). The reading of hate and fear of the “other” body as a main motivation of violent acts, places her explanation very close to the affect theory. Similarly, Sara Ahmed engages with affect when stating:

The impossibility of reducing hate to a particular body allows hate to circulate in an economic sense, working to differentiate others from other others, a differentiation that is never ‘over’, as it awaits others who have not yet arrived. Such a discourse of ‘waiting for the bogus’ is what justifies the repetition of violence against the bodies of others in the name of protecting the nation (S. Ahmed, 2004, p. 47)

Sara Ahmed differentiates the figure of “stranger” from an “other”. While the “other” could be somebody that is not known in the group or in the dwelling, a “stranger” is recognised as somebody who does not belong to the place, who is “out of place” (S. Ahmed, 2000, p. 20). Stranger in her analysis is somebody “not at home” and who belong to imaginary an-other place. In relation to space, “those who are recognisable as strangers, *whose lack of purpose conceals the purpose of crime*, need to be expelled” (2000, p. 31). The figure of a stranger is also “to be feared and loathed”, triggers the feeling of hate and fear that for Ahmed are opposed to the feeling of love to the nation, community, and self (2004, p. 43). In her analysis, the presence of the “stranger” is perceived as a threat to the survival of the national, the nation or the community, as she also discusses the neighborhood watch network. However, hate “does not simply stick on bodies” (2004, p. 46). In postulated by her “affective economy”, hate is not only waked but also redistributed and managed by narratives of difference that create impressions of others as threatening invaders, always with the possibility of changing the object of “othering”.

Ahmed’s theory is directly applicable to the phenomena of street violence, for instance, when nobody helped victims of violent attacks or violent attack is legitimated by society (Young, 2022, p. 108). Moreover, her concept of “affective economy” emphasises the role of narratives in shaping identity and belonging to groups, even very large ones, and finally, elucidates the origin and functioning of hate. Both Ahmed and Mouffe have similar views on hate as the effect on an image/narrative, that the existence of the group of belonging is threatened by an-other

group, as Mouffe pointed out: “there is always the possibility that this ‘we/them’ relation can *become* antagonistic. This happens when the ‘them’ is perceived as putting into question the identity of the ‘we’ and as threatening its existence” (Mouffe, 2005, p. 156).

Although “group differentiation is not in itself oppressive” (Young, 1990, p. 47), and “difference is a precondition for the existence of any identity” (Mouffe, 2005, p. 156), the way group identity is constructed is postulated as pivotal.

2.3.3 HARASSMENT

Cultural and psychological factors affecting women’s, LGBTQ+, and marginalized groups’ mobility are strongly connected to harassment. The work of many researchers shows that harassment does not affect people once off but shapes and limits their freedom of movement in everyday life (Fileborn, 2019; Johnson & Bennett, 2015; Vera-Gray, 2016; Young, 2022).

Thus, street harassment works not through the act itself but through the possibility of harassment, a possibility that serves to maintain the domination of privileged groups in space (Young, 2022). Resulting out of it fear “help[s] to keep oppressed groups subordinate” (2022, p. 109). Focusing on street harassment, Sara Ahmed argues that harassment has an instructive function: It ‘teaches’ how to become a woman/queer person in society, it ‘educates’ caution and timidity, guiding to take up less space and to ‘properly’ occupy the marginalized position of power (S. Ahmed, 2017). „The violence does things. You begin to expect it. You learn to inhabit your body differently through this expectation“ (2017, p. 24). The possibility of harassment is framed then as a regulatory mechanism of the street and of the corporeality – it changes relation to the own body.

The constant barrage of sexual harassment also leads to a constant calculation of risk among women and queer people while making everyday decisions: to walk home or take a bus, stay longer in public space, or head to a destination immediately (Phadke, 2005). Coined by Silpa Phadke, the term “tyranny of purpose” describes the gendered tendency to perform *respectability*, matrimony, or productivity – for example, to “look busy!” (Whitzman et al., 2013, p. 41), to visibly have a purpose. “Respectability becomes measured by the visible signs of a desire to ‘stay safe’” (S. Ahmed, 2000, p. 33). On the contrary, an underprivileged individual who doesn’t exhibit a clear purpose, someone who is ‘doing nothing’ outside, standing at the street corner and watching people or strolling, usually faces externalized oppression, and her/their legitimacy in public space will be questioned. As Ahmed noticed: those perceived as „without a legitimate purpose“, „do not enter the legitimate exchanges of capital that might justify their presence” (2000, p. 31) and thus must be expelled. Also, an interesting observation delivers the journalist Katha Pollit in her newspaper article, describing the gendered contrast while strolling through the park: numerous men leisurely engaged in various activities, while only a few women, including herself, walked briskly and tensely (Pollitt, 1985). Later in the text, her female friend will also comment on why she does not spend time in the newly renovated public space nearby, stating that “It’s not that the malls are dangerous or anything, but sitting there isn’t

worth the aggravation and harassment“ (Pollitt, 1985). Pollitt points out that public spaces are preoccupied with men, while the oppressive dynamics reduce the accessibility of the space.

Taking that the unprivileged body is constantly under threat, policy in many cities changed towards women-only spaces, vehicles, or ‘safe entrances’ aiming to increase safety (Ceccato & Nalla, 2020; Valentine, 1990). This is seen as a problem as by this spatial segregation is given a contribution to the social production of the female body as “the body of the guilty pre-victim” (Cahill, 2017, p. 56). Phadke concludes her research by arguing that safety can be achieved only by maximizing women’s access to public space rather than by its reduction. Not „greater surveillance or protectionism (however well meaning), but the right to engage risk“ (Phadke, 2007, p. 1516) is needed to produce safety actively and exercise the ‘right to the city’.

In conclusion, a multitude of feminist scholars depict public space as a site of oppression where group privileges are executed, and where gendered social control intersects with social and structural inequalities (S. Ahmed, 2000; Fileborn, 2021; Vera-Gray, 2016; Young, 2022). This perspective sets the stage for investigation of the relation between walking and sociopolitical dynamics. This is therefore important as those discourses not necessarily intersect in the scientific literature. Building on this, the thesis aims to explore walking practices that challenge the established street order, with a specific focus on the socio-political potential of such practices.

3. RESEARCH PROCESS

3.1 THEORETICAL & CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

To narrow the subject of the inquiry - the *subversive walk* - I operationalize first “subversiveness.” To do that, I draw upon the concept of *ultradétournement* described by the Situationists group. Secondly, I discuss the ontological concepts chosen to engage with the research matter.

3.1.1 ULTRADÉTOURNEMENT: MANIPULATION OF AESTHETICS

Besides the critique of the Situationist movement's approach as elitist and male-dominated (Heddon & Turner, 2012), which ignores the perspectives of women and marginalized groups (M. Rose, 2015), overlooks the importance of social and political factors that contribute to urban issues (Carrera Suárez, 2015) – besides all that, the reading of the texts of this group may still offer valuable encounters.

Described by them, *ultradétournement* is a submethod of *détournement*. While *détournement* appropriate and alter familiar symbols, texts, visuals and elements of cultural heritage in order to critique or satirize the dominant culture, media, or societal norms, *ultradétournement* “operate in everyday social life. Gestures and words can be given other meanings and have been throughout history for various practical reasons. (...) Ultimately, any sign or word is susceptible to being converted into something else, even into its opposite“ (Debord & Wolman, 2006 [1956]). Thus, *ultradétournement* extends the concept of

"détournement" to a more intensified form of subversion and transformation of cultural or mundane elements. Therefore this thesis will understand *ultradétournement* as the manipulation of everyday practices (walking) to provoke, intervene, unveil oppression, and strike against the public order and societal normativity.

3.1.2 THE SUBVERSIVE WALK

Thus, the *subversive walk* is a walking practice that misappropriates the everyday aesthetics of walking to disrupt social order, established norms, or power structures within a given context. In a subversive walk, the act of walking becomes a mode of resistance. It may involve questioning societal norms, or confronting issues of inequality, discrimination, oppression, or reclaiming public spaces. However, the subversive walk is not a demonstration – demonstration belongs to the realm of social order and is a conventional and culturally coded form of political expression. Subversive walk, on the contrary, works through the altering of conventional behaviors. Informed in feminist critique, it focuses on the body and pays attention to the interconnectedness of various forms of oppression.

The subversive walk is also intertwined with the notion of the minor – it could even slip into a 'minor walk.' 'Minor' theories are built upon the 'minor literature,' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986) where "to write a 'minor literature' is to use a major language in ways that subvert it from within" (Katz, 1996, p. 489). Cindi Katz 'translated' it into the geographic field as *the minor theory*. Erin Manning wrote her insightful "The minor gesture" (2016) – defining it as "more than a chance variation, less than a volition" (Manning, 2016 ,cover). „The minor works the major from within. (...) The major is a structural tendency that organizes itself according to predetermined definitions of value" (Manning, 2016, p. 1) while the minor disrupts its structural cohesion and questions its established norms. „Constituting the minor is not about naming but about consciously working in a vocabulary in which one is not at home—where one has become 'deterritorialized'—but where one works that deterritorialization to its limits, forcing it to express something different" (Katz, 1996, p. 489) which is a subversion by definition. But the minor is not only a disruption, it has a transformative effect on the major, and in this quality lies the hope of 'minor' practices.

3.1.3 CONCEPTUAL ECOLOGIES: ASSEMBLAGE, THE EVENT, AND THE VIRTUAL

Moreover, I utilize concepts of the *event*, *the virtual*, and foremostly, an *assemblage*, in particular, the reading of the Deleuzian assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) proposed by Manuel DeLanda (2019). Although coming from very different genealogies of thought than discussed political theories, assemblage has proven its validity in urban studies (Dovey & Ristic, 2017; Farías, 2011; Farías & Bender, 2012; McFarlane, 2009; Müller & Schurr, 2016). Assemblage and its conceptual ecologies give a promise to do research "in a more-than-dialectical way – expanding our conception of politics from antagonistic to agonistic, from negating to affirmative politics" (Ghoddousi & Page, 2020, p. 5).

To clarify, the friction between political theory and Deleuzian concepts is openly discussed, for example, by Jasbir Puar (2012) or Oliver Marchant, who states that “in Deleuzian space there is no room for the public space of politics” (2019, p. 121). “If, (...) public spheres (...) did not have any centers at all, (...) there would be no meaning, but rather a world of total and eternal meaninglessness” (2019, p. 121). For Puar (2012), however, the frictional combination of normative, subject-oriented political theories with assemblages is possible or even necessary – they are in counterbalance. Thus, by following Puar, this thesis may seem to have a twin-track approach, but in the end, it tries to work with assemblages through the political theory (Mouffe and Ranciere) – to delve under the political agora and find the “seed[s] beneath the snow” (Ward, 1996, p. 18).

Assemblage

For this, first, comes an assemblage, defined as the dynamic and interconnected collection of various elements, both tangible and intangible, that together form the complex fabric. These elements encompass physical structures, human activities, social interactions, cultural practices, economic functions, and environmental dynamics. “Assemblage's only unity is that of a co-functioning: it is a symbiosis, a 'sympathy'. It is never filiations which are important, but alliances, alloys” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p. 69). Translated into the field of urban studies, this approach underscores the idea that cities, organizations and communities are not composed of static, predefined components, but rather emerge through the constant interaction and arrangement of diverse elements over time. This fluid and non-static condition is achieved by a “play of the actual and the possible, and as such resonates with the broader histories of critical theory and critical urbanism” (McFarlane, 2011, p. 652). „Assemblage thinking (...) is (...) attuned to the absent presence of the virtual, the incipient possibilities inherent in any situation” (Müller & Schurr, 2016, p. 223). The notion of possible change, the always persistent chance of disruption, is a key condition of the assemblage's dynamic.

The event

Considering numerous parallels between Ranciere's disruptive dissensus and the notion of an *event* as a process of becoming (Deleuze, 1990 [1969]), along with related to it 'eventness of identity', it becomes apparent that these concepts could be crossed and discussed together. If political disruption is equal to the „institution of a part of those who have no part” (Rancière, 1999, pp. 11–,12) then “the event is coextensive with becoming” (Deleuze, 1990 [1969], p. 8). In other words, the event constitutes political subjectivity. Deleuze describes events as “singularities that are turning points and points of inflection; bottlenecks, knots, foyers, and centers; points of fusion and condensation, and boiling; points of tears and joy, sickness and health, hope and anxiety, 'sensitive' points” (1990, p. 52).

Following this, events represent moments of evolution, during which entities or concepts undergo a process of alteration or change. Rather than being an incident in time, an event embodies a fluid and transformative process that disrupts existing structures and gives rise to new opportunities in the physical world.

The virtual

Finally, Massumi defines, after Deleuze and Guattari, the *virtual* as the „mode of reality implicated in the emergence of new potentials. In other words, its reality is the reality of change: the event“ (Massumi, 2021, p. 134). It is a dynamic dimension that underlies and interconnects the material world. In relation to the urban, potential marks “the relation between the actual and the virtual city - between what ostensibly is and what might be or could have been” (McFarlane, 2011, p. 654). „Assemblages also possess dispositions, tendencies and capacities that are virtual (real but not actual) when not being currently manifested or exercised“ (DeLanda, 2016, p. 108). The virtual is a creative and generative force that contributes to the constant becoming of reality. „We can imagine the virtual in cities as the ever-present potential for breakdown and disruption“ (Müller & Schurr, 2016, p. 222). Deleuze and Guattari use the concept of the virtual to challenge traditional notions of causality and determinism. Thus, similarly to the glitch in digital technologies, the virtual may have spontaneous and uncalculated character.

3.2 METHODOLOGY

This research is critical and feminist in nature, which means it is concerned about social inequalities and uses intersectionality and gender as a lens through which it focuses on emancipatory practices of unprivileged groups. Within these practices, I understand a “subversive walk” in the urban environment as a method of political positioning and communication that this research explores.

I decided to address primarily artistic practices, firstly, to engage with the political aesthetics in urban space (Rancière, 2004) and, by doing so, to explore intersections of performance art with activism and social transformation. Secondly, for a practical reason: art performances typically exhibit a higher degree of systematic recording and archival practices, rendering them amenable to comprehensive investigation.

Consequently, this thesis is a qualitative multi-case endeavor examining three different modes of *subversive walk* conducted:

- a) as an art project by a performance artist (“Mis(s)placed woman?” by Tanja Ostojić, trans-local)
- b) as an art project by an activists group (“Eating Europe” by NGO Maiz, Austria)
- c) as a method in human geography by students (University of Bern, Switzerland).

This research understands a *subversive walk* as a potential of an event, circulating in the artistic and social domain, that, from time to time, “glows” in the material world (Maclure, 2013). Therefore in the foreground of this analysis is the method and the values and benefits its application generates. This thesis also engages with the differences in outcomes depending on the *modus operandi* of urban actors involved in the process of materialisation.

3.2.1 A FEW WORDS ABOUT POSITIONALITY

This research partly adopts a sensibility towards a post-qualitative approach (Boyd, 2022) and is informed in new empiricist thought. By the new empiricism, I mean all scientific positions building upon the works of Gilles Deleuze, Donna Haraway, Karen Barad, Rosi Braidotti, Anna Tsing, among others. Rooted in these works approach is very challenging for social sciences, as it claims: a) disruption of the notion of subjectivity and agency, including non-animated “actors” b) blurring the line between the material world and abstract concepts, focus on time-space and possibility, c) methodological shift from neo-positivist phenomenological uses of methods towards “entanglements”, interrelations and experiments (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013; Maclure, 2013; St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014; M. Thomas et al., 2016).

During the research process, I got inspired by this approach and started to think differently about my investigation, especially in the context of questions that I ask, and how I engage with the interviews and matter of the inquiry. My pre-selected “subversive walks” were historical events. I also was concerned about analyzing them in a too “dry”, technoscientific way, and by doing this, losing all the intra-connections these events had, keeping in mind the words of Manning, who stated that conventionally collected data in qualitative research is „abstracted from experience into a system of understanding that is decipherable precisely because its operations are muted by their having been taken out of their operational context.” (2016, p. 29). Instead, I started to actively shift my attention from the idea of gathering data into “ecologies of research” and considering “methods as a becoming entangled in relations” (Springgay & Truman, 2018, p. 84). For this, open-ended research practices are seen as the most appropriate (M. Thomas et al., 2016, p. 5; after Barad, 2007, p. 171). This approach helped me renavigate my research during the interview with the artist Tanja Ostojić. I pre-signified her art project in Innsbruck as my object of research. However, during our talk, I understood that it was not a singular event but rather a glimpse of her strategy, rooted in always-evolving scores (performance instructions), relations with other people, institutions, activists, and the ability to experiment. The project in Innsbruck appeared to me as just one materialization of the possibilities that the whole structure of relations cumulates. Thus, as my main focus was to research “subversive walk” as a method, I started to ask different questions and to map interrelations within her years-long practice instead of getting stuck to one point in time.

