Qualitative Sociology Review

Volume XI
Issue 1

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CONTENTS

Articles

Book Review

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Thinking Through New Methodologies. Sounding Out the City With Teenagers

Abstract   This paper explores the place for sound within social theory, more specifically, how sound as a subject can be interpreted methodologically. The paper examines the various methods implemented within a Ph.D. research project. The research adopted a participatory approach, examining the missing voices in the post design of place. In this way, the research focused on those groups often excluded in the design of urban space, teenagers. The methods included participant documented soundwalking, sound mapping, focus groups, and ethnographic soundwalks. This paper argues that a closer attention to sound, when examining the urban area, will help shape one's understanding of the everyday. Methods that explore sound as part of the makeup of social life, either as place building or space making, whether they are politically intentional or historically relevant, need to be advanced.

Keywords   New Methodologies; Sound; Sound Mapping; Soundwalks; Soundscape

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This paper is drawn from a Ph.D. research project which examined the part that *sound* played in the construction of space and community. Sound is an experiential and immersive process by which one connects to urban space. Research into the phenomenological tends to focus on the immediate experience of the senses (Patterson 1990; Kreutzfeld 2006; Imai 2008; Waskul, Vannini, and Wilson 2009), or on the sensory as part of communications, placing the senses alongside "'faculties,' 'modalities,' 'channels,' 'media,' 'material culture,' 'capacities,' 'skills,' 'discourses,' 'codes,' 'arts,' 'intelligences'" (Finnegan 2002:34). This, of course, is offset by the continuing dominance of the visible over any other sensory experience in social life (Synnott 1992; Chandler 2010). Thus far studies of sound and society have been predominantly explored within the fine arts, communications, and ecology (Schafer 1977; Ferrington et al. 2000; Truax 2000; Westerkamp 2007). It is necessary to examine new methodologies to interrogate sound as socially constructed. This paper uses the term space to distinguish between place and space. Space is a more amorphous definition in which conceptually new ideas about place can be inscribed through less physical means. This research explored the concept of sound as a tool for the production of space, within working class areas. Though mediatization was examined as it related to walking through and/or mediating the city, the focus of the research was not on virtual spaces or experiences, that is, gaming or online social networking spaces. This research wished to further the study of the urban by including the sonic and its impact or influence on spatial use and interpretation. Over the course of four years I conducted three phases of methodological research. This paper examines two of those phases. The first was a series of autoethnographic soundwalks and the second involved working with 84 teenagers from four secondary schools located near the research area, Smithfield in Dublin's north city center. There were approximately 20-22 participants from each school. Two schools were all boys schools and two all girls schools, three were state public schools and one a private school.

The Smithfield Soundscape

Traditionally, the north and south side of Dublin city have been defined as two distinct areas, usually distinguished by different economic practices and social groups, with a higher working class population located within the north inner city. For over 200 years, the north side of the city was connected to markets and the docks (Cahill 1861; McCarthy 1990). More recently the relationship between the inhabitants of the north inner city area to these trades has diminished. Surrounding this area is a collection of large public housing and flat complexes, as well as a mix of large private apartment complexes, the main city courthouse, and a police station. The west side of this area leads towards the largest public park in Europe, the Phoenix Park, and the east side leads towards a busy shopping district and the docks. There are distinct differences in the soundscape of these two areas, the Phoenix Park is generally a quieter space with a more natural soundscape, while the dockyards is filled with the sounds of moving trucks and shifting tankers. Smithfield still contains a wholesale fruit and vegetable market, its opening and closing times operate differently to most businesses in the city. From 4am till 2pm one is immersed in the sounds of a market: pallet trucks moving crates, delivery trucks parking, fork-lifts driving around, men talking to each other and the opening of metal shutters, groups gathering together, the voices of women purchasing produce, people walking to work, and the loud squawks of the seagulls. Elsewhere the city is extremely quiet in comparison. Its economic practices are connected to wider networks, such as shipping and farming, as well as deliveries to local and national businesses. This makes it sound distinctly different to the

Figure 1. Smithfield market.

Source: Image by researcher.

Figure 2. Interior of fruit, flower, and vegetable market.

Source: Image by researcher.

rest of the city (see: Figure 1 and Figure 2). Since the early 1990s it has undergone a series of rejuvenation projects to deal with the "post-industrial vacancy of Smithfield" (Reflecting City 2012).

Few traditional wholesale food markets are left in Dublin city; in the last three decades those that remain, such as the Smithfield market, have retreated in size and importance. In the 1990s, under the rubric of urban regeneration, the Historic area rejuvenation project was established in Ireland, HARP (DCC 2012). One of the many spaces to be rejuvenated was the Smithfield area of Dublin city. This space occupies a unique position in the city, as it is the only wholesale fruit and vegetable market left in Dublin. In this way, the Smithfield area is also a unique soundscape within Dublin city, as it stands apart from the everyday sounds of consumption, traffic, and pedestrian sounds. The research exam-

ined how these infrastructural changes impacted on the everyday experience of Smithfield, with a particular focus on the soundscape. The research participants, teenagers, became the principal cohort because rejuvenation projects rarely reflect the needs of this social group, particularly in urban design (Matthews, Limb, and Taylor 1999; Neuburger 2004). The contradiction to this process is that teenagers frequent public spaces far more than adults, primarily as a result of few public facilities being available to them. A second smaller cohort of older adults between the ages of 58 and 70 years was interviewed during the research. This group of five adults, two women and three men, was interviewed about their teenage and early adult memories of both the urban and mediated soundscape of the Smithfield area and markets. This data provided a historical soundscape backdrop in which to compare changes in the Dublin soundscape from the 1950s onwards.

We had the fish markets beside us, and all through the night the fish lorries came in during the night and they had to be unloaded, and you'd hear them banging the boxes, the banging of the boxes, and then at about 4 o'clock in the morning you'd have all the farmers coming up with their, now this is the 60s we're speaking about, you would have all them coming up from the country with their cabbage, and the market at that time all had cobblestones, and you'd hear the horses on them, then we had the fruit market and you'd hear all the sellers roaring and cursing, you know, the boxes packing and unloading, so it was all, all different sounds. [2nd female mid 60s]

Interpreting Space and the Soundscape

The methodological approach adopted for this research was interpretivism. Interpretivism means "joining evaluative concerns with descriptions of facts" (Rabinow and Sullivan 1979:1). This is necessary when looking at an approach which goes against, or is opposed to, the positivist approach. Within this theoretical framework, the research also examined reflexivity, phenomenology, and feminist theory. They do not argue that it is one of many methods, but rather that it is the ultimate way of perceiving life. However, while this research was guided by interpretivism, social structures such as class, gender, politics, and economics were also examined. The construction of ideas and things do not happen in a vacuum. Interpretivism argues for the unique analysis of each space and social group, suggesting that it is the individual way we interpret the world that cannot be generalized. However, it is possible even with interpretivism to generalize aspects of one's findings. Interpretivist researchers, such as Geertz (1977) and

Fisher (1993), have made general statements of fact concerning certain practices or experiences within similar fields as probabilistic. In using the interpretivist approach, it was necessary to continuously examine and interrogate the research methods, allowing the participants and the space to shape the research when necessary. Although interpretivism, emancipation, and the participants, as well as reflexivity pushed towards a constant re-examination of the research motives, these approaches provided the rigor necessary to counter the criticisms of bias and subjectivity. However, interpretivism and phenomenological interpretivism often only focus on the personal subjective experience, but this research project also explored the social structures, which shape the individual and group experience of place and space.

The methodologies had to consider how teenagers would best be able to research and reflect on urban soundscapes. Three stages of methods were created for the teenagers, these were: 1) listening soundwalks, 2) documented soundwalks, 3) sound mapping and focus groups. However, the first stage of the research was, as mentioned, a series of autoethnographic soundwalks, which I undertook at the beginning of the methods in 2011. Adams and colleagues (2008) and Degen and Rose (2012) argue that soundwalking allows researchers to immerse themselves in physical spaces, suggesting that it encourages them to actively engage with the phenomenological or the invisible processes of place.

Soundwalking

The concept of soundwalking dates back to the early research of Murray Schafer in the 1960s and

was further developed by Hildegard Westerkamp (2000), both acoustic ecologists. Westerkamp (2000) advanced that sound and space are linked within memory and that soundwalking is an "excursion whose main purpose is listening to the environment." Her methods were based on storytelling and embodiment; she used walks as an approach to link stories and sounds to particular spaces. Her method involved bringing people on walks through spaces (some familiar to participants and some unfamiliar), they would walk through these areas wearing headphones which contained the voices of people talking about their memories of these spaces. These walks are intended to evoke an emotional reaction from the participants through the sounds and stories that they hear. Soundwalking is used as a method to explore different terrains within cities, as well as the relationship between sounds, a person's connection to space, and economic and social practices (Drobnick 2004; Sémidor 2006; Venot and Sémidor 2006; Adams et al. 2008; Adams 2009). Venot and Sémidor (2006) argue that soundwalking allows urban planners to consider the soundscape as an ecological issue.

The rationale for including sound in design considerations is that sound is not limited to a particular viewpoint; sound diffuses through and around space and objects. Objects can block certain sounds and over time they dissipate; this means that when we change a space, through the construction of new buildings, roadways, pathways, et cetera, we alter the soundscape (Blesser and Salter 2009). Additionally, sounds are culturally and historically bound within space, and often the perception and interpretation of particular sounds are limited to a local knowledge of place (Feld 1993; 2012; Kreutzfeld 2006).

Journaling and Autoethnographic Soundwalks

This section details the first qualitative approach, a series of autoethnographic soundwalks and reflexive journaling. I spent a period of five months (these walks took place from February 2011 to June 2011) walking one day a week for two hours at different times of the day to cover the 24-hour cycle. These soundwalks were designed to cover the west side of Smithfield through to the main shopping district at the east end of the city, Henry St. and O'Connell St. (see: Figure 3). The walks were purposefully designed to examine the various degrees of sound levels connected with different types of work or social practices around the north inner city. In designing the soundwalks, it was necessary to develop a walk that took in the Smithfield area, as well as a small section of the surrounding housing spaces and the busier shopping areas. It was important to walk through very different soundscapes to highlight how spaces which are close to each other sound different based on the activities taking place within them. Part of the purpose of the walks, which passed through several different economic and social spaces, was to explore whether or not a uniform soundscape existed in Dublin city.

The first walk took place on the 9th of September 2010 and began at the Smithfield market at 4am (see: Figure 4). During the walks, I witnessed very different social and economics rhythms, which created a unique soundscape in the city. The working day was at least two hours away for the rest of the city, presenting a much quieter soundscape. Exploring this one area, Smithfield, meant examining a distinct soundscape within Dublin.

Figure 3. Map of soundwalk.
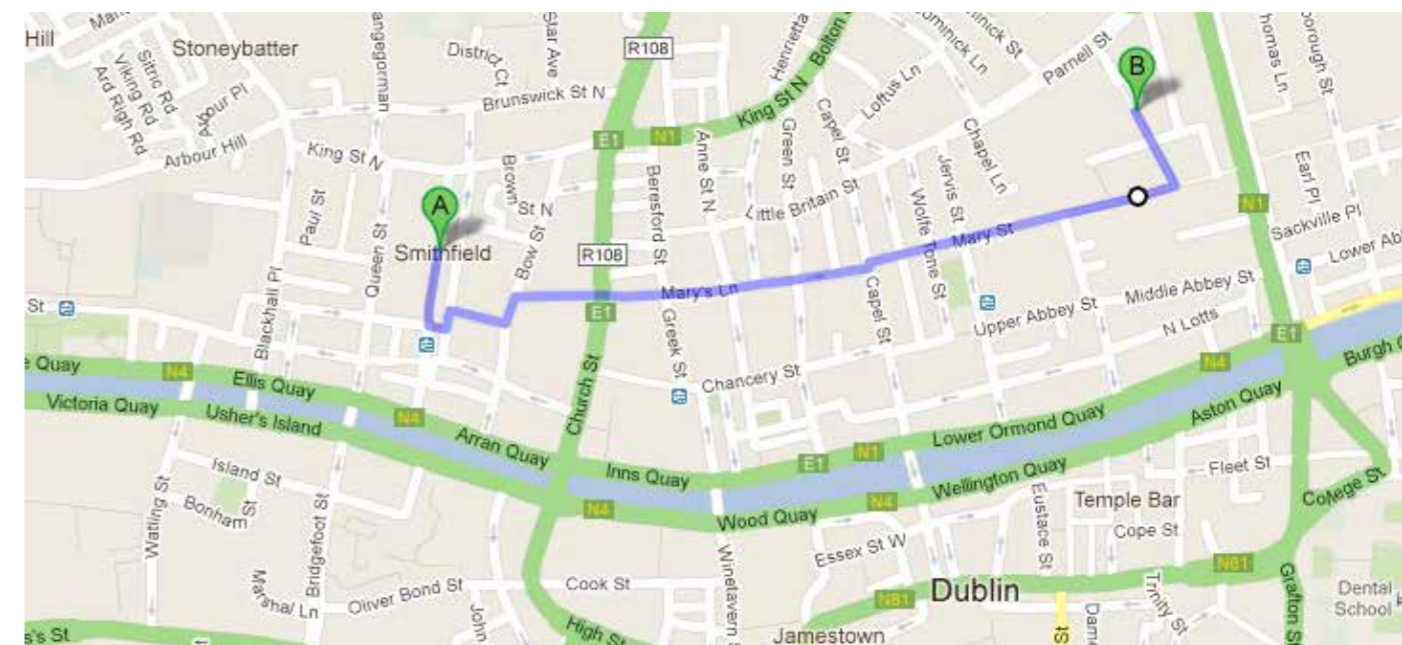
Source: Google Maps.

Figure 4. Dublin streetscape, 4am.

Source: Image by researcher.

Linda O'Keeffe

Thinking Through New Methodologies. Sounding Out the City With Teenagers
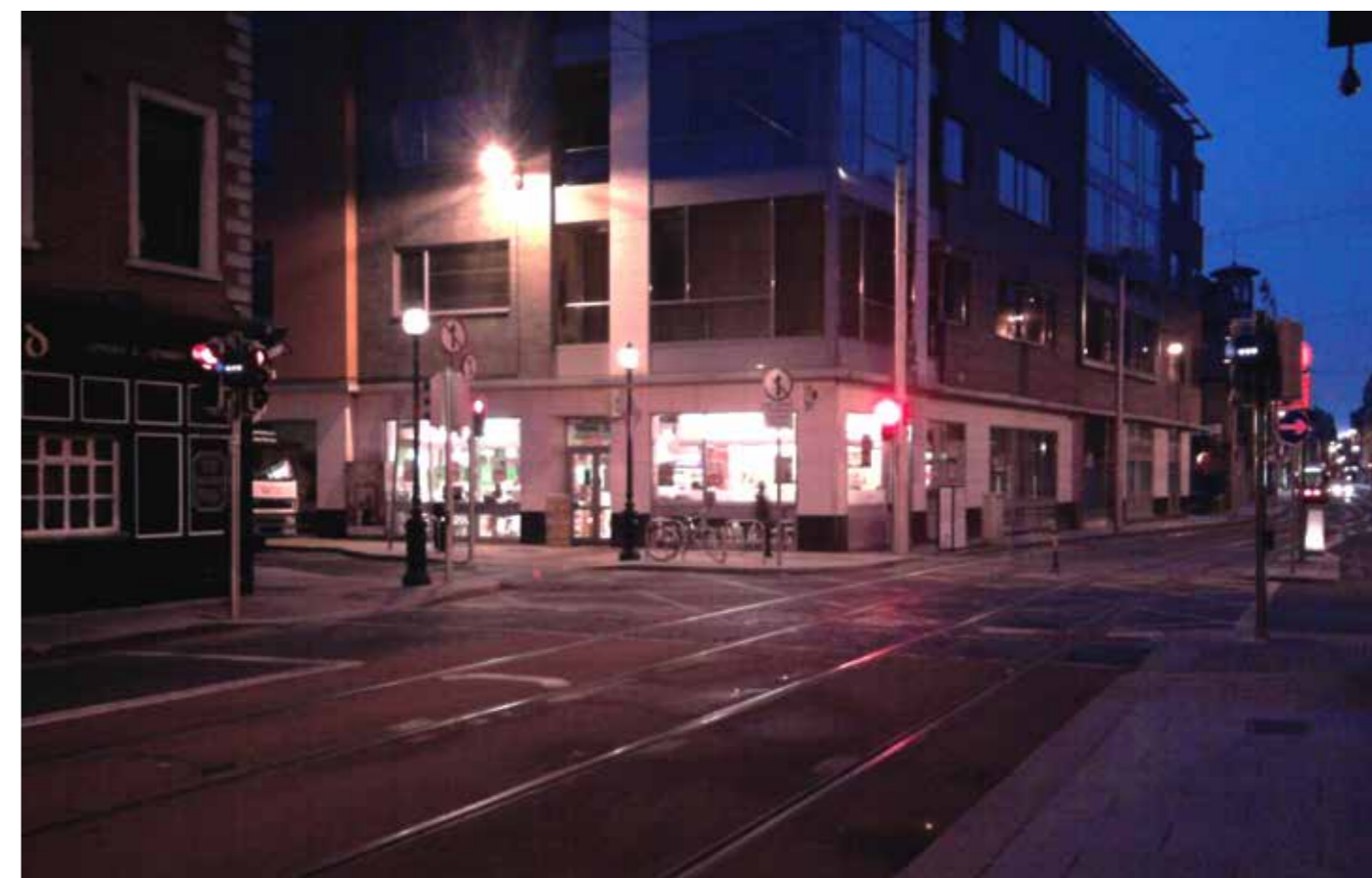
Walking the city at regular intervals allowed me to hear the sounds that were repetitive, linked to production, but also the sounds of typical social practices within housing areas, children playing, street chatter, and traffic. Within Smithfield Square sounds were amplified because of its vast emptiness. Depending on the time of day, the sounds of footsteps (particularly women's high heels), seagulls screeching, and the intermittent shouts of the homeless or addicts were reflected off the tall concrete and glass structures in the square. These sounds were not regularized, but were still a constant presence throughout everyday. The background sound of the Luas tram line, which runs through the heart of Smithfield, created a permanent, almost musical sonic backdrop. There were other less amplified technological sounds such as: mobile phone ring tones, the beeping of pedestrian street crossings, and the emergency services. This repetition of sound within society has become associated with technology, which increasingly regularizes the social soundscape, or as Augoyard and Torgue (2006:123) have termed it, the social chronophony and synchrophony. That is, the synchronized and regularized sound that follows social patterns and activities. They also argue that it is the everyday repetition of events, making and "localizing periodicities of the world; from a ticking clock to a factory whistle" (Augoyard and Torgue 2006:93), which have come to regulate and define time and space. Few streets in Smithfield contain working businesses, this means that throughout the day very little changes sonically apart from the susurration of traffic are heard in the distance. In addition, as the center of several judiciary buildings, the rel-

ative quiet of Smithfield is often pierced with the sounds of sirens.

A recording device was used to document the experience of the walk, which included recording personal reflections, as well as describing the source of some of the sounds heard on the walk. The issues that can arise when recording a space is where does one focus the microphone. Oliveros (2005) contends that there are different modes of listening: passive and active, or directional and focused. Similar to sight, one can focus in on sound; one can also tune it out, either to deal with monotonous or loud sounds (Ronayne, McDonald, and Smith 1981). The difficulties involved in recording a soundscape for analysis are that what was recorded is not necessarily what was heard. When listening, we focus in on the familiar or local rather than hearing all of the sounds in a space. The microphone, however, is not a discerning listener. Hence, on listening back I did not always remember hearing certain events or sound signals which were on the recordings. Also, during the soundwalks, I documented personal reflections and interpretations. These field notes were later transcribed.

After a day of soundwalking I found it frustrating to find that all I noticed was either the traffic or the absence of traffic. Is it a case that when I try to hear a place, I stop actually hearing it as a whole and break it up into pieces? This seems similar to photographing a space; we take a snapshot of the whole. The idea of Smithfield being in anyway an area of a particular kind of practice (as in economic or social activities) seems nil. When I walk up Grafton Street, I hear footfall, people, music, laughter, bags bang-

ing. It's the sound of a shopping district. Smithfield seems empty of sounds that signify anything.

Conditions: Dry windy day, very difficult to hear at certain angles. Lunchtime traffic and lunch time crowds. Walked through Smithfield to markets, not too busy with market people, no kids. [Researcher's notes, 2011]

These notes allowed for an analysis of the immersive experience of a space and the comparison of other spaces experienced on the walk. The next methodological approach involved working with teenagers.

Interpreting the Soundscape With Teenagers

This research argued that the Smithfield area—and particularly the Smithfield Square—did not work as

a community space, in part because the soundscape produced, as a consequence of redesign, was defined (by the teenage research participants) as negative and/or repressive to participation. The Smithfield area contains a number of social housing flats and private apartment complexes. While walking through Smithfield, I would hear the voices of children and teenagers coming from within the central squares of the social housing blocks (see: Figure 5). However, there was a notable absence of teenagers in all of the public spaces of Smithfield. As a large public space, with some stone blocks for seating, this seemed unusual (see: Figure 6 and Figure 7).

Teenagers generally congregate away from the parental or community observation (Kato 2006), the square would seem an ideal place for this. Instead, what emerged during discussions with the group of teenagers was a description of a place that was considered unapproachable.

Figure 5. Social housing complex, Smithfield.

Source: Image by researcher.

Figure 6. Smithfield Square, 2012.

Source: Image by researcher.

Linda O'Keeffe

Thinking Through New Methodologies. Sounding Out the City With Teenagers

Figure 7. Smithfield Square, 2012.

Source: Image by researcher.

The research methodology centered on an introductory workshop on deep listening, a method and philosophy invented by the composer Pauline Oliveros, and soundscape studies. Then what followed were three soundwalks, and twenty separate focus groups. The methodology was designed so that the research group would become active participants in the data collection and analysis. The choice of age group was based on the relationship these teenagers would have to the Smithfield area between the years 2000 and 2012. It was also important to work with both male and female students. The students were aged between 15 and 16 years.

Consideration should be given to the reasons why a researcher chooses to work with one cohort over another; this is particularly so when the potential groups are deemed vulnerable. As with any research project, there were ethical issues to consider in this work. It was important that the research adheres to the Sociological Association of Ireland guidelines on working with human subjects (NUIM 2012). Because this research involved working with minors, it was also necessary to obtain Garda clearance for the research (the Garda are the Irish police force). This was received in February 2011. Garda clearance or vetting is usually required when working with children in

state institutions. Although it was recognized that legally these were minors and therefore one had to consider parental consent, it was felt that each student involved in the research should be allowed to have a say about their participation in this project.

The choice of age range reflects growing data on the apparent lack of control teenagers have over urban environments (Matthews et al. 1999; Bowden 2006; Dee 2008) and an attempt to understand what strategies they practice to navigate urban spaces. Contemporary research into space and spatial practices has highlighted the importance of working with young people (Matthews, Limb, and Percy-Smith 1998; Travlou 2003; Kato 2006). These researchers explore governmental policies concerning youth which has led to "the exclusion of young people from public space through the criminalization of certain activities (i.e., skateboarding, graffiti) and the policing of their movement (i.e., juvenile curfews)"[1] (Travlou 2003:3). The Smithfield area was designated a space for rejuvenation by the HARP project in the early 1990s. The restructuring of this space continued through the 2000s. As such, the teenage participants primary experience of Smithfield was through the lens and sounds of construction. During the early discussions of the design of Smithfield, teenagers were not consulted or considered in the reshaping of this public space. In an interview conducted by the researcher with a representative of the Dublin City Council, the public space of Smithfield Square was described as a place for potential commercial

opportunities, an "event space." In addition, she stated that it had been seen as unnecessary to explore youth participation in the design of the space as there were so few young people in the area.

Teenagers are seen to sit in the in-between space of childhood and adulthood, which often excludes them from public participation, they are not given the status of adults (Matthews et al. 1998; Dee 2008; Emmel and Clark 2009). For the participant group in this research, the authorities and people, people generally being adults, have the power to control the construction of space and the resulting soundscapes.

> Interviewer: So here's a question for the paper (indicating the sound map), who has control of the city, who has control of the city sounds?
>
> Group: (Participant 1) Us? (Participant 2) Government. (Participant 3) Aw people. (Participant 4) People. (Participant 5) People.
>
> Interviewer: Well, for example, you talk about the emergency services and traffic and you're talking about helicopters, can you get them to lower down [the volume]?
>
> Group: (Group) No.
>
> Interviewer: Who can?
>
> Group: (Participant 2) The government. [Group 11b: female]

Although Lefebvre (1974) argues that one can alter the fixed meaning of space through the appropriation of city spaces, this is not always the case for young people, particularly within urban centers. Their use of public spaces is often restricted by the use of age limitations (see: Figure 8) (Travlou 2003; Kato 2006; Dee 2008).

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[1] The Irish equivalent is the Juvenile Diversion program, "the intended outcome of the Program is to divert young people from committing further offences" (see: www.citizensinformation.ie).

Figure 8. Public playground, Dublin inner city housing complex.

Source: Image by researcher.

It is through the deployment of urban planning and the law which deals with "perceived public space issues" that "impact adversely on children and young people, contributing to their partial or complete removal from public space" (Dee 2008:2). Participants in the research expressed this view:

Interviewer: When you go out with your friends outside, do you tend to stand in places? Do you tend to hang around corners or…?

Group: No. (Participant 3) No. (Participant 2) No, not really.
Interviewer: No?
Group: (Participant 2) A lot of people think that though, cause they do be like... Don't be hanging around streets or anything.
Interviewer: But you don't anyway?
Group: (Participant 2) We don't really like, we were standing at, right the church wall. (Participant 1) We go on a walk or something. (Participant 2) Yeah,

you just walk around like, but we were standing at the church and the Garda [Irish police] some of them like, and we were deciding like, standing on Church Road, whether to go up to the playground or go to the park, and all you're doing is standing there and a Garda goes by and he tells you to move and you don't even be doing anything. [Group 11b: female]

In this way, the creation of ephemeral spaces for young people in the city is restricted. They are then forced to find new spaces to socialize (Kato 2006), which again become demarcated by the sounds they produce. Curtin and Linehan (2002) argue that teenage boys (in particular) often feel excluded from space because their presence is seen as threatening.

Interviewer: Do you feel that there's a sense that the presence of teenagers in spaces is not welcome?
Group: Yeah, but I can understand that, as well.
Interviewer: Why?
Group: Like a housing area, like you'd be sitting there and everyone would be making loads of noise cause like you're having a bit of a laugh, like you'd be shouting, you wouldn't realize that you're shouting, but you are, and you're told to move on like, I understand. [Group 2c: male]

This paradox suggests both a reflexive approach adopted by the teenagers to monitor their sounds and—paradoxically—ambivalence to being quiet. However, the participant suggested that part of the reason that young people use particular spaces at night was their closeness to communities, lights, and adults.

Qualitative Mixed Methods: Soundwalking With Teenagers

One of the primary goals of a soundwalk "is to reveal the nature of the structural, ecological relationships" (EHA 2010:27) among participants to the soundscape. When a person is asked to listen to the sounds of a space, it allows them to open an "inner space for *noticing* (emphasis in original)" (Westerkamp 2012:56). The young participants took on the role of researchers/ethnographers, documenting and collating data from the soundscape. The strength of this approach lies in the placing of research collection and data analysis in the hands of participants (Harding and Norberg 2005), it allows the research group a type of ownership of the knowledge they produce. Feminist methodologies argue that we must take into account "the observer's standpoint, a direct challenge to universality and objectivity" (Schwartz-Shea 2006:89).

Prior to the first soundwalk the participants were asked to bring the soundscape to the foreground of their attention. Public spaces in a city are often "defined by the placement and height of buildings, the textures of surfaces, colors and light" (Billstrom and Atienza 2012:73). This makes a soundwalk truly distinctive, as there are very different processes involved in examining the sounds of a space. First, one is exploring where and how the sounds heard in a space are produced. Second, sounds can be ambiguous or diffused, which means there is no source or we cannot locate one. Finally, listening means paying attention and not talking, this was very difficult for the teenagers. There were three soundwalks conducted with each school group:

Linda O'Keeffe

Thinking Through New Methodologies. Sounding Out the City With Teenagers

1. Walking and listening with intent, as a group.

2. Recording sound objects and spaces with a camera in groups of two.

3. Recording the soundscape with a digital audio recorder also in groups of two (see: Table 1).

The duration of each walk was approximately 40 minutes. Oliveros (2005) argues that when we walk a space to listen, we learn a new method of communicating with it; we also develop new ways of communicating with each other. In the act of soundwalking, the hope was that the young participants would get a chance to really listen to the city without the interruption of conversation or mediated listening. The soundwalks allowed the teenagers to reflect on the relationship between sound and source, for example, they began to note that certain sounds, such as the Luas tram line, added a kind of rhythm to the city.

> Group: (Participant 1) I hear the Luas a lot. (Participant 2) People talking. (Participant 3) Yeah.
> Interviewer: So you like the sound of the Luas? Does anybody else like the sound of the Luas?
> Group: (Participant 1) Yeah. (Group) I love it.
> Interviewer: Is it because you have just become used to it, what is it that you like about the sound of it?
> Group: (Participant 1) It's not too loud, it's kind of peaceful. (Participant 2) It's like a wave. A bus is [vocalizes a loud sound]. (Participant 1) Yeah, it's quiet [the Luas]. Like a ballet. [Group 14a: female]

Other participants reflected on the mediated music of the city, some defining it as necessary to the soundscape of consumption, others as a nuisance sound.

