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Research Article

Walking as a Critical Spatial Practice: Mapping Perceptions of the "Other" in Urban Space

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Abstract

This article turns the lens to spatial practices that create environments for new relationships between the body and its surroundings and offer alternative ways of understanding and engaging with the city. It centers on the activity of walking as an everyday critical practice that is both performative and explorative. This approach differentiates itself from the existing literature by critically examining the walking act and exploring temporary, perceptual, and experiential potentials of understanding and narrating the city through the perspective of "the other". This article aims to investigate and discuss "other" spatial data about the city, its inhabitants, and their movements to enhance spatial awareness by employing critical spatial practice. This process enables the revelation of "other" languages, informed by the body's movements and interactions within the city.

The goal is achieved by presenting "the walking act" as a critical everyday activity, discussing it theoretically, examining various walking styles and walkers, and conducting a case study on the Marmaray line in Istanbul. Based on these discussions, the article develops "another" description of "critical walking". The case study involves walking and synchronously mapping elements related to "the other", aiming to uncover an alternative language to make sense of urban spaces. Unlike conventional architectural representations, this mapping is open-ended, without rigid boundaries. In doing so, while this inquiry does not intend to reach a conclusive interpretation, it is possible to conclude that the walking practice in question transforms the experience into a personal and unique knowledge of space by promoting spatial awareness through the "others" of the city.

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1. Introduction

Along with the epistemological paradigm shift that originated in the early twentieth century, the concept of space began to be understood concerning a body in motion. Phenomenological approaches, which emphasized perception as connected to the subject rather than the object, framed space as a domain of a dynamic, perceptive body in movement. This shift has gradually been challenged and moved away from human-centered, Cartesian, and rational understandings of space and body, which have previously reduced their interactions to measurable fragments and visual components. The orthographic projections and perspective views that inquire into the city from a top-down, human-centered vision - rooted in Renaissance models of vision and the observer - were insufficient for capturing the experiential dimension, as they omitted the observer as the subject and their lived experience (Altunok and Dursun Çebi, 2021).

At this point, it is important to highlight that the body is not a static entity when interacting with space. Rather, it is a dynamic concept that both transforms and is transformed by space. Merleau-Ponty articulated this dialectical relationship between body and space by suggesting that bodily experience of movement is not merely a perception of a particular object, but an instrument for engaging with the world and matter (Direk et al., 2017). Walking as a bodily movement involves both the physical activity and the mental impulse that enables the materialization of this movement in space. Therefore, while the walker perceives the urban environment, their body opens to the world and matter by encountering the same environment (Altunok, 2023). The epistemological shift has caused the concepts of body and space to evolve along uncertain trajectories, giving rise to more heuristic, empirical, critical, and ambiguous discourses. This article focuses on critical everyday practices that emerge from these empirical and ambiguous frameworks, with the central assumption that such practices have the potential to uncover “other” languages made visible through the body’s movements and actions within the city. The significance of this potential is based on the idea that attempts to understand and represent urban space largely through conventional methods and tools are often insufficient in unveiling and representing “other” forms of knowledge about urban space.

This article explores the everyday practice of “walking in the city” as a critical performance, drawing significantly on de Certeau’s discussion on this act. De Certeau (1988) conceptualizes “the act of walking” as both a spatializing and space-constituting practice, where each step leaves a persistent imprint on the urban surface, and the paths formed to reflect the geography of the city. His discourse challenges the conventional, top-down, human-centered perspective on the city, which aligns closely with this article’s investigative approach. De Certeau (1988, p. 92) rhetorically asks in *The Practice of Everyday Life*: “Must one finally fall back into the dark space where crowds move back and forth, crowds that, though visible from on high, are themselves unable to see down below? An Icarian fall”. Here, looking from the top of a skyscraper in New York City and perceiving the complexity of what is going on below and the movement of people are referred to as a bird’s eye view of the city, while experiencing the city from the ground level refers to the act of walking. The perception between the two must be completely different.

Building on this foundation, this article seeks to examine and discuss “other” spatial data related to the city, people, and movement, aiming to enhance urban spatial awareness through critical practices and to reveal “other” languages expressed through the body’s acts and movements in the city. Here, “other” languages serve as a semiotic metaphor. Yücel (2005) posits that language extends beyond speech and text, while communication is not confined to machinery; numerous activities can be interpreted as languages or forms of message transmission. Thus, it is limiting to claim a single mode of interpreting language and its connection to architecture. Instead, “other” languages should be explored to reveal transmitted messages within the urban environment and to address “other” spatial data concerning the city, its inhabitants, and their movements.

From this perspective, the article is structured around a central question: If bodily movement serves as a platform for disseminating oneself through the material world and simultaneously constitutes a dialectic between subject and space, how can the body create an alternative language through movement and the acts that it integrates into this process? This question will be addressed by presenting walking as a critical everyday practice, discussing it theoretically, analyzing various walking styles and walkers, and ultimately conducting a case study. This article distinguishes itself from existing literature by means of treating walking as a critical lens for viewing our surroundings and representing it through mapping, thereby exploring perceptual and experiential potentials in architectural representation to challenge the conventional, top-down approach to spatial observation.

1.1. Walking as Critical Engagement with Space

Jane Rendell’s concept of “critical spatial practice” addresses the nature of critical everyday activities, emphasizing both the “critical” and “spatial” elements by focusing on the unique spatial dimensions within interdisciplinary practices bridging art and architecture (Rendell, 2006, p. 20). She considers walking an everyday activity that qualifies as critical spatial practice because it fosters new types of relationships between subjects and objects in architectural design, particularly when exploring spaces in flux and social encounters (Rendell, 2006). Thus, criticality within spatial practices connects space with the understanding of space, facilitating environments for novel experiential, heuristic, and ambiguous relationships between subject and object within architectural contexts.

