Title:

"You still want to go lots of places". Exploring walking interviews in research with older migrants

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Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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Abstract

Background and Objectives

Walking interviews have become prevalent in social sciences, however, their use in research with older people is limited. This article offers a reflexive account of our ethical and methodological choices and practices while conducting walking interviews with older migrants, and considers the potential of this method in researching migrants' aging in place.

Research Design and Methods

The study had a longitudinal, multi-sited (London and Yorkshire), qualitatively driven multi-method research design. In 2018-19, in-depth interviews were conducted with 45 older migrants originally from the Caribbean, Ireland and Poland; followed by walking interviews with a sub-sample of 9 participants 6-12 months later. The majority of participants were over 80 years old.

Results

Our study demonstrated that walking interviews are a promising method to explore in-depth a variety of relevant issues including older migrants' mobility, health and wellbeing; navigating places through everyday activities; interactions with local neighbourhoods over time, and the meanings associated with such experiences. Through direct exposure to the physicality of places, walking interviews can elicit rich and complex data that would be difficult to collect through other methods.

Discussion and Implications

Conducting walking interviews with older migrants has unique thematic potential. However, a range of ethical and practical challenges need to be considered, including a risk to revealing participants' identities and adopting an ethics-in-practice approach. The method has some

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limitations, especially with less mobile participants. Implications for researchers, policymakers and practitioners are suggested.

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In the UK, like in many developed countries, the population is aging rapidly. In 2018, 18.3% of people were 65 years and over, projected to grow to 24.2% by 2038 (ONS, 2019). Among them, the proportion of older people with a migration background is increasing (ONS, 2013). The context of an aging society, growing numbers of older migrants, and the policy focus on aging in place (Sixsmith & Sixsmith, 2008) provide a strong rationale for investigating how older adults, including migrants, access, navigate and relate to their local neighbourhoods (Choi, 2021).

Combining the strengths of ethnographic observations and interviewing, walking interviews (Kusenback, 2003) provide privileged access to exploring place and memory (Evans & Jones, 2011; O'Neill & Roberts, 2020), neighbourhoods and communities (Emmel & Clark, 2009), mobility, health and wellbeing (Carpiano, 2009; Foley et al., 2020). In this article, we critically reflect on the methodological and ethical issues encountered while conducting walking interviews with older migrants in England as part of a longitudinal, qualitatively driven multi-method research project. The purpose of the study with aging migrants was to investigate their experiences of aging in England, focusing on their wellbeing, care needs and support. We included walking interviews in the second round of the study to explore older migrants' everyday mobilities, access to services and relationship with place.

Importantly, the majority of participants were 80 years old and over, which, to the best of our knowledge, is a significantly older profile than in most research on older migrants with its predominant focus on retirement age. As discussed later, conducting research with older migrants necessitated specific methodological and ethical considerations, especially concerning participants' anonymity. Some of the issues we explore, however, such as the merits and limitations of walking interviews, and some of the ethical challenges, are relevant for social gerontological research in general.

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With this article, focusing on migrants' aging in place, we aim to contribute to the growing literature on using walking interviews to research aging (Finlay and Bowman, 2017; Gardner, 2011; Grove, 2020; Lager et al., 2015; Van Cauwenberg et al., 2012). We explore the questions:

1. What is the thematic potential of walking interviews in research with older migrants?

2. What ethical and practical challenges are posed by such research?

3. How to address these challenges?

Walking Interviews

Walking interviews are referred to by different terms in the literature, such as go-alongs (Carpiano, 2009; Kusenback, 2003) or visual tours (Peyrefitte, 2012). They take diverse forms; for example, in terms of who determines the route taken – the researcher or the participant; conducted while walking and/ or using some form of transport; conducting a semi-structured or unstructured interview, during or after; and use of audio- or video recording. The method has a considerable literature, which thoroughly evaluates the benefits and limitations (Carpiano, 2009; Emmel & Clark, 2009; Evans & Jones, 2011; Kusenbach, 2003; O'Neill & Roberts, 2020). Walking interviews generate richer data because participants are prompted by the environment, specific sights and connections, therefore elements of their everyday lived experiences that otherwise may remain overlooked can be explored (Emmel & Clark, 2009; Kusenbach, 2003). Walking alongside participants exposes both the researcher and the participant to the multi-sensory stimuli of the specific place (O'Neill & Roberts, 2020; Peyrefitte, 2009). Walking interviews, therefore, provide unique access and perspective to participants' attitudes, feelings and knowledge about places (Evans

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& Jones, 2011), as well as to their spatial practices, perceptions of the environment, elements of their biographies, the "social architecture" of the area – the people who live there and their social networks, and the "social realm" – patterns of interactions in the neighbourhood (Kusenbach, 2003). As Emmel and Clark (2009: 10) note, "the walkaround acts as a mnemonic device, it reminds us to ask questions about particular issues we see". Additionally, walking interviews can help build rapport with participants (Carpiano, 2009), and have proved successful in recruiting participants who were otherwise reluctant to take part in a follow-up interview (Kusenbach, 2003).

Despite walking interviews' potential for exploring aging in place, their use in research with older people is limited. A recent scoping review on research examining person–place transactions in aging adults using qualitative–geospatial methods (Hand et al., 2017) identified only four studies between 1995-2015 that used walking interviews. These studies investigated social networks in neighbourhoods (Gardner, 2011; Lager et al.,2015); accessibility and safety issues (Ståhl et al., 2008); and environmental influences on walking for transport (Van Cauwenberg et al., 2012). More recent studies applied a geographical approach to explore health and wellbeing (Foley et al., 2020) and the "place-based functionings of older people" (Grove, 2020), while also reflecting on methodological issues (Finlay & Bowman, 2017).