I also changed the way how I utilize and analyze my speculative, art-based walking research, which resulted in workshops with students at the university where I previously accomplished my internship. Originally, I designed it as a phenomenologically informed experiment with a questionnaire and focus group for ‘data gathering’. But the workshops were implemented in an educative setting, with a clear intention and hope that by the introduction into the discourse of ‘right to the city’ and invitation to focus on inequalities in urban space during the exercises, students will observe „how felt difference might register in thinking” (McCormack, 2014, p. 11). Thus, I could not take the answers from questionnaires out of context, claiming that this was phenomenological or purely ethnographic research because there was

still a clear intention constituting this investigation. Troubled, I found the answer in the literature, saying that methods employed without intention hinder "the very possibility for delicate new modes of existence to manifest themselves." (Manning, 2016, p. 9). Springgay and Truman go even forward, claiming that "it is no longer sufficient to engage with representation and interpretation (reflexivity). Rather we must consider speculative eventing as a research practice that provokes an ethics that is accountable to a material world" (2018, pp. 86–87). Even though these workshops do not count as participatory action research, for reasons I will discuss in the methods chapter, I started to see these workshops as real-life events and focused more on linkages and relations to the context in which the workshops happened.

Dealing with methods as secondary tools for research and troubling the subject are just a few of the shifts in the post-qualitative approach that I found enriching. From the literature emerge also the bigger picture of research that breaks completely with conventional meaning-making and uniformed structure of research design, which suggests human would be "superior to and separate from the material" (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013, p. 630). The post-qualitative approach, in its most extreme form, rejects the human subject, is against data, and is anti-method (Boyd, 2022), which in the context of my walking inquiry sounds like losing ground. Instead, I try to follow Mark Vagle and Brooke Hofsess (2016) with the idea of bridging the phenomenological use of methods with a post-qualitative inquiry, where a combination of conventional approaches and new empiricist thought should result in a 'post-reflectivity'.

3.2.2 RATIONALE BEHIND THE RESEARCH PROCESS AND SELECTION OF CASES

The idea of how to approach *subversive walk* in a way that will contribute to the field of urban studies changed over time during the research process. It was clear that practices of protest and contestation in urban environment belong to the very spectrum of interest in urban studies (Colomb & Novy, 2016; Hatuka, 2023; McAdam et al., 2005; Rosenthal, 2000); moreover, some investigations focus intensely on artistic and art-informed practices (De Fina Gonzalez, 2021; Domínguez Pérez et al., 2022; Hoop et al., 2022). In relation to my investigation, it appeared convenient at the beginning to select a historical case that I already knew from the art research classes I attended prior to the master's program – like "Blank placard dance" by the choreographer Anna Halprin or "Spaziergansdemonstration" by the political Association SDS. Both cases were subversive and misappropriated walking, applying it in different socio-political contexts. However, both were located in the 1960's, not necessarily well documented, moreover the case of Anna Halprin from a different geography, which discouraged the feasibility of the research. I also was familiar with the seminal and influential performance walk by Valie Export, pictures of which are in almost every book on the history of performance art. It turned out later that the body of literature on this particular piece is very modest, the artist was out of reach, and the VALIE EXPORT Center Linz (Research Center for Media and Performance Art) had only three texts related to this event: two Viennese newspaper articles from that year and one contribution by a Viennese theater director. Therefore, the chances for "becoming entangled in relations" with this potential case were small. I have searched continuously for cases of

misappropriated walks to find the beautiful project “Faceless” by Manu Luksch. However, the subject of surveillance and CCTV cameras seemed to have less relevance for gender trouble and inequalities that the research aimed to center.

One of the challenging questions was also how to define *subversive walk*, more particularly – how to differentiate it from a regular political demonstration. Not everything that appears under the umbrella term “performative democracy” (Weibel & ZKM, 2015) is suitable for this investigation. Many walks done within the public protest movement (Göle, 2022) do not utilize the possibility of misappropriation or manipulation of parameters. In clarification helped me the exhibition catalog “Global Activism” by defining “politically inspired art—global art practices that draw attention to grievances and demand the transformation of existing conditions through actions, demonstrations, and performances in public space” (Weibel & ZKM, 2015). “Politically inspired art” recalls the term activism. In this thesis, I will also use it sometimes reversely with art-based activism, as the demarcation line between those categories might occasionally be very blurred (Liinamaa, 2014, p. 537). And the blurred line was exactly the place where I started to search for subverted or manipulated walks.

Finally, at the end of the first year of the 4CITIES program, I created a list of potential cases (Appendix 1), putting in it also two works that I have seen in the meantime at the exhibition “WALK” in Schirn Gallery Frankfurt. The table below shows an excerpt from Appendix 1:

TABLE 1 – EVENTS/PROJECTS FOR A POTENTIAL CASE STUDY WITH TWO CHOSEN PROJECTS HIGHLIGHTED (FOR MORE INFORMATION S. APPENDIX 1)

Event and year	Author(s)	Issues tackled
Spaziergangsdemonstration, Berlin, 1966	SDS, Kommune I	<i>anti-war, anti-gov</i>
Blank placard dance, San Francisco, 1967	Anna Halprin	<i>anti-war, community building</i>
Faceless, London, 2007	Manu Luksch	<i>CCTV, (non)reality, fiction</i>
Armor, Kabul, 2015	Kubra Khademi	<i>gender, harassment</i>
American Reflexxx, Myrtle Beach, 2013	Signe Pierce & Alli Coates	<i>gender, harassment</i>
Aus der Mappe der Hundigkeit, Vienna, 1969	Valie Export	<i>gender, domination</i>
Mis(s)placed woman?, various cities, 2009-2023	Tanja Ostojić	<i>gender, queerness, harassment, migration</i>
Eating Europe, Vienna 2013	Maiz Association	<i>gender, queerness, migration, activism</i>

Both added works, “Armor” and “American Reflexxx,” had a crisp focus on gender relations, making them suitable for this investigation, despite their geographical and cultural context – one work was created in the US and the second in Afghanistan. Researching them

without contextual knowledge could easily lead to a (re)production of an exoticized or mystified picture. Here, I am referring not only to the notion of orientalism theorized by Edward Said but to local discourses, that unawareness of which could trouble the whole analysis. I was surprised when I read Khademi's comment in one interview:

„I saw that it was all over the news and social media. (...) The performance was presented as a project of the United States against Islam values, as blasphemy, as encouraging female prostitution. The image then started circulating internationally, which made it worse because people in the Western world admired it. (...) outsiders perceived my work as activism. That was painful for me. This wasn't activism; I'm an artist“ (Epps, 2021).

In this statement, the artist's position enables her to raise critique of social relations from within the society, while being an activist would raise allegations and indirectly deprive her of agency. This comment assured me that without my personal insight into local discourses, any analysis would be unreliable. Therefore, I had to look for examples in more familiar contexts.

At this stage of research and case selection, I still considered different variants of research design. One particular was very appealing in its simplicity: a singular case study followed by a reenactment of the studied walk that I started to develop at APL (Angewandte Performance Lab in Vienna). This type of research process could reach the depth of an event and simultaneously entangle several bodies in a collective embodied exploration. Reenactment – an act of recreating or restaging a significant artistic event from the past – is popular in performance studies, scenography, dance, or art research and seems to be still 'undiscovered' in creative geographies. Introducing reenactment as an embodied research method in urban studies could bring new qualities into the field. To this type of experimental research convinced me, Harriet Hawkins, who agitated already ten years ago, “to extend and deepen considerations of the form and import of geography-art relations“ (Hawkins, 2013). Meanwhile, practice-based research became a broad, diversified spectrum of methods many researchers use (Hawkins, 2020). Taking into account not only cultural and performative turns in geography but also new empiricist thought, discussed in the last paragraph, the utilization of reenactment would not be even a pioneering work but just a consequent implementation of approaches that currently influence and (re)shape the scientific field.

Simultaneously, the uneasy question at this point in the case selection process was: which artistic or activist *subversive walk* would be substantial enough to serve as a useful model for exploring this phenomenon? Is there any walk that could make a statement for the whole category? None of them seemed complex enough, and on the other hand, all of them had something to offer for a broader analysis. I could not leave the idea that subversive walk is something multi-faced, and thus only by engaging with the variety of its “glows” (M. K. E. Thomas & Bellingham, 2016, p. 7) we could grasp its potential and its ongoing repetitiveness.

Finally, the cases I have chosen for the analysis were the last found. From the text written by Suzana Milevska (2014) that I encountered during the course in gender studies, I learned about Tanja Ostojić. Milevska described there the artist's project “Integration impossible?” in which Ostojić walked through London's inner city covered in a burka made of

camouflage fabric and thus provocatively engaging with “new measurements of surveillance and (...) frequent stop-and-searching of veiled women” (2014, p. 124) after the bombing in London in 2005. This unexpected combination of two cultural codes precisely pointed out the transnational sexism Muslim women are exposed to (Riley, 2013). I started searching for the artist’s name, figuring out that Ostojić’s practice had way more to offer in the matter of subversive citations. I found out that the famous photograph of pants with the European Union flag pattern in a frame imitating Gustave Courbet’s painting “The Origin of the World”, was the artist’s visual comment on the EU’s migration politics. Furthermore, Ostojić’s body of work involved multiple performances in public spaces, scores, and collaborative workshops, rendering her practice a promising and rich source for the inquiry in walking. A photograph from one of her projects, “Mis(s)placed woman?” in Innsbruck, showed a human body in a public space, particularly legs equipped with flip-flops and carrying the upper body, that got stuck in a suitcase. The intense visual language and the utilisation of walking blended with the vulnerability of migration, convinced me to start searching for more information and, finally, to choose her practice as my area of research.

Simultaneously, I was exploring the proliferation of books on walking, getting more and more disappointed by their uncritical way of reproducing the canon, that is by “constitution and maintenance of a given symbolic order” (Mouffe, 2008, p. 11). In particular, the books were taking as a point of departure a free, unnoticed (and thus white), genderless (and thus male), humanist subject in his leisure time – sometimes with a small exception for projects of William Pope L. and Adrian Piper. So I attended a seminar ‘on walking’ from the Department of English Literature at the University of Bern, considering taking a case from literature. I read: Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah, Teju Cole, Siri Hustvedt, Ray Bradbury, Walt Whitman, Garnette Cadogan. Indeed, these narrations had to offer very critical perspectives - besides their troubling fictionality and immateriality.

Finally, I encountered the exhibition catalogue “Global Activism” (Weibel & ZKM, 2015). I knew from one of the curators of the exhibition, that inviting activists to participate in the event was challenging, as they disregarded the museum as a “bourgeois institution” – a concept that relates to Ranciere’s ‘representational regime of art’. Rooted in the common concern of becoming eventually annihilated by the art market, which on the top level is intertwined with neoliberal policy agendas like ‘creative city’ (Liinamaa, 2014), processes of gentrification (Deutsche, 1996), or war economies (Steyerl, 2017), activists tend to operate in a spatial distance from art institutions. A Viennese cannibalistic procession from 2013, described in the catalog, was also organized in public space and not in the interior of a theatre or any public building. It was vastly differentiated from a conventional demonstration – it misappropriated and subverted several elements, rendering it a good starting point for further investigation. The fact that behind this event stand a migrant’s association made additionally an intra-link to the project of Tanja Ostojić.

3.2.3 RATIONALE BEHIND METHODS

As discussed before, this ‘post’-sensible (Boyd, 2022) investigation did not start with “preexisting *methods of data collection*” (St. Pierre, 2021) but went towards an „active and creative *style* of doing research which maintains a certain openness to how objects are encountered in the field” (Boyd, 2022, p. 7), or in short, towards “becoming entangled in relations” (Springgay & Truman, 2018). As a starting point were chosen two past events, with their digital traces and literature discussing them. Several public media channels (on platforms: Vimeo, Youtube, Facebook, Instagram) and the project’s blogs owned by the authors and organizers enabled first encounters with events’ representations, mainly with videos, photographs, posters, and descriptions. As those interactions, even assembled with the discussed concepts relevant to urban studies, were not sufficient to engage with the first research question, a conventional method, however, with an abbreviation, was utilized – an interview, primarily because of pragmatic reasons.

Before coming to the details of each of the three investigations, I would like to shortly discuss the problem of an interview that led me to re-thinking this method. Starting with Derrida’s accusation that Western culture is phono- and logocentric, speech is then an authoritative act where the subjectivity of the author and the world are constructed (Derrida, 1971). Similarly, but drawing upon Deleuze and Guattari, some researchers, also from the geographic field, reject the idea that an interviewee can ‘speak for themselves’ (Bissell, 2015; Mayes, 2019; Mazzei, 2016), as voices are just materially embedded in the event of speaking. Particularly this quote makes the point: „Each of us is caught up in an assemblage... and we reproduce its statements when we think we are speaking in our own name, or rather we speak in our own name when we produce its statement” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 41). On a less abstract level, it means that data, or interview answers, are not fixed nor passive data but rather verbs and processes. Certainly, this way of thinking about assemblages and voices undermines the subjectivity of interviewees, especially in the context of discussing their role in the event or expressing self-reflexive thoughts. Nevertheless, given the not-that-big number of interviews conducted to engage with the first two modes of a subversive walk, I decided to slightly change the strategy. Instead of asking interviewers questions from a comparative guideline list, I used some answers from the previous interlocutors to engage in consecutive conversations to confront the interviewee with other opinions or concepts. Two interviewees were not directly related to the researched events but linked to networks. I followed the assumption that by ‘mixing groups’, which means not separating the ‘cases’ in an interview, some new insights could occur that would be closer to the research question or to the very idea of a subversive walk. Therefore, the interviews were an invitation to think *with* or to think *through*.

In following points are discussed the methodological details of the analysis in each mode of *subversive walk*:

- 1) Besides desktop research and content compilation of visual material, I conducted a long, unstructured interview with the artist that, upon the invitation, that took place on the balcony

of her private flat in Berlin. During the interview, I changed the focus of the discussion from a particular and singular event towards performative 'ecologies' within the artistic practice under the umbrella of the "Mis(s)placed woman?" project. I remained in contact with the artist, exchanging several emails and having access to private online archives with visual documentation of projects.

2) This engagement approached the procession "Eating Europe" as an embedded and historical event, however, linked to the present and seen through present-day lenses. Similarly, the investigation started with desktop research, followed by the process of examining or rather reflecting on some aspects of this event in in-depth interviews conducted with a dramaturgist and co-producer of the event, a collaborator of the Wienwoche and senior lecturer of Social Design at Angewandte, an performance artist and senior lecturer at APL (Angewandte Performance Laboratory). Already this list is troubled by the attempt to clearly define the roles and impossibility of signifying 'experts,' 'participants,' and so on. However, from the perspective of the research question, the definition of roles made no significant difference. The interviews were semi-structured and with cascade character: following the first interview, the next ones entailed confrontations with opinions from other interviews, also from the artist Tanja Ostojić, or from the literature.

3) The last investigation operated with embodied and experimental methods, and thus, it aims to contribute to walking research. I had a chance to develop a block of score-based performative exercises that was implemented in the workshop day, titled by the organizers "Exkursion Bern", for first-year bachelor students of Geography at the University of Bern, at the end of the academic year. The workshop was dedicated to the concept of 'right to the city' and took place four times on different days (16.,17.,23.,24. May) - every time with another group of students who could choose which exercises in the afternoon will they take part in. The performative block was intended to take 90 Min., with the aim to raise awareness and increase sensitivity through embodied experience (Latour, 2004). It was attended by 17 students, in total, and in particular by 16 bachelor students and 1 student of 4CITIES master program. The workshop sheet was accessible to students in advance (on the online platform) and is attached as appendix 2. Students were asked to choose 2 out of 5 exercises, having 20 mins. for each performative exercise, and as they usually involved group action, I also participated in these exercises. All participants were invited to choose the place of performance themselves and to stop performing anytime if they did not feel comfortable with the setting or interactions.

