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GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION TO EXPLORE VISUALLY QUALITATIVE DATA: RADIAL GRAPH TO COMPARE DIVERGENCES OF CRITERIA IN EDUCATION IN MUSEUMS BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT AGENTS INVOLVED.

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Abstract

This paper presents the proposed method of analysis for a qualitative research in museum education. Its main contribution is to facilitate the processing of textual information (verbal and visual) for the systematic analysis of the data. It consists of a radial graph for a relational method of analysis based on the visual exploration of the data, that allows an analysis of the social interrelations in the educational setting (developed in an informal educational context, but it could be applied to formal educational research). Likewise, the research difficulties for the analysis of the qualitative data, in response to which this proposal of method of analysis was devised.

Keywords: museum education, radial graph display, qualitative research.

1 INTRODUCTION

Qualitative research in education has brought important contributions. One of the main ones is the recognition of the social context as factor in learning. However, research on education in museums has commonly studied the elements separately (Griffin, 2004), despite the frequent allusions to socio-political tensions which restrict the educational context of the museum (Foreman-Peck & Travers, 2013).

Initially this research on museum education was designed as a case study based on the method of observation (Bodgan and Biklen, 1992). The subject of study was the active participation of students in museum education programs (Maset, 2005). The sample chosen and worked on for the case study was the educational program "Les Ateliers de la création" of the Centre Pompidou & Ircam (Paris) in the 2012-2013 edition (coinciding with the school year). The researcher did a residence there for three months, during the period comprised from February to May of 2013¹. Once finalized, the coding phase for the analysis of the data was started in greater depth (Schreier, 2012). By that time, the researcher had assembled a wide and extensive variety of data: that obtained from the

¹ This research constituted the doctoral thesis entitled "Responsible Agents from the Institutional Promotion and Community Development in Museum Education Programs: Case study on the art education program 'Les Ateliers de la creation' of Centre Pompidou & Ircam in Paris" and defended in 2014 at the University of Jaén (Spain). During the doctoral period, the researcher undertook a research stay in Paris (France), in the 'Center de Recherche su"r l'Actuel et le Quotidienne-Université Paris Descartes', with the support of the residence grant at the "Colegio de España de Paris-CIUP-Cité Universitaire granted by the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In an university agreement with the mentioned research center, the researcher carried out the three-month residency in the Pompidou's "Departement des Publics".

observational fieldwork (diary, visual and audiovisual recordings of educational sessions at the museum, interviewing of students, scholar teacher, museum educators); Documentary material produced by the museum staff to define and promote the educational projects; Bibliography refers to the museum's cultural policy and to the national policy of education in France.

In the first revisions of the data collected, the researcher was able to point out some main issues related to the participation of the students in the educational activities that had taken place during the different sessions of the "Les Ateliers de la création" program of the Pompidou Center & Ircam. However, other questions were also raised on the subject of research: the forms of student participation were in tension with those of the other agents (museum educators, project coordinators, museum cultural policy, funders, French politics, social status in Paris of students, etc.). In this sense, the researcher began to understand that the analysis of student participation was inseparable from that of the other agents involved, because dependency relationships were developed between one and the other in different roles of authority. The research was redirected to the following hypothesis: the divergence of criteria between the agents involved in the education program, the dominant criteria being those of the museum policies, did not leave room for real active participation of the students, despite the methodological and objectives framework that had been defined and with which the program of the museum was announced. Codification in the analysis of the data allows the researcher to establish relations of meaning with greater depth than that which appears evident on the surface of situations. However, if the previously mentioned research had continued its analysis with traditional methods in qualitative research, there would be no reason for this paper. The point is that focusing the research on the analysis of inter-dependencies between students and the rest of the agents of the museum's educational program led to the idea and design of a method for the relational analysis of qualitative data based on the radial Graph for a visual exploration of the dates.

2 INTERACTIONS IN THE EDUCATIONAL SETTING

Dealing with social interactions in the educational setting requires important scientific attention because it corresponds to a learning factor too. And this subject not only refers to the way in which teachers speak to students or the use of innovative didactical tools, but essentially relates to the forms of communication developed in educational activities between all the participants, because these are themselves "displayed, and thereby given structure and significance" (Freebody, 2004, p. 91). The same author points out that interactions in the educational setting affect:

- The normativity of teacher and learning;
- The characterize acceptable educational practice around the content of the curricular;
- Their place as students;
- The nature, significance and consequences of their learning.

