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Walk This Way: The Impact of Mobile and Sensory Methods on Research with Sex Workers and Street Populations

Abstract

This paper draws on a piece of ethnographic research carried out with outreach workers in London as part of a wider research evaluation. In our attempt to assess the efficacy of services provided by a charitable organization, which has a long history working with street-based sex workers (SBSW) in the Kings Cross area, we evaluated their drop-in and outreach services for this client group, many of whom have high-level needs due to substance misuse and mental health issues. Part of this process involved the use of mobile interviews with outreach staff as they worked, in order to gain better insight into both the realities and lived experiences of women who work (and often live) on the street, and the outreach staff as they went about their daily (or nightly) tasks. We argue that mobile interviews offer a unique way of engaging with vulnerable populations, and enabled us to gain important insights into best practice around effectively engaging with hard-to-reach clients. Likewise, we argue that these walking interviews provided a more ethical strategy for working with an extremely vulnerable group, and gave detailed insights into the practical and emotional difficulties outreach workers face as part of their day-to-day labours which we would not have gained through more traditional interview techniques. We provide empirical data in this paper from these walking interviews, including some sensory findings (haptic, olfactory, and visual) and consider the value of using mobile and sensory methods for criminological research with hard-to-reach populations.

Let's start from the end and work forward

In January of 2019, nearly eight years after the initial project about sex work in London's Kings Cross commenced, we revisited the Women's Open Spaces project to see what had changed in that time period and to catch up with the women we had interviewed. The first thing we notice as we emerge from the underground station is how different the area looks. Having spent almost a year walking these streets while conducting mobile interviews with outreach workers and observing their encounters with their clients, we had become intimately acquainted with their rich and varied tapestry. We knew where you could find unexpected patches of green wilderness in amongst the concrete jungle, and which pubs were lax about letting you use their toilets without having to pay for a drink. Not anymore. The local cafes where you could buy a full English-breakfast for £3.95 have been replaced by upmarket coffee shops and fancy cocktail bars. The friendly pub we used to walk past has turned into a sushi restaurant, catering for a more 'well heeled' group of customers. We walk past the places where we had met sex workers on outreach walks, and find them changed - cleaner, more open, better lit, more surveilled. The women we knew no longer inhabit the same locations, and we wonder what news we might get about them from the outreach workers.

Entering the building which used to house the evening drop-in for sex working women, we feel the same warmth and openness as before. Staff members remember us and come over to say hello. We are too early for the evening drop-in the centre still runs for homeless youths, but we learn relatively quickly that funding has been cut and the drop-in services for sex workers have had to close. Fortunately other organizations are still open and helping these women, but we are disheartened to hear the service that has helped a lot of sex workers in the area for almost 30 years has shut down. While the outreach team are still there, working now with local young people, we are sad to hear they are no longer engaging directly with a population that they had proved so effective in reaching out to. Likewise, we are devastated by updates on some of the women we had gotten to know during the research project. Some have moved to different areas of London, but more than half of those we interviewed have died or disappeared in the eight years since the project. Two women died from overdosing, two from drug-related health issues, another murdered on the street, one committed suicide, and a further two had disappeared without a trace, having no contact with any of the workers or other connected local services. While this news was heartbreaking, it was not at all surprising. Our work with the outreach team during the research made clear the difficulties that women faced when engaging in street-based sex work, the dangers that they encountered, and how vital direct, judgement free support is in assisting them to stay safe.

This paper seeks to tell the story of this painful reality, and to consider how mobile and sensory methods help to give a fuller picture of the lived experiences of street populations in London. We argue that these methods allowed for a better understanding of risks and dangers that SBSWs faced, and suggest in line with other scholars interested in these innovative methodological approaches (e.g. Meyers, 2010; O'Neill and Hubbard, 2010; O'Neill, 2014) that our understanding of hard-to-reach or vulnerable populations is enhanced through creative approaches to research design.

Background to the research

We were commissioned by a small third-sector organization in London in 2010 to conduct an evaluation of the services they offered to SBSWs in the area. While the organisation as a whole worked largely with young people, there was at the time a sub-section within the organization, known as the Women's Open Spaces project (WOS), which worked specifically with this client group. Sex-working women in the area were offered a range of services, including twice-weekly drop-in sessions and outreach support 3-4 times a week.

