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Publisher citation:

OpenAIR citation:

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Going with the flow: Shadowing in Organisations

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Introduction

In 1997 I undertook my first shadowing in an organisation. I had already been researching the organisation with a team of colleagues for more than a year. Despite the fact that I had already spent many long weeks in the organisation, travelling to all their sites in the UK, interviewing over 100 individuals, observing hours and hours of meetings and taking part in project feedback sessions to middle and senior management, nothing prepared me for the shadowing data. It is well documented that shadowing is a physically and mentally exhausting process (see for example Gill, Barbour & Dean, 2014; Urban & Quinlan, 2014) and at first I thought it was this, and the richness of the torrent of data that was unleashed that was what made the experience so different. However as the weeks passed I began to realise that I was 'seeing' the organisation in a new way. That the data I was collecting were somehow different than the data I had collected before. This shed new light for me on the limitations of other methods and started a process of trying to articulate these subtle and slippery differences to myself and to others.

I began by ransacking the literature. When I couldn't find what I was looking for to explain my new insights to myself in the research methods literature, I started to look in wider and wider circles, including more and more disciplines. In Education (Wolcott, 1973; Polite, McClure & Rollie, 1997; Roan & Rooney, 2006; Earley & Bubb, 2013) and in Nursing studies (Vukic & Keddy, 2002; Fransden, 2010; Johansen & Forberg, 2011) I found glimpses of similarity with what I had done, but their natural acceptance that shadowing was a legitimate approach and descriptions of shadowing didn't help me, beyond reassuring me that shadowing was being conducted elsewhere. This extended review process also helped me to see that what I called shadowing was actually called different things in different literatures and that what other people called shadowing often wasn't the same as what I had done at all. I found a raft of studies where, like me, researchers had followed organisational actors around over the course of their working days, but noticed that sometimes their methodological focus was on the co-constructed narratives developed between researcher and organisational actor (see for example Dewilde and Creese's (2016) discursive shadowing), and sometimes on the perspective created by the movement itself (see for example Evans and Jones' (2011) walking interviews). I found shadowing studies where the focus of the researcher was not on actors at all. Some have taken physical objects as the focus for their shadowing. Bruni (2005), for example, shadows patient records as they move physically through a hospital as well as through the hands of many organisational actors and are subject to, and simultaneously produced by, its organising processes. Other studies shadow less tangible objects, such as organisational policies. Gehman et al's (2013) study of how honour codes develop within organisations included "shadowing the honor code in action" (p88) in a department of a large public university as one of their data collection strategies. I began to understand shadowing as a family of following methods, rather than a single data collection technique.

I found that shadowing in organisations had a long and distinguished history in my own discipline, going back to Mintzberg (1973) who collected both qualitative and

quantitative data while following managers around. The qualitative element of this work had been somewhat forgotten, whilst the quantitative element became structured observation (Mintzberg, 1970). The qualitative work emerges later in the work of Barbara Czarniawska (2007) who took her inspiration from a more European tradition of organisational behaviour research (Sclavi, 2007). Czarniawska's work focuses on the need for new data collection techniques to keep up with the accelerated pace and new forms of organising and sees shadowing as part of that arsenal of approaches that are becoming more necessary.

The rise of shadowing may also be due in part to changes in the academy. The twin pressures of reduced research funding and the increased publication rates necessary for both institutions and individuals to survive in the academic marketplace have made some of the traditional techniques of sociology and anthropology less attractive. There is neither the time (in terms of either diaries or careers) nor the funding available for researchers to undertake long term, open ended ethnographic study of organisations (Couldry, 2003; Kostera 2007; Cooren, et al, 2008). Shadowing supplies a way of evidencing some of the research questions associated with an ethnographic view of the organisation in a more focused, faster paced way and this may be one reason for interest in these approaches growing in recent years.