This article centers on two primary acts that embody criticality; “walking in the city” and the representation of the walk, specifically through mapping. Their connection draws on Judith Butler’s concept of performativity. Butler (1988) suggests that a body engaged in a public performative act is not simply shaped by cultural codes but also plays an active role, bringing interpretations to life within the boundaries of existing norms. Similarly, the practice of walking-based mapping performs place through interpretation, making the map more than a reduced representation. According to Rendell’s depiction of critical spatial practice, walking, which leads to comprehension of space through the flows within it, leads to a reciprocal relationship between the subject and the objects. Describing walking on another axis, namely mapping in this article, corresponds to the fact that the body shapes the concrete and abstract environment in which it moves with the inferences it makes, rather than being shaped by existing norms

based on Butler's thought, and this again demonstrates a kind of reciprocity. The critical potential of "walking in the city" emerges from its ability to transform space through subjective performance, as the specific location, duration, and speed influence the walker's perception, generating a unique, subjective experience.

In developing his concept, de Certeau also criticizes urban cartographies that fail to capture the performative and explorative aspects of walking. In urban or architectural design practice, the first step in beginning to understand a place to realize a design is often through a map, indicating that the dominance of urban cartographies is beginning to limit systematic ideas. Walking can be a way to begin by rejecting these systematic ideas. Doina Petrescu (2015) emphasizes de Certeau's walking concept as challenging to define and represent due to its ontological nature. Walking enables a way of "being in the world" that resists the rigid structures imposed by urban planners and overseers, offering a more fluid and personal experience (Petrescu, 2015). Another critical element in "walking in the city" is the issue of speed in perception and exploration, as modern urban life - shaped by fast-paced transportation and connectivity - alters perception, causing disconnections between space and subjective performance. Careri (2002) describes the modern city as a dynamic space filled with rapid movements, changing vantage points, and constant spatial transformations:

> The Futurist city was crossed by flows of energy and eddies of the human masses, a city that had lost any possibility of static vision, set in motion by the speeding vehicles, the lights and noises, the multiplication of perspective vantage points and the continuous metamorphosis of space (p. 68).

By the late 20th century, walking, which has the potential to criticize the city from different perspectives, had gained metaphorical meanings beyond daily life, such as romantic walking, hiking, walking for health, pedestrianism, window shopping, and marching in groups. Baudelaire (1995) even depicted walking as a form of political expression, highlighting its potential to engage critically with the urban environment.

1.2. Dismantling Walks with a Critical Lens

In this article, various walks and walking styles are dismantled to present walking as a critical spatial practice, with each approach discussed concerning its critical aspects. Numerous philosophers, for instance, walked as a means of reflection or *musing*. Despite physical pain, Nietzsche found that walking was essential for thinking; for him, *thinking was something to do on the road*. He did not trust thoughts that were formed without physical motion, emphasizing the importance of *thinking while walking and walking while thinking* (Gros, 2017). Similarly, Rimbaud and Rousseau walked to think, *concentrating on thoughts* during this *intense working moment*. While Rimbaud considered himself *"just a pedestrian,"* Rousseau believed that only through walking could he truly think, collect his thoughts, *create, and find inspiration* (Gros, 2017). Thoreau, on the other hand, walked *to write*, preferring *to walk around* his home, viewing proximity as sufficient for his explorations (Gros, 2017). Nerval *questioned* the purpose of walking, and Kant walked in anticipation of his thoughts emerging from within (Gros, 2017).

In all these examples, the dynamic interplay between space and subjective experience is profoundly introspective. The places walked and the walkers mutually redefine each other, but these redefinitions *lack a critique of the space* itself. Consequently, in some instances, the environment is rendered secondary or reduced to mere visuality. Although "walking for thinking" presents a way of "being in the world," its critical potential is limited, as it remains centered on *the introversion of one's own mind*.

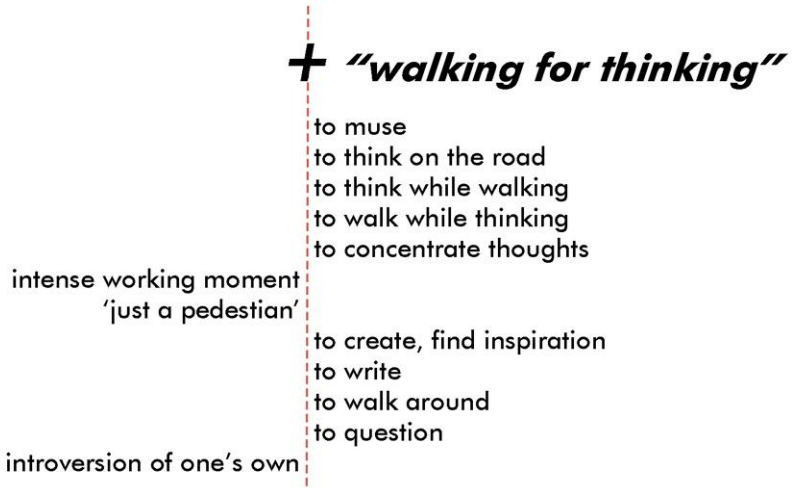

Figure 1. "Walking for Thinking" notions (Altunok and Dursun Çebi, 2021).

The critical aspects of walking can be traced back to Baudelaire's (1995) concept of the *flâneur*. Derived from *flânerie*, meaning *to stroll* or *to loaf around*, the *flâneur* is an observer who engages in *disinterested curiosity*, *walking through crowds* yet *without being part of it*. *Flâneries* and *curiosity* make the walking act an ideal vehicle for *personality formation and learning through the body*. It is an extraordinary *anthropological activity* because it arouses a constant concern for understanding, *finding one's place in the structure of the world*, and *questioning one's bond with others* (Le Breton, 2003). Frédéric Gros (2017) argued that the *flâneur* arises from the interplay of *city, crowd, and capitalism*. For the *flâneur,* the city becomes a labyrinth of perspectives with its passages, dangers, and surprises, while capitalism is critiqued as the "reign of the commodity" and "commercialization of the world" (Gros, 2017).