The drop-in and outreach sessions were normally co-delivered with other local organizations, which dealt with the same client group, but had a different focus (e.g. drug-specific projects or homelessness projects etc.) Most of the SBSW client base had serious addiction issues (alcohol, heroin, and/or crack cocaine), and many had been street homeless or had precarious accommodation arrangements (short-term

hostel accommodation, couch surfing, etc.). Many women had been in prison, and several had serious mental health issues. Some of the women accessed services through both the drop-in and outreach, while others used only one or the other (with the most vulnerable clients unlikely to attend drop-in sessions). The main aim of the project was to support this client group by offering a harm-reduction approach to managing various aspects of their lifestyle – helping them to deal with addiction, providing support for accessing health services (for both mental and physical health), advocating for them with statutory agencies (including prison and probation, local council services, and police), and offering tailored plans to help them stabilize their lives. There was no expectation that women would exit prostitution or stop using drugs/alcohol in order to continue to use the service, although if women expressed a desire to make such changes in their lives the organization worked to support these needs.

The drop-in services ran twice a week in the evenings, and were open only to current or former female sex workers. Women were offered a hot meal as well as other amenities (hot showers, laundry facilities, workshops and activities), and could also access a range of services (housing/benefits advice and help, drugs counselling, STI and health checks, and generalized support services). Many of the women had been attending the drop-in for years, and those who had long-term relationships with the centre spoke of the staff as family rather than support workers. Women who accessed drop-in services were more likely to be in a stable moment in their lives, and were engaged with harm-reduction strategies (including methadone treatment, safer injecting practices, or other drug treatment services).

Unlike the drop-in, effectively engaging SBSWs through outreach presented difficulties, as many of the women who met with outreach workers were experiencing chaotic moments, and were less likely to be engaging in harm-reduction strategies. While the drop-in services were reserved exclusively for female sex workers, outreach services extended to the wider street population. This was in part because of funding arrangements with other organizations (e.g. homelessness projects or drugs projects would jointly fund outreach with WOS), and in part because it allowed for SBSWs to connect with outreach workers in the first instance without necessarily divulging their identity as a sex worker. As such, the remit allowed for a broader engagement with people who shared many of the same difficulties experienced by SBSWs in relation to health and well-being, which carried with it a range of other benefits. As many of the people living on the streets in this area knew each other, there was a clear sense of community amongst these populations. By working with everyone on the street, it was often easier for the outreach team to locate particular clients through such informal networks, and helping the friend or boyfriend of a sex working woman, for example, might also make it easier for her to access services if this was something they wanted to do together.

Walking with outreach workers

In order to gain a full and varied impression of the complex processes involved in engaging with SBSWs, we employed an ethnographic approach over a ten-month period. We attended drop-in sessions regularly, meeting clients and building relationships and trust with these women. We were able to observe the ways in which drop-in workers engaged with women, and how they constructed and maintained relationships. Towards the end of the ethnographic study, we carried out interviews with all WOS staff, staff from other organizations that worked with WOS (including third sector and public sector organisations), and with some of the SBSWs who were accessing the service. While capturing information about the methods of working from the drop-in was relatively straight forward, we believed it was important to try to find innovative ways to understand the greater complexity of doing outreach work. As such, we employed a number of different methods, including mobile interviews, sensory mapping, and in-depth interviews with staff after and/or during each outreach walk to get a sense of how they felt the outreach session had gone, both in terms of affective responses, but also in terms of achieving some kind of tangible goal(s) for their client group.

This paper will focus specifically on the findings from the outreach walks, and we hope to add to the existing literature on mobile methods, and their impact on ways of seeing and understanding the social world. The paper sits within a wider growing concern for the importance of place and mobilities in the social sciences (Casey, 1998; Thrift, 1999; Urry, 2007); with walking itself also receiving renewed attention in geography and anthropology, both as a social practice and as a research method (e.g. Edensor, 2010; Ingold, 2010; Ingold & Vergunst, 2008). Much data is drawn from answers we received to questions we asked outreach staff as we walked alongside them through the city. Mobile interviews, also known as go-along interviews or walking interviews, can be viewed as a hybrid of interviewing and participant observation. They involve walking with participants as they go about their daily tasks (in this case, outreach), asking questions along the way. To this extent mobile interviewing can be seen as similar to the 'shadowing' technique employed by organizational researchers (McDonald, 2005). Mobile interviewing draws on aspects of naturalistic data-collection methods, and therefore shares a lot of the strengths of this methodology (Brown & Durrheim, 2009). Garcia et al. (2012: 1395) argue that researchers using this technique are thus able to 'explore the context with the participant in real time, with the participant in the role of expert guide explaining the meaning of the environment'. Mobile interviewing is becoming increasingly popular as a methodology to use when understanding an issue or experience relies heavily on knowing how participants perceive their environment (Garcia et al., 2012), as is the case with outreach work. In addition, such interviews 'go beyond familiar limits of memory, attention and perception that underpin peoples' accounts of their practices or the organizations in which they work; get representations and 'cognitions' in action; and provide resources for appreciating issues of application' (Potter & Hepburn, 2005:301).

