



The 'Female Flâneur' a Psychogeographical Exploration of Women Walking in the City

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## ABSTRACT

Psychogeography has long been a male dominated field, incorporating the male perspective of the flâneur in which female perspectives were overlooked. Recent research suggests feminist methodology may have the ability to enhance psychogeographical research, therefore, this study aims to incorporate psychogeography and a more feminist approach looking at gendered experience. Using semi-structured, paired, walking interviews, six female participants walked around the city of Manchester and discussed their observations, experiences and emotions. The data was then transcribed and analysed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis. Three themes were found; safety, opportunity and lastly diversity and community. The study found that the experience of the female flâneurs displayed gendered experience previously ignored and the different perspectives and insights of the city that women can bring. It also highlighted urban promises of the city and revealed how their different experiences, such as safety and diversity, affected their creation of place from space; positive and negative. These findings suggest that psychogeography could vastly benefit from adopting a feminist approach; highlighting key differences and inequality amongst psychogeography, urban life and the growing societal and political change.

<b>KEY WORDS:</b>	<b>PSYCHOGEOGRAPHY</b>	<b>FLÂNEUR</b>	<b>EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>FEMINIST</b>	<b>PLACE</b>
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## Introduction

### An Introduction to Psychogeography

Psychogeography originated in 1957 (Bassett, 2004) from avant-garde movements formed by the Letterist Group which became Situationist International (SI); revolutionaries, guided by Debord, consisting of artists and writers (Coverley, 2010). Simplistically, psychogeography is the collision of psychology and geography looking at the behavioural impacts of urban places (Coverley, 2010). Mollaghan (2015: 122) believes the 'geography of an environment has a psychological effect on the human mind' which supports Coverley's (2010) idea of collision; meaning that visiting places can bring about emotions and/or memories. SI adopted a walking strategy, known as the *dérive*, around Paris. During these walks participants had to let themselves be drawn into environments and possible encounters (Debord, 1958). The walks were tied to critiquing 'capitalist gentrification and consumerism' in the modern city (Bridger, 2016: 278); seeking exploration of novel and unknown areas (Arnold, 2019). The SI wanted to use the playfulness of walking in psychogeography; to resist controlling powers and functionalist city planning (Pyry, 2018). They also engaged in walks across other destinations; Richardson (2015) furthers this, explaining psychogeography to be about crossing any boundary; physically or metaphorically. Those who engaged in this walking were typically males, known as the *Flâneur*.

Although SI provides a beginning to psychogeography there has yet to be an exact definition, Coverley (2010) makes the point that psychogeography has resisted definition due to ever changing themes and reshaping from practitioners. Holmes (2010: 37) focuses upon place in psychogeography, describing it as a 'hidden landscape of atmospheres, histories, actions and characters which charge the environment', meaning that, psychogeography has grown from mere observation to potential insights into how the environment influences and affects our emotions and experiences.

Psychogeography expands from just written accounts of *dérives*; artists also created art, film, and poetry. For example, Ian Breakwell, recorded an unknown man walking past his window every day for 3 years. The *Walking Man Diary* (Breakwell, 1975-78) is a collage of photos and calendar cut-outs with descriptive texts. In more recent years Wild (2014) similarly depicted a walk along the Pacific Coast trail by a woman showing her relationship with the environment and herself. The nature of Psychogeography is interpreted to be playful, explorative and flexible; not restricted by form.

### The Flâneur

Psychogeography revolves around the *flâneur*; typically a male figure recognised in 19<sup>th</sup> century Paris. The *flâneur* is defined as being a passive and detached observer wanderer of the streets, a term coined by Charles Baudelaire (Richardson, 2015). The *flâneur* has been a figure of interest for many years, although it has been acknowledged the *flâneur* is rarely seen as female. Wilson (2001) describes the *flâneur* to be a man of pleasure, and to feminists the embodiment of the 'male gaze' representing mastery over women. The *flâneur*'s freedom to walk carelessly through the city is a privilege limited to masculine freedom and, therefore, the *flâneur* is inescapably gendered (Wilson, 2001). However, Elkin (2016) refers to the female perspective, acknowledging women as the *Flâneuse*, going on to criticise the 19<sup>th</sup> century for discounting women.