When I started gathering literature on shadowing as a research method and reviewing studies that had used shadowing approaches, I thought that it was an uncommon technique. Through my reading, and through the community of shadowers I have come to know over the intervening years I realise that I was quite wrong. There is evidence of shadowing approaches to data collection across the social sciences. However, perhaps because the precise nature of the difference between these approaches and their better known sister techniques is so hard to articulate, what *is* lacking is a literature to explain them in detail and examine them critically (Bartkowiak-Theron & Sappey, 2012; Quinlan, 2008). What follows then is not a description of how to shadow (see Czarniawska, 2007 instead) or a catalogue of the different types of shadowing, and their purposes (McDonald, 2005; Meunier & Vasquez, 2008). In this chapter I will set out some of the methodological and epistemological characteristics of shadowing and the extent to which these are shared by and distinct from other qualitative data collection techniques. I do this with the aim of demonstrating ways in which shadowing approaches can contribute to both specific debates within, and the general development of, organisation studies.

The data gathered by shadowing techniques are in many ways very similar to those that can be surfaced through other qualitative research methods in terms of the physical form they take, the data streams they access and the methods that can be used to analyse them. For an example of shadowing data and a discussion of how they differ in form from data gathered by other common data collection techniques see McDonald & Simpson (2014). Shadowing data contain observational data about the setting and norms within an organisation, in much the same way that an observation study would. They include the opinions and beliefs of the individuals within the organisation, just as a study based on a series of interviews would. They also incorporate a stream of researcher reactions to the unfolding organisational action that would be easily recognised by any participant observer. However in shadowing, these data streams are both distinct and concurrent. As these data are elicited all at once, they have different (inter)relationships to each other than the same data elicited through three separate studies would have. At the very least shadowing records two

points of view that are simultaneously moving through organisational time and space. Bartkowiak-Theron & Sappey (2012) suggest that shadowing is in itself a multiple method. This is an interesting proposition with implications for various forms of triangulation.

These similarities with other data collection techniques and the data they produce can make it hard to conceptualise the subtle differences and therefore articulate the unique contribution that shadowing approaches can make. In the sections that follow I will focus discussion on some of the salient characteristics of shadowing in order to form a picture of how shadowing approaches and shadowing data are similar to, but also how they are different from, other research methods. In particular I will consider:

- voice and perspective;
- relationship with the research context and the organisational actor;
- movement and real time; and
- interruption of organisation.

I will both draw on organisational theories and suggest ways in which different kinds of organisational inquiry can be facilitated through shadowing approaches.

I will conclude that shadowing approaches are not entirely distinct from other techniques used to collect data in organisations. They share a range of characteristics at the level of practice, methodology and epistemology with other qualitative organisational research methods. However what makes shadowing approaches different is the unique way in which those characteristics are combined. These fresh combinations of methodological attributes allow an active, explicit, reflexive and dynamic co-production of situated organisational knowledge by the shadower and the organisational actor she follows.

Voice & Perspective: A theory of narratology

One of the aspects of the data gathered through shadowing that feels different from other qualitative approaches is the relationship between the voice of the researcher and the voice of the organisational actor. If shadowing is essentially two points of view simultaneously moving through organisational time and space then this has implications for the story that is (and can/not be) told and raises the question of how, and by whom, that story is being narrated. In the study of literature, Genette (1980) offers a theory of narratology which can be used to examine the relationship between the narrator and the plot. Genette (1980) theorises that each narrative position is underpinned by a different combination of two fundamental elements of the text: perspective and voice.

Narrative perspective mediates the relationship between the narrator and the story they tell. In other words, it tells us what the narrator can see and thus, in what relation they stand to the story. Some narrators will be able to offer their audience an internal analysis of the events in the story as they unfold, whilst others, having a different narrative perspective will present an external analysis of events. *Narrative voice* on the other hand is concerned not with 'who sees' but rather with 'who says' Genette (1980). Voice is about the relationship between the narrator and the narrative act itself.

It is concerned with whether or not the narrator is a character in the story that they are telling.

In her work on the role of the researcher, Hatch (1996) uses this notion to examine the researcher’s position in relation to his or her research work. In this way she frames “research as narrative performance” (Hatch, 1996: 361) and identifies four different possible relationships between the researcher and what they are studying. Shifting these insights to the domain of methodology, it is possible to see that different qualitative data collection techniques offer researchers different combinations of ‘who sees’ (perspective) and ‘who says’ (voice).