Our reasons for employing this methodology are threefold. Firstly, we believe that mobile methods allow a depth and nuance to data collection that are not always

possible via, e.g., traditional static interviews, especially with a research population like the one we worked with. Walking interviews are an ideal technique for exploring issues around people's relationship with space, as well as for attempting to directly connect what people say with where they say it (Jones et al., 2008), what O'Neill & Hubbard (2010:51) have referred to as 'walking, talking, and sensing the urban environment.' This approach is particularly relevant for this project because we were conducting research with a) people who walk as an essential part of their job (the outreach team), and, albeit it indirectly, b) people who walk as an essential part of their day-to-day existence (the team's clients). Indeed, the populations the team worked with are often defined *by* their walking; with slang terms such as 'tramps' for homeless people and 'street walkers' for SBSWs emphasising that these are people who spend a lot of time walking from place to place, moving through the urban environment. Radley et al. (2010:44) discuss the centrality of walking to the experience of homelessness, arguing it is their 'enforced walking' that in many ways 'confirms their otherness'. Similarly, O'Neill et al. (2008) point out that it is the visible nature of street-based commercial sexual encounters that helps create and maintain the mythology of the SBSW as a dangerous 'Other'.

We accompanied the outreach teams on five outreach walks during the summer of 2011. We recorded and transcribed interviews and conversations where appropriate (recordings were not taken during interactions with clients as it would have been very difficult to obtain meaningful consent for this), and detailed field notes were taken. We went out as part of the team, engaging with clients and getting a sense of how the outreach teams built rapport with new clients, how they sought to help clients that were well-known to them already, but also how they engaged with other inhabitants of these spaces, including residents and tenants, police, and statutory or third sector organizations (e.g. hostel workers and managers, community support workers, etc.). Our aim was not simply to observe as impartial outsiders, but to engage as fully as possible with the target client groups they encountered. We recognized, of course, that we could offer little in the way of practical support, but where we could offer some form of emotional or personal help we did this. In this way, we were both able to get a sense of the types of spaces and places the outreach team visited (and where their clients lived and worked), the types of clients they encountered, and the ways in which they engaged with various people living and working on the streets. It has long been acknowledged that social work and welfare practices are founded on mobilities, as practitioners 'must move between and within the different areas of practice not only to be co-present with service users, but also to understand the safety and well-being of those they are professionally responsible for' (Roy et al., 2015:155; see also Broadhurst & Mason, 2014). Walking along with outreach workers was the only way we could get a meaningful sense of how they worked, and how the people they worked with encountered them.

Our second reason for choosing this methodology was related to research ethics. To the extent that street-based outreach work can be thought of as 'dirty work' (Hughes, 1958; Ashforth, Kreiner et al., 1999, 2002, 2007), mobile methods mean

that we as researchers 'got our hands dirty' along with our participants. Existing literature on outreach with street populations suggests that this type of work often places workers in dangerous situations where their physical and emotional safety is at risk (Buning, 1993; Curtis and Hodge, 1995; Strike et al, 2004). Places where outreach is done are 'usually unfamiliar, dirty, inhospitable and even dangerous' (Ng & McQuisition, 2004:102), and the practitioners we worked with negotiated liminal spaces in the city: deserted car parks, empty canal ways, refuse bin sheds, darkened alleys. Doing outreach work also involves having to work in adverse weather conditions, and coming into close contact with people who are in very poor physical health or are struggling with mental health and related self-neglect (Chafetz, 1990) and the precariousness of living on the streets. As such, visiting these spaces and places, and engaging with a wide variety of vulnerable people, not only requires outreach workers to negotiate risk and various affective states as part of their daily work practice, but it also requires them to deal with the physical and social taint of engaging in such work. The physical taint involved with outreach work arises from the locations and the literal dirtiness of them, as well as physical contact with people in poor physical condition. The social taint arises from the ongoing, friendly relationships that outreach workers form with social stigmatised 'others', such as SBSWs and homeless people. It should be noted that outreach workers would not be considered as morally tainted by their work, given the prestige of the 'goodness' of helping the populations they work with[i].