## Women and Urbanisation

So, what of the female flâneur/flâneuse? Elkin's (2016) identified that the social conditions of women lead to the lack of female perspective or ability to walk the city. Taking this notion back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century where society was male dominated, this discussion will focus upon females and the urbanisation that took place.

Sexual inequality was apparent in more mundane events in the Victorian era; women were confined, meaning that 'the public world of work, city life, bars and cafes' were banned to respectable women (Wilson, 2001). This is clear in the majority of 19<sup>th</sup> century psychogeographical accounts which, according to Wolff (1985), only 'concern with the public world of work, politics and city life'; areas women were excluded from, hence their experiences unaccounted for. Those women who did engage with city life were deemed unrespectable 'public women' or prostitutes, if recognised at all (Wilson, 2001). City urbanisation led to concern over the undermining of established patriarchal authority, making the term 'public woman' ineffective. Despite dangers, the city presented a 'vista of opportunities' compared to country life (Wilson, 2001: 83), however, not all women gained from this, women in the suburbs became more private and restricted away from the city (Wilson, 2001).

## Feminism

Feminism is referred to as 'the belief that women should have economic, political and social equality with men' (Adhikari, 2013). It has represented a variety of movements including liberals, radicals, postmodern etc. (Tong, 2009). The general belief is of a gender imbalance in society due to the patriarchy; the social structures and practices in which men dominate women in society (Walby, 1989). This feeling of inequality over centuries is recognised by Wolff (1985). Previously women were kept in private invisible spheres, and seen as prostitutes if they engaged in city life alone. In modern times Feminism and the international women's movement has been steadily increasing in size/strength (Berkovitch, 1999).

Modern feminism, Van den Bergh and Cooper (1994), not only addresses women's rights and equality, but stretches to include the planet, all genders and ethnicities and the handicapped amongst others; not limiting it to female issues but equality for all. Gross (1998) supports this, adding that feminism is the rejection of ideals, such as the patriarchy and societal femininity, in order to better society. In 2017, 673 Women's marches took place with nearly five million participants across the USA and 81 other countries (Presley and Presswood, 2017). Organisers want to send a message that women's rights are human rights; defending the most marginalised amongst them (Women's March, 2019).

However, as modern feminism intends to move society forward, women still face every day issues; including walking in a city. Wilson (2001: 72) questions 'whether women are seen as a problem of the cities, or the cities as a problem for women'. Even in the late 1960s feminist groups advised women living and walking alone in the city to attend self-defence classes, rather than using their manners (Hickey, 2011). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century self-defence has turned to education and empowerment; Braidotti (2011) expresses that turning difference into strength can help society move towards gender equality. The "Me Too" movement (2018), went viral across all social media platforms in 2017; creating a conversation about sexual violence, helping survivors of any background or gender. As Feminism is creating large movements

within society, and psychogeography engages in politics of cities; a woman's perspective has the potential to offer new understandings and interpretations. As Lavery (2009, cited in Bridger, 2013: 295) argues the aim 'is not to deny men the ability to walk the city, but rather to transform patriarchal attitudes to women so that cities become truly democratic spaces'.

### **Urban Promises**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries migration to cities grew and urbanisation was pushing forward. The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the largest number of new cities than any other (Bairoch and Goertz, 1986). This migration to urban life is evident even now, according to the UNFPA (2007) in 2008 more than half of the human population (around 3.3 billion) lived in an urban area. This urban movement is reflected within psychogeography, where cities are overwhelmingly chosen over rural life to explore and conduct dérives.

