



WELL-BEING AND HEALTH OF PEOPLE AND PLACES

A coastal criminological exploration: Approaching urban industrial strain using visual sensory methods in Aberdeen

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Abstract: Criminology and sociology have more to offer one another in understanding urban life. Stories of urban crime appear in newspapers and across social media platforms, depicting the simplistic and sensationalist realities of complex urbanism and people's lives. However, criminologists and sociologists are encouraging qualitative insights into urbanism and the use of multi-sensory methods in research. This experimental pilot study explored the use of visual-sensory methods in a crime/ industrial/community location in Aberdeen City. The study uses data collected from a sensory group sea-sound-walk I participated in, with new information from an extension of the exploration through lone arts-based walking. Field notes, including descriptions, route maps, observations, interpretations, reflections, and photographs will provide empirical evidence and rich context. The interpretive and reflective analysis acknowledges my own experience of the urban environment.

Keywords: Criminology and Sociology, Aberdeen, Visual Sensory, Atmosphere, Urban, Port, Oil, Energy Transition



1 Introduction

Urbanisation is rising, and criminologists have recognised the need to examine the status of crime and justice in the current period of globalisation (Franko, 2017; 2019). Loader and Sparks (2013) commented that failures towards reducing and controlling crime in contemporary society are causing social anxiety in a divided and unequal world, with ideas on how to address this issue remaining subject to debate. Crime dominates the global media (Hayward, 2010), sensationalising representations of poor areas with high criminality, such as ganglands, ghettos, and bad neighbourhoods. Urban sociologists and criminologists are therefore encouraging insightful social science approaches to the understanding of crime, deviance, and urban life, taking into account the sensitivities and ever-changing complexities in this globalised era (Fraser and Matthews, 2019; Hollander, et al. 2018).

A new epistemology, 'Sensory Criminology,' was introduced in 2020, focusing on senses, the spaces of punishment, and social control, considering how sensory components of punishment manifest, how they are experienced, and what this could tell us about these places and practices (*Sensory Criminology*, 2020). Herrity, (2020; 2019) demonstrated how sound alters the experience of time in the context of prison space, noting the emotional impact the soundscape had on both staff and prisoners in maintaining daily order in the environment. Warr (2020) researched the sensory impacts of prison life for people serving long-term sentences, such as the power of touch through prisoner body searching, which built upon prisoners' perceptions and experiences from a space of punishment and indignity. March (2021) discussed how prisoner-writers replicate the speech and sounds of prison in their works, drawing on the intensification of noises such as bangs or violence as a regular chaotic battleground. Recent sensory criminology studies are focussed on prison and places of confinement, although the possibilities of expanding sensory criminology are open, particularly in relation to the work of Young (2014; 2019; 2020), who has shaped the understanding of urban environments, such as sensory 'affective' encounters from interdisciplinary work across law, criminology, art and sociology. Sociologists who have explored the city have provided us with embodied sensory indications of people's experiences in



contemporary life (see Simmel, 1903; Benjamin, 2002) and these studies show why criminology should consider the embodied, multisensory existence in spaces.

Criminologist Maggie O'Neill explored a multi-sensory approach to qualitative research over the past fifteen years, most notably arts-based walking research and ethno-biographical walks as a form of 'mobile criminology' (O'Neill, 2020; O'Neill and Roberts, 2019; O'Neill, 2014; O'Neill and Hubbard, 2010). O'Neill's reflections on these methodologies, and her research with undocumented women and asylum seekers in the urban environment, led to an enhanced understanding of social issues, witnessing the potential to change power dynamics between people, forming connections, and visually transforming the 'ways of seeing' (O'Neill et al., 2020). Given the enormity of urban sociology and the potential of sensory and mobile methods, a small number of embodied sensory urban criminology studies have been carried out in the UK. Neville and Sanders-McDonagh (2018) chose 'mobile methods', such as interviews conducted through walking, to conduct research into sex work, due to its criminalisation. The researchers walked with street-based sex workers in London, going to 'dirty places' where sex work was sold, e.g. bin sheds, with smells of decaying rubbish and urine/faeces in the background. The study highlighted the sensory reality of spaces where sex workers work as a result of criminalisation and marginalisation. Through this approach, the researchers were able to understand the problems in real time (Sanders-McDonagh and Neville, 2019). Similarly, another sex work study explored the role of the senses in shaping residential perceptions of brothels in Blackpool (Cooper, et al. 2018). The findings suggest that residents not only had mixed feelings on brothels, such as fascination and commiseration, but also developed sensory imaginative feelings based on the physical buildings and their architecture.