In these studies, similarly to ours, the walking interviews with older people were embedded into different multi-method research designs, often being preceded by a traditional sit-down interview. The number of walking interview participants differed greatly, ranging from 6 (Gardner, 2011) to 96 (Finlay & Bowman, 2017). Participants' age-range also varied, for example, Finlay and Bowman (2017) included people between 55 and 91, with an average age of 71. Most studies, however, recruited people 65+, with mean age often in the lower 70s. Employing multi-method designs, the age of the subset of participants who participated in

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walking interviews was not always defined. Our study focused on an older age-range, with walking interview participants being between 77 and 84 years old.

These studies highlight the benefits of walking interviews in exploring various aspects of aging in place. Enabling a rich immersive experience for the participants and researchers, walking interviews provide access to a detailed understanding of older people's everyday spatial routines and complex meanings of place. They allow for a more democratic co-construction of knowledge and more equal power dynamics in research (Finlay & Bowman, 2017). However, Foley et al. (2020) highlighted that more exploration is needed into the ethnic, gendered and ethical aspects of walking interviews. With this article, we aim to respond to some aspects of this call.

Research Design and Methods

Our longitudinal, qualitatively driven multi-method study (Morse, 2003) was embedded into a large, ESRC-funded research programme, Sustainable Care (2017-2021), which explored the sources of economically and socially sustainable care arrangements and relationships. Our study focused on older migrants' experiences of aging in England, investigating their wellbeing, care needs and support networks.

To explore these issues, we recruited people of pensionable age (65+), living at home but receiving care from paid carers (formal care) or family members, neighbours, and friends (informal care) to support them remaining at home. Such help included personal care, support with housework, shopping, moving around or walking outside, taking medication or paying bills. Our inclusion criteria allowed for participants with any type or level of disability or health condition that permitted them to take part in a one-hour-long interview.

We focused on three ethnic groups that arrived in large numbers in the post-WW2 period: migrants from the Caribbean, Ireland and Poland (Crofts & Stripe, 2020). All but one

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interview was conducted in English, the mother tongue of Irish and Caribbean participants. A Polish participant who arrived more recently (2004) required an interpreter.

Fieldwork was conducted in two rounds between July 2018 and September 2019, in two different areas: London and Yorkshire, the latter including a city, smaller towns and villages. The first round (July 2018 – March 2019) consisted of in-depth interviews with 45 older migrants across the two research areas and the three ethnic groups. In the second round (July-September 2019), we conducted walking interviews with a subset of 9 participants (see Table 1).

Table 1.

Research Ethics

The study received ethical approval from the University of Sheffield's Research Ethics and Integrity Committee. Members of our team were also required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check because participants fit the DBS's "vulnerable adult" definition, as they received "assistance in relation to general household matters by reason of age, illness or disability" (DBS, 2012: 1).

Before the interviews, we described the project aims, methods and ethics in detail to all participants, and provided a hard copy of the Information sheet in both rounds. We also provided information by phone, when arranging the walking interviews. Informed consent was acquired from all participants in both rounds, mostly as written consent. Before the walking interviews, if written consent was practically difficult to obtain (for example because we met the participant on the street), we tape-recorded their oral consent after reading aloud the consent form for them. Furthermore, we understood consent as a process, not as a one-off event that happens at the beginning of an interview. We informed participants that they have the right to withdraw consent at any time, however, none of them withdrew from the project.

To protect participants' confidentiality, all data were anonymised, with participants given culturally appropriate pseudonyms.

Rationale for walking interviews

Walking interviews were not part of our initial research design; we decided upon this method as a response to an ethical challenge we faced following the first-round interviews. Originally, we wanted to map older migrants' support networks through qualitative social network analysis, using sociograms (D'Angelo & Ryan, 2019). This method employs a paper-based diagram with the participant in the centre, asking them to place their contacts on this visual map depending on the degree of closeness. By definition, sociograms provide a visual representation of people' social network perceptions. However, this method risks exposing thin and shallow social networks, making participants' isolation directly visible to them (D'Angelo & Ryan, 2019). Having already collected rich data on participants' networks and faced with these findings, we felt compelled to change our research design to avoid negatively impacting on participants' wellbeing.

"Mobility" was identified as a key theme from the first-round interviews. Several participants conceptualised the experience of growing older in terms of their diminishing mobility:

> "To me, it's the main thing that I haven't got freedom to go out a lot at the moment, and I've got aches and pains in my back which limits my movements… I think I would feel younger if my husband was feeling better so we could go out more and enjoy life more as we used to." (Elwira, 77, Polish, London)

The ability to get out-and-about was intrinsically connected with good health and maintaining independence (Goins et al., 2015). Several participants suffered from pain, tiredness and health problems, however, they still made great efforts to get out of the house

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and retain an active lifestyle (discussed in more detail in Ryan et al., 2021): "I've got a lot of trouble with my knee… I've got a crutch. I had a new knee a few years ago, and I had a new hip as well… I was looking for a stick and… I started using it" (Ronan, 77, Irish, Yorkshire). Recognising the pivotal role of mobility for older people's wellbeing from the first-round interviews and calls in the literature for research into older adults' own perceptions of their mobility (Goins et al., 2015), we were prompted to explore more deeply how older people perform routine everyday mobilities.

Data Collection: First-round Interviews

In the first round, we explored in detail participants' experiences of growing older in England, their wellbeing and care arrangements, including help received from family and friends. We also asked about their migration history, experiences of racism and discrimination, their transnational relationships and the role of technology in maintaining these (see topic guide in the Supplementary material). Before the interview, participants completed a demographic questionnaire, which in addition to common background variables such as gender, ethnicity, religion, country of birth and education level, also included questions designed to capture their wellbeing along a range of dimensions.

The majority of participants were recruited with the help of community organisations working with older people and/ or the three ethnic groups. Since these non-governmental organisations (NGO) worked specifically with migrants and older people, and had established relationships with participants, they were well-placed to provide additional support for those taking part in our research, if needed. One outcome of this recruitment approach, however, is that the majority of first-round interviews were conducted at NGO premises, rather than in participants' own homes.