With the urban migration figures and focus of cities within psychogeography; what brings people to urban life? Cardoso et al. (2019) found that city life has long fed the imagination; it's seen as a place of promise, happiness and social mobility. It's 'urban promises' of job opportunities, housing and few restrictions of personal choice are notable advantages which span decades (Wilson, 2001, Milgram, 1970 and Cardoso et al., 2019). Television and film have also reinforced these ideas; *Sex and The City* (1998) portrays four women living glamorous lives in New York showing an almost perfect city life. Milgram (1970) extends the positive image to the 'atmosphere' of the city; finding that people are willing to make financial sacrifices to live in cities. Yamagishi et al. (2012) researched the notion of the freedom of 'city air' hypothesising that social constraints are more common within rural areas than urban. Okulicz-Kozaryn and Valente (2018) wrote a discussion of city life and acknowledged the freedom of 'city air' believing it to be as relevant today as ever. Cities tend to be more liberal and possess a more progressive and accommodating nature compared to rural areas (Okulicz-Kozaryn and Valente, 2018). Fischer (1982) suggests that over time cities have become places of freedom for all demographics. However, the city isn't always seen so positively; Ganjavi et al. (2000) found that a characteristic for individuals who felt unsafe walking at night was being female; therefore, gender became a security factor. This is reflected by Aihio et al. (2017) who found that woman felt more vulnerable than men.

### **Construction of Place**

Bridger (2013) believes that psychogeographical research has to recognise the relationship between people and place. Cresswell (2004) explores the notion of 'Place', interpreting Agnew's (1987, cited in Cresswell, 2004) definition, place has three aspects; location, locale and sense of place. Meaning actual location/coordinates, the physical shape and the attachment to people make a place. Cresswell (2004; 10) describes space to be a 'realm without meaning' and only when humans invest meaning into space (becoming attached) it becomes a place. This coincides with psychogeography and the potential perspectives and attachment women could hold with the city.

### **Aims of this Research**

Psychogeography is an area in which men have dominated; from the beginning with Debord to, more recently, Sinclair and Bridger, whom are all prominent male figures

within the field. A woman's experience has largely been ignored; inequality of the earlier centuries is key to the lack of female orientated research. However, as society has changed and urbanisation has allowed growth, women have become more prominent; not now held in a private sphere or as an object of the 'male gaze'. In light of the presented research, this study aims to contribute to growing female work and perspective within psychogeography. The research will focus upon females and their perspective and experiences of walking in a city (Manchester) and will look into the structure and content of gendered experience of place; as Bridger (2013) suggests. The research could provide meaningful insight and comparisons to previous work by males, whilst also exploring the notion of place; which Bridger (2014) highlighted as understudied.

## **Method**

### **Design**

This study is a qualitative psychogeographical exploration into women walking in the city; it included recruitment of participants through opportunity style sampling and consisted of three semi-structured walking interviews. The data investigated women as female flâneurs and their experiences and emotions towards walking in a city. It was analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA); chosen as it is an analytical approach which tries to explore and understand the lived experience of phenomenon (Smith, 2004).

### **Data Collection**

Six participants took part in a semi-structured, walking interview in Manchester city centre, answering ten open-ended questions. The style of the semi-structured interviews was as a conversation between the interviewer/interviewee, whose interactions generate new data (Willig, 2013). The use of semi-structured interviews allows the opportunity for unknown information to emerge; participants can speak openly and freely (O'Keeffe et al., 2016), allowing for richer data. These interviews were conducted as walking interviews; walking around the city to engage with environments. This has been considered a major advantage to walking interviews; giving insight into both the participant's perspective and relationship with the place and self (Solnit, 2001). Ingold and Lee (2008) further this, explaining that it encourages connection to the landscape; allowing the researcher to understand how and why places and relationships are formed between the participant and the environment.

The walking interviews were conducted in pairs; two participants and the researcher in each. Interviewing as a pair allowed for further discussion into topics each participant brought up; again allowing for richer data, and challenges of each other's perspective (Lewis, 1992). The interviews were recorded on an audio recording device and transcribed (Appendix 4) and analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

### **Data Analysis**

Due to the explorative nature of the research, focusing on perspective and experiences, IPA was chosen. IPA focuses on the personal, subjective experience of the participant and their perceptions of the world (Smith, 2003). IPA can be flexible

and adapted to the researchers aims (Smith et al., 1999) and is rooted in a phenomenological approach with three distinctive features; phenomenological, interpretative and idiographic (VanScoy and Evenstad, 2015). IPA deals with not only the participant's interpretations, but also the researchers (VanScoy and Evenstad, 2015), and includes four hermeneutic features: spatiality, temporality, embodiment and intersubjectivity (Smith, 2016). Smith et al. (2009) believes the researcher must have methodological rigour whilst also requiring imagination, playfulness and critical thinking. As a result of this, IPA is a suitable approach as it will allow for an in depth understanding of the female experience walking in a city; illuminating new and valuable perspectives.