However, the figure of the *flâneur* has been critically examined by Springgay and Truman (2018) as a gendered, racially, and geographically marked construct of the 19th century. As a male figure who enjoys considerable leisure in a specific urban setting, the *flâneur* remains anonymous and detached, ostensibly free to observe his surroundings (Springgay and Truman, 2018). This detachment limits their criticality, as their observations neither *suggest interventions* nor offer representations that engage with the realities they perceive. However, the continuation of their state of walking in crowds in the streets and passages of the modern city with their disinterested curiosity by exploring the accelerating flows in the city could have been ensured by being more inclusive in their context - so much so that neither today's *flâneur* nor the critical walker can be defined physically and mentally by specific norms, whereas it is

important to think of diverse bodies and minds opening up to the world and matter through walking.

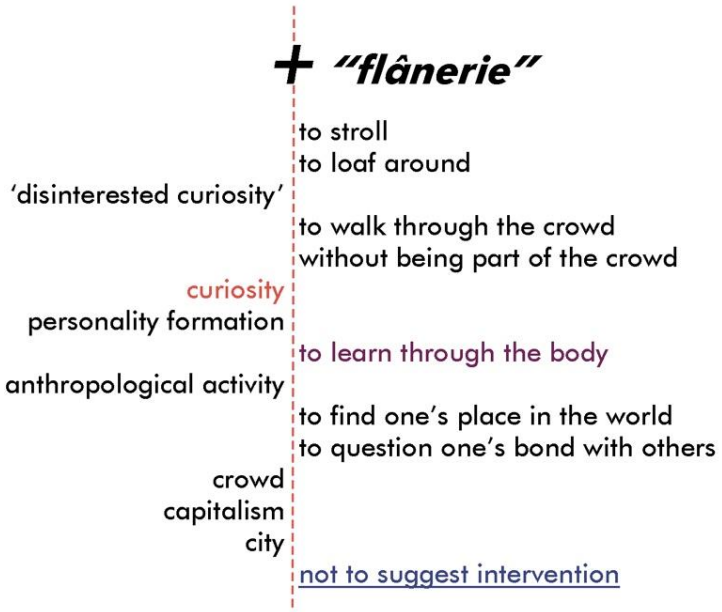

Figure 2. "Flânerie" notions (Altunok and Dursun Çebi, 2021).

Following Baudelaire's introduction of the *flâneur* concept in the 19th century, this notion gained further attention in the 20th century, notably through Walter Benjamin (2003), who regarded the *flânerie* as both an analytical tool and a way of life. The 20th century, marked by a paradigm shift in epistemology, also saw transformations in everyday life. Due to the dynamic nature of daily practices, walking evolved into a critical urban practice. In this context, it is essential to examine two Dadaist excursions conducted in 1921 and 1924. The Dadaists are often considered the first group to embrace walking as a *collective activity*. Their inaugural excursion in 1921 aimed to *move both artists and art* beyond museums and galleries, bringing them directly to *the street* and the public. This gathering, held on April 14, 1921, was *announced to the public* through flyers and press releases, and artists' participation was *documented with photography*. This excursion became more communal in that it was organized collectively by a group of people who came together for the same purpose, while also inviting participants from the public. In this respect, it also provided a critical view of art, art space, and the city.

Figure 3. Dada "Excursions" notions (Altunok and Dursun Çebi, 2021).

In 1924, a second Dadaist excursion took place, this time *without a pre-determined aim for walking*. The routes were selected *randomly* from a map, marking a potential shift from Dadaist urban actions to Surrealism (Özcivanoğlu, 2019). This transition is evident in the focus on *the creative potential of the unconscious mind*. Careri (2002), referencing André Breton's Surrealist Manifesto, explains that the 1924 excursion was an investigation of *unconscious parts of the city*. Breton described "Surrealist Deambulation" as a form of walking without a defined path, *exploring the space between waking life and dream life* (as cited in Özcivanoğlu, 2019, p. 22). The two excursions differ in their critical orientation: while the 1921 Dadaist excursion had a clear goal - bringing artists from galleries to the streets - and involved documentation and collective participation, the Surrealist deambulation had no defined purpose, no recording, and no collective structure. Consequently, the Dadaist excursion arguably holds greater potential for producing critical reflections on the spaces traversed.

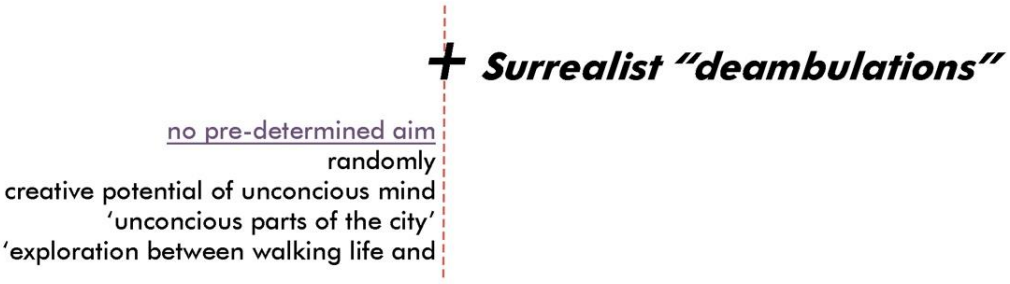

Figure 4. Surrealist "Deambulations" notions (Altunok and Dursun Çebi, 2021).

Following the discussions on *flânerie*, Dadaist excursions, and Surrealist deambulations, the concept of *dérive*, meaning "to drift", represents another critical approach to experiencing and inhabiting the city. Introduced by the Lettrists, *dérive* was envisioned as a *collective act* and an *alternative way of inhabiting the city* (McDonough, 1994). It can be described as an *experimental body of behaviors* closely tied to the urban environment - a technique of passing through varied ambiances in usual (Andreotti and Costa, 1996). Critically, the Lettrists diverged from the Surrealists by *criticizing their focus on the unconscious*, instead emphasizing the city's *transformative potential and revolutionary energies* (Özcivanoğlu, 2019). Another distinctive feature of *dérive* was the *cross-checking of impressions* among participants, which reinforced the collective, participatory nature of the practice. Lettrist texts documented these urban explorations, eventually becoming *"manuals for using the city"* (Careri, 2004). Significantly, *dérive* led to a reimagining of *cartography*; these early maps of movement utilized fragments, collage, and intentional disorientation, laying the groundwork for further discoveries and reinterpretations of mapping practices.