Motivated by our interest in care and wellbeing, and based on the assumption that care needs are likely to increase with advancing age, we aimed to include people who were significantly older than 65, specified in our sampling criteria. Thus, while our participants were aged between 65 and 92, the majority (60%) were over 80 years old, and the median age was 82. Of the 45 participants, 30 were female and 15 were male, reflecting to some extent the higher percentage of females in older age. Most participants have lived in England for several decades, with the majority arriving during the post-WW2 reconstruction period. Two participants arrived in the 1970s and one Polish participant in 2004 (Table 3 in Supplementary material.)

Second-round Interviews

The second-round interviews (July-September 2019) were conducted after analysing data from the first round, to further explore relevant topics. Since most first-round interviews were conducted at NGO premises, often at a significant distance from interviewees' homes, we also wanted to explore participants' relationship with their local neighbourhoods, their feelings of belonging, access to transport and relevant services. Walking interviews - accompanying participants on an "outing" in their neighbourhood, thus combining interviewing with direct observation - seemed a promising method to study these themes.

The selection criteria for walking interviews were three-fold: (1) participants who had consented in the first-round to be contacted for the follow-up stage; (2) whose daily routines included going out-and-about; (3) the accounts from the first-interviews suggested potentially rich data on the themes of interest. We also considered demographic criteria to ensure representation across the two research areas and three migrant groups. Based on these criteria, we drew up lists of participants in each migrant group and research area, with participants meeting more of our criteria being invited first. We continued with the invitations until we met our quota or had no participants left on the list. In this round, 6 participants were

female and 3 were male. Their age ranged from 77 to 84, with both median and mean age being 80 (Table 2).

Table 2.

We asked participants if we could accompany them on a walk that forms part of their everyday mobilities: for example, going to the shop, post office or the local park. Participants were invited to decide the route, length and timing of the outing. Mindful of potential limitations in participants' mobility, we suggested 15-minute-long walks. However, the length of walking interviews varied greatly, from 14 minutes to 1 hour 50 minutes, depending on how long and where participants decided to go.

During the walk, we asked questions about participants' daily routines, their access to relevant amenities and services, proximity to family, friends and other networks of support, feelings about their neighbourhood, change over time, and belonging (see topic guide in Supplementary material). Although we prepared a topic guide, we aimed to keep these conversations less structured, allowing participants to initiate and expand on topics important to them. The interviews were audio-recorded with a portable digital voice-recorder or a clip-on recorder. We also developed detailed fieldnotes about our impressions of the neighbourhoods, the facilities available there, proximity to various transport options, the facilities which enhanced or limited participants' wellbeing, and how long it took for them to access these places. All four authors took part in the walking interviews and, on most occasions, we worked in pairs to accompany participants, to ensure we can interact with them, on the one hand, and keep an eye on safety and record data, on the other.

Afterwards, we conducted a sit-down semi-structured interview, to reflect on the walk and probe further, if necessary. Depending on the location and the wishes of participants, these conversations took place in local cafés or, in one case, the participant's home. One

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participant, with whom we had a nearly two-hour-long walking interview, preferred walking to sitting down, so we did not conduct the sedentary part of the interview in this case. The length of the second sit-down interviews also varied greatly, from 19 minutes to 1 hour 35 minutes. These interviews were also audio-recorded.

Data Analysis

All interview transcripts were analysed using inductive thematic analysis, following the steps identified by Braun and Clarke (2006). All four authors contributed to data analysis, conducted in subsequent stages, described in detail in the Supplementary material.

First, to familiarise with the data, all four authors read the transcripts and coded a selection of these. After a comprehensive discussion, a large number of initial codes were generated, which were combined into several main themes, including "growing old", "place", "wellbeing", "care" and "belonging". Using this coding frame, the first and fourth authors coded all transcripts using NVivo12 software. The coding process was regularly discussed, and themes reviewed and refined by all four authors. During this process, for example, "mobility" was identified as another main theme.

The walking interviews were NVivo coded by the first author, using the coding frame developed in the first-round as a starting point. Several new codes were added (including "change from first interview", "staying mobile", "mobility aids", "mobility impediments"), while themes not discussed during the walks were eliminated. Through an iterative process explained more comprehensively in the Supplementary material, the themes and sub-themes were further revised and refined. The growing number of sub-themes under "mobility" and "place", and the collapse of other themes necessitated a different coding frame to better map this new set of data. Thus, another thematic map was developed by re-combining codes into

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new overarching themes: "health and wellbeing", "environmental challenges" and "sense of place" (Figure 1).

Figure 1.

The new "health and wellbeing" theme inherited sub-themes from the original "wellbeing" and "growing old" main themes from the first coding frame, and new codes were also added. Sub-themes relating to place-specific data about participants' access to amenities and services, transport, mobility impediments in the neighbourhood and strategies to overcome these were combined into the overarching theme "environmental challenges". Finally, sub-themes about "reflections on neighbourhood" and its transformation over time, and feelings of belonging formed the main theme "sense of place". These overarching themes are explored in the Result section, with illustrative quotes for each.

Finally, the nine pairs of interviews (first and second round) were compared, alongside the connected fieldnotes, analysing data for a single participant at a time. Since the two interviews covered similar topics, comparing them revealed differences in the richness and complexity of data collected by the different methods.

Results

Health and Wellbeing

Allowing for participatory observation, the walking interviews provided deeper insight into participants' physical health and wellbeing. For example, when we first met her, Agnieszka (80, Polish, London) seemed to be in good health and talked at length about keeping active, but the walking interview revealed issues with her mobility. After only 2.28 minutes of leisurely walk, she got out of breath and we needed to stop for a short rest every few minutes. Thus, it took 22 minutes to reach her local supermarket, although Google Maps

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suggests this is a seven-minute walk. Nonetheless, she refused our offers of help, for example, to hold her bag, emphasizing her autonomy and competence: "I am still able to do things, you know, it's just I am a bit slower". The frequent stops prompted Agnieszka to reflect on her mobility and the change from the first interview: "I feel young, yet I am 80. You can't get away from it. And in my body, I feel much frailer than I was a year ago, which I don't like… my walking is a bit more wobbly."

