In Surabaya, as the case of this study, road-based culture has been historically predisposing the way people inhabit the roads. It, then, leads to the ‘acceptance’ of the automobile as the primary mode of mobility. In contrast, there is an emerging youth movement who promotes walking as a way to subvert the current road-based culture and re-invent walking as creative and pleasurable activity as an alternative way of enjoying Surabaya. Through an examination of daily journals, photos, and social media documented by people joining the walking community in Surabaya City, this paper scrutinises the subversive yet creative aspects of walking as an organized activity with a view to generating new insights into the creative potential of walking. In this paper, I argue that the way people experience the world through walking is different to the way people experience the world through automobile travel, and that this generates different versions of, and attachments to, the urban environment of Surabaya.

Keywords: walking practice, blusukan, creativity, flâneur, actor-network theory.

In her critical analysis of the production of objective realities, Donna Haraway wonders how it feels to experience the world not by vision, but by the scent that is caught by her dog’s nose. As Haraway suggests, our senses and body are a perceptual system which generate and mediate specific ways of experiencing the world (Haraway, 1988, p. 583). The different ways through which beings experience the world allow them to understand the world differently. This principle might be applied to the way people inhabit place: different
inhabitinations of space might engender novel understandings and actions that might not otherwise be available and, in this sense, might constitute a basis for creativity. Through an examination of daily journals, photos, and social media documented by people joining the walking community in Surabaya City, this paper scrutinises the subversive yet creative aspects of walking as an organized activity with a view to generating new insights into the creative potential of walking.

Road-based culture as the habitus of Surabayan people

The driving culture in Indonesia prioritizes automobile and the roads has become deeply entrenched through the design of the landscape of the urban space. Raihana argues that since the beginning of its construction, roads were not aimed to facilitate pedestrians but were designed for automobiles (Raihana, 2007, p. 42). Since Surabaya was appointed to be an autonomous city by the central Dutch Government in 1920s, the construction and the development of roads became the primary project of Surabaya Gemente (Basundoro, 2013). Roads were hardened with asphalt and the automobiles began to occupy the roads along with pedestrians, bicycles, animal-driven carts, and electric trams. The emergence of automobiles diverged pedestrians and cyclists to the other side of the roads. Since then, Surabayan roads became busy and crowded with private automobiles as well as public transportation. Interestingly, there was a hierarchy ‘enacted’ in this public space.

The changing landscape of transportation in Surabaya put automobiles over bipedal modes of mobility. If we trace back to the early existence of automobiles in Surabaya in 1900, Mrazek notes that the Magneet magazine implicitly propagated motorcycle riders as masters of the road (Mrazek, 2002, p. 23). This magazine became a media to propagate the power of automobiles (Raihana, 2007, p. 40). Mrazek states that they had zero tolerance towards other road users, especially the poor Indonesians who mostly walked to get around the city. Inevitably, there were a lot of accidents caused by motor riders who victimized pedestrians. The driving culture in Indonesia was ‘built’ in ‘haste’, sometimes through forms of coercion (Raihana, 2007) which put the supremacy of the automobiles over minor modes of transportation such as walking. The automobile culture in this era demonstrated how automobiles came to exercise their power over minor road users. Furthermore, the roads did not only become the primary infrastructure of transportation but also became the stage of exhibiting the powers of the machine over bipedalism.

The growth of the use of automobiles in Surabaya required the government to rearrange urban space which then marginalized the pedestrians. Dick (2002) finds that since 1930, the population of Surabaya had therefore become highly mobile, even if walking was probably still the most common means of transportation. After Indonesia’s independence in 1945, as Dick noted, the currency depreciation caused private automobiles to become unaffordable. People relied on public transportation, which was gradually increased, such as the informal

---

1Gemeente or the independent and autonomous government was responsible to manage and to fund the city. Surabaya was assigned as Gemeente on April 1st, 1906 by the Central Government of Netherlands.
becak\textsuperscript{2} or angkot\textsuperscript{3} and buses which were officially provided by the City of Surabaya Government.

When the economic condition recovered in the 1970s and the household income significantly increased, people began to afford motorcycles and cars. Dick states that automobile numbers doubled every decade until the 1990s (Dick, 2002, p. 384). However, the traffic explosion in Surabaya demanded more spaces and transportation arrangements. During the 1990s, the government banned slow-moving vehicles such as bicycles and becak from entering the main roads. The roads were widened, the trees were cut, and worse, in some areas, the sidewalks and crossing lanes for pedestrians were ‘converted’ into asphalt roads. Compared to 1900 Surabaya, no one seems to walk more than a short distance nowadays (Dick, 2002, p. 385). Since 2005, although the government has reconstructed the sidewalks, people are not used to becoming regular pedestrians. Automobile culture is systematically passed on to the next generation and gradually become the habitus of the Surabayan people. This brief account of urban development in Surabaya and the increasing reliance on automobiles on the part of residents provides a background to appreciate the significance of the emergence of the walking tours in Surabaya.

However, this reliance on automobiles does not solely mean that Surabayan people are not used to walking at all. Rather than becoming the main mode of going mobile for Surabayan people, walking is perceived as a way to spend the leisure time such as window-shopping in malls or as an exercise like morning walk or jalan sehat—an occasionally collective walk. The emergence of walking communities in Surabaya opens up another possibility to experience the city differently from established routines of everyday life in Surabaya and in particular, habitual ways of moving through the city using automobiles. The walking ‘tours’ that they offer also allow the walker to experience the ‘alternative’ way to spend their leisure time and at the same time, to do exercise. This novel experience does not only yield a pleasure for the walkers but also generate a ‘new’ understanding of Surabaya and a sense of attachment towards their own city.

