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**Engineering the Pedestrian.
Timescape of Urban Walking after the 1920s**

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Engineering the Pedestrian. Timescape of Urban Walking after the 1920s

This paper addresses the historical construction of urban mobilities in the North-Atlantic area during the twentieth century. In investigating the conflicting temporalities of pedestrians and drivers, it shows how urban mobility temporalities have been organised around industrial timescapes, banning stillness and favouring cars as fast vehicles: the result is today's overlapping urban mobility arrhythmias, where slow users are penalised. The construction of a new timescape of urban mobility and its subjugation to industrial rhythms was part of a larger process of social engineering of walking and its de-sensing. The privilege granted to fast and motorised vehicles has created mobility injustice, while their role in CO₂ emissions invites us to reconsider the current practises and to reverse this mechanism, giving more time/space to slow mobilities.

1. Introduction

“On April [2016] Fool’s Day, City Observatory’s Joe Cortright published a tongue-in-cheek take on TTI’s [Texas Transportation Institute] methodology that he’s calling the ‘Pedestrian Pain Index.’ The idea sounds simple: What if we measured the transportation system for pedestrians the same way we measure it for drivers?”¹ Although launched on April Fool’s Day and despite the lack of reception of the “Pedestrian Pain Index”, the idea of measuring the “pain” endured by pedestrians when they “lose” time during their walks in the city is an excellent perspective from which to scrutinise the mobility timescape in urban spaces as well as its hierarchies. Over the past hundred years, the time “lost” by drivers at traffic lights has been the subject of endless jeremiads, reports and economic calculations, while pedestrians are simply invisible in the public debate, and their “lost” time does not trigger any interest.

As Peter Norton wrote, offering motor vehicles the right of way was a must among transport planners: “In 1947, traffic engineer Ernest Bailey was explicit. ‘We generally assume that the motorist’s time is invaluable [...] while that of the pedestrian is utterly worthless.’ Consequently, authorities were ‘trying to make roads safe and expeditious for the motorist at the expense of added haz-

¹ <https://usa.streetsblog.org/2016/04/04/what-if-we-measure-streets-for-walking-the-way-we-measure-streets-for-cars/> [28.09.2021].

ards to the pedestrian', who was compelled to cross more dangerous streets".² Among the tools used to achieve this goal, we have the clear spatial division of traffic flows, imposing limitations on walking, banning jaywalking, and, of course, traffic lights which determine the time of crossing. Many urban pockets and infrastructures, such as urban motorways, are simply not accessible to pedestrians or cyclists. These spatial confinements forged fenced channels for different users, controlling arrhythmic areas, shaping current urban mobility timescape(s).

In this paper, I will use secondary sources to focus on the genealogies of urban mobility timescapes for pedestrians, as constructed in the North Atlantic area throughout the twentieth century. Indeed, the "downgrading and disciplining of pedestrians is omnipresent in the small but growing scholarship on the history of urban walking. This scholarship suggests that during the twentieth century streets were reconstructed mainly for cars, while pedestrians were marginalized by means of legislation, police control, planning measures and infrastructure provision, although not without resistance".³

Relying on the seminal work by Lefebvre on rhythmanalysis, I advocate to further develop a historical analysis of mobility temporalities and rhythms in the urban arena. As a starting point, I take that "modern mobility is a mélange of speeding up, slowing down, hurrying and waiting, sometimes by design but more often by the clash of urban rhythms".⁴ Counting on a growing body of research, I will focus on the conflicts and "arrhythmia" between slow and fast urban movements, excavating the role played by transport systems in the emergence of speed as a dominant paradigm of the twentieth century and how this has shaped the current timescape of (Western) urban mobility. Analysing this temporality means also addressing its time hierarchies and how the current hegemonic paradigm based on speed not only clashes with mobility justice, but also with the goal of sustainability.

Engineering the pedestrian is the backbone of my investigation, which links to the idea of industrial and familiar order used, among others, by Boltanski

² Peter Norton, *Persistent Pedestrianism. Urban Walking in Motor Age America, 1920s-1960s*, in: *Urban History* 48:2, 2021, 266-289, quotation p. 266.