Alongside deteriorating health and mobility in older age (see also quotes from Elwira and Ronan earlier in the Methodology section on Rationale for walking interviews), however, other common themes in our data included "staying mobile", "maintaining independence" and "impact of mobility on wellbeing". Despite her reduced mobility, Agnieszka made an effort to go out every day, to different activities organised by Polish NGOs, exercise classes for older people, church, to meet friends and family, and also for walks in the neighbourhood and the nearby parks. Similarly, when asked about her "very bad" arthritis, Marjorie (78, Caribbean, London) said: "I don't let it stop me doing what I have to do… When it's very bad, then probably I sit down a bit longer, but then I get up and do something… And I feel better."

Some participants, including Ronan (77, Irish, Yorkshire) and Millicent (83, Caribbean, Yorkshire), mentioned using walking sticks. Others, like Agnieszka, rejected mobility aids. Elwira (77, Polish, London) explained that her husband, Jakub (89), whom we also interviewed in the first round, was hardly able to leave the house anymore because he refused to use sticks or a wheelchair:

> "I want to get him a stick, he doesn't want a stick… We don't walk anymore. We used to go for a long walk, that's why we live here, because he loved walking… He doesn't want to get a chair so I can take him out. "What people will say?""

Agnieszka and Jakub perceived unaided mobility as vital to maintaining a sense of autonomy and competence (Goins et al., 2015), which even superseded aspects of wellbeing connected to pain avoidance and pleasure attainment.

While several participants had health issues (for example asthma, knee problems) that, to differing extent, impacted their mobility, all nine participants led active lifestyles at the time of the interviews. Geraldine (77, Irish, Yorkshire) and Weldon (84, Caribbean, Yorkshire) were part of walking groups, visiting the local park and going on long walks in the nearby countryside, respectively: "I go walking on Tuesday… That's serious walking. You've got to do seven-eight miles" (Weldon). Weldon also explained the importance of these walks: "I think it really helps me a lot because we generally go in the countryside, and when I walk there, I kind of forget everything. You got fresh air and everything like that." Incidentally, our walking interview with him took nearly two hours, as he preferred walking to going to a café. The walking interviews thus highlighted the heterogeneity of older people regarding their health and mobility.

Environmental Challenges

These interviews also provided a glimpse into the challenges older people faced navigating their local neighbourhoods, bringing the physicality of places to the fore. This was particularly salient in Yorkshire where we observed how older people struggled with the hilly terrain. Millicent (83) remarked that the biggest improvement to the area would be to "flatten it" as she lived "on top of a hill". We accompanied her on a bus-ride and a short walk home from a shopping trip from the city-centre. During this journey, Millicent explained the various environmental challenges she faced when conducting her everyday mobilities, including the long steep hill and steps leading to her house, potholes and uneven surfaces, overhanging vegetation blocking the footpath, rubbish on the street, and having to change buses several times to reach her destination. She also highlighted environmental factors that

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aided her mobility, such as having access to good transport links close to her house and the

handrail next to the steps: "in the ice and the frost, you want something to hold onto".

Millicent also developed strategies to manage her diminishing mobility, for example,

using different routes during winter to avoid particularly steep roads, finding better transport

links and changing her shopping routine:

> "If I come in the market and get fish and meat, tins and all, I usually get a taxi. I can't
>
> carry them. I wait 'til I need enough tinned stuff and bottles… and then I go into
>
> Tesco, and get a taxi from there."

Access to public transport was a salient issue in most interviews. Aine (82, Irish), who

lived in rural Yorkshire, mentioned that bus routes were reduced to "one an hour. It used to

be one every half hour." Having her doctor's surgery in the next village and only basic shops

close to her house, Aine depended on public transport. Participants living further from city-

centres noted a lack of shops and other services in their local neighbourhoods:

> "There's just one corner shop… just one, and they turned… part of it is a post office,
>
> because… most of the big post offices are closing down, and they're putting them in
>
> the shop… So, if you want anything that's more, you have to come out and go to the
>
> supermarket." (Millicent)

Participants from London tended to have better access to transport, shops and

services, however, the traffic, noise and agglomeration on the streets caused difficulties for

them. "On a Saturday I wouldn't venture out because it's too much… too crowded for me",

Marjorie told us.

Importantly, although we discussed daily mobilities during the first interviews, these

details were revealed by walking interviews. For instance, passing by a supermarket, the sight

of the shopping baskets prompted Agnieszka to explain how a change to the shopping trolleys

in her local, affordable, supermarket, to low-lying "plastic baskets on wheels", forced her to use more expensive shops: "you have to bend down which for me… I've got a back problem." Sensory exposure to specific features of the environment enabled access to spontaneous reactions and often overlooked, reflexive aspects of participants' spatial practices that shaped their wellbeing.

Sense of Place

Walking around in their neighbourhoods, something we were not able to do during the first-round interviews, participants described how these places transformed over time, including socio-economic changes and shifts in ethnic composition.

With many new houses built in her village, Aine lost her view over the fields and farms, but she accepted the changes stoically: "I'm not too upset about that because I think people have to live somewhere, and I think there is a big shortage of houses… I'm not against change." During our long walk, Weldon took us on a "tour" of his neighbourhood, showing us the sites of pubs and clubs he used to visit. Most of them were gone, along with the local post office, shops and cafés: "You see, everything is closed here. If I want something, I go to town." A nearby park was also left to deteriorate:

> "Once upon a time… there was a lot of flowers, beautiful flowers, well-manicured grass. It was beautiful, now it's a wreck… They got rid of the park-keeper and it gradually ran down… This here used to be the park-shop and that over there the park-keepers' office, and it's all now closed and boarded up."