(Loosely) Organized walking: Manic Street Walkers and SUBWalker

Before discussing the experience of the walkers in detail, it may be worthwhile to be acquainted with the walking communities in Surabaya. This section provides a brief introduction to the two programs—Manic Street Walkers and SUBWalker—as the study principal case studies. Both of these walking communities have the similar objective which is to explore and to take pleasure from walking in Surabaya. Their practice of walking subverts not only the major mode of inhabiting the city by using the automobiles, but it also subverts the way most of the Surabayan people spend their time such as window-shopping in malls. Subversion, in this study, is not conceived as a form of resistance in the oppositional sense that cultural studies inherits from subcultural theory. Rather, it consists in and emerge out of an ‘alternative’ way of doing things collectively which have rarely been done before in any regular or habitual or loosely organised way.

\textsuperscript{2}Becak is being known as trishaw, pedicab, tricycle vehicle.

\textsuperscript{3}Angkot is abbreviation of Angkutan Umum. It is a van which is designed to carry 12 – 14 persons, it is an affordable public transportation which can reach rural areas that cannot be passed by busses.
Manic Street Walker (henceforth called as MSW) is an established walking tour program run by Anitha Silvia, a founder and coordinator of the program under C2O Library and Collabtive, a community organisation based in Surabaya City. MSW invites participants to visit and explore places in Surabaya that they may have passed by in everyday life such as the traditional market, the old town, China town or *kampungs*. Pioneered in December 2011, MSW has run several walking tours which have their own routes and themes. MSW runs group walks once a month, to have fun and as a form of exercise. Each trip is free of charge and has its own route which lasts up to 6 hours per day.

*Kampung* is also known as the urban village.
Quite similar to Manic Street Walkers, SUBWalker is an emerging walking community initiated by Dimach, Rani, and Kiza in 2016. This club offers a self-guided walking tour which aims to contribute to their city by reintroducing and discovering the hidden and unnoticed beauty stored in the most unexpected places. They capture their journey and document it on Instagram and their blog. In addition, SUBWalker attempts to include light conversation and discussion during their walk and undertakes documentation of their activities on their blog and social media. On their blog, they suggest that by employing a bilingual strategy consisting of Indonesian and English language posts, they would like to participate in the development of Surabaya as a part of the global community, by offering distinctive experiences of Surabaya to tourists (SUBWalker, 2016).

The walking ‘tours’ these clubs conduct can be defined as a loosely organized walking. Their walking ‘tours’ are organized, in the way that they coordinate where to meet, where to go, or what they will probably do. But at the same time, during their walk, they aim to go with the ‘flow’ and explicitly value surprise encounters or doing something they never have before. For example, MSW members paused in the Confucius temple and had their fortunes told by a fortune teller who attracted them. More than ‘simply’ a way of getting from A to B, their walking is a form of leisure and explorative activity that aims to give pleasure and surprises to those who engage in it.

Instead of simply exploring the significance of MSW and SUBWalker, this study uses these cases to think about how different ways of inhabiting place (i.e. walking) generate not only pleasure, but also enact different realities of Surabaya. The MSW’s and SUBWalkers’ ‘willingness’ and passion for walking in their own city as a means to explore, understand, and to build a sense of attachment with Surabaya enacting Surabaya as a different sort of city. They let their bodies “learn to be affected” by the city and its other entities by interacting with them in particular ways (Latour, 2004, p. 205). Walking mediates how the members experience and make sense of the environment they are moving through, which then generates a different comprehension of the world. The ways the walkers inhabit the city—which roads they move through, which places they visit, how the places make them adapt themselves to inhabit these spaces, or how they make meaning towards it—signals a form of resistance towards the urban design that structures everyday life in Surabaya and also indicates a form of creativity among the walkers.

This study aims to build up a picture of how walking becomes a mode of engaging with the city which differs from other common ways of inhabiting the city such as driving cars. It also aims to provide insights into some of the potentialities of walking. To achieve this aim, I will draw on online accounts of established walking tours to analyse the cultural meanings and sociomaterial innovations that emerge from this loosely organized walking. My archive is composed of personal blogs, photos, websites, and related social media which shares the stories of the members of MSW and SUBWalker. The participants’ accounts of their journeys are worth analysing for what they might reveal about the meanings and motivations associated with organised walking in this city. They reveal and aim to

---

5Here, I am drawing on Whitehead’s notion of prehension where walking is considered as a way of prehending the world (Halewood, 2013, p. 29; Sherburne, 1966, p. 9).
communicate to wider publics what would otherwise be ‘unknown’, ‘unpopular’ or underexposed information about their city. They reveal details of the city that might otherwise be ignored or unseen in everyday lives given the practices of inhabiting and moving through urban space that has been instituted as habitual—namely automobile travel.

**Theorising walking**

This section discusses some theories which strongly relate to the everyday life’s activity like walking. I will use the concept of the *flâneur* to help us situate the walking that is practiced by MSW and SUBWalker. While walking is quite tricky to ‘define’, the concept of rhythm helps us to understand the multiplicity of walking where rhythm is the results of the dialectical form of strategy and tactic. These concepts put walking as constantly negotiating the power relations between the laypeople and the ‘authority’. However, those concept does not put attention to the body as the locus of how people experience and make meaning while walking.

Hence, one way to examine the walking is to pay attention to the body—the walking body—where the body is not passive receiving the stimulants, but it actively responds and engages with it. In this manner, the body learns to be affected by the differences and the way the body articulates differences (Latour, 2004) are incalculable and multiple. The more differences the body are moved, the more it articulates. Hence, when the walking body learns to be affected by the differences, we are likely to ‘gain’ surprises of what the articulation enacts and how it forms the new reality of Surabaya and how this process also shapes the subjectivity of the walkers itself.

**Walking practices: the flâneur and the walking club**

One of the most well-known strands of scholarly work on walking emerged in the context of 19th-century modernity when Charles Baudelaire introduced the figure of the *flâneur* in his poem ‘The Painter of Modern Life’ (Baudelaire, 2010). The *flâneur* was a dandy, a man in the crowd who became a quintessential figure of early modernity in Europe (Baudelaire, 2010, pp. 10, 12). The *flâneur* poetically expressed his admiration of the city, its emerging urban life, and landscape during a period of massive urban renewal in Paris in 1853 (White, 2008, pp. 37-38). Wandering was the source of his enjoyment: The *flâneur* absorbed the ambiance of modernity and took pleasure by strolling through the city.