Freebody realizes his research on interactions in the educational setting in a qualitative field of research. It is based on the talk that goes on in educational interactions. The kind of materials which he considers for the analyses of data is videotaped and audiotaped. In this sense, the reference methods like the Birmingham School's functional sociolinguistic (Freebody, 2004: 96) and the Conversation Analysis developed within Ethnomethodology (Freebody, 2004: 97).

The research proposed in this paper coincides with Freebody in the kind of material for the analysis (verbal and visual textual), Freebody's methodological approach is based on coding and categorizing collected data. What is proposed in this paper is a visual display as a method of data analysis, which takes a different approach to qualitative methodology.

3 COGNITION PROCESS IN EXPLORATORY GRAPH VISUAL

The analytical qualities for a radial graph display as a method of data analysis reside in the cognitive capacity of the researcher's visual exploration. In this sense, Liu (2013) supports his thesis on exploratory graph visualization on the Cognitive Load Theory. In the cognitive load theory of the exploration process, user's cognition functions in two parts: one is the limited working memory and the other one is the comparatively unlimited long term memory. The first one corresponds to where important learning process happens and, the latter, to where user's knowledge lies. The cognition process is defined as follows: new information is introduced and learned in the working memory, and then schemes for filling the knowledge gap is extract. Then, those schemes are transmitted to the long term memory and saved. (Sweller, 1988, cited in Liu, 2013: 21-22). To understand how cognition functions in the exploration process, we must also take into account the three types of cognitive load (intrinsic, extraneous and germane) according to Sweller's contributions to the field. A user's prior knowledge in the long term memory affects the intrinsic cognitive load (structure and complexity of the material learned in long term memory, but which cannot be influenced by system designers; extraneous (induced by system designs) and germane cognitive load (users' efforts to process and comprehend the materials) are imposed by the system design and vary from system to system. (Sweller, 1988, cited in Liu, 2013: 22). In this sense, it is understood that system designers influence the cognitive process and the researcher's capacity to learn about the data contents. That is why the radial graph as relational method of analysis can be very useful for the research proposed in this paper.

4 VISUAL GRAPH DISPLAY IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Regarding a theoretical foundation definition for the method proposed in this paper, I consider it appropriate to provide a brief introduction in reference to the particular conditions for a bibliographical review of the research in question: the use of the Spanish language and in the context of Southern Spain. I consider the holding of this Congress, the European Congress of Qualitative Inquiry in Leuven (Belgium), which is the first European edition of the historic International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry in Illinois, is of great interest and should not be overlooked. The different activities being held bring together a wide heterogeneity of sources from all over Europe: the crossing of languages, affiliations, contracts, resources and services, etc. This obviously must not be overlooked, because it is the contextual reality in which we develop our research: ideation, design and execution. In my particular case, my place of origin and the language in which I do my research has functioned as an important factor in accessing information for a bibliographic review of the subject. The research tradition in the Spanish context in the field of artistic education is closely linked to the qualitative research of the case study and methods of direct observation, visual ethnography and codification of the data for analysis. Therefore, the idea of the vector element for an analysis of qualitative data required a revision of the subject. In the first queries that I started in Spanish databases (Dialnet, RedBIUN, BUJA), using keywords like "vector", "vectorial system" or "vector graphics" I did not find bibliographical references for a qualitative investigation. However, the first results that approached the subject were in English. Thus, as a researcher from Spain, pursuing the research using the English language has been decisive in the prosperity of my research, (I doubtless came up with the idea of what I might find even in languages other than Spanish and English, but the extent of the task has so far only made me consider it a pending activity for a moment of leisure). But, even when searches are done using English keywords, results may appear, but they are also limited. Thus, I would like to point out that the prosperity of this proposal and research could be developed by having access to databases in Anglo-Saxon contexts (Goldsmiths-University of London's Library, Institution of Education-UCL's Library). The set of bibliographical references that follow are examples of this. Both electronic journal articles and printed books, published since 1990, have been

accessed and consulted in the English context of London on the occasion of my last research stay (Goldsmiths-University of London, 2016). Although these bibliographic results have not included an example prior to my proposal of analysis based on the vector, the theoretical and previous approaches have enriched the theoretical framework and possible basis for progress in defining the proposal. In this period I continue working on it with the intention of defining and describing the taxonomy and Schedule of the analysis. The major challenge I address is to extend it to the investigation of the factor of social inter-relations in artistic learning in the educational site (formal school and informal museum, assuming in turn the school partnership program).