The concept of outreach as dirty work raises ethical considerations for us as researchers. By engaging in the very same sorts of work as our participants – walking with them in dangerous and unclean places, developing rapport with their clients, which often involved shaking hands and touching – we attempted to create a more egalitarian exchange between researcher and participant(s). Sheller and Urry (2006) describe the mobile interview technique as 'mobile ethnography… participation in patterns of movement while conducting ethnographic research' (p.217) and talk about how it can help to encourage a relaxed and trusting atmosphere between researcher and participant. Likewise, Anderson (2004) discusses how mobile interviews are useful insomuch as they can help to balance the power dynamic inherent in research, encouraging a more collaborative approach, and Carpiano (2009:267) describes mobile interviews as a 'rapport builder' that helps to circumnavigate potential perceived power disparities between interviewer and interviewee, and allows the researcher to interact with any given group on a deeper level. In addition, by focusing on the findings of our mobile interviews, this paper also offers new insights about the nature and degree of the precariousness and vulnerability of SBSWs in an area of London that is being increasingly gentrified (Neville and Sanders-McDonagh, 2018).

Our third reason for using mobile methodologies is because the very process of talking while walking (and, indeed, thinking through walking) adds to the understanding of data and the construction of the meaning we attach to it. Pink, Hubbard, O'Neill & Radley (2010:1) note that while walking has long played a role in sociological research, it has recently become increasingly central 'as a means of both

creating new embodied ways of knowing and producing scholarly narrative'. We see walking being recognised as a methodological concern within the context of discussions of ethnographic practice, with 'connections between fieldwork and walking in the field beginning to be usefully teased out' (Pink, Hubbard, O'Neill & Radley, 2010:3), and offer our accounts of walking with the outreach team as an important addition to the growing literature on mobile methods.

Ingold (2000, 2007, 2008) argues that walking is not simply something that we do in order to get from A to B, it is in and of itself an integral part of the way we perceive our environment. It is through walking that places are made and unmade, that spaces are opened and circumvented (de Certeau, 1984). As we move through the city we learn and come to know and remember certain spaces and places in new ways; making walking an ideal means of learning about the lived reality of the SBSWs in the area. Coupled with mobile interviews, we created sensory maps of each walk we went on, which helped us to recreate our physical movements through the outreach locations, and allowed us to see emotional connections attached to particular places and the people who inhabit those places. Ingold (2010) argues that walking is not merely a physical and/or behavioural activity, it is a kinetic way of thinking and knowing, an activity done through the feet. Our mobile research was an embodied practice, and we argue that mobile research with the outreach team allowed both us to experience and share common problems/forms of praxis – thinking in movement – or, perhaps better conceived of as thinking *through* movement.

Findings

'Hands-on' outreach techniques

Street populations, often with very good reason, are sceptical about interventions, 'treatment', and the work of social services (Levy, 2004). Even particular individuals living on the streets who recognize the potential benefits of the services being offered to them may reject outreach because of past bad experiences with what they see as related services (e.g. social workers, local councils, the police) or clinicians (e.g. involuntary hospitalization), or because treatment entails sharing personal details that may evoke powerful feelings such as shame, guilt, or anger (Levy, 2004). On a number of occasions we witnessed (potential) clients initially refusing to engage with the outreach teams, stating their distrust of 'official' agencies who they were scared of, or had previous negative encounters with, more generally (e.g. the police, borders agencies). Following these encounters, we would often ask outreach workers if they were discouraged by the lack of 'success', and were assured that they weren't. A static interview would have provided us with similar data on how new clients responded to initial contact, and how outreach workers dealt with hostility in the field. However, it was only be accompanying the outreach workers and being physically close to the people they worked with that we were able to see how this particular organization worked with a chaotic, fearful, and

sometimes angry group of people, and how they managed to get these clients to engage in harm-reduction practices. This tended to involve gentle but repeated contact on different outreach sessions, humour, an openness to physical contact (shaking hands, hugging etc.), and a shared knowledge of, and comfort with, both the spaces they encountered clients in and the street communities surrounding them.