### Procedure

Participants involved in this study were recruited through an opportunity style sample. The participants were invited via email; this prevented any pressure that a face to face invitation would have. The email included a general initiation and if they wished to take part they were to reply with their interest. The potential participants were then sent the participant information sheet (Appendix 2) outlining the plans of the study. If the participants then accepted the invitation, written consent was gained through a consent form (Appendix 3). Participants then took part in a walking, semi-structured interview in pairs, which were recorded on an audio device; answering questions such as 'Can you tell me about your experiences walking here at night?' or 'How do you think being a woman makes your experience different?' Once completed they were debriefed and any further questions were answered by the researcher. Participants were also given pseudonym names and told they can withdraw their information from the study up until 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

### Participants

In order to participate the participants needed to be female (as this study explored the female perspective) and they had to be aged 18 or over. Those recruited had mutual friendships with the researcher, allowing for richer data to be collected, as participants would feel they could speak more openly. All participants have lived in Manchester and their ages ranged from 19-24. Participants chose a pseudonym in order to be anonymous (Table 1) and were paired together.

**Table 1.** Summary of participant pseudonyms

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Paired with</b>
Dana	Jenny
Jenny	Dana
Sandra	Lily
Rose	Molly
Molly	Rose
Lily	Sandra

### Ethics

Appendix 1 shows the completed ethical approval form and insurance checklist, which is in accordance with the guidelines set by the British Psychological Society. The participants received an Information sheet prior to the study and any questions

were answered prior to the interviews. Participants gave written consent and were briefed; informing them they have the right to withdraw up until the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019. The participants were given pseudonyms for anonymity and the data collected was kept on a password protected laptop and file; to be deleted 6 months after the study was completed. After the interviews the participants were debriefed and contact information was given if they wanted to ask questions or withdraw.

## Analysis and Discussion

Across the three interviews, three common themes occurred; safety and Manchester, diversity and community and opportunity. These three themes commonly linked to spatiality and intersubjectivity whilst also mentioning temporality.

### Safety

Although living in a city is suggested to bring opportunity and has been glamorised through media; not all aspects of urban life reflect such notions. The female flâneurs all voiced experiences they have had regarding their safety in the city centre; especially at night. Reflecting Ganjavi et al. (2000) who found that typically being female was a characteristic for individuals who felt unsafe at night. The flâneur is perceived to walk freely, being a wanderer (Richardson, 2015 and Wilson, 2001) but this is not fully agreed with for the female flâneurs. All of the women identified negative emotions towards areas of the city reflecting spatiality; in particular the majority identified Market Street. As Sandra discussed her experiences with the area;

‘When it gets dark I hate it like it makes me feel uneasy...I would avoid walking down there at night’ – Sandra (Transcript 2, Line 164-167)

‘I wouldn’t risk it on my own especially in the centre and Market Street’ - Dana (3, 41-42)

This was then agreed by Lily and spoken about in the other two interviews. Jenny extends her reasoning, sharing her experience of harassment in that area. The identification of specific spaces in which they have all had negative experiences reflects Cresswell’s (2004) notion of spaces becoming places through meaning; avoiding these areas due to fact they now perceive danger. This reflects the effect of spatiality and intersubjectivity with the relationship between the participants and those they’ve been harassed by. It has been highlighted by Plan International (2019) whom have set up a ‘Free to be’ app in which women can identify areas in which they have had negative experiences, which is mapped for other women to see. The ability to share experiences with others was a common occurrence within all interviews;

‘I’ve heard a lot about crime and rapes and stuff’ – Rose (1, 69-70)

‘I hear them from my friend or friend of friend about places in town’ – Lily (2, 37)

Not only were areas recognised and avoided by all participants from their experiences, they also identified places in which their friends or others had negative experiences. This passing of information between the women through their relationships with friends/family has ultimately allowed the participants to feel safer whilst walking amongst the city. As women have been shown to be more fearful of

crime than men (Schafer et al., 2006), the passing of information has provided a sense of unity between them. Alluding to the feminist movement - uniting to support one another, which Van den Bergh and Cooper (1994) discussed. Their experiences have also provided them with knowledge on how to stay safe; all participants discussed a conscious awareness of what they have learnt through their time of living in cities.