> Group: You know the way the shops like to get customers in by playing music at full volume outside the shop or the entrance, that adds on a lot of sound, if they did away with that, if there's a law, you can do that. (Participant 1) Sometimes three shops in a row do that, sometimes and you just like hear loads of noise. (Participant 2) Yes. (Participant 3) Yes. (Participant 4) And, you know, when you're walking on the footpaths, and you're right beside them, it's loud. [Group 14a: female]

The aim of the first soundwalk was to examine what the young participants heard and if they understood how listening (which is active) impacted on their perception of space. Additionally, soundwalking allowed them the opportunity to examine the difference between hearing a space (which is passive) and listening (an active process). Thus, the research could ascertain what part, if any, sound played in their interpretation of certain spaces.

Walking in silence is extremely difficult for people, especially when they are part of a group. When participating in a Deeplistening summer school in 2010, I discovered that groups of people find it especially difficult to be near each other and not talk, or otherwise try to communicate non-verbally. People would find ways to communicate even if it was with hand signals and facial expressions. During the soundwalks with the teenagers, they would avoid eye contact and maintain a distance from each other, to keep silent, or gather in twos, discreetly gesticulating or mouthing words silently. After the first silent soundwalk, which some

participants described as "painful" and "exhausting" (several participants complained about the tiredness they felt after a silent walk), it was decided that for the subsequent three schools, there would be no silent soundwalk; instead, the students would walk the same route, but be attentive to the environment. In designing a new methodology, it was important to adopt a reflexive approach, allowing for possible changes in response to participant suggestion and reactions.

Table 1. Dates and types of soundwalks from 2011-2012.

Gender	School Type	No. of Students	School	(1) Soundwalk	(2) Photo Soundwalk	(3) Audio Recorded Soundwalk
Duration				40 min	40 min	40 min
Girls	Public School	23	a	9th March 2011	16th March 2011 (a2)	23rd March 2011 (a3)
Girls	Public School	20	b	23rd Sept. 2011	30th Sept. 2011 (b2)	7th Oct. 2011 (b3)
Boys	Private School	21	c	18th Jan. 2012	25th Jan. 2012 (c2)	1st Feb. 2012 (c3)
Boys	Public School	20	d	19th Jan. 2012	26th Jan. 2012 (d2)	2nd Feb. 2012 (d3)

Source: Self-elaboration.

The aim of the soundwalks were: 1) to examine what they heard, 2) to understand what the experience of listening meant to them, 3) to see if they could differentiate between hearing and listening, 4) and to find out what part, if any, sound plays in shaping the urban teenage experience. The participants interrogated the researched space, its purpose, and

As a cohort teenagers tend to travel in pairs or small groups (Travlou 2003). Confronted with the idea of being together, but ignoring the social norms of conversation caused some consternation. When the groups were allowed to walk without having to be silent, their behavior in space altered. The connection to listening and vocalizing became group orientated; in this way, the researcher was not just following a group, but examining how they listen *in* groups (Aarts and Dijksterhuis 2003).

the meaning of certain sounds in the everyday, how sound defined place, placelessness or the creation of non-places (Osborne 2001; Augé 2009).

The second soundwalk involved the students being placed into pairs and given a disposable camera to visually document sound producing objects, for exam-

Linda O'Keeffe

Thinking Through New Methodologies. Sounding Out the City With Teenagers

ple, cars, alarms, people, and water/rain (defined as a particularly Irish sound) (see: Figure 9). For the final soundwalk, the group was again placed in pairs and given a digital audio recorder. The participants were asked to consider recording sounds that they could identify, as well as sounds which could be described as indeterminate of origin, such as background noise/sounds. Asking young people to listen to the environment while documenting, gave them a clear focus. It also raised challenges, for example, an uncertainty with how to document a sound with a cam-

era, or with the digital recorder, how to distinguish singular sounds within the larger *melee* of an urban soundscape. In addition, it was observed that during the soundwalks, the boys were less comfortable approaching certain groups such as buskers, street market sellers, small children, et cetera, whereas the girls felt quite comfortable walking up to people to record their sounds. The boys also tended to walk in larger groups; it was difficult to separate them out so that they could record sounds. Girls often went off either in pairs or individually to record sounds.

Figure 9. Images taken by teenage participants on their soundwalks.
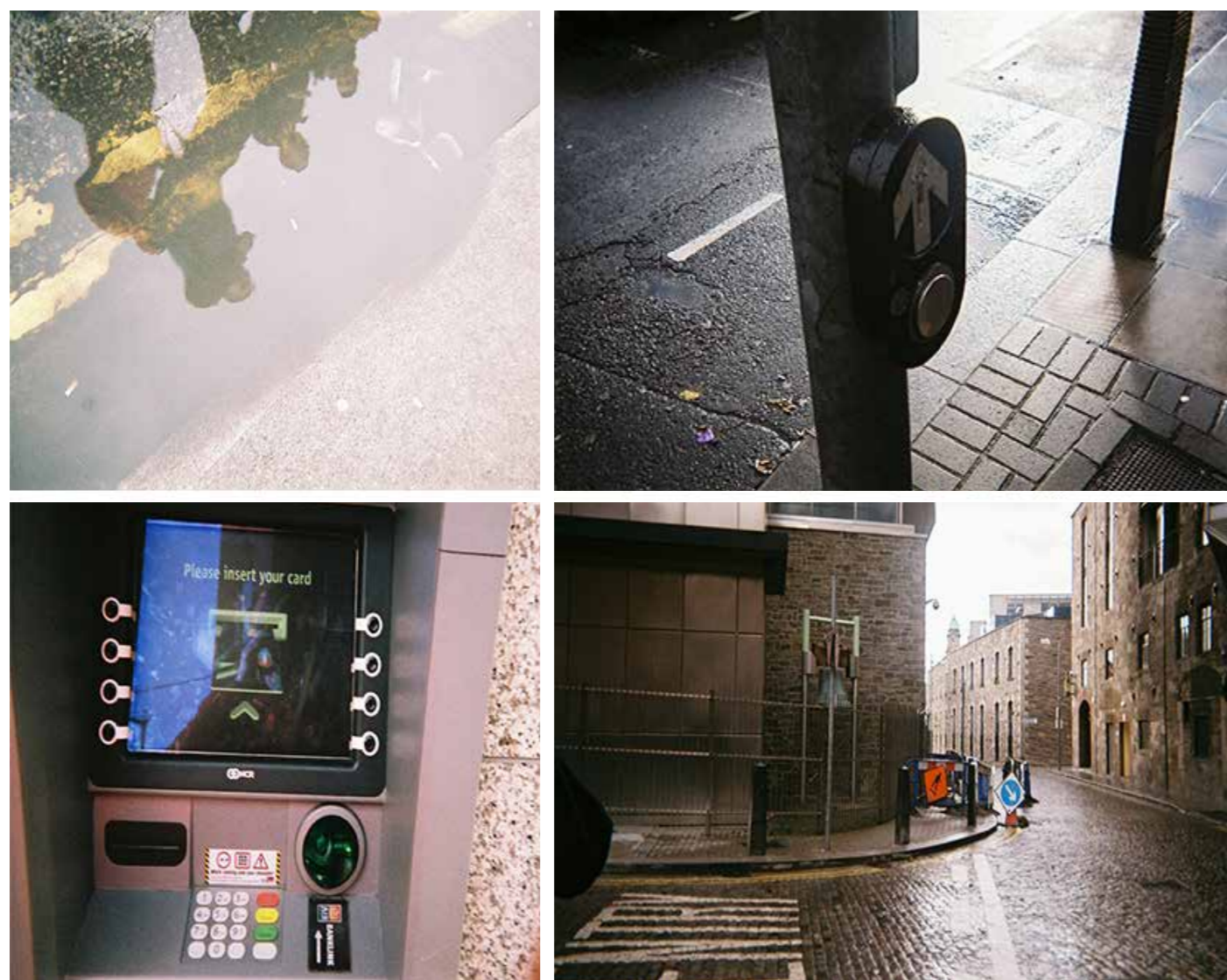
Table 2. Focus groups, 2011-2012.

GROUPS AND GENDER	NO. OF STUDENTS	DATES
Group A Girls[1]		
13a	19[2]	16th March 2011
14a	5	6th April 2011
12a	5	16th April 2011
Group B Girls		
10b	5	7th October 2011
11b	5	14th November 2011
8b	5	25th November (1) 2011
9b	5	25th November (2) 2011
Group C Boys		
1c	5	9th February 2012
3c	4	23rd February 2012
2c	4	22nd March 2012
Group D Boys		
6d	5	15th March 2012
7d	4	16th March 2012
4d	5	29th March (1) 2012
5d	5	29th March (2) 2012

Source: Self-elaboration. For [1, 2] see: Endnotes.

Focus Groups With Teenagers

The next stage consisted of a series of 40-minute focus groups with around 5 participants attending each discussion. The discussions were recorded onto a zoom digital audio recorder.[2] Focus groups can reveal common assumptions and highlight differences of opinion not previously considered (Raby 2010). For example, teenagers as a social group tend

to socialize within structured and unstructured group settings: classrooms, parks, youth clubs, or just hanging out (Curtin and Linehan 2002; Kato 2006; Boyd 2007). It was felt that the focus group situation would be both familiar and more comfortable than one-to-one interviews. There is always the potential for unruly behavior in focus groups because they "provide less studied personal 'account-making' than that emerging through interviews and life histories" (Raby 2010:2). There is also the problem of confidentiality and the risks involved when openly sharing ideas "because the group dynamic of sharing opinions can create vulnerabilities between

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[2] It is important to use good audio recording technology to document discussions about sound and the everyday, the recorder will not only document what is being said but also the soundscape within which the discussion is taking place. This turned out to be vital on later analysis.

Linda O'Keeffe

Thinking Through New Methodologies. Sounding Out the City With Teenagers

participants" (Hofmeyer and Scott 2008:69), known as "spatial familiarity."

In this study, there were 14 focus groups held over a one-year period (see: Table 2). In school A, each focus group took place in the school library, a very quiet space. The other groups, B, C, and D, took place in classrooms within the schools. The duration of the focus group was dictated by the duration of a single class. In most instances, this averaged 40 minutes, with the longest at 54 minutes and the shortest at 33 minutes. Except for the first focus group with group A, where the teacher was present, I facilitated the rest of the groups. The conversations were recorded on a digital audio recorder. The purpose of the focus groups was not just to explore the participants' interpretation of sound, either technological or natural; it was also to create a space for more active participation in the research. The focus groups were designed as a natural progression from the soundwalks. Typically the aims of the focus group were to:

- investigate the sounds the participants hear on a daily basis in school, at home, and while socializing;

- explore redesigning city spaces for better soundscapes;

- explore meaning and language to describe sounds, with a focus on the difference between noise and sound;

- explore sound and space in the context of digital audio technologies;

- discuss the various ways that participants use their mobile phones, for example, phoning, texting, listening to music, and the places they use their phones.

I was investigating where *spatially* different types of technological use took place, for example, where participants listened to music and why they chose particular spaces for certain activities. It was important to examine why different methods were used in different spaces to communicate: texting, phoning, emailing, and social networking. There is research that supports technological use as spatially specific (Ito 2004; Bull 2008; Hagood 2011). It can also be argued that mediated listening is spatially and context specific.

Where they chose to listen was as important as why they engaged in mediated listening. For some, mediated listening was used to create a sonic background even in group situations.

Group: (Participant 1) I always listen to the radio. (Participant 5) You could be sitting in (Mary's) and we'll just be talking and she'll go like, I have to listen to the radio and she'll put on Spin 103, and no songs would be on it and she'd still listen to it.
Interviewer: Just put it on in the background?
Group: Yeah. [Group 9b: female]

Interviewer: Do you listen to music?
Group: (Participant 1) I fall asleep listening to music. (Participant 2) When I'm walking alone to school, I listen to music.
Interviewer: What about you, do you listen to music?

Group: (Participant 3) Never. (Participant 4) If I'm going somewhere on my own or something. (Participant 1) If I was going training or something.
Interviewer: So, do you mostly listen to music when you're by yourselves?
Group: Yes. (Participant 2) Say, if he was in town like say he told me he was in O'Connell Street I was walking from my house I could listen to music until I got to him.
Interviewer: Why?
Group: (Participant 2) Just something to amuse you, it puts you in a good humor I think.
Interviewer: What about you, why would you listen to music?
Group: (Participant 5) If I was in bed and I wanted to go asleep, I'd listen to music.
Interviewer: You listen to music for travelling like going on long journeys?
Group: Yes. [Group 1c: male]

One could argue that so much mediated listening forms a kind of disconnecting to space (Bull 2000). One possible outcome might be that young people will no longer use public spaces, which will enable urban planners to decide that teenagers should not be considered in urban design. For teenagers, bringing one's mobile phone or iPod outside means that at some stage they will be consuming media. The reasons for this consumption are of concern to this researcher. In addition, teenagers mediate through different parts of the city as a means of adjusting their sensory perception to space. For the urban based teenagers, this can evolve into a constant form of acoustic shifting; they are no longer earwitnesses to their environments (Ystad et al. 2010).

Interviewer: Do you never bring [mobile device] it outside?
Group: (Participant 1) No. (Participant 2) Only the odd time. (Participant 3) Only when I'm walking by myself.
Interviewer: So you don't do too much listening to music outside of the home?
Group: (Participant 4) No. (Participant 5) Only when you're going out?
Interviewer: Do you use it going places?
Group: (Participant 2) No, only when you're going to a party, you can listen to music. (Participant 3) Like you wouldn't bring it out. (Participant 1) If you're going on a jog or a walk or something, then I bring it out. [Group 10b: female]

The heuristic approach of teenagers/young people is to reconfigure their sense experiences through media technologies. One could argue that this approach is a precursor to what Dyson (2009) calls the cyborgization of the senses; a process whereby one's perceptual processes are enhanced or altered through the embedding of technology into the body (Haraway 1991).

Mapping Sound

Within the focus groups the participants worked with sound maps (see: Figure 10). The maps were intended to explore how one understands or places soundscapes within geographic territories, by designating spaces of sound, noise, or ambiguous soundscapes, and identifying spaces where the keynote sounds[3] were non-directional and consequently hard to describe or place.

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[3] The "keynote sound" is the fundamental tone of a space and is analogous to a musical term, for example, the sounds of forklift trucks moving crates within a market space.

Figure 10. Sound map created with first school.

Figure 11. Sound pyramid.

Source: Self-elaboration.

Figure 12. Sound pyramid made by group b3.
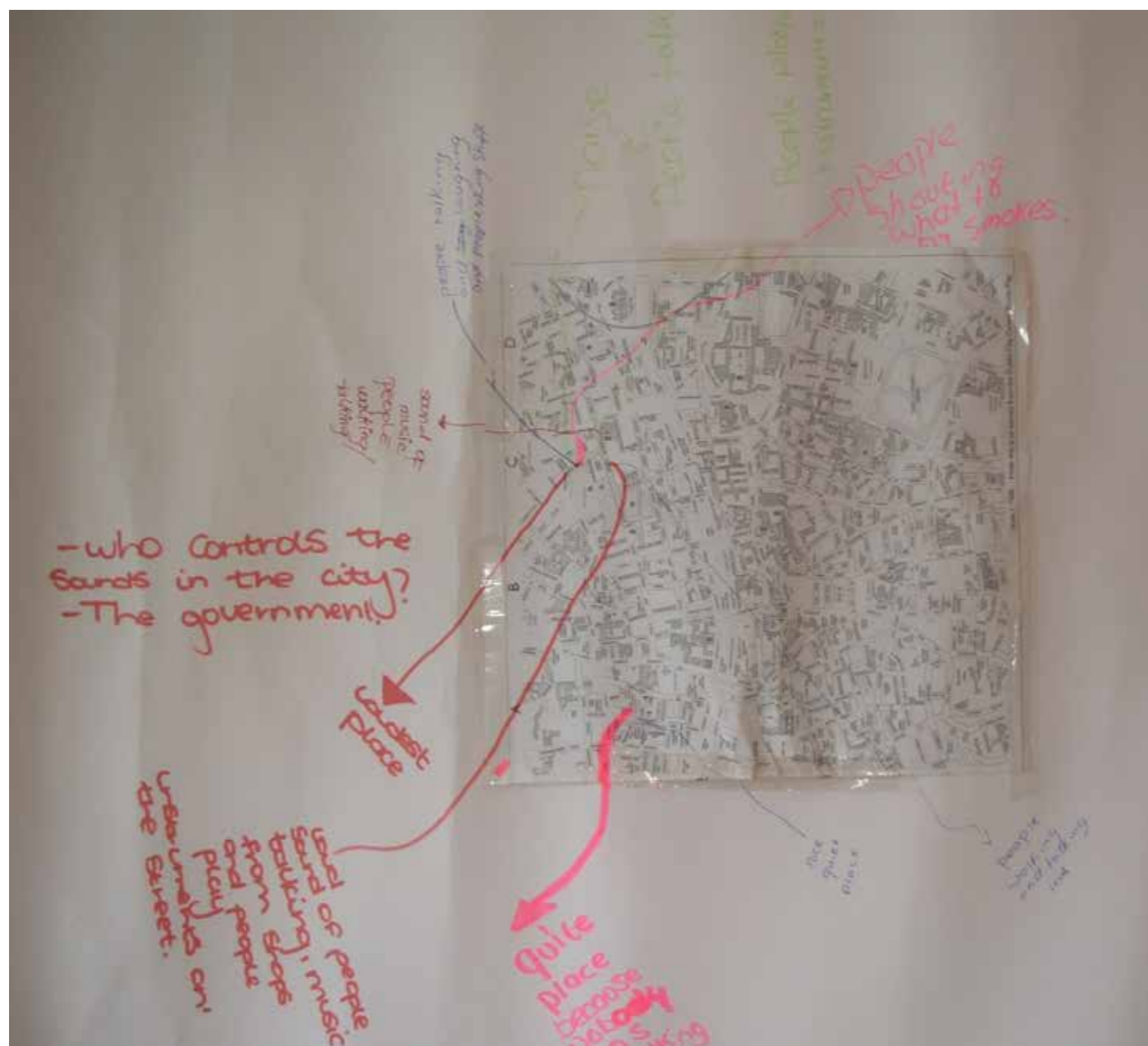
It was not my intention to have a cartographic narrative of space, as this would involve flattening out the landscape, a process which—de Certeau (1988) argues—ignores the processes of walking and experiencing space. These maps were intended to explore how we could look at a space geographically and designate spaces of sound, noise, and spaces of alteration.

The map was altered twice during the fieldwork phase, the first iteration created problems simply because these maps were primarily focused on specific sites and points of reference, it was decided that a sound pyramid would replace the geographical map. This involved removing the markers of physical space, such as lines and trajectories, and replacing them with a sonic construct (see: Figure 11).
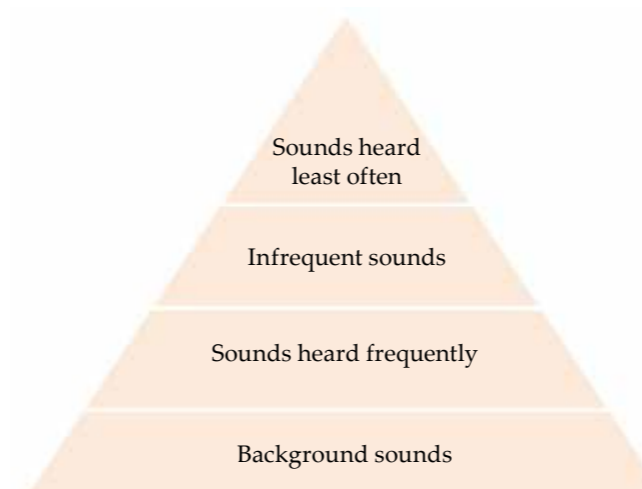
The sound pyramid is based on the concept of sound as three-dimensional. The design of the pyramid guides the participants to think of sound in terms of layers, each one sitting on top of the other (see: Figure 11 and Figure 12). Acoustically this is not the case, however, as a visual prompt it worked better than the maps in stimulating a discussion. The students were asked to see the bottom layer of the pyramid as the space for sounds that are constantly around them or in the background, and the top layer as sounds that are heard less frequently. The sound pyramid created a very different focus, a more discursive process, in general, it allowed individual voices to emerge within the group. It also created a debate over what constituted key sounds in a space.

Interviewer: What is a sound that you always hear?
Group: You know, you can always hear yourself thinking…
Group: When we're off to get the bus everyday like, we're always hearing drug addicts shouting and stuff like.

Interviewer: Write that down.
Group: Sorry? I didn't know if we could put that in…
Group: People talking would be at a higher level if you know what I mean.
Interviewer: Do you think?
Group: Cause they're talking directly to you…
Group: Ye, always hear whistles from my house cause the back entrance of it goes into St. Anne's park, so I always hear it at breakfast. [Group 6d: male]

The sound maps also highlighted differences of assigning meaning and importance to sounds within the city, these differences were noted between the genders and between the social classes. In exploring sound in the environment, the use of space, and the meaning of sounds, it was apparent in some instances that gender played a part in the construction of meaning. In the schools, there were instances when gendered practices of listening and making sounds became obviously different. Their behaviors in public spaces were dissimilar, boys made

Linda O'Keeffe

Thinking Through New Methodologies. Sounding Out the City With Teenagers

a point of making sounds or shouting while on the soundwalks, whilst girls walked in small clusters, whispering. Sometimes the participants highlighted differences in the genders in sound production; for example, the male participants argued that girls talked for longer on the phone, were more demanding of attention, and were louder when in groups. Additionally, the researcher noted that the female participants described sound environments differently, often professing to love or hate sounds, in a dramatic manner.

Group: (Participant 2) Aw do you know what, I love the sound of wind. (Participant 1) Yeah, the leaves on the wind did you ever get, on like a real cold night, like coming up to Christmas, right, you just stay, you just stay in, and it's, and it's lashings of rain, and it's so windy and you watch a film, have a cup of hot chocolate. (Participant 1) Aw yeah. (Group) I hate the traffic sounds. (Participant 1) I hate ambulance and police. (Participant 2) Aw yeah. [Group 11b: female]

Group: (Participant 1) I hate the traffic sounds. (Participant 5) I hate ambulance and police. (Participant 3) Aw yeah. (Participant 2) I hate that. (Participant 1) Yeah. (Participant 2) Like in the middle of a nice day and if you're asleep and its deafening and the police just fly past my window. (Participant 1) I hate that, I like the noise of town, but I hate when addicts are shouting, just shouting.
Interviewer: You hear that a lot?
Group: (Group) Yeah. Yeah. (Participant 2) Like when its football night I can hear them on the street shouting [laughter]. (Participant 4) I love that, you know, when Ireland were playing it's just the best atmosphere ever. [Group 10b: female]

For the boys, the sounds of emergency services, annoying as they might be, were seen and described as necessary:

Interviewer: What about sounds that you don't like?
Group: (Participant 1) Not really. (Participant 2) But, you wouldn't be bothered by it anymore because like it's normal.
Interviewer: If someone said to you, look, if there is a sound that you don't like in the city, a sound that you're really bothered by, and we'll take it out, we'll actually remove it...
Group: (Participant 4) I don't know, I can't think of anything.
Interviewer: You would keep everything [sounds] that there is?
Group: (Participant 3) Probably. (Participant 1) Like there is nothing that I can think of that is so like annoying I want it gone. (Participant 2) The ambulance sirens they have to keep them because they are transporting someone. [Group 2c: male]

Interviewer: Would you describe the city as sound or noise?
Group: Noise. (Group response) Noise.
Interviewer: Really?
Group: Noise with sound.
Interviewer: And then, so are you seeing that in the negative?
Group: Yeah. (Participant 1) Yeah. (Participant 2) Basically yeah. (Participant 3) There's a lot of car horns and… (Participant 2) Ambulances. (Participant 5) But it's not like it's noisy when we're there, if ye get me, it's not like ye get in a bad mood if you're walking through town, the noise is just there, we're used to it now, it's kinda blocked out, it is noisy, it's not like pleasant to hear police sirens. [Group 4d: male]

On the soundwalks, the researcher also observed the female participants, when walking by groups of young teenage boys, alter their behavior, becoming more muted in their speech. This highlights how gender separation in schools may impact on teenagers behavior—sound production—in public, particularly when they meet (Pipher 2005; Kimmel 2009). This may be one of the reasons why the participants, particularly the boys, define gendered differences in sound production.

Group: I don't like to be sexist here, but if there's more women, there's more sounds, more noise actually. Yup.
Interviewer: So would you think that women make more noise than men?
Group: (Group response) Yes.
Interviewer: In what way?
Group: [They find it difficult to describe what they mean] (Participant 1) They talk loud. (Participant 2) Women they can't have quiet time either to themselves and are constantly talking. (Participant 3) And when they do, they want perfect conditions. (Participant 2) Girls would be on the phone to their mates, lads just don't have any of that. [Group 4d: male]

In one group, the girls stated that they would ring girls to chat, but "wouldn't ring fellas" (Group 8b). This suggests the unusualness of girls talking to boys both through mediated technologies and in public spaces, perhaps indicative of the gendered education where girls and boys are separated through early childhood and then adolescents. During one lunch break, the researcher noted:

I was standing in the main foyer where the students congregate when changing classes or going on their lunch break. There is a room of this area, which is a canteen.

There is no canteen in the other schools. While standing there, I heard shouting, whistling, laughing a bell ringing. Nobody tries to have order, the teachers just move through the noise. The boys gather in groups and talk loud, what is interesting is that it seems like all of the boys must be talking, however, on closer inspection, a group may consist of 5 to 8 boys, gathered close together, while 3 or 4 at most might be talking loudly, the rest are just standing and listening. I noted this in a lot of male groups. This is very different to my visit to (2nd girls school) where during the break the girls were restricted to their classrooms with a female teacher walking up and down the corridor, telling them to "keep it down," "keep quiet," and "behave." [Researcher's notes, 2011]

It is in these very differences of perception that one could argue for gendered soundscapes; sounds that perhaps exclude or include gender into a space, or that a space may produce or repress a gender's sound. The concept of gendered sounds is found throughout history. Schwartz (2011) argues that the female voice has, throughout history, been associated with noise, aggression, and possession, but also seduction. The devaluing of women in society, including the suppression and segregation of their voices, was—he argues—part of a move to supplant women from positions of power. The silencing of women today in public is not restricted to religion, or even a particular culture; there are distinct processes in play within various cultures to suppress the sound of women (Fortune and Enger 2005; Konrad 2006). Within this research, most of the female participants stated that their spaces for hanging out with friends were generally in a house or bedroom, whereas the male participants discussed hanging out outside. The older participants offered similar views, the women

remembered as teenagers hanging out at home with friends or at least staying close to where they lived. Conversely, the older male participants would bring their portable music devices, that is, radios, on to street corners or into parks, whereas the women remembered listening to the radio with their friends in their bedrooms or sitting rooms. Kimmel (2009:197) argues that "boys and girls learn—and teach each other—what are the appropriate behaviors and experiences for boys and girls and make sure that everyone acts according to plan." The public performance of sound or expression is situated within different arenas, both public and private, for each gender.

Conclusion

The moment is very important when exploring the perception of space and sound. Schafer (1977) argues that in certain conditions the experience of sounds in space can be radically different. Air pressure, for example, can alter how sound diffuses through space, thus altering our perception of place. The different rhythms of the city (night-time sounds and day-time sounds) are shaped by different working and social activities (Lefebvre 1992). Throughout a week, month, or year the city will undergo constant changes to its soundscape. Blesser and Salter (2009) argue that there are shifting spatial definitions and practices which shape one's understanding and experience of the soundscape. For example, a tourist in Smithfield might not be able to immediately interpret sound cues they cannot see, local sounds, for example. They must rely on visual cues to understand these sounds. Additionally, having no historical or community connection to these sounds, they will not be imbedded or resonate within their social lives with

any meaning. However, for most people, the sounds of a market are not necessarily new, so meaning will be attributed from other connections or memories to similar sound types.

Blesser and Salter (2009:34) argue that in most public situations people construct what they describe as acoustic architecture or "territorial bubbles." These bubbles act to both enclose and excluded people within and from sound. Therefore, examining the soundscape requires an interrogation into spatial design and spatial use, as architecture and the design of space play a part in how one experiences and produces sound within space (Cain et al. 2008; Augé 2009). One must also examine the approach taken by urban planners in reshaping space (Hamnett 1991; Moore 1999; Peillon and Corcoran 2004). Thus, one must interrogate the social constructs that influenced the redesign of public and private spaces within Smithfield.

Combining methods, which examine sound as an immersive social experience, connected to all aspects of life, means using approaches not typical in social research. Methods such as soundwalking, deep listening, and even sound mapping have a basis within in numerous studies examining the urban sound experience (Gell-Mann and Tsallis 2004; Venot and Sémidor 2006; Adams et al. 2008; Cain et al. 2008). However, the exploration of the qualia (the qualitative aspects of conscious experience) highlights the seldom-explored phenomena of sound as integral to spatial relations and community (Augoyard 1979; Degen 2008). Therefore, the design of a method to explore sound and its meaning involves the exploration of fields of research outside of sociology, it demands an interdisciplinary approach.

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Endnotes

1   The lettering and numbering are tied to the use of Excel for analyzing the data, and are somewhat random.

2   The size of the first focus group occurred as a result of miscommunication between researcher and staff, however, the group discussion occurred and was recorded, and whilst too large for a proper focus group, still created a dynamic discussion.

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Politically Sensitive Encounters: Ethnography, Access, and the Benefits of "Hanging Out"

Abstract   Negotiating politically sensitive research environments requires both a careful consideration of the methods involved and a great deal of personal resolve. In drawing upon two distinct yet comparable fieldwork experiences, this paper champions the benefits of ethnographic methods in seeking to gain positionality and research legitimacy among those identified as future research participants. The authors explore and discuss their use of the ethnographic concept of "hanging out" in politically sensitive environments when seeking to negotiate access to potentially hard to reach participants living in challenging research environments. Through an illustrative examination of their experiences in researching commemorative rituals in Palestine and mental health in a Northern Irish prison, both authors reflect upon their use of "hanging out" when seeking to break down barriers and gain acceptance among their target research participants. Their involvement in a range of activities, not directly related to the overall aims of the research project, highlights a need for qualitative researchers to adopt a flexible research design, one that embraces serendipitous or chance encounters, when seeking to gain access to hard to reach research participants or when issues of researcher legitimacy are particularly pronounced, such as is the case in politically sensitive research environments.

