YOU CAN’T GO WRONG
The Added Value of Walking as a Tool of Qualitative Research in Urban Ethnography and Planning
Scenario: planners getting to know their project environment ...

on site

focus on how the infrastructure works … but where are the users?
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virtual visits....

google maps

bing maps
'Armchair anthropologist' – conducting field work

back in the days ...
Walking ethnologist – conducting field work

nowadays ...

Ulla Thamm
You Can’t Go Wrong
Chicago school of sociology – Robert Ezra Park

“I suspect that I have actually covered more ground, tramping about in cities in different parts of the world, than any other living man”

R.E. Park
Ethnographic field research – user manual

• Participant observation:
  o participating, walking with and into a cultural context
    ‘walking in someone else’s shoes’
  o observing the role of culture within the target group or within the space
  o learning from insiders but remaining an outsider

• Writing about your observations, placing them in a larger context

Why walking ethnography today? … And how can it be used for planning?
What are the benefits for urban planning?

- **Basic, prior research, getting a better understanding for your planning field**

- **Evaluation tool.** Finding out what has worked well or what is not working and assisting in finding problems and solutions.
Berlin Tempelhof, abandoned airport

„Green lung“ of Berlin
Berlin Tempelhof, abandoned airport

Abandoned runway – now used for cycling, roller skating, picnics, playground ...
So why not relate such findings to improvements for public spaces and walking possibilities in cities?

… and bring the users, their behaviour in space in context with planning processes.
Walk21 Vienna 2015 – Stepping ahead

20 – 23 October
City Hall, Vienna

Conference themes:
• Walking towards new public spaces
• Walking towards resilient cities
• Walking towards safety and health
• Walking together

Call for Abstracts open: 24 November 2014 – 30 January 2015

www.walk21vienna.com
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Sources


Stephanie Taylor: *Ethnographic Research. A Reader* (Open University, 2002).


Theorists of sociology: http://www.dmacc.edu/instructors/gdtitchener/welcome_files/theorists.htm
