Walking and Talking: Using mobile methods in the study of multifaceted cultural heritage organisations.

Johnstone, Mrs Jane[1]; Bryce, Dr Derek; Alexander, Dr Matthew

Department of Marketing

Strathclyde Business School

199 Cathedral St

Glasgow G4 0QU

Purpose

This paper evaluates the possibilities associated with *go-along* technique and other mobile qualitative methods augmenting other qualitative methods as a novel approach to developing understanding of multifaceted organisations.

Design/methodology/approach

The study explores the challenges associated with 'static' qualitative methods for understanding multifaceted organisations and evaluates how a range of mobile methods can achieve a greater depth of analysis when researching complex hospitality and tourism settings. The paper uses an illustrative empirical case where mobile methods are used as part of a multi-method qualitative study exploring ancestral tourism in a large, heterogeneous tourism organisation.

Findings

This research highlights how mobile methods can service to: broaden the scope of interviews through introducing enhanced meaning and spontaneity; afford opportunity to explore and verify interview findings in informal settings and; widen participation in the study through ongoing recruitment of participants.

Practical Implications

We identify implications for researchers working within hospitality and tourism who can gain additional insight by augmenting qualitative studies with mobile methods.

---

[1] Corresponding Author jane.johnstone@strath.ac.uk

<u>Originality/value</u>

This paper identifies challenges in using more static qualitative methods when seeking understanding of complex, multifaceted tourism organisations where work activities are mobile and spatially dispersed. This research highlights the value of mobile methods in combination with other qualitative methods, to gain greater understanding of these organisations.

<u>Keywords</u> – ancestral tourism, ethnography, go-along techniques, heritage management, heritage tourism, hermeneutics, interviews, mobile methods, multi-method research, observation, qualitative research

<u>Paper Type</u>

General Review

Introduction

In organisational studies, a wide range and combination of fieldwork methods are useful for understanding the dynamic and complex processes involved in organisational activities (Ybema et al., 2009; Ciuk et al., 2018). Qualitative approaches often involve ethnographic methods, including interviews, participant, and non-participant observation. However, several authors highlight challenges in conducting ethnography which typically involves immersion within the field for extended periods of time, and full participation within an organisation, which is not always possible (Angrosino, 2007; Cunliffe, 2011; Czarniawska, 2007; Emmerson et al., 2011). Furthermore, scholars highlight challenges with these methods, especially in relation to larger organisations where divisions and departments are often spatially dispersed (Costas, 2013; Czarniawska, 2007, 2008, 2014). Here, researchers advocate alternative ethnographic techniques, including 'mobile' methods that take account of diverse organisations and appreciate that organisational activities often take place across multiple locations.

This paper reviews qualitative organisational and sociological studies where researchers use a range of 'mobile' techniques to better understand participants' activities in relation to the context where these activities take place (Carpiano, 2009; Costas, 2013; Kusenbach, 2003; Ramsden, 2017). One of these techniques is a variation on interviewing and involves researchers talking and walking with participants in order to better understand connections to their surrounding environment (Anderson, 2004; Evans & Jones, 2011). Variations of this technique are utilised in increasing numbers in social research (Evans & Jones, 2011) and discussed under different labels including *talking whilst walking* (Anderson, 2004), *the go-along technique* (Carpiano, 2009; Kusenbach, 2003) and *the walking interview* (Evans & Jones, 2011; Harris, 2016); here, we use the term 'mobile methods' to capture these techniques.

The paper discusses the usefulness of these techniques in hospitality and tourism contexts, which are often multifaceted and contain discrete sub-organisation,

providing particular service modes or functions. This is particularly notable in the private sector in the context of vertically integrated tour operators like TUI, large multinational hotel chains or holding companies, like Accor or IHG and airline groups like IAG and Lufthansa Group or strategic alliances such as OneWorld, which contain extensive and diverse brand portfolios (Litteljohn, 1997; Min & Joo, 2016; Wang & Chung, 2015). Additionally, the challenges of delivery of cohesive experiential services across a range of inter and intra organisational relationships in the cultural and heritage tourism sector have been noted by, for example, Gold (2004) and Pappalepore and Duignan (2016).

To illustrate the viability of these approaches we use extracts from a qualitative study investigating ancestral tourism resources (a form of heritage tourism – see Alexander et al., 2017), its potential within an urban context and the challenges of coordinating service provision across this large organisation. The context for this illustrative study is 'Glasgow Life', a large cultural organisation with responsibility for many museums, galleries and archives within the city of Glasgow, Scotland. The aim was to explore staff experiences of delivering ancestral tourism across several museums, galleries and archives and developing an understanding of the resources available for the visitors they serve, and the spaces and museum/archive displays necessary to achieve this. Considering the diversity of objects, artefacts, exhibits and other resources which form the ancestral tourism product, qualitative data-capture methods were used, which include mobile techniques allowing in-depth exploration of the coordination of service provision.

The methods discussed are particularly relevant in the context of the tourism and hospitality industry where activities are often spread through different parts of the organisation with staff moving between settings and roles and where researchers do not have a defined organisational role in which to conduct participant observation. Furthermore, we demonstrate how static methods such as sit-down interviews and observation can be used alongside mobile techniques (Anderson, 2004; Carpiano,

2009) as a novel approach to better understand the activities and coordination of spatially dispersed services across a large organisation.

The paper continues by discussing qualitative methods used to investigate and understand complex organisations. Here we consider the challenges of conducting ethnographic research and the role of mobile approaches offering a viable alternative. We continue by introducing our illustrative case and outline the research context, sampling, ethical issues and research instruments. This allows consideration of how mobile methods are integrated into the research process. The paper continues by using extracts from field notes and interviews to illustrate the relevance of go-along techniques within hospitality and tourism contexts. We conclude by summarising these benefits and offer implications for researchers.