Keywords   Fieldwork; Ethnography; Hanging Out; Politically Sensitive Environments; Researcher Legitimacy

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There are many challenges facing the budding field worker hoping to conduct ethnographic research in conflicted or politically sensitive environments. Nordstrom and Robben's (1995) edited volume reveals the risk ethnographers take, both personally and professionally, in order to voice the experiences of people and communities living in conflict regions. Meanwhile, more recent reflections on conducting research in "difficult circumstances" have highlighted the broader issues that researchers must contend with, including gaining access, negotiating security, overcoming suspicion, as well as at times managing an outsider identity, retaining objectivity and appreciating cultural sensitivity (Sriram et al. 2009). In addition, generating research legitimacy in areas widely regarded to be politically sensitive, both in terms of location and research substance, is said to be crucial (Knox 2001). Consequently, it has been argued by others who have conducted fieldwork in conflicted regions that research participants, and the communities of which they are part, act on what they see to be true rather than the paper credentials of the researcher (Sluka 1990; Shirlow and McEvoy 2008). In seeking to generate trust and rapport within politically sensitive environments, the issue of visibility in the eyes of those with whom the research is to be conducted becomes of crucial importance. Following these insights, the authors decided to reflect on their own experiences of seeking access to research sites that were politically sensitive, namely Palestine and a prison in the north of Ireland. Although markedly different, these two research contexts share a similar characteristic that designates them as politically sensitive to researchers: a cultural context of historic and current ethno-political violence. Fragmented culturally, socially, and politically, these environments raised pointed issues of identity and positionality that, at times, situated the researchers as suspicious "others"; they thus required careful consideration of their "presentation of self" (Goffman 1959). In turn, how they approached the field, their behavior within it, and the nature of their visibility thus became a crucial dimension in their personal and professional relationships with the people they engaged with. Critical reflection on separate experiences, with striking parallels, lead the authors to argue that "hanging out," both as a method and a sensibility, enables researchers to build meaningful relationships, develop inter-personal rapport, and foster mutual trust with potentially reticent or reluctant research participants. Informal modes of engagement, we argue, thus act as a crucial precursor to gaining access to research sites that would otherwise be inaccessible if approached formally. "Hanging out," the authors conclude, should then be viewed as a complimentary means of gaining access to politically sensitive research sites.

"Hanging out" has been considered a cornerstone of the ethnographic method, particularly within anthropology. Clifford Geertz (1998) coined the phrase *deep* "hanging out" to define the method of physical, informal, and prolonged immersion within a cultural environment in order to gather data. Typically then, "hanging out" has been conceived of instrumentally, that is, as a means to gather knowledge and insights, with participant-observation generally used to "understand acts and actors as much as possible from within their own frame of reference" (Yanow 2007:409). This can lead some to

view "hanging out" to be a relatively small element of the overall research design: "ethnographic work is only 5% visible fieldwork versus 95% preparation, analysis, synthesis, and communication" (Jordan and Dalal 2006:368). However, we argue that "hanging out" is not merely about data extraction, but a delicate process that plays a crucial role in establishing researcher's positionality prior to and during fieldwork. As Kawulich (2011:65) notes: "striking up conversations with community members while 'hanging out' and becoming known as a regular helps the researcher establish a position with which others may become comfortable." However, "hanging out" can also lead researchers to be regarded with suspicion, if their role is unclear and/or ambiguous, by actors in the field (see: Magolda 2000). Such a view has been long established, with Becker's (1963) insights in the seminal text on the sociology of deviance particularly applicable. In environments of tension, or what we refer to as "politically sensitive" environments, the judged regularly view their judgers as outsiders. In such situations, the researcher's approach and behavior are vital in negating suspicion and developing rapport (see: Gustavson and Cytrynbaum 2003). Consequently, some researchers take active roles among the groups they research (Adler and Adler 1987; 2012), which in turn provides opportunities to engage with people informally, build trust, and gain access to research participants that may have otherwise been inaccessible or reticent to take part if approached formally (see: Bolognani 2007; Valentine 2007; Huschke 2013). The issues surrounding researcher's positionality, the roles they adopt, their behaviors, and the actors they align with are particularly pertinent in political-

ly sensitive environments: cultural settings where there exists heightened concern over the motives of researchers and where research outputs can unintentionally have damaging repercussions for participants (see: Feenan 2002; Bell 2013). Drawing on these insights, the authors reflect on their own experiences of "hanging out," not simply as a method to obtain information and knowledge, but as a precursory mode of engagement in order to facilitate access to politically sensitive research environments. They contest that "hanging out," in the form of purposeful and meaningful engagement, can make the researcher visible and help them to establish a culturally appropriate identity that in turn erodes suspicion of them as researcher "other." Comparing similar experiences in different settings not only adds strength to the authors' general treatise but also illuminates the importance of being critically aware of the political context in which researchers seek to engage. The discussion begins with a journey to Palestine.

"Hanging Out" in Palestine

In 2010, Browne embarked on a period of fieldwork in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (hereinafter Palestine) in order to investigate the public performance of memory in a region famed for its instability in terms of regional conflict. Browne's ongoing research explores the manner in which the annual *Nakba* commemorations on the 15th May are organized simultaneously by political elites as a means of strengthening a shared Palestinian identity, and also as events that are used as powerful tools of the downtrodden, particularly marginalized groups, including Palestinian refugees, and those who

represent them: Palestinian non-governmental organizations (PNGO's). In designing the research framework, it was considered appropriate to focus solely on qualitative methods deriving from the ethnographic tradition: semi-structured interviews with those involved in the organization and delivery of the commemorations, and participant observations at the events, with a view to analyzing intra-group solidarity at the memorial practices as they played out in public. A database of potential research respondents had been gathered over the course of the previous year, aided by prior trips made to the region, considered best practice by others who have previously worked in conflict zones (Sluka 1990). Potential interviewees were targeted to cover a diverse range of perspectives from across civic and political society, including members of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), political parties (Fateh, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP], and Hamas), Palestinian non-governmental organizations (PNGO's), and Palestinian activist groups. This combination of methods, it was hoped, would generate the requisite "thick description" (Geertz 1973) needed to gain a deeper understanding of the negotiated construction of the selected commemorative events.

Palestine represents a politically sensitive environment in which to conduct research given the ongoing occupation and seemingly intractable nature of the conflict with the Israeli state. Similarly, the internally fractious nature of Palestinian political governance adds to the sensitivity in the region, with the land commonly referred to as Palestine (Pappe 2006) divided geographically in two: the

West Bank and Gaza Strip, both areas which (at the time of writing) are governed separately by the two most dominant rival political factions, Fateh and Hamas. In addition, a broad and ideologically diverse range of Palestinian political factions garner significant popular support across the region. All of which adds to the contested and factional nature of the political landscape in Palestine and helps to generate an atmosphere of justifiable suspicion which can result in outsider researchers having their research motives questioned (Norman 2009; Radsch 2009). The success of the research therefore hinged upon careful negotiation in order to gain access. Whereas other conflict researchers have championed the snowball sampling method (SSM) as a means of overcoming suspicion and mistrust in politically charged environments (Sluka 1990; Knox 2001; Cohen and Arieli 2011), the arguments both authors make is that whilst chain referral and SSM are important, gaining access in these selected politically sensitive environments involved significant periods of time spent "hanging out" in the areas of enquiry. For Browne, "hanging out" unquestionably aided in generating researcher legitimacy, helping to open the door to a wide range of research respondents, from Palestinian refugees to political elites.

In advance of arriving in Palestine, detailed letters explaining the aims and objectives of the research were sent to those respondents with whom Browne had targeted with a view towards smoothing the transition into the field and in an attempt to generate research legitimacy with intended research participants. These letters were sent on official headed notepaper from Queen's

University Belfast and accompanying contact details of the supervisory team involved in overseeing the research. Despite seemingly meticulous advance preparation, all attempted correspondence fell on deaf ears. None of the letters sent were responded to. Similarly, it proved difficult to make contact with Palestinian political representatives and Palestinian non-governmental organizations via e-mail from behind a desk in Belfast. Such issues have been discussed in the literature focusing on the challenges associated with gaining access to elites in the Middle East (Radsch 2009); and it soon became apparent that official letters and e-mail communication were not a sufficient means to obtain trust or establish any form of rapport with targeted research participants. It would later become clear that communicating from afar was not appropriate given the politically sensitive nature of the research, and this was articulated as one of the reasons why Browne did not receive any advance communication. This was in stark contrast to previous research experience in Belfast in which "official" letters were a crucial means of generating researcher legitimacy resulting in gaining access to meetings with targeted respondents, many of whom were political elites. The result being, that upon arrival in the field, only a few "loose" contacts had been made, those gathered during previous fieldtrips, a situation one would consider unsatisfactory and daunting when seeking to begin a prolonged period of fieldwork.

For Browne, generating trust and rapport with groups and individuals in Palestine required a combination of perseverance, luck, and a reliance on personal recommendation (*wasta*)[1] built up over time. As a result, of most importance were the enduring personal connections made during chance encounters whilst "hanging out" in public spaces. Ensuring a visible presence at as many public events as possible across the West Bank, where it was conceivable that a wide-range of potential research participants would be in attendance, was deemed crucial. This served the dual purpose of increasing personal familiarity with both the region itself, as well as with key stakeholders working on issues related to the research, namely, commemoration and refugee rights. As such, "hanging out" at events not directly linked to the research aims increased the likelihood of being recognized at future public memorial events. Ethnographic access, as others have shown (see: Atkinson and Hammersley 1994), is not limited to the moment of entry into a social world; it is an ongoing process (Woodward 2008:551). Following this, Gottlieb (2006) has highlighted the benefits of *advanced hanging out* as a way of building trust and developing rapport with potential research respondents. Embracing the concept of "hanging out," however, also requires attention to cultural practices, for example, in the Middle East most informal conversations involve a cup of coffee (Norman 2009; Radsch 2009). For Browne, a caffeine addiction became an unavoidable, if not welcome, side-effect of this form of ethnographic practice. He would often spend mornings and afternoons "hanging out" with Palestinian

[1] Translated from Arabic, meaning "clout," or more commonly known as "who you know." It refers to one's personal connections and in the situation described is used to refer to a form of chain referral used whilst spending time working in Palestine. For further discussion on the term and how it was useful when conducting research in the Middle East, see: Radsch (2009) and Norman (2009).

Shabab[2] in the coffee shops of Ramallah in an attempt to meet with as many politicized young men as possible. Chance encounters and faces that grew familiar led to discussions of politics and the upcoming *Nakba* commemorations. This initial embedding process, over a broken 6 month period, acted as the vital means of breaking down cultural barriers, which in turn aided in the generation of trust and researcher legitimacy in an area dogged by covert surveillance and intra-communal suspicion. If we agree, as both authors do, that the "epistemology of ethnography lies in the interaction between individuals and the subsequent reciprocity of perspectives between social actors in their natural environment" (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994:256), then it follows that culturally appropriate "hanging out" greatly aids the chance of generating positive and meaningful relationships with potential research respondents, leading ultimately to the requisite production of knowledge. This form of chance ethnographic encounter, whether serendipitous or not, generates researcher legitimacy, particularly in politically sensitive environments, leading to the strengthening of relationships between researcher and potential research participants. Thus allowing for more informed observation and analysis of the social environment in which one is hoping to conduct research and greatly increasing the likelihood of future participant compliance in potential interviews.

What Browne has previously referred to as the growing fetishism for research in conflicted or politically sensitive environments (Browne and

[2] Translated from Arabic, meaning "young men," or "youth."

Moffett 2014) has, in his experience, resulted in justifiable reluctance on behalf of local groups and individuals in Palestine to willingly engage in research projects with overly zealous and enthused researchers, some of whom foolishly promise the world in terms of dissemination of research findings and subsequent demonstrable change, but predictably deliver relatively little. Aspects of poor practice by researchers, including a failure to treat potential respondents who sacrifice time and emotional energy as active and reflexive participants in the research,[3] have, in Browne's experience rendered accessing respondents for research in Palestine, a more challenging endeavor. Heeding the advice of colleagues in Belfast, many of whom have been research participants engaged in studies relating to the conflict in Northern Ireland, Browne ensured his visibility in Palestine through active engagement in a wide range of socio-political activities, including becoming aligned to the leading Palestinian human rights NGO focusing on refugee and residency rights in the region,[4] spending regular periods of time in their onsite library, and meeting with staff members in a non-formal manner (for a coffee, of course). Much time was spent travelling to and from Bethlehem, attending the offices of the NGO, and taking part in informal meetings at every opportunity with the result being the generation of familiarity between Browne as an outsider and staff in the NGO. This in turn helped to create a sense of trust and rapport with

[3] For a useful discussion on this issue, see: Moe Ali Nayel's reflections from Sabra refugee camp, Lebanon. "Palestinian Refugees Are Not at Your Service." *The Electronic Intifada.* Retrieved December 05, 2014 (http://electronicintifada.net/people/moe-ali-nayel).
[4] BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights.

members of staff whom Browne would later go on to interview formally for research purposes. The importance of this informal relationship building lay with the fact that Browne's personal credentials and legitimacy as a researcher working in Palestine were vouched for (*wasta*) and subsequently extended to other likeminded individuals with whom he informally met. This greatly aided in expanding upon the initial network of research respondents identified, leading to a high profile invitation to attend a series of important political meetings, including the first meeting in March 2010 of the National High Committee for the Commemoration of the Nakba.

Despite attempts made to generate researcher legitimacy, on one occasion Browne's position as an outsider in the region, that is, a non-Palestinian, proved an insurmountable barrier to gaining access despite the various personal recommendations made on his behalf. Such a failure stemmed from bureaucratic wrangling and an inability on behalf of Browne to convince them that he was best placed to properly research the *Nakba* commemorations from an outsider's perspective. On this occasion, Browne was forced to abandon attempts to gather research participants together to explore the political and factional issues surrounding commemoration of the *Nakba* at a roundtable discussion he had planned. Whereas, for some, meeting with an Irish researcher in private was permissible, gathering to discuss contentious issues, such as refugee rights and the right of return, with someone who was an outsider facilitating intra-group dialogue was considered inappropriate. Through this process Browne realized that although "hanging out" could open many

doors during his time in the field, ultimately *wasta* was circumscribed by the fractious political context, the backdrop against which the work was being conducted. Although not detrimental to the overall aims of the research, the collapse of the proposed roundtable discussion resulted in much personal reflection as recorded in a series of research diaries meticulously kept whilst engaged in fieldwork.[5]

"Hanging Out" in Prison

In 2011, McBride began investigating personality disorder policy and practice within Northern Ireland's criminal justice system (see: DHSSPS 2010). "Personality disorder" is a diagnosable mental health disorder (see: WHO 1992; APA 2000) that 60-80% of the prison population is said to have (DHSSPS 2010). The goal of the research was not traditional in orientation, that is, aimed at evaluating the relative success of the implementation of the policy (see: Fischer, Miller, and Sidney 2007; Hill 2009; Thissen and Walker 2013), but interpretative (see: Yanow 2007), that is, aimed at investigating the way policy acts as a discursive "meaning-making" device. To probe the meaning-making around personality disorder, McBride employed a policy-ethnography research design (see: Shore and Wright 1997; Schatz 2009; Shore, Wright, and Però 2011). This consisted of participant observation, semi-structured interviews with key actors, for example, (ex)prisoners, mental health service users, healthcare staff, prison staff, as well as policy-makers, and document analysis. However, gaining access inside prisons in order

to conduct participant observation presents a difficult challenge as prisons across the world have been experienced as inaccessible, opaque, and constraining environments by researchers who have had to negotiate risk adverse ethical review committees, challenges of influential gatekeepers, and strict security procedures (see: Rhodes 2001; Wacquant 2002; Waldram 2009).

Accessing "behind the gate" in Northern Ireland has been even more challenging for researchers due to the 30 years of ethno-political conflict, which transformed Northern Ireland's prisons into sites of ideological warfare (Feldman 1991). During the 1980s, the UK government's policy of internment without trial tripled the prison population, political prisoners embarked on a hunger strike that resulted in the deaths of ten Republican prisoners, and prison officers became legitimate targets of political violence. This series of events, in effect, made prisons a "no-go" area for researchers and produced a security focused culture within Northern Ireland's Prison Service (NIPS) that continues today (Shirlow and McEvoy 2008; PRT 2011). Consequently, little to no ethnographic research has been conducted in Her Majesty's Prison (HMP) Maghaberry, Northern Ireland's largest and only maximum security prison.

Gaining access to HMP Maghaberry, as part of an ethnographic investigation of mental health policy and practice within Northern Ireland's criminal justice system, therefore presented a daunting task for McBride. It began with a lengthy application process with ORECNI, the Research Ethics Service within the Northern Ireland's Health and Social

Care System/National Health Service (NHS). The three and a half month process included completing a 57-page online form, writing an 18-page research protocol, which had to be peer-reviewed by two academics, as well as submitting McBride's curriculum vitae along with those of my academic supervisors. Once approval was obtained, in a similar vein to Browne above, McBride sought access by requesting a formal meeting with prison management. This was accepted and a meeting was held with a senior manager of the NIPS and a senior governor of HMP Maghaberry in March 2012. A frank conversation over a cup of coffee revealed openness to the research; the timing was said to be *impeccable* and the topic *excellent*. The fact that the project focused on a Department of Health policy, and could potentially support the development of services within the prison, appeared beneficial. However, despite the willingness of management to facilitate the research, there was an obvious ethical and practical conundrum for both parties: in what capacity could McBride enter the prison? Prisons are not an average ethnographic environment as most people the researcher will interact with have lost their liberty. Prisoners' everyday actions, for example, eating, using the telephone, exercising, et cetera, are regulated by rules and procedures. There is thus an ethical conundrum of informed consent and the risk of unintentional coercion. To simply insert McBride into the environment to observe prisoners and staff was simply out of the question.

One means of circumnavigating this ethical conundrum was for McBride to enter the prison on a voluntary basis and deliver a skill-based activity,

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[5] The benefits of which have been espoused in other recently published works on conducting research in politically sensitive regions (Browne 2013).

such as a reading or writing course. This would legitimize his position within the prison and enable prisoners (and staff) to decide whether they wanted to engage with him by choosing to participate in the activity. Subsequently, McBride hoped such a role would help him to develop meaningful relationships with prisoners and staff in such a way that was not considered intrusive or invasive. However, despite his university education, McBride's lack of formal training qualifications proved to be a bureaucratic hurdle. Although this formal approach had made the research(er) visible to senior management staff, a point not to be discounted, ultimately they had more pressing concerns than develop a niche voluntary role for an enthusiastic researcher.

Like Browne above, what ultimately unlocked the prison gates was a mixture of luck, perseverance, and McBride's willingness to "hang out" at public events. In the month following the meeting, April 2012, McBride attended a conference focused on personality disorder. Flagrant self-promotion at the time of coffee and lunch breaks during this two-day conference led to an invitation to join Northern Ireland's Regional Personality Disorder Strategy Implementation Group (RPDIG). This group, which met on a monthly basis, brought together operational staff from across health and criminal justice agencies in charge of developing personality disorder services across Northern Ireland. These meetings provided a window into the way in which the strategy was being implemented on a regional basis across Northern Ireland and also led McBride to be invited to visit HMP Maghaberry by a healthcare professional. An initial visit,

in May 2012, was highly insightful, yet there was still no obvious role McBride could adopt. However, over the next five months, McBride attended monthly RPDIG meetings and other policy events, such as training courses. Regular participation at such events made McBride visible to the "policy community" and enabled him to establish an identity, somewhat dubiously, as a research expert. Favorably, the British and Irish Group for the Study of Personality Disorder's (BIGSPD) annual conference was due to be held in Belfast in February 2013. McBride's willingness to participate led to him being asked to co-facilitate an art exhibition. The art work would be produced by prisoners who utilized a mental health day center in HMP Maghaberry, and later publically displayed in conjunction with the BIGSPD conference. With a "local champion," and support from prison management, negotiating the complex array of bureaucratic procedures required to gain security clearance was in actuality relatively straightforward. Perseverance, a degree of fortune, willingness to engage, and support from others thus presented an opportunity for McBride to gain access to HMP Maghaberry from the ground up.

With access came a practical challenge, namely, McBride's positionality in relation to prisoners and staff. Early on, McBride decided that it was vital to maintain an independent identity in attempt to not be too closely identified or aligned with either inmates or staff due to the hierarchical and conflictual nature of the prison environment. Fostering a neutral identity, devoid of institutional allegiances, McBride felt, would in turn enable him to build trust among both prisoners and staff. The

voluntary role as an art facilitator therefore presented the ideal opportunity to carve out a position within the existing hierarchy that was anomalous. Nevertheless, much still depended on the way in which McBride *performed* this role.

Between October 2012 and February 2013, McBride visited HMP Maghaberry 15 times in the capacity as art facilitator for between two and four hours at a time. Art classes were held in the day center each Friday morning for two hours. McBride would arrive at the center before the prisoners in order to set up the art. This also offered an opportunity to get to know staff when prisoners were not around. Fortuitously, the art class coincided with "Friday fry-ups"; an initiative designed to coax prisoners out of their cells with a traditional breakfast fry and over to the day center. This provided McBride not only with a hearty meal but also an opportunity to sit and talk with prisoners about life in prison, his research, football results and also encourage them to take part in the art project. The majority of the time McBride spent in the art room working on pieces *with* prisoners. Drawing, painting, and molding clay together facilitated conversations about personal or sensitive issues that some of the art work sought to provoke. On occasion, McBride swapped the paint brush for a pool cue or table tennis racket to play a game with whoever the reigning champion was. When the prisoners left at lunch time, McBride would stay to tidy up the art room and again chat with staff.

The role of art facilitator thus provided an opportunity for McBride to engage with prisoners and staff in a designated position that legitimated his pres-

ence. Open and honest about his underlying motivation for volunteering, to research mental health in prison and get a feel for the experience of prison, McBride developed a niche identity within the day center. The temporal and spatial restrictions of McBride's presence made it an unconventional and, to some extent, formalized mode of "hanging out," and is thus better conceived as a *sensibility*. Informal in dress and appearance, McBride stuck out from uniformed staff and was often mistaken for a prisoner by visitors to the day center. Meanwhile, his cultural familiarity, having grown up in Belfast, meant he was able to relate with many prisoners; predominately young men from inner city areas. Thus McBride was able to establish an anomalous position within the established prison hierarchy. In this way, McBride built meaningful relationships with prisoners and staff alike. Prolonged visibility combined with a relatively unorthodox means of engaging with everyone within the day center led McBride to establish an identity beyond that of "researcher" and helped him to garner trust with those he engaged with (see: Waldram 2009). Becoming a person rather than merely a researcher proved essential in recruiting staff, who were initially wary of McBride's motives, to conduct semi-structured interviews. This in turn led to a further 10 visits to HMP Maghaberry to conduct interviews, gather more observations, and get involved in other initiatives.

For McBride, "hanging out" thus enabled him to become a visible and trusted actor within the personality disorder policy community, as well as the prison environment. Deep "hanging out," that is, attendance at conferences, participation

at meetings, personal conversations around the art table, as well as observations of the interactions between different groups of actors, provided a wealth of information and data that provided a window into the way in which personality disorder shapes perceptions, identities, and—ultimately—impacts, either implicitly or explicitly, on people's lives. However, "hanging out" was not just a method of knowledge production, but became a sensibility that enabled McBride to establish his positionality within the field. As espoused by Browne above, "hanging out" enabled McBride to develop a legitimized identity within multiple social arenas that eroded suspicion of him as researcher "other" and facilitated access into an environment that has historically been a "no-go" area for researchers. The benefits of McBride's approach have subsequently been illuminated by two colleagues engaged in research projects aimed at eliciting the experiences of prison staff, both of whom have found gaining access to be a major problem (one due to bureaucratic hurdles, the other due to problems recruiting participants). Although it would be naive to suggest that there are no other factors at play, it is relevant to note that both have attempted to gain access to interviewees through purely "official" routes and neither has used immersion within the prison environment as a means to gain access. For McBride, "hanging out" made him a visible actor, while his engagement revealed his personality to other actors; this in turn enabled him to develop trust and rapport with potentially suspicious actors that ultimately facilitated the gathering of data that may not otherwise have been possible had he simply approached the research field formally.

Conclusion

The experiences shared above, in research conducted in two diverse but equally politically sensitive environments, champion the benefits of "hanging out" in order to strengthen researcher legitimacy and ultimately gain access to hard-to-reach environments and potential research respondents who may be reticent to participate. The examples discussed reveal that "hanging out" in highly charged political environments greatly aided Browne and McBride's ability to negotiate complex issues concerning access by engaging with potential research participants in an informal manner. In politically sensitive environments in which ulterior motives of the researcher are commonly suspected, this form of *ad hoc* ethnographic research practice generates researcher and participant familiarity, which in turn, we suggest, helps to alleviate mistrust and suspicion. For both authors, diverse and informal means of engagement, that is, attending public events, drinking coffee, and picking up a paint brush, allowed the researchers to circumnavigate the barriers that formal mechanisms, such as written requests for meetings, had presented. This in turn enabled them as researchers to establish a role within these highly charged, politically sensitive environments. Developing visible positions within the research environment enabled both researchers to move beyond an identity of detached, and to some extent unwelcome, observer to a position of engaged actor that facilitated the development of meaningful relationships, facilitated mutual trust, and enhanced the researcher's legitimacy. We argue this in turn aided in accessing other poten-

tial research respondents through chain referral or snowball sampling methods, strengthening the understanding of the lived realities and everyday lives of those research participants who willingly gave up their time and energy to be involved in the research, with the outcome being that the researcher's standing within the research environment and among the research participants was greatly enhanced. To the extent that both Browne and McBride would argue that those taking part in their research had a greater degree of interest in the research findings and outputs as a result.[6]

In championing the merits of this form of ethnographic practice, both authors are persuaded by the views shared by Jordan and Dalal (2006) who have previously argued:

> [w]hat is required is an educational effort that makes clear that what looks like "just talking" or "just hanging out with those guys" is part of a rigorous methodology that worries about such things as validity and reliability and sample size and rival hypotheses. More critically, it entails accruing layers of experience through time by observing a range of phenomena across different sites. [p. 368]

However, in expanding upon their arguments, we suggest that "hanging out" assumes even great-

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[6] In May 2012, Browne returned to Palestine to present research findings gained as a result of time spent working in the region. He invited a number of those with whom he had closely worked with, including some who had been interviewed for the research to attend. Similarly, McBride, in conjunction with ex-prisoners, has organized a number of public exhibitions of the artwork produced in HMP Maghaberry. This highlights the close and enduring personal relationships both authors have retained with those whom they conducted the research.

er potential when the credibility and legitimacy of the researcher is under question, as is often the case when the research is conducted against the backdrop of ongoing or a history of sustained intra/inter-community conflict. We do not share these experiences as a means of providing a blueprint of how to gain access in politically sensitive environments—indeed, for some, bureaucratic or "official" channels may be sufficient—rather we provide them in order to highlight the potential benefits of "hanging out" as a means of generating researcher legitimacy and ultimately creating meaningful relationships with research participants in politically sensitive environments, many of whom remain highly marginalized or hard-to-reach populations (Cohen and Arieli 2011).

One final note would be to highlight that whilst there is no way of prescribing how researchers should "hang out" in politically sensitive environments, it is imperative that researchers are mindful of the ethical ramifications of their engagement with research participants, as well as the political repercussions of the publication of potentially sensitive research findings. In the absence of a rigorous checklist of do's and don'ts, one is forced to rely on a personal sensibility and sensitivity to perseverance, luck, and pro-active engagement. Therefore, we close in saying that engaged ethnography has benefits, but can be a challenging and daunting proposition. Ultimately, "hanging out" requires time, patience, and the personal resilience to render every challenging fieldwork encounter a research opportunity.

Acknowledgments

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Researching Children's Multiple Family Relations: Social Network Maps and Life-Lines as Methods

Abstract   Visual methods are reported to have certain advantages when conducting interviews on sensitive topics, such as intimate spaces, home-related ethical issues, and vulnerable families. In this article, we concentrate on two visual methods: social network maps and life-lines. In our research project on children's well-being and emotional security in multiple family relations, we collected data by interviewing children and asking them to complete social network maps and life-lines. We discuss the suitability of these two visual methods for describing children's close relationships with their family members and significant others. Combining these two methods during an interview process with children has not very often been tested. It is thus argued that these particular methods help a child to explain his or her family relations and life events. For the researcher interested in studying challenging and complex family relations, they can be extremely useful tools.

Keywords   Family Relations; Children; Life-Line Method; Social Network Maps; Visual Methods; Sensitive Issues

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The use of visual methods is a long-standing tradition in social science research. As Jacqui Gabb (2008) has suggested, family research can also benefit from various different visual techniques. Photographs, diagrams, and drawings, in particular, have been used to prompt and elaborate stories and memories (Pink 2004; Mason 2007; Sheridan, Chamberlain, and Dupuis 2011; see also: Brannen, Heptinstall, and Bhopal 2000; Punch 2002a; Darbyshire, MacDougall, and Schiller 2005; Konecki 2009). Visual methods are said to possess certain advantages, whether used alone or together with interviews, when addressing sensitive topics, such as intimate spaces, home-related ethical issues, and vulnerable families. When children are the focus of research, asking them to draw pictures or diagrams may be helpful when, for example, language limitations hinder them from expressing themselves adequately by word of mouth. Past and present experiences that cannot easily be articulated through language alone may find expression when visual and creative methods are combined with speech (Parry, Thomson, and Fowkes 1999; Darbyshire et al. 2005; Veale 2005; Wilson et al. 2007; Sheridan et al. 2011; see also: Phelan and Kinsella 2013).