The terminology used plays an important role in the foundation and definition of the vectorial proposal. A wide variety of terms have been found:

- Visual Research.
- Graphical Display.
- Exploratory visualization of graphs.
- Mapping.
- Diagrams.
- Scatterplots.

Possibility analyses based on graphical display have an important tradition and use in quantitative research, but not in the field of qualitative research, where the verbal language of scientific production has dominated. In the absence of an extensive framework of previous references, qualitative research based on graphical display is developed in the research of the current researchers. I have identified different slopes among the previous examples found:

A. Visualizing Qualitative Information and directed to computer software. (Slone, 2009). It is the most similar to the radial graph proposed in this work.

B. As part of mixed methods analysis based on an overview of visual techniques for quantitative data display and qualitative data display. (Onwuegbuzie and Dickinson, 2008).

C. Visual display for cross-case analysis in a handbook on strategies for qualitative data analysis (Banzeley, 2013).

The interesting thing to refer to in the three previous examples is that they all agree to place the work of Miles and Huberman first published in 1994 as a theoretical and grounding basis. Banzeley dedicates a section to “Visual display for cross-case analysis” (2013). It states that visual displays involve exploring and investigating relationships in data which can be done by using coded data and also by visual strategies. Banzeley collects several kinds of visual strategies, one of which consists in using scatterplot (while other examples are mapping cases, overlapping and social network analysis). For the foundation of scatterplots, Banzeley cites Miles and Huberman (1994).

Miles and Huberman (1994), on their part, place scatterplots into the “case-ordered displays” section. The proposition is to defend the use of scatterplots in a second phase of data analysis, after data is coded in matrix because, in matrix, data is segmented and clustered, but it does not connect the data in a cross and transversal semantic. . “We need something a bit more *spatial*”. (p. 197). It adopts a cognitive interpretation of proximity to and distance from one case to another, that is to say, their similarities-coincidences and differences-. “Scatterplots are figures that display data from all cases on two or more dimensions of interest that you think are related to each other. Data from cases are scaled carefully, and the cases positioned in the space formed by respective “axes”, so that similarities and contrasts among the cases can be seen. The principle is a bivariate (or multivariate) analysis of relationships in coordinate-defined space.” (p. 198).

Miles & Huberman study innovation in education; they identify that the final results of innovation differ and do not reach the proposed development model; That is, they identify that which is considered innovation in the school does not coincide with the project model. Therefore, in the course of the implementation of the projects, there must be interference and incidents. Due to the strong support of project managers, the hypothesis arises as to whether they succumb and give in to the emotional pressures of users not to adopt innovation. If this hypothesis were true, then a clear relationship between levels of pressure and levels of freedom should be identified for the case. "Scatterplots are very useful when you are in an exploratory mode, or are trying out a hypothesis (...). Because figures like these call for a careful "scale score", rather than an impressionistic rating, you have to do finer-grained work than the case-level researcher probably did (...). Techniques such as summed indices (...) can be used. If careful scaling is not possible, and if cases cannot be precisely distinguished from each other on a variable, then a contingency table is better." (p. 199).

In an analysis of content, the first reading undertaken is "syntagmatic" whilst the second is a "paradigmatic" reading. (Bardin, 1986: 99). The syntagmatic reading refers to a longitudinal analysis of the different actions that occur in each of the study subjects and that have been documented by the researcher from the different sources (direct, oral, written observation). The paradigmatic reading refers to the transversal analysis of the contents on a dominant theme to which a plurality of experiences converges.

5 RADIAL GRAPH DISPLAY AS A STRATEGY ON A RELATIONAL METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Firstly, I came up with the idea of vector and vectorial systems as a strategy of relational method of analysis of data collected. I then moved away from a physical and quantitative approach to better understand that the method proposed consists of a visual exploration of the data collection and, in particular, in a radial graph display for the purpose of comparing and contrasting different agents on the same subject (Kirk, 2012). Remembering the last direction of the research, it was redirected to the study of the divergence of criteria among the agents involved in the education program, the museum's policies being the most dominant did not leave room for real active participation of the students, despite the objective and methodological framework that had been defined and with which the program of the museum was announced. The different agents correspond to the different persons (physical or legal) which play an important part in the educational setting and program. The relationships between them should be observed in reference to the same topic which, in turn, would correspond to high influence elements in the educational and learning program. In the research I did on the study of case of "Les Ateliers de la creation" educational program of Centre Pompidou and Ircam in Paris, those agents and subjects were:

- Agents: students, school teacher, a sound composer and researcher from Ircam, a museum educator from Pompidou Museum, the member staff coordinator from Ircam, the member of staff coordinator from Centre Pompidou, educational service direction at Ircam, educational service at Centre Pompidou.
- Subjects: Falk & Dierking's learning factors in the museum experience (2012) which are the following,
 - The personal context: *Visit motivation and expectations, Prior knowledge, Prior experiences, Prior interests and Choice and control.*
 - The sociocultural context: *Within group social mediation and Mediation by others outside the immediate social group.*
 - The physical context: *Advance organizers, Design and exposure to exhibits and programs and Orientation; Architecture and large-scale environment; Subsequent reinforcing events and experiences outside the museum.*

5.1 Radial graph elements and values

A radial graph display was developed for each subject, in which the agents involved were visually compared and contrasted. The elements and values in play in each one are those of a vector:

- **Module:** the action performed by the subject with respect to the object of study. In qualitative studies the values are theoretical and, therefore, the length of a vector has no value in itself, but in opposition to other vectors of the same system, in which the one of greater length represents the dominant action and those of shorter length are of less influence on the group (this is fixed by the logic used in the vector system, as explained below).
- **Direction:** the content of the action of the subject that is drawn in the form of an imaginary straight line. We recognize that human action is not projected in a straight line. However, given that in this analysis the sample is not a particular action but a system of possible interactions - as a whole - that intervene in the development of an educational program, the level of observation we carry out is global and, therefore, the Actions that we consider are simplified in those of greater influence on the sample, that we represent in a rectilinear way in the direction of the vector. This refers to the intent or purpose of the resulting action of the subject as indicated by an arrowhead drawn at one end of the vector direction.
- **Starting point:** refers to the descriptor according to each case.

5.2 Types of radial graph display according to criteria content between them

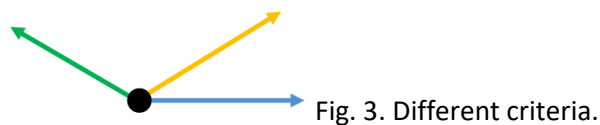
- **Similar criteria:**



- **Opposite criteria:**



- **Different criteria:**



5.3 Measure of the impact of agents' criteria on the educational setting

The impact of agents' criteria on the educational setting is visually measured according to different levels of rings on the radial graph display. The start point is the center of the graph, the further the level is away from the center the higher the value of the impact it has had on the educational setting.

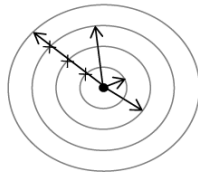


Fig. 4. Rings of level on radial graph display

5.4 Example of radial graph display

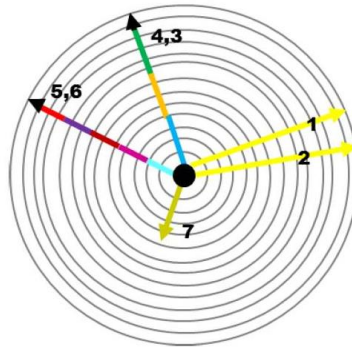


Fig. 5. Example of radial graph display

- A. Each agent is associated with one unique colour on the full analysis.
- B. Each form of participation and criteria on the ancient matrix of coded data collection is numbered on the matrix and remains within the radial graph display.
- C. Agents with similar criteria are displayed one after the other, thereby increasing the level reached on the radial graph display rings.
- D. Opposite agents' criteria are displayed in opposite directions.
- E. Different agents' criteria are displayed with more or less distance between them according to the proximity of criteria on the educational setting.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The radial graph display has allowed us to compare the different agents involved in the educational setting of museums and, in particular, has allowed us to make comparisons using different forms of participation and their influence on the resulting educational work. In this way we have tried to understand and identify the evidence that allows a place or not for active participation of the students as the main receivers of the educational proposal.

The graphical radial display system deals with our cognitive quality of the visual exploration, for a greater understanding of elements and contents.