Qualitative Methods for Understanding Complex Organisations

One of the challenges in studying organisations is making sense of the dynamic nature of activities and events that occur in often spatially dispersed locations (Costas, 2013; McDonald & Simpson, 2014). Costas (2013:2) recognises a 'mobilities turn' more generally in social sciences and, in the context of organisations, acknowledges that 'mobilities challenge the spatially bounded conception of organization that traditionally underlies studies of organization'. Organisations, Costas (2013) explains, are no longer understood as fixed locations with staff and work activities moving between multiple locations and roles. Whilst observation methods can be useful for gathering data on customs and practices (Anderson, 2004; Easterby-Smith et al. 2012), Czarniawska (2014:92) highlights that researchers can find themselves watching the 'comings and goings' of people working rather than observing activities as they take place. Furthermore, gaining full participation and immersion for an extended period of time within an organisation may not be possible or practical (Czarniawska, 2007), with researchers instead making use of a range of ethnographic 'techniques', or 'encounters' (Carpiano, 2009; Czarniawska, 2014; Pinsky, 2013) to explore activities across different locations and organisational settings.

Qualitative interviews are useful for understanding participants' perspectives within organisations (King, 2004), but Kusenbach (2003:462) describes sit-down interviews as 'static encounters' that do not allow for a full understanding of surrounding environments. Such concerns require that ethnography be concerned with situatedness of both researchers and research populations in a constantly evolving dialogic sense. Ethnographic approaches have, therefore, transcended the boundaries of mere 'observation' in empirical or structuralist terms and supplemented these with forays into interpretivism, 'new journalism' and poetics, extending further into the expressivism and expressive perception (Denzin, 1997; Van Manen, 2002; Rudd, 2003).

Recognising this, O'Gorman et al.'s (2014: 54) call for recognition that interviews within ethnographic settings accept 'both the specific situational nature of individual studies and the wider, historically determined, discursive frames within which forms of individual expression may occur'. Joseph (2018), meanwhile, argues that the assumed universalism of 'the self' in much ethnographic research must be crosscut with understandings of the historical specificities of how 'the self' is constructed by researchers, informants and the organisational settings both are embedded within. Therefore, developing a sophisticated understanding of the surrounding contextual environment, both personal and organisational, is of particular importance to develop a better understanding of the complex interpersonal, intra and interorganisational processes which allow hospitality and tourism resources to be made available to tourists. Here we outline the mobile methods which, as part of multi-method qualitative studies, begin to address these concerns.

The go-along technique

Described as a hybrid between interviewing and participant observation (Kusenbach, 2003), the go-along technique often involves researchers accompanying participants as they go about their daily activities. Similar to shadowing techniques used in organisational studies (Evans & Jones, 2011; McDonald & Simpson, 2014), it is used in health, social and geographical research and is argued to provide deeper insights

into the issues and experiences of participants in the environments where day-to-day activity takes place (Anderson, 2004; Carpiano, 2009; Garcia et al., 2012; Kusenbach, 2003). Carpiano (2009:267) emphasises its use in building rapport with the go-along allowing 'a more inclusive process, where the respondent becomes more of a participant in the interview than simply a subject who is being interviewed'. In a similar vein, the go-along is argued to be less interrogative than sit-down interviews and balances the power dynamic between interviewer and participant (Anderson, 2004; Garcia et al., 2012).

De Leon and Cohen (2005:203) highlight that the prompts and probes participants are exposed to in the go-along technique are valuable for motivating participants and facilitating conversation and suggest that physical surroundings are particularly useful for eliciting 'rich responses'. Similarly, Evans and Jones (2011:849) argue that this form of interviewing produces 'richer data, because interviewees are prompted by meanings and connections to the surrounding environment'. In contrast to sit-down interviews where participants 'tend to overlook issues that do not figure prominently in their awareness' (Kusenbach, 2003:462), the go-along allows for an improved understanding of connections with a residential or social context with participants able to explain the meanings that that the surrounding environment holds for them (Carpiano, 2009; Garcia et al., 2012).

Whilst go-along techniques are so far used mainly in studies exploring health and social issues, this method could be further utilised in different contexts, especially within tourism and hospitality services where go-alongs could enhance understanding of the disparate interrelated places where service encounters take place. Termed an anthropological study, Reed's (2002) conversations with professional tour guides whilst walking round parts of London articulated participants' visions of London both in the present time and historically.

Walking interviews and Hanging Out

There are variations in go-along techniques ranging from walking interviews led by the participant or researcher (Anderson, 2004; Evans & Jones, 2011; Harris, 2016), to 'hanging out' in spaces where participants regularly visit (Kusenbach, 2003:463). Anderson's (2004) approach resembles a hybrid between hanging out and a walking interviews and involves 'talking whilst walking' or 'bimbling', where participant and researcher wander aimlessly allowing for dialogue but also understanding of the participants' connections to place. While there are limited organisational studies where researchers explicitly use 'go-along techniques', a version of hanging out is utilised in ethnographic studies of organisations where observations and impromptu interviews occur in informal work spaces, e.g., beside watercoolers or photocopiers (Fayard & Weeks, 2007). Hanging out is a useful approach for exploring participants' lived experiences in informal surroundings. However, it often involves only one or two locations, inhibiting understanding of their experiences in a broader context (Kusenbach, 2003). Mobile methods, according to Kusenbach (2003:463) allows for exploration into 'less prominent places and of the spatial practices by which different places are linked together' and how these places link to participants' social or professional lives.

These go-along techniques are here argued to complement existing ethnographic techniques and address some of the challenges with ethnographic studies outlined above. As mentioned above, interviews are described as 'static encounters' where the focus is on the talking and the participant rather than the surrounding environment (Kusenbach, 2003:462). Sit-down interviews can be useful for exploring participants' perceptions (Evans & Jones, 2011) however, the places and spaces where activities take place are often overlooked, with participants removed from their normal environment (Kusenbach, 2003). Observations are useful but 'it does not shed any light on the meanings that actors ascribe to their actions, the actions of others, or the organizational context' (McDonald & Simpson, 2014:12), Go-along techniques also have limitations which should be articulated. Safety is a concern depending on the place where the participant and researcher are walking (Garcia et al., 2012). Evans and Jones (2011) suggest that go-alongs can be more spatially focused rather than on the participants themselves, with videos and GPS

links being used to pinpoint where participants raise specific issues. The use of videos and recording devices may affect the informal, less interrogative nature of these interviews as highlighted above (Anderson, 2004; Garcia et al., 2012) and may raise issues over informed consent and anonymity of non-participants. While there are limitations with the different methods, the use of mobile methods as part of a multi or mixed methods qualitative study can be useful for understanding the complexity of experiences and activities within organisations (Ybema et al., 2009).