This workshop intentionally utilized the liveness of embodied experience to accelerate the reflection upon 'social order' in public space (Rancière, 2004). This approach could be linked to the concept of "learning to be affected" (Latour, 2004), and the discussions after performative tasks evolved around "how felt difference might register in thinking" (McCormack, 2014, p. 11). Besides a few similarities with Participatory Action Research due to knowledge production through action and application, I use the term *speculation* or *experiment* for several reasons: PAR should involve participants already at the conception of the workshop, which was organizationally not possible; the aim of improving something was also not met due to lacking

repetitions (as students could attend the workshop only once). However, it was still participative, collaborative, and art-based, as for exercises were proposed *scores* (performance instructions) from Fluxus—emerged in '60, an art movement favoring performative process (*flux*) rather than a finished piece of work. The scores were carefully chosen to balance their disruptive potential with their feasibility in the workshop context.

The discussions were complemented by the questionnaire and group text (in the form of a mind map) “to disrupt and reshape the boundaries of the research phenomenon” (Thomas et al., 2016, p. 38) and to be filled out on the spot. The form of a questionnaire enabled comparative analysis; however, the results were treated with ‘post’-sensible ambiguity. Finally, I offered an online meeting to discuss the workshop in a focus group.

3.2.4 LIMITATIONS AND ANNOTATIONS

To start with the last case, due to the end of the semester and holiday period, only one participant attended the ‘focus group’ meeting, which transformed into an interview. During the workshop, as participants were apparently affected and strongly willing to talk after every performative exercise, I offered to reschedule the performed sequences. The questionnaires were written already on the spot after the discussion, which could strongly influence the answers – particularly in what was said and what stayed unsaid and thus nullifying ‘opacities’. The group text (mind map) was composed without much attention or, due to lack of time, sometimes finished by a willing participant after the workshop. As a result, the concept of de-subjectified and intra-related text had little chance of being fulfilled. Interestingly, the majority of the students who attended the workshop were from the close region and spoke local dialect, which may relate to some similarities in their answers.

Secondly, questionnaires, discussions, and some interviews were conducted in German. Translations of some quotes appear in the text and are marked by the symbol * that is placed in brackets indicating the source. This symbol is used also for other translated sources.

Moreover, not all contacts were available for an interview. In interviews itself came out places, discourses and contexts (Istanbul or brasilian ‘cultural cannibalism’) of which I had and still have limited familiarity. Notwithstanding my best efforts to read more and discuss it with student fellows who have more contextual insights, the conduct of thought may still be affected by a lack of situated knowledge.

Finally, the formulation of the research ‘object’ (*subversive walk*), that is, a concept, virtuality and potentiality from the one hand, and an embodied experience and liveness from the other, brought more than enough ways in which it can be unfolded within the interdisciplinary field of urban studies. Only three attempts were possible within the given time. Thus, this thesis, by its finitude, does not give justice to the continuous multiplicity of the concept of subversive walk, that is – as put by Latour and Hermant while relating to *the virtual* – a „plasma just waiting to take shape“ (Latour & Hermant, 2006).

4. STEP ONE: MIS(S)PLACED WOMAN?

In this chapter is offered a brief introduction of Tanja Ostojić's overall practice, followed by the outline of the years-long project "Mis(s)placed woman?" and the network this project creates. Subsequently, I take up the task of assessing the ways and means the artist and other contributors to the project utilize subversive walk to raise political questions and, by doing so, to engage with the first research question.

Remaining accurate to the artist's self-description on the project's website, Tanja Ostojić is a Berlin-based, Yugoslavian-born performance and interdisciplinary artist renowned for her socially and politically engaged feminist art, particularly within the realm of public space. Utilizing a range of mediums in her artistic exploration, she focuses on a spectrum of subjects, including feminist matters, migration, power dynamics in the art domain, social structures, economic influences, and bio-political considerations, among others. She actively integrates herself as a persona within her performances, predominantly adopting the viewpoint of migrant women. Since 1994, her works have been exhibited at numerous solo and collective exhibitions. Notable venues showcasing her work include the Venice Biennale in both 2001 and 2011, the Brooklyn Museum in New York, MUMOK in Vienna, the Ludwig Museum in Budapest, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, and many others. Her work extends into research and education. Ostojić was trained as an artist in Belgrade, Nantes, and Berlin, and at the time when I contacted her, she was a lecturer in performance art in Reykjavik.

In this context, it is important to highlight that migration politics belong to the core subjects, Ostojić focuses on in her practice. Around the Millenium, the artists developed several projects sharply engaging with the fate of postwar Yugoslavia and the East/West divide in European politics, among which were: *Illegal Border Crossings* (2000) at the Slovenian/Austrian border, *Waiting for a Visa* (2000), and *Looking for a Husband with EU Passport* (2000-2005). In the latter, building upon the concept mail-order bride, the artist offered a marriage in exchange for a Schengen passport, simultaneously subverting the announcement with a "completely opposite visual message than the usual aesthetics of the adverts" (Milevska, 2005, p. 117). The images and language of the announcement linked the transborder marriage of convenience to human trafficking and prostitution in a caustic and satirical way. Following a un/real marriage, this project led Tanja Ostojić to obtain a German visa for five consecutive years.

While dealing with a years-long struggle with German bureaucracy, artists worked on "redefinition of the field of [her] artistic activity" (Ostojić, 2007, p. 284), starting her *Integration Project*, consisting of workshops, language courses, and other participative, social activities. Those apparent gestures of assimilation were by no means statements nor unreflected expressions of political commitment. Besides the social dedication and "over-identification with the established regimes of power" (Milevska, 2005, p. 118) in Ostojić's work, deeply ironic and excessive, the artists developed in the meantime the project *Naked Life*, investigating the issues of discrimination against Roma and Sinti in Europe and relating it to Agamben's concept of 'bare

life.' Finally, in 2009 she issued the book *"Integration Impossible?"*, confusing the created narratives and stressing the strategy of resistance underlying her practice.

In the same year, 2009, the artist started the "Mis(s)placed Women?" which became her biggest and most branched collaborative art project that is under ongoing development. It consists of performances, delegated performances, and performance art workshops with the contributions of more than 170 individuals, particularly women artists from diverse backgrounds. "Mis(s)placed Women?" is rooted in the displacement experiences of migrants, refugees, and itinerant artists. The themes explored include migration, gender, feminism, gentrification, power dynamics, and vulnerability, with a focus on female and transgender bodies. The initiative investigates, on the one hand, the subject of migration, exploring and building upon experiences of (un)privileged mobility, and on the other, focusing on the dynamics of public spaces and the (in)visibility of marginalized groups in it. Guided by feminist emancipatory methodologies, the project hosts workshops at heterogeneous cultural organizations. Activities extend from performances in public spaces to exhibitions and public discussions, aiming communication and dialogue with the audience.

The last and most extensive project's steps, consisting of longer residencies and workshops, accompanied by exhibitions and publications, took place in Innsbruck in 2013 and in Istanbul 2021/22. In the latter the artist supported workshop participants in 'producing' their performances instead of performing herself. The participants and contributors form an informal community and occasionally attend new events within the project, depending on their location.

„Mis(s)placed woman?" is, without doubt, a trans-local network of people who happened to meet at the same place and made meaningful connections that were maintained for months or even several years, in many cases leading to the reunion and repetition of the event. Contemporary arts organizations and financing institutions undoubtedly belong to this structure of relations too. However, the description of the network could not fully unfold the complexity of socio-material relations that this project established. Instead, I will try to consider „Mis(s)placed woman?" as a translocal assemblage, focusing strongly on the role of actions and events that this performative project centers.

By no means the central figure of the network is the artist who develops her ethically motivated, participatory art practice. Less obvious, although very common in the art domain, is the project's archive that aims to witness and document artistic activities and, by chance, to contribute to the broader art scene and visual culture. The workshops would not be possible without participants, who might be other artists developing their careers or activist interested in artistic methodologies. The solidarity bond between artists and contributors is built upon shared experiences of migration and discrimination. The contributors would not know about the project if not the open call issued by the hosting cultural organizations— as the last recent DEPO in Istanbul and Cultural Academy Tarabya, consequently in Istanbul, and earlier Art-In-Public-Space Tyrol in Innsbruck. Those institutions have very different profiles that vary from non-

commercial, socially engaged missions to state-owned joint ventures with artist's associations. The organizations are embedded in the local, urban context, dependent on local politics, founding opportunities, and the audience they attract. They are, at the same time, exhibition sites, aiming to be active, in *flux*, to 'produce' an audience and a vibrant cultural scene. Hosting performative projects, they aim to produce an 'emancipated spectator,' using Rancière's words – not a passive observer but an active member of the community who plays a role in interpreting and giving meaning to the artwork. The community attached to the organization is, by definition, exclusive (Mouffe, 2008), or as one interviewee called it, 'a bubble'. By providing artists' residencies, the organizations have the possibility to choose the projects they want to host, underpinning the choice to their values, social vision, or theme. As not profit-driven entities, they rely on financial support from state-owned or private cultural foundations – among others, Austrian 'Land Tirol,' German 'Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen,' 'Stiftung Kunstfonds,' 'Goethe Institut,' French/international 'Foundation for Arts Initiatives' and Turkish 'Anadolu Kültür.' Particularly, DEPO's diversified financing relies foremostly on European public cultural funds as a result of "near-complete absence of Turkish government actors (...) in supporting the contemporary arts in Istanbul" (Sanul & van Heur, 2018). Yet, the specificity of the project entangles several other elements. It is the artist's strategy to go "beyond the white cube" (Ostojić, 2007, p. 281), which means moving the performative event and workshop from galleries' interiors to public space. Thus, chosen streets and or squares become the most important, spatially embedded components of the assemblage. However, the street already performs social order and heteronormativity and, by doing so, intersects other assemblages (state, neighborhood).

Now, if the performers are accompanied by the film crew, as it was during the workshop in 2021, the passersby are reassured that they are witnessing a cultural production. The presence of the film crew creates a distance; the disruption in public space is 'justified' by the commonly known choreographies of video production. Nevertheless, the artist reckons with the interruption by the police, as the group has already been frequently controlled and followed by police functionaries – with different intensity and in relation to the symbolic value of the place. The police's codes of categorizing transgressive behaviors relate to the massive protests in Gezi Park in 2013. Less intense controls of police and security occurred regularly in the project, also in Sweden or Austria; thus, the artists developed already a few strategies for tackling it (by rhetoric or by delegating another person to 'take over' the discussion). The film crew is necessary for documentary production; however, the artist is ambiguous about documenting:

„I prefer when it's not over-documented, you know, because then it's just people and you, and if it's over-documented, if there is a camera and everything, people always think 'oh, it's something for TV' or whatever. I think it takes away the presence of performance and the authenticity" (Interview 2, Pos. 475-481)

What is the 'authenticity' of the performance piece in public space? It is the affective intensification rooted in the disruption of the codes and flows of everyday life. It is an *event*, an occurrence of the 'virtual' in public space, that affects passersby, as they are not able to

categorize the situation; it appears as 'out of control,' 'out of order.' It is – from the perspective of the street – a glitch. It produces Rancière's 'strangeness.' An unknown element, hard or even impossible to decode.

In the short and low-quality video dated 30.09.2022 and recorded by phone camera from a close distance, around eleven women walk backward down the street, forming a line, one behind the other. All of them scream and hold a long band made of traditionally painted floral tablecloths upon their heads – a gesture replacing carrying protest flags. It is a spontaneously organized action of solidarity with Iranian protests after Mahsa Amini's death. The event is self-organized, without funding, supporting institutions, and without official permission to perform in Istanbul's public spaces. Most of the walking women took part in previous activities within the project and thus belong to the „Mis(s)placed woman?“ community. Now, their scream affects the street. It transmits the intensity that is under the 'conscious' control, and thus, it electrifies. Some of the participants were already involved earlier in performances with screaming, called by the artist 'opening the voice.' Every time they intensely affect people on the street:

„Everyone was coming out. It was a small street with small restaurant shops all along. Just pedestrian. Everyone came out. Elderly men were taking their canes, tapping them on the metal fixtures. It was like, you know, even Japanese tourists asked what is this about? (...) It was really, really strong and very powerful.“ (Interview 2, Pos. 619-625)

The female scream is culturally coded and has its symbolic value. In the influential essay "The Gender of Sound," Anne Carson states that silencing women "has been an important project of patriarchal culture from antiquity to the present day. Its chief tactic is an ideological association of female sound with monstrosity, disorder and death" (1994, p. 24). By analyzing ancient Greece, Carson shows how women were denied the virtue of self-control (*sophrosyne*) when it came to speech, and their voice was associated with qualities of being too loud, never silent. Yet, in the described performance, the female scream is utilized for the expression of mourning and solidarity. It induces affective intensification along the streets where the group marches. Finally, it is an intense performative, embodied act that shapes the political and social subjectivity of „Mis(s)placed woman?"; an event constituting political becoming.

4.1 THE SCORE BECOMES DANGEROUS ON THE STREET

The score is a crucial element in performance art. It consists of a set of instructions, guidelines, or tasks needed to create a performance piece and serves as a starting point for improvisations. It has its roots in the Fluxus movement and was theorized as a translation of music notation into the visual arts (Friedman, 2002)– thus, it should be a partiture for movement. The score reduces descriptions to essential elements and therefore leads to a multiplicity of realizations. Tanja Ostojić works with several short scores that are exchangeable or undergo alterations/mutations. She commented on the walk described above as follows:

„We decided to do one event on the street in support of the feminist revolution in Iran. So we combined these two performances, this one [‘opening the voice’ with tablecloths] and this one, walking backward. So we created a new score.(...). And we walked one behind the other like a little train walking backward and screaming at the same time, and doing that in a number of little streets in the neighborhood. (Interview 2, Pos. 629-635)

In Ostojić’s practice, pieces and scores “are being recycled” (Interview 2, Pos. 192), always evolving. At the same time, the very idea behind her performance pieces in public space is blurring the line between art and life. The passersby should be confused; they should experience it as an unexplainable and unpredictable event embedded in the actual world, in the realm of everyday life. However, score - a very ‘dry’ instruction, gives performers a high degree of predictability; it shapes the plan of action. Besides reactions that the performer might face, the score secures ‘the rest.’ As several interviewees expressed, the score helps to gain a special, distant mindset, altering the body into the tool of conceptual art. Thus, in the context of discussed performative pieces on the streets, score produces an unequal power relation – between somebody who ‘knows’ what will happen and somebody who cannot predict anything. „On the street (...) the act becomes dangerous, if it does, precisely because there are no theatrical conventions to delimit the purely imaginary character of the act” (Butler, 1988, p. 527). The event breaks completely with the theatric tradition of the ‘contract’ (i.e., ‘we both know that this what is happening is just a simulation’). The contract is not offered. Thus, the score in this particular context reshapes the relations. From the street perspective, the event creates tension (Deleuzian ‘bottleneck’); the event is disruptive. From the performer’s perspective, the event - to a certain degree of intensity, as reactions work through affect – might still provide frames of stability and comfort that allow the artist to say, at the end, “I enjoyed creating a small provocation” (Interview 2, Pos. 940).

Finally, with consecutive repetitions, scores evolve. They are altered by embedding culturally coded elements, like i.e., the gendered traditional tablecloth that “really stands for the migrant women here” (Interview 2, Pos. 651). Scores function as unorthodox proposals:

“People were transforming it (...) within the workshops, and sometimes people create their own scores that then we are basically producing” (Interview 2, Pos. 294-296)

The artist takes in the project’s archive scores developed by other contributors and interprets them. As an example, *Score #3: Becoming One With a Bag* (Ostojić, 2022, p. 13) by Dagmara Bilon envisions a human figure as “legs coming out of a bag,” but the performance is static; it prescribes standing still in public space for half an hour. However, in the piece “*Misplaced Women?*” and the *Tourist Suitcase*, Ostojić ‘mobilizes’ this score. While walking with the suitcase on the upper part of her body, she interacts with passersby. This walk has nothing in common with flâneurian or psychogeographic approaches. Performers cannot escape the fact of having a body. Scores in the “*Mis(s)placed Women?*” are oriented toward the body and toward interaction while confusing power relations for the ethereal moment of performance. On the other hand, they are still scores, a ‘path to follow’, a tactics. For Marchart, the first performative condition of protest is to “act in a tactically and perhaps even strategically concerted and

organized way” (Marchart, 2019, p. 85). Thus, score and scoring have the potential and compatibility with political practice.

