

“How do you feel about (doing) drugs in the city?”

Emotional Mapping

Methodological Guidelines

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Aim of the method

Emotional mapping is a method for individual interviews about everyday life in the city, consumption practices (as consumer or not), and emotions related to places. It involves the drawing of a subjective “map” of everyday places and their coloring with emotions.

After several interviews with a relative homogeneous group, such as people living in the same city or neighborhood, you are invited to make collage of citations from the maps and text. This juxtaposition of diverse places and emotions and themes will show the diversity of the lived spaces in this city. This method allows to represent urban space from the perspective of particular, discriminated or marginalized persons.

Method suited for

Since this method involves discussion about private and sensitive matters and the risk of symbolic violence high, it is highly recommended only for experts with social sciences background who already have experience in sensitive interviewing.

Bibliography

Germes Mélina, Klaus Luise (2021): “When Marginalized Subjects Map Their City: Counter-Mapping Planning Experiments with Drug Users in some German and French Neighborhoods”, Bulletin for Methodological Sociology.

DRUSEC Project: <https://drusec.hypotheses.org/1014>.

Themes

Party; Open Scenes; Discriminations; Mobilities; Public and private spaces; Gender; Emotions

What do you need

People: One or two investigators with complementary skills.

1st phase, individual emo-mapping interviews:

- A3 white paper, color pencils (black, yellow, orange, red, purple, blue, green), the printed attached documents, your notes.
- Recruit and appointments with interviewees. Duration ca 1 hour, in a quiet place.

	<p>2nd phase, collage of a synthesis map:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Huge grey paper, black big pencil, glue and scissors - Duration: one whole day <p>Budget: for prints, material, scans and defraying participants for their time.</p> <p>Place: a safe close place to make interviews (e.g. a closed room in a drug help facility)</p>
Requirements	<p>Regarding the interview, skills and experience in sensitive interviewing, knowledge about personal data and full anonymization are required.</p> <p>Regarding the collage, experience in spatial, geographical methods and crafts is a great help.</p>
Links	Collection in the Archive; Oral history interview; Participative cartography
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A contribution to urban research on everyday lives, emotions and structural exclusions of drug users

Emotional Mapping and Collage allow to make a jump from individual tales of everyday experiences and the representation of the city – places, institutions, structural in/exclusions processes being highlighted by a focus on emotions.

The synthesis map from all individual experiences contributes to an alternative cartography of the city, rooted in critical cartography and counter-mapping research and activists' traditions. Instead of quantitative objectifying maps of “drugs in the city” with criminal statistics or syringe founds, it present pictures of the lived spaces of the city.

It allows to turn and twist the too classical and class-question of the “public spaces” (threatened by drug use in public) into a question of the accessibility to spaces of privacy, to homes, to (health)care and the right to safety for drug users.

Strengths of this research practice

Strength of the interview method:

- Giving participants a voice on their everyday spaces and lives.
- Emotions of drug users are an original approach to understand the social context, resources and difficulties of each person.
- Mapping process involving colors is also a fun way to mediate between interviewer and interviewee. The participant owns pencils and paper and gains some more control on the interviewing process.
- The result offers a situated perspective on the city, including the complexity of contradictions between positive and negative emotions “at the same place”.

Strength of the visualization method as collage:

- Instead of portraying individuals and giving lots of information about them, the collage is a synthesis, showing commonality and differences among a homogenous group of interviewees.
- Collage is easy to read and an almost unmediated representation of the voices of the interviewees – verbally as well as visually expressed.

Limits of this research practice

- As in any research interaction, there remains still the risk of symbolic violence. The ethics are very important and sometimes tricky – that’s why experience is needed.
- The individual emotional maps should not be fetishized as a result of research. They are only a step in the process. Neither the emotions, nor the mapping are intrinsic expression of an individuality. They are highly contingent.
- Not everybody likes to draw. Some people won’t draw anything. Others will make lists or itineraries. Sometimes someone will refuse to draw something. That’s why the transcript of the interview and the map are not to be separated.

Getting Ready

Steps

- Get familiar with the Guidelines of the interview and give it a first try with a friend.
- Questions and the four parts don’t have to be asked in this order: follow the spontaneous rhythm of the discussion.
- Choose the city or neighborhood of your case study.

Ethics

- Choose the practices that interest you: (illegal) drugs and/or alcohol; party, festival, everyday life...
- Choose the social groups you want to focus on, in terms of demographics, discriminations
- Prepare the material (cf. p1 and Annex)
- Gather flyer with information about drug/alcohol help and hotlines, in case of need
- Make appointments with some people (between 5 and 10) in a quiet place.