In this article, we concentrate on two methodological tools: social network maps and life-lines. In our research project on children's well-being and emotional security in multiple family relations, we collected data by interviewing children and asking them to complete social network maps and life-lines. The purpose of social network maps is to capture children's family and other important relationships, with particular interest in how they define their family. In different studies, network maps with varying architectures have been used. In our study, we used maps that were divided into three sectors (family, relatives, and other important people) and three zones (closest, close, and remote), the child being in the middle of the map (see: Figure 1, p. 58). We asked children to freely add people important to them on the map. By using life-lines, we aimed at gathering information on the child's life history, in particular important transitions and events in the child's life. The life-line comprised both a horizontal line, which represented the whole life course from birth to the present day, and a vertical line, which represented the mood, positive or negative, connected to different life events (see: Figure 2, p. 61). The child marked the most significant events on the line and evaluated them.

The visual material collected in this study was thus produced by children in collaboration with the researchers. In this article, we both describe and reflect on our research experiences and discuss the suitability of these two visual methods for analyzing children's close relationships with their family members and significant others. We argue that by using and combining the two techniques, which are both visual and creative (Greene and Hill 2005; Veale 2005), with child interviews, a researcher stands to gain rewarding insights into children's perceptions and experiences of their lives and families. Combining these two methods during an interview process with children has not very often been tested: one of the few research efforts to utilize them simultaneously with other participatory methods is the Timescapes project (see, e.g., Weller and Edwards 2011).

Our purpose is to demonstrate that using visual methods and a mixed-method approach offers several advantages in collecting and analyzing qualitative data. First, visual methods furnish useful background information for the interviews; second, they provide rich independent data, a kind of visual architecture that is easy to analyze in itself; third, some children express themselves better by drawing and others by talking, hence combining these two modes can be expected to give better insights into children's experiences; fourth, as we discuss below, the specific social network map used in our study shows the multiple ways in which children understand the difference between their family and relatives, information which interviews alone would be unlikely to elicit; and fifth, the life-line method enables the incorporation of some of the advantag-

es of a qualitative longitudinal study in a research setting where it is not possible to follow children's lives for a longer period of time. Moreover, because we used social network maps and life-lines in an ethically sensitive research setting in which the participants' trust is of crucial importance, throughout the course of the article we raise ethical questions and highlight some of the challenges such a setting poses to researchers.

Background of the Study

The research data on using social network maps and life-lines referred to in this article concerns the research project on children's well-being and emotional security in multiple family relations. The project is multidisciplinary as it employs researchers from sociology, social work, education and psychology, and draws upon the theories and concepts used by these disciplines. The different disciplines complement each other in the project; for example, psychology and education give us insights into, for instance, emotions in families and into a child's development, including understanding of a key concept in our research, *emotional security*. Sociology and social work, in turn, help to reveal the meanings of family relationships and networks, and wider societal perspectives with regard to the structures and institutions that families and children are part of. The project was funded by the Academy of Finland (2010-2013).

The concept of *emotional security* refers to a child's social relationships, feelings, appraisals of trust, and sense of security in the context of family life. According to previous studies, emotional security

is an important link between the family environment, children's well-being, and child behavior problems (Cummings and Davies 1995; Davies and Cummings 1998; Davies, Winter, and Cicchetti 2006). The project at hand focuses in particular on children's personal understandings and emotions regarding their family relations and the challenges children face as a consequence of these relations (Andersson 2005; 2009; Holtan 2008; Pösö 2008). Therefore, we talk about *multiple* family relations. In the project, we interviewed children in different but often intertwined family situations: children living in foster families, who experience relationships with both biological and foster family members; children who have experienced physical or emotional violence, or have witnessed substance abuse within the family; children who have experienced parental divorce or separation and, as a result, come to experience residential and non-residential family relations; and children living in so-called nuclear families. These family relations cover the wide range of family situations that most children live in, including challenging and problematic ones. Family studies have been criticized for concentrating too much on the nuclear family or on the so-called proper family (Smith 1993; see also: Pösö 2008), and hence our purpose was to avoid an approach limited in this way.

Regardless of what type of family they live in, children experience multiple relations and connections that signify different things to them and offer different meanings. Some of these family relations are present in their daily lives, while others might only exist as memories or emotions. Many children have experiences of loss, separation, and anxiety deriv-

ing from their family relations, including events such as divorce of parents or grandparents or complex relationships with step-fathers or step-siblings. To be able to capture the multiple and challenging characteristics of a child's family relations, the use of innovative and versatile research methods is required. Family relations are emotionally laden and can import negative and positive effects and emotions into a child's life, the ones that are difficult for children to talk about. This is another reason for applying several research methods.

According to the contemporary sociology of childhood, it is important to provide children with the possibility to express their personal interpretations and thoughts, and to treat children as subjects instead of objects of the research (Eder and Fingerson 2002; Greene and Hogan 2005; see also: Roberts 2000; Ajodhia-Andrews and Berman 2009). Child and parent may view family relations very differently (Smart 2002). Our project is concerned, in particular, with capturing the child's perspective. In fact, children may sometimes comprehend complicated family relations differently from adults, and they can be very creative in defining who belongs to their family (Mason and Tipper 2008). However, researchers cannot ignore the fact that children need protection from adults, even when they are considered social actors (Eriksson and Näsman 2010).

Our interest in family relations also derives from awareness that family forms have changed considerably across the Western world. As Jokinen and Kuronen (2011) have stated on the basis of European comparative family studies, the most well-known

changes in family life include an increasing divorce and reconstitution rate, and an increasing number of children living outside their birth families (see also: Amato 2000; 2010). These changes have brought a need for studies from the child's point of view (Jokinen and Kuronen 2011). Families remain a child's most important growth environment and most significant source of emotional security and well-being. This applies to all families, biological and other.

The data gathered for the project on children's well-being and emotional security in multiple family relations consists of mobile phone-based diaries, thematic interviews, social network maps, and life-lines collected from a total of 64 children aged 7-15. Children at this age, while competent enough to take part in our study, are still to be considered "children." We were unable to include children under school age in our study since the use of mobile phone-based diaries requires them to be able to write fluently. Moreover, as Eriksson and Näsman (2010) state, school-aged children probably have more experience regarding interactions between children and adults outside the family than younger children, and are also more experienced in producing knowledge.

The data collection process began in two elementary schools, where the children were mainly living in nuclear families, single parent families, or reconstituted families. The schools recruited to the study were the ones that the researchers already had contact with, and located within a reasonable distance for interview purposes. This "familiarity" sped up the research process, as we were able to

implement the data collection almost immediately instead of trying to start the process from scratch. In the Finnish school system, there are generally no substantial differences between schools, either geographically or otherwise, and the schools participating in the study were "ordinary" primary schools. Other children, such as children living in foster families, or who had experienced or witnessed violence or substance abuse, were recruited to the study via appropriate child protection or domestic violence-related institutions and NGOs, such as Save the Children.

The research questions addressed by the project at hand were: (1) How do children develop and maintain degrees of emotional security in complex family situations? (2) What factors (e.g., the quality of social networks, roles of significant others, etc.) contribute to or hinder a child's emotional security in complex family situations? (3) How do children define and maintain their family relations in challenging life situations?

This article focuses on the social network maps and life-lines drawn by children for the purposes of our project. 64 children participated in the diary data collection, 41 of these children filled-in social network maps and life-lines, and we had permission to conduct interviews with 35 of them. We also asked for the consent of the children's parents and interviewed some of them. The data referred to in this article thus consists of network maps and life-lines collected from 41 children. Several methods were used to analyze the different data obtained during the study. In the analysis of social network maps and life-lines, thematic content

analysis and thematic category analysis were utilized. In the analysis of social network maps, we were interested in how the children understand their family: who belongs to it, how the children would group and arrange people on the map, how close people on the map were to the children, and whether these people were biological family members. In the analysis of life-lines, important events in the children's life-lines were categorized into thematic categories. Unfortunately, the substantive results of the analysis can only briefly be touched in this article; however, they are presented in other publications (see, e.g., Jokinen et al. 2013; Jallinoja, Hurme, and Jokinen 2014).

Ethical Starting Points

We recognize that it is not necessarily an easy task to give a voice to children living in challenging family relations and, consequently, that multiple methods may be required to achieve this goal. Owing to the sensitive nature of the topic, ethical considerations must be borne in mind at all times when doing research on family relations (Warin 2011; Phelan and Kinsella 2013). Such relations usually involve personal secrets. In some studies, it has been stated that children are particularly prone to keeping secrets, as they want to remain loyal to their parents (Pösö 2008; see also: Hurtig 2006; Smart 2007; see, e.g., McNay 2009 on family secrets). Clearly, loyalty towards family can be argued to be a characteristic of family members of any age; however, in the case of children, it has particular significance owing to children's dependency on adults. For example, some of the children in our study who had experienced their parents'

divorce spoke honestly about it, while others did not mention it at all.

In our study, parents who were willing to participate alongside their children were also interviewed and asked to complete their own social network maps from the child's point of view. This approach raised ethical concerns about whether children or parents would feel obliged—against their will—to reveal certain information about their lives (Heath et al. 2009). For example, in the interview situation, a child might expect a parent to reveal details about their family life, such as arguments in the family, that he or she might not otherwise wish to be unveiled. Hence, a child might also talk about the issue at hand, albeit reluctantly. There was also an additional problem—that participants might be curious to know what other members of the family had told the interviewer. It was our duty as researchers not to disclose to other family members what a parent or a child had said. Carol Smart (2007) argues that it can be difficult to get people to talk about their negative feelings towards members of their own family, especially in an ongoing situation. This poses a challenge for research delving into problematic family relations and provides the underlying rationale for developing new data collection methods.

One priority of an ethically responsible approach was to avoid causing harm or distress to the participants. Therefore, we felt the need to ensure that children were receiving professional help and/or had access to a help system during the research process. While this applied, in particular, to children living in difficult family situations and

reached via NGOs, we also wanted to ascertain that children recruited via schools would receive help if the interviews were to reveal worrying situations in their families. The organizations we cooperated with were Finnish NGOs working with adults and children on the issues of foster care, family violence, and substance abuse treatment. These organizations selected potential informants from their clients and employed an ethically focused selection criterion: the family situation had to be relatively stable. This meant, for example, that actions relating to foster care needed to have been taken a relatively long time before the data collection began. The social workers in the organizations knew their clients well enough to evaluate whether their life situation was such that participation in the study would cause them no harm or danger, and that, if needed, they could also provide help and counseling if the interviews were to bring back feelings and memories a client needed to discuss. It is noteworthy that the project was granted ethical approval by the ethics committee of the researchers' university (see: Jokinen et al. 2013).

Owing to the sensitivity of certain issues related to the research subject, careful consideration was also given to several other ethical and child-specific questions. For example, during the data collection, it was highly important that the children understood the purpose of the study (see: Cree, Kay, and Tisdall 2002; Pösö 2004; Mason 2007; Ryen 2011), and to bear in mind that although children may be capable of understanding the nature of the work being done, their lack of life experience may hinder their ability to comprehend its consequences. This is not, of course, to say that participation

in a study may not sometimes be difficult for adults as well (Mishna, Antle, and Regehr 2004; Helavirta 2006). As these kinds of ethical questions and challenges are discussed by the present research group elsewhere (Notko et al. 2013), they will not be considered any further in this article.

Visual Methods for Capturing Children's Family Relations

Mixed methods designed for children were used during the data collection. These methods aim at being "child-friendly," or "research-friendly." This approach reflects changes in the understanding of childhood that have taken place over the past few decades, one of which is the emphasis on a child's agency during research. In studies with child participants, there seems to be a growing desire to develop new "fun" and child-friendly methods. It is also important that such methods are participatory and creative in nature (Punch 2002a; 2002b; Veale 2005; White and Bushkin 2011).

Samantha Punch (2002b) has stated that the challenge lies not in patronizing children during research, but in recognizing their competencies, namely, by letting them enjoy being involved in the project and letting them communicate. A combination of techniques can make the interview process more fun and interesting for child participants.

However, the main purpose of using multiple techniques in our study was not just to develop "fun" methods but also to generate useful, relevant data. Using participatory techniques helps, for example, overcoming obstacles pertaining to a child's possi-

ble lack of confidence when addressing adults because of lack of experience of being treated as an equal by adults. It might also be the case that younger children are less able to concentrate. Bringing visual methods into the interview may make it easier to help them maintain their concentration. However, adults should not presume that this is necessarily the case for all children, as children are not all the same. Nevertheless, developmental factors are undoubtedly important in the choice of methodology (Punch 2002b; Greene and Hill 2005; Veale 2005).

During the present thematic interviews, social network maps and life-lines were used as visual methods. Because we had used social network maps and life-lines separately—but not simultaneously—in our earlier individual studies, and noted their suitability for family research, in this project, we were interested in seeing what benefits might emerge from combining them. Of course, other visual methods, just as good as the ones used in our project, are available for use in studies with children, such as the photograph method (Punch 2002b; Barker and Weller 2003; Darbyshire et al. 2005; Phelan and Kinsella 2013). For our purposes, however, no additional methods were needed, as the two visual methods complemented the thematic interviews. We also felt that, from the resource perspective, the use of more methods in this particular project was not justified. The chosen methods were considered sufficient to yield visual information on the research topic, that is, children's family relations and important life events. In choosing our visual methodology, we were keen to explore not only the content of both the maps and life-lines but also the spatial organization of the social network maps (see: Rose 2001).

Using Social Network Maps to Study Children

The social network map used in our study comprised three concentric zones: closest, close, and remote. Along with these zones, the map was also divided into three sectors, one for each of the child's family, relatives, and other important people, such as friends. The children located their family members and others in these sectors according to the level of intimacy they felt towards the person. It is noteworthy that while such maps have been used in other social science studies, their architecture has tended to vary. For example, Julia Brannen, Ellen Heptinstall, and Kalwant Bhopal (2000) divided their network map into three zones and four domains: household, relatives, friends, and formal others. Carol Smart, Bren Neale, and Amanda Wade (2001) used, in turn, a three-zone map, which was divided into just two sectors: family and friends. There are also methods that resemble our approach to network maps, such as the family network method, employed by, for example, Eric Widmer (2006). In addition, Kati Hämäläinen (2012) used a social network map in the shape of an apple tree in her study on foster children.

Thus, the shape of the map can vary in form from more simple to a more sophisticated; the role of the architecture of the map, that is, whether its visual image affects how children fill-in and understand the map, is a question that merits closer investigation. For example, does a simple map give children more freedom and hence prompt them to fill it in more on their own terms than a sophisticated map, or, does a map with a more sophisticated and

detailed architecture better assist children to focus on and ponder the topic of the study than a simple map? These are questions that remain unanswered here.

At the beginning of the interview session, children were asked to indicate on their social network maps people who were most important to them (see: Figure 1 below). The interview did not continue until the maps had been completed. If necessary, during the course of the interview, children were able to add new names to the map:

> Child: Hmm. Can I still add [something] there?
>
> Interviewer: Yes, you can. You can, of course.
>
> Child: I'll write godmother.
>
> Interviewer: Right, that already came up in your talk. You can add [names] there, yes. [Interview 6]

Figure 1. Social network map drawn by an 11-year-old.[1]
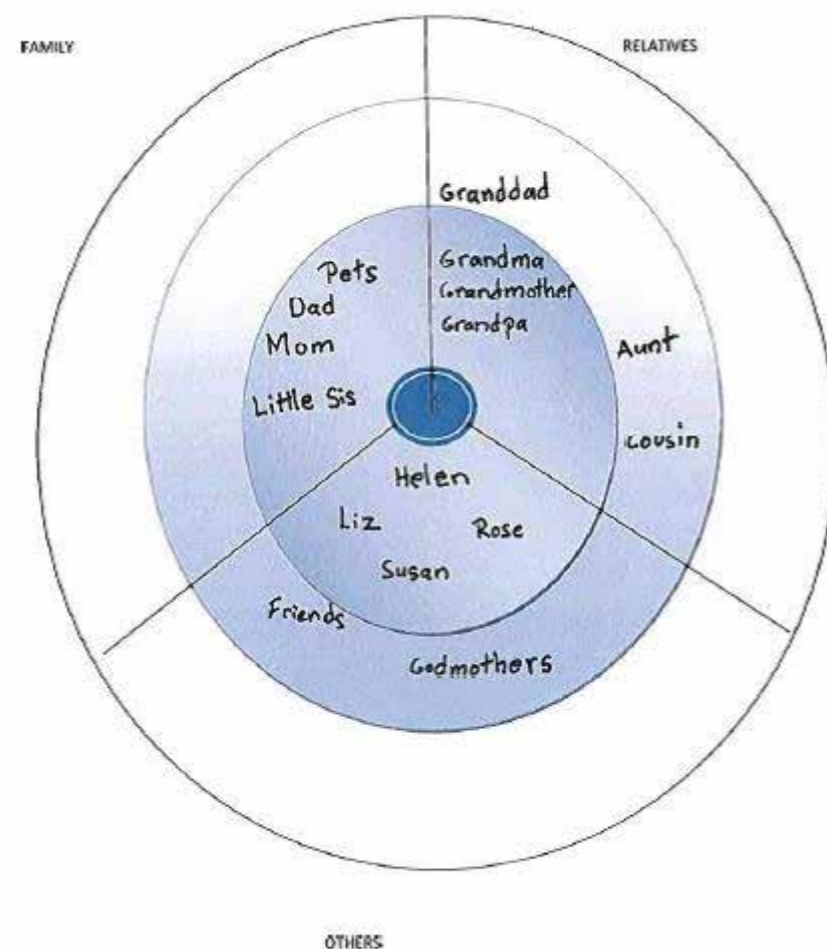
Our experience suggests that filling-in a social network map as the first phase of engagement during an interview has certain benefits, the most notable being that the map acts as an "icebreaker" between interviewer and interviewee (child). Drawing or illustrating makes the interview process less authoritative. If the child felt a bit shy, he or she was not required to look directly at the interviewer immediately. Instead, the child had an opportunity to muster the courage to talk while marking people on the map. According to Punch (2002b), the use of task-based methods puts children at ease. In our study, most of the children were keen on using visual methods, whereas a small minority preferred not to use them and appeared to be more at ease talking (see also: Darbyshire et al. 2005). Nevertheless, when needed, visual methods like social network maps and life-lines can serve as a distraction for interviewees who are shy or anxious about being interviewed. The visual graph also becomes the third—and active—player in the interview process since it draws attention to itself and away from uneasy children (Veale 2005; Sheridan et al. 2011). The social network map also facilitates the transition towards asking the actual questions.

Elizabeth Silva and Carol Smart (1999) write that it is a common methodological practice in research on families and childhood to ask respondents to draw maps that would describe their families, or to locate their family members within a set of concentric circles. Identifying family members and friends in these ways is understood to reflect the subjective meanings of family relations. In some instances, the maps drawn may be far from an idealized or "standardized" portrayal of the family and its members. This would therefore disrupt the taken-for-granted assumption about blood and marital relationships. Stretching the concept of family might, in fact, erase clear-cut boundaries. Brannen and her colleagues (2000) report that children do not necessarily find it problematic to describe complexities associated with family relations. In their study, children were articulate and it were more commonly the researchers who struggled to make sense of family circumstances. These notions echo our experiences with social network maps, confirming their value as tools for research. Another research advantage that we noted is that one can discern at a glance, or at least begin to perceive, a child's social relations from their impressionistic network maps. In contrast, the interview method cannot offer such a quick and concrete outline.

Examination of the data collected from social network maps in our study revealed that although most family members were placed in the "closest" zone, some were not. An argument and/or a remote relationship with a family member, whether a sibling, a father, or a mother, was a reason to locate them in a zone outside the "closest." Mothers, however, were marked as "closest" more often than other family members.

> Interviewer: So you marked your mother as your closest family member. Why do you feel that she's the closest?
>
> Child: Well, I like to tell things to mum and that.
>
> Interviewer: Mhm, yeah. And then your big brother is the one you placed furthest away?
>
> Child: Well, we don't sort of talk much or we do argue and stuff, but we are pretty much in agreement with each other.
>
> Interviewer: And then your father and little sister are between your mother and your big brother.
>
> Child: Mhm.
>
> [Interview 7]

Network maps have often displayed almost parallel results, as many children tend to locate their significant others in the inner circles (see: Brannen et al. 2000). Correspondingly in our study, for example, one boy replied when asked why he had placed his parents in the inner circle: "I don't know. They are my parents."

However, not all of the children in our study conventionally located their biological parents in the inner circle of the map. Some other studies also have shown that children's idea of a family can be very flexible. According to Brannen and her colleagues (2000), children rarely refer to a "proper family" when answering questions about their significant others; neither do they often use this term when referring to their own families. By the term "proper family" we understand here conventional ways of seeing a family, that is, as a nuclear family composed of a mother, father, and their biological children. We have also noted above that although it might be considered that placing parents in the "closest" zone is an idealized way of configuring the family, this does not mean that the family is "proper" as such. Children also placed grandparents, pets, and adult siblings' children, and, in some instances, a brother's wife, a step-sibling, and a step-grandfather in the "closest" zone, which indicates that they had not necessarily filled in their maps according to social expectations regarding what constitutes a "proper family." For example, one child marked pets in the closest zone with other family members (see also: Charles and Davies 2008 on pets as part of people's kinship networks):

Interviewer: Does anybody else belong to your family in addition to your mum, dad, and little sister?

Child: No. Except our pets [belong too]. [Interview 11]

In addition, children did not hesitate to place family members they did not have a close relationship with in zones other than the "closest" on the network map. One child, a girl whose parents are divorced and who lives with her mother and sees her father every other week, explained in the interview: "I put also my father here [in zone two], he is at least a little bit." Another girl, who meets her father only rarely, told us: "My father, well, okay, he belongs to my family. However, I put him over there [in zone three] because he is, in a way, not in my family. Either at Christmas or during the summer or autumn holidays we meet each other. But, otherwise, he's not…"

Furthermore, children who had gained new family members when their parents had remarried or repartnered after divorce, and children who had biological parents and foster parents, had two families to mark on the map. The children's perceptions of people closest to them could thus also vary, and—occasionally—a parent was marked as "remote." In the case of foster children, the most secure and closely connected family relations might be, in particular, between children and non-biological family members. Similar results have also been obtained in other studies (see, e.g., Mason and Tipper 2008; Castrén 2009).

As an example of the variety of family configurations, one child, who—in addition to his biological parents— had a step-mother, a step-father, and a step-sibling, placed the step-sibling in the "closest" zone with his biological family, and his step-father and step-mother in the "close" zone. He pondered about placing his step-sibling nearer than his step-parents:

Child: And then my dad's wife's child, she's in a way also counted in [the family]... [Interview 6]

Importantly, all of the children had family members who were considered to be close and important to them, and were accordingly placed in the "closest" zone. Moreover, the fact that a child might start by filling-in maps that conform to the idealized view of the family could also reflect the child's desire for family relations of precisely that kind.

Life-Lines in the Study

Similarly, during the later stage of the interviews, children were asked to draw a line and mark significant events relating to their families on it. Because our aim was to trace changes, continuity, and breaks in family relations, the life-line method enabled us to trace temporality, which ranged from larger entities to small details. The horizontal axis represented time from a child's birth to the present day, and dots marked on the life-line referred to their

age. As in the study by Joanna Sheridan and her research group (2011), the act of drawing life-lines could be a co-constructed effort between researcher and child. Children marked significant events on the life-line that related to their family, and wrote down what each of them expressed. The researcher worked as an aide during the process, asking questions when needed about the child's life. Thus, in much the same way as working with network maps, the researcher was able to point to marks on the graph and ask the child, "Tell me about this," or "What happened here?," or "Why did you draw this here?" It is also noteworthy that, with this method, children can more easily express events relating to different contours of time, such as historical, cyclical, and, perhaps most significantly, personal time. This emphasizes children's personal experiences with the concept of time and its effects on family relations (see: Sheridan et al. 2011).

Figure 2. Life-line made by an 11-year-old. Translated (with details altered).
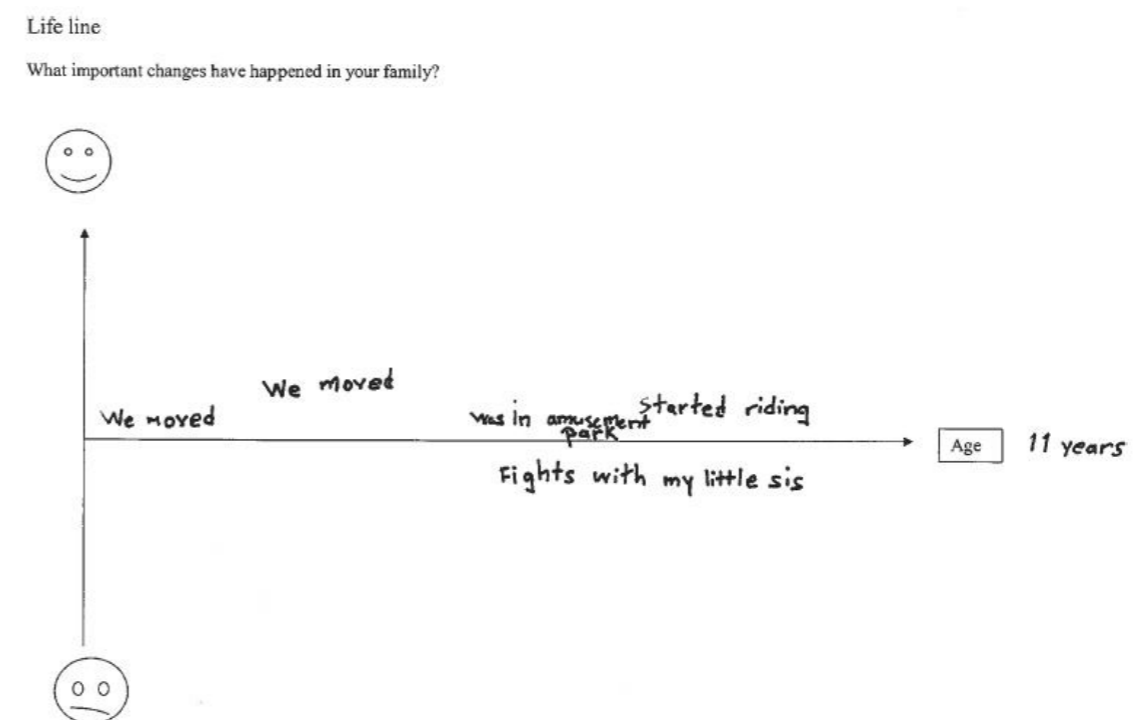
Karen Davies (1996) notes that the life-line method can be useful when trying to explain the complexity of an individual's life. In our view, for the very same reason, it also helps to capture a child's life, including family relations and emotional experiences. Research often captures time as a snapshot of the child's present life (see: Greene and Hill 2005). Our more ambitious aim was to gain an insight into children's pasts and futures as well. Another method well-suited for studying temporal dimensions in children's lives is, of course, qualitative longitudinal research (see, e.g., Thomson et al. 2004). Whilst we did not have a possibility to carry out longitudinal research within the project's time and resource framework, using the life-line method worked well for our purposes.

Allen White and Naomi Bushkin (2011) used life-line exercises, along with a wide range of methods, in their study on asylum-seeking children, whose lives are often full of complexities. What made the life-line technique so suitable for our study was that it positioned children's lives along a chronological line while representing time as *relational* instead of individual. This means that separate events and time as a whole should be seen in relation to the child's, the child's family members', and significant others' times (Davies 1996). Life-lines can also be seen as a memory aid for children in the sense that they act as a trigger for remembering the various events and experiences that have taken place during the totality of a person's life. Life-lines depict events quickly and effectively in a graphic format. Children may have plenty of events to mark on the line, and in these cases, for the interviewer, the graphic form

also is very welcome for reasons of clarity. Here, a child explains events on his life-line:

Child: When I was 3, my dad and mum separated. And when I was probably 5, my little sister was born.

Interviewer: That was a happy event?

Child: Hmm. Except…if anybody else held her, I would scream and shout that nobody else but me can hold her…so jealous! … And I remember I was so excited about school starting, I was 7…I'll write that above there because I've run out of space. And there, that's my rabbit. There, I write that I got him. And then he died. And that is a bit blurred, but there I went to kindergarten and I got my first friend.

Interviewer: And your grandma has died? Do you remember a lot about your grandma?

Child: No, I just remember that, that we visited her, you see, she got this serious illness…and she used to wave like this…

Interviewer: But, it's nice that you have those memories, although you were quite little back then. And then your dad died?

Child: Yeah…and now our house is empty [the house is being sold]…it was our home, you see.

[Interview 32]

As one can imagine on the basis of the extract, even though some events have been excluded to protect anonymity, the life-line corresponding to the events that the child has described during the interview added clarity to the order of events. It also assisted the child to recall feelings attached to the events, both happy and sad. On the other hand, two children in our study left the life-line blank. As already mentioned, we emphasized the

voluntary nature of participation to the children, for example, that they did not have to answer every question. Sometimes the children took advantage of this possibility, as these blank life-lines show. Because the number of blank lines was only two, it did not present problems for the data analysis. Pirskanen (2009) also noted in her study on men who have had problem-drinking fathers that not all individuals feel at ease filling in a life-line since they find it difficult to express time and events in a graphic form.

At the same time as a life-line encourages participants to tell their stories, it acts as data in its own rights, since its value goes beyond merely plotting and recording life events (Davies 1996; Sheridan et al. 2011). In their study on obesity and weight loss, Sheridan and her colleagues (2011) exemplify how time-lining serves as a subtle and reflexive research method. In our study, life-lines opened up a rich view on how children perceive time and temporality and how children's memories and family histories are mingled in these perceptions.