4.2 LONG-TERM FRIENDSHIPS AND CULTIVATION OF SUBJECTIVITY

The assemblage of “Mis(s)placed Women?” is a structure with replaceable parts – its functions and last even without founding and cultural institutions, at least for some period of time. Of course, urban studies tend to focus the analysis on those stable, structured organizations embedded in local politics. However, as “a component part[s] of an assemblage may be detached from it and plugged into a different assemblage” (DeLanda, 2019, p. 11), those organizations are replaceable in “Mis(s)placed Women?”. Some cultural hosting institutions and some source of financing must be, in the end, found to develop the next steps and to maintain relations. But the procedure of applying for residencies and funding goes beyond the local or national frames, and the members of the community are capable of traveling from London or Berlin, as an example, to take part in the project’s activities, as described by the artist:

„ The women that get to know each other during the workshop often build long-term friendships (...) for instance, Workshop group in the Festival of Politics in Aberdeen (...) who contributed to the project for several years and who also got together and collaborated on a longer-term in London (...) and they collaborate also outside the >Mis(s)placed Women?< framework (...) [one participant] moved, for instance, to Bangladesh and she also kept participating in our project activities and exhibitions. There is a group from Berlin as well (...) and also in Istanbul (Interview 2, Pos. 796-810)

The interpersonal network of the “Mis(s)placed Women?” community is quite remarkable. It possesses a genuinely trans-local character, with bounds strong enough to keep together people involved in the project’s activities despite their relocations. Some of the contributors are also activists. It is not a twist of fate but a conscious choice of the artist while selecting applications submitted for the open call for the workshops. As she stated: “I don't choose people who have (...) big CV's, I rather choose people who don't have so much access to artistic production, who seek connection” (Interview 2, Pos. 812). In the last workshop, half of the group belonged to the local LGBT community, and the artist defined her goal by stating, “it was very important to give them empowerment” (Interview 2, Pos. 663).

The size of the workshop groups is crucial – aiming to guarantee meaningful connection and exchange, the number of participants is limited and rarely exceeds 10. The embodied character of the workshop, the exchange related to, often shared, experiences of discrimination and migration, and the incorporation of biographical elements - those could be just a few reasons for the intense bond emerging among participants. Few of them described the work process as an “invaluable, emotional exchange” (Ostojić, 2022, p. 33) and an “empowering experience” (Ostojić, 2022, p. 29). As an example, one participant decided to incorporate her grandmother’s unused dowry into the developed performance. “She said, this was probably the most important experience in her life” (Interview 2, Pos. 818), reported the artist. The bond connecting project contributors by far exceeds the notion of participating in a workshop.

Finally, performing together may be understood as an embodied act of establishing collective identity (Mouffe, 2012, p. 630) or, as described by Sparks, “performative cultivation of subjectivity through bodily practice and ritual” (2016, p. 430). As the artist stated, „the project and [her] attitude, it's a combination of pedagogical, artistic and socially engaged practice (...), basically community building practice“ (Interview 2, Pos. 806-808). The building of a collective subjectivity could be fostered by the described earlier temporarily established difference in space. This is based upon the division we/them – ‘we’ who have a plan of action or follow the score, and ‘them’ who are being disrupted, confused, the “constitutive outside” (Mouffe, 2012, p. 630). This dynamic is fostered in public spaces and strengthens the bonds between participants. This practice is a fundament upon which emerges “Mis(s)placed Women?” community, with its evolving structure and capacity to connect with local activist groups.

4.3 URBAN CONTEXT AND GUERILLA TACTICS

Overcoming the exclusive character of the art scene that tends to attract and shape a specific audience (a ‘bubble’) may be one of the reasons to move the performance art to public space. The collection of people on the streets and the dynamics of public spaces are very diverse and play an important role. Places are not redeemable:

„I try to seek for the exact context with which I want to work. Each corner of the city has a different context, (...) the same kind of performance done in different parts of town would have a completely different resonancy and different feedback. So I use the performance also to do a site-specific research. Sociological or in city landscape or, you know, political opinion“ (Interview 2, Pos. 162-164)

What is striking in this quote is the usage of the term ‘site-specific research.’ The artist uses performative work to ‘learn’ the places. It is not flâneurian voyeurism or distanced observation but an active interaction with other people and objects in space. The choreography of the place is given great attention, but foremost, the intended disruption and renegotiation of relations situate the body of the performer in place. This ‘research’ is an open-ended, embodied process of learning.

Public space is a field of hegemonic activities, a prolongation of social order. Nevertheless, it also has a ‘memory.’ Historical facts and local knowledge are highly valuable for the project’s community. In an older performance piece, a project contributor combined her Jewish heritage, the square in Cologne with the underground Jewish archive that collapsed, and the poetry of her family. The genealogy and the past embedded in places are of great interest for “Mis(s)placed woman?”. The term ‘misplacement’ implies the wrongness of place, the inappropriate emplacement. Nevertheless, „those who are, ‘in place’ also must arrive; they must get ‘here,’ (...) their arrival is more easily forgotten or is not even noticed. The disorientation of the sense of home, as the ‘out of place’ or ‘out of line’ effect of unsettling arrivals, involves what we could call a migrant orientation“ (S. Ahmed, 2006, pp. 9–10). Ahmed builds her model of queer orientation upon the migrant’s experiences of deterritorialization, of being non-normative in a normative space (2006). Here, “Mis(s)placed woman?” as an eternal migrant and a ‘political body’ is ‘oriented’ towards agonistic interventions:

"I didn't ask for permission (...) if you apply for permission, it might take time, you would have to pre-decide about where you want to do things. (...) I go rather with this guerilla strategy because I want to give complete freedom. I don't want everyone to perform in one square."

(Interview 2, Pos. 531-543)

Nobody is informed about the event besides the performing participants. The deficiency of information enhances the disruptive potential. A few excuses are prepared in advance for the police.

Lack of permission to perform in public space belongs to regular and repetitive solutions. It is not even clear if they are solutions or choices – the performative pieces and exercises work as the 'minor' (Deleuze et al., 1983; Katz, 1996). If the very idea of "Mis(s)placed woman?" is defined as being deterritorialized, then 'she' constitutes the minor by consciously working "in vocabulary in which one is not at home" (Katz, 1996, p. 489), that is by the micropolitical disruption of the structural cohesion of the street (social order/hegemony) and its normative flows. If the "blockade of circulation" (Marchart, 2019, p. 88) of goods, services and urban traffic is the condition of acting politically towards protest, it would be then a matter of the size of "Mis(s)placed woman?" community to cross the threshold and be able to move from distracting towards 'blocking' the flows.

The interactions with police and the social order executed by them were spatially diversified. In Innsbruck, the artist had no significant issues with the functionaries. However, during her performance, she was pushed out of the main square by the right-wing activists, as they "claimed" the space as their: "This this was the particular situation with the kind of clash (...) to whom belongs the space" (Interview 2, Pos. 928-929). Differently, in Istanbul, police control was intensified in 'strategic', official places with symbolic values. Paradoxically, the walk involving collective screaming was accepted by the controlling organs and classified as not conflicting with the rules. The artists explained it by putting it in the historical context:

"In the response of the Gezi protest (...) they prohibited any kind of gathering (Pos. 878-880) We were (...) negotiating if we can do the 'opening the voice' (...) - it's basically screaming - and the police said: you can do that! You can do that but not while standing, only if you're walking. And then, it was crazy.... We were walking (...) and screaming, and everyone was coming out. (Interview 2, Pos. 617-620)

Gathering and standing were seen by the police as a strategy of occupation, of reclaiming the space - as it was the protest tactic in the disruptive 2013. In addition, the artists stated that it was prohibited for the group to hold any sign – "police will immediately arrest you" (Interview 2, Pos. 605). Any placard with the written word could trigger police awareness of upcoming protests. The impossibility of demonstrating denies, of course, the existence of a democratic public sphere. However, the police's focus on logos (text/sign i.e. mentioned in the interview rainbow flag), and spatial occupation, contrasted with the possibility of organizing a screaming march, shows the porosity in the execution of power. The scores were discussed with the police prior to the event, giving a chance to negotiate the terms.

In contrast to these inconsistent police order should be taken artist's experiences with privatized or commercialized 'public spaces' in Germany:

"[one participant] was performing in front of the cosmetics shop (...) this guy came so quickly out and told her to move (...) she just started taking off her shoes, emptying her pockets. (...) not a big deal as a performance, but somehow, you're questioning this consumption. You're questioning it without saying anything. You just don't look like a fancy customer. Nobody wants to see that in front of the shop (Interview 2, Pos. 983-993)"

In this example, commercial activity fixes the socio-spatial order to almost a totality. Any potential disruption in the everyday flow of consumption is being stopped immediately. For Mouffe, spaces with those levels of control are not public spaces anymore; they do not have agonistic qualities (Mouffe, 2005, p. 163). A quite similar position was expressed by the Viennese artists oftentimes performing in public spaces:

„Laws you can somehow break or circumvent. But in Austria (...) economy and commerce, that's a lot of trouble (...) The reasoning is another: you harm the business, you are a business disruptor. (...) So the economic argument is different than the safety argument.“
(Interview 1*, Pos. 26-30)

The interviewed performance artists mentioned several situations where managers or securities of commercial companies stopped their performances in places appearing as 'public', giving witness to the condition of late capitalism that selectively affects parts of 'public spaces' and exercises a fixed order, which performers cannot directly negotiate.

4.4 AESTHETICS: WORKING DETERRITORIALIZATION TO ITS LIMITS

As a performative and mediated project, "Mis(s)placed woman?" operates with a variety of aesthetical strategies. This consists of cultural and historical citations, surprising combinations of culturally coded elements, semantic experimentations (contrast or similarities), and finally, over-identification, which was incorporated already at the beginning of the project. As described by Suzana Milevska, the artist's work centers on „over-identification with the established regimes of power and representation through which the objectification of the female body usually takes place“ (Milevska, 2005, p. 118). In "Mis(s)placed woman?", this over-identification also relates to 'deterritorialization'; it is oriented towards the migrant's experience. Because this aesthetics works through subversion and intersects the notion of minor, I recall its definition, which was a conscious work "in a vocabulary in which one is not at home—where one has become 'deterritorialized'—but where one works that deterritorialization to its limits, forcing it to express something different" (Katz, 1996, p. 489). The over-identification of working towards 'something different' clearly shows the example from Austria.

In 2018 in Innsbruck, during the performance, Ostojić was pushed out of the square by a right-wing activist, who „felt (...) responsible for protecting the music band that was there to support the FPÖ“ (Interview 2, Pos. 406). This event belongs to the well-documented highlights

of the artist's project, firstly because of physical friction and its transgressive character. Secondly and foremost, because of the very visual clash of cultural codes depicted in one frame – the artist's body, on the move and partly hidden in the suitcase, evokes the discourse on othering, human trafficking, and 'flesh.' The woman who pushes her out, wears 'dirndl' – a traditional Austrian folk dress. Being pictured in the front of a late medieval landmark ("Goldenes Dachl"), the figure elicits the following logic: somebody 'at home' and 'from here' violates a migrant body 'out of place.' This is an event of staging the antagonism; even more – a founding antagonism without which the subjectivity of "Mis(s)placed woman?" could not become visible. There is finally a 'negative constitutive outside' – an Austrian woman in a folk dress in a conservative Austrian city, more 'at home' than ever, who materializes the accusations that could be uttered from the migrant's perspective. The aspect of staging the symbolic violence and conflictual antagonism is for Marchart (2019, p. 86) strategic for the construction of political collectivity. In this sense, this solo performance is political by operating with the visual language of antagonism. The mediation of this photograph is a contribution to the general symbolic field. The "clash between starkly opposing sides" (Ghoddousi & Page, 2020, p. 5) and the creation of antagonistic enemies are counterbalanced by the satirical and grotesque character of the scene.

Going further with symbolics, the artist changed shoes for this performance: from the originally prescribed by score high heels to flip-flops. Although, as she explained, it was a result of the 'plot' (transformation from a businesswoman, to a tourist, to a 'body in a suitcase'), it made a shift in cultural codes towards vulnerability –likewise powerful in aesthetics of antagonism (Marchart, 2019, p. 88). In another performative piece, a workshop participant used as a culturally coded element - the unused dowry of her grandmother, floral tablecloths, to overwrite them and engage with the passersby. Due to restrictions in public spaces (*police order*), some symbols cannot become visible. The group found its way to shift the meaning of the flag:

„You will be immediately arrested if you take a LGBT flag in Istanbul. But if we waive different scarves, our own scarves, (...) it is also a way to work.“ (Interview 2, Pos. 661-664)

Those semantic shifts in meaning demand situated knowledge, implying that performers hold the belief that passersby can 'decode' these practices. The intelligibility of this gesture requires entanglement with the local symbolic context. If the shift in meaning is not obvious, it could be the case that only the part of the public (counter-public) is addressed – and the 'language' remains secret, as it was with Polari used within the gay community in Britain, or codes performed within lesbian tusovkas in Russia (Stella, 2012). This tendency of establishing an exclusive code for a community is in the very definition of ultra-détournement: "The need for a secret language, for passwords, is inseparable from a tendency toward play. Ultimately, any sign or word is susceptible to being converted into something else" (Debord & Wolman, 2006 [1956]).

Finally, historical and cultural citations belong to the common strategies of "Mis(s)placed woman?". During the workshop in Istanbul the group reenacted (restaged) the queer picnic that was violently "dispersed" in Maçka Park by the police one year earlier, in June

2021 (SCF, 2021). As common with citations in performance art, some elements were altered (no edible objects) to amplify the meaning of this practice of commemorating.

To conclude, the variety of aesthetic and performative strategies opens a broad field of variations in this trans-local, years-long project. The embedded and local knowledge of contributors enriches the practices that operate in more-than-dual directions: one towards political antagonism and the formation of conflicting subjectivities (constitutive negative outside), and the other towards fostering community building ('impossible' constitutive inside). Finally, there is still opacity in-between, enabling the community of "Mis(s)placed woman?" to connect in a more unstructured way with places and people through affects, cultural codes, citations, and any other means that create intensities.

5. STEP TWO: EATING EUROPE

"We have come to devour Austria, but we do not digest it"

[Maiz procession slogan (Rebelodrom, 2013)]*

Those words, collectively uttered and repeated, accompany the grotesque procession that stretches the 'Grenzstation NoborderZone' at the Viennese Künstlerhaus (Artist House) to the Karlskirche (St. Charles church). Drawing on Oswald de Andrade's Manifesto Antropófago (Manifest of Anthropophagy) – Brazilian avant-garde movement from early 20th century – performers call themselves 'cannibals', who, by appropriating catholic symbols, alter a religious procession into a hyperreal and satirical intervention. Every member of the 'anthropophagic society' carries a distinctive trait that associates them with the Austrian migration regime, be it related to precarity, sex work, legal compulsion to learn and speak German language, or the patronizing attitude towards migrant women. Figures in the march symbolically "disidentify with their assigned position within the police order" (Sparks, 2016, p. 424) and turn servant figures into rebellious subjects. Therefore, two female popes walk together with 'Madame Kloeé' – 'the richest migrant cleaning lady in Europe who came into money by speculating on the Austrian stock exchange' (Pfoser, 2013), among 'She-Hero' wrestlers, 'Super Putas,' ninjas, and fashionists, who twist the style of Habsburg's Dynasty with queer aesthetics. Migrant subjectivity is staged in a self-ironic, exaggerated, and corporeal way. In the haze of burning catholic incense amplifying the absurd imagery, performers carry parts of a 'white corps': stuffed leg, stuffed heart, stuffed arm, artificial bone, and other organs to be symbolically consumed during the ritual. Drums give rhythm and affect the attending bodies, synchronizing their movement. The stuffed 'body parts' are 'cooked' in a bowl, placed in the mouths of the performers, and then spat out. Two performers embodying female popes encourage the crowd to repeat the anthropophagic 'lithany', sentence by sentence. This, as a collective utterance of the political 'wrong' (Rancière, 1999), is oriented against national identity politics, globalized power structures, white Eurocentric culture, inequalities affecting migrants, and lastly, against the Austrian ruling party SPÖ (Social Democratic Party of Austria). The latter is therefore important because the event takes place on 22nd September 2013 – one week prior to the

national Parliament elections. As it is also Sunday, the procession is subsequently a grotesque citation of catholic rituals and takes advantage of the empty space in front of Karlskirche to stage a counter-hegemonic event.

This introductory narrative gives an impression of the analyzed subversive walk. In contrast to the first case (step one), this research inquiry focuses on one particular embedded-in-place event, from which it follows the interconnections with people, objects, and history. Starting from the question of how the walk was 'produced', this chapter aims to draw the structure of relations to, finally, engage with the first research question and discuss the connection between movement, bodily expression, and politics.