Benjamin argued that the early emergence of the Arcades in some of the important cities in Europe had pulled the *flâneur* from his original domain, the city streets into the Arcades. The industrial revolution had significantly transformed capital cities throughout Europe into glittering and luxurious urban spaces embellished with arcades, parks, monuments, art galleries, etc. As Benjamin wrote, Paris was known as the City of Mirrors which portrayed its people as spectators and consumers at the same time, which he called phantasmagoria. The Arcade was considered a hallmark of the modern era and a temple of commodity capitalism (Buck-Morris, 1989, p. 83). The activity of the *flâneur*, henceforth, was no longer strolling the city streets and taking pleasure from their modern ambiance, but from goods, other’s fashion, and from showing off their own style and taste.
In the 19th century, Benjamin saw the *flâneur* as not only a person who took pleasure from wandering the city but as a labourer. Benjamin argued that *flânerie* was undertaken to overcome boredom after working in the factory, a way of recharging him/herself like a battery. Benjamin also illustrated a more modern figure of *flâneur* of the photojournalist who was always ready to capture aesthetic appealing moments and only to forward their photos to the companies that hired them. Meanwhile, as a poet, Baudelaire must have observed *flânerie* as a way of producing and selling his poems. He made his aimless wandering through the city streets a method of productive labour (Buck-Morrs, 1989, p. 185).

More recently, anthropologists conceived *flânerie* as a method of conducting research. Naas mentions that *flânerie* can be employed to observe the city where an anthropologist enters a community in the city as a whole and dives into the city crowd (Naas, 2012). For Naas, *flânerie* connotes an active and intellectual observer that combines the casual eyes of the stroller and the purposeful stare of the detective. Naas argues that the *flâneur* incorporates both the strangeness and familiarity of the city. Thus, he suggests that *flânerie* can be considered an activity of ethnographic exploration. The essence of *flânerie* is walking which slows down the pace of mobility and therefore enables one to capture specific details of the object of research.

The question is, can the SUBWalker and MSW walking be considered as a form of *flânerie*? Does the concept of the *flâneur* suffice and match the ‘criteria’ of the SUBWalker and MSW walking tours? There are similarities but also specific differences. For example, the *flâneur* is generally theorised as a figure somewhat detached from his environment, whereas SUBWalker and MSW aim to actively engage with their surroundings and local community and build a new sense of attachment with the city. The next section discusses these similarities and differences in further detail.

**Rhythm, tactics, and walking**

To begin with, Lefebvre’s conception of rhythm provides further insights into the multiplicities of walking. Lefebvre argues that whenever there is an interaction between a place, a time, and an expenditure of energy, there is rhythm (Lefebvre, 2013, p. 25). Theoretically, it is quite intricate to define and ‘categorise’ walking since it has various embodiments, but rhythm can help us to understand the multiplicities of walking. A daily walk, pilgrimage, or therapeutic walk can exemplify the relations between rhythm and walking. The example of pilgrimage and therapeutic walk emphasises the temporality of space where the body has its own rhythm while traveling in different places. Whereas the daily walk as studied by Middleton emphasises how walking has different rhythms during the day and night (Middleton, 2011).

In Middleton’s study of the multiple forms of temporality and spatiality that emerge and shape pedestrian movement in everyday life in London, she found that people became aware of time through their physical mobility (Middleton, 2011). She highlighted how rhythm governs the way people walk in the streets. During the day, people hastened their steps to work. Some of her participants noted that walking to work encourages them to think about work. In contrast, at night, people walk in more leisurely and relaxed ways. Her participants commented that walking during the night allowed them to have a drink after work, helped
them relax, as they could kill them as they wanted (Middleton, 2011). This resembles the reasoning behind Lefebvre’s concept of rhythm which considers walking as embodied rhythm or dressage where the body continuously appropriate the space and time. Bodies respond sensitively to the ‘regulation’ of the space and time. Middleton’s analysis strikingly demonstrates how different feelings, emotions, and sensations may be associated with slight variations in the rhythm and purpose of walking.

The concepts of tactic and strategy from Michel de Certeau provide a different approach to understanding the practice of walking. In his theory of everyday life, De Certeau makes a distinction between tactics and strategies and situates walking through the city as a tactic. The concept of tactics directs attention to the ways in which ‘uses’—commonly assumed to be passive and guided by established rules—operate as ways of exceeding the designs of power (De Certeau, 1988). De Certeau prefers to use the term ‘users’ rather than consumers to indicate the active role of people who are subjected to rules and conventions ‘designed’ for them. The practice of everyday life is the locus where the power of resistance is ‘stored’ and exercised. Resistance is not ascribed to groups of people but consists in the practices of everyday life such as walking. By contrast, strategies are used by those who are in power and manifest in particular arrangements such as a city, a business, a state, an army, or scientific institution. It must be noted that strategy employs a panoptic gaze and gains its legitimacy from expert knowledge (De Certeau, 1988). For instance, when urban planners and the local government design pathways and fragment the city into blocks and functions, they are acting strategically rather than tactically. The tactic allows one to appropriate designs in their own way. De Certeau argues that since the tactic is equivalent to wit, it may generate a form of creativity. In this regard, the concept of the tactic is useful for explicating the subversive and creative dimensions of the practice of walking in the city.

Unlike the urban planner who sees the city from a ‘panoptic’ and totalizing gaze, who provides strategies that govern everyday rules and conventions, the walker develops their own rhetoric of walking which provides variable modes of navigating the design of the city. They make meaning of the streets; they make use of certain places in ways that are probably different from the original meaning proposed by urban planners and the government. These meanings are varied among walkers. For the purposes of my study, what is interesting about the ‘making-do’ of these minoritized ways of inhabiting the city is that walking allows the walker to grasp the details of the city that might be missed and generates a novel experience or creativity. De Certeau argues that the tactics employed by walkers are useful for explicating the subversive and creative dimensions of the practice of walking in the city.