Data Collection method	Narrative Elements	
	Perspective: Who sees	Voice: Who says
Interviews	Organisational Actor	Organisational Actor
Shadowing	Both	Both
Participant Observation	Organisational Actor as Researcher	Organisational Actor as Researcher
Observation	Researcher	Researcher

Table 1: Genette’s (1980) theory of narratology applied to data collection methods

When the results of an interview study are reported the reader is often (implicitly) offered to share the assumption that the researcher has ‘seen’ the organisational stories that are presented unfold. In fact the researcher is reporting to the reader what has been reported to them by the organisational actor (Potter & Hepburn, 2005; McDonald & Simpson, 2014) and there is no direct relationship between the researcher and the organisational action. In narrative perspective terms, it is the interviewee, and not the interviewer who ‘sees’ the organisation. By the same token, although the researcher reports, edits and organises the data for the reader, the decision about which data are relevant to the study and how they are reported in the first place also belongs to the interviewee. Ultimately then it is the interviewee’s ‘voice’ that is represented in the final account. Although the researcher is an instigator and recorder of these organisational narratives they are held at one remove from the organisation itself. At the other end of the spectrum, within an observation study, the researcher ‘sees’ the organisation first hand for themselves and exercises a lot more control over the data, owning both perspective and voice, albeit a voice based only on an external view of the organisational action without access to organisational narratives. Within a participant observation study there are two forms of both perspective and voice present: researcher as organisational actor has access to both organisational action and organisational narrative from an internal stance; and researcher as researcher has access to both from an external position relative to the organisation. Both voices and perspectives however belong to the researcher. Shadowing brings a fourth combination to these three traditional positions that

researchers can take in relation to the organisation they study. Here the researcher 'sees' the organisational action from an external perspective at the same time as the organisational actor 'sees' it from an internal one. Done well, there are also two separate voices recorded in the data and subsequent reports of the study: the voice of the researcher and the voice of the organisational actor offering concurrent but distinct narratives of the organisational action they are part of. This description of narrative perspective and narrative voice is of course exaggerated here in order to draw these distinctions. All research accounts are to some extent co-constructed and don't exist independently of the researcher-organisational actor relationship (Gill, 2011). The point here is that shadowing techniques allow the researcher to have a different relationship with both the organisational narratives and the organisational action, leading to different data and different insights (Shotter, 2006). They are neither better nor worse; they are simply different.

Relationship with the research context and the organisational actor

As shadowing within an organisation sets up a different relationship with that organisation than other research approaches, it is useful to work through some of the implications that this will have for the researcher and for their data. One important difference is that the shadower remains an outsider to the organisation as an interviewer would, and yet can see the organisational action directly, first hand. This significantly reduces the distance between the researcher and the organisation and therefore increases the data about the physical and social contexts that the researcher is able to record about any given action. This would also be the case for an observer, of course, but they do not have the benefit of access to organisational narratives, as the interviewer does. Neither do they have the chance to both access respondents' organisational narratives and develop one of their own, as the shadower does, reducing distance between organisation and researcher in another way whilst retaining 'outsider status'. See Table 2 for a summary of relationships a researcher may have with organisational actions and narratives.

Relationship	Organisational action	Organisational narrative
Insider role	Participant Observation	Participant Observation
Outsider role	Observation, Shadowing	Interview, Shadowing
No direct relationship	Interview	Observation

Table 2: Relationships between Researcher and Organisation.

Goffmann's (1967) discussion of social performance and his distinction between front stage and back stage is useful here. An interview is very much conducted within the 'front stage' of an organisation where the interviewee performs the organisational narratives for the benefit of the researcher, who forms the audience for the

performance. The shadower, is of course also the audience of a performance, but here they are allowed access to a wider range of organisational spaces, some of which may include the 'back stage' areas, allowing glimpses behind the scenes (Monahan & Fisher, 2010). The performance is also materially different because it is (or certainly becomes) less rehearsed and instead it is improvised in the moment. Another performance is happening in shadowing of course: the researcher's performance. As the shadowing goes on, the researcher's performance also becomes less practiced and formal and the person being shadowed finds themselves seeing elements of the researcher's back stage too: the motivation and mechanics of the research act are partially revealed and discussed, each actor becoming part of the other's performance.

In the previous section it was demonstrated that shadowing sets up a different relationship between the researcher and the organisational narrative. This will also have implications for the data collected through shadowing. To use a lens from organisational theory, the interviewer and shadower both have access to what Argyris & Schon (1996) call 'espoused theory' or what people say does (or should) happen in their organisation, but shadowing also has access to 'theory in practice' or what actually happens. In this way, shadowing research can move research participants beyond discussions of the general or ideal ways of doing things, to sense making around the specific and concrete episodes they witness and or take part in together.