As performers in this procession, the members of Maiz take part. Established in Linz in 1994, Maiz is an association and autonomous center by and for migrant women. Its political and social mission aims to „better the lives and work situations of migrant women in Austria and to promote their political and cultural participation, as well as to transform the existing unjust social conditions“ (maiz, 2019). Maiz connects migrant women engaged in various roles, such as the sex industry, cleaning services for leasing companies, janitorial and caregiving roles, as well as those working in healthcare and the care sector. Additionally, this includes people in unauthorized situations, asylum seekers, the unemployed, homemakers, and students, among others. Having 10 regular employees, 3 volunteers, rotating project-based contributors, and many associates, Maiz provides workshops, counseling in legal, (psycho)social and family matters, street work, language and literacy courses, socio-pedagogical consultations, qualification courses for entry into healthcare professions, youth culture programs, community building events; moreover, it initiates art-based projects, publishes, participates in research projects and engages in practices of knowledge production (maiz, 2019). The piecemeal funding relies mostly on subventions from the City of Linz, regional public funds (Land Oberösterreich), Austrian Federal Criminal Police Office, the European Commission, the Federal Ministry of Arts and Culture, Austrian Society for Political Education, among others, ranging from an average of 15 grants per year to a peak of 28 in certain specific years.

A description of one of Maiz's recent projects, titled "Schutzmantel," (maiz, 2022) begins with a quote from Françoise Vergès, and underlines the political worldview of the association:

„Every day, in every urban center of the world, thousands of black and brown women, invisible, are >opening< the city. They clean the spaces necessary for neo-patriarchy, and neoliberal and finance capitalism to function“ (Vergès, 2019)

I found it telling that the perspective depicted in those two sentences also disrupts the canon of walking, rendering flâneurism and dérive not only as practices of privilege but equally as entangled in systemic exploitation, since the act of "opening the city" inherently occurs on foot. The capitalist exploitation and racial exclusion are, however, not the only "constitutive outsides" (Mouffe, 2012) of the association, but are accompanied by structural violence, heteronormativity, inequitable political power dynamics, sexism, and homophobia (maiz, 2019).

Thus, while being a small and local NGO, Maiz orientates itself politically in a globalized reality (Zangl & Bala, 2015, p. 452).

All this still does not explain why Maiz, located in Linz, organizes and performs a procession in Vienna. The association is well-networked; nevertheless, the national election is not the only reason for organizing a performative project in the capital city. As emerged from the conversations, the procession in September 2013 had its roots in another 'walking event' from November 2012:

On November 24, there was a march, a protest march from Treiskirchen to Vienna, (...) that demanded the right to stay and then there was a large camp, Refugee Camp in front of the Votiv Church and Sigmund Freud Park and then the Votiv Church was occupied for 2 months, and that was quite a long strike and protest of Refugees, where also many different groups in Vienna have participated, among others also people from Maiz Association (Interview 5, Pos. 42-44)*

Traiskirchen was and still is the largest reception refugee camp in Austria (Ataç, 2016) in the proximity of 24km from Vienna. The commented protest against inhumane living conditions, which began in November, relocated the site of the conflict to the city center, thereby fostering the rise of alliances and possibilities of networking (Ataç, 2016; Ataç & Steinhilper, 2022; orf.at, 2013).

To unfold this structure of interrelations as an assemblage, it should be mentioned that, during that winter period, several associates and contributors of Maiz resided in Vienna and participated in the long occupational protest, either in public spaces or at the Academy of Fine Art (Ataç & Steinhilper, 2022; orf.at, 2013). Few of them already knew Gin, a dramaturgist and activist, who was an upcoming collaborator of the city's cultural festival Wienwoche and responsible for the block "Rebelodrom" within it in 2013. Back then, they met at a few workshops and in meetings within activist networks. Their engagement in Refugee Protest has 'done things' (S. Ahmed, 2017) - it changed the relations between activists and influenced them to contribute to the upcoming project, also entangling the Protest as a main point of reference. The already established contact to 'Türkis Rosa Lila Villa' - an Austrian Lesbian, Gay, and Trans Center located in the 6th district of Vienna - provided necessary space for meetings and exchange between different actors contributing to "Rebelodrom." Also, Brut Northwest - a Viennese co-production house and venue for the theater, performance, and dance scene, with which Gin produced several projects in the past, was open for further cooperation. As a part of the annual Wienwoche event, themed "demokrazija-ja-ja" in 2013, Rebelodrom was designated as an action laboratory that conceives and executes melodramatic and "rebellious" interventions over a period of 10 days. By acting in public and virtual spaces, the initiative was designed as a platform for diverse activist projects and a forum for discussing political strategies of action.

„One goal was of course to make the anti-racist, queer concerns visible in Austria or in Vienna before the elections. And also to provide ideas: What is possible, what can also be done with activism? (...) also, of course, a networking of the communities.“ (Interview 5, pos. 655-662)*

While applying for cultural grants, Rebelodrom was defined and described as „Open Source Tool to create Rebellion.“ It aimed to connect activists and facilitate the exchange of practices on the intersection of politics and aesthetics, thus, the assembly worked with traditional campaign elements such as posters or rallies, satirizing them or blending with other contexts. In the discussed here theoretical context, those practices could be interpreted as a subversion of the standardized political tactics, an unfaithful mimicry of the electoral ‘social order,’ or as a *détournement* in its original prank-oriented meaning. Therefore, Rebelodrom turned festival media channels and Karlsplatz to a stage for following projects: "Perverse Partei Österreichs" (ger. Austrian Perverse Party), expressing satirically “Queerness in the Austrian mountain format“ (Interview 5*, pos. 58), a ninja special unit of “Mindj Panther“ from the "Roma Armee Fraktion" utilizing rap to express political demands, and cannibalistic procession by Maiz that combined aesthetics of the post-colonial struggles with political and social agenda of the association in Austrian context. Links to the Refugee Protest Camp in Vienna were also maintained and implemented in the multimedia installation „Grenzstation NoborderZone,“ which comprised material components of the Austrian border crossing at Klingenbach as a symbolic representation of deportations, showcasing, in contrast, videos and films claiming advocating for the right to stay and unrestricted movement for all. The installation functioned also as a public information hub for the Refugee Protest, with Rebelodrom's lounge bar operated by the queer bar Marea Alta. In the video trailer announcing the interventions, Maiz and other groups, implemented sequences from Refugee Camp Vienna.

„the video production was already running over the whole summer, even before that, for example with the people from the Refugee Protest, they did an action at the border in Nickelsdorf, and that was then again, of course, for the Protest and its visibility“ (Interview 5, pos. 275)*

Throughout the project, the Rebelodrom community dedicated itself to using the festival's media platforms to amplify the visibility of the Refugee Protest. Many of these investigations align with what Marchart identifies as 'truly political art.' In his view, “activist art practices are geared toward the political practices of organization, agitation, and propaganda—practices, that is, of immersing oneself into the muddy waters of social struggle“ (Marchart, 2019, p. 14). Although Maiz cooperates with art institutions, it is still – as NGO - embedded in those ‘muddy waters.’ Favoring collective, strategic, and organized actions over individualistic protocols, the association stated in the interview:

„as maiz doesn't aspire to produce artworks but chooses art as a political field of action, the street is the right place for it – not only symbolically, but above all as a very real site of occupation.“ (Migrazine, 2013)*

One must be, however, said that the ‘muddy waters of social struggle’ have their ebb and flow. Amid the dynamic landscape of activist networks, one notices a flux; activists and co-workers circulate in the network of NGOs and collectives, at times disappearing or transitioning between them. This movement shapes the organic evolution of the association's footprints. Notably, in 2023, there is no longer anyone at Maiz who was part of the procession back in 2013. Such a pattern reflects the notion of association as assemblage, or even a network of regional

activism as assemblage, where the notion of 'exchangeable parts' (DeLanda, 2016) results in the constant flux inherent in social engagement.

5.1 CROSS-CULTURAL AESTHETICS AND INCORPORATIONS

What was unorthodox and ultimately political in the procession "Eating Europe," was the novel performative interpretation of Oswald de Andrade's Manifesto Antropófago from 1928. The manifesto outlined the principles of the Anthropophagic Movement, which aimed to create a new Brazilian cultural identity by "eating" and assimilating elements of European colonial legacy. The term "anthropophagy" was used metaphorically, drawing on the idea of cannibalism as a way to ingest and transform external influences. The cultural cannibalism sought to break away from the imitation of European cultural forms and embrace Brazil's potential to absorb the global tradition, without clear boundaries between the culture of origin and the culture it's received by, offering Brazilians a hybrid identity (Havenne, 2021). „Neither copying, nor rejecting foreign traditions, cultures devour each other and regurgitate anew what could be described as a >total work of art< that gathers together both cultural differences and resemblances under the sign of an aesthetic collage or totality“ (Havenne, 2021, p. 26). In her text, Havenne emphasizes the nation-state-oriented tone of the manifesto and compares it with the more global-oriented (periphery vs. center) approach of Glissant (1990). Nevertheless, in the light of this analysis, both viewpoints represent a contention that a nuanced, relational, and even - for Glissant - a rhizomatic identity is possible.

Maiz association, in contrast, rejects this conceivability in their reading of the manifesto:

When we, as protagonists, talk about antropophagy, we mean the gorging of a white, Eurocentric dominant culture in order to appropriate the hegemony of those who want to maintain the dominant conditions. But this gorging is not about swallowing in order to digest. It is not about assimilation, but about spitting out again what has been eaten. (Migrazine, 2013)*

What is at stake is the reactivation of an old conflict, or equivalently, the constitution of a new one through rhetorical repetition. However, by metaphorically 'spitting out,' the cannibal community refuses the possibility of 'culturally' assimilating or merging with anything. This interpretation of the cannibalistic figure, which differs from the original text, is regularly used in Maiz's publications and rhetoric of projects. The logic of the procession 'Eating Europe' deny symbolically the possibility for cultural amalgamation (in this context, 'incorporation' fits appropriately), and offers only grotesque cruelty. This serves the (re)institution of antagonistic conflict. Following Marchart, "community of protest can only be established through confrontational means. These means do not have to imply physical violence, but there will always be an aspect of symbolic violence involved. This aspect of symbolic violence is implicated in the very logic of antagonism" (Marchart, 2019, p. 86). The depiction of "white, Eurocentric dominant culture" as body parts, not good enough to be consumed, reshapes the power relations and signifies a 'constitutive outside', yet, very fragmented. Still functioning as an art

project rather than a demonstration, the procession misappropriates the original manifesto to stage a global conflict and deconstructs a catholic procession.

With the introduction of the cannibalistic rhetoric in the Austrian context, Maiz goes in line with Rancière's notion of the "excess of words" (Ranciere & Panagia, 2000, p. 115), that challenges „the prevailing division between who makes logical sense and what makes merely noise“ (Wingrove, 2016, p. 409). The shift in meaning allows the community to disidentify with their assigned place within the police order – as i.e. migrant sex workers or migrant workers in the care sector, and to constitute in the conflict their subjectivity as ‘cannibalistic’ activists, refusing assimilation under the current prevailing conditions. As Sara Ahmed reminds, “the body emerges from th[e] history of doing, which is also a history of not doing, of paths not taken“ (2006, p. 159). The strategy of refusal, supported by Anthropophagic rhetoric, lays the ground for the establishment of a new political subjectivity. As Rancière states, “All political action presupposes... the introduction of previously uncounted objects and subjects” (Rancière, 2004, p. 7). This perspective on the political dimension of a new and surprising practice was shared by my other interviewee (a years-long collaborator of the festival Wienwoche):

"you're going to create a noise, (...) to really create a kind of friction which could then also lead to a productive discourse about something, (...) that it becomes a discourse and people become aware of something – that we actually talk about it as a society." (Interview 3, pos. 216)

Yet, the notion of the ‘noise’ is very important, as the community of Maiz aims to address their claim to the wider public and society in general. What if the declaration of a ‘wrong’ (Rancière) cannot be heard and understood as a ‘voice’? Sparks and Wingrove point to the critical dynamics that decrease the possibilities of the activists’ disruptive dissensus. While „activists’ efforts to disidentify with (...) negative positions and to lay claim to alternative identifications as equals and speaking subjects“ are extremely important, those are also „made incredibly difficult by histories of racism, sexism, heteronormativity, and colonialism“ (Sparks, 2016, p. 428). The embodied character of the cannibalistic procession that shapes the dissident subjectivity is entangled in the hegemonic discourses of body, ability, nation, ethnicity etc. always assuring, unfortunately, the possibility of being perceived as mere ‘noise’. Thus, the struggle of the Maiz community and of migrant women in Austria, in general, do not end with the public utterance of the political claims, as this aim was also out of reach for the more than year-long Refugee Protest in 2012/2013.

5.2 INSCRIBING THE BODY IN THE CITY, STAGING THE CONFLICT

“Austria, we love you, we will never leave you!”

“We have come to devour SPÖ!”¹

[Maiz procession slogans (Rebelodrom, 2013)]*

¹ Social Democratic Party of Austria

The event of “Eating Europe” consists not only of an assemblage of people from the association, grotesque props, drums, and a collective utterance of slogans. As a subverted art project (for political aims) and ridiculed religious procession, it creates an “abnormal” hyperreality, a temporality far beyond every day, where many abstract concepts meet and where – ironically- *the political* (Mouffe) can unfold itself.

Naturally, without guerilla tactics, the procession had no chance to ‘disorient the everyday’ as was possible for “Mis(s)placed woman?.” Even though “one can say, ‘this is just an act,’ and de-realize” (Butler, 1988, p. 527) the performance, “Eating Europe”, however, operates with different means: through the ‘unreal’ and through staging. The concept of the stage – Karlsplatz and the route the procession takes to Künstlerhaus – has a political dimension and enables the Maiz community to amplify and even to layer the conflict. As Rancière states, “in politics, subjects act to create a stage on which problems can be made visible – a scene with subjects and objects, in full view of a >partner< who does not >see< them” (Rancière & Corcoran, 2004, p. 7). Although Rancière uses the word ‘stage’ in a metaphorical way, Marchart interprets it literally and provides examples where physical, material staging is at the service of the political subject i.e. queer performances at demonstrations against the G-20 summit (2019, p. 84). As the antagonist conflict has no material appearance, the stage and embodied performance are the means to make it perceptible. “While *the political* as such cannot be staged—because the founding event of antagonism always escapes representation—it nevertheless must be staged in order to become visible at all.” (Marchart, 2019, pp. 55–56).

In the performance „Eating Europe,“ at least three established antagonistic conflicts intersect with each other and aim to make the antagonism visible. Two of them were already discussed: first, the reference to the anthropophagus movement utilized for recalling a postcolonial cultural conflict; second, the protest antagonism constituted by Refugee Protest Camp Vienna. Additionally, theater scholars Sruti Bala and Veronika Zangl described “Eating Europe” as an altered repetition of the procession “Une soirée aux amants funèbres” organized by Viennese actionists [Wiener Gruppe] in 1953. The route of the procession connected several institutions of high culture (Vienna State Opera, main city’s cathedral) with places of ‘low’ culture (Prater). Operating with elements of high culture – the poetry of Charles Baudelaire, Edgar Allan Poe, Gérard de Nerval, Georg Trakl, and Ramón Gómez de la Serna, declaimed in original with no dramaturgical logic, and by blending it with religious elements like a haze of the incense and black clothing, the group ridiculed “the construction of cultural memory based on ideologized ‘high’ culture” (Zangl & Bala, 2015, p. 451). The procession was claimed to be “the protest against the conventional, anonymous, normative” (Hayden, 2012, p. 35) and to irritate and provoke the canon-adoring audience. As the postwar years in Austria were a period of the “reconstruction” of the traditional and high-culture-oriented national identity (Hayden, 2012, p. 36), the deconstruction and subversion of the cultural canon could be read as a protest against the new *social order* and as a counter-hegemonic practice. If the procession “Eating Europe” repeats the action “Une soirée aux amants funèbres”, then it does so by opposing nationalist politics. Although the procession of the Wiener Gruppe addressed “nationalized universal

humanism as expressed in high art" (Zangl & Bala, 2015, p. 452), the core of the anti-nationalist stance remains the same. The cannibalist procession is a practice of repetition that recalls the Viennese struggle against patriotic hegemonic discourse.

To conclude, "Eating Europe" can be read as an act of (re)staging the three founding conflicts: a global postcolonial antagonism articulated through the rhetoric of the anthropophagic movement, a local conflict involving the Viennese administration, and the Refugee Protest of 2012/2013, and finally, an older Viennese conflict between elitist, nationalist cultural hegemony and its antagonist counterpart. The disruptive potential of this procession is tied to its intelligibility, to the entanglement with the symbolic field – those who will see it should be able to decode at least one of those conflicts.