However, while De Certeau directs attention to how practices such as walking can be used tactically to avoid or subvert the designs of power, he pays less attention to experience itself, to how the body feels in the process of walking and perceives its environment. I am interested to explore how walking can operate as a distinctive way of experiencing and understanding the city compared to other modes of transportation or how does walking generate a novel experience or understanding which might not otherwise be available. If walking modulates the experience of time and space, how might the city affect particular walkers and vice versa? Hence, I aim to explore the creative potential of walking by offering a new reading of (loosely) organised walking in Surabaya. I am interested in the differences,
insights, perspectives, and actions that emerge from the experience of walking, understood as a culturally and materially conditioned—but active—bodily experience.

The Walking Body, Articulation, and Creativity

The walking body can be understood as mediating the experience of the city. Here, walking becomes what Latour terms a mediator, conditions which “transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry” (Latour, 2005, p. 39). Conceived as mediator, walking has the ability to transform the meaning and identity of Surabaya—the places, the heat, the local communities, the roads—in short, all the elements which compose this city. As Mol argues, different practices enact different realities (Mol, 1999, p. 77). She argues reality is not given but is constructed, open, and contested within the practices of everyday life. Thus, to investigate how walking can serve as a mediator, it is necessary to situate walking as a practice which makes a difference to how bodies encounter the city. It is useful here to compare the walking body with the automobile body since walking has been minoritized in Surabaya as a mode of exploring the city.

As the primary mode of inhabiting the city, automobility embodies a set of ideas and practices deeply connected to automobile culture. The sense of the city is conditioned by the materiality of automobiles. For instance, the sights of the city glide past, out of reach, while the body of the passenger remains relatively passive. The walking body, by contrast, is endowed with a different sort of kinaesthesis in which the body is informed through the perception or sensation of movement in the joints, tendons, and muscles (Lewis, 2001, p. 69). In the case of leisure and explorative walking (such as that engaged in by SUBWalker and MSW) what comes into play is not just kinaesthesis, but tactility, olfactory senses, vision, auditory senses, and even taste.

Bruno Latour introduces an approach which assumes that to have a body is to learn to be affected, by other entities such as human and/or non-human, also include a body extended by prosthetic devices (Latour, 2004, p. 205). To apply Latour’s thought to this example, the walking body is articulated with its surroundings in a particular way and thus learns to be affected by the differences which occur during the walk. The walking body actively engages with, and is sensitive to, certain differences in the world, and is not merely a passive interface (Latour, 2004, p.206).

The automobile-body represents a different articulation of the body with its surroundings. The differences one becomes sensitive to during walking and driving are not the same. The automobile-body perhaps learns to be affected by road signs, traffic, and the experience of speed or slowness, in ways which are likely different to the walking body. Certain postmodern spaces such as automobiles and motorways can be understood as “non-place” as a form of space which is designed to be passed by rather than appropriated which makes its users have a very little or no engagement with it (Auge, 2008). If the walkers are enabled to interact with the details of city relics or with the community, those who are driving in motorway engage with words of texts such as signage, road markings, or traffic lights which may have different insights for the walkers. This is what Auge argues where the link of individuals and his surroundings is established through the mediation of words or texts when they are in “non-places” (Auge, 2008, pp. 76-77). Both automobility and walking can
be considered mediators which enact different realities and yield different sorts of experience. Since automobiles are the dominant way of experiencing the cityscape of Surabaya, it becomes interesting to scrutinise walking as a minoritized practice which generates different experiences, pleasures, and prehensions that otherwise might not be available.

From a Latourian perspective, the articulation of the city through walking does something to reality (the city) itself. As the organizers of SUBWalker and MSW note, there are always variations in the route of walking, intentions, the group of people who join them, the activities which are done during the walking, etc., and the walking body intersects with these various differences. It combines these differences and processes them to understand Surabaya. The walking body will not feel the same thing over and over again. “A subject only becomes more interesting, deep, profound, when it resonates with others, is effected, moved, put into motion by new entities whose differences are registered in new and unexpected ways” (Latour, 2004, p. 210). This is what Alfred North Whitehead calls creativity, where creativity is not only attributed to the individual but is understood as the effect of those differences which come together, prehend, and mediate each other on a given occasion (Halewood, 2013, p. 35; Sherburne, 1966, p. 33). Those surprises of the city, which walkers experience during walking tours, have given them energy and inspiration to respond the city in unexpected ways and build new attachments and identities.

The City and Us: Enjoying, discovering, and reinventing Surabaya and the self through the walking body

The pleasure of participating in loosely organized walking

In the following discussion, I discuss how loosely organized walking encompasses some of the tenets of flânerie i.e. pleasure of wandering and observation of the city but also bears certain differences. One similarity flânerie and the loosely organised walking tours of MSW and SUBWalker is their shared emphasised on the pleasure of walking. Strolling the city is conceived as a form of enjoyment and leisure. This kind of walking ‘subverts’ the reliance of Surabayan people on automobility and the dominant habitus consisting in how Surabayan people spend their leisure time - driving and shopping.

As has been clarified before, subversion, in this study, develops as an alternative way of doing things. Surabayan people commonly spend their leisure time in shopping malls, in the mode of Benjaminian flânerie, much or less, in which pleasure is taken in activities such as window-shopping in consumer Arcades. The emergence of MSW and SUBWalker offers a different way of gaining pleasure by undertaking walking tours in various natural and built environments in their own city, in which mass commodity consumption is not the modus operandi of the tour location. As participants of SUBWalker commented in relation to their experience, in videos SUBWalker shared on social media (SUBwalker, 2016),

“It was fun, indeed!” - Putri
“It was thrilling walking with SUBWalker! And yeah, it was exciting!” - Kicuph and Orin

Tuturlogi: Journal of Southeast Asian Communication 2 (2021) 1-23
Nevertheless, the pleasure of loosely organised walking emerges in relation to different conditions and environments in which this walking operates (compared to flânerie) and in particular its mode of engaging with these environments. Traditionally, the pleasure of the flâneur yields from the aimlessness of the activities of walking, their observation of the city, and their detached absorbance of the atmosphere of modernity as they independently immerse themselves in the mass of strangers that inhabit the spaces of urban modernity.