'I won't play music through my headphones so I can hear what's going on' – Molly (2, 77-78)

'I'm conscious of who and what's around me' – Jenny (3, 97-98)

'I'm always conscious around here, walking through town I'm always conscious in the day or if I'm out at night' – Rose (3, 27-28)

They all feel a need to be aware of who and what is around them, on their own or with others, no matter the time of day. However, there is a focus upon the night due to the ever growing nightlife in cities, Chatterton and Hollands (2002). The women justified their tips and awareness with their sex, explaining they had always been told by family and friends how to stay safe as they grew up. This was an issue which they felt males had not experienced; reflected by Mellany Sanchez (2017) who released a short video 'Stay Safe' in the style of a public service announcement. The video consisted of women giving tips on how to stay safe living in New York, in hope of helping other women. The women involved acknowledged stories from around the city; in which they compared to their male counterparts.

'I've walked around here with my guy friend, I've been more aware...noticed more to stay safe they ask why I won't walk certain ways...they know the risks but seem less conscious' - Jenny (3, 151-153)

'I've been told repeatedly how to stay safe as a woman even though it should apply to men too, I don't think...like they know things are unsafe but they aren't as aware...they see risk that apply to women more then to them' – Dana (3, 155-162)

The experiences that the participants shared in contrast to what they know from their male friends showed a difference between male and female perspectives. Aihio et al. (2017) suggest that males may think they are invulnerable, not thinking of risk, as reflected by Dana. This difference between male and female safety highlighted throughout the interviews suggests a potential gender difference in perspective, which Bridger (2013) noted psychogeography should discuss.

However, both Molly and Rose discussed that, despite their negative encounters with the city, they didn't always feel the city was unsafe; suggesting this was due to the busy nature of the city no matter the time. In their experiences the city is deemed to be well lit and often strangers around would help if they were to be in any danger. Dana also expressed that, although her experiences have been negative, her confidence over time has grown allowing her to carry on with her day to day walks. Therefore, the idea that the flâneur can walk the streets carelessly being a male privilege (Wilson, 2001) is recognised. As female flâneurs, the idea of walking carelessly is deemed unlikely or even impossible, as they describe how they are constantly aware of their safety, actively avoiding places and people whilst learning skills/tips to stay safe. This illuminates a perspective the female flâneur has

including; their encounters, lessons and observations to which they all felt that men rarely had issues with.

### **Diversity and Community**

The second theme commonly occurring was Diversity and Community. Side by side, these have become a paradox within community psychology; both are explicit and vital values (Neal and Neal, 2014), however, they often run in opposition to one another (Rappaport, 1981). In all of the interviews each participant described how they felt a large sense of diversity amongst the people of Manchester. The flâneurs identified how, when they were amongst places they enjoyed and people with similar interests, they felt like they were part of a community; even when just walking through these areas:

‘Even though I don’t know them I’ve got a community’ – Dana (3, 50)

‘It’s like a mini community we are all there because we like the music and stuff’ – Sandra (2, 100)

When talking about her interest in the Manchester music scene and place in the Northern Quarter, Dana expressed her feeling and observation of community, even when she did not know those around her. Likewise, when walking towards the location of the nightlife venues Sandra often visits, she expressed a sense of community amongst people who have similar interests. This entailed a notable diversity between different spaces in Manchester, often leading to the participants recognising that everyone had a place in the city; such as LGBTQ+ communities or different religions and cultures. Therefore, this expression amongst the people and place reflects the urban promise of variety and freedom (Cardoso et al., 2019).