³ Martin Emanuel, *Controlling Walking in Stockholm During the Inter-war Period*, in: *Urban History* 48:2, 2021, p. 248-265, quotation p. 248.

⁴ Tim Edensor, *Rhythm and Arrhythmia*, in: Peter Adey et al. (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities*, Abingdon 2014; Jennie Germann Molz, *Representing Pace in Tourism Mobilities. Staycations, Slow Travel and the Amazing Race*, in: *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 7:4, 2009, p. 270-286, quotation p. 272. Both in Phillip Gordon Mackintosh/Richard Dennis/Deryck W. Holdsworth, *Architectures of Hurry. An Introductory Essay*, in: Phillip Gordon Mackintosh/Richard Dennis/Deryck W. Holdsworth (eds.), *Architectures of Hurry—Mobilities, Cities and Modernity*, London 2020, p. 1-20, quotation p. 6.

and Thévenot⁵: “Industrial orders of worth, for example, are characterised by the idea of efficiency governing different entities: things need to be done as quickly as possible. In contrast, domestic order of worth values long-term relationships more highly and thus emphasizes durability and stability”.⁶ On careful scrutiny, it seems that over the past century urban public space has been increasingly drawn toward an industrialised and engineered time organisation, though this process is far from totally accomplished (and, actually, in more recent decades, this trend has even been reversed). However, as Hornsey persuasively wrote, we can witness a parallel between the worker in the factory and the pedestrian in the urban environment, a topic already highlighted by McShane⁷. So, as much as the worker has to perform according to efficiency (that is, less input for more output), so the pedestrian has to achieve mobility according to an invasive set of rules, spatial obligations and new temporality.

“Connected to the motorcar at different moments in its lifecycle, the industrial labourer and the urban pedestrian were subjected to similar processes of enforced correlation. Both were located within new organisations of time, space, regulation and supervision that sought to realign their corporeal rhythms within a dominant assemblage of mechanical devices and informational flows”.⁸ Set along these concepts, in the conclusion of this paper, I will frame this new mobility timescape within a larger project of industrialisation and de-sensing walking, advocating for mobility studies and transport history to provide a fruitful angle from which to analyse the concept of timescape historically.

2. Temporality of Mobility

Following Cresswell, we can break “mobility down into six of its constituent parts (motive force, velocity, rhythm, route, experience, and friction) in order to fine-tune our accounts of the politics of mobility”.⁹ Three of these six mobil-

⁵ Luc Boltanski/Laurent Thévenot, *The Sociology of Critical Capacity*, in: *European Journal of Social Theory* 2:3, 1999, p. 359-377.

⁶ Claudio Coletta/Tobias Röhl/Susann Wagenknecht, *On Time. Temporal and Normative Orderings of Mobilities*, in: *Mobilities* 15:5, 2020, p. 635-646, quotation p. 637.

⁷ Richard Hornsey, 'He who Thinks, in Modern Traffic, is Lost'. *Automation and the Pedestrian Rhythms of Interwar London*, in: Tim Edensor (Hrsg.), *Geographies of Rhythm. Nature, Place, Mobilities and Bodies*, London 2010, p. 99-112; Clay McShane, *The Origins and the Globalization of the Traffic Control Signal*, in: *Journal of Urban History* 25:3, 1999, p. 379-404.

⁸ Hornsey, p. 101.

⁹ Tim Cresswell, *Towards a Politics of Mobility*, in: *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28, 2010, p. 17-31, quotation p. 17.

ity elements directly refer to temporality, but “motive force”, “route” and “experience” can also easily be associated with the concept of rhythms. Vannini critically added further elements to this definition of mobility, exploring how “a focus on the temporalities of mobility constellations – thus a focus on patterns of movement existent within places – is not complete by examining rhythm and speed only, as Cresswell suggests”.¹⁰ Vannini’s point is further elaborated, addressing how “while issues of ‘when’, ‘in what order’, and ‘how often’ are matters of rhythm broadly defined, issues of ‘how long’ are significant issues of duration [...]. Together, speed, rhythm, and *duration* ought to give us a more thorough understanding of place temporality and mobility constellations’ temporal aspects, and thus ought to produce a more sophisticated rhythmanalysis”.¹¹