In contrast to the traditional subject of the flâneur literature, MSW and SUBWalker organise their walk but in a manner that remains open to spontaneity and any surprises that might occur or be spotted during their walk. Both MSW and SUBWalker walking tours have their own theme and routes but without an overly strict itinerary. For example, SUBWalker’s Food on Foot which was one of their first walking and culinary tours. This involved walking to the old town of Surabaya, briefly pausing in some traditional stalls which sold traditional snacks and delicacies, passionately sharing their feelings and emotions, their experience of walking and tasting local culinary items, and excitedly recording their experience in daily journals, blogs, or social media. The organizers of the walking tour choose the places or themes which they have never been or rarely explored. What they look for and ‘absorb’ is the novelty and locality of the Surabaya.

Research is an essential element in this process, both to consider and decide on the route and to respond to the discoveries yielded from their walking tour. They read literature, observe the everyday life of Surabayan people, identify alluring spots, visit underexplored places, and note whatever interesting stories emerge from them. MSW, for example, collaborated with local communities, historians, architects, designer, artists, or culinary experts to brainstorm and come up with ideas for themes and locations. Upon investigation, it is clear that certain expectations of their walking tour exist but there is also some commitment to letting their bodies go with the flow.

Figure 3. SUBWalker's post in Instagram about their Food on Foot trip

The way these communities conduct their walking is analogous to the research method known as ‘cultural probe’; a technique that has been elaborated in the field of interactive design that aims to gain unusual and unexpected insights into different domain of everyday life. Cultural probes are ludic devices that “a design-led approach to understanding users that stressed empathy and engagement which are collections of evocative tasks meant to elicit
inspirational responses from people about fragmentary clues about their lives and thoughts (Gaver, Boucher, Pennington, & Walker, 2004). The organisers of walking tours enact a logic of interactive research and discovery that is very similar to that which informs use of cultural probes. Before the walking tour is conducted, they already prepared aspects of the route, stopping and meeting point, convey some information about the activities proposed, and/or the time frame of the tour. However, during the walking tour, they allow participants to appropriate, ‘play’, and explore. For instance, tasting local foods or having their fortunes told. The participants are free to document, discuss, or try something they would like to do as long as they respect the local community and the places they visit.

This loosely organised walking aims to enable the walkers to engage with any kind of detail of the city, experience moments and let their bodies interact with the environment and the communities they encounter. It enables the walkers to gather and collect fragments of Surabayan life and interpret it in their own ways which may generate new insights, subjectivities, and appreciation. Walking seems to be a way to probe the city that could enrich people’s lives and move the subjectivity of the walkers in pleasurable ways. Analogous to cultural probes, their walking tour value uncertainty, play, exploration, and subjective interpretation (Gaver, Boucher, Pennington, & Walker, 2004) within a loosely structured frame that is designed to enable such surprises.

Unlike the flâneur who detaches themselves from the city, the loosely organise walking tours of Surabaya are undertaken with the aim of forming new attachments to Surabayan environment. Walking does not only enable the walkers to build up a sense of place or spatial qualities as detached observers, the walkers, and the city itself become newly shape through these emergent attachments. The places that Surabaya’s loosely organised walking tours visit do not ‘signify’ modernity in a Baudelarian sense and/or the ‘novelty’ of the current condition of Surabaya. In contrast, the destinations chosen are mostly in the old town of northern Surabaya which, for MSW and SUBWalker, promise some encounter with Surabayan’s hidden ‘treasures’ of the past and its stories.

Now, the traces of the past remain alive through the materiality of the places and vestiges of its sociocultural and economic past and present. When they walk into these precincts, they do not absorb and witness the ‘modernity’ of the flâneur. Rather, they seem to embrace, observe, and experience of different histories of Surabaya and the vernacular life of these multi-ethnic zones to the extent that they are ‘preserved’ in northern Surabaya. Though the area is not well-maintained by the local Government, the assemblages of people, places buildings, things, practices, activities, and the pulse of life they emit generates feeling of nostalgia for a little-known pasts and new discoveries. Rather than evoking a fixed idea of the past, walking in the northern Surabaya suggests that places are physical situations that are ambiguous, contested, and experienced in the present (Rosenberg, 2012) which animates their subjectivities and generates ‘other’ versions of Surabaya which will be discussed further in the following subchapter.

Like the ‘salaried-flâneur’ who made a living from flânerie i.e. photojournalists, walking can be a source of insight about places that are able to be incorporated into regimes of economic values. Many of these social media assist the users in posting and sharing their travel-related comments, opinions, and personal experiences, which then serve as
information for others (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). These destinations are well-documented through the participants’ social media, blogs, or youtube. These travel documentations, indirectly, have become the materials that form a basis for ‘selling Surabaya’ to tourists, i.e. the city’s narration of cultural and social life or the historical ambiance of the old town, though it is not yet to happen in any large-scale way. The organizers of these walking tours are aware of this potential, as SUBWalker writes:

“All this time, three of them—Dimach, Kiza, Rani—feel that the tourism of Surabaya has not yet been attracted many people to come for a visit. Whereas, Surabaya has plenty of appealing things that can be developed and promoted such as historical narration in Northern Surabaya, innumerable delicacies, and culinary, beautiful parks in the city, and kampungs with its uniqueness.” (SUBWalker, 2016)

While SUBWalker tours remain free of charge this group uses the popular hashtag (#) i.e. #exploresurabaya #aslisuroboyo #yoikisuroboy to organize their documentation into ‘certain’ categories which expand their reach on Instagram. These tags operate alongside posts which are created by the users of social media to make these pleasurable for other curious impressionable users (Blackshaw, 2006). On the other hand, C2O Library & Collabtive, the organisation that hosts MSW, offers paid walking tours called Surabaya Johnny Walker (henceforth SJW) which target local and tourists aims to promote and introduce the richness of Surabaya while at the same time raising revenue for C2O Library and its programs including cost-free MSW tours (C2O Library & Collabtive, n.d.). Here we can see that these walking tours do not only generate pleasure and understanding of Surabayan culture, histories, and spaces, but it generates economic value both for themselves and for the city through contributing to Surabaya’s emerging creative economy and tourist industry.