We continue by introducing extracts from a qualitative study which explores staff experiences in different locations and the coordination of ancestral tourism service provision across a complex, heterogeneous organisation. This study uses a combination of observation, interviews and go-alongs, adding these to a repertoire of ethnographic techniques in order to develop a fuller understanding of a large complex organisation.

Research Approach and Design

Hermeneutics provides the overarching approach in gathering together the various strands of data in this study. Hermeneutics is a theory of how we interpret human interactions and activities to develop understanding (Barrett et al.. 2011) and an acknowledgement of how 'prior understandings and prejudices shape the interpretive process' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:27). Gadamer (2008, 2013) explains 'prejudices' (or preunderstandings or presuppositions) as including language, background and prior knowledge, shaping our perspectives and making thought and understanding possible. Influenced by Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics (Gadamer, 2008), this study recognises the researcher's 'prejudice' which is then embedded into the interpretive process and strengthened through engagement and interpretation. The researcher's prejudice here emanates from the literature; background to the study; through the use of multiple qualitative methods; and developing understanding through encounters with participants in the research field.

Gadamer's hermeneutics were associated with intersubjectivist research where knowledge and meanings are co-created in dialogical moments or 'livings conversations' between people, with researchers interested in conversation as a shared activity, and how knowledge is explored and created jointly (Cunliffe, 2011; Helin, 2013). For this study, knowledge is socially constructed with the researcher developing their own understanding through an iterative process of engagement with participants, interpretation and reflection, an approach more aligned subjectivist research. The stance for this study is a subjectivist, double hermeneutic perspective where the 'researcher [is] embedded in the world, shaped by and shapes experiences and accounts, [and] mediates meanings of actors' (Cunliffe, 2011). There are varying interpretations of the double hermeneutic, but the emphasis here is on the researcher's place and meditation within the research (Cunliffe, 2011), where conversations and meanings are interpreted, sometimes iteratively, through repeated interaction with those within an organisation.

To develop an understanding of activities across multiple sites in an organisation, qualitative researchers often employ a range of interpretive practices and multiple methods of data collection (Brewer, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In an organisational context, utilising a combination of fieldwork methods can contribute to understanding the dynamic and complex processes involved in organising (Ybema et al., 2009). Ethnography is typically understood as an approach where researchers 'spend an extended amount of time in the community they are studying' (Angrosino, 2007: xv). From an interpretive perspective, this is guided by the principle that the 'complex social world can be understood only from the point of view of those who operate within it' (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004:36). The approach for this study is influenced by a hermeneutic perspective with an emergent research design that involves multi-methods in order to develop a rich understanding of the organisational context.

Research Context

The research context for the study is Glasgow Life, the operating name of Culture and Sport Glasgow. It is an arms-length organisation that delivers services for Glasgow City Council. These services include libraries, community, sport, youth services, arts, museums, events and music. Glasgow Life is responsible for Glasgow's destination marketing and is a key partner in its recent tourism plan, with ambition to grow the tourism market from 2 to 3 million visitors by 2023 (Glasgow Life, 2017a). A priority within this tourism plan is the promotion of cultural tourism in the UK and international markets, with heritage identified as one of the 'key strands of Glasgow's cultural offer' (Glasgow Life, 2017b:3). Additionally, the national tourism organisation for Scotland, VisitScotland, identified ancestral tourism as a growth heritage tourism market (Tourism Intelligence Scotland, 2013). Glasgow Life is keen to explore the potential of ancestral tourism to maximise the opportunities from the urban industrial heritage resources held in the many museums, galleries and archives that it is responsible for.

In relation to the study in question, Glasgow Life is custodian of Glasgow Museums and Collections with public access to these collections spread across eleven locations including museums, galleries and archives. With one museum (the Burrell Collection) closed for refurbishment at the time of research and another only opening towards the end of the data collection period (Kelvin Hall), the focus for this research was on the first nine locations listed in Table 1. Some meetings, events and interviews were held in the other sites including Glasgow Life's head offices or Glasgow City Council premises. Akin to studies that recognise the mobility and spatially dispersed nature of organisations (Costas, 2013; Czarniawska, 2007, 2008, 2014), participants' roles often involved working across many sites or their responsibilities concerned activities in different locations.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

Sampling and Ethical Issues

In any research project, there are ethical issues surrounding issues of access and consent (Miller & Bell, 2012). Initial contact was made through a 'gatekeeper' working within Glasgow Life. Gatekeepers are referred to as those 'who are in a

position to 'permit' access to others for the purpose of interviewing' (Miller & Bell, 2012:62). At the gatekeeper's suggestion, where possible, the researcher visited each of the sites and gave a presentation to staff to inform them of the research purpose, and to request voluntary participation for interviews or to informally share their experiences with the researcher when they were visiting each site. The researcher also explained that they would be visiting each site and attending meetings and events where there may be opportunities for informal conversations. Staff were informed that in these instances, with their permission, the researcher would take field notes, and this information would be anonymous and confidential. Miller and Bell (2012) highlight that consent needs to be ongoing; therefore, verbal consent was always sought at the beginning of these informal interactions. For write-up, this data would be treated as observations with the source cited as either general field notes or as a numbered informal conversation. Whilst some of these conversations may relate to a specific site, staff often work or have worked across several locations. Therefore, they could not be identified as individuals.

Initial contact with individual sites was made with managers via the gatekeeper. At some locations, a presentation to staff was not practical. However, the researcher was also invited by the gatekeeper to attend curatorial meetings where again, the researcher gave a presentation to inform staff of the project. There were also opportunities to converse informally with staff and to develop contacts. Sampling was therefore a combination of the snowballing technique (Kristensen & Ravn, 2015) and purposive sampling (Silverman, 2017) where participants were invited to participate based on their particular expertise or position within the organisation. Informed consent is an essential ethical consideration for qualitative research (Mauthner et al., 2012). For sit-down and go-along interviews, participants consented via a Participation Consent Form. However, with go-along techniques, the ethical issues of non-participation and incidental encounters (Garcia et al., 2012) also need to be considered, and this will be explored within discussion of the research instruments.