The duration of pedestrians’ movements, and even their immobility, such as at traffic lights, must be considered when addressing a timescape of urban walking. It is exactly in questioning the “mundane practice of [...] crossing the road”¹² that, in my opinion, it is possible to use Susan Stewart’s hint of seeking every day temporality as “drowned out by the silence of the ordinary”.¹³ This angle allows us to define a genealogy of this silenced and largely accepted ordering of space and time, as well as “paying attention to time as an institution and a resource”¹⁴, constituting part of the social fabric and its ordering. In going further on this issue, we can show the construction of “temporal inequality”.¹⁵

Focusing on walking is also interesting if we think of its “narratives of worthiness, morality, and aesthetics that constantly contrast it with more mechanised forms of movement which are represented as less authentic, less worthy, less ethical”.¹⁶ Michel de Certeau and Lefebvre himself addressed the walker as an inspiring element of urban mobility, and this fascination, although strongly gendered, can be traced back to Walter Benjamin’s flaneur: “Lefebvre is clearly

¹⁰ Phillip Vannini, In Time, Out of Time. Rhythmanalyzing Ferry Mobilities, in: Time & Society 21:2, 2012, p. 241-269, quotation p. 245.

¹¹ Vannini, p. 245, italics added.

¹² Joe Moran, Crossing the Road in Britain, 1931–1976, in: The Historical Journal 49:2, 2006, p. 477–496, quotation p. 477.

¹³ Susan Stewart, On Longing. Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection, Durham 1993, p. 14, quoted in Moran, p. 495.

¹⁴ Michael Howlett/Klaus H. Goetz, Introduction: Time, Temporality and Timescapes in Administration and Policy, in: International Review of Administrative Sciences 80:3, 2014, p. 477–492, quotation p. 477.

¹⁵ Robert E. Goodin, Temporal Justice, in: Journal of Social Policy 39:1, 2009, p. 1–16, quotation p. 5.

¹⁶ Cresswell, Towards a Politics of Mobility, p. 20.

aware of how contemporary pedestrians are precariously managed by a dynamic complex of both human and non-human actors. Gazing from the balcony of his Parisian apartment, he notes the rhythmic variance between those strolling tourists abruptly halted by solicitous street entertainers and the aggravated flows of peak-time pedestrians ordered by the automated pulse of traffic lights”.¹⁷

Walking is thus open to different outcomes¹⁸, and its characteristics can easily clash with a regimented and industrialised urban order: “Performing the everyday is closer to the unreflexive, repetitive enactions identified by Butler than the rather strategic acts cited by Goffman, and in this lies its power, because it is often beyond reflection and critique”.¹⁹ Precisely because it is unreflexive, walking can be resistant to Taylorisation of the practise. By the same token, after an appropriate “dressage”, to use Lefebvre’s words, this unconsciousness can also lead to an interiorisation of external rules. Pushing the argument further, as we will see in more detail in the conclusion, walking can be used as a Trojan horse for social regimentation and mobility de-sensing.

3. Building Industrial Timescapes for Mobility

We cannot romanticise the past experience of urban walking. To be a pedestrian in the city has always been a dangerous activity, especially at night. The arrival of the motor vehicles into the urban arena did not create a Big Bang in urban management, because public spaces were already flooded with mechanical transport devices²⁰, such as carts, tramways and bikes. Historically, there was the push to negotiate different (and alternative) flows in the city, where walking was a difficult task, not only from today’s perspective, but also for contemporaries: in the nineteenth century the “dilemma of the flaneur/française, faced with the rush and bustle of the city street, was typified by Baudelaire’s poet, ‘crossing the boulevard in a great hurry, splashing through the mud, in the midst of a moving chaos, with death galloping at me from every side’”.²¹ The streets were also used by the ruling class as a gathering place in which, according to Scobey’s article, at “prescribed times and places,

¹⁷ Hornsey, p. 100.

¹⁸ Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust. A History of Walking*, London 2001.