White and Sutton (1995) recommended that urban crime prevention should identify how space is linked to social divisions and power imbalances in society without side-lining social community relations. The risks of urban crime prevention strategies that serve to sweep away physical acts of crime could leave an incomplete nuanced picture in difficult environments, which could have detrimental effects to engaging with (and understanding) the experiences of the most vulnerable and marginalised (Hubbard and Lyon, 2018). This pilot study seeks to expand upon existing scholarship by offering



an experimental enquiry into a crime/industrial/community location in Aberdeen using arts-based methods, enhancing sensory understanding of the urban area.

The 1970s oil discovery in the North Sea revolutionised the UK as a source of energy security and has carved Aberdeen's economic, political, and cultural identity as the 'oil capital of Europe'. Torry, an area and community historically based around fishing and boat building within the city, sits beside the oil Port of Aberdeen, formerly known as Aberdeen Harbour (Energy Voice, 2022). It has taken the weight of industrial development for the city. When oil arrived in the 1970s, the houses of what was formally known as "Old Torry" from the fishing community was requisitioned for oil and gas infrastructure and now the new port development to support oil and gas and cruise liners to the city situated at Nigg Bay (Aberdeen Harbour, 2020). Torry is an area that suffers from economic, health-related and social inequality; it is identified as being one of the most deprived areas in the city of Aberdeen (Scottish Government, 2020; see Figure 1 below).



Figure 1. Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation showing Torry in red for 10-20% most deprived.



Concerning spatial crime control, the Port of Aberdeen's history is noteworthy for having accommodated a one-of-a-kind red light tolerance zone in Scotland since 2001 (McKeganey, 2006). The installation of the zone was aimed to improve the relationship between police and sex workers, while removing the fear of arrest for the parties involved (McKeganey, 2006). Despite a government consultation recommendation to adhere to a harm prevention approach for street-based workers (Scottish Executive, 2004), kerb-crawling was outlawed by the Prostitution (Public Places) (Scotland) Act in 2007 (Sanders, 2008), with the fallout resulting in city displacement (BBC, 2008), arrests, and no supplementary welfare provision (Scoular and O'Neill, 2007). A more recent urban order of street intolerance resulted in the enforcement of 'dispersal zones'¹ to curtail youth-related antisocial behaviour (BBC, 2019; *Press and Journal*, 2019). The zone encircled a large geographical proportion of the city centre, stretching down to the Port of Aberdeen, beside the main shopping centre on Market Street and towards Torry, where part of the exploration took place (see Figure 2). This was the first forceful measure to target youth street crime since antisocial 'boy racer' driving on Aberdeen's Beach Boulevard was addressed in 2005 (Lumsden, 2013), and youth street offending in Torry in 2011 (BBC, 2011).