One of my interviewees compared this approach to other practices centering on social transformation but using another means of action:

„An approach of creating an impact on a very local level or setting an artistic acupuncture, (...) is often easier than trying to reach the bigger, higher structural level by means of the performance itself (...) although it needs a longer perspective – especially if it does not have a lasting and sustainable effect " (Interview 3, pos. 20)

The procession "Eating Europe" belonged in the conversation to the interventions aiming to reach a "higher structural level." As already analyzed, it used several repetitions of established conflicts to sediment and amplify the antagonism. However, besides the aspiration of influencing upcoming national elections, this performance and the process of preparing it also had another dimension – to connect with other activist groups and to "act in concert" (Butler, 2016, p. 80).

5.3 ALLIANCES, PROGRESSIVE ACTIVISM AND SOCIAL CHANGE

The interviewee, a regular collaborator of Wienwoche and a teacher in Social Design at Vienna's Angewandte, made a general comment on alliances:

„If we are about to make a change in society, a big role is building alliances. (...) It is crucial to connect with others. I think it's impossible for one person to create a sustainable change but that (...) it's really about building these networks" (Interview 3, pos. 370)

Both Wienwoche and Rebelodrom, as a platform in 2013, emphasized the significance of collaborating with different activist groups and connecting them – in terms of used here theoretical concepts, it could be described as recurrent interactions with other assemblages within the activist network. All productions, in which Gin was involved, were „typically produced through collaboration with either a collective or multiple collectives" (Interview 5*, Pos. 36). The festival Wienwoche with its focus on activism, was also an important point in conversation:

"The Wienwoche team is also very well connected. There are often synergies with other project submissions or social associations and NGOs that may not even be in the artistic sphere themselves, but can be brought on board and their concerns made visible through such a festival and the existing networks". (Interview 3, pos. 156 and pos. 128)

Wienwoche was also described as a festival where many NGOs and activist groups are, for the first time, active in cultural production and thus “can gain experience in activist art” (Interview 5*, pos. 191-199) within the festival. For Maiz, the year 2013 also marked their first collaboration with Wienwoche, rooted in dynamics and engagement in Refugee Protest 2012/2013, discussed earlier.

It is important to note that the Rebelodrom platform, which hosted Maiz, was a subgroup of Wienwoche 2013 and had an additional, external funding from MA 7² due to the larger theater project coordinated by Gin. This grant enabled Rebelodrom to operate with more independence. What united all these activist groups, that joined Rebelodrom (including Maiz) was the shared concept of the new direction that activism should pursue:

„progressive activism is about distinguishing from classical activism, which marches obediently on the street or traditionally hangs banners.“ (Interview 5, pos. 554-559)*

Interestingly, the interviewee compared ‘classical activism’ to a convention and conduct within *police order*. Hence, it became evident that a demonstration had been categorized as an archaic and undesirable mode of expression. If not within the realm of ‘common sense’, then how should ‘progressive activism’ operate? Remarkably, not through material transgressive practices but through narratives. As Gin explained, his years-long project, financed by public institutions, was based on:

„a futuristic narrative, (...) about a ‘She’-Guevara, who creates an underground network in the world, an open-source tool, a separatist rebel network and they try to accelerate the worldwide rebellion (...) a bit of that story was then taken over for the Rebelodrom“ (pos. 315-317) that was also a bit activist passion, or to what extent queer activism should also be passionate, dramatic, as well as humorous, and how can you act there in the different levels“ (Interview 5, pos. 398-400)*

Moreover, in the conversation, melodrama - the most political genre among performing arts (Marchart, 2019, pp. 63–68) - also took an important place as a root for many narratives. As Marchart explains, “Melodrama is agitational; it sets people in motion by setting them in emotion. It is political because it is a drama *between* actors, not a tragedy within actors” (2019, p. 66). Given that political antagonism is, in the ontological sense, inaccessible (2019, p. 68), it must be visualized to become perceptible, and melodrama has the means to stage or narrate the political conflict (2019, pp. 63–68). Thus, through shared and exchanged knowledge during months-long collaboration, Rebelodrom’s projects became entangled with (melo)dramatic rhetoric and means of expression from the field of theater studies.

Out of all the conversations that recalled other people involved in the project emerged a broader, sociological picture of the activists’ network. Most of them had stable employment in academia or more or less stable positions in NGOs and cultural institutions; moreover, they graduated in arts, philosophy, theater, and cultural studies or similar disciplines. All the mentioned social and cultural projects were financed by public institutions, which implies the

² Department of Culture of the City of Vienna

knowledge and skills needed to receive grants. Therefore, the accumulation of academic, cultural, and social capital does not allow to count the network as those “who have no part.” Subsequently, a question arises as to whether any form of activism and Rancière’s democratic *politics* would be possible, at least for discussed movements in Austria, without the involvement of exactly those “who have a part”?

5.4 ART INSTITUTIONS, FUNDING AND ELECTORAL CALENDAR

The Wienwoche festival was regarded in all discussions as a stable and trustworthy institution with dual roles: as an attention multiplier and as a supportive network. It was described as follows:

"A funding and art institution [that] offers you a platform, can offer you resources. This is the case, especially with Wienwoche: (...) The festival has a team that supports the realization of the project. You don't have to take care of all the communication or production all by yourself, you have a good project idea, and you are supported in the implementation of it by a team with various expertise. (...) You get the chance to use Wienwoche as a platform for the visibility of your project." (Interview 3, pos. 402)

While being satisfied with the possibilities offered by marketing and mediatization through channels of Wienwoche, my interlocutors were concerned about the festivals’ audience, which was described as a “bubble” and “alternative scene” with very similar political views and shared values (Interview 3, Pos. 116). Therefore, Rebelodrom aimed to arrange performances in public spaces and open the possibility for chance interactions. Considering the circumstances, it would be doubtful for activists to arrange performances in closed spaces, especially in the pre-electoral period.

It should not come as unexpected that the founding of both platforms was closely tied to politics, particularly at the local level. Wienwoche and Rebelodrom were, and Wienwoche still is, financed with municipal funds. In the case of Rebelodrom and other projects in which Gin was involved, the funding grants needed direct approval from the city parliament, resulting in a distinct form of dependence:

If the financing must be approved by the city parliament, then other parties have the possibility to veto or ask questions (...) It came twice, (...) that they saw the project as too provocative. But one must say, the city of Vienna, so the city parliament, that is the SPÖ, or social democratic party, they've been in this position for ages. Here and there often already allow something like that. (pos. 413-417) It was perhaps, therefore problematic that it was in the pre-election period (Interview 5, pos. 427)*

In contrast, the budget of Wienwoche is approved through different protocols and is not tied to projects that the festival will co-produce or develop. This procedure enables Wienwoche to make decisions on the program more independently from the city parliament. In other mechanisms of funding, the quote above reveals how Rebelodrom and similar Viennese cultural projects may be directly entangled in local politics and, when applying for larger grants, undergo control by political parties. It shows both: municipal financial support for cultural activism and a

bottleneck of passing not only common criteria for cultural projects but also their coherence with the values of political parties in the city parliament. The particular programs and procedural details were not addressed in the conversation; therefore, it would require a supplementary inquiry to discuss the influence of this mechanism on the network of activists in the cultural scene. Nevertheless, this comment sheds light on interrelations in local funding of culture, allowing at the same time to imagine that a recomposition of the city's parliament could have immediate results on the landscape of cultural production.

To conclude, while it might appear that municipal cultural funds offer a wide array of opportunities to support platforms like Rebelodrom— without knowing that it will result in SPÖ-critical procession “Eating Europe” one week prior to national elections – and simultaneously, they are tied to specific mechanisms of control entangled with local electoral calendar.

Finally, Maiz Association, alongside all the social work undertaken by this modest NGO, uses artistic practices for its political agenda. Rather than relying solely on individual avant-garde acts of provocation, Maiz, through the “Eating Europe” procession, “follows the protocols of political action (...) [that is] collective, strategic, organized, and conflictual” (Marchart, 2019, p. 29). The months of project preparation brought together activists who - within a ten-year timeframe - have shifted their organizations and job roles, yet have maintained their connections within the network.

6. STEP THREE: EXPERIMENTAL SPECULATIONS

The last investigation arises from the engagement with the subversive walk in a different, speculative manner, where the walk is not a mean of politically motivated dissensus but a performative technique employed in a series of workshops at the university. These workshops aimed to provide the opportunity to reconsider the social order in public spaces. In this chapter, I provide an overview of the workshop's context, a description of methods, and their artistic origins. Lastly, I discuss how this approach to experiencing public space could serve as a method in human geography, and equivalently in urban studies.

The whole-day workshop titled “Exkursion Bern” was dedicated to first-year bachelor students of Geography at the University of Bern in Switzerland and prepared collectively by two research groups: Climatology and Social and Cultural Geography. Conducted on four different days at the end of the academic year, it aimed to introduce students to the discourse of ‘right to the city.’ After the presentation of the Lefebvrian concept and exposé highlighting inequalities in urban space, students became, for the first half of the day, four different podcast-based exercises, three of which were to be conducted by every participant. The themes evolved around: accessibility and the experiences of disability in urban space, (re)production and regulation of spaces related to nightlife and youth in the city, (in)visibility of sex work in public spaces, and, finally, urban heat in the context of climate change. The tasks involved interviewing, analysis of signs and representation systems, and interpretation of data. The afternoon was dedicated to one of three in-depth blocks that students could freely choose between: heat

mitigation, accessibility, and the one that is the subject of the analysis – public order. The workshop blocks were intended to not exceed 90 minutes.

Seizing the opportunity to contribute to the educational program, I prepared the “social order” block using a speculative, art-based walking research methodology. As open-ended engagement with processual scores, the performative block aimed to “become a field of variations in which to experiment with the questions of how felt difference might register in thinking” (McCormack, 2014, p. 11), increasing the sensitivity and conscious relationality through embodied experience (Latour, 2004). The performative and collective movement was utilized as a method for thinking. As Karen Barad stated while explaining her approach, “the point is not merely that knowledge practices have material consequences but that practices of knowing are specific material engagements that participate in (re)configuring the world” (2007, p. 91).

As the geographic department already had an established form of the assignment – timing, delineation of goals, general questions – I proposed 2 loops of scores, free to choose, twenty minutes each. The goal of the block was formulated as a self-experience of normative rules in the public space through performative exercises, offering to become acquainted with additional (to the previously utilized on that day) qualitative method (that was here a field note of embodied experience). The point of reflecting positionality was inherently connected to the exercises. The general questions for the workshop session were as follows: What social regulatory mechanisms influence human behavior in the public space of the Old Town of Bern? Is the public space truly inclusive? What role does one's own body play in relation to the social control of public order?

After every block of a performative exercise, the group discussion evolved around those prepared questions:

- How did you feel during the experiment? Did the adopted posture, speed, and rhythm of movement trigger anything within you? If yes, what?
- Which moments did you find challenging? Why?
- Did you have any interactions with passersby? Did anything get said or indicated? What did you feel during these interactions?
- At which moments did you feel uncertain? Why?
- How does the way your body is perceived (gender, race, age, social status, etc.) influence your experiences in the exercise?
- Additional observations (e.g., about the group experimentation, the geographical context, any extra observations, etc.).

The questions approached the role of the body in a relational, social, and convivial way. As the walks were always performed in a group – at least two, but often engaging the whole group – the social aspect of walking was present in discussions.

With the aim of introducing the specific performative scores that students could choose from, I briefly introduced the Fluxus movement from which most of these scores originated. At

the same time, I note that, given the focus of this thesis, the general description will be very reduced and selective. In short, Fluxus was an international avant-garde artistic and cultural movement that emerged in the 1960s. It was characterized by two approaches: breaking down traditional barriers between art and life and by favoring processes over finished artworks, which resulted in the proliferation of scores, performances, and experimental music pieces – as at the core of interaction and communication was not an object but a ‘notation’ or a brief moment. The prefix *Flux* underscores the focus on fluidity.

Some writings of Fluxus artists engage directly with the context of public spaces and the notion of ‘minor’ disruption. The manifesto „AKTUAL—Live Otherwise“ of the Prague-based artists' community “AKTUAL” recalls discussed in the framework concepts:

„Use every situation as an attack on your surroundings and on yourself. Use the means available with the directest possible intensity of effect. Make a game of many everyday situations, thus ridding them of all that is cramped and deformed. Exert an influence through every gesture, word, act, glance, your appearance, through EVERYTHING. Simple, anonymous activity. There is no difference between a deliberately evoked action and a spontaneous one. Walks, dinners, trips, games, celebrations, journeys by bus and street-car, shopping, conversations, sports, fashion shows...all done a little bit differently. Spontaneous rituals in the street. Conflicts. Conflicts of all kinds. Conflicts which must take place so that they can be resolved.“ (‘Fluxus East: Fluxus-Netzwerke in Mitteleuropa’, 2007, p. 87)

Written in 1965-66 under the Soviet regime, the manifesto equals the social order of public space with the police order. The street and everyday situations are seen as assemblages, where the action and disruption work through intensities (affect). Following the notion of ‘minor,’ the disruptive act could be both – a chance variation and a volition. „The minor works the major from within“ (Manning, 2016, p. 1), constituting "urban space [as] the product of conflict“ (Deutsche, 1996, p. 278). Besides the hope of resolving conflicts that the political theory undermines, this quote combines the political perspective on urban space with assemblages and all their fluid and affectual theorization. The micropolitical, ‘minor’ disruption is, again, a ‘glitch’ in the landscape of the street. In those ‘games of everyday situations,’ “there is theatre which attempts to contest or, indeed, break down those conventions that demarcate the imaginary from the real” (Butler, 1988, p. 527). Blurring the line between art, or artificial gesture, and life opens up the possibilities of tactical subversion and disquiet. The manifesto helps, therefore, to link the Fluxus movement with utilized theories.

Whereas the Fluxus movement was focused rather on “individualistic protocols of avant-garde provocation“ (Marchart, 2019, p. 29), proposed in the workshop waking scores were conducted collectively, therefore directing the attention to relationality. The scores were chosen from the publication “Walking from scores” (Biserna, 2022), taking under consideration the feasibility of the score in the workshop context, its simplicity and the threshold level of potential participants that could be not familiar with performative exercise. A small exception marks the score of ‘slow motion walk’ that was derived from the training video (Marina Abramović Institute, 2013). As the scores are written in German in Appendix 2, I describe them shortly here:

1. Slow motion walk (Marina Abramović Institute, 2013) – is a performance method where performers move significantly slower than their usual walking speed. The slow pace encourages a heightened sensitivity to bodily sensations, such as the shifting of weight, the sensation of movement, and the connection between the body and the ground. This technique has been used in various artistic, meditative, and experimental practices for a long time; therefore, attributing authorship to this method would be challenging. The contemporary performance artists who use 'slow motion walk' in their training programs include Marina Abramović and Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, among others.

2. Giveaway construction (Biserna, 2022, p. 424) – This participatory and interactive performance is conceptually rooted in the Fluxus movement, of which the New York-based author Alison Knowles was a significant figure. The performer(s) assembles a collection of objects found on the street, or any everyday items and invites the audience to engage with the performance by giving away those objects. The audience is invited to take these items freely, breaking down the barrier between the performer and the audience. The concept behind the artwork is to challenge the conventional idea of art as something to be possessed or owned, shifting toward 'flux', towards the flow of objects, and words (and affects, in the context of this thesis).

3. Walking event (Biserna, 2022, p. 134) – This piece involves drawing a circle on a bustling street's sidewalk with chalk, creating a circle about 3 meters in diameter. After drawing the circle, the performer is instructed to walk continuously along the drawn line within the circle in a circular path without stopping. It is worth mentioning that this score comes from a geography, that was under communist and Stalinist rule in 1960', and its Prague-based author Milan "Knížák himself was kept under police surveillance and arrested on more than one occasion for his art activities" (Waxman, 2010, p. 211).

4. March (Biserna, 2022, p. 422) - A selected group of 3 or 6 individuals walk in a linear formation, either single file or in pairs, following a pre-agreed route. Unlike traditional marches with specific goals or destinations, "March" proposed by the Amsterdam-based artist Willem de Ridder, transforms the act of walking into a meditative practice. As the score does not indicate it, participants were free to decide about the pace of the walk and approach to the movement.

5. City piece (Biserna, 2022, p. 154) – is a minimalistic score ("Walk all over the city with an empty baby carriage") that interrupts the ordinary conduct of urban routines. By selecting a common object associated with motherhood and child-rearing, the New York-based artist Yoko Ono to some degree troubles with this piece's conventional perceptions and behaviors in urban spaces, under the condition that the route, visited places and durability of the walk also go beyond conventions, in order to make a difference.