Taken together, these relationships between the shadower and the organisation and the shadower and the organisational actor underline the extent to which researcher and researched are engaged in the co-production of knowledge about the organisation. This is true in every research study (even in post-positivistic studies where it can be read as problematic), but the balance between the researcher and the researched in both the production and sensemaking of the data is perhaps unique in a shadowing study. This allows for a different view of an organisation which is well placed to inform questions about organisational practices (e.g. Gehman et al, 2013), processes (e.g. Blake & Stalberg, 2009), roles (e.g. Gilliat-Ray, 2011) and interactions (e.g. Fenton et al., 1997) in a detailed and specific way.

These different relationships between researcher, context and organisational actor also permit the articulation of the mundane, every day, unsaid, unsayable and taken for granted which can be accessed through the combination of trust and insight built up in both directions between the researcher and the researched. This gives organisational research access to new possibilities for research questions that would be harder to answer through other research relationships as a number of researchers have demonstrated.

In their introduction to their special issue on invisible work, Nardi & Engeström, (1999) describe different kinds of work in contemporary organisations that have become invisible. These include work that is done behind the scenes which is un(der)valued because it is done out of sight, leading to assumptions that it is very straightforward, unimportant, or not done at all. The special issue also discusses work that is informal in nature, defying quantification. This kind of work, such as snatched conversations in corridors, jokes told between team members, regular lunch meetings without specific agendas and organisational stories recounted to new recruits have a real and profound effect on organising processes, but they do not appear on any job descriptions or strategic plans. This makes them both hard to manage and vulnerable to being weakened or lost when visible tasks are reallocated, personnel change or restructuring

takes place. In her piece from this special issue Westerberg (1999) elects to shadow organisational actors in order to understand some of the invisible nature of their work because “From different meetings, interviews and written comments in the questionnaire we had a description of what the managers *thought* and how they *felt* about their work but we didn’t know what they actually were *doing*.” (p99). By taking this approach, Westerberg is able to demonstrate that although some kinds of managerial decision rely on the formal hierarchy of the organisation, others are made through information gathering and opinion seeking through an informal, experience (rather than position) based social network approach that enhances, and enables the official decision making process.

In another study, also set in a healthcare context, Quinlan (2008) uses shadowing as a data collection technique to operationalise her institutional ethnography approach. She uses shadowing to ‘step into’ the world of the Nurse Practitioner and allow her as a researcher to see the organisation through the stand point of that specific role. Through this work Quinlan (2008) was able to take what the Nurse Practitioner actually did as a starting point for their exchanges, building up her sensemaking of that role from the actions she observed, rather than from any preconceived idea of what the Nurse Practitioner should do, or from an official job description. They were able to set up a relationship that was “not encumbered by the established protocols governing the relationships between researcher and researched used in traditional sociological research methods... [and that they]...were relatively free to craft our own terms of interaction.” (p1489). By developing a purposeful combination of closeness and distance with the organisational actors she followed, Quinlan found examples of how actors can significantly facilitate important organisational processes that on paper have nothing to do with their job titles or responsibilities (Quinlan, 2008). Seeing the organisation in this way can lead to powerful and meaningful suggestions for change or improvement because they are informed by an understanding of what people actually do and what it is like to do that. This aspect of the shadowing process makes it particularly helpful for institutional ethnographers and action researchers (see e.g. Sclavi, 2014) who want to see the organisation from the inside out and seek improvements that serve the people directly involved in the ‘doing’ of that organisation.

Shadowing can also provide evidence of political work done within or between departments, or work that is undertaken in order to make a badly designed organisational process work despite the official procedures. van Hulst and his team (van Hulst et al., 2012) were interested in producing research which focused on individuals operating in extremely complex environments where “what seems to be needed are creative ways to mediate and at times redesign the multidimensional interface between (groups of) people, (formal and informal) policies and (sub)-systems” (p436). They were looking at policy from the perspective, not of what had been decided by important stakeholders, but rather in terms of how these decisions could (or could not be) and were (and were not) implemented through the practices of key individuals. Their shadowing approach helped them to draw detailed accounts of the ways in which people making a difference to disadvantaged neighbourhoods went about solving real problems. These practices involved rule breaking, trust building, improvisation and boundary spanning practices that would have been difficult to ‘witness’ using other techniques.