The 'hands on' nature of the interactions between the outreach team and their clients that we observed during our walks was also reinforced by data we collected during the evaluation. Throughout the course of this study, we encountered incredibly positive responses about WOS from other government/third sector agencies we interviewed, who acknowledged that WOS were able to develop trust and rapport with a 'difficult' client group in a unique way. Agencies often noted that it was this physical and social proximity to disadvantaged client groups (in this case SBSWs and street populations) that enabled the organization to work so effectively. One interviewee from a local borough council commented:

> *Organization 3: They're very good at trying to accompany clients to hospital appointments, and trying to do some of that 'hands on' stuff that sometimes other services just wouldn't be able to do, which I think makes a lot of difference. I think they're very approachable. They're kind of creative with how they work. And they build up a good rapport with clients, clients really trust them, which I think is really good.*

The next section explores some of the emotional labour that became apparent as we walked with the outreach team, and considers how our mobile methodology allowed us not only to witness, but also directly experience, some of the emotional intensity that outreach workers face as part of their day-to-day job.

The Emotional Labour of Doing Outreach

The clients with whom outreach workers engage are often isolated and disenfranchised, and have minimal resources and poor access to social services (Ng & McQuisition, 2004). Outreach work is therefore based on developing dynamic relationships between outreach workers and their clients in order to provide them with an appropriate range of valuable services (Manfred-Gilham, Sales & Koeske, 2002). This is achieved through frequent and consistent contact with clients on the streets or in other community-based settings, 'meeting clients where they are: both geographically and existentially' in order to help them with immediate needs such as clothing, food, medical care/supplies, emergency shelter, and housing, and gradually persuading them to accept more specialized services through the development of trust (Fisk et al., 1999:232-3).

Outreach can therefore provide opportunities to intervene in a timely way with individuals who otherwise would be unlikely to seek help (Ng & McQuistion, 2004), and has proven to be a very successful modality for engaging a variety of clients

such as homeless people, SBSWs, and juvenile offenders (Geller, Fisher & McDermeit, 1995; McMurran, 1991). However, numerous studies note that outreach cannot be effective if the clients do not feel that outreach workers are trustworthy or that proper services are being offered (see, e.g., Kryda & Compton, 2009). Street-based individuals often develop their impressions of services from interactions with outreach workers (Lam & Rosenheck, 1999). If initial impressions of outreach workers are favourable, more individuals may be willing to consider developing relationships with service organizations more generally (Levy, 1998; Ng & McQuisition, 2004). The 'most critical ingredient' in 'doing outreach' is therefore not providing resources or even advocacy, but the establishment and maintenance of a trusting and meaningful relationship between the outreach worker and the client (Hopper, Mauch & Morse, 1990:263). The outreach workers in this study had spent a great deal of time building up trusting relationships with their clients, and this meant that, to some extent, they were emotionally invested with them. For example, they had often shared personal details about their own lives (for example, if they live in the area, if they have children or partners, etc.), and they also provided comfort to clients in particularly sad or difficult situations.

Developing and maintaining such a relationship is often labour intensive and emotionally and clinically challenging (Morse *et al.,* 1996). James (1992) characterized care work as comprising 'organizational labour + physical labour + emotional labour' and in many ways outreach work can be seen as a similar combination of high intensity labours. Several encounters with street populations during outreach highlighted the difficulty that WOS workers faced in finding balance – of being able to intervene with vulnerable clients and develop trusting relationships, while at the same time negotiating individuals who were not always easy to work with.

During one particular incident during an early morning outreach walk, we met a homeless man in his 60s (Jake), who was alcoholic with drinking problems so severe that the team were concerned he would die from his addiction. Jake was drinking cider on a bench, wearing filthy clothing, and smelt strongly of urine and faeces. He was well known to the outreach team, and he told them he had just been removed from a hostel for failing to follow the rules set out. He had been told repeatedly that he was not allowed to drink in the common room area, and after three warnings from the hostel workers he was kicked out of the hostel after a physical altercation with a staff member over his drinking. He felt that he had been singled out by the staff, and unfairly treated, although he recognized that he had broken the rules. He was visibly upset about the incident, and began to speak falteringly, telling the outreach team that he was too young to die, and that he didn't want to die alone on the streets. The outreach team were able to comfort him and empathized with him; they said they would speak to the hostel and see if they could arrange for a meeting, but also made clear that the reason he was removed was partly his own fault and that the he would have to follow the rules if he returned. The team dealt with this interaction professionally, consoling Joe when he was upset but also offering a practical way forward.