¹⁹ Tim Edensor, *Reconsidering National Temporalities. Institutional Times, Everyday Routines, Serial Spaces and Synchronicities*, in: *European Journal of Social Theory* 9:4, 2006, p. 525-545, quotation p. 529.

²⁰ Massimo Moraglio, *Knights of Death. Introducing Bicycles and Motor Vehicles to Turin, 1890-1907*, in: *Technology and Culture* 56:2, 2015, p. 370-393.

²¹ Quoted in Mackintosh et al., p. 13

the city's propertied men and fashionable women gathered in public, circulated past one another, and exchanged salutations".²² The role of gender in defining the use of public space remains a crucial element in the definition of mobility patterns, and this has already been outlined by several studies. Here I would urge the continuation of this line of investigation, putting the accent on twentieth century pedestrians.

The use of streets for parading was accompanied by some improvements to road surfaces and use specialisations already in the nineteenth century²³, and via an immense program of public works that transformed the urban walking experience by literally paving the way to a network of sidewalks. This transformed walking well before the arrival of the automobile from a careful negotiation with the street soil (and the mud) into a 'stepping-machine' exercise: "the mechanization of footwork was part and parcel of a wider suite of changes that accompanied the onset of modernity".²⁴

While walking in the city was getting smoother, crossing the street remained a challenging task: anecdotal evidence reports how in 1830s London, "furious driving" by horse-pulled busses repeatedly harmed or killed pedestrians²⁵, while Passalacqua as well as Ishaque and Noland showed how a large set of regulations predated the cars and how cart drivers considered pedestrians to be second level street users.²⁶

We can thus trace hierarchies of mobility and its timescape well before the arrival of cars, though we need to consider three relevant characteristics of nineteenth and, even more evidently, twentieth century urban mobility: increased speed, greater distances travelled on a daily basis, and bigger volumes of mobility both in absolute number and pro-capita. This was rooted in what Nicholas Papayanis called the "Ideology of circulation" when speaking of 1840s Paris streets²⁷, while Brian Ladd warned about "the acceleration of the street".²⁸

²² David Scobey, *Anatomy of the Promenade. The Politics of Bourgeois Sociability in Nineteenth-Century New York*, in: *Social History* 17:2, 1992, p. 203-227, quotation p. 203.

²³ Brian Ladd, *The Streets of Europe. The Sights, Sounds, and Smells that Shaped its Great Cities*, Chicago 2020, p. 202ff.

²⁴ Tim Ingold, *Culture on the Ground. The World Perceived through the Feet*, in: *Journal of Material Culture* 9:3, 2004, p. 315-340, quotation p. 321.

²⁵ Richard Dennis, *The London Bus. An Unlikely Architecture of Hurry*, in: Phillip Gordon Mackintosh/Richard Dennis/Deryck W. Holdsworth (eds.), *Architectures of Hurry—Mobilities, Cities and Modernity*, London 2020, p. 45-64, quotation p. 46.

²⁶ Arnaud Passalacqua, *La bataille de la route*, Paris 2010; Muhammad M. Ishaque/Robert B. Noland, *Making Roads Safe for Pedestrians or Keeping Them Out of the Way?: An Historical Perspective on Pedestrian Policies in Britain*, in: *The Journal of Transport History* 27:1, 2006, p. 115-37.

²⁷ Nicholas Papayanis, *Planning Paris before Haussmann*, Baltimore 2004.

²⁸ Ladd, p. 195ff.

Higher speed and greater intensity of transport were evident in cities, where the dense built city fabric made the saturation of public spaces more visible. In London, space was so fully utilised and so precious that collective transport had to go underground as early as 1863, long before the advent of cars. However, while dangerous, saturated, and difficult to handle, it seems that mobility in the nineteenth century remained an individual, autonomously organised task, with no clear evidence, so far, that it was deliberately being turned into a strictly governed time/space machine.