Thus, the walking interviews revealed the erosion of services and public places, as well as the social inequalities faced by our participants in their daily lives. Pointing to a newly opened expensive-looking café, Geraldine noted that "people like me don't use it".

Lohendra (82, London), a Hindu man with Indian background from the Caribbean, also pointed out places that previously were pubs, betting shops, bank branches, giving an account of his past activities and daily life: "You see that building there [now Islamic community centre]… it was actually my local pub… a big change." As a long-term resident in the neighbourhood, Lohendra recounted how the area had transformed through successive waves of migrants and his changing relationship with other ethnic groups. When he moved to his neighbourhood decades ago, his "white" neighbour "wasn't that happy", and Lohendra attributed this animosity to him being a "foreigner". However, "in the end we became the best of friends… when they get to know you… nobody seems to have any problems with anybody", he explained.

Many neighbourhoods we visited were ethnically diverse and changing through the years. "When I moved in, there were lots of Afro-Caribbean people in the road and lots of white people, and they moved out and Asian people have moved in… The whole area has changed in the last 20 years", Marjorie described. Millicent highlighted that "all nationality eats different", and with increasing Eastern European arrivals, food-shops in her neighbourhood started catering for them: "when you go in looking for something that you're accustomed to, sometimes they don't have it."

People who were once newcomers became locals, observing their neighbourhood changing its familiar ethnic identity (see a more detailed discussion in Ryan et al., 2021). This common experience, however, prompted different reactions. While Marjorie felt isolated and lonely in her now predominantly South-Asian neighbourhood, Weldon, living in a place with similar ethnic dynamics, said: "We do get along very well… I have good neighbours. They don't speak good English but we can still have a good conversation".

While in the first interview we asked participants about their neighbourhoods and the inter-ethnic relationships there, direct exposure during the walking interviews to facilities with (changing) ethnic identities – such as places of worship, ethnic shops and clubs – elicited more nuanced and detailed accounts of these issues.

Discussion

The thematic potential of walking interviews in research with older migrants

As demonstrated by the previous sections, walking interviews provide a unique tool to explore various aspects of older migrants' lives, including their mobility, health and wellbeing; local neighbourhoods, the services and amenities available there; environmental challenges; and how older people navigate places through everyday activities. As migrants who lived in their neighbourhoods for decades, they gave rich accounts of how these places changed over time, revealing a reduction in public services, social inequalities, complex attachments and sometimes a sense of loss with the on-going transformations of once familiar neighbourhoods, due to social, ethnic and generational changes.

Importantly, these data were generated entirely by visual prompts during the walking interviews, so they would have remained uncovered with standard interviews. Conducting the walks after the first-round interviews, it was apparent how issues materialised while walking around that had not emerged in the previous, conventional interview, giving us much deeper insights into how participants experienced and negotiated their everyday lives in local places. We were also able to observe what our participants' neighbourhoods looked like, and what services and amenities they provided (or not) to older migrants, thereby getting a sense of the individuals as living in specific places. Integrating this method into a longitudinal design, we

were able to build on the findings of first-round interviews. Importantly, having met participants earlier allowed for rapport, trust and solidarity to develop between us.

Reflections on the ethics and methodology of conducting walking interviews with older migrants

When conducting walking interviews with older migrants, the issue of anonymity needs special attention. Given the specific demographic profile of our participants and their neighbourhoods (for example, some lived in neighbourhoods with few co-ethnics), we decided against integrating new geo-spatial technologies and tools into our study. Tracking participants' exact location overlapping with the voice-recording offers more spatially grounded data and analytic and representational possibilities (Evans & Jones, 2011; Foley et al, 2020; Grove, 2020). However, sharing precise geographical information in conjunction with participants' age and ethnic background could potentially reveal participants' identities. Geo-spatial technologies, although thematically promising, should be considered cautiously in research with older migrants to ensure participants' anonymity.

The often contingent and unpredictable nature of walking interviews highlighted the importance of "ethics-in-practice" (Foley et al., 2020) as opposed to procedural ethics. Arranging and completing walking interviews with older migrants required more effort and time than traditional sit-down interviews. We had to consider a multitude of criteria, including weather, time of the day, participants' pre-existing programmes and their health condition, and accept that a carefully set-up interview could be postponed or cancelled at short notice due to rain, cold or illness. Our main strategies to mitigate and manage potential risks included: providing choice in terms of the timing and route of the walking interview, adapting to participants' daily programme, advance planning (Finlay & Bowman, 2017), and having two researchers present.

As mentioned by Foley et al. (2020), research ethics procedures often focus on the theoretical risk of older people falling or becoming unwell during the interview, especially when conducting mobile research. To adhere to ethics guidelines, we conducted most walking interviews in pairs specifically to ensure that we stay at maximum alert during the whole duration of the trip, with one researcher looking out for traffic, slippery and uneven surfaces and other hazards, and taking notes, while the other focused on the conversation. Only one interview was conducted with one researcher present, which, however, was as successful as the others.

In the first-round interviews, the difficulty of carrying heavy bags from shopping was mentioned repeatedly. So, we offered to accompany participants on a shopping trip and help with carrying bags. However, most participants opted instead for a leisurely walk on the local high-street, preferring a more equal interpersonal relationship with the researchers over receiving "help". Clearly, participants resisted being constructed and perceived as "frail" and needing support. Built on a more collaborative and personalised approach to research (Carpiano 2009), walking interviews can bring to the fore benevolent assumptions which are often incongruent with older migrants' own perceptions of themselves, underlining the importance of researcher reflexivity to ensure the ethical use of this method.

The large variability between the length of these interviews reflects the diversity of interviewees in terms of their mobility and preferences. Having shorter walking interviews with some participants, however, did not impact on the richness of the data because we combined walking and sit-down interviews. While in other studies the traditional sit-down interview preceded the walking one, to build rapport (Finlay & Bowman, 2017; Grove, 2020; Lager et al., 2015; Van Cauwenberg et al., 2012), we conducted the sit-down part after the walking tour, in most cases outside of the home, in a local café chosen by participants. Since the walking interviews were conducted in the second round of our longitudinal design, we

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had the opportunity to obtain background information and build rapport through the first-round interviews. Thus, the second sit-down interviews after the walk provided an opportunity to expand the time-frame of the walking interview, allowing us to follow up on emerging topics and reflect on the walk. We argue that this design is particularly effective with older participants and other groups with limited mobility.