When asked about this encounter, the two workers we were with said that while they were sad Joe was in the position he currently found himself in, and were keen to help him find a solution, they were not particularly distressed by the encounter itself – besides which, they had to 'get on' with the walk. We, however, felt deeply saddened by the experience. We both felt emotionally distressed after hearing his story, but walking with the outreach team allowed us to get a sense of how they managed this emotive moment. While we felt almost incapable of moving forward, the outreach team had to keep walking. The act of physically moving forward meant that they literally moved out of one space and into another, forcing a psychic shift. It also meant that we too had to keep moving, but it gave us a clear sense of how the outreach team create spaces of intimacy with clients while still maintaining the emotional distance necessary to do their work effectively.

In the above example, there is a discrepancy between the feelings of distress we felt here, as we were unable to offer any practical advice, and the feelings of the outreach workers. Having helped this client many times over many years, and hearing the same story over and over, while at the same time watching his condition deteriorate even further, the workers seemed to have arrived at a point where they emotionally detached themselves from the situation. This emotional detachment was evidenced in other situations, both during the outreach and drop-in sessions. In her work on emotional labour, Hochschild (1983) argues that creating emotional distance is not only necessary, but is in fact normal and healthy when undertaking emotion work, and argues that some level of estrangement from the work and from the clients is necessary. Many of the client group currently use alcohol or drugs in ways that are harmful to their health and well-being, while others had reduced their drug use (some were on methadone scripts). Outreach workers spend a great deal of time building up trusting relationships with these women, and this means that to some extent outreach workers must invest emotionally to build these relationships. This can range from sharing basic personal details about one's life (for example, if they live in the area, if they have children or partners, etc.) to comforting women about sad or difficult situations.

As the spaces in which interviews take place can provide a cue for participants' narratives, mobile interviews have the potential to move beyond simply gaining responses to questions, rather, they can offer us the ability to unpick more experiential understandings of these places (Housley & Smith, 2010). Through generating a deeper understanding of movement and the relationship between people and place, we can uncover new meanings and understandings of people's lives that are psychosocial: structural, cultural, and simultaneously 'deeply embedded in subjectivity' (Frosh, Pheonix & Pattman, 2004:42; Back, 2014; Ingold, 2010).   To this extent, mobile interviews may 'help reveal some of the place and practice-based insights of participant observation without the intensity and time commitment ethnography demands' (DeLyser & Sui, 2013:5).

Lopez (1996) discusses how 'witnessing' homelessness can impact outreach workers emotionally and tempt them to cross agency boundaries to assist clients. Working with both homeless people and other street-based populations such as SBSWs can place a heavy emotional burden on outreach staff, and encourage them to cross boundaries in various aspects of the work, which may place them in unsafe situations during the course of providing case management services in community settings. Morse *et al*. (1996) therefore stress the importance of outreach workers defining and setting limits for themselves in order to avoid 'staff burnout' and continue to function effectively in their roles. Street-based clients, once engaged, can sometimes seem to present staff with a 'seemingly bottomless pit of needs' (Hopper *et al*., 1990:19), while staff remain quite limited in their own abilities to meet all of these needs. Morse *et al.* (1996) warn that staff who fail to set appropriate limits may eventually begin to respond to clients with criticalness rather than empathy, and react out of internal feelings of chaos and crisis. This highlights the importance of outreach teams helping each other to set and negotiate limits, and constructing their own processes for dealing with negative emotions that arise during outreach work.