Shadowing can also show how individuals in an organisation, whilst appearing to work within the rules, block the work or progression of others or how organisational

resistance being employed can lead to innovative, negotiated ways of organising (Waddell & Sohal, 1998). Work of this kind is not so much invisible as deliberately hidden. Without knowledge of the hidden organisation, scholars cannot see the full picture of organisational practices and potentially produce less robust and authentic accounts of organising to underpin their theorising of, and interventions in, organising. The kinds of relationships that shadowing brings to the nexus of context, actors and practices are particularly well placed to articulate the invisible in an organisation, whether the invisibility is due to the fact that the work is mundane, informal, undervalued, rule breaking or hidden.

Movement and real time

One of the distinguishing factors of shadowing techniques is that it is infused with movement. The movement is not controlled by the researcher, but by the person (or in some cases, the policy (Gehman, et al. 2013) or object (Bruni, 2005) that they are shadowing. This raises a number of practical issues for the pair. The question of access of the researcher to the organisational actor and to the organisation becomes something that cannot be negotiated in a one off way at the outset of the research. This is partly because it cannot be entirely predicted in advance. Instead it must be continually negotiated between researcher and organisational actor. If a customer turns up unexpectedly to discuss the pricing of a prototype it might raise questions of commercial confidentiality that had not been anticipated and must be resolved in the moment. There are a range of situations which a shadower might come across where her presence might feel uncomfortable for the shadower and/or the organisational actor and/or their organisational colleagues. These situations often have an informal or personal element and are usually not foreseen when the initial access negotiation takes place between shadower and organisation and/or organisational actor. To illustrate this point using situations from my own shadowing work, consider what the shadower should do and how she might feel while the director of production: calls her husband; arranges a meeting to discipline an underperforming colleague; comforts a distressed friend from another department who has been wrongly blamed for missing a deadline; uses the shadower's presence to ensure that a colleague doesn't bring up an issue in a performance meeting as part of a long held rivalry; stays late into the night to buy her team beer and take away pizza, and work with them to meet an important deadline; pretends to meet a client and instead goes to the dentist in the middle of the day. All of these things are part of her day and help the researcher understand her role within the organisational space, but none of them are things to which most of us wish to bear witness. The level of relevance the researcher will see in shadowing a specific event may well be influenced by their own academic discipline. An ethnographer, for example, might view all of these episodes (and her own feelings about them) as legitimate data, whilst an occupational psychologist might see some of them as less pertinent to their study. Sometimes the organisational actor will wish to rescind access to a specific event or episode and sometimes the shadower will wish to withdraw. When they are in agreement about this it is straightforward, but where there are differing opinions about what it is appropriate to shadow then this can become socially difficult.

Although a researcher may theoretically distinguish between shadowing an individual and shadowing an individual as a single locus within a network, in practice the

difference is artificial. Shadowing work will inevitably extend its gaze far beyond the opinions and actions of a single person, taking in a wide range of organisational actors with which the individual being shadowed has interactions, no matter how trivial. In effect the shadower captures the practices of the organisational actor, their team, their boss, their friendship groups, the people who make the rules about where they can park and the people who serve their lunch. The organisational actor is the lens through which the organisational context and practices are viewed by the researcher, rather than the locus or even focus of the research.

The lack of control the researcher has over where, and with whom, the research will be conducted and the fact that access is continuously negotiated and renegotiated also has important ethical implications. Most qualitative researchers have approaches which include repertoires of informed consent. Like organisational access, informed consent is something that is established at the outset of the project for a whole department or organisation, for an observation study for example, and/or at the beginning of the relationship with individual organisational actors, in the case of an interview study, for example. In a shadowing study consent can be granted on behalf of the organisation as a whole by senior management and informed consent can be deliberated by the person(s) being shadowed in a thorough and appropriate manner. However the range of people that are met momentarily through the shadowing process, included in the research account and gone again before they have the chance to wonder who that person following their colleague was, reaches throughout the organisation as well as across its boundaries. Some participants, such as a client at the other end of a telephone call, might be wholly unaware that they are being included in research at all. This presents a series of ethical dilemmas for shadowers who have promised their university Ethics Committees something that they are unlikely to be able to deliver in practice: informed consent from all research participants. See Johnson (2014) for an excellent discussion of this issue.