One intriguing feature of life-lines as a research method, however, is their ability to reveal life events and family matters while simultaneously concealing or disguising them (Sheridan et al. 2011). Participants have the potential to leave significant events unmarked if they feel that these are something they do not wish to share with interviewers. They also might seek to draw attention to a particular event in the hope of taking it away from another event of a more sensitive kind. However, in our research, we did not find this a problem. We wanted to respect the child's freedom of choice in

labeling family events as significant, as well as to refrain from obliging them to speak about sensitive issues that were too difficult. In general, respecting interviewees' choices on the topics they are willing or unwilling to talk about concerns not only studies on children but all research, especially when the topics can be considered sensitive or private. Our view is that in these cases, the ethical nature of research is primary, even if it means that the knowledge gained during the study is not as "complete" as it ideally could be. Comparison of children's and their parents' interviews also revealed that some children who had experienced violence or substance abuse in the family did not mark these experiences on the life-line. One possible interpretation of this, in addition to the sensitivity of the topic, is that events of long duration (e.g., an alcohol problem that extends over several years) are not necessarily easy for children to locate in a temporal line. Here, again, we emphasize the advantages of using multiple methods to obtain as rich a dataset as possible, as the different methods complement each other also with respect to "missing" information. In addition, the use of life-lines gave us rich and detailed information on most of the children's important experiences and transitions.

To summarize, it is easier to learn about how children—and also adults—analyze their world when they are given adequate space to talk about it (Alasuutari 2005). As our research suggests, visual methods offer children a space for explaining and describing their family relations in the course of being interviewed. It has been said that qualitative research generally provides an opportunity to tap

the richness of a child's thoughts. Through such methods we are able to step outside the bounds of adult thinking and discover unexpected differences between the perceptions of adults and those of children (Mishna et al. 2004). It might be that children are used to trying to please adults, sometimes fearing an adult's reaction. It is therefore important to create an atmosphere of confidentiality when working with children (Punch 2002b). In our opinion, visual methods emphasize not only a child's agency but they also expressly create an atmosphere in which children do not need to worry about giving the "right" answers.

> Interviewer: You can mark in the closest zone people you feel are the closest to you.
>
> [The child writes].
>
> Child: Can I put two?
>
> Interviewer: You can put as many names as you want.
>
> Child: And, can I mark pets, too?
>
> Interviewer: Yes, you can. These maps can look very different. There are no right or wrong answers, but your own experiences are important, as is the case with all the questions.
>
> Child: These are all [members] we have in our family. [The child shows completed map].
>
> [Interview 21]

Thus, children are allowed to be experts on a topic of interest to them: their family. Naturally, it must be borne in mind that research participants may respond differently to different research methods (Brannen et al. 2000), and, as we have stated before, using a mixed-methods approach is a good way of handling this problem.

Discussion

This article describes and evaluates the use of specific visual methods in our research on family relations. Both social network maps and the life-line method were used in a study where children were interviewed. Sheridan and her colleagues (2011) argue, in the light of their own research and other social studies, that qualitative research generally relies on talk, but that talk can be assisted and supported by visual means. Our experiences with the use of social network maps and the life-line method when interviewing children about their family relations strongly support this argument. These particular methods help a child to effectively explain his or her family relations and life events, especially when compared to merely speaking about them during the interviews. Therefore, visual methods support the interviews, help the interviewer to follow the child's story, and give a versatile picture of the child's social world. Moreover, these methods are participatory, and the child is invited to actively join in the interviewing process by illustrating, as well as talking about their perceptions. In other words, our experience shows that offering children multiple channels to express themselves enhances their active participation. During the research process, it became clear that some children expressed themselves better by talking and others by drawing. During the interview process, the children often referred back to their social network maps and life-lines in order to supplement them with further details. The interviewers were also able to spot things on a map which the child has not

talked about, then to point to these things, and ask the child about them. All of the above indicates that visual methods encourage children to remember and talk about issues related to their families.

We also took cognizance of the criticism that using a social network map might cause children to draw maps of an idealized family. In other words, children might locate their family members on a map in such a way as to make them appear socially desirable. However, this did not appear to be the case in our study. For example, most of the children who had experienced parental divorce did not think there was such thing as normal, perfect, and proper family. Very few of them referred to the standard or idealized nuclear family stereotype of a father, mother, and their biological children. In the case of life-lines, children might leave out events that they do not want to reveal to researchers. However, as part of an ethical research process, we sought to respect their right to do so and not to probe excessively into possibly painful memories. Hence, despite their potential weaknesses, we consider the advantages of visual methods outweighing their possible disadvantages when researching family relations.

More importantly, richer data may be compiled by using a variety of methods. For example, a combination of the interview method and innovative techniques aimed at children enables a child's unique perception of his or her family to be brought into light (see: Punch 2002b). When combined, a variety of methods helps to

produce a picture of children's day-to-day family relations, as well as significant family events from the past, which have impacted the course of their lives. These are the most explicit advantages of using a composite methodology. As a result, we are not solely limited to an understanding of children's family relations as they happen on a day-to-day basis, but we can also grasp the past and therefore understand the temporality of family relations, as understood by children.

These methods also assist us to form a comprehensive account of why and for what reasons a child's current family relations appear as they do from the child's perspective. With graphic assistance, we can see how family bonds evolve over time, grow in importance, remain stable, undergo ruptures, or even fade, as is sometimes the case. We argue that exploring temporality in a child's family life is an important key to understanding family relations, which is why the life-line method is of such value when it is not possible to implement a longitudinal research setting. Perhaps the most important benefit of using social network maps is, however, the potential to grasp a child's perception of his/her family relations in their entirety, as well as to see the commitments, loyalties, and bonds children share with the significant others in their lives. For example, our maps, where family members, relatives, and other important people had a sector of their own, offered interesting and important information on how children defined in many different and detailed ways who belonged to their family or was counted among their relatives. Our maps show that—from the

children's point of view—the boundary between family and relatives is fluid. Each of these visual methods is valuable as each differs in its scope while helping to capture experiences relating to the multiple dimensions of family life.

In addition, using task-based and creative visual methods can cause children to feel more comfortable in certain situations. This is relevant to our research topic since the discussions we had with children were often sensitive in nature (e.g., in the case of foster children). Both social network maps and life-lines help to reveal the complexity of family relations in many ways, even when the issues in question might be difficult for the child to cope with. Combining these methods enables children to contemplate and visualize their experiences. Hence, they offer a combination of reflexive methods that can be applied by researchers interested in children's family lives.

Using social network maps and life-lines assisted us in our efforts to capture some of the irregularities and similarities in family relations across family types, such as nuclear families, divorced families, foster homes, or families affected by violence or a parent's substance abuse. The results displayed greater diversity when relations in the family had gone through major change or adversity, as the children in these families reflected more on issues related to relationships and people close to them. In general, the children included happy and normal everyday events, such as birth of siblings, getting pets, or going on trips, but sometimes also illustrated their life-lines with difficult events, such

as family members' illnesses and deaths or arguments with family members. In other words, the life-lines displayed the complexities of family life in its entirety and showed how children's lives are relational—related to people important to them—in nature.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that combining visual methods when researching challenging and complex family relations can be extremely useful from the researcher's perspective. Our results indicate that by applying such methods, versatile knowledge on children's families can be gained. Combining visual methods also enables children's voices to be heard on the matters regarding their families. Because we used both interviews and visual methods, we venture to say that not all the information gained by using visual methods would have been gathered by interviews alone. In addition, for our analysis, the visual data, as independent data in its own rights, furnished very useful material in a compact form. The challenging task that researchers face when studying children on sensitive matters such as their family relations can thus be eased by utilizing and combining innovative visual methods.

Acknowledgments

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An Examination of Narratives From Women Offenders: Are Gender-Specific Reentry Efforts Needed?

Abstract   In this article, data was gathered from interviews and observations using content and historical analysis of several women from a reentry program in Hartford, CT (n=32). Interviews illustrate that examining a gendered approach of female offenders provides an efficient foundation on which to answer the question of whether reentry programs are truly gender-specific. The needs of women are different than men and therefore there should be a difference in treatment upon reentry. Two main purposes are served: to investigate women's narratives about the reason for criminal activity and to examine their specific needs for gender-specific reentry programming. The value of qualitative research in life trajectories is emphasized as a tool to understand gender-specific needs with a particular focus on the life course dimensions of entrance, success, and timing (Thornberry 1997).

Keywords   Gender; Reentry; Case Studies; Life Course; Social Bond

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Many scholars have maintained that subjugation to forms of cultural and economic discrimination play a unique part in the female offenders' life course (Rivera 1997; Goodstein 2006; Claus et al. 2007). Poletta (2009) argues both criminologists and policy makers often ignore this fact. This is problematic with regard to females in institutional or non-institutional correctional settings who have had previous experiences with victimization and its undesirable effects. It is *especially* true in cases where involvement of women in criminal lifestyles is intertwined with relationships to males. In such relationships, women take the form either as victims (Belknap 2007) or accomplices (DeLisi 2002). In this article, data is taken from interviews with several women from a reentry program in Hartford, Connecticut. The article seeks to investigate narratives about women offenders and examine their reactions to gender-specific reentry programming.

Scholars who focus on female offending point out that many female offenders often experience a life history of victimization (Daly 1992; Merlo and Pollock 1995; Owen 1998; Covington 2003; Belknap 2007). Introduction to drugs, running away from home, and forced sexual encounters at a young age is a pattern found in the lives of female offenders (Kilburn and Lee 2010). Female offenders have a unique set of experiences and difficulties that may lead to career criminality (i.e., victimization, trauma, multiple marginalization, mental health, addiction). That said, it is implicit that female offenders have different needs in terms of correctional programming and aftercare.

Many researchers contend that such experiences prompt a need for gender-specific interventions (Steffensmeier and Allan 1996; Bloom, Owen, and Covington 2003). Such interventions are often designed in deference to a life course perspective that highlights critical events in any persons' life (Sampson and Laub 1992; 1993). For those working with female offenders, the importance of focusing on histories of previous domestic victimization or cohabitation with male offenders, for example, becomes crucial to formulating effective strategic principles towards reentry and rehabilitation.

Best practices for female offender rehabilitation are aligned with the increasing number of nonviolent female offenders who are becoming processed at greater rates through the criminal justice system (Belknap 2007). According to Merlo and Pollock (1995:119), "[t]he typical female offender is not a corporate or computer criminal, a terrorist, a burglar, or a murderer. Instead, she is likely to engage in theft, fraud, drug offenses, forgery, embezzlement, and prostitution." Female offenders are typically nonviolent offenders involved in crimes such as larceny and drug abuse (Merlo and Pollock 1995). However, they often became the collateral consequence of crime control policies and uniform criminal justice processing. Unfortunately, attempts at interventions aimed at female populations have typically been gender-neutral rather than gender-specific (Bloom and Covington 2000).

During the last decade, the number of female offenders entering prisons increased by almost 40 percent (Frost, Greene, and Pranis 2006). Frost, Greene, and Pranis (2006) conducted a state-by-state

Susan V. Koski & S. E. Costanza

An Examination of Narratives From Women Offenders: Are Gender-Specific Reentry Efforts Needed?

analysis of female incarceration. Between 1977 and 2004 there was a 750 percent increase in female incarceration. In 2009, females represented about 7 percent of the state and federal prison population. In addition, there was approximately 24 percent of that population under community supervision (Glaze and Bonczar 2009; Pollock 2009). As the female correctional population increases, female-offending patterns must be more extensively explored to forge more successful attempts towards reentry, prevention, and rehabilitation.

This article seeks to address a gap in current research addressing the need for gender-specific programming (Steffensmeier and Allan 1996; Bloom et al. 2003). While there has been a marked increase of the number of females in need of correctional services (Bloom et al. 2003), there continues to be a limited emphasis on the need for changes in intervention strategies. As a result, the growing needs of female offender populations remain somewhat unarticulated in current criminal justice research.

Life course theory reveals a myriad of factors that potentially contribute to women's criminal behavior (Sampson and Laub 1992; Bloom and Covington 2000; Zaplin 2008). Among issues that emerge from several interviews with female ex-offenders are: pregnancy, family history, victimization (specifically physical, sexual, and emotional abuse), employment, education, and marital status. The call for revisions in gender-responsive programming, policy, and intervention for female offenders represents an attempt to address these factors and in what ways they may be unique to women (Heilbrun et al. 2008).

Life course research on female offending produced during the last decade provides a framework for the study of reentry and other policy initiatives. This article contributes to the understanding of female rehabilitation by highlighting the importance of gender-specific pathways to rehabilitation for women. We explore the ways that interviewees processed personal experiences and events during their life that ostensibly impacted their decisions to enlist in criminal activity or desist from it. In addition, we highlight excerpts from interviews that indicate the importance of gender-specific post-correctional programming.

Relevant Literature

Social bonding theory (Hirschi 1969), developmental theories (Moffitt 1993) and life course theory (Elder 1985; Sampson and Laub 1993) all provide frameworks from which to explore female reentry and rehabilitation. Life course literature is of paramount importance as it emphasizes the changing nature of criminal behavior over the life cycle (Glueck and Glueck 1950; Moffitt 1993; Sampson and Laub 1993; Thornberry 1997). This perspective is ultimately concerned with *transitions* during the life course and *trajectories*, a concept relating to patterns of behavior. Transitions are characterized as events that account for trajectory, such as: gaining employment, committing a delinquent act, or having a child. It is useful to draw from the body of literature on life course theory to understand female criminality. In addition, life course theory applies equally well in understanding why some women desist from criminal activity (Elder 1985).

Social Bonding

Social bonding theory (Hirschi 1969) purports that a person's decision to conform to normative behaviors revolves around four dimensions of contact with mainstream social forces: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. These four artifacts are known as the four dimensions of social bonding. Attachment relates to development of emotional bonds to mainstream role models. If a person is emotionally attached to someone (i.e., family, friends) engaged in criminal activity, they too should begin to develop an affinity towards criminal behavior. Commitment and involvement respectively refer to time and level of commitment and involvement to mainstream (non-criminal) lifestyles. Belief refers to a personal affinity towards normative social values. It is implied that these dimensions of social bonds, for their part, are strongly related to a person's lifestyle development.

Early literature on cognitive development and social bonding relates most strongly to a gender-neutral perspective of criminality, however, social bonding theory is also considered a solid foundation for explaining criminality throughout the female life course. Some research explores the differences in male and female career criminality as they relate to social bonding, however, unfortunately, the vast body of literature in these fields neglects gender (DeLisi 2002). Social bonding literature points out the crucial aspect of bonding towards criminal desistance (Shover and Thompson 1992), and provides insightful comments on the analyses to come. Shover and Thompson (1992) highlight the idea that contingencies related to social bonds are often highly effective in predicting whether people will desist from criminal activity during the life course. They introduce the idea that people with an attachment to mainstream society (i.e., an attachment to a significant other who is not involved in crime, an attachment to a job or profession, a commitment to school, etc.) will eventually desist from tendencies towards criminal activity.

Developmental Perspectives

Developmental theories emphasize the importance of learning in criminal activity, but research sometimes ignores how patterns of socialization and bonding for males and females inherently differ. Early work in developmental learning primarily focused on juvenile delinquency. Glueck and Glueck (1930:142) observed that many delinquents appeared to have "had experience in serious antisocial conduct." In a follow-up study, they found similar results (Glueck and Glueck 1950). The Glueck's seminal research provided evidence that adult antisocial behavior virtually requires childhood antisocial behavior.

Career criminality does not happen immediately, but develops over time. According to Sutherland (1947), criminal behavior is learned; it involves a dialectic between "teachers" and "students." Burgess and Akers (1966:140) state that "criminal behavior is a function of norms which are discriminative for criminal behavior, the learning of which takes place when such behavior is more highly reinforced than non-criminal behavior."

Developmental perspectives are often fused with social bonding perspectives and focus on how

Susan V. Koski & S. E. Costanza

An Examination of Narratives From Women Offenders: Are Gender-Specific Reentry Efforts Needed?

social bonds directly and indirectly influence social roles (Erickson, Crosnoe, and Dornbusch 2000). Such perspectives offer great insight into potential risk factors for female criminal involvement. Erickson and colleagues (2000) suggest that males are more strongly affected by the influence of bonding with friends than females. This idea relates primarily to the affinity-based, or attachment, dimension of social bonding. That said, other dimensions of social bonds often prove significant to explain male and female differences. Kilburn and Lee (2010) suggest the burden of raising children, or heading single income households, or even acting as caretakers for ailing parents may have influences on female development.

Some developmental studies indicate that female and male offenders may have similar motivations for committing crime, however, the manners in which they execute crimes differ according to their social roles and perceived identities (Adler 1975; Simon 1975; Smart 1989; Shover and Thompson 1992; Chesney-Lind 1997). For example, it is often expressed in the literature that males are socialized to be aggressive and therefore their crimes will be more aggressive (Reifler 1997). It is probable that women also differ emotionally and psychologically from males in dealing with traumatic events in their lives possibly leading to criminal activity (Gaardner and Belknap 2002; Kilpatrick, Saunders, and Smith 2003).

Social bonding theory (Hirschi 1969) and social control theory (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990) have also proved useful tools for explaining gender-neutral patterns of conformity. Attachment, commit-ment, involvement, and belief in mainstream social norms and mores explain why people do not become involved in crime. Inversely, failed attachments to family, neighborhood, and relatives result in deviance and criminality. Since a person's stake in society increases with age, social control theorists argue that desistance is a natural function of age. There is considerable empirical evidence of the proposed relationship between age and crime (Elder 1985; Farrington 1986; Britt 1992; Nagin and Land 1990; Wilson and Daly 1993). Curvilinear patterns indicate that individuals become involved in property crime and person crime at younger ages and continue criminal involvement until they are older, upon which it is thought they desist as a function of age (Hirschi and Gottfredson 1983; Nagin and Land 1993).

Life Course

The life course theory has two main themes: trajectories and transitions. Trajectories have three dimensions: entrance, success, and timing (Thornberry 1997). Transitions, often referred to more generally as life events, are embedded within the trajectories. According to Sampson and Laub (1993:8), life course perspectives "focus on the duration, timing, and ordering of major life events and their consequences for later life development." Basic life course research seeks to shed light on the concept of career criminality as people age and become exposed to varied levels of risk. Results from interviews are consistent with the work by Moffitt (1993). As Moffitt indicated, women who began criminal activity at a young age proved to be life-course-persistent (antisocial behavior persistent over the course of one's life).

Criminologists have focused attention comparatively towards both female and male life course predictors in order to better understand gender disparities in criminal trajectory (van Wormer and Bartollas 2007). As Piquero and Mazerolle (2001) predicted, the majority of the women interviewed (all but one) became pregnant at an early age, dictating the trajectory early on in the life course. We note that this event is a gender-specific occurrence illustrating how non-gendered theories ignore major life transitions.

Life course perspective (Hutchinson 2005) has examined how variant factors, such as age, relationships, common life transitions, and social change, influence people's lives from birth to death. As Hutchinson (2007:9) states, "[i]f you want to understand a person's life, you might begin with an event history, or the sequence of significant events, experiences, and transitions in a person's life from birth to death."

According to life course scholars (Sampson and Laub 1992; 1993), there are some distinct characteristics of the life course perspective that distance it from developmental and social bonding theories. The primary weakness of developmental theories is that they are gender-neutral and perhaps insensitive to events that arise during the female life course. Developmental theories are often used to explain the onset of delinquency, the escalation of crimes, persistence, desistance, and offending patterns. Each one of these theories can then be separated to delve deeper (Farrington 1986).

Steffensmeier and Allan (1996) broached the controversial topic of whether gender-neutral theories (theories primarily derived from male offender samples) or gender-specific theories (those derived from male and female samples with a focus on differential needs) are better suited in understanding criminality. Despite Steffensmeier and Allan's call for gender-specific programming, the male paradigm is currently used widely to assess female criminality and therefore to evaluate and plan women-specific intervention programming (Steffensmeier and Allan 1996; Bloom and Covington 2000).

Life course theorists point out the importance of the socialization process in career criminality, yet acknowledge the differential life events across gender that also affect career trajectory. Although it is more common for males to engage in criminal careers (DeLisi 2005), females who enter into a career of crime often exhibit similar exposure patterns. Likewise differential life events vary across gender to affect desistance.

In a series of interviews conducted by Giordano and colleagues (2006), female offenders tell stories which provide evidence that exposure to violence is not exclusive to males:

> I was raped by just about every man my mother ever had…I told the judge, he say, "Why you keep runnin' away from home, Danielle?" I said, "Well, hell, if I gotta stay home and get fucked by all her men, I might as well be out on the street and get fucked and get paid for it." [p. 31]

Akers (1998) similarly discusses a young girl who witnessed her mother's promiscuous behavior to

Susan V. Koski & S. E. Costanza

An Examination of Narratives From Women Offenders: Are Gender-Specific Reentry Efforts Needed?

the extent that she became numb to violence and submission. Other scholars agree that female criminality is often shaped by victimization (Cobbina 2009). A report by Greenfeld and Snell (1999) stated that 44 percent of women incarcerated reported experiencing either physical or sexual abuse at some point in their lives; 69 percent of those inmates reported that the abuse occurred before the age of 18. Child victimization often leads to adult criminal activity and subsequent victimization. Intimate partner abuse is one example of the cycle of violence as a young girl becomes involved in more serious relationships throughout her life. Typically, those who have suffered through sexual or physical abuse at some point in their lives are at a higher risk of becoming victimized later in life (van Wormer and Bartollas 2007; Zaplin 2008).

Bridging the Gap

This article presents a challenge to hypotheses implicit in all of three theories discussed above, not seeking to disprove them as much as to see if they apply to independent study of female offenders. That said, we feel that much of the research that has been done in studies of social bonding, developmental theory, and life course perspectives has taken an overly quantitative lean. In doing so, much of the research done in life course perspective over the last decade, has not captured the qualitative dimensions of reentry experiences for females. Towards overcoming this gap, the forthcoming examination investigates female offenders' narratives about reentry and examines their responses to gender-specific reentry programming, bearing in mind the outstanding principles of so-

cial bonding, developmental experience, and life course experience.

Data and Methods

Poletta (2009) suggests that foundation of feminist research lies in compelling case histories and narratives. Examination of such narratives can highly enhance a valid and qualitative understanding of the intersections between gender and the criminal justice system. Interviews conducted on 32 women from Hartford, CT, participating in a reentry program, were analyzed for qualitative content. The women were selected randomly for the study. Six months prior to release from a local women's facility, program participants are chosen for entry and begin working collaboratively with a case manager to establish basic life needs. All but one of the women interviewed had children and were living below the poverty rate at some point in their lives. The women's ages ranged from 31-59.

Patterns and key themes from the interviews were expected to conform to a perspective on criminality. Women interviewed were dually diagnosed with substance abuse and mental illness. An initial interview along with a three-month follow-up was conducted on all 32 women. Then a five-year revisit was conducted. Seven of the women were on probation or parole at the time of the interview. At the time of the three-month follow-up, some of the women had relapsed on drugs, but none had been rearrested.

The qualitative methodology of content analysis proved extremely useful because it allowed for an

in-depth understanding of life course pathways and what events have led females to either continue or desist from criminal activity. The women interviewed were able to offer awareness about issues that are unamenable to quantitative research. A mixed-method approach was used to understand the life course perspective and how it related uniquely to the female reentry experience. The results provided an avenue for identifying patterns of behavior and more importantly, for this study, the pathways one takes to that desistance.

The interview process was an iterative one that demanded flexibility and a comfortable environment for the participants. Most interviewees expressed gratitude for the chance to share their journey with others, but most importantly for the opportunity to talk about painful events. The original study interviews were all collected at a reentry program in Hartford, CT. The three-month follow up interviews were also held in the same place. The five-year follow-up interviews were conducted via telephone as many of the women had moved on to farther locales and it was more convenient for them based on their work schedules.

All of the women were available to be interviewed and committed to a three-month follow-up interview. The study focused on the same group of women five years later to determine their current status. The target was to begin establishing possible points of intervention that may have helped these women desist at an earlier age.

Interviews for the five-year follow-up were conducted via telephone as some women were difficult

to meet with in person. The women were all contacted first to set up an interview time where they would have little distraction and be able to spend 45-60 minutes speaking. All participants provided verbal consent towards participation in the study. They were also mailed a hard copy of the interview and/or provided with a copy of the document through the reentry program staff.

As an incentive, participants were given $20.00 gift cards to a local grocery store or clothing store for their participation. Once the interview was completed, the names were coded and then the actual names were destroyed. In order to preserve the identities of the original cohort of women, a locked file was maintained with the women's first names, pseudonyms given, and contact information for further follow-up studies with this group.

Findings

Interviews with the participants provided insight into the lives of women who engage in criminal activity. The women discussed points in their lives where they were introduced to substances, had their first child, learned of a mental illness, experienced abuse, and struggled with relationships, among other things. The findings suggest a reform of reentry programming based on the specific needs of women offenders.

Although there are similarities to male offenders, a woman's experience of parenthood, for example, can alter the direction of their life course simply by virtue of being the primary caregiver. This life-altering event at a young age often leads to other

Susan V. Koski & S. E. Costanza

An Examination of Narratives From Women Offenders: Are Gender-Specific Reentry Efforts Needed?

antisocial behaviors. This is the case with the remaining eight factors, as well. Women experience these factors differently than men and therefore their treatment should match their experience in terms of gender/person-specific needs (Thornberry 1997; Heilbrun et al. 2008).

To begin, the interviews first addressed each of the women's experience of supervision once released (probation or parole). To describe their feelings about the moment of release from prison, eleven of the women use the word "bittersweet." They explained post-release is a period filled with "uncertainty." One woman describes her struggle with drug abuse as being a factor in her reentry challenges:

> I tried to get off drugs, both drugs and alcohol. I tried probably about 20 times, but it was just more powerful than me. I lacked education, I guess, and just couldn't do it. I never really understood how to get clean or stay clean. No one around me knew either because we all used together all the time. And I knew as long as I was hanging around the same people, I wasn't gettin' clean.

Another woman discusses the difficulty in making the numerous appointments set by her supervising officer:

> I know they got to have us at all these appointments and meetings, but I can't get to 'em. I can't be waiting for the bus and then asking people to give me rides—it ain't their problem, but I have to be [there]. They should come get me if they want me there…it not like I don't want to comply, but they act like I can just get in my car and go, it ain't like that.

These statements confirm some of the basic principles of life course theory as the "bad associations" proclaimed by one interviewee, echoes of the involvement dimensions of social bonding, the addiction taking control, and the lack of transportation rather than a lack of caring, are all factors in unsuccessful reentry. The statement that one interviewee made that everyone around her was also using substances speaks to the interviewee's affinitive ties to people who use illegal drugs. This statement seems to confirm one of the basic principles of life course theory as the interviewee's claim of "lacking education" (and resources) merges with the concept of trajectories (Elder 1994; Thornberry 1997).

Bearing in mind the importance of trajectories, the women were asked about a point where they may have been persuaded to take a different life path. This question provided important insight as all of the women were able to provide an exact point at which they could have used help to get through a rough patch. One interviewee stated:

> mostly everyone around me disowned me when I was using drugs…the teachers at school never knew I used drugs so they left me alone…but it was when they left that really sent me back…I couldn't get over it when I walked into the school one day and [she] was gone. She was my counselor, my teacher, she meant everything to me and she was gone…it was no surprise though, they all left and came back and left again.

Another woman stated, "yup, my fifth grade teacher, she knew, she was actually the only one who knew I had potential…I didn't even know [laughs]."

One woman discusses that the birth of her daughter could have changed her path, but her addiction made that difficult:

> well, when I found out I was pregnant, I should have gotten off all the shit I was on and I didn't. I had no one telling me that what I was doing was gonna mess with her. I didn't know she was gonna be born with alcohol whatever…what is it alcohol syndrome? She was addicted too and they had to take her, I guess, so I didn't even get her anyway. It was a big mess and I'm still tryin' to get her…I guess that it was then that I had the chance to stop it all, but I was stressin' so I didn't and I still stressin'.

These excerpts are important because they suggest that there are life-altering events, as well as turning points in one's life where those life-altering events can be turned into normative behavior. However, it becomes clear from the interviews that although there were moments when all could have changed, unless the right intervention/support/relationships were established, the women did not choose the pro-social behavior.

Life course trajectories, specifically the eight factors discussed below, appear to be the pattern for women offenders. These factors plus some others are heavily discussed in the literature and our research supports the emergence of the trajectory common to women offenders.

Life Course Trajectories

During interviews, eight factors emerged and appeared to be impacting the pathways of women offenders: *education*, *marital status*, *employment*, *parenthood*, *victimization*, *substance use*, *mental health*, and *family background*. These eight factors, all of which have been identified in prior literature, appeared to prominently impact female criminality (Chesney-Lind 1998; Pollock 2002; Bloom, Owen, and Covington 2003; Belknap 2007).

This section of the findings reveals both quantitative analysis, discussion of the interview content, and interview excerpts in an attempt to triangulate the data and support the existing literature on the common trajectories for this population (Baily 2007; Schutt 2012).

Education

Lack of education, which has been known to play an important role on criminal life course trajectories for men, may also play an important role in predicting female criminal life courses. Of the women interviewed, 93% had one year of college/special training beyond high school or less. One of the women was enrolled in graduate level studies at the time of the follow-up. When the interviewees were asked about the impact that education had on their current pathway, many stated that they floundered in school and "barely got by," leading to consequences of failing grades, suspension, and reported low self-esteem at this time in their life. In addition to the difficulties in the classroom, 10 of the women reported that there was no one at the school that "believed" they would do well beyond high school. Some of the women reported that this was not how the boys at school were treated, that they were pressured into sports and vocational activities, while the girls were

Susan V. Koski & S. E. Costanza

An Examination of Narratives From Women Offenders: Are Gender-Specific Reentry Efforts Needed?

often ignored unless they were labeled as being one of the "smart" kids. During the interview with many of the women who reported this, it was mentioned that this lack of support both at home and at school caused them to place little emphasis on the importance of doing well beyond high school. The majority of the women also reported very little to no support at home making it difficult to complete homework assignments, projects, and even attend school functions. One woman expressed frustration in her difficulty obtaining employment based on her lack of education as she recalls her upbringing:

> I mean, no one really told me about the important stuff, like if I had known that I needed an education, I mean, you know…my step-father never had no schooling, my mom definitely had no schooling, and I think it was like expected that I would just be fine since, you know, I was a girl…like I could just find my man and have his kids and he could go work or whatever. I mean, my brother had a job since he was like, um, 14…but I never had no jobs or skills until I went away.