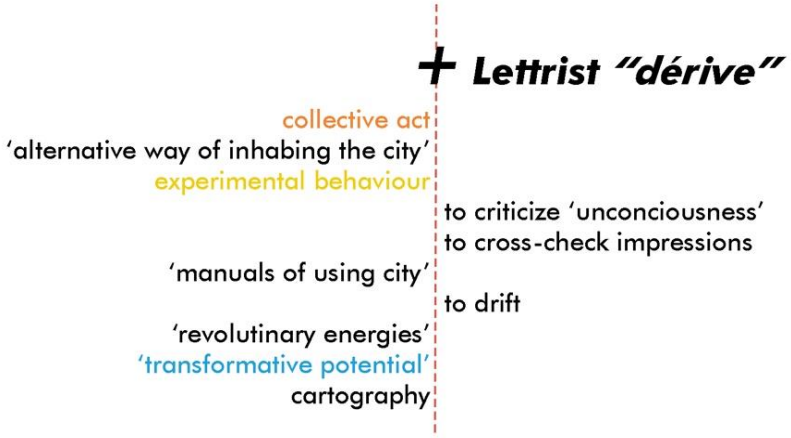

Figure 5. Lettrist "*Dérive*" notions (Altunok and Dursun Çebi, 2021).

The concept of ***dérive*** gave rise to what is known as "Situationist psychogeographical discoveries". Building on ***dérive's*** transformation of cartography, Guy Debord introduced *situationist cartography*, which aimed *to map the sensory and perceptual experiences* encountered while navigating the city. These psychogeographical discoveries offered performative tools to represent the experimental act of walking, thereby infusing a critical dimension into the experience. Debord (1981) described these mapping practices as explorations of *psychological climates*, attempting to visualize the *emotions* and *behaviors* of the walkers. These maps prominently featured arrows to denote *directionality and itineraries*, which served as core elements of expressing movement and subjective experience through urban space. The depiction of walking and the psychological context in which it unfolds, as explored through Situationist cartographies, holds significant value. This importance lies not only in its proposal of a novel form of cartography but also in the way it utilizes representation as a method of recording spatial and experiential phenomena.

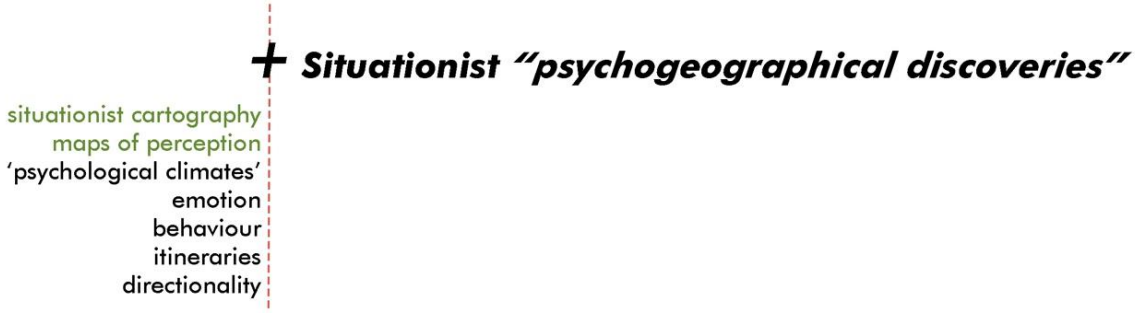

Figure 6. Situationist "Psychogeographical Discoveries" notions (Altunok and Dursun Çebi, 2021).

1.3. Walking Table of Criticism

In this study, various forms of walking styles, theories, methodologies, events, and walking as an art - collectively referred to as walking knowledge - have been addressed and discussed to highlight their core aspects and ideas (Figures 1–6). According to this dismantling and theories on critical spatial practices, spatial practices that arise from walking practices performed

critically to create awareness, put experimentality, curiosity and learning through the body forward, suggest a performative representation tool, have a transformative potential, suggest an intervention to urban space are decided and referred as “critical walking” description of this article (Figure 7). In addition to these, the “critical walking” methodology involves performativity, participation, innovation, motion and a self-critique of top-down perception of the universe (Tümerdem, 2018).

Figure 7. “Critical Walking” notions and aspects (Altunok and Dursun Çebi, 2021)

Within this article, it is propounded that critical walking methodology —which possesses these stated aspects— paves the way for individuals to criticize their surroundings, increase their awareness of the city, and easily represent “other” spatial data according to their experience in the city. Thus, making sense of and exploring the specifically spatial aspects of interdisciplinary processes or practices that operate between art and architecture becomes possible. The individual becomes open to new kinds of relationships that emerge between subjects and objects in architectural design and makes discussions about future transformations and interventions for that specific space. To understand where “critical walking” is situated among all previously stated walking styles, a “walking table of criticism” was created. These aspects are ranked according to how visible the criticality is. Since criticism appears as concrete as possible only in the act, such features as transformative potential, suggesting an intervention and performative representation tool are crucial for “critical walking.” Therefore, in the following figure, all previous walks that were mentioned in the literature review are evaluated and ordered according to criticality (Figure 8). This table is a tool that includes the definition of “critical walking,” its position among other walks, and the characteristics it should have, and it has become the general lexicon of the walker. For these reasons, it has paved the way for determining the frame of this article’s “critical walking and mapping” strategy.