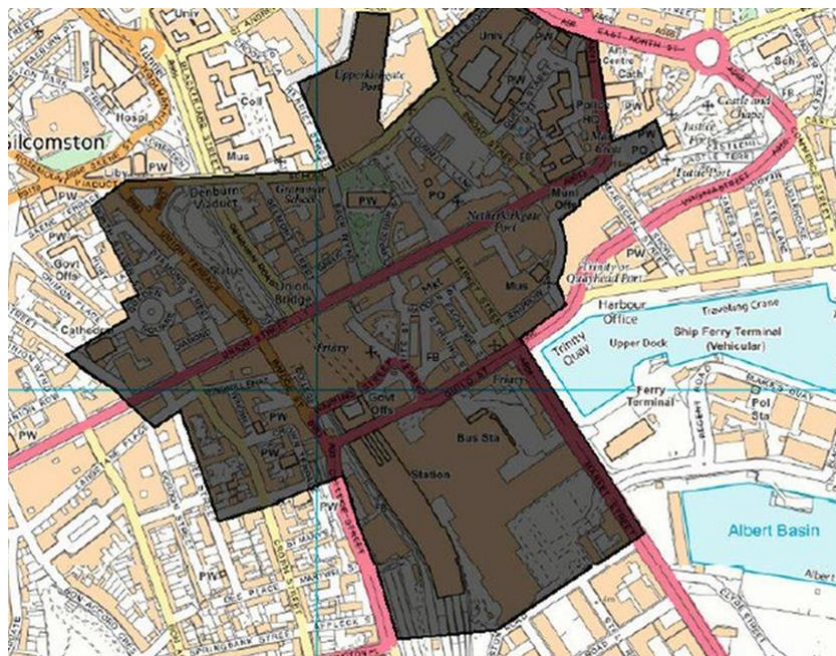


Figure 2. Police Scotland image of the dispersal zone in 2019

¹ A zone that gives police officers power to order groups of more than two people, suspected of antisocial behaviour, to leave the area. Those who ignore the order, or return to the area within 24 hours, can be arrested (Scottish Government, 2004)



The first walk, which involved participating in a group sea-sound walk for two hours, began at the south bank of the River Dee, passing Torry and one part of the port (see Figure 3). Pink and Morgan (2013) stress that, depending on the phenomenon under inquiry, short and planned experiences in the field can offer intense, rich developments in research practice, and the first sensory walk in which I participated encouraged early reflection and critical thinking on the data (Ewen, 2020; Grant and Osanloo, 2014). For the pilot study, I undertook a second walk, in the morning and afternoon (0900-1100am and 1400-1700pm), followed by several weeks of exploration to complete a sensory experience of the surrounding Aberdeen port on my own, and explored a different route to determine the starting point of a nuanced and complex interpretation of the location. This route took me through the outskirts of Torry and towards the Energy Transition Zone to expand the interrelated landscape and interpretation (see Figure 4).

I developed the following research questions to explore again how visual–sensory methods shape the interpretations and experiences of the urban industrial landscape, in a situated spatial exploration of Aberdeen City:

1. In what ways does engagement with visual–sensory methods create an understanding of the social and cultural context of a location in Aberdeen City?
2. What, if any, are the visual–sensory findings from walking in the spatial location?
3. How does the use of visual–sensory methods influence the perceptions of the urban environment experienced by an individual as a nascent social science researcher?

2 Methods

The COVID-19 pandemic prevented me from organising a group walk. Therefore, the pilot was not able to draw fully on the principles of arts-based walking. I also acknowledge that people experience senses differently; however, the intention is to be part of the sensory understanding by sharing my interpretations as a researcher and a resident of Aberdeen, and to identify what these methods can offer in understanding the coastal urban environment. Inspired by the work of Sarah Pink, I adopted a deeply reflective and subjective position to include my emotions as a researcher in the sensory



experience. Considering positionality is crucial in qualitative research (Hopkins, 2007) and, reading into sensory interpretation, my field notes confirmed that my embodied personal accounts in the field would be hard to isolate given the nature of sensing (Pink, 2008; 2009; 2015). Not only does this reflect on the landscape, but it also encouraged deeper analysis of the data to answer the research question (Pink: 2015; Sword, 1999).

Through a qualitative method of gathering visual–sensory data, O’Neill and Hubbard (2010), via their concept of ‘ethno-mimesis’, helped to shape research methods through a combination of field notes and the use of visual art to represent the experience. Due to the complexity of the location, I used photography to support the contextual understanding, which supported theme development from the images (Banks, 2007). The concept of ‘a criminology of atmospheres’, proposing experimental and sensory dimensions beyond the street level (Fraser and Matthews, 2019), encouraged me to use all of my senses in the setting. Spot theory, developed by Ferrell and Weide (2010), aided the recognition of the urban street art that I captured as a sub-cultural practice and visual phenomenon that cannot be examined away from the context in which it has been found. Lastly, I drew on ‘Hope’s Work’ by Back (2020) to maintain a positive stance in developing the beginnings of scholarly research, not to ignore social challenges observed, but rather to seek out fragments of ‘hope’ as an array of open-ended future possibilities.