The arrival, first, of the bike, followed immediately by the automobile, put this environment under pressure. Three inner elements of motor vehicles made the difference: speed, suppleness, and number. Carriages, carts, trains, and tramways were also fast, massive, and devoted to the transport of the middle-upper classes, guaranteeing right of way, often simply ignoring other users. However, they never achieved the speed and agility (and later the number) of motor vehicles.²⁹ The maneuverability of movement of the latter, which were not chained by tracks, unlike trains and tramways, violently impacted metaphorically and physically the practices of the other users, such as jaywalking, playing and simply standing. The social rank of the drivers and owners provided them with legal impunity.³⁰

4. *“Ex Chao Ordo”: Building a new Mobility Timescape*

So, the speed, number and flexibility of motor vehicles made the risk of urban mobility more evident. Increasing volumes of transport made the urban space scarcer. All these elements increased the conflicts among users, making them more obvious and more hazardous. Meanwhile, the process of urbanisation and the growing size and population of European and American cities made the complexity of the urban machinery more evident. Local authorities, especially in Europe, stepped into the organisation of everyday urban life, including the direct management of public transport systems, such as tramways and underground systems. The Great War further accelerated this impulse to govern citizens' lives, legitimising experts and policymakers to control not just war efforts and production but also the public arena. A more precise, defined and resourceful use of urban public space was one of the goals of urban policymakers in the interwar period. Beyond mobility, speed and efficiency were therefore a

²⁹ Moraglio, *Knights of Death*.

³⁰ Kurt Möser, *The Dark Side of ‘Automobilism’, 1900–30. Violence, War and the Motor Car*, in: *The Journal of Transport History* 24:2, 2003, p. 238–58; Tomás Errázuriz, *When Walking Became Serious. Reshaping the Role of Pedestrians in Santiago, 1900–1931*, in: *The Journal of Transport History* 32:1, 2011 p. 39–65.

perfect fit for the dogma of industrialising urban time/space coordinates. “In the 1920s, automobilism moved toward daily, trivial, and economically driven attitudes (or at least, that’s how it was depicted), calling for time efficiency, and therefore requiring innovative spatial arrangements. World War I introduced the ‘systems’ perspective in automobile mobility, leading to the creation of new infrastructural solutions, in which the imperative of motor vehicle drivers was to perform mobility with the best cost-benefit outcome, with efficiency and efficacy as the main goals”.³¹

Driving was accountable, targeting time- and effort-saving, which meant the expulsion of the slow (as inefficient) and the old (as obsolete) was fully legitimised and therefore a top priority for the expert community and for policy-makers. This was crisply summarised by Errázuriz: “While drivers thought of themselves as modern men [sic!] with fast, efficient, autonomous, productive and successful vehicles, they tended to criticize walking for being slow, unproductive and wandering”.³² In aligning these factors, it is not a surprise that “in industrial cities, this generally occurred sometime during the first half of the twentieth century as the purposes and meanings of the urban roadway were persistently, if unevenly, revised”. This led to streets being “culturally re-defined no longer as a site of heterogeneous social activity, but as a functional conduit whose purpose was to facilitate the speedy flow of traffic.”³³

Speed and smoothness were the pivotal ideas in the “scientific” organisation of mobility, overlapping with Taylor’s statements about industrial “scientific” management of production: “Traffic engineers borrowed freely from the popular ideas of Taylor and his followers. [Industrial engineer] Straetz claimed: ‘Traffic conditions on our streets and highways today greatly resemble the confusion and disorder, which prevailed in the industrial production field twenty years ago’”.³⁴

More evidently from the 1920s onwards, with some minor divergences between Europa and the Americas, the main part of the urban streets was given to the exclusive use of drivers, and “... proposed to transform the practice of walking, prioritizing mobility over stagnation and prohibiting any street use that represented an obstacle to modern circulation”.³⁵ As for Taylor’s work process, superfluous movement in public space was claimed to be unnecessary.

³¹ Massimo Moraglio, *Driving Modernity. Technology, Experts, Politics, and Fascist Motorways, 1922-1943*, New York 2017, p. 3; based on Gijs Mom, *Atlantic Automobilism. Emergence and Persistence of the Car, 1895-1940*, New York/Oxford 2015, p. 7.

³² Errázuriz, p. 4.

³³ Hornsey, p. 100.