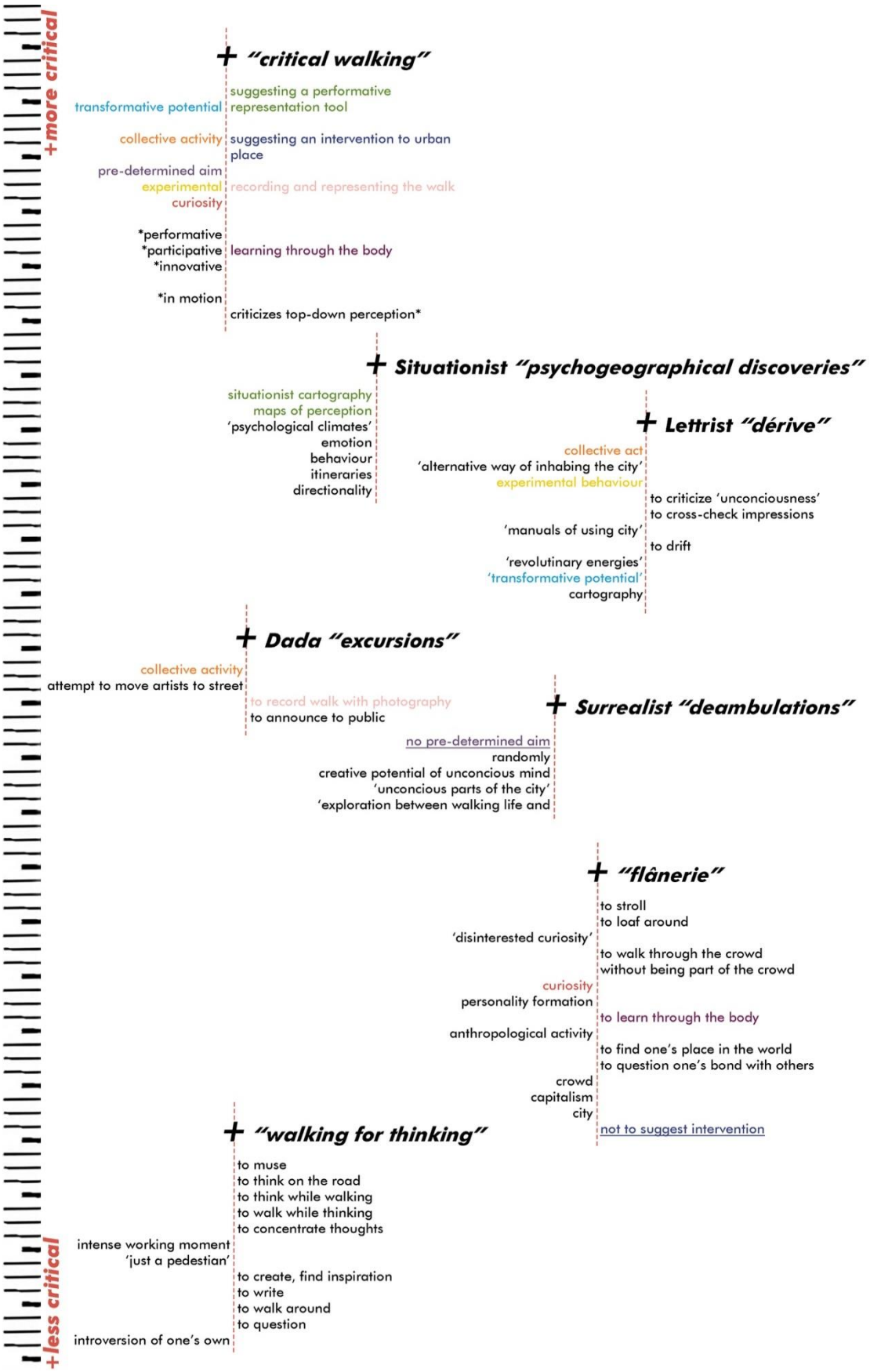

Figure 8. Walking *table of criticism* (Altunok and Dursun Çebi, 2021).

2. Situating Otherness: From Theoretical Framework to Site-Specific Methodology

After establishing the foundational lexicon of critical walking within the “Walking Table of Criticism,” and assembling the theoretical framework, this study proceeds by situating the site-specific methodology and critical walking case study. The article aims to examine and discuss “other” spatial data on city, people, and movement, thereby uncovering “other” languages expressed through bodily acts and movements in urban spaces. This research, which seeks to experience the city by walking through the “other,” aims to specialize and deepen the knowledge of space through the concept of the “other,” as well as to transform urban space into a space of discovery and questioning by going beyond the conventional. The concept of the “other” highlighted here is grounded in the occurrence of unexpected events and situations, the actions of living beings, unfamiliar encounters, and unique spatial assemblages and conditions. These elements transcend conventional perspectives, enriching personal experiences and fostering a critical understanding of the city. This pursuit of otherness through the case study involves mapping unexpected events, situations, actions, or entities that relate closely to otherness, generating a new type of representational tool that facilitates “another” language for interpreting the city. Aslıhan Şenel (2013) contends that mapping as performance provides an alternative to conventional, top-down urban representations, enabling an interpretive and critical perspective on the intricate relationships within cities. As Şenel (2013) describes, this alternative approach aligns with the metaphor of “another” language by expanding the possibilities for representation in architectural design. Additionally, the concept of critical walking, as developed in this study, emphasizes an in-situ, site-specific practice that prioritizes the walker’s subjective experience and their critique of the traversed environment. Consequently, conducting the case study within this framework is essential for advancing the article’s investigative approach.

To locate an appropriate case study, a space physically within the city yet perceptually excluded from it due to its spatial transformation was sought. The spatial shift sought in the city should trigger the spatial awareness of the walker by creating a difference between scales, such as by rising above the ground, going below the ground, separating large parts, and creating undefined spaces, thus leading to the discernment of otherness. According to de Certeau (1988), walking as a spatializing and space-constituting act is defined by its persistent interaction with the surface. Walking and representing this act in a place devoid of ordinary spatial practices reveals an opportunity to explore how the body relates to space not through conventional practices but rather through those that actively engage the body, fostering heightened spatial awareness. Thus, activating the body-space and subject-object relationships could reveal “another” form of representation in architectural design and uncover “another” language that maintains communication between body and space.