‘The range of people you encounter is a broad...I love the diversity, there’s so many communities, it’s so nice to be around different cultures as well’ – Molly (1, 38-39)

‘There’s places for people who like r and b or pop music or raves like you see it everywhere and it all works together in the city’ – Lily (2, 142-143)

All participants recognised places which had meaning to them; a feeling of diversity and comfort, where places and people connected, reflective of Fischer (1998). Molly and Rose discussed their enjoyment of the Northern Quarter and, dependant on their mood, they can go to a different area for a different experience; concurring with the expanding diverse nightlife, as Chatterton and Hollands (2002) described. Through discussing their experiences of places and community/diversity the women expressed a feeling of identification to places and within themselves.

‘I can’t imagine ever feeling this way in a small city like home...I’ve never felt so included and not judged’ – Dana (3, 128-131)

‘I never felt like I fit in [at home] and even my family said I should move to a city’ – Rose (1, 25-26)

The difference in emotions felt between participant’s rural homes and their city experiences showed an association to the city with diversity, sense of place/self and relationships with people. This concept is discussed by Yamagishi et al. (2012) and Okulicz-Kozaryn and Valente (2018) whom indicate that cities are seen as more accepting than rural areas. Sandra and Lily support this with reflections on their outfit choices; when at home they felt pressured to wear certain clothes whereas in

Manchester they felt free to wear what they were comfortable in. They noted how an anonymous relationship with other city dwellers, much like Breakwell's 'Diary of a walking man' whom he never identified, along with diversity and community, has helped them become more 'free' and less judged.

'It can be like a breath of fresh air when you don't know anyone...without like in a way being judged' – Lily (2, 101-102)

The anonymity aspect reflects the passive idea of the flâneur (Richardson, 2015), the female flâneurs also adopted a passive and detached motion towards people in their walks (only in places of comfort/safety). The idea of community provided an element of safety; Molly and Rose discussed being harassed within a place they identified with; this was resolved by others amongst the community, providing the feeling of safety. All the participants expressed positive emotions towards the city, especially places they identify with; no matter the previous negative experiences presented. Unlike previous centuries, these flâneurs are not restricted to the private spheres (Wilson, 2001) and have the ability to walk around and experience different communities etc.; including areas men have yet to recognise.

The female flâneurs focussed on how their observations and feeling of community allowed them to enjoy themselves, explore and feel safe. The paradox (Neal and Neal, 2014) between diversity and community is present here; they recognised that multiple communities have been established through respect and appreciation of the diversity of the people in them. Again this theme reflects Cresswell (2004); each flâneur reflected identification and positive emotions to areas in which they felt they had a community. This theme, unlike the previous, did not convey any differences in gendered experiences; on the contrary, it suggested the experience of the women to be positive and equal to the male, as they felt they had places they found pleasure in and felt included.

### **Opportunity**

The idea of living and walking in a city bringing opportunity is part of the notion of urban promises previously discussed e.g. for jobs (Cardoso et al., 2019 and Wilson, 2001). As the participants walked through Manchester they discussed how all of them had gained from the opportunity to access higher education through universities in Manchester. Due to their migration to Manchester, an urban city; like half of the world's population (United Nations Population Fund, 2007), they discussed that higher education along with experiences of living in a city have, they believe, helped them gain more than just an academic education.

'I can further my education whilst also learning through my experience' – Jenny (3, 131-132)

The recognition by all participants of education and experiences suggests that living in a city can possibly fulfil urban promises. However, Dana and Lily both identify that, although being in a city creates such opportunity, it isn't applicable to everyone; thus the possible emptiness of urban promises (Cardoso et al., 2019). They discussed observations of homelessness and poverty as the walks passed those experiencing that reality.