³⁴ McShane, p. 390.

³⁵ Errázuriz, p. 59.

The goal of maximizing output and reducing input, also in mobility, led to the street being seen as a mere transport stream. As for the worker, who should be consistently engaged with her/his duties, the pedestrian should move in the most efficient and effective way.

Any obstacle blocking the way, such as bystanders, should be removed and any friction in the movement should be avoided. In order to reduce friction, the dream of experts and politicians was to force pedestrians to walk only on the left side of the street, to minimise even the clashing flows of walkers. This is confirmed by local research carried out in the Anglo-Saxon world³⁶ as well as on Chile³⁷, Italy³⁸ and Sweden³⁹, all pointing to the convincing idea of the organisation of public space as an urban imperative, conceiving urban space as a metaphor of circulation and circulation only, and later organising any movement according to the industrial timescape.

5. Bending Time and Forging Arrhythmias

How did this new organisation of public space according to industrial rhythms effect the routine of walking? Well, we have seen how after the 1920s pedestrians had to stay on the sidewalk, and on the sidewalk only. In the case of the UK, “[t]hroughout the 1920s and 30s, London’s walkers were subjected to successive attempts to choreograph the rhythms of where, when, and how they moved through their city’s streets. Common to all was the disaggregation of walking into a component set of separate tasks. Proceeding along the sidewalk and crossing the road became conceptually distinguished, opposed to each other and discretely managed within contiguous and controllable sequences”.⁴⁰

The line dividing walking from motoring was the kerb. The raised sidewalk was not a twentieth century invention, and as seen before, following Ingold’s work, the process of mechanising walking was already in place before the arrival of the car.⁴¹ However, under this new set of rules, the kerb was a physical artefact full of symbolic values. The act of descending from the sidewalk was indeed no longer allowed and was eventually banned, also legally.⁴² The sidewalk was thus the confined space for walking, dramatically reducing the space

³⁶ McShane; Hornsey.

³⁷ Errázuriz.

³⁸ Moraglio, *Knights of Death*.

³⁹ Emanuel.

⁴⁰ Hornsey, p. 107.

⁴¹ Ingold.

⁴² Peter Norton, *Fighting Traffic. The Dawn of the Motor Age in the American City*, Cambridge, MA. 2008.

left to pedestrians. Nonetheless, as noted by Ishaque and Noland⁴³, the raised sidewalk had (and still has) contradictory elements. On the one hand, it confined pedestrians to a narrow strip of the urban space, but on the other hand, it kept them safe. The fences along sidewalks, the history of which has been richly described by Moran and later by Rooney for the London case, simply escalated those concepts by lecturing those pedestrians who were prone to disobey the new mobility settings: “Miles of pedestrian barriers were erected in London, making it harder for those on foot not to use the provided crossings”.⁴⁴

Still, in this new, totally industrialised time/space of movements, pedestrians needed to cross the road somehow: the question of how to manage the crossing remained open. Banning jaywalking created the need to find regulated crossing channels. This triggered a time-space apparatus made of precise and individual points where the flow of walking and that of driving met: the streets’ corners. Although reduced in number, there were still conflicting flows and timescapes when cars and pedestrians met. The solution was to make the pedestrian wait for a car-free road, or set turns (for example rhythms) for the crossing in the busiest intersections. At these busier intersections, policing was reputedly necessary, though very engaging for the local authorities, mainly due to the necessary personnel required to govern the flow of traffic. This led to the mechanical management of the crossing, that is, the installation of traffic lights to reduce the costs.

In both manned and unmanned cases, the timing of the traffic light was set around the needs of the drivers, and already in the 1930s, the timescape of the traffic light was organised as a continuous flow of motor vehicles along the same route. And as Rooney pointed out, in 1930s London, the traffic lights’ tempo was automatically regulated by timers, no longer on demand.⁴⁵ This completed the move to an even more industrialised time-space organisation, in which space was not devoted to movement alone, but also to an automatised, abstract timing of the flows: “With cars running alongside horse-drawn carts, electric trams and slow heavy lorries, the metropolis seemed beset by an increasingly entropic arrhythmia, manifest in black-spots of extreme congestion and an agitated confusion as diverse types of driver tried to negotiate each other’s tempos and conditions of manoeuvring”.⁴⁶

⁴³ Ishaque/Noland.