Here, the study interprets the experience of being physically within the city yet perceptually outside it as a form of introversion and contextual disconnection. It seems that this location, which is physically located in the city but perceptually otherized, may lead the walker to be isolated from the time and space they are in, to look critically while distracted, and thus to

better identify otherness in space. De Certeau's (1988) concept of "traveling incarceration" aligns with the type of space this article investigates. In describing a train, de Certeau (1988) uses it as a metaphor for a closed module that encapsulates movement and perception:

> Inside, there is immobility of an order. Here rest and dreams reign supreme. There is nothing to do; one is in the state of reason… Outside, there is another immobility, that of things, towering mountains, stretches of green field and forest, arrested villages, colonnades of buildings, black urban silhouettes against the pink evening sky, the twinkling of nocturnal lights on a sea that precedes or succeeds our histories (p. 111).

He questions, "What is happening? Nothing is moving inside or outside the train" (De Certeau, 1988, p.111), suggesting that, for an individual within this module, neither the inside nor the outside conveys motion perceptually. This binary relationship, in which the outside and the inside are often isolated from each other, in a visual relationship where speed makes it difficult to see, where the movement of one is quite dominant over the other, is a description of a "rational utopia" according to de Certeau, as it gives the feeling that nothing is actually moving when the parties are isolated from each other. Conceptualized as a "rational utopia", this type of space presents a setting suitable for the study's critical walking experiment. In this context, an urban element, a structure or a part of the city that behaves as the "rational utopia" de Certeau speaks of and becomes a closed module within itself, where movement turns into an immobile order because it is disconnected from its surroundings even though it incorporates movement, is searched. In connection with this, Istanbul's Marmaray line - an enclosed, seemingly disconnected part of the urban environment that precludes everyday walking practices - emerges as a compelling site to explore "another" language through critical walking. Indeed, by drawing a border parallel to the shore, the Marmaray line separates the two sides by establishing and demolishing many relationships at different scales above and below ground, and the movement within itself becomes decontextualized by differentiating from the movement outside. The Marmaray line, with its surrounding boundaries, may have become a closed module or an immobile order, with only permitted points of inclusion.

2.1. Critical Walking and Mapping Strategy

From this point, the "critical walking" case study was conducted along the Marmaray line between Suadiye and Feneryolu stations (Figure 9).

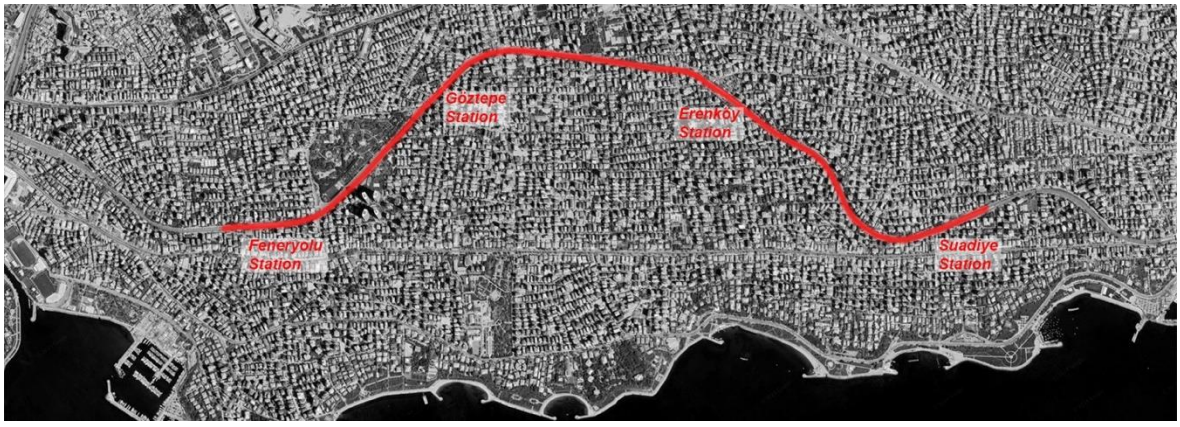

Figure 9. Critical walking and mapping route (Altunok, 2024).

The previously discussed general lexicon of “critical walking” served as the core framework, guiding an approach that emphasized an uncharted, map-free path, with a concurrent extraction of elements that represent the “other” within this distinct “rational utopia” - the Marmaray line - using mapping techniques. Three principal layers can be identified to outline the structure of the walking and mapping strategy (Figure 10).

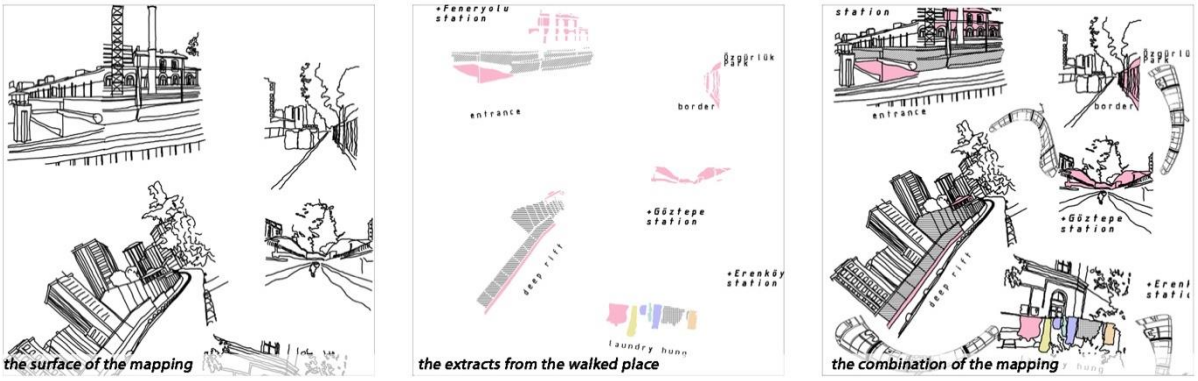

Figure 10. Three main layers of the critical walking and mapping strategy (Altunok, 2024).

The first layer, *the surface of the mapping*, maintains a strong connection with the context of the walked space. In this study, the surface of the mapping consisted of partial traces that were perceived while walking and delineated between extracted elements. The second layer comprises *the extracts from the walked place*, which capture aspects connected to the “other”, defined here as unconventional, disruptive, unfamiliar, out-of-context, unexpected, strange, and contrasting. The walker used a glossary derived from the “critical walking” lexicon and the “rational utopia” metaphor to systematize the extracts. This glossary includes terms like scale, border, transition, wall, edge, underpass, overpass, dead end, and old vs. new.