Marital status

Of the women interviewed 89% had not been married, but all had been in lengthy relationships. According to Hirschi (1969), pro-social bonding is key to positive relationships leading to pro-social behavior. On the contrary, these women described their relationships as "unhealthy," "dysfunctional," "negative," and "toxic," contributing to their antisocial behaviors. One woman recalled an incident of domestic violence where her children witnessed the abuse:

> He never cared really if they was there. He was always mad, but only when he was drunk, well, I guess sometimes when he wasn't, too…he would start yelling and cussing at me like I was cheatin'. He said I was cheatin' with his friends on him, his brother, too. He was like crazy, what do you call it…anyway, a couple of times he even hit me in front of my kids and they was screaming and acting like I was dyin' because I was knocked out. They called my sister and it was like all night we was trying to get him to leave cuz I didn't want him near my kids and one isn't his kid so sometimes he takes shit out on him and I wanted him out…my sister ended up taking my kids.

Both physical and emotional abuse present, many of the women reported the majority of their crimes were done alongside their spouse or partner or they became involved with that person after using substances together. One woman stated, "I never did nothing like this stuff [referring to using and selling drugs], I had never even tried it before I met my boyfriend, well, he was…now we don't speak cuz I had to leave all that."

Only one of the women was not in a relationship at the time of the interviews, but reported having been in abusive relationships most of her life. A number of women interviewed were asked about their criminal history. 29 of the women had prior criminal convictions directly related to their spouse or partner. These charges ranged from murder to robbery to drug trafficking. Only one admitted to gang involvement with her partner. Further research on this idea that for women on these particular pathways having a spouse or partner may in fact be detrimental to their success in law-conforming behavior is needed.

Employment

Employment relates directly to education as discussed in the interviews. The women reported having difficulty getting jobs even at a young age, mainly because they either lacked the skills or had already turned to drugs, which also meant, in many cases, selling drugs. However, prostitution was employment where education did not matter. All of the women reported having been involved in prostitution on some level. The range was from regularly prostituting to only having tried it a few times. The majority of the women reported "drifting" in and out of prostitution depending on how bad the bills or the addiction became. One woman reported doing four to five "tricks" a day to fuel her heroin habit, she "got clean," obtained a "normal" job, but when her boyfriend returned from prison and the heroin addiction worsened for both of them, he would pimp her out to his friends. She recalls this segment of her life as an "unfortunate cycle," she states:

> it was like the worst of the worst of the worst for me, you know…I hated it, but I had no way out, I loved my dope more. I let him do it, I let him essentially sell me to his friends, coz I knew, I knew I was getting high that night…and it's all I cared about—I didn't care about no job, my kids, my mother, nothing…just dope.

Finding steady, satisfying, and mentally stimulating employment proved to be a challenge for the women interviewed. They reported feeling marginalized as their lack of higher education, poor skills, and substance use, often introduced by

a male figure in their lives, may have contributed to their challenges as a woman.

Parenthood

All but one of the women reported having children. Children proved to be a major impact for the women in many ways. First, 84% of the women had their first child under 18. This transitory event of having a child, according to Sampson and Laub (1992), can lead to varying pathways depending on when this event takes place in one's life course. Many of the women interviewed had the event at hand early and admitted that this changed their pathway at a young age. One woman stated, "well, it was his baby and so I stayed, I stayed because you don't want no one else with your man and so I stayed." She goes on to describe the many years of physical abuse she endured by this person, as well as their co-dependence as they often used crack and abused prescription pills. In this particular case, having the child, as she reported, kept her in an unhealthy situation that became increasingly harder to leave as the bills piled up and she had nowhere else to turn. Others reported that their children were taken away from them at some point during their criminal activity and this led to more stress causing them to become depressed and traumatized, placing them on a path of destruction with drugs and alcohol among other high risk behaviors. Two of the women reported that having their children was what changed their pathway for the better, helping them to "wake-up" and also gaining support from family members that had otherwise disappeared. For the women who had a child or children, they all reported that the event

Susan V. Koski & S. E. Costanza

An Examination of Narratives From Women Offenders: Are Gender-Specific Reentry Efforts Needed?

impacted them positively now, many are either re-unified with their children or in the process, and that reunification was a large part of their sobriety or desistance from criminal activity today. This included one woman who provided a story of her child (whom she typically used with) being killed and the way that the death changed her pathway today.

Another woman discussed the impact of having a child at a young age:

> it ain't no fun to have one when you young, you don't know what life even is about or who's good and who's bad. I ran around and of course I got [pregnant]. Don't know one tell you that it gonna happen—it just do. If I didn't have that baby and then two more, I would be like a CEO somewhere now cuz I did good in school and I used to always keep a job and stuff. I messed it up and then, since it was messed up already, it didn't matter anymore.

This quote provides support of the transitions in one's life that may alter the course of their life based on how influential the turning point was to them. Having a child for this woman, and most, can be a life-altering turning point (Thornberry 1997).

Victimization

All of the women interviewed discussed abuse in some form as a child, youth, and today. The unfortunate cycle of violence became evident as the women spoke of the trauma in their childhoods, which then led to the trauma in their adolescence,

which then led to the trauma many continue to suffer from today. Some reported that today they continue to suffer from abuse by their spouse or partner, their mother, or a sibling. Some reported that they are finally free of the actual abuse, but never will be free from the trauma they have endured. One woman recalls her current situation with domestic violence:

> it's just part of me, I guess, I mean, how could it not be? I been abused like hit and stuff as long as I was little. It was always just the way it was. I can't get away from it cuz after I left my house where I grew up in [sic], it just followed me. I still get beat. Even if it not even in a relationship. I get beat over drugs, or I still on the street [prostituting] so I get beat there, too. It don't matter, it follow me. It always will.

All of the women interviewed were asked about the role their trauma played in criminal activity. All reported that their prior abuse played a role. Some of the women did not make the connection immediately, but when prompted, identified a relationship between their criminal activity and prior abuse. All of the women also reported that they had been victimized while in the commission of a crime such as prostituting or selling drugs.

Substance Use

The women interviewed all had severe drug habits, although the program where the women were interviewed was labeled as a dual diagnosis (mental illness and drug abuse combined) treatment program, the range varied for both mental illness and drug abuse. The women in this study were all

heavily addicted at one point in their lives. About half of the women reported that their addiction started at a young age primarily due to early drug exposure. One woman stated:

> my cousin and my sister used to smoke and so I started, my mom was always working or out so we used to just smoke in the house…I always wondered why no one ever said nothing, then I realized that they just didn't care that we was smoking in the house.

The other half reported that their introduction to drugs began later in life and was accompanied by either a spouse or a partner who was also abusing substances. 8 of the women who reported beginning later in life reported no early drug exposure, but that they experimented with substances in middle or high school.

Mental Health

The women in the study were all diagnosed with mental illness. In addition to other diagnoses, all of the women suffered from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In most of the cases, the PTSD was a result of abuse as children or by a male figure, or witnessing domestic abuse in the home. In interviews with the women, it was not obvious whether mental illness was independent of their relationship with males or a result of it. Women offenders, perhaps more so than their male counterparts, are often concerned about how their diagnoses effect their legal relationships with their children. Mental illness may go untreated if they are fearful that a diagnosis will strip them of their rights as a parent. One woman stated:

> yeah, it was then [referring to date of diagnosis] that they took my kids…no one told me they was gonna take my kids. I went to the hospital and when I came out, my sister who also was abused by [him] had my kids. Why? I don't know…the whole situation was shit.

Other women alluded to the idea that there are more treatment programs for men than there are for women, but another noted that the treatment programs often do not provide adequate or any child care, again forcing many women to abandon the idea of treatment.

Family Background

Of the women interviewed, the theme of intergenerational criminal activity reoccurred. In early interviews, this prompted additional probing about each woman's background. 10 of the women interviewed reported that someone in their immediate family had been either incarcerated or arrested at some point. The remaining women knew of a family member who had been incarcerated or arrested, but it was not a close family member. One woman attributes her criminality to her mother's involvement in illicit activity:

> it was like every night, she was always using, I mean, I could never even see how she like went to work and stuff cuz she always be asking men for stuff, you know, like prostituting for her fix…how could I not grow up dopin'? I mean, she was supposed to be a mother, not out doin' her thing and ignoring her babies.

This theme of intergenerational criminal activity may exist for male offenders, as well. Intergenerational

Susan V. Koski & S. E. Costanza

An Examination of Narratives From Women Offenders: Are Gender-Specific Reentry Efforts Needed?

criminality has many dimensions. The most obvious interpretation of intergenerational criminality is that behavioral patterns are inherited or shared by family members (Fishbein 1967). However, it seemed that for the women offenders interviewed intergenerational criminality was more closely linked to criminality through its association with losses of family members to imprisonment. For women, it proved the absence of that family member often contributed to their own role in criminal activity. One woman stated: "Well, when [she] wasn't around, my sister and me, we paid all the bills, I mean, as best we could, but all that, all that stuff—it fell on US! We was left to do it all ourselves." Another female offender recalled the frustration she felt when her step-father was incarcerated for his third time in her life: "I felt abandoned, lonely, like why are you doing this to us again, scared, and I felt bad for my mother…and us, too—we were always being left by him." In addition to the common feelings of abandonment expressed by many of the women, another recurrent theme in the interviews was that many of the women reported feelings of embarrassment about family members involved in criminal activity. For the interviewees, feelings of and guilt and shame about past family failure seem to linger. Also, many of the interviewees reported the preexisting fear that they would end up on a similar path. It is possible that the concept of self-labeling (Goffman 1959; Richards and Tittle 1981) is a powerful catalyst for involvement in criminal activity, as many of the women recalled shame of where they ended up in grim contrast to some of their closest family members. One woman stated:

it's funny, you know, I ended up like [her]. I never told no one what she did for work because, you know, it

wasn't like the kind of work you proud of [referring to selling drugs], but now I ended up following in [her] footsteps anyway.

It should also be noted that while many women expressed feelings of embarrassment for their family members, they simultaneously expressed feelings of pride for themselves as they accomplished distinct goals and objectives of their rehabilitation program.

Life Course Dimensions

A key theme derived from the interviews was that they were indicative that women have special needs that vary from male offenders and that these women have gendered responses to at least eight factors (mentioned above). There is a decided need for gendered rehabilitation and aftercare. With regard to the life course, women experience life events in varied ways. While our interviews showed support for classic social bonding principles, they also confirm the nature of bonding is strongly linked to gender patterns of behavior (Benda 2005). Although social bonding influences a child's development, life course theory augments our gendered understanding of the journey of growing up in such a way that suggests that neutral approaches may not be ideal. Interviewees' responses also proved consistent with Thornberry's (1997) three dimensions of criminal trajectory: entrance, success, and timing.

The entrance dimension as demonstrated by one woman interviewed was during her middle school years,

it mostly started when I was in grade eight, but earlier I was like really a good student, I did what I was told

and nothin' got me, but it was started when I hang out with these three girls and we did, you know, drugs and shit, like just little stuff, and then one wanted to…she wanted to start selling herself so we was stupid and we did it so we didn' look bad or nothin'… and look at me now—I ain't got my kids, I got nothin', I told you [she was] the only one who helped me with gettin' my food stamps, oh, and my spot in the shelter.

Second is the success dimension, another woman discussed her triumph with criminal activity, she stated:

Well, really, I didn't do nothin', it found me. I always tried to stay away from it cuz, you know, that's what people say, but both my brothers and my uncle where [incarcerated], and while they were there, I sold drugs for them.

The timing dimension played a significant role for the women. The timing of the events in their life seemed to dictate all other events. One woman describes her involvement in a domestic violence situation:

it was always bad, he hit me, my sister used to be with him and she told me, but I figured he wouldn't [hit] me…it wasn't even like he was like doped up, just like mean, and he was like jealous, so I couldn't like even go to the store or to the school to get my son, and he get like all crazy…he didn't work neither so he just told me what to do…it kinda like ruined my feeling of me and what I wanted.

She then went on to discuss how the timing of this event led to other events that impact her today:

it was after he got locked up, where he at now, that I kinda like started with another man, and then he hit me too! I was like so tired, I was using heroin, but started meth[odone], so I was tryin', I was tryin', but got arrested for this time and just tired so I don't want nothing to do with all that no more…that ain't the life for me and my baby, he's ten, but still my baby, haha.

This three-dimensional model is supported by earlier work by Sampson and Laub (1993:8) who proposed that life course dynamics focus on "duration, timing, and ordering of life events and their consequences for later life development."

As Elder (1994:5) predicted, patterns that emerge from the interviews indicate that "the interweaving of age-graded trajectories" is extremely helpful in understanding female criminal behavior. We expect that interviews with males would have proved similar support for the perspective, however, the outcomes of the interviews point out the need for gender-specificity in theory and practice. For females, events that are expected to alter trajectory outcomes are parenthood, drug use, childhood abuse (physical and sexual), access to education/opportunity, mental health, death of a loved one, and family background. For each of the interviewees, these events were processed differently and there were multiple gender-specific factors that lead to criminal behavior.

Conclusion

Our interviews cast in sharp relief the necessity for gender-specific theory to explain crime. In much of the interview content, we observed that much

Susan V. Koski & S. E. Costanza

An Examination of Narratives From Women Offenders: Are Gender-Specific Reentry Efforts Needed?

of their criminal behavior emerges from their own understanding of gender-specific roles. Many of the women interviewed appeared subservient to males in their personal lives. Connected to this may be low self-esteem issues that emerged during key transitions in their lives.

We had hoped our research would contribute more or less to reentry and rehabilitation findings, however, it is a subject that should be approached with guarded optimism based on the sample size.

Our research has provided insight into the lives of women who have been involved in the criminal justice system for some time, and their needs have proved to be different than those of male offenders. Women who reoffend often do so to cope with daily struggles that are unique to females, a fact that is often ignored by many reentry programs. Women who have been victimized either before or after incarceration are at a higher risk of abusing drugs. With abuse comes heightened probability of dealing or prostitution in exchange for drugs. The child abuse/substance abuse relationship is particularly strong.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

In addition to a small sample size, which is often the case in qualitative research, the limitations of these case studies lie in the validity of the interviews as opposed to generalizability. While there is no way of telling whether or not women offenders are globally effected by these life factors, it is a reasonable expectation that the commonalities reflected among these women would also be reflected in larger studies of women offenders. While the list of risk factors is by no means exhaustive, it suggests several avenues of strategic intervention for policymakers. Commonalities among women who desisted from criminal activity emerged during interviews, and successful interventions throughout the life course were identified. What is important is that these commonalities in so far as they prove generalizable can be incorporated into useful models of reentry, rehabilitation, and aftercare. One key factor that future research should consider is that women offenders' identity may vary across regions.

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Susan V. Koski & S. E. Costanza

An Examination of Narratives From Women Offenders: Are Gender-Specific Reentry Efforts Needed?

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Service Relation and Organizational Context: A Qualitative Research at Shopping Centers

Abstract Service work has undergone changes related to their managerial practices, which bring new professional and organizational realities to employees. The purpose of this article is to explore the opportunities of a qualitative research strategy combining both semi-structured interviews and participant observations to consider work organization and analyze the existing modes of service work of different types of shops and restaurants within shopping centers. This analysis considers the existence of a complex service relation that incorporates relational and material dimensions.

Keywords Service Work; Service Relation; Work Organization; Shops; Restaurants; Shopping Centers

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Considerable attention has recently been paid to the heterogeneous nature of work in the service sector. Actually, contemporary research on service work has been one of the most vibrant fields in sociology of work in the past 10 years (Macdonald and Sirianni 1996; Korczynski and Kerfoot 2005; Pettinger 2005; 2006; Warhurst and Nickson 2007; Korczynski 2009). Despite the relevance of the nexus of work and organizations (Haveman and Khaire 2006), some empirical research does not start from

examining how a specific organizational context actually shapes service work and particularly service relations. Understanding the particularities of service relations requires attention not only to work activities directly involved in service delivery, but also to their organizational context.

More often than not, researchers focus on either shops or restaurants organizational settings, construing them as distinct subjects of enquiry. Such compartmentalization is supported by evident differences concerning workplaces and employment relations among these typical service work organizations. Shops and restaurants comprise a variety of locations, such as retail, hospital, or industrial sites. Both are also the service activities most commonly found in shopping centers, significant spaces of production, consumption and social reproduction in contemporary society (Falk and Campbell 1997). The shopping center, as a complex or-

ganizational context, mobilizes the potential of the employees for innovation and self-actualization by slackening rigid bureaucratic ways of control and, according to employees, more autonomy. However, this autonomy is predicated (Korczynski 2004) because the employees are in fact constrained by strict regulations (Leidner 1993). The customer is mobilized as a resource to legitimize the standardization of conduct and to reduce direct practices of managerial control.

This article proposes a comprehensive sociology of service relation involving employees and customers in different types of shops and restaurants. It explores the opportunities of a qualitative research strategy that integrates both semi-structured interviews and participant observations to examine the work organization in shops and restaurants at shopping centers and question the existing modes of service work,[1] suggesting the existence of a complex service relation incorporating relational and material dimensions. The analysis focuses specifically on the following five features of service relation: approaching the customer, time and space framework, resources mobilized by employees, sales information support, and skills mobilized by employees.

This methodology of studying service relation provides an interesting insight not only into the comparative analysis of work and organizations in the service sector as a whole, but also into a deeper analysis of each subsector.

Comprehensive Sociology of Service Relation

Service activities in recent decades have attracted widespread and varied reflections about the specific nature of service work and its place in contemporary societies (Gadrey 1994; Rifkin 2000). Part of the debate on the expansion of service activities concerns the issue of service relation. At an abstract level, a service relation is established not only between individuals, but also organizations at the time of a service initiated by individual X, mostly at the initiative of individual Y, concerning a fact or issue requiring the assistance of individual X (Gadrey 1994). Analysis of this relation requires the understanding of conditions and resources that individuals and organizations mobilized. It seems useful to go back to Weber's theories on social relations in order to contextualize the service relation. According to Weber (1971), the social relation corresponds to an action which leads to the action of others. It is characterized by a sense of intention and subjectivity of the actor. Indeed, Weber (1953:243) considers that the "act which is particularly important to comprehensive sociology is, in particular, an attitude that: is in accordance with the subjectively intended meaning of the one who acts; is co-determined in their course by that meaningful reference; and can therefore be explained in an intelligible way based on that sense (subjectively) intended." Moreover, Weber recognizes that social relations are motivated by conflict, hostility, avoiding, breaking, or friendship. This is particularly significant because the service relation analyzed in shops and restaurants includes these situational boundaries that can be determined by

the levels of urgency of each party involved in the social drama of work (Hughes 1981).

Goffman (1961) developed the notion of service relation initially advanced by Hughes in the universe of services, mainly in hospitals (Hughes 1981), focusing on service interactions. It incorporates situations where the work takes place in direct contact with the customer, when the individual providing the service has to adjust his/her work to the particularities of the customer. However, according to this perspective, service relation seems to be unduly limited to a co-direct presence of people involved in it, and overly centered on the relational dimension. Therefore, my focus is on examining the service relation considering both its relational dimensions (Borzeix 2000; Jeantet 2003)—made up of spatial-temporal, institutional, and inter-subjective components—and material dimension (Pettinger 2006).

Regarding the relational dimensions, and particularly the spatial-temporal component, the service relation between employees and customers is not episodic, but recharged in space and time by social relations of loyalty, habit, motivated by particular preferences or absence of choices. Actually, Weber (1959) pointed out this durable and renewable nature of social relations. The institutional component refers to the organizational location of the service relation that is likely to occur at two levels. At the first level, there are shops and restaurants themselves with operating rules associated with brands and professional hierarchies; and at the second level, there is the shopping center as a whole that imposes certain rules of con-

duct on shops and restaurants. Like the first two components, the inter-subjective component refers to relational dimensions not only with customers, but also with other employees and between employees and superiors. In this context, the professional *ethos* of employees seems to impose both an embodied and non-embodied performance occurring at different times and in different spaces of a working day.

The relational dimensions of this service relation show that this activity takes advantage of the personality and attitude of employees by leading them to the organization's goals. Hochschild's (2003) analysis of emotional labor in the airline industry is paradigmatic on this topic. According to her, emotional work requires that employees induce or eliminate feelings in order to produce the most appropriate state in others (for example, airhostesses should give passengers a safe and friendly atmosphere). Employees undertake their emotional work, while having to master their own feelings, recognizing that in many situations, for example, they have to smile even if they do not feel like it. They must also be able to manage customers' feelings. It is as if service quality should make the customer satisfied and happy. In this context, emotional labor is not a homogeneous universe, as it depends on working conditions, types of jobs, and the cultural orientation of the employee to emotions. However, if expressions of emotions can be overwhelming for employees, we cannot forget that it enables them to exercise some control (Bolton 2006) over others, such as customers. Actually, this emotional labor does not always mean alienation, as it makes the creation of

wider purposes possible (Wharton and Erickson 1993). The aim of standardizing emotional labor has to be understood not only as an instrument implemented by brands to achieve sales and profits, and therefore something negative for employees, but also in relation to how employees face the social space of work. Actually, there are positive aspects as it helps employees to better control interactions with customers and with other employees. Furthermore, standardization means that the brand does not always impose its requirements unilaterally. In the case of shops and restaurants, emotional control cannot be analyzed as a linear antagonism between shops, store managers, and operational level. We perceive some ambiguity and openness in the control mechanisms. Both employees and customers can attempt to subvert the interests of management, but also their own interests. The employees can intimidate the customers, but they often experience a feeling of lack of control in the interactions with customers. In this context, if the brand offers standardized strategies that protect them in the interaction with the customer, or enable them to have additional power, there is no reason for employees to reject these standardizations.

Besides attitude, it is crucial for the debate on the relational dimensions of this service relation to also emphasize appearance, image, and physical attributes of employees (Warhurst and Nickson 2007). The attitude of employees can be shaped by emotional labor, and their appearance through aesthetic labor (Warhurst and Nickson 2007). Moreover, it is not possible to neglect the impact of customers on the performance of emotional and

aesthetic labor among employees, which involves the incorporation of less tangible skills. It is essential to consider relational skills designated as "soft skills," which include emotional and aesthetic dimensions.

The material dimension of the service relation reveals the material tasks done during a working day. Those employed in shops and restaurants are involved in both creating, as well as selling places (Pettinger 2006). They take care of the ambience, making it conducive to consumption, of the product presentation, stock preparation, tidying, and cleaning. Besides, their self-image and appearance are important and inseparable from the product on sale. To some extent, this is employee commercialization, in the sense of the appropriateness of the employee's image to the brand and shop organization. In the case of shops and restaurants, the use of a brand uniform is quite illustrative. It seems that the role of the material dimension of this service relation, and all that is associated with it, is even more important because it makes it possible to understand the shift of work from employees to customer in some types of shops and restaurants.

Qualitative Methodology

Much of the research about the analysis of service work in shops and restaurants is qualitative, with researchers experiencing some difficulty in accessing employees and their workplaces (Leidner 1991; Reiter 1997). This research did not face such constraints at its beginning, but as it progressed. Actually, the first 15 interviewees were employees

studying at the University of Porto, where I teach. In order to diversify the profile of interviewees, it was necessary to find other employees who were not simultaneously studying and working. Therefore, I decided to directly contact employees and ask them whether they were students or not. I first identified myself as a researcher, stating the objectives of the research, and then asked if they would be available to collaborate in the research by granting an interview scheduled according to their preferences. This way of accessing employees was more complex and there were constraints in this phase as many people approached were unavailable. However, this recruitment process was central "to understanding the 'outcomes' of the research" (Rapley 2007:17). In other words, the methodological misfortunes experienced by the researcher supported the inquiry on the very work organization in shops and restaurants at shopping centers. Moreover, such misfortunes enabled an increased awareness about the effects and limits of the conceptual and technical instruments used.

I have tried wherever possible to diversify the demographic profile of respondents, which required rejecting some contacts collected and looking for others. Despite these constraints, 60 employees were interviewed in 8 shopping centers located in the Porto Metropolitan Area, a number of interviews according to the principle of saturation (Burgess 1984), in other words, a strategy that consists of collecting information until it becomes redundant. The sample included 58% (35) of female interviewees and 42% (25) of male interviewees. The majority of women were working in shops (63%) and 37% in restaurants. With regard to the

men interviewed, approximately 60% were operating in restaurants and 40% in shops. It should be pointed out that there is a sharp contrast in percentages recorded for females and males and for shops and restaurants. These realities highlight how gendered attributes are brought into organizations and work (Leidner 1991; Lowe and Crewe 1996; Pettinger 2005).

According to the premises of qualitative research, the concern was not to select a statistically representative set of individuals, but rather a "socially significant" one. Therefore, respondents were considered not only as single individuals, but also as representatives of their organizational contexts, professions, as well as part of a social group that shares common characteristics (Rapley 2007). During the semi-structured interviews, my strategy—and remember the title of the book by Studs Terkel (2004), *Working. People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do*—was to listen to the employees talking about what they do in their daily work and how they feel about it. To be sure, "listening" was informed by an interview script covering questions about the career, work activity, job satisfaction, and personal lives. As should now be obvious for the discussion above, in this article, I seek to cover only the specific theme of the work activity, capturing issues related to work organization and service relation.

When analyzing interviews, I do not "reproduce interviewees' own accounts, glossed over by a few social science categories" (Silverman 2013:48). Rather, the analysis of data is built on the notion of actors being located in specific social contexts,

therefore giving prominence to their creation of meanings. Borrowing from the narrative forms of organization studies, interpretative analysis permits "elucidating along theoretical, non-normative lines a viable way of combining narrative with the logic-scientific mode of reporting" (Czarniawska 1998:14). However, narratives themselves may easily be manipulated as "expressions given" (Gubrium and Holstein 2009), so it is important to look for "expressions given off" (Gubrium and Holstein 2009), as actions and thoughts that are less controlled, and in this way can tell us an actor's motives and true selves in the organizational context of shops and restaurants within shopping centers. Therefore, to capture these second kinds of expression, participant observation took an important role in order to observe shops and restaurants' employees and customers throughout all times of the working day (morning, afternoon, night during week, and weekend), and capture the work activity itself. Planning to systematically observe whenever possible the following sites for two months was vital: the entrance area of the shops and the restaurants, where I registered the movements of employees and customers; and the internal area of shops and restaurants, chosen for its relevance in framing the nature of the work activity under analysis. The idea was to look at how these two settings as contexts are used and produced by actors themselves. I approached these contexts from the "bottom" as I focused on chains of actions and events (Holstein and Gubrium 2007). As these two field sites are public spaces, accessing them was a process of hanging out and observing meticulously in order to produce a thick description of these two settings and the employees and customers in it. This description is based

on detailed field notes that I did after being in these two observational sites. Indeed, it was outside the field that I wrote the most careful notes about what I observed, otherwise the anonymity requirement would have been lost.

Both semi-structured interviews and participant observations showed the benefits of being there (Hodson et al. 2009), as they allowed a rich narrative about work organization, space configurations in shops and restaurants, and an understanding of service relation based on the following key features: approaching the customer, time and space framework, resources mobilized by employees, sales information support, and skills mobilized by employees.

Work Organization and Space Configurations in Shops

Prior to characterizing the work organization in the customized service and self-service shops, it is important to identify the existing professional categories according to work contracts. In customized service shops, professional categories are the following: first class cashier, second class cashier, third class cashier, assistant manager, and store manager. In self-service shops, positions are as follows: cashier, third class supervisor, second class supervisor, and supervisor. Both shops organize internal categories for employees who do not have direct equivalence with the provisions laid down in work contracts. Such categories compromise not only salary hierarchy, but also symbolic positions in shops. In the case of self-service shops, the supervisor plays an important role as this position

guarantees the front-line brand image. The supervisor talks to the shop management team about the customer's reactions to products on show and new guidelines. Promotion is an informal process in both types of shop, without explicit underlying criteria.

Shops are spaces designed for circulation of articles likely to be handled (Du Gay 1996) and for people hanging around. All shops are concerned with several issues: the shop window, the inner area, and location of articles. The window is the first image of the shop. The organization of the inner area is planned to the smallest details since it receives on a regular basis new products that have to be displayed in the best place to respond to customers' needs, which are the focus of organizational and marketing activities (Fuller and Smith 1991). Regarding large chain stores, there is a principle of uniformity for all shops within the same brand achieved through photographs showing how the areas should be organized. The marketing services associated to those of merchandising play an important role in the construction of such a consumer universe. Furthermore, the strategy to expand franchises adapted to the socio-demographic characteristics of customers increases their tendency to buy products (Abell 1991).

In what concerns a work organization, among self-service shops there are two working places: the shop itself and the restricted working area. Employees are in various places in the shop, at the checkout, receiving articles and payments, or at the shelves and small tables scattered around the shop, organizing, folding, or replacing articles. They are also guarding the fitting rooms, receiving articles that customers try on. Finally, some employees organize articles near the entrance of the shop, so that they are able to control situations in which alarms not removed or disabled from the clothing are activated.