The case presented in this work constitutes the first essay of the researcher on her proposal of radial graph display as a strategy of relational data analysis. We continue working on the functionality and use of the proposal, and for that reason the interest of bringing a first essay to a scientific forum in qualitative research.

The transfer of the proposal could reach the educational setting, informal, like in this case, but also formal. In this we continue to work.

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EXPLORING INVISIBILITY THROUGH MULTISENSORY SPATIAL RESEARCH METHODS

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Abstract

In this paper we present research methods usable in the absence of sight with the objective of exploring techniques that can allow spatial knowledge beyond vision. There is a visual dominance in contemporary built spaces neglecting invisibility, i.e. the multisensory integration of non-visual modalities. An example of this ocularcentrism can be found in the visible/invisible duality. Visibility is often thought of as a quality of the visible whereas invisibility is often neglected. By contrast we propose to re-think invisibility as a quality, arguing that its multi-sensory integration is of main importance given that visibility is temporary, which contrasts with the persistence of invisibility in human perception. Therefore, we explore invisibility based on qualitative research methods, developed by the first author in the condition of full blindness. We identified two useful tools to explore the space of invisibility: the use of interlocking building blocks in user-centred design discussion groups, and the use of elicitation models in post-walkthrough interviews. In spatial qualitative research, user-centred design can be interesting for the researcher's self-observation during the design process, exploring pertinent questions and feedback from diverse research participants. Therefore an important inclusive tool/material can be the interlocking building blocks system of Lego, allowing through their modularity and adaptability to build and rebuild models during creative discussions. In order to increase usability we present a prototype of an interlocking building block system with three main advantages: compatibility with conventional architectural scales, increased haptic comfort in a fast and continuous task of recognisability by blind people, and the absence of logos providing a material/tool with neutrality without imposing commercial references. Walkthrough interviews are important to obtain a holistic understanding of the interaction between the interviewee and the space being used. However, often researchers find problems with spatial restrictions to develop an audio or visual recorded interview. In order to avoid these difficulties we developed a post-walkthrough interview, consisting of a spatial experience with participants without recordings, just listening to their comments and observing how they interact with the space, followed afterwards by a video recorded interview in a different space using elicitation models. The presented qualitative research methods and tools can be useful to researchers in the conditions of blindness and low vision. Moreover they can be used by fully sighted researchers to explore multi-sensory research methods as deeper qualitative approaches to the space of invisibility.

Keywords: invisibility, multi-sensory architecture, physical models, user-centred design, walkthrough interview.

1 INTRODUCTION

Visual sources, mainly drawings and photographs, are currently widely used by architects and researchers, as important representations of spatial knowledge. Anthropologist Tim Ingold [1] questions the visual dominance over other sensory modalities as a source of human knowledge present in our ocularcentric culture. Some architects have taken notice of this ocularcentrism. Pallasmaa [2] states the need to survey critically the role of vision as a concern for architecture. Moreover, Vermeersch [3] states the importance of the role of representational artefacts in architects' spatial perception. We argue that architects and researchers often forget the multi-sensory potential of using physical models instead of visual representations. When architects and researchers use sketches they ignore the potential of the spatial reality provided by physical models testing their ideas. The empirical knowledge of Alberti [4] that physical models can identify errors that drawings cannot, seems to have been forgotten.

When architectural researchers introduce pictures to elicitate spatial memories from interviewees, they are not considering the potential of using physical models, which are less selective and limiting than photography can be. Moreover, unlike drawings and pictures, physical models allow to include a great part of the population, namely blind and partially sighted people who can be important contributors for the built space quality.

This paper aims to explore research methods and tools that integrate the quality of invisibility, specifically the multi-sensory integration of other modalities beyond vision, in order to balance the presence of ocularcentrism. However, we need to consider that visual representations have also important intrinsic qualities that cannot be achieved through other sensory modalities. For example, to complement the text of this paper we present some pictures, but they are secondary representations, they are not essential in the narrative, so they are not exclusive. Architectural researchers can explore multi-sensory knowledge, testing the spatial quality through the condition of a non-visual perception, considering invisibility.

This paper presents two qualitative research methods centred on invisibility. In order to increase the legibility of the text they are presented separately. Section two contextualizes, identifies and discusses a qualitative research method and tool applicable in user-centred design discussion groups. Similarly, section three presents the other method and tool, usable in walkthrough interviews.