As the Marmaray line follows the path of an old suburban line, remnants of the past - such as older buildings bordering the line, high retaining walls due to the varying elevation of a rapidly changing city, or boundaries marked by barbed wire - are visible along the route. The Marmaray line, a vehicle of an outsized scale dividing the neighborhood into two, impacts the pedestrian and vehicle crossings within the neighborhood’s scale, to which it does not belong. Its dominance is seen in how it forces people to line up at a border where space narrows, creates viaducts through descent, produces sterile underground crossings, and disrupts neighborhood continuity at its stations. The glossary terms - such as scale, border, wall, and edge - were chosen to capture these “other” spatial features.

The third and final layer is *the combination of the mapping* process itself, where the mapping surface and extracted spatial data from the walked route are united through actions like cutting, tearing, overlapping, subtracting, highlighting, expanding, explaining, erasing, outlining, scanning, annotating, scribbling, narrowing, drawing lines… This “rational utopia” approach to critically walk and map the Marmaray line revealed the “otherness” of spaces between Suadiye and Feneryolu stations through unconventional representational forms that diverge from traditional mappings (Figure 11).

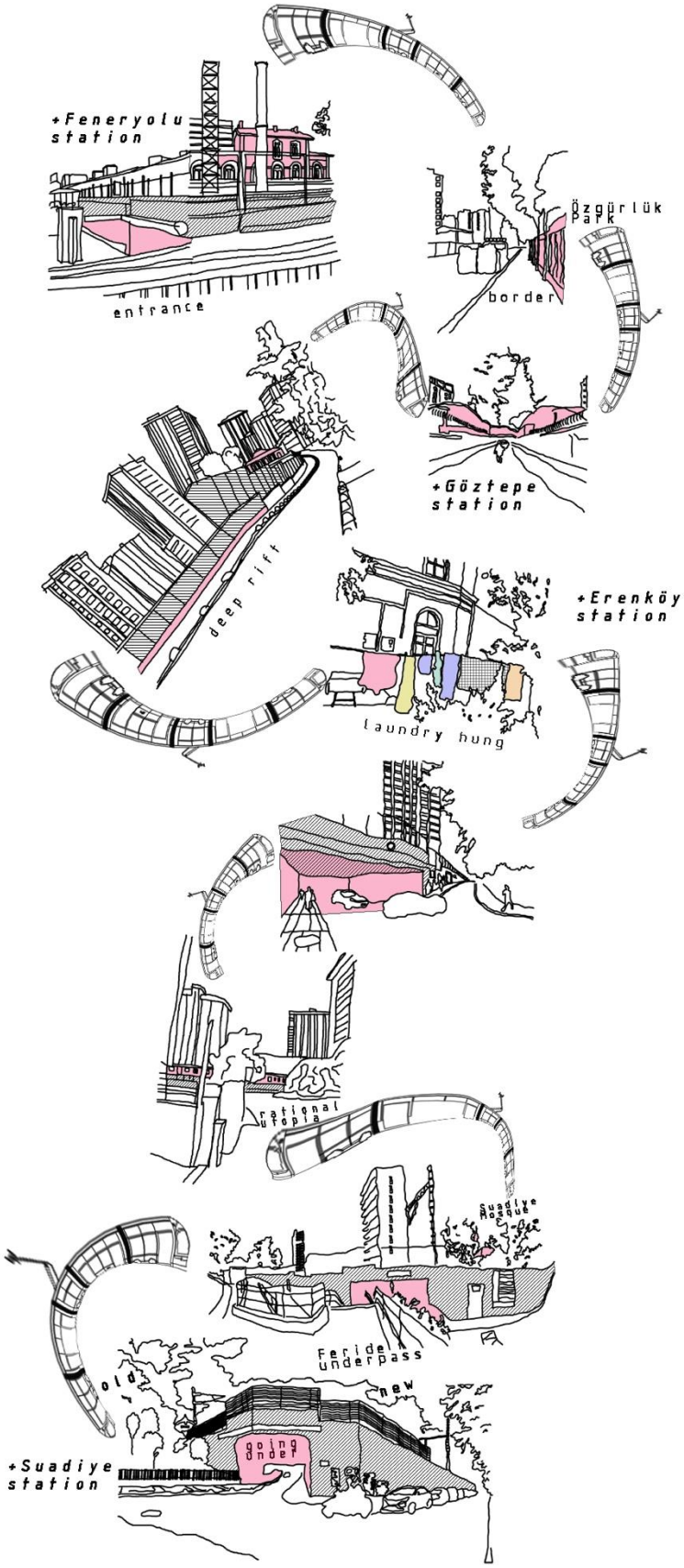

Figure 11. “Others” of Marmaray Line Mapping (Altunok and Dursun Çebi, 2021).

3. Discussion on the Mapping

The mapping produced here is not a fixed, finished representation with clear boundaries, differing significantly from traditional architectural design depictions. Since new recordings can be made from different perspectives - or even from the same perspective at different times - the mapping allows the discussion to be approached from varied angles. While this mapping does aim to critique certain events, situations, and movements encountered during the walk, the convergence of these specifics also opens pathways to explore other perspectives and discussions. Conventional urban and architectural design tools also rely heavily on cartography and maps to convey specific information, but mapping through walking is more responsive to other perspectives and debates as it privileges the view of the walker from ground level rather than the God's eye view.