As customized service shops are often smaller, they have fewer employees and, at the same time, less customer flow, so it is not necessary to deploy a worker permanently at a shop entrance, as this can be done by any employee. The checkout is where articles and payments are registered. Shop floor employees welcome customers and fetch what they request. There are employees at the shelves and tables, organizing articles and putting them away when required. Finally, in the stockroom, their task is to organize the articles received and to decide on the location of such articles in the shop. Both types of shops are fitted with adequate storage rooms for the articles, sometimes on an upper floor or on the same floor as the shop.

Service Relation in Shops: A Qualitative Approach

The service work in shops can be analyzed according to five features: approaching the customer, time and space framework, resources mobilized by employees, sales information support, and skills mobilized by employees.

In the case of self-service shops, employees do not determine when and how the customer is approached, and the duration of service relation varies according to customer types and their motivations (Fuller and Smith 1991; Korczynski 2004). Custom-

ers tend to wander around the existing shop areas in order to see different articles, which do not necessarily result in an article being sold. Therefore, it is important to take into account the following three types of customers suggested by employees during the semi-structured interviews carried out: the shop-loyal customers, who repeat their visits following previous contacts, and who buy articles; transient customers, who visit the shop and can buy one article or two; and passers-by, who simply visit the shop with no intention of buying. In the first case, it is important to mention that loyalty does not mean exclusivity because it is possible to be loyal to more than one shop.

When there is interaction between customers and employees, the latter can guide the customer by suggestive selling techniques (Mills 1986). Thus, employees can prompt the customer into buying by setting up a favorable business atmosphere for the sale to take place (Pettinger 2006). There are specific areas within the shop to support sales, as the location of products and their layouts are carefully planned by the brands, as noted earlier. Furthermore, the effect of the shop window itself is very powerful. Finally, during the service relation, employees make use of many relational skills allowing them to fully become part of the interactional moment. Furthermore, organizational skills are also widespread as employees have formal and informal training about the organizational structure of shops.

In the case of customized service shops, employees determine when and how the customer should be approached. Interaction duration varies, and is less structured than in the previous case, so it allows employees to manage their availability to the customer in a way that stimulates discovery of products by the customer. However, employees must always adapt to the flows of interactions with the customer and other activities that they have to undertake. It facilitates the suggestive selling, but in these types of shops employees have more time to present articles in detail. Regarding sales information support, self-service and customized service shops are alike in terms of physical spaces, location and product layout, and collection catalogues. Also important are the suggestions offered by employees to customers, by means of a set of relational and technical skills. Actually, organizational skills are not so evident, as in the self-service shops, as the technical skills which point the deep knowledge that employees have about the articles they present to customers.

Body and non-body language (Leidner 1993; Reiter 1997) are designed to achieve a certain tone and a certain end. Service relation is not only the framing structure of work, it is the work, and often the product of work, its result. This type of work immediately turns into a social action (Weber 1971), as I already noted, an action not only steered to others, where language and communication contribute to shape the final product offered (in this case, a service), but also steered to the product itself. Language is crucial during the working day of these employees. On this issue, a glossary containing the main expressions identified throughout participant observations and semi-structured interviews with these employees is proposed. It shows different dimensions of service work, such as relational and material.

Table 1. Glossary on service activity at shops.

Beating the record of sales	To exceed the amount of sales of the same day in the previous year
COSC	Control of orders, sales, and costs
Regular customers	Customers entering the shop every day or every second day
Coordination	Changing the layout of articles in the shop
Morning meeting	Morning meeting to inform employees about the amount invoiced the previous day, whether the objective was achieved, and comment on the weakest points
Minimum assistance paid to the customer	Observation of rules to assist customers
Unload truck	Receiving goods from Spain, separating and counting goods in the restricted work area, and then placing them in the shop
Cash takings	Account for end-of-day cash takings
HACCP	Hazard analysis and control critical points
Inter-note	To register the number of items going to another shop of the same brand
Shop's user manual	Document containing all operational rules
Nipoe	Week-end meeting on the current sales of the shop during the previous week, week balance-sheet, sometimes people present publicly the experiences that did not go as planned during the week
Tips for care shown to customers	Amount in cash that full-time shop employees receive for special care shown to a customer
Tidy the clothes	Separate the clothes
Fold the clothes	Special folding method according to each department (women's, men's, children, baby)
Suggestive selling	Suggest articles to the customers
Twenty-four	Return to the storage area every hour to replace the articles sold in the shop

Source: Self-elaboration.

There are two key issues. Firstly, is the "fold clothes" as it reveals the material dimension of this working activity. Indeed, one of the employees interviewed described himself professionally as "clothes folder." Thus, inside the shops we cannot forget about a significant number of activities involving material tasks, which means that interactive service work contains not only a relational dimension, but also a material one.

Secondly, is the issue of "suggestive selling," also included in the glossary of the restaurants, that makes it clear how shops interfere in the organization of the customer experience (Lowe and Crewe 1996), for example, according to the type of physical layout offered to the customer. The shop also determines how employees present themselves to customers. After receiving scripted instructions from shop management, employees manage their body and verbal language when suggesting any additional article to the customer, as I pointed out during observations. Looking the customer in the eye, being friendly and smiling, knowing how to wait for the customer's reactions and to respect their space imply verbal and non-verbal language that must express an image associated to the brand (Leidner 1993). Service relation is largely standardized, not only are employees involved in this, but also customers (Pettinger 2004; 2005; 2006).

Thus, from this perspective, there is clearly a characteristic type of language and communication used, built and structured throughout the daily activities of these employees, which represent essential resources in service activity. Some perspectives consider that the brand and the organization as a whole control and manipulate the employee's body and soul (Leidner 1993). However, at the same time, standardization and routines are an opportunity for employees (Bolton 2005; 2006). As noted earlier, they consider it important in their working day as it indicates how to act in particular situations with customers, colleagues, and superiors.

Work Organization and Space Configurations in Restaurants

Before analyzing work organization in the three types of restaurants (fast food, hybrid, and classical), it is important to identify the existing professional categories. In the case of fast food restaurants, an operational career consists of five stages, which represent organizational boundary roles in terms of responsibilities assumed. Each boundary role has different levels of autonomy and responsibility among performance of functions. Therefore, at the bottom, there is the operator, then the expert, the VIP expert, the shift manager B, the shift manager A (all from an operational career), the unit manager B, the unit manager A, and the brand director.

Employees of low and high status categories are relevant to the study because both imply physical presence at restaurants and interactions with customers (Reiter 1997). It seems that these multiple hierarchies benefit restaurants and their organization (Brochier 2001), as they enable permanent attendance of superiors controlling and supervising employees. This involves ensuring that employees stay with the organization through promotions or hope of promotion. The aim is to get managers

performing both supervisory and material tasks, such as being in the kitchen. For those managers hoping to evade the more material tasks, being there also makes them become more involved in order to rise in the hierarchy. In hybrid restaurants, the hierarchy structure is the same as in fast food restaurants. Among classical restaurants, there is the restaurant manager, the assistant manager, and waiters. The professional hierarchy is simpler than in fast food restaurants.

The analyses of work organization take into consideration workstations, equipment, and main tasks. Among fast food restaurants, there are two main workstations—kitchen and window. The kitchen is fitted with refrigerators where the products received are preserved, and a grill which is a specific technical appliance designed to cook meat in a fixed period, measured by its purpose-built control device. This device allows time adjustment according to different types of meat available. The seasoning area is where the cooked meat placed on the bread is seasoned. There is a further technical device to cook fish and chicken. The deep-fryer is designed to fry the potatoes. The window has cash registers, and drink and coffee sections. At the cash registers, employees register the orders. The menu available to customers is fixed on the upper part of the wall behind the window. To look at the menu, customers have to come closer to the window, and make a quick choice and place orders to avoid queues behind them, especially at breakfast and dinner time, which employees call rush hours. After taking the orders, window employees deliver information to their colleagues located in the kitchen. If they already have the orders, they

will quickly slide products over a ramp dividing the kitchen from the window, or if preparation is necessary, this happens a few moments later. Most menu options available to the customer are already prepared, particularly the most popular options. Drinks are near the cash registers and are delivered to the customer by employees taking the orders. The coffee area is further from the cash registers and therefore the customer must proceed to this area with the ticket confirming payment, and request the coffee, the milk-based drinks, and/or confectionery.

This work organization is rather like a "production line," as highlighted by a manager interviewed, an unvarying routine for taking and delivering orders where everything must be done in the shortest time possible and in a small space. Indeed, the size of these fast food restaurants is very small, with many employees in the same place at the same time in both main working places.

Regarding hybrid restaurants, there are three main workstations: the kitchen, the counter, and the dining room. As in the case of fast food restaurants, the kitchen is fitted with refrigerators to preserve food products, but here there is an additional hob and an oven area to cook the food. To defrost the products, employees have to respect the requirements of the frozen products, especially the best-before date and the freezing time. The kitchen is fitted with two tables that provide support to the hob and the oven area, respectively. The oven is used to cook pizzas and salads. Employees at the tables have to take into consideration how the products are laid out according to their proper quantities and their

particular characteristics. Sauces are added to the pizzas before they are taken to the tables, which is not the case with pasta dishes. Employees carry the pre-prepared dishes to the tables. They are in charge of attending customers. The kitchen is also equipped with a dishwasher. The cash registers and the drinks sections are found at the counter. The function of this counter is the same as in fast food restaurants. A bar stands in one of the corners of the dining room, where drinks are fetched for the tables. Some employees are in charge of welcoming customers at the restaurant door and taking them to the tables, others are responsible for waiting at the tables, and others are in charge of supplying drinks from the bar to the tables during rush hours. Finally, the cash register is used to register products that have been served at different tables and to register payments.

In classical restaurants, there are three workstations: the kitchen, the counter, and the dining room. The kitchen is fitted with a hob, a refrigerator, and an oven, with functions similar to those of hybrid-type restaurant. The side tables are used for the preparation of food, and no distinction is made between the side table for the hob and the table for the oven area, as in hybrid restaurants. Potatoes are cut in the kitchen and then fried in the deep fryer. They do not come in packages as in fast food and hybrid restaurants. There is an expert in the kitchen, the cook, who is in charge of cooking for customers, similar to hybrid restaurants. Among fast food restaurants, even though the employees are in the kitchen, they are not exactly cooks because they perform tasks at various workstations, so they are multifunctional. Indeed, employees are taught

in a short time and are fully trained in almost a week (Leidner 1993; Reiter 1997). In the kitchen, they are responsible for one specific task integrated in a particular production process. The counter system is identical to that of hybrid restaurants, but with one difference: employees at the counter remain in the same place and do not wander off to other workstations. Finally, in the dining room, there is no distinction between welcoming the customer and paying special attention to the customer, as there is in hybrid restaurants. Employees often wait for customers to choose their own tables and sit down before offering them the menu, and, a few minutes later, they take their orders.

In sum, hybrid restaurants have the same features as fast food and classical restaurants. However, employees are multifunctional in both fast food and hybrid restaurants since they move around several workstations. In classical restaurants, employees perform only the tasks for which they have been hired. For example, as I saw through the observation, if someone is employed as a waiter or to work at the counter, or even in the kitchen, he or she will only do tasks related to that function. Examining these issues is important to understand the heterogeneous reality of work organization in different types of restaurants, which is far from a homogenous image of workers and work organization among restaurants at shopping centers.

Service Relation in Restaurants: A Qualitative Approach

As stated earlier, the service relation between employees and customers in restaurants can be

analyzed according to five features: approaching the customer, time and space framework, resources mobilized by employees, sales information support, and skills mobilized by employees.

Regarding the moment of approaching the customer, in fast food restaurants, this is generally a process that is initiated by an employee. Indeed, as I have seen during observations throughout the research, the customer is usually still reading the menu over the counter and choosing what they are going to eat and drink, when the employee welcomes him/her and offers some help. The employee guides the customer who is also oriented by the brand suggestions. However, as soon as the customer takes part in the service relation, the brand must adapt itself to the customer's behavior (Whyte 1948). This requires the transfer of work previously done by the employee to the customer. It seems that the production and service model of these brands pull the customer into the process of work, and the result is a reduction of labor costs, benefitting the chains with free labor since these customers are not paid to perform these tasks. As Ritzer (1993) argues, the boundaries between employees and customers have a tendency to disappear, especially in the self-service systems. However, this does not happen in classical restaurants. In these, the customer enters the space, chooses a table, and only then is he/she approached by the employee, even though this approach can take place long after the customers have entered the restaurant. In the case of hybrid restaurants, the situation at the counter is similar to that in fast food restaurants, and the situation at the table is similar to that of classical restaurants.

Moving on to the time and space framework, this type of service relation takes only a short time in fast food restaurants, between 5 and 8 minutes, prescribed by the restaurant itself, while in classical restaurants it lasts for an average of 20 to 50 minutes. In hybrid restaurants, the situation is similar to that of other restaurants. As we have seen, this service relation occurs in specific spaces in restaurants.

Concerning the brand devices used by the employees during the service relation, it is possible to highlight suggestive selling in fast food restaurants where, for instance, customers choose the menu and then the employee tells them that for an extra 20 cents a larger drink can be served. The suggestive selling is also a reality in classical restaurants. However, here, we have longer interaction periods that allow employees to describe the products in more detail. The situation in hybrid restaurants is similar to the two already mentioned.

Sales information support is largely scripted, according to each brand (Ransome 2005). Indeed, in fast food restaurants, there is a clearly visible panel with the menu options and respective prices. In the case of classical restaurants, the menu (describing each dish for every day of the week) is given to the customers.

Finally, the skills mobilized by employees in the three types of restaurants include a group of relational skills that mobilize employees' subjectivity. Organizational and technical skills are also evident, particularly in fast food and hybrid restaurants, where employees are multifunctional and

are obliged to know the products and how to work with the existing equipment.

Regarding the whole universe of restaurants, a glossary on its activity was set up according to data gathered from both semi-structured interviews and participant observations. This is a set of concepts and expressions related to the work undertaken in restaurants; in other words, a language that structures and is structured throughout the daily activities of employees interviewed (Valentine 2002). During the first interviews, I needed to clarify these concepts and expressions used by employees from restaurants. Along the last interviews, my familiarity with the language enabled me to understand the discourse of those interviewed and observed.

Table 2. Glossary on service activity at restaurants.

Beating the record of sales	To exceed the amount of sales of the same day in the previous year
COSC	Control of orders, sales, and costs
Frequent customers	Customers using the facility every day, or every two days
Mystery customer	Customer working for the brand, who assesses the business attitude of employees, the level of knowledge of the products and of hygiene in facilities, without employees being aware of the evaluation at hand
Achievement of standards	Achievement of procedures for the preparation and making of products, rules for paying attention to the customers
Closing of tills	Cash taking at the end of the day's activities
HACCP	Hazard analysis and control critical points
Preparation lists	To collect and prepare all the products needed to begin preparation, on opening the food shop
Preparation manual	Document containing the rules on the preparation of certain products
Rush	Work periods with an intense flow of customers
Sangria	Cash register filled with cash
Seven phases in paying attention to the customers	Group of compulsory phases along which attention must be paid to the customer
Suggestive selling	Suggest additional products to the customers

Source: Self-elaboration.

Among the concepts and expressions compiled in Table 2, special reference must be made to the mystery customer, as it implies the instrumentalization of the customer by the brand (Erstad 1998). This mystery customer defines the assessment of service quality perceived by customers. Non-quality due to a number of successive failures means that is not fit for purpose. As Jougleux (2005) argues, there are quality failures according to perceived expectations, specification of service offers, service production, and communication. With respect to perceived expectations, the employee providing the service is not aware of the customer's true expectations, and does not know the main issues on which the customer justifies his/her opinion of the service nor is the employee aware of the levels of performance expected by him/her. In terms of specification of service offers, they sometimes do not meet the customer's expectations (waiting time, accessibility, delays in the follow-up). Regarding service production, the company fails to provide the service guaranteed before. Finally, concerning communication, there is a difference between promises made to the customer and actions accomplished. Indeed, the notion of quality is quite close to that of satisfaction (Jougleux 2005), seen as the result of the comparison between what customers perceive as services which should be provided and services effectively provided. Thus, service is a product that cannot be dissociated from the customer that requests and consumes it. Even if the shop or restaurant providing the service anticipates its characteristics and production methods, it is only achieved through the interaction between customer and organization, as I observed directly in shops and restaurants. Nonetheless, an excessive fixation on the customer can be harmful. This is not only about the quality of the service relation at the front line, attention

also must be paid to the back line, or in other words, to the production place, where the employee often is.

In terms of results in the case of very standardized services, for example, in fast food restaurants, the limited operating area allocated to employees and also the expectations of customers reinforce the fact that the perspective of quality is determined especially at the functional level of the brand (Jougleux 2005). As noted earlier, even if the service is offered in many places, it is up to the brand to specify the service offer proposed for each shop, without the possibility of adapting locally. Organization of production standards applies both to back line and to front line alike, as well as to the physical characteristics of the place. Nonetheless, there is still some possibility of local adaptation of the service provided to the customer, for example, in terms of skills and courtesy shown by employees who contact customers, which exceed the rules stipulated by the brand. In this context, the mystery customer is a certification practice applicable to employees as a goal to achieve, towards which everyone must work. The instrumentalization of customer pressure means, for example, as some employees put it, the intensification of the work place. Unit managers demand that employees work harder, as they themselves are also under scrutiny and must show their commitment to work among restaurants.

Conclusions

This article explores the opportunities of a qualitative research strategy combining both semi-structured interviews and participant observations to discuss work organization and analyze the singularities of service relation taking into account the different work activ-

ities among shops and restaurants. Based on these service activities most commonly found in the organizational context of the shopping center, the analysis considers the existence of a complex service relation that incorporates relational and material dimensions.

Throughout qualitative analyses that combine inextricably linked data gathering from semi-structured interviews and participant observations, this research explores the opportunities to capture interviewees' discourses and actions. The analysis of work organization and spaces configurations leads us to consider different types of shops and restaurants—self-service, customized service shops and fast food, classical, and hybrid restaurants. Moreover, the article recognizes heterogeneous service work pointing to a service relation incorporating relational and material dimensions. Indeed, in the service relation, the relational dimensions (Borzeix 2000; Jeantet 2003) are not the dominant attribute as there are material tasks involving the creation of shops and restaurants as selling places (Pettinger 2006), suggesting the complex play of interests between employees, customers, and brands as employers (Leidner 1991; 1993). This is a key point because those workplaces at shopping centers are explicitly marketplaces, aimed at selling products.

An analysis that recognizes complex service relation allows highlighting the ambivalent role of emotions therein. Besides focusing on issues about standardization of emotional work and its oppressive effect on employees, this article also noted that such standardization is important for employees (Bolton 2006) since they are able to achieve a greater control of their emotions in the interactions with customers, other employees, and superiors. Indeed, there is a positive experience of emotional labor for employees who do not consider their work as an ephemeral experience, as jobs for students. Service work is therefore a reality that has to be framed in the physical and social space in which it takes place, and among the multiple players involved in such work.

Understanding and examining the nature of service work in organizational contexts such as the shopping center require a wider scope that considers not only the features of service relation as situational, but also the more abiding patterns that structure it, related to organizational goals. Both are crucial to the debate on sociology of service work and should not be neglected among sociological analyses.

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The Fourth Act in Socio-Legal Scholarship: Playing With Law on the Sociological Stage[1]

Abstract   The emerging narrative of law as a social phenomenon—as opposed to a legal phenomenon—presents pressing questions about what it means to take a sociological approach to law, why the discipline needs retelling from a sociological vantage point, and how this relatively new narrative can be told. I consider these "baseline" questions of socio-legal studies through a careful dissection of Roger Cotterrell's assertion that a sociological understanding of legal ideas "consistently and permanently addresses the need to reinterpret law *systematically* and *empirically* as a *social* phenomenon." By deconstructing Cotterrell's statement, I will explain how a sociological approach provides a vital analytical lens through which to appreciate not only how law works (succeeds or fails) in different social contexts but also how law acts as a social phenomenon. Drawing upon historical and contemporary research examples, I argue that law must be studied as if on a sociological "stage" upon which different actors perform and experience social "acts" within the "theater" of the legal discipline. I will explain why a sociological approach to law is vital for understanding how each "act"—each social phenomenon of law—plays out in the context of other phenomena, including globalization, transitional justice, and the evolution of socio-legal scholarship itself.

Keywords   Globalization; Post-Conflict; Social Phenomenon; Socio-Legal Scholarship; Transitional Justice

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Prologue

A sociological understanding of law "consistently and permanently addresses the need to reinterpret law *systematically* and *empirically* as a *social* phenomenon," writes Roger Cotterrell (1998:183). One of the modern godfathers of sociology of law, Cotterrell (1997), is known for advocating a "law and community" approach to socio-legal studies to replace what he considers an outdated "law and society" approach. The above quote highlights Cotterrell's position on the significance of understanding law not only in its relationship *to* society or embeddedness *within* society, but *as* an independent phenomenon of social life. However, Cotterrell's summary observation raises questions about the need to retell the story of law, what methodologies are involved in reinterpretation, and the appropriateness of using sociology as opposed to other disciplines in formulating this new legal narrative. Amidst the growing trend in socio-legal studies to understand "law *as* society" in its various social contexts—as opposed to "law *in* society" or "law *and* society"—it is vital to ground such understandings in an awareness of purpose and approach (Frerichs 2011). In other words, how can law be studied and understood sociologically, and why is the resulting perspective desirable for academics and practitioners? Scholars of both sociology and law will benefit from taking a closer look at the necessity and method of a sociological approach to law, as Cotterrell's quote summarizes in a nutshell. With this article, I attempt to crack the shell. In doing so, I will offer insights into how law "acts" as a social phenomenon and why scholars must learn to "play" with law on the sociological stage.

Approaching law from any discipline requires an analysis of the legal text, the context in which law is created and implemented (i.e., historical, social, and political conditions), and the underlying subtext or moral meaning that steers legal decision-making (Perry-Kessaris 2012). I will utilize this framework to analyze a sociological approach to law and to show how a sociology-based perspective addresses law's role as an integral piece of "the social." First, I will dissect the terms used in Cotterrell's statement, such as "consistently" and "phenomenon," to determine their purpose as the text of the argument. Next, I will analyze the context of the statement—why and how a sociological approach is taken—to elaborate on the actual "need" of law to be reinterpreted and why such reinterpretation must be performed "systematically" and "empirically." Lastly, I will examine the statement's subtext and underlying factors that determine whether the anticipated results of a sociological approach to law are possible and, if possible, desirable.

With socio-legal scholarship increasingly concerned with the "epistemological dimension of how we perceive and perform the law," socio-legal studies are arguably outgrowing their interdisciplinary dimensions and approaching an era of trans-disciplinarity (Frerichs 2012:58). Therefore, the overarching truth or falsity of Cotterrell's statement must be tested against the success of a sociological approach in reaching an understanding of law that effectively addresses these epistemological

[1] A version of this article was presented at the conference "Re-Imaging Society Through a Socio-Legal Lens" (Cardiff University, United Kingdom, December 16, 2013).

concerns. This search for truth or falsity will entail a journey through classical sociology of law theories, including those of Émile Durkheim and Léon Duguit, to more contemporary ideas of Bruno Latour on the transformation of social things into legal "productions." I will examine these theoretical perspectives alongside case studies that unveil possible reasons for "unsuccessful" legal ventures, and which subsequently signify the need for scholars and practitioners to reinterpret law from new sociological angles. Case studies include the failed use of law as a revolutionary tool of social change in Soviet Central Asia, the ineffective implementation of international patent law in Djibouti, and the clash of external law and local customs in Indonesia. Additionally, I will present research from the fields of law and development and post-conflict studies to compare a sociological approach to law with other disciplinary approaches, such as politically and economically informed perspectives.

By exploring this range of theoretical and empirical research, and selectively spanning the evolution of sociology of law studies, I will present how law as a social phenomenon is constantly shifting in the context of other phenomena, such as globalization, transitional justice, and the field of socio-legal scholarship itself. Ultimately, I will place Cotterrell's statement within the larger picture of sociology of law development, and will argue that a sociological approach to law can, and indeed should, be used to better comprehend law in its sociological form. Lastly, I will contend that the field of socio-legal research, and the trans-disciplinary understandings that result, serve to inform new sociological perspectives of law rather than cause

the discipline to lose sight of its legal foundations. Law does not fade into the sociological sunset simply by being reinterpreted through a sociological approach. Rather, sociological perspectives allow law to be recognized and appreciated as a scene played out on a sociological stage, as a social phenomenon performed by actors in an increasingly globalized legal theater.

The Scene: A Socio-Legal Statement Is Made

As mentioned, any approach to law requires a look at the text, context, and subtext of the law. Therefore, a sociological approach to law is concerned with the text, context, and subtext of law in terms of concepts and relationships among society. Depending on the subject of study—whether global or local, political or economical, customs-based or doctrinal—there can be many different ranges of what constitutes "the social." By describing a sociological understanding of law as "consistently" addressing the need to reinterpret law as a social phenomenon, Cotterrell implies that the empirical, analytical, and normative methodologies of a sociological approach can be applied across a variety of facts and circumstances. A sociological approach is a way of understanding law *as* a social phenomenon regardless of what type of society is being studied.

That a sociological understanding "permanently" addresses the need for reinterpretation suggests that a sociological approach creates a foundation for studying law as a social "act," even as the society being analyzed undergoes continual change.

Robert Kagan (1995:141) has likened socio-legal scholars to "a band of near-sighted detectives, stooping to search for evidence concerning one event while a crime wave is breaking behind [their] backs." Cotterrell takes a more optimistic view that scholars can effectively (re)interpret law even as its social environments inevitably shift in the course of conducting research, and that the findings of sociological approaches to law hold value for future academic explorations.

To study law "systematically" and "empirically" means to critically review the knowledge gained by real world observations and experiments by placing all empirical conclusions into a larger design. Systematic analysis can uncover the degree to which empirical evidence reinforces or rebuts a hypothesis, or creates a new one entirely. The discipline of law is already an inherently systematic exercise as it continually strives for standardization, clarity, and control of arbitrariness in social relations. A sociological approach to law seeks systematic knowledge of these social relations by analyzing legal texts and empirical data within broader social contexts and subtexts. Such systematic reinterpretation perhaps comes naturally with the gradual evolution of sociology of law scholarship, described by Sabine Frerichs (2012) in terms of "generations" of socio-legal thinkers. Although Frerichs' (2012) argument is directed more specifically towards studies of law, society, and economy, her guideline is helpful for understanding the general development of sociology of law.

Frerichs (2012:3, 61) describes the first generation of historicists, such as Durkheim, as mainly focused

on the "embeddedness" of law in society, operating in a pre-disciplinary era in which legal theory and social theory had not yet been fully differentiated (Klein 1996:8). The second generation of realists, such as Oliver Wendell Holmes and Richard Posner, focused on the "relatedness" of law and society (Frerichs 2012:7, 61). This era of legal positivism caused the study of law to fragment from the study of society, allowing for analysis of how one affects the other as separate yet interdependent disciplines (see: Moore 1973:719). The third generation of constructivists, such as Jürgen Habermas and Niklas Luhmann, constitutes an age of inter-disciplinarity, as the theoretical boundaries and "complex intersections of the legal and the social" have been rediscovered and appreciated as ever-shifting (Frerichs 2012:61; see: Sarat 2004:6). With this "law *as* society" generation in full swing, socio-legal scholarship is subtly, but expectedly undergoing the next phase of reinterpretation—a fourth generation or fourth "act" in which law is recognized and studied not only as a social *thing* but as a social *phenomenon*.

Frerichs' general timeline of socio-legal studies is used here to shed light on Cotterrell's assertion that law must be "reinterpreted" rather than simply "interpreted." Due to preexisting conceptions of law as a purely legal phenomenon or as a discipline merely linked with sociology, reinterpretation is necessary to view law as an independently *social* phenomenon. Reinterpreting law as a "phenomenon" rather than a social tool, effect, or ideology allows law to be examined, in Durkheim's sociological positivist terms, as a social fact to be observed and measured (Durkheim 1895:71).

However, a sociological approach is not simply a return to "historicist" views, but allows law to be studied as "an aspect of, or field of experience within, the social" (Cotterrell 2011:509). Finally, to "address" the need to reinterpret law as a social phenomenon means to adequately or completely reach an understanding of law as such. This requires a tricky assessment of the "success" of a sociological approach, which must be "measured" in comparison with possible alternative disciplinary approaches to law.

After setting the scene with the text of Cotterrell's statement alongside a brief chronology of socio-legal studies, I will now dig deeper into historical contexts of the socio-legal narrative and reveal some unexpected elements that guide modern sociological approaches to law.

Act I: The Tragedy of the Antiquated Theory

The sociological retelling of law starts from an understanding of why this story must be told. To better comprehend the historical background from which Cotterrell's statement is made, we must first understand how "law and society" as a field of academic pursuit came into being and how it has subsequently become outmoded.

At the turn of the twentieth century, sociologist William Graham Sumner (1906) wrote about law as a reflection of social mores, of unconscious group ways and folkways aimed at the basic human need to obtain pleasure and avoid pain, constituting a utilitarian social judgment. Nearly a century

earlier, German jurist Friedrich Karl von Savigny similarly believed law to be an expression of the *Volksgeist* (spirit of the people) in his adamant hostility to the codification of social norms (Frerichs 2012:21). Nineteenth-century French philosophers and social thinkers, such as Auguste Comte and Durkheim, were interested in the social perspectives gained by looking at the collective will of the people to create state law. Durkheim (1895:71-72, emphasis added) believed that social facts develop and materialize "outside the consciousnesses of individuals"—just as law is formulated and preserved in legal codes—and therefore law is naturally perceived as a social fact having the "characteristic of a *thing*." But, with gradual divisions in social class (in France, at least) came an influx of legislation meant to establish law as a technique of juridical science rather than a philosophy of society. For instance, François Gény put forth that law is formulated from *donné* (existing social relationships), allowing for normative legal principles based on the "verifiable conditions of society" (Koskenniemi 2001:281, 290).