The data analysis framework consisted of revisiting, revising, and interpreting structured and colour-coded field notes and photographs—inscriptions, descriptions and reflections. I chose not to use software in order to enhance my knowledge, understanding and relationship with the data through my writings and to practice developing comprehensive notes suitable for analysis (Walford, 2009). I was interested in what visual–sensory methods told me about the spatial area. From interpreting the data, similar sensory aspects and reflections came up again as I was walking, listening, smelling and seeing—all of which acted as means of illustrating the contextual sensory-scape. From this, section 4 begins by prioritising the ‘seeing’ of visual themed presentations of the route maps, photographs. As Copes (2020) upholds, criminology has shied away from the power of the visual presented in scholarly research, noting the missed ability of readers to have a sensory feel of the data. This is followed by a written



discussion split into two attendant subcategories: 1) seeing, hearing and smelling industry and localised strain; 2) a sense of guilt in place: limits, reflexivity and future research.

3 Data

Sensory Walk 1



Figure 3. Sensory walk map 1 showing the inner-city position of the Port of Aberdeen.

(continued overleaf)



Sensory Walk 2

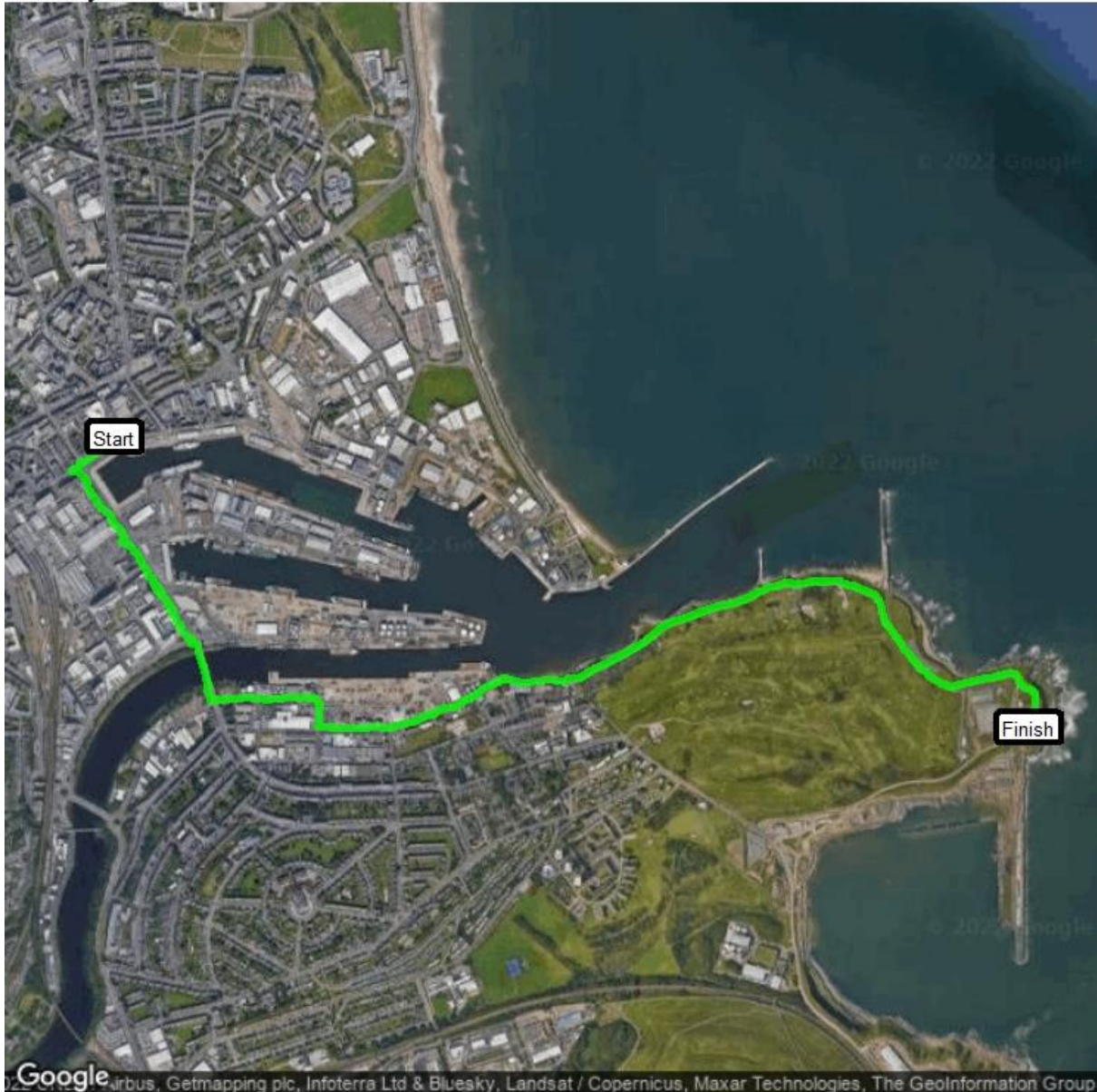


Figure 4. Sensory walk map 2 of the interrelated landscape.

(continued overleaf)

3.1 Visual theme 1 – Humour but hazardous industries



(continued overleaf)



3.2 Visual theme 2 – The trail of ‘hope’ towards Torry



(continued overleaf)



3.3 Visual theme 3 – Love is ALL around



(continued overleaf)



3.4 Visual theme 4 – The yeses have it!





3.5 Visual theme 5 – The sun still shines on fishes: community strength



(continued overleaf)



3.6 Visual theme 6 – Energy transition developments: the unknowable future





4 Discussion and conclusion

4.1 Seeing, hearing, and smelling industry and localised strain