Beginning the examination of "other" spatial data surfaced through the mapping, the Suadiye station - where the walk commenced - embodied elements marked by the "rational utopia" metaphor, including scale, the old, the new, and underpass dynamics. Here, the mapping emphasized the towering wall that supports the Marmaray line far above the local ground level, rendering it as if placed from above, detached from the city's fabric. The historic Suadiye Station left disconnected at the edge of this towering wall, is represented through sketched lines, attempting to assert its presence within the map. Following this, the mapping captured Feride underpass, a four-ramped pedestrian bridge near Suadiye Mosque, emphasizing themes of transition, boundary, and underpass dynamics. The limited one-meter stretch left between the Marmaray line and the mosque forces worshipers into a confined space, highlighting how the imposition of top-down planning can shape daily interactions with urban infrastructure. Additionally, bridges supporting this "rational utopia" become walls, dwarfing the surrounding neighborhoods, with some sections adorned with graffiti - a manifestation of "another" form of expression (Figure 12).

Figure 12. "Others" between Suadiye and Erenköy Stations (Altunok, 2024).

As the walk proceeded to Erenköy Station, the mapping documented another instance of "otherness" - laundry hanging in the garden of the historical Erenköy Station, symbolizing how older station structures have been sidelined or repurposed for functions unrelated to their original design. This was further emphasized along areas where the road level ascends, leaving the Marmaray tracks below surrounded by towering retaining walls that carve deep rifts in the city's fabric. The historical Göztepe Station, disconnected and relegated to a marginal role, sits where the Marmaray line intersects the road, sidelined by the city's top-down planning approach. The new Göztepe Station, constructed as a standardized project seemingly placed

without adaptation to its context, blocks the natural pedestrian flow from both sides of the street. This misalignment was represented in the mapping by mirroring the station's image to emphasize its discordant fit with the neighborhood. One of the "others" recorded in the mapping was Özgürlük Park, a recreational area secluded from both the Marmaray line and adjacent roadway by fencing. Here, a critique emerged on the isolation of potential communal spaces, reflecting the ways top-down infrastructural projects constrain urban spaces. The walk ended at Feneryolu Station, where the pedestrian entrance had been relegated to the side of a vehicular road - an arrangement critiqued in the mapping for overlooking pedestrian-vehicle dynamics in the placement of the Marmaray line (Figure 13).

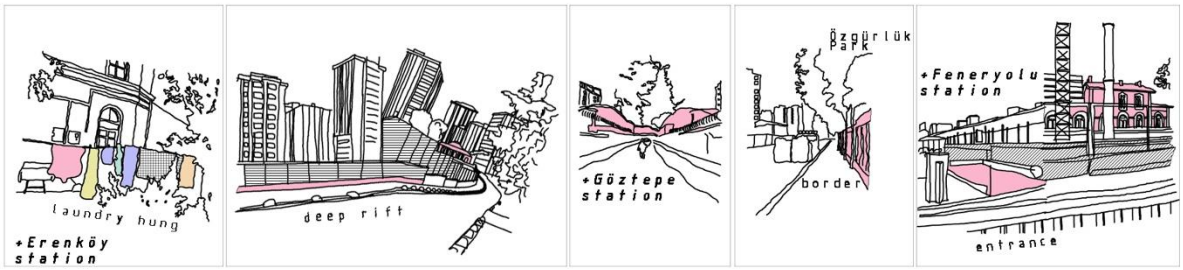

Figure 13. "Others" between Erenköy and Feneryolu Stations (Altunok, 2024).

The critical walking and mapping experiment along the Marmaray line does not seek to provide a conclusive commentary on urban design but rather aims to foster a language that opens up continuous dialogue. This methodology pursues "another" mode of language that critiques urban space while inviting further inquiry and debate rather than establishing conclusions. In this respect, this mapping remains an adaptable foundation for future discussions and reexaminations from multiple perspectives.

4. Conclusion

In this study, architectural representation, traditionally shaped by orthographic views and perspective - a legacy tracing back to Renaissance models - was critically examined in light of everyday practices that prioritize the observer's experiential interaction with urban spaces. Such an approach echoes Judith Butler's (1988) assertion that bodies engaged in public performative acts are not merely passive objects inscribed with cultural codes. Instead, they actively engage with and animate meanings within given frameworks, making visible nuanced interpretations. Building on this idea, this article focused on walking in the city and mapping as critical acts that reveal "other" spatial data - unique insights on city, people, and movement that foster a deeper spatial awareness and reveal "other" languages rooted in bodily acts and urban movement.

The metaphor of "other" languages was used to suggest unconventional forms of representation, drawing from semiotics to convey the potential of messages in nontraditional forms. To illustrate walking as a critical spatial practice, various forms of urban walks - each offering its own critique - were analyzed. This led to the development of a critical walking methodology, tested through a case study along Istanbul's Marmaray line, aimed at surfacing "other" spatial insights and alternative representation methods.

The mapping derived from the Marmaray case study became an evolving form, inviting continuous reflection on critical walking. This approach suggests that critical spatial practices can be expanded upon, each perspective and re-walk enriching the insights they provide. As the case study unfolded, critical walking exposed Marmaray as a “rational utopia” isolated from the neighborhoods it intersects, eroding pedestrian connections, disrupting historic and contemporary ties, and fragmenting visual and physical continuity. Thus, walking - by highlighting “otherness” - affords an open, adaptive awareness of the city, fostering a critical lens that enhances our capacity to engage with and articulate “other” languages in urban spaces through bodily actions.

In sum, critical walking and mapping experiments can be replicated in follow-up research in pursuit of various keywords with different people’s experiences. It can also provide an introductory perspective on fieldwork and its recording for undergraduate and graduate students doing research and studies in fields such as architecture and urban design. By establishing its own subjective methods in research design, this study becomes inclusive with the capacity of the tools it deals with to vary according to the individual. All in all, critical walking not only critiques existing urban structures but cultivates an experiential and transformative way of becoming more conscious, engaged inhabitants who are attuned to the complex, layered languages of the city.

Declaration of Ethical Standards

The article complies with national and international research and publication ethics.

Ethics Committee Approval was not required for the study.

Conflict of Interest

There was no conflict of interest between the authors during the research process.

Authors’ Contributions

All authors contributed equally to the article.

Declarations

The authors take full responsibility for the content and any modifications made during this process.

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During the preparation of this work, the authors used Grammarly for spelling check, ChatGPT and QuillBot for rephrasing and paraphrasing purposes. After using these tools/services, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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