⁴⁴ Moran, p. 483. See also David Rooney, *Keeping Pedestrians in Their Place. Technologies of Segregation on the Streets of East London*, in: Phillip Gordon Mackintosh/Richard Dennis/Deryck W. Holdsworth (eds.), *Architectures of Hurry—Mobilities, Cities and Modernity*, London 2020, p. 120-136.

⁴⁵ Rooney, p. 87ff.

⁴⁶ Hornsey, p. 107.

This new way of moving in the city impacted all of the six elements of mobility as remarked by Cresswell, including “route” and “experiences” of pedestrians. This new setting thus recreated the concept of what walking in the city was, impacting its timescape, which was now definitely an industrialised one.

On this point, there are two important things to note: First, not only the jay-walker, but also the reckless driver had to be eliminated. As Gij's Mom mentioned, after World War I, motorised mobility developed from an individual into a top-down socio-technical system.⁴⁷ The celebrated “joy” of speed and the intrinsic violence related to it⁴⁸ was no longer possible in an industrial traffic management system. This was not only necessary to coordinate the growing number of motor vehicles, but was also an imperative under the biopolitical assumption of saving lives for the country's economic efforts. Second, even if all the pedestrians followed the rules and the reckless drivers were removed, urban traffic still had conflicts. The crossing at the intersections and the policing of the flows were good second bests compared to a proper industrial flow. In the Fordist factories, any rhythmic conflict was eliminated, allowing a smooth, seamless motion. In the city, such smoothness was not reachable without rebuilding everything with totally separated flow networks (à la Corbusier) or defining a more radical division of walking and driving (as in the Buchanan report).

However, although it was imperfect, there was a clear winner in the system: the driver. And if someone lost something, it was the pedestrian: “While motor drivers reached their destination more quickly when all crossing bodies were circumscribed exclusively to street intersections, pedestrian circulation was more efficient if they followed direct trajectories between two points”.⁴⁹ In this new timescape of mobility, the new transport time/space system devoted to motorised mobility also reduced the efforts of drivers. As noted by Ederson, the final goal was a “routinised time-space” experience. Driving was increasingly a simplified amalgamation of “routes and places in which shared, synchronized movement, work and recreation [were] carried out”, linking “individual time-space paths, identifying points of spatial and temporal intersection.”⁵⁰ The same can be said about pedestrians, whose temporalities were totally engineered.

⁴⁷ Mom, chapter 7.

⁴⁸ Möser.

⁴⁹ Errázuriz, p. 53.

⁵⁰ Tim Edensor, *Automobility and National Identity. Representation, Geography and Driving Practice*, in: *Theory, Culture & Society* 21:4, 2004, p. 101-120, quotation p. 109.

6. Mobility Timescape, Social Engineering and De-sensing Mobility

At the end of this brief excursus about urban walking management in the twentieth century, we can wrap up with some conclusions and offer some hints for further research. First, in this paper we have seen how the analysis of the timescape of urban walking has been useful as a way to address time commodification and the regimentation of time in the past century. This led us to assess how mobility is an excellent angle to investigate temporalities and rhythms: indeed, mobility is, in a nutshell, time and space combined, which is what makes rhythms. Second, time/space reorganisation and the new mobility timescape should not be considered alone, but in relationship with the process of increasing mobility, social acceleration⁵¹ and industrial “scientific” management.⁵² This confirms how time is indeed a political resource and how rhythms should be framed in the wider analysis of industrialisation.