Both walks gave me a sensory stimulus of the recognisable and inescapable presence of local industry in Aberdeen City. The Port of Aberdeen, which I walked into for my first group sensory experience, can be appreciated for its inner-city location and accessibility. However, the spatial environment is challenging due to the constant flow of traffic, loud noises from construction, shrieking seagulls, and the crowd of people crossing small walkways to access offices, flats and housing, mainly leading into Torry. It was noticeable from my fieldnotes that I was hit with this reality (again) in what I considered to be a “familiar environment” as a long-term resident in Aberdeen. However, the difference was that I was fully embracing the sensory experience, rather than rushing through the port area and avoiding it. I remembered Simmel’s (1903) words on the struggle between the individual and the social forces in modern culture; the appeal of being in a big city but trying to resist being swallowed up by it. I was first an explorer in a group walk and then a researcher, confronting and understanding the urban/industrial environment by taking an atmospheric and embodied approach:

Loud and dominant. Seagulls, traffic, construction (banging, drilling, constant shrieking from the gulls) at the harbour, smoky smells and the pong of fish lingering – as if they are all competing harshly to be noticed in the space. No wonder people move so quickly (Fieldnote: sensory group walk 1).

North Sea Oil and Gas is felt not just in the physical form of towering oil tanks and office buildings, but also in local livelihoods, from the predicted fortune of economic prosperity in mass employment and wealth. It has also been felt at the localised level throughout a history of oil price volatility, and social and environmental decline brought about by oil, signifying another damning aspect of Aberdeen’s embedded identity as the ‘Oil Capital of Europe’ (Cumbers and Martin, 2008; BBC, 2016; 2020).