It is worth noting that these sociological perspectives of law were primarily gained amid the historical and political realities of nineteenth-century Europe, which saw European states gradually construct laws upon social relationships and social solidarity. Sociology of law scholarship gained a foothold in the United States by the mid-twentieth century with the "law and society movement," by which academics recognized that law and legal institutions should be understood within their social contexts (Friedman 1986:770). This movement reflected a commitment to seeing law as

a more complex legal phenomenon than originally thought. In essence, law was no longer regarded as the result of "discovered logic," but instead became criticized (and praised) as an "artifact of judging," a politically-infused device capable of affecting society as much as being composed of societal norms (Riles 2010:12).

Cotterrell's statement represents the ushering in of a new era in socio-legal scholarship in which law is to be appreciated as more than a function of social utility or a tool to engineer social change (Tamanaha 2006:34). By reinterpreting law in its twenty-first-century contexts, theorists are attempting to understand the discipline irrespective of its foundations in social *construit* and beyond its existence as a *legal* phenomenon embedded within social layers. In essence, reinterpretation is necessary to understand law *as* a social layer in itself and therefore to escape the tragedy of antiquated theories—namely, eventual irrelevance.

Brian Tamanaha (2006) explains how these prior theories and conceptions of law reflect the evolution of socio-legal thinking, with law at first considered a means of maintaining the status quo of a reasonable society, and later as a method of steering an imperfect society to where it ought to be. For example, in 1917, the Soviets attempted to transform traditional societies of Central Asia by dismantling tribal ideologies and creating a proletariat class of women expected to turn to the new legal order for liberation (Massell 1968:184-186). However, in failing to consider the societal reality that men held the moral and economic means to women's emancipation, the Soviet effort was a di-

sastrous attempt at social engineering. This failed experiment illustrates the fundamental error in wielding law as an instrument of social change without taking into account that legal "virtues," such as emancipation, are *social* phenomena that are not so easily manipulated. The notion that law exists as a non-legal phenomenon is essential for understanding the form that law takes in different social settings, and for more accurately predicting the social effects of law within a given society.

Understanding law as a social phenomenon also addresses past criticisms of socio-legal scholarship—mainly, its focus on factors that shape legal processes rather than actual social consequences of law. Such critiques of the socio-legal field led to the "social effects" research agenda of the 1990s (Kagan 1995:144). In a similar vein, Stuart A. Scheingold (2004) describes the ideological "myth of rights" as the fictitious assumption that litigation automatically evokes the realization of law and meaningful or effective social change. As politics of society, class, and distribution of power become more determinative of who can invoke law and who benefits from social change induced by law, sociological approaches can help to discover the link between law as social myth and law as social fact.

Modern experiments in legal transplantation also affirm the value of reinterpreting law through sociologically informed perspectives. Ramesh Thakur (2001) explains that modern societies often seek to import/export law without ensuring "a degree of congruence" between supposedly "universal" norms and the existing local customs where new laws are to be transplanted. Often aimed at

development, good governance, and the rule of law, international legal transplantation necessitates empirical research of existing cultural traditions or taboos. Franz von Benda-Beckmann (1989:137) studied Minangkabau villagers in Sumatra being asked under state law to register their rice lands despite local customs known in Indonesian-Malay culture as *adat*. His research revealed unexpected interactions between law and "the social." The Minangkabau pointed to their *adat* customs as the reason for the conflict of policies, claiming that *adat* did not allow for individual ownership of property. In reality, *adat* is flexible enough to allow for registration of collective lands had the villagers wanted to cooperate with outside authorities (von Benda-Beckmann 1989:139). When developers and lawmakers use law to engineer social development without understanding law as a social phenomenon, they may fail to recognize when a society uses norms or customs as an "easy scapegoat" to "shield themselves" behind their culture (von Benda-Beckmann 1989:130, 139). A sociological approach to law can go beyond a narrow structuralist critique of the relationship between law and a particular community, and can analyze the actual rather than the assumed (and often flawed) social subtexts that affect legal cooperation or resistance.

Reinterpreting law sociologically can also lead to a better understanding of different hierarchies of legal order and how different societies create or reduce conflict through informal law. For example, informal institutions of justice, such as neighborhood dispute resolution centers or tribal courts, attempt to neutralize undesirable behavior before it reaches the level of criminal action under formal legal structures (assuming such structures have been established) (Abel 1982:289, 305). However, "informal" resolution processes can disproportionately coax certain groups or individuals into adhering to social norms to avoid facing the harsher penalties of "real"—and more "formal"—law (Abel 1982:272). Because informal justice structures often do not have the force of law and are not held to the same judicial standards as formal law (i.e., right to a fair trial, right to counsel), any perceived unfairness in the process can weave its way back into the social fabric, causing more tension or resentment than the process was meant to reduce. As a result, informal justice mechanisms that try to repair or mitigate social problems in the *absence* of law may lead to unexpected social conflicts resulting precisely from the lack of law. This "backfiring" exemplifies how law exists as a social phenomenon and how this phenomenon affects the way that individuals perceive justice, restitution, and the treatment of social conflict.

Cotterrell is certainly not the first scholar to study law from a sociological vantage point. Max Weber's theory of sociology as a means to study social action was famously taken a step further by Eugen Ehrlich, who asserted that law could be properly understood through an understanding of "living law" (Ehrlich 1936). However, law must be continually and consistently reinterpreted as a social construct because "the social" is always changing in the context of other phenomena. For example, the phenomenon of globalization generates a vital need to understand law in the context of relationships between states, societies, and international legal institutions (Nelken 2001:351).

In the debate between international law and international relations schools of thought, liberalists use transnational perspectives to analyze why the behavior of states is increasingly "social rather than systematic" (Slaughter Burley 1993:207, 227). Martti Koskenniemi (2001:268, 306) describes this shift of traditional notions of sovereignty being replaced by the solidarity of human relations as "the great social phenomenon of today." With the growth of individual rights in international law comes the need to study law beyond its previously understood contexts as a reflection of society and as an instrument of social change, both of which merely viewed the function of law differently yet maintained the nature of the phenomenon as legal. In contrast, international law arguably "neither emerged from, nor reflected State interests," but grew from states seeking to realize the best interests of their respective societies through global rules of cooperation (with concerns of international reputation inevitably at play) (Koskenneimi 2001:283; see: Koh 1997:2636). Yet the plurality of law and globalization refers not only to different national legal systems cooperating or competing on the global stage but also to the fragmentation or cohesion of various social communities that create and experience international law. Approaching international law sociologically addresses the need to understand "dimensions of power, meaning, and social relationships" that constitute global legal pluralism (Merry 2007:151-152).

Yehezkel Dror (1959:794) explains the lag that occurs when a substantial shift takes place in either society or law without a corresponding adjustment occurring in the other. Arguably, the emergence of law as a social phenomenon is not substantively new, but simply the new realization of an existing phenomenon. Regardless, reinterpreting law sociologically is critical to alleviate any lag or tension between law as a social phenomenon and existing interpretations of law as a legal phenomenon, social expression, jurisprudential science, or political instrument.

Act II: A Comedy of Systematic and Empirical Errors

Up to this point, I have presented a broad sketch of what a sociological approach to law is and why this approach might be a good idea considering the historical beginnings of socio-legal scholarship and modern contexts of cultural "scape-goating," informal dispute resolution "backfiring," and the globalization of individual rights. But, how is a sociological approach taken and the necessary reinterpretation of law achieved? Cotterrell (1998:187) describes a sociological approach as inherently focused on "the social, the systematic, and the empirical" all at once. However, he emphasizes that this reinterpretation must be performed empirically and systematically, which necessarily entails a bit of sociological trial and error.

Empirical research is fairly straightforward as the collection of quantitative and qualitative real world data supported by secondary sources. A strictly empirical approach to law is useful for evaluating limited aspects of social organization. However, a purely "positivist treatment of social norms" mistakenly assumes that social solidarity is rational-based and automatically promotes

obedience (Elliot 1922:642). To elaborate, at the turn of the twentieth century, Duguit (1921:129) aimed to study law as an empirical social science, agreeing with the likes of Jean Jacques Rousseau that social consciousness results from the "tacit assent which all the members of a group give to common life." Duguit (1921:131) claimed that juridical norms emerge from objective facts about socially necessary behavior, resulting in "objective law." At the time, some scholars regarded Duguit's pragmatic theory of law to be ideological and overly scientific, stating that "objective law" relied too heavily on assumptions that individuals feel a sense of obligation (*devoir*) to follow social rules (Elliot 1922:640-641). Following such criticisms, law as a strictly empirical social science is revealed as an overly narrow approach that does not successfully escape the metaphysical aspects of the discipline. Essentially, there are many factors that do not have an apparent or direct relationship to law that, nevertheless, influence law in terms of its existence as a social phenomenon. This is where systematic analysis is crucial to a sociological understanding of law.

Empirical findings about law must be pieced into broader societal patterns by placing legal data, social facts, and other aspects of "the social" onto one "analytical page" (Perry-Kessaris 2013:90). In *The Making of Law: An Ethnography of the Conseil d'Etat*, Latour (2009:75-76) describes how law is assembled by "putting pieces of empirical evidence into a legal format." Police reports, witness statements, and certified copies—each supported by the appearance of legal truth despite having no legal nature—are melded together to support legal claims

or "productions" (Latour 2009:75-76). A sociological approach to law similarly weaves together social and legal "truths" to create the following socio-legal "production": an understanding of law as a social phenomenon occurring within the larger discipline of law. One such example can be seen with post-conflict societies, which experience different actors struggling to "operate within a social context of shared subjective understandings and norms" to determine the most appropriate structures for legal accountability and social reconciliation (Abbott 1999:367). The transition process of an "atrocities regime" constitutes a social phenomenon occurring within the larger structure of law (Abbott 1999:379). For example, Kenneth Abbott (1999:375) finds that some genocide convictions in the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda fed back into society "to reshape how individuals view governance, the duties of states and citizens, even the meaning of statehood and citizenship." Transitional justice in post-conflict societies demonstrates how law appears within local social networks and practices while simultaneously operating within "larger social structures and forces that shape those practices and networks" (Cotterrell 2011:508).

Empirical and systematic methodologies are not without their limitations. For one, law as a social phenomenon may require a more abstract evaluation of symbolical meanings that are difficult to observe or measure through empirical and systematic analysis. For a sociological approach to consistently "construct, compose, and interpret social relations," empirical and systematic research must constantly strive for analytical creativity (Silbey

2010:474-475). To this end, a systematic method of analysis known as Actor-Network Theory (ANT) has proven helpful in exploring social phenomena within law. ANT is not really a theory, but rather an ethnographic and ontological approach that maps social interactions by virtue of their material-semiotic connections with other actors, objects, and networks (Cloatre 2008:264). Such mapping used in socio-legal studies can uncover the absence of socio-legal objects (those actors or objects anticipated to cause a desired result) and the presence of non-legal networks that may produce the desired result instead. In other words, ANT is a way of detecting legal "emptiness" in a social network and discovering the other possible factors and associations that unexpectedly generate a social effect meant to be achieved by law.

Emilie Cloatre's (2008:271-272) study of pharmaceutical drugs and international patent law utilizes ANT to discover how ethnic tensions and communication gaps in government sectors in Djibouti account for the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)—the socio-legal object—not being implemented properly in the country. Cloatre's (2008) interviews with non-legal actors, such as doctors, pharmacists, and health organizations, ultimately expose socio-historical explanations for why one desired result of international patent law (to prevent the sale of generic pharmaceuticals) has been achieved despite ineffective implementation of the treaty. Through an ANT approach, Cloatre (2013:105) finds that generic prescriptions are rarely sold in Djibouti due to post-colonial relationships between French doctors and pharmaceutical companies, on the one hand,

and Djiboutian private pharmacists and importers, on the other. Here, ANT helps to unveil how the market in Djibouti has been ordered by practice and habit towards branded drugs that are known to be reliable and effective, as opposed to a pharmaceutical market ordered by specific international law or government policy (Cloatre 2013:99). Cloatre's study demonstrates how creative systematic analysis can detect unanticipated social networks that may substitute for faulty or disregarded law. This empirically and systematically-generated glimpse of different actors and networks bringing about legally desired behavior in a society—even in the *absence* of law—affirms that law exists as an undeniably *social* phenomenon.

Act III: Drama and Improvisation in Measuring Sociological "Success"

After covering the text, context, and subtext of a sociological approach to law (the what, why, and how), it is important to consider whether this approach adequately "addresses" the need for reinterpretation, as Cotterrell contends. But, how can such "success" be measured? Nineteenth-century sociologist Harriet Martineau emphasized the importance of guiding sociological research to appropriate ends. In her emancipatory efforts towards slavery and feminism, Martineau applied Jeremy Bentham's principle of "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" (Cleary and Hughes 2013). So perhaps the success of a sociological approach to law should be measured in terms of its tangible benefits to a significant portion of society. But, what constitutes the relevant "society" benefited—academia generally, the legal or sociology

communities, the society studied, or perhaps a particular group within "the social"?

Alternatively, in David Nelken's (2001:355-361) discussion of transnational legal transfers, the first step in determining the success of a transfer is to look at "*the types of law* it is intended to transplant." Likewise, a study aiming to reinterpret law must first acknowledge the original interpretation meant to be replaced. As described above, and as Susan Silbey (2010:471) summarizes, law is generally studied as a legal phenomenon or as a social construct, meaning "a system [or] product of social forces." Therefore, success of a sociological approach can be measured against innovative understandings of law as neither a legal phenomenon nor a social construct, but as a phenomenon of society. Even Weber's use of social "ideal-types" to gauge the rationale behind social adherence to law was only meant to study "social action encompassed *within*" legal phenomena (Cotterrell 1992:150, emphasis added). In a subtle but important contrast, a modern sociological approach attempts to study legal concepts existing *as* social phenomena.

However, successes and shortcomings of a sociological approach may turn on the perspective of different judges, whether lawyers or sociologists, or any group able "to impose its interpretation of the outcome…and to tell a convincing story of what has occurred" (Nelken 2001:363). If reinterpretation can be so easily disregarded by scholars, it may be difficult for a sociological approach to bring law any closer to a settled methodology that the discipline arguably lacks. Therefore, assessing "success" in the reinterpretation of law must ques-

tion the adoption of sociology over other disciplinary approaches, such as political, economical, philosophical, or historical-based perspectives.

Returning to post-conflict societies, a political sociological approach that employs international relations theory is often used to study the interaction between international law and local communities following human rights atrocities. Transitional justice in such protracted and post-conflict societies is carried out in a variety of social and legal (and often politically-influenced) forums, including international criminal tribunals, domestic courts, local councils, truth and reconciliation commissions, and tribal forgiveness ceremonies (see: McKnight 2015). Political understandings of law as a social phenomenon can help to examine how domestic and international "attitudes of revulsion" towards human rights atrocities trigger political-socio-legal processes of accountability, reconciliation, and reconstruction—or fail to trigger such processes, as the case may be (Abbott 1999:362, 372). As Chandra Lekha Sriram (2006:477) suggests, "[s]cholarship examining transnational legal processes or transnational judicial dialogue can offer a fresh perspective, given that so many atrocities are not only internal but transnational, while many processes of accountability are purely domestic or international." Just as a sociological approach to law is not solely based on sociology alone, a political sociological approach does not claim to be a purely legal method. Nevertheless, such interdisciplinary approaches can enhance an understanding of post-conflict justice networks by situating legal institutions and processes of accountability within their politicized contexts.

Another possible lens through which to reinterpret law is an economic sociological approach, which strives for understandings of both the "legal" and the "economic" as social phenomena "occurring on all interconnected levels of social life" (Perry-Kessaris 2013:69). Amanda Perry-Kessaris (2013) uses an economic sociological approach to shed new light on the increasingly rationale-focused field of law and development. Looking at wind farm development in Cyprus, Perry-Kessaris (2013:77) discovers that in the process of "solving" carbon emissions problems in the country, unexpected societal conflicts have arisen based on human emotions of animosity and apathy towards development. By placing different levels of Cypriot social life (i.e., the perspectives of developers, civil society actors, and international and local policy-makers) on the same analytical page, Perry-Kessaris (2013:80, 90) finds that wind farm development is motivated by the economic rationalism of developers more than the environmental policy participation of Cypriot civil society. Here, a mixed econo-socio-legal approach successfully measures the seemingly un-measurable chaos occurring at the intersection of law, development, and human emotion.

In situations where certain intangible factors may be better left uncalculated or unmeasured, a sociological approach possesses some advantages over more quantitative or "scientific" methods. This is due to a unique characteristic of social science that attempts to understand social actions "as *meaningful* to those engaged in it" (Cotterrell 1992:12). Weber highlighted such subjective actor behavior (*verstehende*) as a critical element in

comprehending any social phenomena beyond the measure of "observable regularities" (Cotterrell 1992:12). Applying this micro-sociology approach to law, concepts that seem purely legal can be viewed in their truly sociological contexts. In the reoccurring example of transitional societies, a sociological approach can analyze post-conflict legal concepts in terms of those engaged in a justice process. The resulting understandings reveal the existence of transitional justice as a social phenomenon revolving around all types of players on the sociological stage: victims and perpetrators of human rights abuse, lawyers, judges, tribal leaders, external influences, and all other post-conflict actors (including objects and networks). These actors are ultimately involved in creating and, at the same time, experiencing a social phenomenon of law (see: Waldorf 2006:4 on "categories" of individuals involved in Rwanda's post-genocide mass justice process). A sociological approach not only informs the interplay between social action and social engagement, it also acts as a testing ground to experiment with how different research methods can aid sociological understandings of law. For instance, Cloatre's (2008:266, 278) study of pharmaceutical patents results not only in conclusions about patent law implementation in Djibouti but also better understandings of how ANT is best utilized in socio-legal research. This constant innovation of research methods to accompany modern approaches to law is reminiscent of the "cultural turn" of 1980s socio-legal scholarship, whereby revamped theories of legality—focusing on legal cultures rather than "law-first" analyses—were linked to a rise in social structures of law (Silbey 2010:473).

The appropriateness and applicability of a sociological approach today may be overshadowed by a different approach in the future, as the sources uniting law and social phenomena evolve from partially or semi-social to some other basis. These future changes may challenge Cotterrell's claim that a sociological approach "permanently" addresses law's reinterpretation. For now, a sociological approach should be appreciated as an effective and valuable means of exploring social engagements with the law, experimenting with sociological methods of research, and ultimately, restaging the narrative of law through a part-dramatic, part-improvisational design. And although a sociological approach to law has been criticized for its supposed reliance on beliefs rather than facts of social consensus (see: Silbey 1991:812), the aim of Cotterrell's (1998:189) sociological approach is not to produce a theory about the ideology of law but simply to "inform and interpret legal ideas" through new perspectives. Therefore, a sociological approach should not be expected to replace law with social science or create a new academic discipline stemming directly from sociology. Social anthropologist von Benda-Beckmann (1989:142) also cautions that "[a]ny attempt to fuse legal science and social science can only work to the detriment of both." Clarification of what a sociological approach is *not* brings us back to the overarching inquiry: What *is* a sociological approach to law, if not a separate social science nor a sub-discipline of sociology?

After cracking the shell surrounding Cotterrell's statement and exploring ways to approach (to "play" with) law on the sociological stage, we find that a sociological approach exemplifies the use of

social science as "an analytical *device*…as a way of seeing familiar things in a new way" (Said 1978:259, emphasis added). Despite this discovery, the main challenge of a sociological approach is found in the risk of changing the nature of the object studied. In other words, approaching law as a social phenomenon can easily become the study of law as a *legal* phenomenon. As Nelken (2001:353) describes with the process of applying "universal" international law upon local societies, there is a possibility that law in its original form "cannot survive the journey" of transplantation. Similarly, in discovering new meanings and social realities of law, there is a concern that the discipline will not survive the journey of reinterpretation. Law may disappear "like a mirage…because as sociology interprets law, law is *reduced to sociological terms*" (Cotterrell 1998:175). In order to provide the discipline of law with new sociological reinterpretations, it is important that the phenomenon being studied maintains its nature as *social*.

For example, access to justice issues falls within the discipline of law, while the individualized values, perceptions, and experiences of social events affecting access to justice constitute social phenomena (Felstiner, Abel, and Sarat 1980/1981:634-637). This transformational process of social events becoming legal events is similar to what Latour (2009:80) describes with non-legal files *becoming* legal and giving rise to "legal effects." In this way, social events or social objects relating to law transform as they are processed, yet the transformation remains a social phenomenon, while the discipline to which the phenomenon relates remains legal. Sociological approaches to law similarly maintain their place

under the umbrella of the legal discipline, while continuing to explore new sociological footholds below. Therefore, law does not fade in the midst of sociological reinterpretation. Furthermore, there is no real need for concepts of transition and transformation to become completely dreaded events in interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary research, as these very notions often provide the undercurrent that stimulates academic growth and development. Indeed, the field of socio-legal scholarship is a gradually evolving social phenomenon in itself, and one that is heading towards (perhaps already undergoing) an era of transdisciplinarity.

Epilogue: A Fourth Act Emerges

Throughout this article, I have provided examples of each stage of the socio-legal lifespan—from the birth of sociological (and Europeanized) theories on social solidarity, to law as a political strategy for women's "liberation" in Soviet Central Asia, to law revealed as a social phenomenon in the intersection of state law and local customs in Indonesia. These examples highlight previous chapters in the story of socio-legal scholarship in order to emphasize why future chapters must be reinterpreted rather than simply interpreted, and from where this retelling begins.

The continued evolution of socio-legal studies experiences its fair share of skepticism, as seen with criticisms of law's (in)ability to remain an autonomous discipline. I have described how law is, at times, regarded as susceptible to influence by other disciplines, sociology included. However, this is more likely the result of academic "colonization" by

one discipline wishing to "expand their empires" rather than a genuine flaw in transdisciplinary research (Balkin 1996:960; see: Posner 1987). The true significance of sociological approaches and sociological understandings of law—as well as an appreciation of these understandings as transdisciplinary—may involve a little imagination.

Cotterrell (1992:6, emphasis added) explains American sociologist C. Wright Mill's concept of the "sociological imagination" in terms markedly similar to those Cotterrell uses to describe the purposes and methods of a sociological approach: "[s]uch an imagination *constantly* seeks to *interpret* detailed knowledge of law in a wider *social* context…and tries always to *approach* these matters *systematically* with a constant sensitivity to the *need* for specific *empirical* data."

Like a sociological imagination, a sociological approach does not attempt to reveal what law cannot. Rather, the value of "playing" with law on the sociological stage lies in the discovery of law's existence as a phenomenon of other disciplines without wholly becoming a product of those disciplines.

I have argued that such transdisciplinary understandings of law are particularly important in the context of modern globalization and global legal pluralism. This transnational phenomenon presents situations where culturally driven decisions are masked with law (seen with Minangkabau customs concealing societal discontent), and where legal development attempts to directly remedy societal problems (seen with wind farms "saving" Cyprus from environmental catastrophe). In such cases,

understanding the more subtle subtexts and non-legal factors affecting the use of law can lead practitioners to realize not only how law *works* (succeeds or fails) in a society but also how law *acts* within a broader social scheme. These perspectives must be gained through a balance of empirical study and systematic analysis so that all pieces of the socio-legal puzzle can be viewed simultaneously on the same stage. In this way, subjects of legal research, such as post-conflict transition, can be analyzed in terms of complex social phenomena that exist within larger legal concepts of justice. Furthermore, socio-legal researchers must continue to experiment with creative methods of systematic analysis, such as ANT, to add a valuable dose of ethnographic or mixed-method evaluation to what may otherwise be viewed as a primarily theoretical approach to law.

As we crack the shell surrounding Cotterrell's strategy for sociological approaches and understandings, we discover that the study of law is not a how-to manual revealing a linear cause-and-effect of the discipline (as previous generations of classical so-

ciology thinkers and law "and" society scholars suggested). Neither is law purely an aspect of social life that can be understood in "third generation" terms of inter-disciplinary constructivism, without further insight into how law transcends disciplines when recognized as part of the act on the sociological stage. By finding truth in Cotterrell's words, the storyline of law reads more like a theatrical play with different actors engaged in what is ultimately a social performance—a *social phenomenon*—of law. Therefore, reinterpreting law from a sociological approach is essential for recognizing law as a social (and globalized) phenomenon, for understanding such phenomena from new analytical perspectives, and for keeping up with the evolution of socio-legal scholarship as a transdisciplinary "fourth act" emerges.

Acknowledgments

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Book Review

Yin, Robert. 2011. *Doing Qualitative Research From Start to Finish*. **New York: Guilford Press**

Doing Qualitative Research From Start to Finish is an important contribution which provides a framework for students and novice researchers to experience steps of qualitative research. The author has used a friendly diction with many examples helping the audience with smooth reading and understanding the concepts. Jargons have not been used excessively and the text, rather than playing with words, aims to put the reader in the atmosphere of actual qualitative inquiry. A key stated concern of the author is that the best way to learn more about a qualitative research is to acquire it in action, that is, when an actual qualitative research study is conducted. The book comprises 12 chapters organized in four main parts: Understanding qualitative research, focusing on fundamental issues and concepts; Doing qualitative research, addressing the practice of dealing with the data; Presenting the results from qualitative research, discussing issues of displaying and writing qualitative research reports; and Taking qualitative research one step further, placing it within the broader realm of social science research. On the whole, the volume illustrates from scratch what a qualitative study involves and, as the title implies, presents an A to Z of qualitative research in an admirable manner.

The first part includes three chapters illustrating some general images of what qualitative research is and how it can be initiated. First, Yin introduces qualitative inquiry and talks about various topics that can be studied through such an approach, and elaborates on features of qualitative studies. He points out that for doing a qualitative project, researchers need to be equipped and to be competent, that is, to have enough ability, as well as authority to manage and direct the study. One main point, which the author mentions, is that the best way to learn more about qualitative research is when you actually carry out a qualitative research study. So, one should learn through practicing. He explains how to take the initial steps in research, how to tackle the challenges of starting a qualitative study, and how to develop a study bank, which refers to a selection and collection of appropriate journals for qualitative studies. An important feature of this volume in discussing the basic issues in qualitative research is a focus on explaining what qualitative approaches involve rather than overly comparing and contrasting them with quantitative trends, although the differences are briefly discussed. A further concern in the first part of the book and among the main fundamental issues is an emphasis on bringing a strong sense of ethics in studies.

Part two deals with the practice of conducting qualitative research. In chapter four, Yin elaborates on design (making a plan for different steps of research) and centrally argues that qualitative research design is to serve as a *logical* plan rather than a *logistic* one. Like some other scholars (e.g., Maxwell 2005), Yin highlights the important consideration that the design of qualitative research is not a linear plan in which one follows some predetermined steps. Rather, it is an *interactive* process in which the researcher moves back and forth and may change some steps. Chapters in this part also discuss different types of sampling and associated challenges: purposive, convenience, snowball, and random sampling. Yin argues that qualitative research is *particularistic* in the sense that understanding the nuances and patterns of social behavior only results from studying specific situations, complemented by attending carefully to specific contextual conditions. In his view, generalization has a limited role in doing qualitative research, but it is not impossible. The main difference is that in quantitative research, statistical generalization is the concern, but what matters in qualitative, is *analytic generalization*.

Among the major considerations in part two are issues of fieldwork in qualitative inquiry, field settings with people in their real life roles, and how researchers can enter a field. The author explains different ways of gathering data (interview, observation, collecting and examining materials, etc.). Another main concern of the book is analyzing the data, which is dealt with in two chapters. According to Robert Yin, qualitative data analysis involves five phases of: compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding. However, the novice researcher reading about these steps needs to bear in mind that although following the steps at hand may help in managing large bodies of qualitative data, the steps are not the end of the route. Researchers need to go through a further crucial phase of *interpreting*, which may hardly be viewed as detached from the analytical process. The author believes that there is no firm definition for determining good interpretation, but generally, interpretation may be understood as "explaining how or why events came about, or alternatively how or why people were able to pursue particular courses of action" (p. 216). Following the interpreting endeavor, the qualitative researcher needs to appreciate the perspective that the main conclusions lie along the lines of what the researcher still does not know. Dealing with qualitative data in the chapters of this part of the book is also considered in the context of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis that can be used to assist the entire analytical process, with the caution that whether researchers decide to use software or not, analytic *decisions* must be made by the researcher.

Part three of this book shows researchers how to narrate data of their studies. The key point is that "qualitative data are more alphabetic than numeric" (p. 233). So, researchers can narrate the data in the exact words of participants or through different tables, graphs, pictures, et cetera. The author explains how to report the findings and conclusions of the study in an attractive and comprehensive manner, which shapes one of the most difficult steps for many researchers. Yin's stories about his personal experience with qualitative research are intriguingly informative for researchers, and may well help them with exploring small corners of the qualitative research challenge. Finally, the last part of the book, which consists of one chapter, focuses on a major contrast between qualitative and non-qualitative research in terms of being located within the larger landscape of understanding that aspects of social life and research may contribute to creating understandings beyond the confinements of academia.

Some other features of the book include starting each chapter with a brief abstract and giving the audience a general view of the chapter, and ending each chapter with a recap of the terms and concepts explained. Moreover, the book ends with a glossary of special terms used in qualitative research. According to Yin, this book is the result of his 30-year experience of working on more than 200 qualitative studies. Therefore, expectedly, it is a helpful source for those who are setting out their journey with qualitative approaches. With a critical look, one might observe that not all aspects of qualitative research are comprehensively covered in terms of their practice, but the book does have its considerable merits. Robert Yin's book has used an easy-to-understand language with many real examples that help novice researchers understand qualitative research. The book may therefore be confidently recommended as a supplemental reading for courses of qualitative research methodology in different fields of social sciences and humanities

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For all sociologists for whom interpretative paradigm and qualitative research methodology are basic perspectives of studying social reality. In order to enable a free flow of information and to integrate the community of qualitative sociologists.

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Volume XI ~ Issue 1
January 31, 2015