Notwithstanding Fluxus's ambition to establish a universal, global practice, the notion of the score's geography of origin is nevertheless important, as the context, audience and local symbolic field every time decide about the intelligibility of gesture, whether it is to be read as intentional subversion or a 'minor' alteration of the performative landscape.

Finally, the table shows the scores chosen for performing by participants:

TABLE 2 – PERFORMATIVE WORKSHOPS, PARTICIPANTS CHOICES

Participants	Slow motion walk	Giveaway construction	Walking event	March	City piece
P_1			x		x
P_2	x			x	
P_3			x	x	x
P_4	x		x		
P_5			x	x	
P_6	x				x
P_7	x			x	
P_8			x	x	
P_9	x			x	
P_10			x	x	
P_11	x			x	
P_12	x				x
P_13	x			x	
P_14	x			x	
P_15	x				x
P_16	x		x		
P_17				x	x
myself	x,x,x		x		

6.1 AFFECTIVE (MICRO)POLITICS

The collectively performed walks were not politically motivated, nor had they a political conflict to express. They could also be hardly read in a political way, in the sense of Mouffe or Rancière. Even ‘slow motion walk’ as a prolongation of flâneur ‘philosophy’ by mimicking the attitude of ‘getting slow’ had at the current moment no possibility of becoming political as the context and discourse of omnipresent acceleration in modernizing cities and its counter-stance had lost its relevance. Nevertheless, the scored walks caused a disruption of the cohesion of the street, which will be here described as ‘micropolitical’ level – by no means aiming to operate with binaries, but rather acknowledging the variety of political levels (Stengers et al., 2008). The collective walk and the street as an assemblage is driven by force “able to bypass ideology” (Roelvink, 2020, p. 428) and theorized as affect. As Ben Anderson puts it, „Affects are about what a body may be able to do in any given situation, in addition to what it currently is doing and has done. Because capacities are dependent on other bodies, they can never be exhaustively specified in advance” (Anderson, 2017, p. 10). The affect is relational, and a body in the network of relation affects and is simultaneously affected (Anderson, 2017, p. 9). Thus, by collectively operating with the power relations between performers and passersby, our subversive walks created „ideological effects through non-ideological means” (Massumi, 2002, p. 40). The participants reflected on it in several ways. Scores that ‘occupy’ a place, like walking in a circle, worked almost automatically as micro-interventions of reclaiming space, where nobody (re)negotiated the self-claimed rules:

Some people also apologized when they walked through our circle. (P_10, Pos. 35)*

When they realized that they were on "my" circle with their stroller, they apologized (P_16, Pos. 7).*

Most interestingly, the collective walk made a bond, and connected performers, which I also noticed, especially while performing together with others in 'slow motion walks'. As discussed earlier, the performatively constituted difference, that is, the division of we/them in public space, contributes to the experience of collective subjectivity. That was expressed by the following words:

I was surprised how quickly a sense of group feeling develops when you behave as a group differently from the people around you. (P_8, Pos. 23)*

I simply followed the group because I trusted that they were looking out for us. In retrospect, it's a bit unsettling that I handed over the responsibility for myself to the group leaders. (P_10, Pos. 10)*

Over time, I felt like I was in a trance, gradually tuning out the surroundings and focusing on our group. (P_10, Pos. 3)*

The subject of gendered spatial behaviors was also reflected in comments:

This was a very exciting experience, especially since I'm usually always careful to make space for other people. (P_2, Pos. 7)*

I quickly realize when I take up a lot of space with my movements. I immediately felt that there was too much space and I needed to make room. (P_11, Pos. 11).*

I believe that's why it had an influence, because until now I wasn't accustomed to taking up so much space as a petite woman. Therefore, it was very special for me to assert my place once. (P_13, Pos. 16).*

Those reflections were a common point in discussions – several participants who identified themselves as women spoke about the felt difference of moving in the space as a group and the new experience of dropping the inner pressure to give place to other people on the street. Some also spoke about the 'attention' that the group became from passersby, and that was described as a familiar type of "unwanted attention" they were used to while 'going out' in the evening, expressed as follows: "I only receive unwanted attention when I go out" (P_13*, Pos. 17).

It is difficult not to connect those comments of spatial habits with Ahmed's description of gender socialization (2017). She describes harassment and violence in everyday life as "instruction. (...) When you have received the message of this instruction, your feelings are given direction and shape. (...) Girls come to take up less space by what they do, and by what they do not do. Girls come to restrict themselves through restricting how they use their bodies. [Marion] Young calls this restriction an "inhibited intentionality"(...) To become accommodating, we take up less space. The more accommodating we are, the less space we have to take up. Gender: a loop, tightening" (S. Ahmed, 2017, pp. 24–25). Connecting it with the workshops, due to their length, it was not possible to discuss in-depth the relations between past encounters, socialization, and current spatial habits. Nevertheless, the comments of participants draw attention to an accumulation of "unwanted" past experiences in public spaces.

Lastly, the performances involving the group in a coherent order, as 'slow motion walk' and 'march', accelerated more intense interaction with passersby. The 'march' was, in several places, joined by unknown children or teenagers. On the other hand, the confrontation with

‘slow motion walk’, especially on crowded sidewalks, was expressed by passersby as irritation; however, not directed to participants. Instead, passersby expressed comments like i.e. ‘What’s going on here?’, ‘What are they doing?’ oriented towards the general, imagined public. This could be interpreted as a moment when the performative intention – that is, the volition behind the gesture – was already perceived as intentional to passersby and, thus, not considered as a ‘minor’ intervention anymore.

6.2 (IM)POSSIBILITIES OF PERFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE

The workshop followed Latour’s process-oriented definition of embodiment as “learning to be affected” (Latour, 2004), where engaging with the world and ‘becoming’ means “to be affected by hitherto unregistrable differences” (2004, p. 209). The process is necessarily collective, as a subject becomes articulated only „when it resonates with others, is effected, moved, put into motion by new entities whose differences are registered in new and unexpected ways“ (2004, p. 210). Multiple interactions, “more words, more controversies, more artificial settings, more instruments,” result in a “more embodied body” (2004, pp. 211–212), which is equal to ‘being alive.’

Without a doubt, performative and participative workshop with discussions offers an affectual setting and the possibility to enhance the described process. In discussions, participants related their new encounters to their different past experiences, i.e. demonstrations that some of them attended or their everyday habits. On days when public spaces were crowded and proliferated plenty of interactions, participants noticed the difference in their own behavior or group dynamic in space in a relational manner. In addition to all the enriching processes occurring during the workshop, one aspect must be taken into consideration. However ‘alive’ an embodied method may be, the experience of the difference is limited exactly by the body. That means in this context, one can not encounter the ‘marginalized perspective’ by performative exercises and self-reflection. Firstly, accumulated experiences change the body; secondly, the body in the public sphere functions also as a sign. The most evident is the embodied reality of race. As Ahmed writes, “Seeing oneself or being seen as white [or brown] or black or mixed does affect what one ‘can do,’ or even where one can go, which can be re-described in terms of what is and is not within reach” (S. Ahmed, 2006, p. 112). Those discriminatory dynamics are impossible to encounter when working only with personal experience and discussions. It became clear to me, when one participant in the end discussion refuted the notion that inequalities prevail within the public spaces. That means, it was still possible for at least one person out of seventeen to remain indifferent - after attending the day dedicated to ‘right to the city’, after listening to three podcasts about the mentioned earlier groups, and after engaging in performative exercises. However singular and exceptional, this situation led to two conclusions: to my own expectations (and apparently a failure) of taking for granted a basic level of social awareness among participants and to assumptions that not only the performative workshop but also the whole day dedicated to ‘right to the city’ may be too short and not sufficient to make less concerned students involved. Since the university

institution is generally accused, as an example in several works of Bourdieu, of belonging to the structure maintaining and reproducing inequalities, efforts to enhance students' social awareness remain important. However, as the example shows, more effort, time, or additional formats may be needed to encompass the entirety of enrolled students.

6.3 LACK OF ANONYMITY AND THE DIGITAL ERA

Conclusively, within the workshop context, the lack of anonymity arose as noteworthy. Being the epitome of urban life for Georg Simmel, or a matter of course for the Prague-based “Aktual” group, anonymity in the old town of Bern was not guaranteed. In a city with 144 thousand inhabitants (Statistics City of Bern, 2023), the probability of meeting acquaintances by students was estimated as high. As expressed by one participant, before reaching large squares while exercising the ‘march’ core, he could not shake off the thought of unexpectedly encountering familiar faces. Although the workshop set-up and the particular scores remained ‘worth to try’ for participants, the idea of social evaluation and restricted, far from anonymous, participation in the ‘urban’ community became an important insight. This perspective might emphasize, on the one hand, the absence of qualities that are inherent in the very notion of the city. On the other hand, the comfort of anonymity in an urban environment might prove elusive in the Internet Age. This became evident when we were performing the ‘slow motion walk’ on one of the workshop days, and a group of teenagers started recording us with their mobile phones. One of the participants connected this with the character of public space:

In today's context, engaging in unconventional behavior in public spaces often results in being filmed quickly. (P_4, Pos.17)*

Instead of triggering the social order in everyday life, our performative act in this particular moment became a spectacle. Moreover, the idea that every passerby on the street may have a camera in their pocket, possibly one haunting every unusual event and eventually publishing it on TikTok or other video platforms, recalls the discourse of digitalization as a new mode of surveillance. The social order becomes enriched by a new instrument of exercising control. These implications reshape the urban context, in which Fluxus-rooted idea of playing with social conventions in everyday life remains only partly effective. The porosity of this concept becomes evident in digitalized times. As discussed at several points earlier, the context remains a pivotal point in estimating the impact of a performative act. In this particular case, it is not the gesture that becomes political (a ‘protest’) by references to the symbolic field, but the gesture that aims to disrupt everyday routines, and is neutralized as such by being recorded and framed as “just an act” (Butler, 1988, p. 527). Of course, the fact of entering the virtual domain opens up new possibilities on a very symbolic level where cultural citations and intelligible political intent may become powerful; however, the disruptive micropolitics of Fluxus become recuperated by economies of TikTok, Youtube, and “forces of corporate capitalism” (Mouffe, 2021, p. 312). This event shed light on Fluxus’s methodology of ‘intervening life’ as something inadequately equipped to make a difference in the new context of the digitalized urban

environment. As disruption, friction, and conflict are inherent parts of public spaces, novel methods of engagement and evolving approaches are required to sustain a state of conflict; to stay conflictual at all.

7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Three highly different engagements with subversive walks were examined in earlier 'steps'. These ranged from a singular, politically motivated procession, to a trans-local, participatory artistic project, and finally to speculative experimentation within the university's educational framework. In this chapter, I first tackle research questions using the analyses presented in the preceding sections. Secondly, I explore the subversive walks within a broader context, drawing on insights from literature spanning various disciplines.

7.1 SUBVERSIVELY WALKING TO BE POLITICIZED

To answer how feminist performers utilize a subversive walk to raise political questions, the political theories must be again recalled. Considering the agonistic *politics* of Chantal Mouffe, the analyzed subversive walks, necessarily critical, are political by their contribution to the symbolic field. In "Mis(s)placed woman?" and in the procession "Eating Europe", they address and shape the political subjectivity of a queer, migrant non-normative lives in the global and local context. Thus, they raise the question of inequalities and political possibilities of migrant, non-normative groups. Their political 'power' is tied to the condition of intelligibility – one must be able to 'read' them in the given symbolic context, otherwise an unintelligible gesture may remain a sign of a secret language that fails to align with the mechanisms of the political agora.

However, subversive walk is not a pure act of *politics* in Rancière's terms. Following Rancière, a politically disruptive action should: create and 'strangeness' (1) that the subversive walk almost by definition produces. Also the 'readability' or intelligibility of the reason (2) of the disruptive walk is clearly given in the procession "Eating Europe," as it operates with three citations and verbalizes the antagonistic relation to the leading political party. Intelligibility of intention behind walks performed within "Mis(s)placed woman?" may vary, as it operates in different contexts and addresses different audiences. Finally, the mobilization of individuals (3) is not given. Discussed subversive walks do not start an uprising and they do not aspire to do so. Interestingly, one interviewee accused 'classical' activism (i.e. average demonstrations) for 'well-behaving'; for him subversive practices belonged to more progressive tactics, that can confront conventions and force renegotiation of 'partage du sensible' prior or besides legal mechanisms.

In the context of assemblages, performers utilize subversive walks for the creation and cultivation of political subjectivities. A new political subject is created by disidentification, as it was with insurgent 'cannibals,' or by overidentification. However, the fact that bodies are

culturally and socially codified creates many constraints (Sparks, 2016). The stereotypes may block the possibility of hearing the message as a 'voice' and not a 'noise.' Subversive walking is also a practice of community building, in the sense of a "performative cultivation of subjectivity through bodily practice and ritual" (Sparks, 2016, p. 430). Both discussed practices utilized walking as a bonding experience for tightening the connections within the group and also, for making alliances.

Also, performers incorporate several aesthetic strategies for questioning hegemonic discourse (social order) and, by doing so, to generate disruption. To those practices belong:

- making social order ridiculous i.e. through „over-identification with the established regimes of power and representation“ (Milevska, 2005, p. 118) and recalling the aesthetics of human trafficking
- contrasting compilation of culturally coded elements, material or behavioral i.e. gendered tablecloths, burka with military camouflage pattern
- aesthetical engagement with the history and symbolical value of the place in the form of citations i.e. subverted religious ritual in front of the church
- semantic shifts and experimentations with signs, i.e., the political body as a stuffed and fragmented corpse
- guerilla strategy as an affectual tactic, in particular by performing 'illegally' or by not communicating about the performative act

To additional means contributing to the political intelligibility may also belong the choice of place, i.e. the Jewish archive in Cologne from the project "Mis(s)placed woman?". By publication of documentation – recordings, photographs – artists and activists may influence the general discourse, as long as the gestures are 'readable' in the cultural context of the audience. Finally, scores were utilized as proven sets of gestures and means of communication.

7.2 SUBVERSIVELY WALKING TO BE AFFECTED

Following Latour's remark that "the opposite of embodied is dead, not omniscient" (Latour, 2004, p. 209), opting for a performative approach as a method in human geography, and equivalently in urban studies, appears to be the appropriate decision. The performative exercises have shifted the focus from observing, that a flâneur-based or derive-based approach would probably foster, to interacting and interconnecting. The method was employed by all groups "to become sensitive to even more differences" (Latour, 2004, p. 212) related to the topic of inequalities in public space. This approach also facilitated reflection on one's own internationalized spatial behaviors. As articulated by some participants, they began considering how much space they take in everyday life and if this is related to their gender or cumulated experiences. Moreover, they engaged in introspection regarding the dynamics within groups and that a group can move differently in a crowd. These insights could be interpreted as reflections operating at a micropolitical level.

However, performative exercises in the form of short workshops (each 1,5h) remain inadequate in effectively mediating and enhancing sensitivity towards the marginalized perspective. The fact of having a body is exactly the limit of embodied experience, and some encounters are beyond reach. As discussed in the last chapter, without knowledge or introduction to the topic of social inequalities and marginalization prior to the workshop, involving, as an example, readings, media, and discussions – it is still possible that some participants stay indifferent. Of course, every system poses its inherent ‘glitch’ – a characteristic of the *virtual*; nevertheless, the words of Rosi Braidotti become significant in the educational context. If the university as an institution should sustain its relevance in the contemporary world, an effort is needed to address “civic responsibility, [and] a concern for social (..) sustainability” (Braidotti, 2013, p. 181).

7.3 SUBVERSIVELY WALKING IN SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

All the discussed subversive walks were collective and embedded in assemblages. Expanding upon the analysis, it becomes apparent that dissensus and disruption need not necessarily arise spontaneously, as Rancière may suggest. Behind attempts of political disruptions are alliances and networks that were developed over a long time, like the community of “Mis(s)placed woman?” or the NGO Maiz. Similarly, the history of social movements suggests that their political dissensus worked by „slow accretion, reiteration, and citation rather than surprising rupture“ (Sparks, 2016, p. 430). Also, Bassett criticizes this point after Badiou by stating „that Rancière’s view of politics suggests a democratic transition to a new regime can somehow be based on ‘an eruption, a movement of the masses’, a ‘lightening like rallying together,’ whereas [Badiou’s] own view of political change (...) presupposes the formation of an organized and disciplined body“ (Bassett, 2016, p. 283). Among the discussed walks, the political procession of the Maiz association relied exactly on the social, organized body that had to train and plan in advance.