Research Instruments

Interviews (including sit-down and go-along interviews) were held with thirty-eight participants and lasted between half an hour and two hours. Most participants were employed in roles that involved working in one or more of the eleven sites mentioned. These roles varied from visitor services staff, to curators, archivists and managers, all of whom had some experience or knowledge of service provision for ancestral tourists. Staff in various marketing roles were also interviewed to provide insights into how Glasgow Life currently market ancestral tourism.

Twenty-four interviews were consistent with a go-along or walking interview style, which will be explained here. Interviews were held at mutually agreed locations though the researcher prompted participants in advance asking if they could provide a tour of a museum, gallery or archive, or just a walkthrough so that they could develop a sense of their experiences of ancestral tourism and the resources available. For some participants, which included marketing staff and some managers, this was not convenient or practical, with sit-down interviews more suitable. The go-along interviews resembled Anderson's (2004) 'bimble' with the slow pace helpful for note-taking. Participants highlighted some exhibits, objects or resources as being significant for discussion on staff experiences of ancestral tourists. Here, both participant and researcher 'hovered' and conversed in spaces close to these areas of interest, which again made note-taking easier. All interviewed participants were informed of their anonymity and confidentiality of the data and completed informed consent forms. As stated previously, participants' roles often involved working across several locations, and in some cases, although participants were situated in one place, they had previously worked at other sites. This helped to ensure anonymity. Although participants' often spoke of their experiences in particular museums or archives, this was not always the place where their current role was located.

While most interviews were one-to-one, some interviews were in small groups between 2 to 4 people, with follow up one-to-one meetings or email conversations

where appropriate. As this research was exploratory, the open-ended, conversation type was deemed most appropriate (Patton, 2015). For hermeneutic studies, the researcher must acknowledge there are prejudices taken into the field and these often guide the direction of questioning. In this case, several themes were identified from extant literature, which focused on the challenges of delivering ancestral tourism and the fragmented nature of current ancestral tourism provision. These themes influenced the direction of questioning, allowing the researcher to compare and contrast the findings with prior research.

The interview approach for this study resembled guided conversations (Herrmann, 2011) where interviews conform to a semi-structured approach, albeit in often highly mobile contexts. This is a constructionist approach where conversation develops between the interviewer and interviewee (Rowley, 2012). Rather than a series of questions, conversations were guided by the research aim to understand the potential of ancestral tourism by exploring staff experiences of delivering ancestral tourism within Glasgow Life. In most cases, interviews began with probing questions asking participants to explain their role within the organisation and which departments and locations they worked in.

Participants were informed that only sit-down interviews would be audio-recorded if permitted. Since all go-alongs and all but three of the sit-down interviews were conducted in public spaces with others often in close proximity, there were practical and ethical issues to consider here. These included background noise, which made a clear recording difficult, and there were issues of interruptions and the inclusion of non-participants. Instead, in both sit-down interviews and go-alongs, the researcher took notes during the conversation, later transcribed these conversations and emailed these to participants for 'member checking'. Similar to other approaches where audio-recordings are not permitted, data presented from participants is 'based on quotes as they were captured in the note-taking process' (Hansen & Rennecker, 2010:51). Member checking provides participants with an opportunity to check these quotes and the researchers' interpretation of their views (Schwartz-Shea &

Yanow, 2009) and also provides the researcher with time for reflection and hindsight and an opportunity to ask participants for clarification or further questions if required. While there are concerns over the reliability of this approach with some theoretical framing and analysis inevitably occurring as notes are written (Van der Waal, 2009; Wheeler & Reis, 1991) the hermeneutic approach for this study acknowledges biases or assumptions as part of the interpretative process, rather than a transcendental phenomenological approach which sets aside or 'brackets' these assumptions (Larkin & Thompson, 2012; Pernecky & Jamal, 2010). Furthermore, recording devices are argued to be obtrusive and off-putting for participants with their absence assisting the flow of conversation (Brewer, 2004; Gabriel & Griffiths, 2004).

Another ethnographic technique utilised in this study was observation. Given that the researcher did not have a defined role within the organisation, observation was non-participative. The go-along technique often involves the researcher in a role as observer and interviewer taking field notes of conversations and their observations. Supplementary to interviews and tours of facilities, the researcher attended meetings and events attended by employees in various roles and working in different locations of Glasgow Museums and Collections. The researcher also attended some information sessions on family history resources, open to the general public. Attendance at information sessions was suggested by some of the participants interviewed in order to provide the researcher with a deeper understanding of resources and services available for ancestral tourists. Observations from these meetings and sessions were written up as field notes.

In addition to the observation activities mentioned above, and similar to 'hanging-out' and water-cooler conversations (Fayard & Weeks, 2007; Kusenbach, 2003), the researcher also had the opportunity for informal conversations with 49 different employees in a variety of roles within the organisation. Kusenbach (2003) emphasises 'hanging-out' as a common technique incorporated into ethnographic research design. However, as mentioned earlier, she also explains that this often

focuses on professional or personal activities in one or two locations, 'downplaying the significance and meaning of less prominent places' (Kusenbach, 2003:463). In the field, the go-along technique facilitated 'incidental ethnographic encounters' (Pinsky, 2013:281) occurring as interruptions on go-along interviews, or in the meetings and events mentioned previously, with the researcher conversing with other staff members who joined the conversation. Ethical issues were again considered here. While most conversations occurred with those who had already been informed of the research through the initial presentation, the researcher reminded these participants of the purpose of the research and told them that, with their verbal consent, these conversations would be written as field notes with full anonymity assured. In natural settings like this, taking notes at the time can prove difficult and impractical. A useful technique emphasised in ethnographic studies and utilised in this study was taking detailed notes at appropriate intervals or as soon as possible afterwards (Angrosino, 2007; Wheeler & Reis, 1991).