Importantly, with walking interviews, the perspective of the less mobile is more difficult to capture and older populations might have a higher percentage of people with diminished mobility. Given our research interests, we specifically aimed to recruit participants whose first-interviews provided rich accounts of daily mobilities. Many of the "active" participants, however, had themselves decreased mobility due to illness and pain. Thus, our study demonstrates that the method can be successfully employed even with significantly older people, many of whom keep active despite living with health problems. Therefore, the method is not only useful for the most active (such as Weldon), but for those with reduced mobility too (for example Agnieszka).

Implications

In this article, we critically reflected on the merits and challenges of conducting walking interviews with older migrants, a method rarely used in research with this demographic group. Based on the experiences of this research, we argue that walking interviews provide a unique tool and perspective to explore a variety of relevant issues, as discussed earlier. Although walking interviews can be more resource-intensive and pose ethical and practical challenges, these constraints are not specific to older participants and they can be mitigated.

In cases of severely impaired mobility, researchers can adapt the methodology: walking can be replaced with a car journey or bus-ride (as in one of our interviews). More

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empirical evidence is needed to explore the ethical and practical challenges and the questions around data comparability posed by these adaptations.

Conducting walking interviews with older migrants across different settings, such as a global city and rural areas, we endeavoured to answer calls to investigate a wider range of contexts in mobile research with older people (Grove, 2020). There is further scope to explore gendered experiences of mobility in advanced age, as well as linguistic and socio-economic differences. Our participants tended to have well-organised weekly and daily programmes, so differences between the various days of the week and times of the day could also be studied.

Providing rich, place-specific and practically grounded data, walking interviews can enhance our understanding of what makes a place and community age-friendly (Choi, 2021), and what features endow aging well in place (Grove, 2020). Such research can provide valuable information not only to researchers but also to health and care providers, local authorities, city planners and policy-makers about older adults' use of transport, outdoor spaces and the built environment. In the context of aging societies, it is increasingly important to consult older people when planning or changing transport routes and timetables. As seen in our study, many older people are reliant on public transport for accessing basic necessities such as shops and health services, and visiting friends, family and social events. Accompanying them on their everyday journeys could support more age-friendly transport planning.

The method is also useful to investigate environmental features that encourage or hinder recreational and utilitarian walking among older people, such as the width and quality of pavements, availability of benches and pedestrian crossings and proximity of relevant facilities. Better understanding of these factors could inform local authorities about more age-

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friendly neighbourhood planning, as well as strategies to influence walking behaviour among

older residents, thus improving their health and wellbeing.

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Table 1. Number of participants across the two research locations and three ethnic groups

	London	Yorkshire	All
1st round			
Caribbean	10	9	19
Irish	8	5	13
Polish	7	6	13
All	25	20	45
2nd round: walking interviews			
Caribbean	2	2	4
Irish	0	3	3
Polish	2	0	2
All	4	5	9

Table 2. Characteristics of participants who took part in walking interviews

Participant*	Gender	Ethnicity	Age, 1st interview	First arrival in UK	Education	Location	Marital status
Agnieszka	female	Polish	80	1948	vocational training	London	widowed
Aine	female	Irish	82	1953	secondary	Yorkshire	widowed
Elwira	female	Polish	77	1961	vocational training	London	married
Geraldine	female	Irish	77	1954	secondary	Yorkshire	married
Lohendra	male	Caribbean	82	1956	vocational training	London	married
Marjorie	female	Caribbean	78	1960	secondary	London	divorced
Millicent	female	Caribbean	83	1956	secondary	Yorkshire	widowed
Ronan	male	Irish	77	1958	secondary	Yorkshire	married
Weldon	male	Caribbean	84	1962	secondary	Yorkshire	married

*Participants' were given culturally appropriate pseudonyms.

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Supplementary Material

1. Topic guide – first-round interviews

Care 'In' and 'Out' of Place: towards sustainable wellbeing in mobile and diverse contexts

<div align="center">

Topic Guide

</div>

Interview starts with completing a detailed demographic and health/ care questionnaire

Growing Older 'in' and 'out' of Place

1. What does growing older mean to you? (expectations, difference home country/UK)

2. Is this a good place to grow older? Why? ['this' – probe: neighbourhood, town, city/county, UK]

Care

3.   You mentioned you need help with [*tailor questions based on response to Q23 – more details]*

4.   If you need help with something, who would you turn to first? Why? Who else?

5.   Do you receive any form of care from your family/friends in other countries? (financial, emotional)

6.   Are you satisfied with the support you receive? Why? What/ Who else could help (if appropriate)?

7.   [*Q25 if yes*] Who are you caring for? (in proximity/ transnationally - remittances, emotional support)

8.   Is caring for family and friends different in [*home country*]? In what way?

Wellbeing

Subjective wellbeing

9.   What would growing old well mean to you? (what helps; prevents; home county/ UK)

10.   What are the (most important) things that keep you happy? (activities, family, friends, hobbies, religion)

9.   If you could change one thing in your life now what would that be? Why? Why can't you change it?

Material wellbeing

12.   So you said [*Q20*]. What do you mean by that?

13.   What do you think, will this change in the future? Are you worried about it? Who can you rely on?

Relational wellbeing

14.   Who are the most important people in your life? (their location; keeping in touch; change over time)

15.   Family, relatives – *tailor questions based on demographic questionnaire*

16.   Do you travel to meet your relatives abroad? Why? Change over time

17.   Has anyone from overseas visit you? Who? Change over time

18.   To what extent are you satisfied with the level of contact you have with important people in your life?

Role of technology

19.   Tell me a bit about the technologies you currently use in your home which help you get by

20.   How important are these technologies for your day to day living?

21.   Are there any other technologies you wish you could have in your home to use for your care needs?

22.   How frequent do you communicate with family and friends who live far from you?

23.   What type of technologies do you use to stay in touch with friends/ family members who live abroad?

24.   How comfortable are you in using these new technologies?

Experiences of racism and discrimination

25.   Have you ever felt being treated differently because you were not born in the UK?

26.   Have you experienced any discrimination in the UK? How about racism? (at/ access to work, housing, change over time)

Migration

27.   Have you lived in the UK ever since you moved here for the first time in [*Q8*]? Why?

28.   [*Q9]* You said you (don't) have British passport. Has this affected your life in any way?