While this is not new, the investigation on current social disparities in the mobility timescape can provide ideas for formulating actions toward mobility justice. If building the mobility timescape was part of a political project, we can also agree that “in what now appeared to many as the new ‘motor age’, pedestrianizing the pedestrian had become a hegemonic project. In his book *Rhythmanalysis*, Henri Lefebvre foregrounds urban walking as a key example of ‘dressage’ or the breaking-in of the individual to (re)produce what he calls ‘an automatism of repetitions’”.⁵³

The industrialised time of mobility and the *dressage* required for the pedestrian was based on violence (thousands of children were killed during this period⁵⁴) and on the promise of safe harbour in which to walk, that is, the sidewalk. Persuasion was also on the plate, but more used for the reckless drivers. “To Straetz, driver resentment of traffic rules was like worker resentment of work rules. Although ultimately exploitative, Taylorism did draw some input from employees, since it sought the most productive workers and then tried to teach others to emulate those workers’ techniques. Figuring out how to convince workers to accept their recommendations was important to them. Taylorites preferred persuasion to coercion. So, the traffic engineers sought in-

⁵¹ Hartmut Rosa, *Resonanz. Eine Soziologie der Weltbeziehung*, Frankfurt am Main 2016.

⁵² Tim Cresswell, *On the Move. Mobility in the Modern Western World*, London/New York 2006.

⁵³ Hornsey, p. 100, quoting Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis. Space, Time and Everyday Life*, London/New York 2004.

⁵⁴ Moran; Norton, *Street Rivals*.

put from motoring groups (including cabbies and teamsters), as well as transit companies”.⁵⁵

Here, we should reconsider Lefebvre’s concept of *dressage*, which defines the urban mobility setting as a way to accomplish a large process of social engineering. The process of regimentation and time commodification happened in many social pockets. However, an important step of the process was the push of urban space towards an industrial timescape under public rule. If even an intimate action like walking succumbed to a large apparatus of mobility engineering, with sidewalks, kerbs, traffic lights, and long detours to cross the road, all this paved the way for further social engineering in other social niches. Policymakers and traffic engineers “had a vision of a future society, and ways to form it.”⁵⁶

This process of engineering urban space management created an automatised, de-sensed and unengaged mobility, both for the drivers and pedestrians. Merrimann’s writings about the automobility “taskscape”⁵⁷ also applies to urban walking. The new timescape of walking was framed not just as a time/space artefact, but as a complex sociotechnical system, fitting the new social imperatives. The sidewalk, the kerb and the fence also reshaped the physical and the symbolic universe of walking. The pedestrian was requested to move along new performance imperatives. As suggested by Billig, these performances acted as “enhabilitation,” where “thoughts, reactions and symbols become routine habits”.⁵⁸ But although it was mundane, romanticised and intimate, walking was not only industrialised in its timescape, but also in its practice: “The high-tech nature of contemporary pedestrian crossings means that they are, to use a term from actor network theory, ‘black-boxed’. In other words, they seem like an automatic, intrinsic part of daily life, disconnected from historical contexts and debates. The practice of crossing the road forms part of hidden governance, in which law, administration, technology, and education intersect to create what Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift call ‘the engineering of certainty’ in everyday life.”⁵⁹

As pointed out by Ingold, “the reduction of pedestrian experience that has perhaps reached its peak in the present era of the car, is the culmination of a

⁵⁵ McShane, p. 391.

⁵⁶ Moraglio, *Driving Modernity*, based on Jon Alexander/Joachim K.H.W. Schmidt, Introduction, in: Adam Podgórecki/Jon Alexander/Rob Shield (eds.), *Social Engineering*, Ottawa 1996, p. 1-19, quotation p. 3.

⁵⁷ Peter Merriman, *Driving Spaces: A Cultural-Historical Geography of England’s M1 Motorway*, Malden 2007.

⁵⁸ Moraglio, *Driving Modernity*, p. 5; Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, London 1995, p. 42.

⁵⁹ Moran, p. 494.

trend that was already established with the boot's mechanization of the foot, the proliferation of the chair, and the advent of destination-oriented travel".⁶⁰ The transformation of the public space into a mobility stream was not only about creating new timescapes, but also about maximizing performance, increasing speed and reducing effort. For the pedestrians, "by public works, most metropolitan societies have transformed their urban spaces into something approximating the parade-ground, by paving the streets. In so doing, they have literally paved the way for the boot-clad pedestrian to exercise his feet as a stepping machine."⁶¹

⁶⁰ Ingold, p. 329.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 326.