As an illustration of the effect of the visual–sensory, upon entering the Port of Aberdeen, I noticed a close grouping of stickers. I stopped to examine them, although admittedly I would not have done this previously, as I would have been trying to avoid the area. The first group walk encouraged me to pay attention to aspects of the



environment that may have gone unnoticed before. I watched how others stopped to look at small stickers and graffiti, wondering why they were joining together, observing the curiosity unfold whilst I was walking (O'Neill and Roberts, 2019). It was impossible not to catch sight of the stickers; they were colourful, bold and appeared to be industry related. Visual theme 1 not only attests to the industry theme, but also the impression of harm and humour. The hazardous smiley and sea-related skull with crossed swords gave me a sense of concern, danger, and empathy. Were these stickers trying to convey the realities of oil and fishing? As I wrote in my fieldnotes:

The smiley is fun in the wide smile; however, one eye is telling a different story from the toxic waste dripping down. Are we just trying to carry on living our lives, smiling despite everything? The symbol containing the skull and crossed swords and sea-patterned anchor feels as though it is related to the harm of fishing, and perhaps the realities of harsh conditions out at sea. Is the sticker captioned "honkonია" and the captain trying to add humour, conveying the surrounding noises and smells of the North Sea? (Ewen, 2020; Fieldnote: sensory walk 1).

The stickers are of symbolic relevance to the urban and port industrialised location. This is an example of Spot theory (Ferrell and Weide, 2010), which focuses on the situation, context, and beyond the abstract, in which street art is discovered. The cultural dynamics of instability and the precarity of local industry represented through the stickers provide me with a critical, imaginative and criminological view on industry-related harm, with a slice of humour for good measure, perhaps to make light of it, which I felt profoundly.

During the extended period of walking as part of sensory walk 2, on route to the energy transition zone from the port, I noticed a proliferation of stickers and graffiti on urban street signs and bins on Market Street, beside Aberdeen's major shopping mall, Union Square, which was part of the outer edge of the 2019 youth anti-social behaviour dispersal zone (*Press and Journal*, 2019; see Figure 3 for Market Street outline on the left side). Although it is not possible to discuss all of the stickers and graffiti works, after thorough study it was clear that the majority of them gave a visual-sensory aesthetic of reassurance, hopelessness with hope, politics (Scottish independence), and love, as if the street were an urban path that may go unnoticed amidst the zooming noises of



traffic, the hustle and bustle of people, and the sensory presence of the port. These themes were the most common visual findings in both sensory walks (Visual themes 2, 3 and 4). Visual theme 2 not only displays the recurring stickers on Market Street, but also distinctly hit me with emotions, especially sadness, although I was glad to see its statement. The person appears to be suffering – they have no feet to walk, and they wear unkempt clothes, but they hold a sign with the message ‘there is always hope’.

Does this sticker attach itself to the social reality of urban strain, leading into a deprived area of Aberdeen on purpose? Is this a sign of alienation in the urban/industrial environment? Did youth hanging around place these stickers here? The piece sits amongst ‘Yes’ stickers. Does the person hope for profound change in Aberdeen? (Fieldnote: sensory walk 2).

Reading back on my fieldnotes and looking at the images in the analysis confirmed that the visual–sensory enhanced my embodied connection to the urban street and beyond (Fraser and Matthews, 2019; Pink, 2008; 2015) in the reality of Aberdeen’s social and political climate of deprivation, the uncertainty of our future brought about by Scottish independence and insecurity of oil, the cheer of love-hearts all around signalling warmth in places amongst the challenges and reflecting on the young people who would hang out here. This is what Back (2020) described in his paper ‘Hope’s Work’; to build upon these instances or signs of hope is seen as a gift which is capable of holding people together whilst injustice continues; otherwise, harm prevails without recourse. Back (2020) suggested that if attention is paid to the social world, even in times of struggle, incidences of the ‘extraordinary’ can be documented as knowledge creation and to comfort our pains.

The path leading to the outskirts of Torry demonstrates Aberdeen’s uneven urban and community developments as a form of geographical inequality. Torry embodies long-standing stigma due to its social deprivation, and on approaching and entering the area, then walking over the Victoria Bridge which connects the community to Aberdeen, I felt the inequality. I saw struggling shops, a couple with boarded-up windows, abandoned spaces sitting on the outskirts, accompanied by rusty equipment, litter, and half signs displayed over high industrial fences; I also observed the working activities of small fishing businesses – those that remain open and are surviving. I reflected on the



stigmatising local attitudes that Torry has been represented by, some of which have involved hearing people describe the community as a “shithole” and a place full of “junkies”. As I walked past the few surviving fish factories, the stench of fish was unpleasant; it was overbearing and led me to consider what it would be like to live with difficult odours around, e.g., do these harsh smells prevent people from engaging with the environment? Walking through the miasma, I took in the physical and non-physical smells of decline and spaces of neglect, but the attuned atmospheric senses (Fraser and Matthews, 2019) allowed me to catch a rare glimpse of what I felt was representative of Torry’s community. Visual theme 5 portrays dark and light without hiding either, helped by the sun and contrasting shadows:

This mural on the fish factory is giving me the perception of the Torry community – keeping above the dark during social challenges. The sun is shining onto the fish, as if in this moment they have been given the necessary attention. Vulnerability exists, but strength has survived, prevented from falling entirely into dark shadows beneath and into neglect. The fish depict a sense of closeness and resilience in movement. Perhaps this is showing me why Torry’s history should not be cleared away and that unfinished business remains (Fieldnote: sensory walk 2).

Importantly, Torry has unfinished business in the development of the energy transition in Aberdeen. In the context of the global ecological breakdown, there has been a rapid creation of renewable energy projects to reach net zero emissions and thus slow climate change and decrease environmental degradation (Paterson, 2020). Locally, the city and the wider region are rapidly rebranding themselves, transitioning from the ‘Oil Capital of Europe’ to an ‘Energy City’ to achieve a ‘Net Zero’ vision. This includes reducing carbon emissions and becoming a climate-positive city that exclusively focuses on technology-driven solutions (BP, 2020). The above can be seen in the proposed development of an ‘Energy Transition Zone’ in Aberdeen. The partnership between the Port of Aberdeen, Opportunity Northeast (ONE), and the city council, proposes the use of St Fittick’s Park, one of Torry’s last green spaces, for industrial development, which has caused frustration with residents who do not want to sacrifice the space (Press and Journal, 2020). St Fittick’s Park is situated on the coast; it hosts a skatepark, playpark, wetlands, a forest, ponds and migratory bird species (Friends of



Saint Fittick's Park, 2020). Access to the valued green space supports the physical and emotional well-being of those who live around it (see Visual theme 6, picture 1). Directly opposite the park is the 350-million-pound Aberdeen port expansion project that will host large vessels from a range of industries, including cruises, to arrest the impact of the oil industry's decline (Press and Journal, 2020; Visual theme 6, picture 2). The experiences of visiting both sites allowed me to reflect on their nature by listening to the sea, the crashing sounds of construction machines in the background, and looking at the greenspace:

The sea usually provides a calming effect, but the construction noises are making it unsettled, as if it has no choice, just as if the residents have no option but to hear and live amongst these developments. Other people here are watching the port's expansion progress. There is a professional-looking photographer with an impressive-looking camera, but do any of us really understand what it would be like to live beside these developments? (Fieldnote: sensory walk 2).

St Fittick's Park looks as though it has been taken over. I stare at the houses and flats behind and wonder how it must feel to be someone who looks out on this development, wanting to preserve this space. The green space is now in a fragile state (Fieldnote: sensory walk 2).

4.2 A sense of guilt in place: limits, reflectivity, and future research

Illuminating the senses by thinking about sounds, smells, and sights – how the mind, body and environment operate dynamically – presents a new way of understanding crime, social justice, and state power (Herrity et al., 2021). The visual-sensory in this experimental pilot was aided by biographical knowledge and experience of place, as well as of art and of walking (O'Neill and Hubbard, 2010). The conceptualisation “a criminology of atmospheres” (Fraser and Matthews, 2019), allowed for me to embrace the layered sensory textures as an overlapping interaction of coastal, urban and industrial strain from deprivation, disappearing wealth and decimation of the natural landscape. A map was carved out of the historically seedy, ‘criminal’ nuisance streets, with the foot marks of the banished. The traffic's zooms and gulls' shrieks of business as usual, in plainly distressed areas, almost tasting the



odorous blend of pollutants and surviving fish houses, the speedy physical and construction noises of oil industry and energy transition suggesting dominance and an unknown future. Becoming re-engaged with the environment from group walking (O'Neill, 2020; O'Neill and Roberts, 2019), discovering the aesthetics of the small but insightful visual art and messages on the urban streets, relating to the familiar precarity of local industry (Ferrell and Weide (2010), became a larger transformative spatial sense-making. Guided by an appetite to pay better attention (Ewen, 2020), I also felt the symbolising of political voice, and the solace of love and resistance, as a sign of hope (Back, 2020). The visual–sensory can offer a detailed interpretation beyond the backdrop of Aberdeen's reputational grey scape of granite, the omnipresence of oil, and social inequalities.

