

FAST SIDEWALKS. LOSING PUBLIC SPACE TILE BY TILE

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I read at [Wall Street Journal](#) an idea that seems intelligent and, in my opinion, contains a few perversions. Perversions of the fine ones, of the imperceptible ones, of those that are hardly noticeable but leave their mark. Come on, a Malaysian drop.

They say that they say that in one area of London (the well-known shopping street [Oxford Street](#) in the West End) **they want to divide the pedestrian traffic**: the area closest to the shop windows will be slow lane and dedicated to passers-by in "shopping mode"; and the area closest to road traffic, for passers-by in transit, those who are passing by but have no intention of buying anything. Apparently, the different speed of the walk -some looking miranda, stopping to look at shop windows, deciding whether or not to enter and others with the typical rush of London's fast paced life- makes that a chaos. People "feel anger in the street." [Raging days](#) are ahead if we don't remedy this. So the solution is to paint a stripe. **We like stripes in cities.**

To make the idea work, the group intends to deploy their army of [Red Caps](#), financed with private capital and already patrolling the streets to receive visitors and guide them, so that they tactfully indicate pedestrians to walk along the path they corresponds to them.

I think it's downright absurd; Surely, it could even work, but it is **a very subtle way of continuing to regulate urban space**. In fact, as we verified, it can be done. It is the typical prerogative of the [Business Improvement Districts](#), figure under which the < a href="http://www.newwestend.com/">New West End Company, entity in charge of managing the urban space made up of Oxford Street, Regent Street and Bond Street.

Actually, I hate umbrellas, I would ask for two separate ways when it rains: those of the umbrellas, forbidden to go under the roofs and covers. I also like to go fast to places, so let's see if we put the slow lane for the elderly, for example, who are very annoying. As I am also indifferent to shop windows, I would prefer that people who go shopping occupy the outer "lane" and that to stop to see a window, ask permission from those in the red cap and pay, I don't know, ten cents per used tile with a maximum stay of one minute. You have to get more out of those red caps: the tourists, all in a line, along the streets of the odd numbers, and the locals, out of deference, without lining up but on the sidewalk of the even numbers, let's not confuse. Nothing to mix. And the street is for what it is: to look, stop, go in, buy and go out. The fact that so many individuals are walking around without doing anything is suspicious. **The street is either used for something specific, visible and understandable, or else it is bad .**

Others could ask, I don't know, that those unauthorized gatherings of more than four people in the squares are very suspicious, and I think someone should think about allocating a couple of benches for maximum use of ten minutes and then, "move around and don't let me form a huddle." The same thing has already occurred to someone in a public order ordinance or we are very close....

Anyway, today I write lightly and making things crazy, but sometimes all this is too important and you have to take it as a joke. Or maybe it is more transcendental than it seems; **anecdotal, but transcendental**. The street, the public space, is what it has, which can be lost little by little, ordinance after ordinance, with small painted lines and, above all, imaginary lines. This can be done, this cannot be done.

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