'It's really sad and of such a big city it's kind of a weird reflection' – Lily (2, 111)

'There's a problem with the difference in class here' – Dana (3, 70)

For a city that is seen as opportunistic to most, it is not for all, Lily talks about how homeless people are often ignored and don't have the opportunities most have within Manchester. As women previously could not walk a city or experience it without judgment; being seen as prostitutes (Richardson, 2015 and Solnit, 2001); now these women only felt a small if any difference between genders. One difference being the 'male gaze'; the flâneur in 19<sup>th</sup> century was said to epitomise this concept (Wilson, 2001) and women of the 21<sup>st</sup> century still feel at times, to be seen sexually by men, experienced by most participants. As female flâneurs, this gaze is held upon them, but not embodied by them, due to their familiarity with being subjected to it; another difference between sexes highlighted. Despite this, they have gained from the same educational and career opportunities as men, unlike previous centuries (Wolff, 1985).

'Women have become more prominent figures in society and change has happened, it's more equal and I think it still makes us as free as men' – Dana (3, 148-149)

Dana described how she felt society had changed from the 'prim and proper' ways referred to by Wilson (2001) which a woman should be, but there's still a difference in safety and judgment. All the participants believed they had experienced more equality (Fischer, 1982) in Manchester recently due to societal change from activism including Women's March (2017) and campaigns. Again, they also made comparisons between rural and urban life; as Rose suggested there is more equality in Manchester than her rural home.

'I still get access to more things than I ever would have' – Dana (3, 125-126)

'There's no jobs here [rural home] and its small' – Rose (1, 28)

The participants have attached a sense of equality and opportunity to Manchester, which they do not feel from living in rural homes, similar to Okulicz-Kozaryn and Valente (2018). Incorporating, again, an idea of urban promises being fulfilled. This linked to opportunity for the future, in each interview the pairs pointed out possible careers and how they have/could gain experience to reach their goals.

'I see and have more opportunities for my career, there's so much to do' – Rose (1, 140-141)

'I think it's full of opportunities and like jobs and new experiences' - Jenny (3, 10-11)

No participant mentioned a difference in opportunity between them or others; solidifying a sense of equality transforming previous patriarchal attitudes (Wilson, 2001). They made observations of how those around them are gaining from the city; including how Dana has advanced in her career and others are finding work experience/voluntary work to move forward. Jenny focussed upon the centres around the city she noticed, which help people of all variations move forward in their lives. All the female flâneurs had constructed place, Manchester to them has gone from a space to a place. Urban promises fulfilled in their eyes, they are not held back by aspects which they previously perceived to restrict them.

On the other hand, they noticed and discussed how, although gender may be less of a problem in today's society; class and poverty still are. If the opportunities of Manchester may be limited to specific classes rather than gender; maybe urban promises aren't fulfilled for everyone and are therefore, empty.

## Conclusion

The female flâneurs, largely unrepresented within psychogeography, provided observations and gendered experiences. This study pushed the concept of psychogeography from its origins to a more modern approach including; female flâneurs, group dérives and a feminist outlook. Although in recent times women are not restricted to 'private spheres' (Wilson, 2001), an element of gender inequality was still identified. The flâneur delves into the freedom of exploring areas that may be deemed attractive, to be pulled in to explore unknown places. The women in the study did recognise an element of freedom in urban walking, however, safety due to being female was mentioned regularly in key negative experiences. Meaning that, exploring new places has unfamiliarity and potential danger which they largely avoided; this could suggest that the flâneur, as Wilson (2001) described, could be 'inescapably gendered'. Walks in psychogeography are typically singular experiences, however, in this study the female flâneurs engaged in them in pairs (plus the researcher). The pairing of flâneurs allowed for them to discuss and debate what they felt, their experiences and their observations; a possibility of psychogeography that has been scarcely explored. The female flâneurs learnt from each other and shared in positive and negative experiences, to which they supported and empathised with one another.

Psychogeography, as Coverley (2010) and Mollaghan (2015) describes, is a collision of psychology and geography looking at the behavioural impacts of urban environments and the psychological effects on the human mind. In this study the effects of the urban environment were evident throughout; as the participants walked the streets, they turned space in the city into place (Cresswell, 2004). The female flâneurs all attached emotions and experiences to spaces, therefore, they were constructing place from of positive/negative connections. For example, Market Street was a constructed place of negative experiences and emotions for nearly all participants, which led to them actively avoiding that place; a reflection of Green and Singleton (2006), as they describe specific places to be perceived as risky to young women. This study showed a gendered perspective of the construction of place from space, from the ever present safety issues when the women were walking, to the more recent societal change leading to a feeling of freedom and not being restricted. This reflects Massey (1994) and Aitchison et al. (2000) whom discussed the construction and negotiation of space and place to be gendered due to social production, time and culture.