The researcher also kept a handwritten diary to reflect on their observations. This reflective diary was updated throughout the research period and coincided with transcribing interviews and field notes. Whilst some highlight issues of retrospection bias or errors with this approach (e.g. Bolger et al., 2003; Wheeler & Reis, 1991), the reflective diary was utilised here to supplement field notes and transcribed interviews, adding 'more grist for the analytical mill' (Patton, 2015:661). Scholars underline the advantages of reflective diaries for assisting the process of reflection and interpretation and developing understanding of different scenarios and contexts (Holm & Severinsson, 2011; Laverty, 2003; Moon, 2006). Again, this aligns with the double hermeneutic perspective of this study where the researcher is 'shaped by and shapes experiences and accounts', and acts as the mediator of meaning between the participant and the reader (Cunliffe, 2011:654). Influenced by Heidegger's hermeneutic circle, contemporary researchers use a metaphor of a helix or double hermeneutic spiral to represent the unfolding, progressive nature of understanding (Hatch & Yanow, 2005; McKemmish et al., 2012). The subjectivist stance for this research acknowledges that knowledge is constructed through interaction, and the

researcher develops their own understanding through an iterative process of engagement with participants, interpretation and reflection.

Using mobile methods in a multi method study: Ancestral Tourism in Glasgow

The objectives of this study were to investigate ancestral tourism resources and the coordination of ancestral tourism across a large organisation responsible for many museums, galleries and archives. Rather than detailing the findings from these objectives, this section uses extracts from field notes and interviews to illustrate the usefulness of go-along techniques for this study, discussing the advantages and disadvantages alongside other more commonly used ethnographic techniques.

One of the challenges that conventional sit-down interviews and observation techniques were not able to sufficiently address was understanding the resources and/or museums displays that were available or were of interest to ancestral tourists at each of the sites. Without seeing the actual resources or the objects, exhibits and displays that participants referred to, it would have been challenging to build a picture of the types of interactions that staff had with ancestral tourists. On a walking interview around a museum containing displays on Glasgow's industrial past and industrial workplaces, one participant explained:

> *In this museum, everything tells a story…about the people who worked there…that's what all the displays are …and many ancestral tourists visit because they have some sort of connection with the people that worked in these industries.*

Participants explained that while interacting with ancestral tourists, they would often link displays to surrounding landscapes visible from windows within the museum because *"they want to visualise…to see what life was like"*, as one participant explained. Similar to Reed's (2002) research accompanying tour guides in London, ancestral tourists were promoted to visualise this same space in the past. Likewise, as Evans and Jones (2011) highlight, go-alongs not only facilitate discussions of place but prompt spontaneity of data. While walking through museums and archives, the displays or objects often reminded participants of interactions with ancestral tourists, which they then shared with the researcher. With current marketing efforts for ancestral tourism at Glasgow Life currently focusing on family history resources within the archives, this was valuable information allowing the researcher to understand the potential of ancestral tourism within museums.

In contrast to the 'static encounter' of sit-down interviews, where attention is on talking (Kusenbach, 2003), interviewees in go-alongs can relate meanings to the surrounding environment (Carpiano, 2009; Garcia et al., 2012). This was useful for this research, as illustrated in the following interaction with a participant:

> *I bring them up here, and I say to them, "Imagine…That was the dock wall", then I point to all the areas that used to be shipyards…and this here, where the museum sits, used to be a [shipyard]…and then from here (he points to a space on the river, directly in front of us), that's where they would have caught the [boat] to Canada or USA*

For this study, go-alongs allowed the researcher to gather information on resources and exhibits across the different areas that may not necessarily be coordinated or acknowledged by marketing and management on a wider level.

Informal conversations within the organisation was another approach utilised to gather information. As mentioned previously, Kusenbach (2003) highlights the usefulness of these 'hang-out' situations for understanding participants' lived experiences in informal surrounding. In this research, hanging-out was particularly useful for 'groundwork', to start to make sense of this complex organisation, particularly since the researcher did not have a defined role within the organisation. One of the wider objectives of this study was to understand how ancestral tourism is delivered and coordinated across different sites. In an interview with a museum manager, the researcher was informed that ancestral tourism "*wasn't so much a museum thing… But Ancestral tourism might be something that we are doing without knowing it*". The opportunity to attend meetings with visitor services staff allowed informal conversations to gauge when and how ancestral tourism was being delivered in museums. Through informal conversations with staff in these meetings, it became clear that staff across many different roles and museums had experience of delivering services to ancestral tourists, providing opportunities to arrange follow-up conversations. Museum collections, as one participant explains, allows ancestral tourists to see "*the broader picture of what their ancestors' lives might have been like*". These meetings brought staff together that worked across Glasgow Museums

and Collections so the researcher, through informal conversations and observations, was able to gather more information on how services linked and overlapped. Another advantage of this approach was making contacts and aiding the recruitment of participants for this study.

As highlighted above, the recruitment of participants began with a presentation to staff by the researchers and inviting volunteers to participate. Several participants were recruited using this approach. Attendance at meetings and events also provided an opportunity for the researcher to have informal conversations with staff, and this was another successful approach for recruiting volunteers. The go-along interviews themselves also offered several opportunities for recruitment. Carpiano (2009) emphasises go-along interviews as useful for informal introductions. As interviews were not audio-recorded, the flow of impromptu conversations with other staff was not interrupted by having to cease recording. Instead, in these initial introductions, the researcher was able to provide information on the research purpose (in the limited cases where they had not already been informed) and could invite these participants for interviews. Introductions were often made because the participant being interviewed recognised another as having knowledge or expertise of ancestral tourists. So far, this section has highlighted the usefulness of combining typical ethnographic techniques with 'go-alongs' to contribute to a more in-depth understanding of complex organisations and for the recruitment of participants. This research also highlights the usefulness of the go-along as a stand-alone method in itself.