**Blusukan: Bodies, the city, and attachments**

Though SUBWalker and MSW reject use of the term *blusukan* to frame their activities (for reasons that will become apparent later in this discussion), this local term is nevertheless worth exploring for its hermeneutic value. This term brings certain dimensions of these walking tours to light, such as the sense in which they aim to create new attachments. To give some sense of how these loosely organized walking tours are informed by, and contest, the meanings and traditions of *blusukan*, I will draw on Latour and Hennion’s theorisation of the concept of attachment to investigate the important role played by bodies in creating new attachments through Surabayan walking tours.

Etymologically, *blusukan* is derived from Javanese which literally means to wander about squeezing into; or *blusak*-blusuk which means to keep entering places one is not familiar with or an outsider to (Robson & Wibisono, 2002). In Bahasa Indonesian, *blusukan* means entering particular places to find or explore or discover something (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2015). *The Jakarta Post*, one of the prominent newspapers in Indonesia, defines *blusukan* as an impromptu visit, since this practice is often unplanned and unexpected by people subject to *blusukan* activities. This practice generally relies on modes of slow-paced movement such as walking or cycling. In practice, the
destination of blusukan is primarily lower-middle class inhabitations such as kampungs, traditional markets, villages, or other out-of-the-way places, such as borderlands, disaster areas, or refugee camps. In some usages, it evokes a ‘humanitarian’ concern for, or mode of engaging with, submerged people, places, conditions and social problems.

Figure 4. Malcolm Turnbull joins President Joko Widodo blusukan in Tanah Abang Market on November 2015

This term fell into wider usage and became familiar to wider publics since populist President Joko Widodo came into power. Indeed, blusukan is something of a trademark of Joko Widodo’s leadership since he was officiated as Mayor of Surakarta. He was the first leader in Indonesia who successfully popularised blusukan as a way to discover grassroot issues and problems and demonstrate official concern about them. Blusukan is now undertaken by several other politicians to draw attention to problems, demonstrate concern about solving issues, and to interact and engage more closely with the lower-middle class whose lives are otherwise barely ‘touched’ by high-positioned governmental authorities. Blusukan has also been known as a style of leadership in which leaders are supposed to be compassionate, fair, and respect and listen to their people, rooted in the ancient Indonesian literature i.e Desawarnana by Mpu Prapanca (Arta, 2015). While the practice may be appropriated instrumentally for political purposes, the practice is pragmatic and instrumental. Blusukan also conveys certain meanings and expectations about how the relation between the state and its people should be communally and personally grounded in social trust (Ruman, 2013).

In this study I argue that blusukan can be understood alternatively as a cultural practice that produces new encounters between different classes of people and gives walkers access to aspects of the city that might not otherwise be available. I would like to investigate blusukan at the micro-political, rather than macro-political level; i.e how loosely organised walking ‘intervenes’ and interacts with the everyday life of Surabayan people and the city itself. MSW and SUBWalker do not conduct their walking as a style of leadership but as a way of understanding the city and producing connections between different populations and
the walkers. When participants in these walking tours *blusukan*, they do not observe the city from distance. They sense the places they enter with their body, they talk to other walkers, they discuss and share their opinions with each other or through social media, they record the details of the city, and, significantly, they talk to and engage with local communities. *Blusukan* can be understood as a mode of practical encounter that entangles the walkers with aspects of their city or environment to produce “a redistribution of agency” deployed in the interlacing where every connection does something, but where none is sufficient on its own” (Hennion, 2010, p. 2). This idea of attachment challenges notions of agency and passivity, based on binary distinctions between dependent things and determining ones (Latour, 1999 in Hennion, 2010, pp. 2-3).

Attachment, in this regards, is not a subjective quality, but “signifies a connection, restriction, restraint, and dependence that reminds us that we are prisoners, confined on all sides by our history and environment” (Hennion, 2010, p. 2). Hennion argues that attachments are sustaining, unavoidable and situational. “We can substitute one attachment for another, but we cannot move from a state of attachment to that of unattachment” (Latour, 1999, p. 27). When the walkers’ practice *blusukan*, the ‘subject’ attaches to different ‘objects’ of the city i.e. people, weather, places, urban relics, food stalls, the embodied narration of the city, emotions, feelings. *Blusukan* enables the walkers to access and detect varied and unexpected differences in the urban environment, at the same time as they sensitised to the pleasure of feeling these differences (Hennion, 2010, p. 8). These surprises—implicit in the process of encountering unexpected differences—make it possible to constantly produce new amalgamations and connections, such as being friends with the local people and/or simply being more passionate about walking and exploring the city, as MSW posts on their Instagram.

Figure 5. MSW stopped by a local people’s house and enjoyed homemade traditional herbal drink ‘Beras Kencur’

Source: Instagram.com/SUBWalker

---

6Hennion draws on Actor-Network Theory Scholars
To walk, skilfully: Bodies that moves beyond expected rhythm

Loosely organised walking tours in Surabaya have their own rhythm which engenders particular emotions and sensation. In this context, the rhythms of walking are continuously adapting to the circumstances. The walking body must continuously adapt to the contingencies, flows, materialities, and interruptions experienced while walking (Edensor, 2010). The experience of moving in the environment, also known as kinaesthesia, is particularly responsible for our sense of direction (Tuan, 1977, p.12 in Wunderlich, 2008) in which sensing, and emotion are closely related (Wunderlich, 2008).