In terms of my sensory walks, whilst I had more time to embrace the sensory experience on the second exploration, the findings indicate that collaborative arts-based walking can be a transformative experience when shared. Had it not been for the advertisement of the first sensory walk event, and watching to understand why others had observed the way that they had, I would not have re-engaged with the spatial area a second time, or in the same way. The second walk brought about limitations in non-collaborative knowledge-sharing and learning. For this reason, reflectivity on the visual–sensory is important when it comes to determining the sensory aspect in conducting research (with myself as the researcher), which Guillemin and Gilliam (2004) suggested should not be side-lined to primarily discuss ethics. Dean (2017) recommended a type of embodied reflectivity that takes into consideration the humanity of the researcher, our characteristic traits, and our positionality in research, for the sake of greater authenticity and reality. The whole sensory experience in this pilot was as if I was getting up close and personal with the environment in my home city; it evoked a sense of guilt that I was not fully engaging with my surroundings even though I believed, to some extent, that I was.

The guilt from reflection also came because of not living directly in the location, yet I was there creating my own knowing of what I was experiencing. However, as Pink (2015; 2009) proposed, the sensory is beyond data interpretation, but it can help us to critically reflect on what the experience can tell us about the potential of research practice. An



important direction for future research should be to disrupt the power imbalance between the researcher and the people living in or around an area; an example in this regard is Torry, which is designing an interdisciplinary grassroots collaboration using the arts and participatory action research with multi-sensory elements to understand the impact of energy transition development on a community and their vision for the future. In other words, future research should mobilise and share insights – rather than being limited to my own perspective – by harnessing the potential of multi-sensory arts-based practices in social research. This would be timely and important, to determine whether Aberdeen and the northeast of Scotland region is ‘sensing’ a ‘just transition’ – the new industrial energy strategy in delivering a greener net-zero economy that tackles inequality and injustice (Scottish Government, 2021).

To conclude, this research pilot, experimental in its approach, has richly revealed how engagement through walking using visual–sensory methods can go further and beyond written text in creating an embodied sensory understanding of the social and cultural context of urban spaces – one that reveals the atmospheric embodied experience of urban, industrial and localised strain within Aberdeen City centre through smelling, hearing and seeing.

5 Ethics

The research methodology underwent a full ethical evaluation by Aberdeen University in which approval was granted. Social distancing norms due to COVID-19 were abided by. Adequate care was taken when taking photographs to avoid people from the location.

(continued overleaf)



6 Acknowledgments

I owe this short paper to those people in Aberdeen who are responsible for our street art and the visuals featured within this piece, all of whom have made it possible for me to start expanding my criminological and sociological imagination thanks to their creativity in our home town. I hope that paying closer attention to ‘unlikely places’ will mean that those unknowns will feel acknowledged and less alienated (Ewen, 2020). With the utmost thanks to artist and researcher Maja Zeco, who organised the sea-sound group walk supported by the North-East creative arts programme, ‘Look Again Aberdeen’. A friend who helped me to improve my visual sensory walk maps, Richard Kjellgren, PhD student at Stirling University, I look forward to you visiting me so we can explore together. I would like to give a fresh acknowledgement to those women who worked in Aberdeen’s sex industry tolerance zone in the port area (where part of this exploration takes place), an area that has long been treated as “seedy”. I witnessed your banishment and inner-city harassment due to the fallout from the scrapping of the tolerance zone in 2007—this is for all of you. I hope that this modest contribution will begin to improve what has been a lesser engagement in criminology and sociology in Northeast Scotland.

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