Several scholars accentuate the effectiveness of the go-along interview for helping to build rapport with participants (Anderson, 2004; Carpiano, 2009; Garcia et al., 2012). In these studies, this is significant given the discussion of sensitive social and health issues and issues relevant to the neighbourhoods where they live. Although the topic for this study may not be deemed 'sensitive' in ethical terms, the thoughts and opinions of participants and their roles within the organisation could potentially cover sensitive, confidential issues. On some occasions, interviews involved sit-

down interviews in meeting rooms as well as a go-along interview. In both these situations, participants were visibly more at ease being taken away from face-to-face, sit-down situations. In part, this could be because they were now out of 'ear-shot' from their colleagues but also, go-alongs are argued to be less interrogative than sit-down interviews (Anderson, 2004; Garcia et al., 2012). In support of Evans and Jones's (2011) findings, the go-along also allowed for natural breaks in conversation. There were opportunities for the researcher to reflect and consider questions which can be difficult in face-to-face situations. One of the limitations of this approach was that go-alongs were prone to last longer than other interviews, with conversations sometimes straying from the main topic. However, this also contributed to the informal nature of the interview and opened up the possibility of follow-up conversations and exploration of tangential topics on subsequent visits.

In this study, there were several limitations with the go-along interview, which meant that it was better combined with other ethnographic techniques. One of these is highlighted above and relates to the timeframe required for go-along interviews. The conversation could more easily go astray in go-along interviews with skill required by the researcher to bring the conversation back round to the objectives. Also, for this study, there were several roles where go-along interviews were not practical. This was the case for interviews with marketing staff who were situated within the head office and some of the managerial positions, who had their own offices. The challenge of notetaking was another potential limitation of the go-along and where researchers have limited experience of this approach, it would be advisable to source effective recording equipment. However, careful consideration needs to be given to ethical issues and the challenge of dealing with interruptions and non-participants.

To enhance the rigour and trustworthiness of this research, the researcher made use of member checking by emailing transcribed notes of interviews, as explained previously. With participants having some time for reflection, this proved useful for gathering further information and providing additional insights, allowing participants to elaborate on some of their previous discussion. This also reflects the changing

perspectives of organisations where interactions often take place in virtual spaces, and do not always need a physical presence (Czarniawska, 2007; Fayard & Weeks, 2007), adding another method to the 'tool-kit' of ethnographic techniques and multi-methods of qualitative research.

Conclusion

The use of mobile methods as part of a multi-method qualitative study offered important insights into the services delivered by staff within different parts of the organisation that would not otherwise have been revealed by a qualitative study utilising mainly static methods or observation in isolation.

The first benefit to highlight here is the way mobile methods broaden the scope of the interview process through both their ability to generate meaning through the physical context of the interview but also the opportunity for interviewees to be prompted by a spontaneous occurrence during the interview process (cf. Evans and Jones, 2011; De Leon and Cohen, 2005). In our study, the ability for museum staff to demonstrate the ancestral tourist experience through visualisation with actual exhibits was of particular importance. In addition, by moving through spaces, museum staff were prompted by their surroundings to recall specific interactions with visitors.

Static interviews undoubtedly still offer opportunities to highlight important issues surrounding the organisation. For example, in our study, a museum curator stating that ancestral tourism 'wasn't so much a museum thing'. However, through supplementary mobile methods, these statements can be explored in a wide range of settings and with a wide range of participants through 'hang-out' type situations (Kusenbach, 2003). Thus, issues can be explored and verified outside of normal, sit down interview settings.

Mobile methods afford the opportunity to widen participation within a multi-method qualitative study through the recruitment of additional participants gained through the process of moving around the organisation. In the study above, participants often embarked on conversations with other colleagues during the interview process, which both allowed scope for notetaking but also the recruitment of additional participants. Thus, the go-along interview also becomes part of the recruitment process as interviewees become supplementary gatekeepers to other parts of the organisation which may not have been revealed to the interviewee.

Limitations and Observations on using Mobile Methods

Within the paper, we have been able to clearly articulate the value of mobile methods in augmenting other qualitative techniques within a multi-method study. However, as with any other technique, there are limitations with the approach (or at least facets which researchers should be aware of). Firstly, researchers should be aware that mobile methods in our study often meant that interviews became quite lengthy and that a range of topics can be discussed according to the direction of the movement and conversation. Whilst researchers should not view this as a limitation in terms of the ability to collect rich data there is a sense that the researcher cannot maintain as much control as they might within a static, sit-down interview.

In our study above we discuss the multiple ways that the researcher needed to gain access to the various parts of the organisation. As well as the need for a gatekeeper at an organisational level various other approaches were needed to ensure access at unit level – this included attendance at meetings, seminars and workshops where the research could be introduced. In addition, interviewees became surrogate gatekeepers during the go-along process assisting in bringing other participants into the research process. While this activity was not unmanageable, it does require researchers to ensure that gaining consent is an ongoing process to account for the informal nature of interactions.

Along with the need for researchers to actively manage consent as part of the data collection process, care also needs to be taken with the recording of interviews. The lack of formal recording devices is seen as a benefit to ensuring a more informal interview, but this means that researchers need to be prepared to take detailed notes, utilise research diaries and use member checking to ensure accuracy. These techniques are not unique to mobile methods, but the need for them becomes more acute.

Implications

Increasingly, hospitality and tourism organisations are multifaceted and often contain discrete sub-organisations with a variety of service delivery models. Use of static qualitative methods alone limits the potential for gaining a broader understanding of heterogeneous, mobile activities. This research has relevance for researchers studying a range of hospitality and tourism organisation including, but not limited to, hotel chains, tour operators and airlines, for example, where activities are often spread through different parts of the organisation with staff moving between settings and inhabiting a variety of roles. Our study suggests that mobile methods can contribute to developing an understanding of the complexities of delivering cohesive services in a variety of tourism and hospitality settings.

Firstly, and closely aligned with our own study is the importance of context in shaping the meaning of the interview. The go-along technique is highlighted as a useful approach to enable understanding of participants' connections to their surrounding environment (Carpiano, 2009; Garcia et al., 2012). Mobile methods allow additional insight to be generated through the interaction of the interviewer, interviewee and the environment. Given that so much of hospitality and tourism management is customer-facing and dependent on the physical setting, it is not hard to see the benefits of mobile methods supplementing other qualitative approaches to add value to qualitative findings.

Secondly, mirroring our research above, static interviews with managers or other senior staff can be explored, verified and investigated through mobile approaches which draw in the views of a wider range of participants. Hospitality and Tourism settings afford rich opportunities for utilising hang-out techniques making this a valuable addition to qualitative researchers.