Shadowing techniques focus on lived experience, like many other qualitative approaches, but they are interested in understanding them in the now. Unlike interviewing approaches which focus on actors' narratives about what has happened, these accounts focus on what is happening. Although shadowing techniques record much data (what is being said, where the organisational actor goes, who they speak with, how they approach issues, which issues consume their day) as it unfolds, not all shadowing data are situated in the present. The shadowing techniques that include eliciting a running commentary from organisational actors (see for example Bartkowiak-Theron & Sappey, 2012) or one to one interview debriefs at the end of each day (see for example Bruni, Gherardi & Poggio, 2005), will often find that explanations for some observed actions, opinions or reactions will include data set in the recent or even remote past as well as hopes, fears and plans for the future. As well as current actions being set within the immediate, physical organisational context, then, they are often framed in the context of past and future organisational narratives (Schultz & Hernes, 2013).

This movement through the organisation and the fact that a significant proportion of the data are situated in the unfolding present is what makes shadowing techniques so physically and mentally demanding. The researcher is not only creating a contemporaneous record of speech and actions, and doing this whilst they are moving through organisational spaces at the speed of a sophisticated organisational actor, but

they are simultaneously engaged in the preliminary data analysis required to construct a series of questions for the person with whom they are running to catch up.

Although both the movement through the organisation and the contemporaneous nature of the data collection present practical, methodological and ethical challenges to the researcher, they do allow for the generation of data which can answer a useful set of research questions related to organisational time and space. Researchers have used shadowing approaches to examine how organisational actors apportion their time to different kinds of tasks. Earley & Bubb (2013) were able to develop a detailed understanding of how and why new headteachers divided their time between competing managerial, administrative and leadership tasks. In a similar vein, Vie (2010) was able to answer questions about how the work of middle managers is changing. Czarniawska, (2004) advocates shadowing techniques as necessary to take the examination of organisational time further (Evans, Kunda & Barley, 2004). Her shadowing data raise questions about how time is experienced and recounted within organisation narratives (Hernes, Simpson & Soderlund, 2013). Equally, work which regards organisational spaces as active in framing organisational processes (Yanow, 1998) will benefit from shadowing techniques that can critically examine the relationships between organisational actors and the spaces they inhabit (Evans & Jones, 2011; Taylor & Spicer, 2007).

Interruption of organisation

One of the most powerful features of shadowing is that it captures actions and perceptions of these actions not just in context, but in the moment that they take place. In other words, this is researching at the pace of organising (Czarniawska, 2007) and in the moment of organising. As well as providing access to a less rehearsed performance from organisational actors, this has the added benefit of not interrupting the organising it is seeking to research to the same extent. Having argued that both the organising and, to an extent, the researching become co-produced in a shadowing study, it would be disingenuous to suggest that shadowing does not influence the organising practices it studies. Shadowing would interrupt the organisational action to a greater extent than an observation study would, for example. However it creates much less interruption to organising than any of the interviewing techniques used in organisational research. Most interviewing techniques take place outside of organising, in prearranged meetings which are scheduled in such a way as to invite the interruption and/or suspension of organising for the duration of the interview. This is a useful approach in that it helps separate the narrative being offered to the researcher from the organising itself, making it much easier for the interviewee to package and the interviewer to manage. However the very characteristics that make it more straightforward make it less immediate and potentially, because the researcher has access to a performed rather than lived experience, less (or perhaps just differently) authentic (Peterson, 2005). Shadowing then has the ability to research organising without asking actors to stop organising. As such, it has much to offer scholars engaged in researching organisational presence (Cooren, et al, 2008).