An attempt to consider a subversive walk as a political intervention may lead to an interpretation of political theories as if actions lacking a strong political purpose and not leading to renegotiation of the “partage du sensible,” would be insignificant (Chambers, 2013; Marchart, 2019; Rancière, 2015). However, the discussed subversive walks give at least two undeniable effects: the creation and maintenance of a community, which is evident in practices of a trans-local network of “Mis(s)placed woman?” and the diversification of normativity by loosening up codes of social order, in short – decoding (DeLanda, 2019). For the last one, the ‘minor’ walk would be a factor in changing the system from within, although it may need a quantity and repetitiveness to work towards change (Marchart, 2019).

As conflict is an inseparable attribute of public space (Mouffe, 2005), a subversive walk belongs to the ‘alphabet’ of conflict. While demonstrations and occupations, sith-ins, etc., represent the cristalized and articulated voices on the political agora, subversive practices work ‘on the back’. Important is the context of the articulation - to become intelligible and effective

as an act of dissensus, the walk must be 'readable' by the addressed audience; it must engage with the symbolic field shared by the public. For this, artists and activists utilize several strategies, from disidentifications, and cultural citations to engaging with the historical and symbolic value of the place.

Furthermore, a subversive walk as a collective practice is more than art can do, in Mouffe's sense, but less than Rancière's *politics*. Nevertheless, it utters a 'wrong' (Rancière, 1999) directed towards social order and can potentially create a political subjectivity, as it was in the last 'unofficial' walk of "Mis(s)placed woman?". Therefore I would suggest, at least for some sub-types of subversive walk, the term pre-protest, a precursor of a demonstration, like a sprouting "seed under the snow" (Ward, 1996, p. 18).

Moreover, the threshold of political emancipation marks a crucial juncture. The discussed political concepts (Mouffe, Rancière) are based on representative democracy and visibility on the political agora. Yet, these theories do not encompass the state of in-betweenness or micropolitical opacity (De Backer et al., 2019). However, visibility and intelligibility is not always favorable for a political subject, as visibility may expose to risk and could be harmful under some political circumstances (Glissant, 1990). Thus, the subversive walk becomes a strategy for queer activism in undemocratic public spaces, as an example.

Building upon critical voices, some emancipatory projects encounter obstacles in Rancière's *politics*: subjectivities, even new and alternative, are entangled with racism, sexism, colonialism, which reduce the political efficiency of the dissensus. Unprivileged bodies have limited opportunities for their political voices to be heard while following the conventional procedures of protest (Sparks, 2016). This may underscore the importance of practices of „cultivating political subjectivities over time" (Sparks, 2016, p. 430), opening the field for subversive walk as a community building.

As discussed in the two first modes of the subversive walk, the practices of "Mis(s)placed woman?" and Maiz association were oriented towards the creation of political subjectivity defined by marginality, otherness, and oppression. Their artistic strategies belong to the "dominant mode of making critical art in recent years: feminist art, queer art, art made by ethnic or religious minorities" (Mouffe, 2008, p. 13). Nevertheless, their intersections with the role of NGO are revealing, and this is not only because Maiz is one of them, legally registered.. As Saara Liinamaa argues, „contemporary art (...) mimics the operations of an eclectic NGO" (Liinamaa, 2014, p. 541). To those mechanisms belong, as an example, Goethe Institut, Stiftung Kunstfonds or FfAI (Foundation for Arts Initiatives), acting translocally and contributing to "reinforcement of Western norms (...) and a generally imbalanced international traffic of artists and ideas" (2014, p. 541). However, many projects are not necessarily part of capitalist operations nor big art venues. Liinamaa recalls the term 'soft solidarity' (Horgan, 2012) to name this counter-project of globalization. Soft solidarity should emerge through informal bonds and alliances of those, who protest and struggle against global hegemonic practices. This idea of a counter-hegemonic movement as a solidarity and alliance can explain the ground on which Rebelodrom

as a temporal community operated or “Mis(s)placed woman?” finds hosting institutions and new members. Soft solidarity is an underestimated middle field. “Foregrounding soft solidarity as part of the work of alternative globalization cannot erase the significance of political solidarity, but it can be a supporting feature of this wider project” (Liinamaa, 2014, pp. 541–542).

Stepping back to subversive walks and subversive practices, they prove to be useful there, where social order is fixed, over-controlled, i.e. in non-democratic geographies when protest as a mean of political expression is not possible, as it happens to “Mis(s)placed woman?”. Also, when the entering of the political agora does not give much chance for acknowledgment of the claim, the recourse to subversiveness becomes a viable choice. Subversive practices may also be seen as a set of strategies to be utilized again when the ‘actual conflict’ will come – as an example, Marchart discusses possibilities for projects to become a protest strategy when the political tensions increase (Marchart, 2019, pp. 92–96).

In addition, there exists a connection between scoring and the virtual – subversive walks could serve as highly disruptive events, effectively demonstrating the influence of Deleuzian *virtual*. However, while they are seen as an unexpected disruption from the street, especially with the guerilla tactics of the artist Tanja Ostojić or students utilizing Fluxus scores, they are programmed and prepared actions of the community or a performer. The score is a ‘recipe’ for disruption.

Furthermore, subversive walks and practices that are outside the everyday routines are in a special manner affectual in public spaces, they ‘move’ spectators – as the old man tapping canes on metal elements at Ostojić’s screaming walk or kids and teenagers joining ‘performing’ students.

A less anticipated subject emerged during the interviews: public spaces are facing threats stemming from the capital. The availability of agonistic public spaces for performance is diminishing due to commercialization. In this manner, space becomes disconnected from *politics*. If public spaces „are truly agonistic they cannot be commercialized. If they are commercialized they are not agonistic“ (Mouffe, 2005, p. 163).

Besides, also a personal observation emerged: it felt quite peculiar to encounter a sharp contrast during the research process. On the one hand, I conducted interviews with highly experienced activists and artists committed to advocating for the rights of marginalized, migrant, and excluded groups. On the other hand, I worked with students, among whom the existence of exclusion and marginalization in public spaces was not always unarguable. I wondered if those two worlds could ever meet.

Finally, to circle back and return to the discourse of walking. The canon of walking literature is accused of being fossilized and reproducing privileged perspectives (Carrera Suárez, 2015; M. Rose, 2015; Springgay & Truman, 2018). Aiming to contribute to this discourse, I suggest the role of context in the symbolic field as a pivotal point for the political relevance of a walk. As an example, the ‘protest attitude’ of flâneur is deactualized because the context of

rapid modernization is gone. If urban theories can be provincialized (Leitner & Sheppard, 2016), then *flâneur*, *derive*, and other concepts should be “temporalized”, which means situated in the time and cultural context out of which they emerged. The theory of walking necessitates novel propositions capable of addressing politically valid and current conflicts of the contemporary world, utilizing embodiment to engage with the symbolic field.

7.4 AFTERWORD

This thesis presents evidence that encourages us to reconsider the 'innocent' perception of walking in urban discourse. Walking isn't solely a purely enjoyable aesthetic practice or an activity exclusive to a particular group; the spectrum of walking practices is diverse and influenced by dominant discourses. Understanding the significance of walking practices is closely tied to the context and the local symbolic field, which is a critical element for the 'politicization' of walking. Subversive walks can challenge social norms without causing harm to public spaces as they are an inherent aspect of the dynamic nature of these spaces. As discussed in this thesis, subversive walking may have political entanglements, even though it operates outside the realm of traditional activism. Foremost, when undertaken collectively, it serves as a means of shaping political subjectivity, nurturing a sense of gentle solidarity in global conflicts, and building alliances.

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9. APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1 – PRE-SELECTED CASES IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

Author(s)	Title, place, year	Description
Alli Coates & Signe Pierce	American Reflexxx Myrtle Beach, US 2015	The recording of the performance 'American Reflexxx' exposes the transphobic and discriminatory attitudes prevalent in a coastal US city, revealing a high level of violence and harassment. The 14'03" video captures Signe Pierce's provocative character, adorned in revealing clothing and a mirrored mask, as she confronts unexpected public's reactions. Pierce is insulted with transphobic terms such as "shim", and her gender is repeatedly questioned. It is worth to note that the original idea for this performance piece did not consider much interaction with the public.
Kubra Khademi	Armor Kabul, Afghanistan 2015	In her performance piece, Kubra Khademi wears a custom-made metal exoskeleton, resembling armor, and walks through the streets of Kabul, Afghanistan. The design of the walk aimed to highlight sexual and verbal harassment that women endure every day in public spaces. In the 3'14" video (out of 8 minutes of the walk*) captured by mobile phone Khademi faces various reactions from the public, all oppressive and harassing. The threats the artist received after the performance resulted in fleeing the country. ⁱ
Manu Luksch	Faceless London/Vienna, UK/AT 2007	An art project that explores issues of surveillance, privacy, and facial recognition technology. Luksch used CCTV camera footage of her in advance planned walks in London to create video installations and a film, focusing on individuals whose faces are obscured, pixelated, or hidden. Out of the collected material Luksch created a fictional narrative constructing the plot of the movie: a character in dystopian reality anonymously informed about her past life and child, that she starts to search for.

Valie Export	Aus der Mappe der Hundigkeit Vienna, AT 1968	One of the iconic performances of the artist. An 'imitation' of everyday practice and a playful and, at that time, controversial reversal of power relations. Taking to the streets, Export leads her partner on a leash, using this action as a means to document and expose the power dynamics at play in the relationship between genders. According to the artist, the action led to some astonishing incidents with the "prudish" clientele on the street, outraged by the sexual dimension of the action. ⁱⁱ
Anna Halprin	Blank placard dance San Francisco, US 1967	"Blank Placard Dance" is a participatory performance art piece. It uses the aesthetics of demonstration although it demonstrates 'nothing' as the placards are blank. The group interact with the audience and collect protest wishes. The performance ends in a collective dance engaging the audience. The project is frequently associated with the larger movement of Happenings and Fluxus art, where artists sought to challenge the passive role of the audience and blur the lines between art and everyday life.
Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund (SDS)	Spaziergangs-demonstration Berlin, DE 1967	Strictly political action that was intended to protest the German governmental contribution to Vietnam war. The group developed a strategic play with the police in urban space, after the demonstrations were banned in Berlin '66. The group used the esthetic of strolling to hide their political attempt and distribute protest leaflets. Literature stays, this action was inspired by the strategies of 'Provos' group. ⁱⁱⁱ

ⁱ according to the article by the exhibiting gallery:

https://www.schirn.de/en/magazine/context/2022/walk/ereignisse_entlang_einer_ruestung/ (accessed 03.02.2023)

ⁱⁱ Exhibition Catalogue "Split-Reality: VALIE EXPORT", Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig (mumok), Vienna, 1997, p. 65

ⁱⁱⁱ Fichter, T. P., & Lönnendonker, S. (2021). 5. Kapitel: Der autonome SDS und die DDR. In *Genossen! Wir haben Fehler gemacht*, p. 391, <https://doi.org/10.5771/9783741001550-353>

C) Vertiefungsaufgabe: öffentliche Ordnung

Vertiefungsaufgabe (90 Min): Künstlerisch-performative Zugänge zu dem öffentlichen Raum

Standort

Waisenhausplatz (Meret-Oppenheim-Brunnen)

Ziel

In dieser Aufgabe machen Sie eine Selbsterfahrung der normativen Regeln im öffentlichen Raum durch performative Übungen. Zudem lernen Sie eine weitere, qualitative Methode (Feldnotizen der verkörperten Erfahrung) kennen und reflektieren Ihre eigene Positionalität.

Fragestellung

Welche sozialen Regulierungsmechanismen beeinflussen das menschliche Verhalten im öffentlichen Raum der Altstadt Bern? Ist der öffentliche Raum wirklich inklusiv? Welche Rolle spielt der eigene Körper (Aussehen und Verhalten) in Bezug auf die soziale Kontrolle der öffentlichen Ordnung?

Aufgaben

1. Wählen Sie als Gruppe 2 von den 5 vorgeschlagenen Übungen aus. Folgen Sie den Anweisungen der ersten Übung für 20 Minuten. Behalten Sie die anderen Mitglieder Ihrer Gruppe im Auge. Wechseln Sie nach 20 Minuten zu der zweiten Übung. (ca. 40 Min).
2. Jede Person macht sich individuell Notizen, wie sie die Stadt durch die performativen Übungen erlebt hat. Reflektieren Sie dabei über folgende Fragen:
 - Wie haben Sie sich während des Experiments gefühlt? Haben die eingenommene Haltung, Geschwindigkeit und Rhythmus der Bewegung in Ihnen etwas ausgelöst? Wenn ja, was?
 - Welche Momente fanden Sie herausfordernd? Warum?
 - Hatten Sie eine Interaktion mit Passant*innen? Wurde dabei etwas gesagt oder gezeigt? Was haben Sie dabei gespürt?
 - In welchen Momenten fühlten Sie sich unsicher? Warum?
 - Wie beeinflusst die Art, wie Ihr Körper gelesen wird (gender, race, Alter, sozialer Status u.s.w.) Ihre Erfahrungen in der Übung?Nutzen Sie dafür das beigegefügte Befragungsblatt. (ca. 15 Min)
3. Vergleichen Sie Ihre Erfahrungen im Plenum und diskutieren Sie diese in Bezug auf die Fragestellung der Übung. (Diskussion moderiert durch Ewa ca. 10 Min)
4. Schreiben Sie die wichtigsten Ergebnisse der Diskussion als Gruppe auf und laden Sie diese in den entsprechenden Ilias-Ordner. (10 Min)

Abgabe pro Person (Dokumente abspeichern als: Name_Titel_Datum.docx / pdf)

Transkribiertes Befragungsblatt bzw. Feldnotizen bis heute um 23:55 Uhr auf ILIAS hochladen (Ordner "Abgaben" → Vertiefungsaufgaben → Öffentliche Ordnung Befragungsblatt)

Abgabe pro Gruppe (Dokumente abspeichern als: Name1_Name2_Name3_Titel_Datum.docx / pdf)

Kernaussagen und Zitate pro Gruppe bis heute um 23:55 Uhr auf ILIAS hochladen (Ordner "Abgaben" → Vertiefungsaufgaben → Vertiefungsaufgabe Öffentlicher Ordnung)

SLOW MOTION WALK Marina Abramović Institute, Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker und viele andere	Bilden Sie eine Gruppe à min. 3 Personen und gehen Sie zusammen so langsam wie möglich durch den Raum. Beginnen Sie mit Ihrem linken Bein, heben Sie den Fuss, strecken Sie Ihr Bein nach vorne, setzen Sie es am Boden ab, verlagern Sie Ihren Gewichtspunkt auf das andere Bein. Wiederholen Sie dasselbe mit dem rechten Bein. Bewegen Sie sich auf diese Weise 15 Min. lang fort.
GIVEAWAY CONSTRUCTION Alison Knowles, 1963	Finden Sie einen Gegenstand auf der Strasse und verschenken Sie diesen. Sammeln Sie alternativ mehrere Gegenstände, basteln Sie etwas daraus und verschenken Sie diese Konstruktion.
WALKING EVENT Milan Knížák, 1965	Zeichnen Sie auf dem Bürgersteig einer belebten Strasse mit Kreide einen Kreis von ca. 3 Metern Durchmesser. Laufen Sie schliesslich so lange wie möglich auf der gezeichneten Linie im Kreis herum ohne anzuhalten.
MARCH Willem de Ridder, 1963	Wählen Sie 3 oder 6 Personen, die den Marsch inszenieren werden. Sie gehen hintereinander oder in Zweierreihen auf den Gehwegen und folgen der vorher abgestimmten Route.
CITY PIECE Yoko Ono, 1961	Laufen Sie mit einem leeren Kinderwagen durch die Stadt.

Befragungsblatt/ Notizen aus der verkörperten Erfahrung

1. Wie haben Sie sich während des Experiments gefühlt? Haben die eingenommene Haltung, Geschwindigkeit und Rhythmus der Bewegung in Ihnen etwas ausgelöst? Wenn ja, was?
2. Welche Momente fanden Sie herausfordernd? Warum?
3. Hatten Sie eine Interaktion mit Passant:innen? Wurde dabei etwas gesagt oder gezeigt? Was haben Sie dabei gespürt?
4. In welchen Momenten fühlten Sie sich unsicher? Warum?
5. Wie beeinflusst die Art, wie Ihr Körper gelesen wird (gender, race, Alter, sozialer Status u.s.w.) Ihre Erfahrungen in der Übung?
6. Weitere Beobachtungen (z.B. zum Experimentieren als Gruppe, zu dem geographischen Kontext, zusätzliche Dinge, die Sie bemerkt haben, etc.).