Conclusions

Pink, Hubbard, O'Neill & Radley (2010:3) argue that, in this context, walking is not merely an "attempted short cut to understanding other people's everyday experiences" but can instead act as an "inspiring route to understanding". In addition, the walking and talking methodology may "help processes of social justice via a politics of recognition" thereby countering the misrecognition of the homeless person/SBSW as merely 'the Other' (O'Neill & Hubbard, 2010:56). Researchers have conducted research with other marginalised groups in this way [walking/mobile interviews]: O'Neill & Hubbard (2010) with asylum seekers, Harris (2016) with students of colour, Ferguson (2016) with social workers involved in Child Protective Services, Roy et al. (2015) with marginalised young men

Methodology also based on the grounds of feminist critiques of representing minority cultures and subgroups (Alcoff, 1991; Talbut, 2004). A necessary step to achieving valid and reliable representation is "through a process of negotiating emic and etic positions with the culture of subgroup being studied, and to reconceptualise those being studied not as subjects to one's observation methods, but as participants in the creation of understanding" (Reinhard, 2009:6).

More politically balanced presentation is said to require negotiating etic/emic perspectives in prior knowledge and knowledge seeking procedures (aka methodology). We need to select research tools that reflect the relationship between researcher and participant, and will through their utilisation, operate to reduce the potential for the power dynamics between researcher and researchee, inherent in any study, that empower the researcher and disenfranchise the

researchee (Dervin, 2003; Kvale, 2006). We can link this to some of the {residue] concepts of dirty work in the first draft, as mobility "takes the research process out of fixed (safe, controlled) environments…and allow[s] the environment and the act of walking itself to move the collection of interview data in productive and sometimes entirely unexpected directions" (Jones et al., 2008:2, 8). It also removes some of the power issues with location attached to static interviews – where someone, be it researcher or participant, has to travel to the interview (so it could be the researcher as supplicant, going along to offices of high powered interviewee, or it could be the participant having to pass through exclusionary or intimidating spaces to reach the interview space, such as the university campus).

Outreach workers face considerable challenges, and often work in chaotic and unpredictable contexts (Buning, 1993; Strike *et al.*, 2002; Strike *et al.*, 2004). Strike *et al.* argue that these particular types of environments are often associated with organizational problems, including "structural isolation of workers, difficult relationships with host organizations, disagreements over method and objectives, lack of adequate career structure and over-involvement with clients" (Strike *et al.*, 2004:210). Organizationally, normalization is an important component of being able to manage the difficult elements of their work effectively, and it was clear from the research data that outreach workers had effective mechanisms in place to manage the emotional intensity of their work. This was facilitated by the organization itself that provided appropriate support for outreach workers, but also from the workers themselves, as they forge connections and strong relationships fostered on trust and a mutual understanding of the stress they face working with particularly vulnerable client groups.

It was only by walking with the outreach workers that we were able to truly understand the emotion impact of working with groups of people who have incredibly high level needs, and who trust very few people. The fact that the people we came across as we walked with the outreach team knew the workers by name, shared personal stories about their lives and clearly trusted the team to help them with issues related to sexual health issues, problems with police and arrests, and other sensitive issues suggests that the outreach team have built meaningful relationships with people who often have very little stability in their lives. This was also evident from spending time in the drop-in centre, and recognizing that the WOS team were seen as family for women who often had few connections with their own biological families.

Working with the outreach team who had already built respect with precarious street populations meant that the data we gathered lead to a more valid and reliable representation of the realities of the difficulties street based sex workers and other street people faced. We argue that by walking with, we learned more than any single semi-structured interview could reveal. By walking and doing, we can 'do' research in a way that insures that we capture realities that are impossible to understand by interviewing an outreach worker in a quiet office within the safe enclosure of their office. Mobile research offers the opportunity for more active knowledge

(co)production and the chance to "observe spatial practices in situ" (Kusenbach, 2003:436; see also DeLyser & Sui, 2013). Kusenbach (2013) suggests that mobile interviews should reflect, as much as possible, 'natural' everyday journeys, which are familiar to the individual, and that researchers should avoid controlling the direction of the interview.

Lee & Ingold (2006:67) argue that we cannot 'walk into other people's worlds, and expect thereby to participate with them. To participate is not to walk into but to walk with – where 'with' implies not a face-to-face confrontation, but heading the same way, sharing the same vistas, and perhaps retreating from the same threats'. In this sense, then, walking interviews are one useful and important way of attending to our need as researchers to correspond with the flow of events in a place whilst collecting data in a participatory way (see Lynch & Mannion, 2016).

It is also a powerful way of communicating about experiences and ways of knowing across cultural divides (Irving, 2007), including in both policy and knowledge transfer contexts (O'Neill & Hubbard, 2010) [their work looked at walking and talking with recent asylum seekers].

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