



Real Life Methods

Part of the ESRC National Centre for Research Methods

This is where I live, this is how I live: Using mobile interviews to understand real life networks, neighbourhoods and communities

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Methods: Real Life Methods



Connected Lives

A project exploring networks, neighbourhoods, and Communities through participatory methods

- How do people perceive networks, neighbourhoods, and communities?
- How are networks, neighbourhoods, and communities formed in different contexts?
- What methods are appropriate for understanding networks, neighbourhoods, and communities?
- How can different methods be combined to create 'fuller' accounts of networks, neighbourhoods, and communities?

Methods and approach

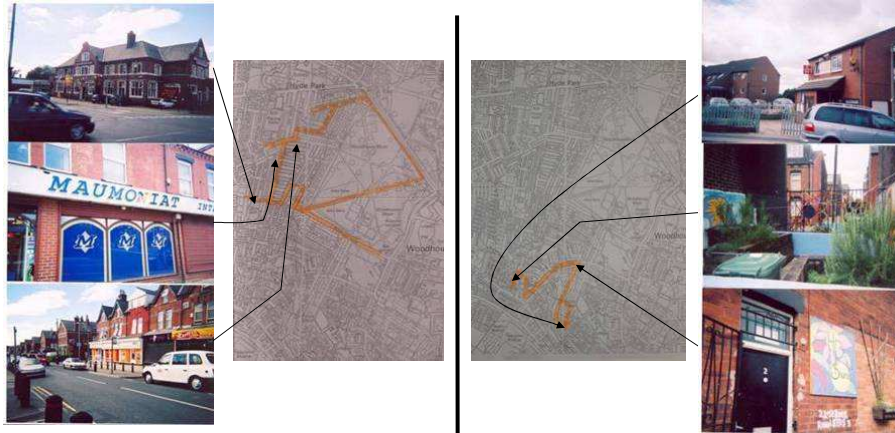
- Qualitatively driven, mixed method approach
- Qualitative: visual, narrative
- Participatory approach
- Inner city neighbourhood case-study with a socially, economically, and culturally diverse population
 - 44.4% aged 20-29
 - 24.66% BME groups
 - 33.8% Households in receipt of State benefits
 - c. 58.6% of total population in full-time education



Qualitatively driven, mixed-method research



“Show us around your neighbourhood”



N=29 of which 2 are car journeys
and 6 are with 'key-informants'

Shortest c. 15minutes; longest 5
hours

The significance of route

- The intimate geographies of location (e.g. places of belonging, places of avoidance)
- The importance of 'neighbourhood infrastructure' (e.g. shops, pubs, community centres etc.)
- The local geographies of social networks (e.g. friends houses, neighbours, acquaintances and familiar strangers)

The significance of place

- Places as relational
- Places as networked
 - The significance of getting lost
- Places as biographical
 - A stimulus for stories about lives in place

*M1: This place here [a café],
I've heard stories about it
AC: What sort of stories?
M1: Er, that it's basically a
drugs' haven*

*F1: I got married there
AC: Oh right
F1: And my mum had er, when it
were all houses, a boarding house
and my grandma had a boarding
house*

Places as practices

- The place of everyday practices
 - Embodied practices (e.g. walking through or appearing in place)
 - Social practices (e.g. bumping into friends)
 - Material practices (e.g. physical and institutional infrastructures)
- The place of extraordinary events
 - The significance of time, memory and geography

The place of extraordinary events



F2: *[This] is where the riots actually started, well they actually started from t'middle o' road down here. So I don't know if you want to start from t'middle o'road. Are we going to go from where H- got its notorious name, do you want to go from here?*

AC: *Ok*

F2: *So like from [19]95 from the riots we kind of got labelled this bad area and things changed.*

Politics and practices of scale



Consistency and change



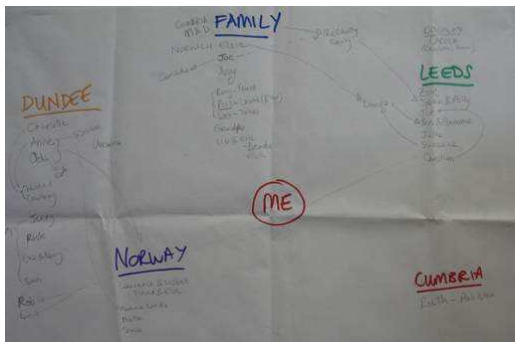
AC: Is this new [a charity furniture shop]?

CL: Yeah, they just painted it. It were all yellow last time.

AC: Right.

CL: Erm. But it's got like tables and chairs and stuff

The dissonance between network and neighbourhood



“this is the veg shop... the men are really nice. If you don't have enough money they say just pay tomorrow” (WI with ED, p47)

Summary

- Our research is attempting to think about the social and the spatial in configuration of networks and communities.
- **Walking interviews** reveal how people interact materially, socially, and through embodied practices to create, maintain, and disassemble their networks, neighbourhoods, and communities over time.