Thirdly, we show the benefits of mobile methods for identifying additional participants who are brought into the research process through the go-along technique. In hospitality and tourism settings which are often multi-faceted the views of a wide range of employees are essential but not all may require the formality of a sit-down interview and, indeed, these approaches may not suit interviews with staff where it is more important to be able to build rapport and reduce power dynamics (cf. Garcia et al., 2102). Mobile methods allow researchers to tap into staff *in situ,* thus drawing on their views in settings they are comfortable in.

Finally, go-along techniques will facilitate research in a practical sense where it could be challenging to conduct sit-down interviews and static observation techniques in busy places such as restaurants, bars, hotels, and airports. This could therefore be of use in tourism and heritage attraction research, aiming to explore experiences, perceptions and relationships with these spaces, from both supply and demand perspectives.

This study evaluated the usefulness of mobile methods as part of a multi-method study to facilitate the understanding of services delivered within a complex, heterogeneous cultural organisation. Specifically, go-along techniques were highlighted as a valuable supplement to ethnographic techniques due to the informal nature of these encounters, their contribution in facilitating discussion of the surrounding environment, and their effectiveness in facilitating recruitment to participate. While this approach is increasingly used in health and social research studies (Carpiano, 2009; Evans & Jones, 2011; Garcia et al., 2012), there are limited

examples of its use in hospitality and tourism settings. However, this study emphasises the contribution of go-along techniques in conjunction with other ethnographic techniques as a novel approach to developing an understanding of complex, spatially dispersed hospitality and tourism organisations.

References

Alexander, M., Bryce, D., & Murdy, S. (2017), "Delivering the past: providing personalized ancestral tourism experiences", *Journal of Travel Research*, *56*(4), 543–555.

Anderson, J. (2004), "Talking whilst walking: a geographical archaeology of knowledge". *Area*, *36*(3), 254–261.

Angrosino, M. (2007). *Doing Ethnographic Observational Research*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Barrett, F. J., Powley, E. H., & Pearce, B. (2011), "Hermeneutic philosophy and organizational theory". In H. Tsoukas & R. Chia (Eds.), *Research in the Sociology of Organizations, Volume 32: Philosophy and Organization Theory* (pp. 181–215). Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Bolger, N., Davis, A., & Rafaeli, E. (2003), "Diary methods: capturing life as it is lived", *Annual Review of Psychology*, *54*, 579–616.

Brewer, J. D. (2004), "Ethnography" in C. Cassell & G. Symon (Eds.), *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*. London: Sage Publications Ltd, pp 312-322

Carpiano, R. M. (2009), "Come take a walk with me: the "go-along" interview as a novel method for studying the implications of place for health and well-being", *Health & Place*, *15*(1), 263–272.

Ciuk, S., Coning, J. and Kostera, M. (2018), "Organizational ethnographies", in Cassell, C., Cunliffe, A., and Grandy, G. (Eds) *SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods: History and Traditions*. London: Sage Publications Ltd, pp. 270–285.

Costas, J. (2013), "Problematizing mobility: a metaphor of stickiness, non-places and the kinetic elite", *Organization Studies*, *34*(10), 1467-1485.

Cunliffe, A. L. (2011), "Crafting qualitative research: Morgan and Smircich 30 years on", *Organizational Research Methods*, *14*(4), 647–673.

Czarniawska, B. (2007), *Shadowing and other techniques for doing fieldwork in*

modern societies, Malmo: Liber.

Czarniawska, B. (2008), "Organizing: How to study it and how to write about it", *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, *3*(1), 4–20.

Czarniawska, B. (2014), "Why I think shadowing is the best field technique in management and organization studies", *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, *9*(1), 90–93.

De Leon, J. P., & Cohen, J. H. (2005), "Object and walking probes in ethnographic interviewing", *Field Methods*, *17*(2), 200–204.

Denzin, N.K. (1997). *Interpretive ethnography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005), "Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research" in N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed, pp 1-32). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R., & Jackson, P. (2012). *Management Research* (4th ed.). London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Emmerson, F., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L.L. (2011), *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* (2nd ed). London: University of Chicago Press.

Evans, J., & Jones, P. (2011), "The walking interview: methodology, mobility and place", *Applied Geography*, *31*(2), 849–858.

Fayard, A.-L., & Weeks, J. (2007), "Photocopiers and water-coolers: the affordances of informal interaction", *Organization Studies*, *28*(5), 605–634.

Gabriel, Y., & Griffiths, D. S. (2004), "Stories in organizational research", in C. Cassell & G. Symon (Eds.), *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*. London: Sage Publications Ltd, pp114-126.

Gadamer, H.-G. (2008). *Philosophical Hermeneutics*. London: Translated and Edited by David E. Linge, University of California Press.

Gadamer, H.-G. (2013). *Truth and Method* (Rvsd 2nd). London: Bloomsbury

Publishing plc.

Garcia, C. M., Eisenberg, M. E., Frerich, E. A., Lechner, K. E., & Lust, K. (2012), "Conducting go-along interviews to understand context and promote health", *Qualitative Health Research*, *22*(10), 1395–1403.

Glasgow Life. (2017a). "Annual review and performance report 2016-17", available at: https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/about-us/annual-review (accessed 23 March 2019

Glasgow Life. (2017b), "Glasgow's tourism and visitor plan to 2023", available at: http://glasgowtourismandvisitorplan.com/tourism-and-visitor-plan/ (accessed 23 March 2019)

Gold, J. (2004). *Cities of Culture: Staging International Festivals and the Urban Agenda, 1851–2000*. London: Taylor & Francis.

Goodson, L., & Phillimore, J. (2004), "The inquiry paradigm in qualitative tourism research" in J. Phillimore & L. Goodson (Eds.), *Qualitative Research in Tourism: Ontologies, Epistemologies and Methodologies*. London: Routledge, pp30-45.

Hansen, S., & Rennecker, J. (2010), "Getting on the same page: collective hermeneutics in a systems development team", *Information and Organization*, *20*(1), 44–63.

Harris, J. (2016), "Utilizing the walking interview to explore campus climate for students of color", *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, *53*(4), 365–377.