The research also found that the female flâneurs acknowledged a temporality to the city and society; societal and political change in the last few years allowing for greater equality (Fischer, 1982). Not only was a difference in society described, but the idea of urban promises was reinforced. The flâneurs all discussed opportunities and experiences they have gained from the city in comparison to rural life; which Wilson (2001) recognised within early urbanisation, reinforcing urban promises.

Past and present psychogeographical research often notes the political nature of society and cities, generally critiquing consumerism and capitalism (Pyyry, 2018 and Bridger, 2016). In more modern times, and from the evidence in this research, these critiques should shift towards the relevant societal changes. As Bridger (2013) agrees that feminist psychogeographic methodology has the potential to be of great benefit to psychogeography. Writers such as Wolff (1985) and Elkin (2016) being key to the movement of the female flâneur. Modern feminist psychogeography has the

possibility to challenge the idea of the current 'democratised, free and civilised societies' to push the recurrent inequality of gender, class and more (Bridger, 2013). Supported by Braidotti (2011) who, as previously mentioned, stated by turning difference in demographics, such as gender, homelessness and class into strength, society can move towards equality. This research provides a small insight into the possibilities of feminism and psychogeography; whilst also highlighting key differences and inequality amongst psychogeography and urban life. This has the potential to facilitate change and acknowledge more female perspectives/experiences amongst the vast male accounts and domination of the field of psychogeography.

### **Limitations**

A limitation of this research included methodological issues. When the interviews were taking place they were occasionally interrupted by others walking between the research and participants. However, Ingold and Lee (2008) suggest that the method encourages connection with the environment allowing researchers to understand more thoroughly participant's experiences; adhering to IPA. The study did not have a large sample size, whilst also exploring subjective experience and being of a small age range; meant that it was difficult to generalise to other research. Despite the limitations, this research has created a foundation for psychogeography to take a step towards a more feminist methodology and future research can, therefore, explore the idea of female flâneurs further and/or urban walking and living for different demographics.

### **Reflexive Analysis**

I used a qualitative approach and, therefore, it was subjective. IPA recognises the significance of my personal interpretations of the data and the effect of previous presumptions I may have on the data (Shaw, 2010). Thus reflexive analysis enables me, the researcher to address their implications on the research (Shaw, 2010). The research developed from my interest in feminism and a desire to support women (and others) in gaining equality. As I have lived in Manchester, Psychogeography then expanded my interest. As a female, I identified previous positive and negative experiences/emotions when walking through the city, thus the study developed into psychogeography. My previous encounters and personally knowing the participants had potential to impact the data. This connection could have had a negative impact on the study, as the interview conversations could become leading in order to gain specific data which would cause bias in the outcome. To avoid this I dissociated my experiences from the participants and remained professional. However, due to the familiar, intersubjective relationships between myself and the participants, the participants openly discussed a variation of experiences from positive encounters to negative confrontations; creating rich data.

The psychogeographical walks allowed for participants to engage with the environment, as they directed them; not only was it a psychogeographic walk for the participants but also for myself. I, therefore, was partly conducting a psychogeographic walk; learning more about the city and the people amongst it. Personally I agreed with Smith and Osborn (2008) who discussed participants being experts in their own field due the knowledge I gained. Prior to the study, I had presumptions in terms of safety and equality due to past personal experiences and

previous research conducted. However, many findings came to light that were not previously considered. One of these was the intersubjectivity between females; having knowledge in this area I did not presume it to be such a large area of discussion.

On the one hand the analysis was time consuming due to its immersive nature, whilst I also felt that it was not completely compatible with psychogeography. On the other hand, the immersive, imaginative quality of IPA allowed it to fit the playfulness of psychogeography.

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