29.   Has Brexit impacted your life in any way so far? How? Do you think Brexit will affect you later on? (access to health and social services; migrant care workers coming to UK; travelling abroad/ visiting family; financially; etc.)

30.   All in all, what are your plans for the future in terms of staying in the UK? Would you like to stay or move back to [*home country*] or perhaps somewhere else? Why?

31.   Anything else you would like to discuss about your care needs?

Thank you for taking part in our research!

2. Topic guide – second-round interviews

Care 'In' and 'Out' of Place: towards sustainable wellbeing in mobile and diverse contexts

Topic Guide (provisional)

A.   Changes in the intervening period

- Health and wellbeing

- Care needs and provision

- Support networks

- New technologies

- Transnational ties

B.   Reflections on the outing

- Spatial practices

- Mobility

- Access to places, facilities, organisations

- Access to (public) transport

C.   Attachment to places

- Home

- Local area

- London/Yorkshire (UK)

- Transnational belonging

Lastly, is there anything else you would like to discuss about your care needs that we might have skipped in our discussion?

Please give me a call or e-mail me in case you have some more thoughts regarding our interview – anything!
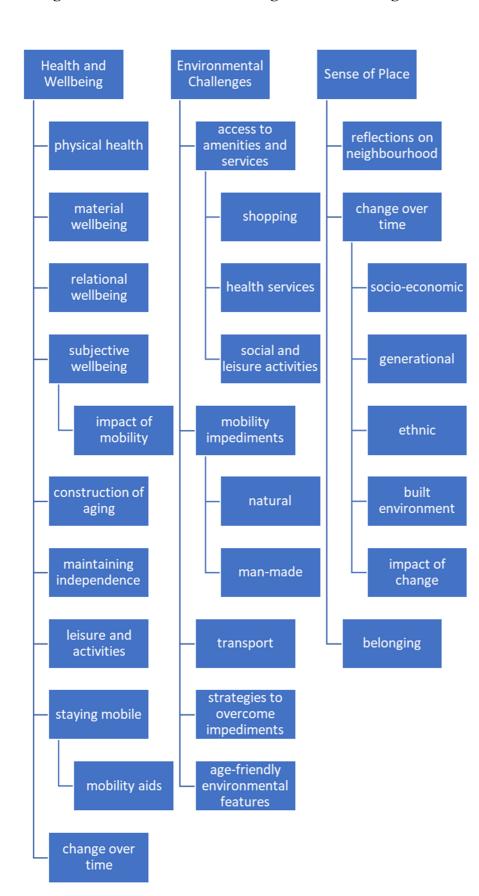
Thank you for taking part in our research!

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3. Table 3. Characteristics of all participants

Participant*	Gender	Ethnicity	Age, 1st interview	First arrival in UK	Education	Location	Marital status
Agnieszka	female	Polish	80	1948	vocational training	London	widowed
Aine	female	Irish	82	1953	secondary	Yorkshire	widowed
Artur	male	Polish	65	2004	vocational training	Yorkshire	married
Barry	male	Irish	92	1949	primary	London	widowed
Beata	female	Polish	72	1946	postgraduate	London	married
Betsy	female	Irish	82	1958	vocational training	London	widowed
Bridget	female	Irish	82	1954	primary	London	widowed
Cathleen	female	Irish	90	1942	primary	London	widowed
Charles	male	Caribbean	78	1960	secondary	Yorkshire	married
Elwira	female	Polish	77	1961	vocational training	London	married
Eunice	female	Caribbean	87	1950s	primary	London	divorced
Ewelina	female	Polish	89	1946	primary	London	widowed
Felix	male	Caribbean	78	1962	primary	Yorkshire	married
Gabriel	male	Caribbean	86	1955	secondary	Yorkshire	widowed
Gabriela	female	Polish	77	1963	secondary	Yorkshire	married
Geraldine	female	Irish	77	1954	secondary	Yorkshire	married
Hannah	female	Caribbean	78	1965	secondary	London	married
Henrieta	female	Caribbean	79	1962	secondary	Yorkshire	divorced

Henry	male	Caribbean	88	1957	vocational training	London	married
Howard	male	Caribbean	82	1956	secondary	London	married
Iris	female	Caribbean	86	1956	secondary	Yorkshire	married
Izabela	female	Polish	82	1977	primary	Yorkshire	widowed
Jadwiga	female	Polish	74	1965	postgraduate	London	divorced
Jakub	male	Polish	89	1946	university	London	married
Jerzy	male	Polish	83	1950	vocational training	Yorkshire	widowed
Jozef	male	Polish	81	1946	university	London	married
Lalima	female	Caribbean	77	1969	secondary	London	widowed
Lilian	female	Caribbean	82	1979	primary	London	never married
Lohendra	male	Caribbean	82	1956	vocational training	London	married
Maeve	female	Irish	90	1956	university	London	married
Mainie	female	Irish	72	1968	secondary	London	never married
Mairead	female	Irish	83	1953	secondary	Yorkshire	married
Mandek	male	Polish	89	1947	secondary	Yorkshire	married
Marjorie	female	Caribbean	78	1960	secondary	London	divorced
Matthew	male	Irish	78	1957	vocational training	London	married
Melaine	female	Caribbean	85	1957	secondary	Yorkshire	widowed
Millicent	female	Caribbean	83	1956	secondary	Yorkshire	widowed
Miriam	female	Irish	79	1950s	vocational training	London	widowed

Mona	female	Irish	82	1955	secondary	Yorkshire	married
Phyllis	female	Caribbean	86	1957	secondary	London	Divorced
Ronan	male	Irish	77	1958	secondary	Yorkshire	married
Samantha	female	Caribbean	65	1968	vocational training	Yorkshire	married
Tekla	female	Polish	77	1968	primary	Yorkshire	widowed
Weldon	male	Caribbean	84	1962	secondary	Yorkshire	married
Yolanda	female	Caribbean	80	1960	primary	London	widowed

*Participants' were given culturally appropriate pseudonyms.