Hatch, M. J., & Yanow, D. (2005) "Organization theory as an interpretive science" in C. Knudsen & H. Tsoukas (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Organization Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Helin, J. (2013), "Dialogic listening: toward an embodied understanding of how to "go on" during fieldwork", *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, *8*(3), 224–241.

Herrmann, A. F. (2011), "Narrative as an organizing process: identity and story in a

new nonprofit", *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, *6*(3), 246–264.

Holm, A. L., & Severinsson, E. (2011), "A hermeneutic approach to the characteristics of mental health nursing practice ", *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, *18*(10), 843–850.

Joseph, S. (2018), "Relationality and ethnographic subjectivity: Key informants and the construction of personhood in fieldwork", in Wolff, D (Ed.) Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork. Abingdon: Taylor and Francis, pp. 107-121.

King, N. (2004), "Using interviews in qualitative research" in C. Cassell & G. Symon (Eds.), Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research. London: Sage, pp11-22.

Kristensen, G. K., & Ravn, M. N. (2015), "The voices heard and the voices silenced: recruitment processes in qualitative interview studies", *Qualitative Research*, *15*(6), 722–737.

Kusenbach, M. (2003), "Street phenomenology: the go-along as ethnographic research tool" *Ethnography*, *4*(3), 455–485.

Larkin, M., & Thompson, A. R. (2012), "Interpretative phenomenological analysis in mental health and psychotherapy research" in D. Harper & A. R. Thompson (Eds.), *Qualitative Research Methods in Mental Health and Psychotherapy: A Guide for Students and Practitioners*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, pp101-116.

Laverty, S. M. (2003), "Hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology: A comparison of historical and methodological considerations" *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *2*(3).

Litteljohn, D. (1997), "Internationalization in hotels: current aspects and developments", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management.*, *9*(5/6), 187–192.

Mauthner, M., Birch, M., Miller, T., & Jessop, J. (2012), "Conclusion: navigating ethical dilemma and new digital horizons" in T. Miller, M. Birch, M. Mauthner, & J. Jessop (Eds.), *Ethics in Qualitative Research* (2nd ed). London: Sage

Publications Ltd.

McDonald, S., & Simpson, B. (2014), "Shadowing research in organizations: the methodological debates", *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, *9*(1), 3–20.

McKemmish, S., Burstein, F., Manaszewicz, R., Fisher, J., & Evans, J. (2012). "Inclusive research design: unravelling the double hermeneutic spiral" *Information, Communication and Society*, *15*(7), 1106–1135.

Miller, T., & Bell, L. (2012), "Consenting to what? Issues of access, gate-keeping and "informed" consent" in T. Miller, M. Birch, M. Mauthner, & J. Jessop (Eds.), *Ethics in Qualitative Research* (2nd ed, pp. 61–75). London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Min, H., & Joo, S. J. (2016), "A comparative performance analysis of airline strategic alliances using data envelopment analysis", *Journal of Air Transport Management*, *52*, 99–110.

Moon, J. A. (2006). *Learning Journals : A Handbook for Reflective Practice and Professional Development* (2nd ed). London and New York: Routledge.

O'Gorman, K., MacLaren, A., & Bryce, D. (2014), "A call for renewal in tourism ethnographic research: the researcher as both the subject and object of knowledge", *Current Issues in Tourism*. 17(1), 46-59.

Pappalepore, I., & Duignan, M. (2016), "The London 2012 cultural programme: a consideration of Olympic impacts and legacies for small creative organisations in east London", *Tourism Management*, *54*, 344–355.

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* (4th ed). London: Sage Publications, Inc.

Pernecky, T., & Jamal, T. (2010) "(Hermeneutic) Phenomenology in tourism studies", *Annals of Tourism Research*, *37*(4), 1055–1075.

Pinsky, D. (2013), "The sustained snapshot: incidental ethnographic encounters in qualitative interview studies", *Qualitative Research*, *15*(3), 281–295.

Kusenbach, M. (2003), "Street phenomenology: the go-along as ethnographic

research tool", *Ethnography*, 4(3), pp. 455–485.

Ramsden, H. (2017), "Walking & talking: making strange encounters within the familiar", *Social & Cultural Geography*. 18(1), pp. 53–77.

Reed, A. (2002), "City of details: interpreting the personality of London", *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, *8*(1), 127–141.

Rowley, J. (2012), "Conducting research interviews", *Management Research Review*, *35*(3/4), 260–271.

Rudd, A. (2003), *Expressing the World: Skepticism, Wittgenstein, and Heidegger,* Chicago: Open Court.

Schwartz-Shea, P., & Yanow, D. (2009) "Reading and writing as method: in search of trustworthy texts" in S. Ybema, D. Yanow, H. Wels, & F. Kamsteeg (Eds.), *Organizational Ethnography: Studying the Complexities of Everyday Life* London: Sage Publications Ltd, pp56–82.

Silverman, D. (2017), *Doing Qualitative Research* (5th ed.), London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Tourism Intelligence Scotland (2013), "Ancestral tourism in Scotland" available at: from http://www.scottish-enterprise.com/knowledge-hub/articles/guide/ancestral-tourism-in-scotland (accessed 20 October 2015).

Van der Waal, K. (2009), "Getting going: organizing ethnographic fieldwork" in S. Ybema, D. Yanow, H. Wels, & F. Kamsteeg (Eds.), *Organizational Ethnography: Studying the Complexities of Everyday Life*. London: Sage Publications Ltd, pp23–39.

Van Manen, M. (2002), *Writing in the Dark*. London, Ontario: Althouse Press.

Wang, Y. C., & Chung, Y. (2015), "Hotel brand portfolio strategy", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *27*(4), 561–584.

Wheeler, L., & Reis, H. T. (1991), "Self-Recording of everyday life events: origins, types, and uses", *Journal of Personality*, *59*(3), 339–354.

Ybema, S., Yanow, D., Wels, H., & Kamsteeg, F. (2009), "Studying everyday organizational life" in S. Ybema, D. Yanow, H. Wels, & F. Kamsteeg (Eds.),

Organizational Ethnography: Studying the Complexities of Everyday Life. London: Sage Publications Ltd, pp1–20.