

Exploration of the multisensory go-along interview in a neighborhood in full development in Leuven

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In the last decades, the interest of researchers in sensory methods is growing. More specifically, we notice a growing number of researchers that investigate research techniques that involve walking/movement (e.g. Anderson, 2004; Carpiano, 2009; Kusenbach, 2003; Pink, 2007; Pink et al., 2010). Walking as a research method has been explored in different ways. It has been used as an observational method that serves the researcher in an early phase of a research project, for example to get to know his/her research setting. It has also been used as a participant-driven method, whereby the participants are encouraged to walk together with the researcher. Furthermore, studies vary from informal conversations between researcher and participant during walks through the landscape, to structured walking tours, explicitly designed to elicit responses to predetermined places (Evan & Jones, 2011). Overall, it has been promoted as a useful method; prompting participants in their surrounding environment would generate 'richer understandings of place' (Evan & Jones, 2011, p. 849).

This presentation centers on the results of a pilot project intended to explore the potential of the multisensory go-along interview as a qualitative research method (Van den Nieuwenhuizen, 2016). The project took place in a neighborhood in full development within the Leuven region, called Vaartkom. During the interviews, local residents walked with the researcher through their neighborhood. They were explicitly asked to 'turn on' their senses in the exploration of their changing living environment, focusing on what they see, hear and smell. Visuals (photographs) and sounds of the neighborhood taken by the participants and/or the researcher will be presented during the talk. Moreover, we discuss how participants experienced the project (based on a process evaluation) and reflect on our own experiences as researchers involved with this project.

The study reveals the advantages of the multisensory go-along method for gaining insights into how people perceive their neighborhood. Furthermore, we demonstrate how the various sensory modalities complement and reinforce each other during the interview.

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