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Walking as feminist political research

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Outline

- **Topic** – Feminist psychogeographical walking
- **Rationale** – reasons for doing feminist psychogeography
- **Theory** - social spaces as political spaces/ gendered subject positions/environment and experience
- **Methods** - developing new methods in psychology
- **Implications** – questions and issues
Researcher standpoint

- My position as a deconstructionist psychologist
- Politicising research
- Importance of reflexivity
- Integration of work/life understanding
The situationists and psychogeography

- What is psychogeography?
- Who are the situationists?
- Situationist practices
Feminist geographers & psychologists

- Lack of research on feminist study of place in psychology and in psychogeography
- Documenting women’s experiences of places and tackling gendered inequalities
- Wording – flaneurs and flaneuse (Wolff, 1985)

• Dérive walking method
• Gendered subject positions, structural demands of work/life
• Difficulties in disrupting work/life patterns
• Head gear and ‘spoil yourself directives’
• ‘Academic’ dérive account
Group of Lesbian Feminists (2005)

- (Grup de Lesbianes Feministes) Spanish anti-capitalist lesbian and feminist collective
- Street interventions (i.e. Sapho) and political writing
- Against positioning of women as ‘consumer-market subjects’
- Social spaces as political spaces
- Useful theoretical and practical ideas
The Women’s Design Group and the Loiterers Resistance Movement

• Women’s Design Group (www.wds.org.uk/inde x.htm) and the Loiterers Resistance Movement

• Regeneration/built environments effecting women safety, street lighting, alleyways …
Mapping out feminist methods

- Theoretical basis and concepts
- Theory informs research
- Reflexivity and gendered subject position
- Politically based research
- Informed by the situationists and critical research/social activist groups
Example research questions and aims

‘How are experiences of social environments shaped by gendered subject positions?’

How do women experience places?

Are particular places gendered?

Do particular places enact certain types of gendered behaviours?

What would non-sexist environments look like?
• **Data methods**
• Individually or in a group
• Site specific or general disorientation
• Photography, diaries, stories, maps, dice, cards
• Referring to other research, i.e. Burnett et al (2004)
Conclusions

• What does walking change?
• Connections with art, activism and public concerns
• Importance of tackling gendered inequalities in everyday life