4. Figure 1. Extract from final coding frame of walking interviews

5. Data Analysis

All interview transcripts were analysed using inductive thematic analysis, following the steps identified by Braun and Clarke (2006). All four authors contributed to data analysis, conducted in two stages, following the two rounds of interviews. First, to familiarise with the data, all four authors read the transcripts and coded a selection of these. After a comprehensive discussion, a large number of initial codes were generated, such as "experiences of aging", "risks, fears", "leisure", "loneliness", "health". Then, we created thematic maps by writing all codes on separate pieces of paper and organising them into overarching themes, including "growing old", "place", "wellbeing", "care", "transnationality", "technology", "identity" and "belonging". For example, the initial codes "construction of aging", "experiences of aging", "agency, retaining control", "risks, fears", "cultural assumptions, "strategies to cope with aging", "future plans" were combined under the main theme "growing old", becoming sub-themes within it.

Using this coding frame, the first and fourth authors coded all transcripts using NVivo12 software. The coding process was regularly discussed, with the codes and main themes reviewed and refined by all four authors using Patton's dual criteria of "internal homogeneity" and "external heterogeneity" (Patton, 1990 quoted by Braun and Clarke, 2006). During this process, "mobility" – a code initially conceptualised as a sub-theme under "wellbeing" – was identified as a main theme, due to its significance across the data, and its complex, extensive relationship with other themes. Issues around mobility were discussed in a variety of contexts, coded under "wellbeing", but also "construction of aging", "agency, retaining control", "risks, fears" of falling, "strategies to cope with aging", and others.

The walking interviews were NVivo coded by the first author, using the coding frame developed in the first-round as a starting point. Several new codes were added, such as "change from first interview", "staying mobile", "mobility aids", "mobility impediments" -

many of them as sub-themes under "mobility" or "place". Conversely, other codes lost their relevance; for instance, "cultural assumptions" about aging and "future plans" were not discussed during the walks. As such, these sub-themes were eliminated. Through an iterative process, the themes were further revised and refined, as we added another layer of hierarchy to the coding structure. As part of this, we differentiated between "natural" and "man-made" mobility impediments, and further explored sub-themes such as "change over time" (in the neighbourhood) in terms of transformations in "socio-economic", "generational", "ethnic" composition and changes in the "built environment", as well as the "impact of change".

It needs to be mentioned, that the repeat interviews covered several topics not discussed in this paper, including experiences of care, transnational family connections and use of technology, with the aim of collecting longitudinal data about these issues. However, these topics were mostly discussed during the second, sit-down part of the repeat interviews, as the physicality of places was not relevant to them. In this article, we focus on the themes which help us answering the analytic question: "What is the thematic potential of walking interviews in research with older migrants?"

With the growing number and volume of sub-themes under "mobility" and "place", and the collapse of other themes, it became evident that the analysis of walking interviews requires another coding frame that better maps this new set of data. Thus, another thematic map was developed by re-combining codes into new overarching themes. From the original coding frame, the following main themes were relevant for this process: "growing old", "place", "wellbeing", "mobility" and "belonging".

From these, the "wellbeing" theme was transferred to the new frame, although renamed "health and wellbeing", to better reflect the significance of the sub-theme "health" across the data. With issues around aging mostly discussed in connection with health and

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wellbeing, the theme "growing old" from the initial coding frame was collapsed into the "health and wellbeing" theme. Therefore, in its final iteration, the following sub-themes were included: "physical health", "material wellbeing", "relational wellbeing" "subjective wellbeing" – inherited from the original coding frame, along with "leisure and activities". The sub-themes "construction of aging" and "maintaining independence" originated from the main theme "growing old", with the latter sub-theme refined from "agency, retaining control". New codes were also added, such as "impact of mobility", "staying mobile", "mobility aids" and "change over time" (see Figure 1).

The walking interviews provided very rich place-specific data about participants' access to amenities and services, transport, as well as specific impediment to mobility in their neighbourhood, strategies to overcome these and age-friendly environmental features. These sub-themes were combined into the overarching theme "environmental challenges".

Then, reflective sections of the data about the neighbourhood and its transformation over time, and feelings of belonging were combined into the main theme "sense of place".

Counterintuitively, the theme "mobility" was removed from the coding frame. Issues of mobility cut across the main themes "health and wellbeing" and "environmental challenges". Thus "mobility" can be conceptualised as another layer of overarching theme above them. This structure, however, would have only added to the complexity of the coding frame, without benefiting the analysis.

Therefore, in the final iteration of the walking interviews coding frame, the main themes that address the research question on the thematic potential of walking interviews in research with older migrants are: "health and wellbeing", "environmental challenges" and "sense of place". These are explored in the Result section, with illustrative quotes for each theme.

In the final stage of analysis, the nine pairs of interviews (first and second round) were re-read and compared, alongside the connected fieldnotes, analysing data for a single participant at a time. This enabled us to further evaluate the benefits of walking interviews. Since the two interviews covered similar topics, comparing them revealed the difference in the richness and complexity of data collected by the different methods, conventional sit-down interviews and walking interviews.