Loosely organised walking can be understood as a form of kinaesthesis where the body in motion actively senses spaces. It generates an embodied state of awareness (Lewis, 2001) where the body becomes a participant in configuring a particular experience of the self and the city. In their blogs and videos, MSW and SUBWalker note that they are changing orientations of the body as it moves through the cityscapes:

“from Dr. Cipto 20 street, we walked towards Tjokroaminoto Street, … we walked a couple blocks and we arrived at ‘Kong Tik Tjoen Ong’ temple, … from Gembongan street, we turned right passing a bridge and arrived at Peneleh street, turned left to the Makam Peneleh Street, … we traversed Semut Kali street which was fully occupied by the trucks..., Danto’s and Ardian’s starvation led us to pause and to rest in a warung in front of Coklat temple, ..” (Silvia, Reportase: MSW #2 Imlek, 2012)

Here, the body is continually having to reassess itself in relation to the route, the cityscape, and the feelings and needs of other participants: locating itself, pausing, navigating, moving on, relocating, pausing, navigating, and so on. Many walkers are familiar with such experiences. They walk in slow-pace, their hands touch the relics or some of them capture the moment through their cameras, their eyes attempt to enmesh details of the places they encounter, they share their responses to these places with other walkers, and at some points, they pause and interact with local communities. This walking rhythm reflects the co-production of the body and the environments it moves through which allows them to ‘find’ surprises and enjoy the moments of walking, as SUBWalker expresses in their Instagram post,

“All of our senses are spoiled with various charms stored right there, hidden even in the smallest little detail. A detail that tickles our mind or at least makes us smirk in daze.”

To maximize the experience of walking itself, the walking tour participants rely on bodily techniques that are technically constituted by specific sets of movement, which are themselves acquired through training and education to serve a specific aim—in this case, walking in the city or blusukan (William & Bandelow, 1998, p. 50). In Mauss’s discussion of techniques of the body, he differentiates various types of bodily techniques particular to different activities and different cultures and times and societies. Loosely organised walking tours mobilise particular bodily techniques, which are conceived as offering different ways to enjoy and to understand the city and can be distinguished from other walking dispositions.
such as flânerie. Loosely organized walking involves a particular set of bodily techniques and enrols particular equipment in its accomplishment.

Figure 6. SUBWalker walked in the Surabayan kampungs

As MSW notes in their website, though walking is a good exercise for well-being, they suggest participants to be aware of their condition and their outfits. The walking body needs to be healthy and fit to join the walking tour. This enhances the sensual experience of walking given that the routes are generally quite lengthy and take a considerable time. These requirements are slightly different to those of hill-walking where, as Edensor discusses, the walking body needs to be trained and conditioned to attain the level of fitness required for strenuous hill-walking (Edensor, 2001). In addition, certain dietary provisions are suggested but not essential or compulsory for participating in the walking tour. MSW suggests the walkers bring drinking water and a light meal alongside a suitable outfit. MSW always reminds participants to prepare themselves by wearing flat and well-cushioned shoes and light, loose, and comfortable clothing (C2O Library and Collabtive, n.d.). MSW advises participants to wear a broad-brimmed hat, sunglasses, have a small amount of money, drinking water, and apply sunscreen. This advice is clearly a response to the environmental and weather conditions of Surabaya. Without these items, the city would not be anywhere near as accessible or endurable via this mode of movement, i.e. daytime walking.

Because some of the participants rarely do walking tours, these devices (i.e. clothing and walking shoes) enhance their experience of walking in their own city. Advice about clothing takes account for its material, ease of movement, and what will best equip the walker to endure the hot weather of Surabaya. These walking accessories can be considered as ‘actants’ (Urry, 2000, p.79), objects which facilitate and constitute the aims and practices of walkers (Edensor, 2001, p.99). Suitable walking shoes or comfortable footwear plays important role to quietly expand the capacities and affordances of the walking body (Michael, 2001). Comfortable shoes serve to mediate the experience of the walking body.
and constitute its nature and capacities. Otherwise, walking hurts the feet as some early participants in MSW tours experienced.

“At the intersection towards the market, Idha, Danto, Mirna, and Adrian and I took a short break in the warung, Mirna’s feet were scuffed because she wore the unfitting sandals, Adrian’s feet were also swollen because the shoes he wore were inconvenient at all…” Anitha Silvia (Silvia, 2012)

Pain, caused by the wrong shoes, becomes what Serres calls parasites, where materiality intervenes in what should be a smooth flow of communication between the body and nature (Michael, 2001, p. 115). But as Michael argues, the process of being in pain can also lead people to seek out ways of reconnecting with the surrounding sociocultural world. Instead of being ‘parasites’, I will argue that pain pertains to what is being communicated by the body itself. Indeed, it is a feeling which connects people in new ways to their environment, rather than completely detaching ‘subjects’ from the world. On the contrary, pain is a feeling which appropriates elements of the universe in a particular way and concretizes the experience as a certain sort of (in this case, partly painful) experience (Halewood, 2013; Sherburne, 1966).

Surabaya’s loosely organized walking tours also emphasise the collective pleasures of walking and discovery. This is quite different from the early romantic walking of the 18th-19th century where the flâneur championed specific personal qualities (Edensor, 2001) through a form of walking that enacted their individuality and autonomy (Jarvis, 1997, p. 28). Certainly, solitary walking may cultivate self-reliance, contemplation, and self-development. Barron expresses a preference for solitary walking over collective walking as he argues that solitary walking provides a good time for people to walk alone and nurture their private thoughts and feelings in a manner free from the obligation of revealing them to others (Barron, 1975 in Edensor, 2001). I would contest this argument, since each technique of walking—whether solitary or collective—simply gives walkers different experiences, which may be differently valued. Collective walking makes walking a ‘social event’ which connects strangers, acquaintances, and/or friends. Blusukan preserves and enacts the values of friendship, connection, and shared experiences. The pace of the walk is set to optimize group enjoyment and experience is communally constituted (Edensor, 2001, p. 90). This does not mean that collective walking cannot develop one’s individual qualities. Through light discussion, and social interaction within the group, the walkers gain knowledge and experience from others which may shape and cultivate singular potentials.