Data Protection

- Train to ask short questions:
 - “would you like to tell me how?” - questions
 - open questions instead of yes-no questions
 - avoid “do you do A or B” questions
 - avoid suggestive questions “don’t you do this?”
 - avoid questions about you “I need to know what...”
- Think about what information or data you need to give about yourself – don’t give too much. Avoid interviews at your or their home
- Register their contact data separately and only under an ad-hoc pseudonym.
- You (your institution) are responsible for the data protection during the whole process. We strongly recommend the interview being anonymous from the beginning. Avoid taking notes or transcribing any too personal information that could lead to identification. Destruct any record as soon as possible.

In Action/1: the individual emotional mapping interview

Steps

- Present yourself, the context of your study, give data protection information.
- Gather the material you need, for your own notes.
- Give priority to the discussion over the guidelines and in the same time make sure all topics have been dealt with

At the end of the interview

Ask the person how they are. If needed, offer the support you gathered (flyer, hotline).

- ☐ Repeat data protection information and thank them.

Ethics

- ☐ Before starting the interviews, give information about the rights not to answer, to leave and to cancel the interview (cf. Annex)
- ☐ The semi-directed interview is not a questionnaire, it should be an interesting consensual conversation. No need to ask questions in the “right order”.
- ☐ Give time to answer, time to remain silent. Don’t interrupt.

Data Protection

- ☐ If you choose to record the interview, you are responsible for data protection.

In Action/2: Collage map

Steps

- ☐ Identify the main, relevant themes and the main places cited in the interview (notes and map)
- ☐ Cut citations: sentences from your notes (typed) and little pictures cut off from the maps
- ☐ Organize the citations by themes and/or places, and paste them on a grey paper: we call them “theme islands”
- ☐ On a big sheet of paper standing for the whole city, place the islands in a meaningful way. Often, we choose a mix of geographical orientation and thematical poles.
- ☐ Leave place to add a title, the pseudo of the interview partners, your name(s) or pseudo, time and place of your work.

Ethics

- ☐ Don’t over-interpretate: don’t make the map “say” things that interviewee didn’t mean.

Data Protection

- ☐ Remove personal information (s. anonymization) from the text or map citations.

Prepare the donation of your files

Finalize the file

At the end of the process, you have a big collage from the citations from interviews and pictures. Our advice is to scan the whole “city map” Collage and also separate scans of the theme islands, so that people can “zoom in” easily. Feel free to write a comment about the process, the context or the results. Upload all file pictures as parts of the same archive item.

Anonymise the file

For the safety of everyone, it’s vital that your file remains anonymous. Some tips:

- Don’t include any personal information (names, pseudonyms, phone number, email, date of birth, etc.). Why not use a false name, just for this document?
- Instead of specifics (place of work, family members, medical conditions...), keep it vague and use general terms.
- Instead of addresses, talk about neighbourhoods and cities.
- Make sure no one is identifiable in the photos – which is boosting creativity!

Upload your files

<https://narcotic-archive.org/s/archive/page/contribute>

Following: Attached documents

- ☐ Semi-structured interview guide.
- ☐ Emotion Legend

Emotional Mapping Interview

Semi-structured interview guide.

Part 1 – Your lived space

The aim is to have the person talk about places that feature in their day-to-day life – both the places frequented as part of daily routine and those visited less often, but important; and step by step draw them in black on the white page: this drawing is the map.

- Living spaces and everyday life: *Where do you live? Where do you carry out your daily activities?*
- Getting around: *How do you get around?*
- Over the course of the interview, the individual is asked to draw these places in black on a piece of white paper, producing a rough map.
- Drawing the map: *Could you draw this place on the map (name, symbol, line?)*

Part 2 – Drugs and you (drug use, witnessing drug use).

Once the ice has been broken, we move on to drug-related practices (as consumer or spectator). Have the individual tell of **significant experiences and anecdotes** occurring in specific places. The places where these experiences happened are particularly important. The places mentioned are drawn and added into the mental map as the interview goes on.

- Consumption spaces in general: *Which consumption spaces do you frequent? (Where are your party spots?)*
- Your consumption spaces: *Where do you use (drugs, alcohol, etc.)?*
- Consumption (and party) routines: *What do you use? Where do you get it?*
- Interactions with prevention and risk reduction: *How do you ask for help with prevention/risk reduction?*

Part 3 – Your emotions in relation to places related to drug use. Begin by showing and explaining the emotions legend. Next, ask the individual if they can attribute one or several emotions – positive or negative, more or less intense – to each drug-related space.

- Avoidance: *Where do you never go, or go as little as possible?*

Part 4 – Your needs. This part concludes the interview by asking to identify their needs in terms of public actions – e.g. housing, health, risk reduction, safety, mobility, etc. They can mark their own suggestions on the map (with a black star, for example).

What might suit your needs (and be useful to everyone)?

Emotions Legend