As shadowing is less apt to interrupt organising, and perhaps in part also because of the sheer volume of the data flow(s), the data itself tends to be less directed by the interests and intellectual agenda of the researcher than data in an observation study

would be and, at the same time, less packaged by the organisational actor than the data from an interview study might be. This can give the impression that shadowing data are more 'grounded' than those gathered by other qualitative approaches. However, paradoxically, whilst the data themselves may flow relatively freely from actual organisational practices only a fraction of what is experienced can ever be recorded and even then the huge quantities of data that are captured by the researcher must be drastically reduced in size through analytic and interpretative processes in order for them to be presented through academic vehicles such as books and journal articles. It may be that this heavy editorial, analytical, sensemaking hand in fact adds more rather than less researcher interpretation to the shadowing accounts than would be necessary for other studies. In other words, the shadower should not be regarded as a neutral vehicle through which organisational data are collected, nor should the influence of the researcher be regarded as stopping when she leaves the field. It is important to consider within such discussions of researcher influence is that our discomfort with researcher influence stems from a positivistic ideal that the observed and the observer should or could be separate. Instead, researcher influence should be both illuminated and celebrated (Monahan & Fisher, 2010) within qualitative research traditions.

Conclusion

In summary, researchers have been shadowing practitioners in organisations since organisational research began (Walker, Guest & Turner, 1956). Over the past decade more scholars have been writing about shadowing approaches, and crucially, discussing and comparing them critically. This work has enriched and expanded our repertoires as qualitative researchers. Shadowing organisational actors gathers data in the tradition of (and in turn is part of) the enacted organisation and as such it can inform a wide range of organisational research approaches which regard both knowing and doing as mediated, situated, provisional, pragmatic and contested (Blackler, 1995). It has an important role to play in the development of the many strands of organisational research which pursue these views of organising. It also has much to add to the accumulating interests in how actors move through organisational space over time that Costas (2013) characterises as the gathering momentum of a 'mobilities turn' in organisational research. More application of shadowing approaches and more critical debate will be needed for their full potential as research instruments to be realised in organisational research.

Shadowing is essentially interviewing and observing at the same time, but it is much more than the sum of its parts. In this chapter I have argued that: Shadowing fosters a dual narrative of the organisation borne of two perspectives and two voices; it offers the researcher different relationships to the research context and to the organisational actor than other qualitative approaches; it takes account of movement through the organisation and allows the researcher to operate in real time; and it takes place within the flow of organising. Perhaps most important of all, it raises the possibility of two way reflexivity for both the researcher and the organisational actor, adding a naturally hermeneutic layer to qualitative inquiry (Bartkowiak-Theron & Sappey, 2012).

In Table 3 I offer a visual summary of the arguments presented within this chapter. The table serves a dual purpose. Firstly it sets out a simplified version of the arguments

that have been made about the similarities and differences to other research methods throughout this chapter. However it also provides a visual reminder that although shadowing may not be completely unique in terms of any single aspect of research design, that it represents a different combination of research strengths and weaknesses to other qualitative research methods. It is this unique **combination** of methodological characteristics that makes shadowing such a distinct and powerful tool for unlocking a particular set of research questions. By side stepping the methodological, and to some extent epistemological, slight of hand of reporting 'what people do' on the basis of asking them what they do and conflating reported actions for actual practices, shadowing offers something quite simple. It supplies different (not better, just different) answers to the question: what do people do all day? These answers are co-produced, changing and novel forms of knowledge of organising borne of a different kind of relationship between researched and researcher that moves through organisational time and space. Moreover, the answers to this question turn out to be powerful in finding new ways to understand the lived experiences and situated practices of organisational actors.

Research method	Voice	Movement captured	Distance from organizing	Research Relationship	Production of Knowledge	Time Perspective	Control over data collected	Setting
Interviews	Actor	Time	Medium	Actor	Facilitated by researcher	Retrospective (possibility of prospective)	Shared	Outside normal work context
Shadowing	Actor and Researcher	Continuous across Time & Space	Low	Actor in Context	Co-production (actor and researcher)	Now (possibility of retrospective and prospective)	Actor	Within natural flow of organising
Participant Observation	Researcher (actors reported)	Time & Space	Low	Researcher in Context	Researcher (active)	Now (possibility of retrospective and prospective)	Researcher	Within natural flow of organising
Observation	Researcher	Time & Space	High	Context	Researcher (passive)	Now	Researcher	Outside natural flow of organising
Focus Groups	Multiple actors	Time	Medium	Actors with each other	Co-production by actors	Retrospective (possibility of prospective)	Multiple Actors	Outside normal work context

Table 3: Dimensions of Shadowing

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