The co-formation of the city and the self through walking
By framing walking as enunciation, de Certeau implicitly counts on the physicality of walking, seeing it as the key to a style of tactile apprehension and kinaesthetic appropriation (De Certeau, 1988). During the walking tour, MSW and SUBWalker takes steps to ‘maximize’ the bodies of participants to learn to be affected (Latour, 2004) by the things they stumble upon. For example, participants describe being moved to touch the mossy old wall, being ‘tempted’ to taste the local culinary, having to deal with painful swollen feet, or
feeling the ‘sensation’ of drinking from a hand-made clay kettle provided free for the traveller by locals, etc. It is through these bodies and how they are equipped for motion that the city is articulated. These physical interactions can be considered as modes of ‘feeling’, in a Whitehedian sense, where the body feels the world around it in a particular manner.

Figure 7. An MSW’s participant drinks a water for free which is provided by the local people in Pegirian Market

Source: Instagram.com/Manicstreetwalkers

As Michael Halewood explains, such feelings are certainly not limited to humans, other entities are ‘feeling’ too. From this perspective, feelings are ‘vectors’, for they feel what is there and transform it into what is here (Halewood, 2013, p. 31; Sherburne, 1966, p. 8). However, what MSW and SUBWalker participants ‘feel’ is not just the sense they get of something through physical interaction. It generates certain emotions in the ‘subject’ such as surprise, excitement, curiosity, thrills, pain, or annoyance. Though Latour and Whitehead insist that feeling is not simply a subjective experience, these ‘emotions’ articulated by the walkers illuminate how they are perceiving or experiencing the city at a particular moment. The value of Latour’s and Whitehead’s approach is that it enables us to take account of the ways in which feelings are mediated by other actants (the wrong shoes, maps, sunscreen, light clothing) and describe more than just the subjective states of particular human persons.

The articulation of the city through walking does something to the city as well as to the walkers themselves. The world is not made of inert objects but of those events of experience which we undergo (Halewood, 2013, p. 30). The city—let us say, as an ‘object’—is not just inert and ahistorical entity. It is a reservoir of differences whose specific properties the walkers reveal and make emerge in their practical encounters with it (Hennion, 2007). Neither of the two is given, but they discover each other in the act of experiencing. This idea resembles Latour’s concept of the factish, “to be made by what I make” (Latour, 1999). Latour explicates the theory by exemplifying his experience of writing. For the last thirty-five years, he discusses how he has been writing notebooks that have made him, and asks ‘who writes? Who is fabricated?’ To answer his question, he introduces the notion of “faire-faire”, that which “makes one do”, or what he calls “factishes”. This allows him to avoid the dichotomy between the subject and the object and the whole question of the power of
causation—what acts, and what is acted upon (Latour, 1999). So, he answers that when he writes his notebook, it is clearly him who writes; but he is also written by his book, it is clearly it that writes or produces him (Latour, 1999, pp. 27-28). In short, the ‘subject’ shapes the ‘object’ and the ‘object’ shapes the ‘subject’ in the process of their mutual and practical encountering. Hennion makes a similar argument, using it to propose the notion of “open subjects” and “open objects” (Hennion, 2010).

If we use this theory to understand the city and the walkers, we can see that the walkers make the city as the city makes the walkers in a process of co-formation, or mutual becoming. Let us consider the walkers as ‘subjects’ that are ‘composed’ by their different backgrounds, knowledges, intentions, or experiences, while the ‘objects’—local communities, places, the atmosphere, the culinary items, the weather, etc., are each composed by their own pasts and stories. When the walkers walk to some parts of the city, their bodies collide with these other bodies. These bodies will be affected and moved by each of their innumerable differences. In addition, as I have indicated, social media serves as an ‘extension’ of the walkers’ bodies. This technology is being used by them ‘enacts’ the reality of Surabaya through narration, representation, and discourses. They feel the differences that the walkers become sensitised to through the process of walking and the coming together of diverse experiences into a novel unity is the process of becoming (Halewood, 2013, p. 28). This process may generate another ‘version’ of Surabaya and generate new subjectivities. As SUBWalker participants have written on their Instagram,

Figure 8. ‘New’ Version of Surabaya: It is a home for SUBWalker

Source: Instagram

For the organisers of SUBWalker, for example, walking creates ‘new personal’ meanings of Surabaya itself. Surabaya is not ‘merely’ the second biggest metropolitan city or the ‘city of heroes’ as it is popularly known in Indonesia. Surabaya means home to them, in a sense of connectivity, familiarity, and closeness to the elements which compose the city itself. Like a ‘family’ which has family name, SUBWalker participants identify themselves as ‘wong kene’ (LINE Suroboyo, 2016) or the ‘local people’ (of Surabaya) which generates a new
sense of belonging in Surabaya, or, as the Surabayans people proudly call themselves as Arek Suroboyo.

Penutup

In this paper, my intention has not been to suggest that walking is intrinsically ‘better’ than automobile travel (though it certainly has far fewer environmental impacts). Current debates around urban sustainability tend to pit the speed-paced automobility ‘against’ the slow-paced mode of transportation i.e. walking or cycling but, in the end, these debates tend to be circular. Rather, I have argued that the way people experience the world through walking is different to the way people experience the world through automobile travel, and that this generates different versions of, and attachments to, the urban environment of Surabaya, and constantly produces different ‘realities’ and that the way we encounter the world shapes our subjectivities and their becoming.

Daftar pustaka


Arek Suroboyo is a local Surabayan language which means the people of Surabaya. Historically and culturally, this call embraces their pride as Surabayan people which are bound of some dispositions as brave, loyal, honest, and friendly.


London: Routledge.