2 USING INTERLOCKING BUILDING BLOCKS IN USER-CENTRED DESIGN

2.1 Context

User-centred design and co-design are useful approaches to address the quality of invisibility, integrating users' multimodal spatial perceptions. Moreover, Jones [5] states that in democratic societies architectural design requires an intrinsic involvement of users in the decision process. Making decisions that affect the life of people is impossible without their meaningful involvement. Co-design distinguishes itself from user-centred design by directly involving the user as expert in the design process. By contrast, in user-centred design the user is not necessarily directly involved, but can be represented by an expert [6]. Considering the case of a space for blind people, for instance, in a co-design approach, blind users are directly involved in the design process; in a user-centred design approach blind users can be represented by a fully-sighted expert with specific knowledge on the space's usability for blind people. User centred-design and co-design explore the boundary between research and design practice, in the way of achieving qualitative knowledge through the users' spatial experience. Considering that user/experts may not have had design education, it is important to develop techniques and design tools that facilitate including their diversity of conditions.

In user-centred design and co-design working meetings, designers often use spoken language to discuss ideas, complemented with drawings. Drawings can be made and perceived by blind people if they are in relief, e.g., sketched on a special paper that produces upper relief using an assistive base. However, relief drawings are not that quickly perceived as physical models by blind people. Moreover, many users without architectural education may have difficulty in understanding drawings. By contrast, physical models have their intrinsic physical space and allow a more intuitive perception. Therefore, it is important to explore working models when discussing ideas, because they allow the flexibility of being built and rebuilt. In architecture physical models are often classified in two types: presentation and working models.

Many contemporary architectural designers/researchers seem to forget the potential of using working models when developing their ideas. Also, currently 3D virtual models are increasingly used instead of physical presentation models, despite the latter's inclusive potential in being perceived by blind people.

In architectural history physical models were used instead of drawings in the building process, even in cases of great complexity, such as the ancient Chinese cities Ming and Manchu on an urban scale, or single buildings like Gaudi's Santa Coloma and Sagrada Familia churches [7]. Also, in architectural theory, the use of models instead of drawings is important in order to explore the complexity of buildings' form and materiality in the design phase [8].

Some rare cases exist where working models replace drawings in a first approach to idea representation. Eero Saarinen referred to the use of clay models before any graphic interpretation, like in Michelangelo's design process, mentioning that the complexity and the plasticity of his work on TWA terminal in New York could not have been achieved by drawings only [7].

In literature we found four categories of drawing sketches, but no classification of working models: the thinking sketch is an individual representation of the thinking process; the talking sketch is a representation related with group discussion; the prescriptive sketch communicates the idea to persons not involved in a specific design process; and the storing sketch registers the design synthesis that works as a representation archive for future reference [9]. In our understanding the four types of working drawings can be applied to specify different types of working models. Accordingly, we will use the terms thinking model, talking model, prescriptive model and storing model.

When Carlos Mourão Pereira, the first author, became blind in 2006, he started to adapt his design process, using thinking models with materials like clay and Lego blocks in his architectural practice. Lego was used as material/tool providing a metric reference through the modularity of the interlocking studs [10]. A Lego piece does not differ too much from an assistive metric ruler for blind people, i.e., a tool with upper reliefs at equal distance supporting haptic perception of reference and dimension. The use of Lego drew the attention of several researchers. Heylighen [11] mentioned the usability of Lego in the representation of orthogonal structures in Pereira's design process; Vermeersch [12] mentioned the utility of Lego to provide a usable representation for quick rough tests.

However, Pereira also identified some negative issues, as the dimension of the Lego blocks, specifically in the modularity given by the studs, introduces an unconventional architectural scale [13]. For Pereira, it is important to use Lego blocks of the same white colour [14]. The main reason is that it speeds up the modelling process, avoiding time waste in selecting colour blocks without the need for assistive strategies, such as the use of colour separators with a single box for each colour. Also, he made prescriptive models with Lego blocks, to allow communicating ideas to his assistants who develop computer drawings. Some of these models were preserved for future use, becoming storing models. Since 2008, when he began exploring qualitative research in architecture, he perceived the applicability of the mentioned types of working models.

From 2009 to 2011 he was teaching design studio in Erasmus intensive programs, in Portugal and Spain, organized by the Polytechnic University of Catalonia, and in France, organized by the National School of Architecture in Montpellier, centred on inclusive design. He used talking models in Lego, to explore ideas in user-centred design discussion groups with students, allowing to build and rebuild the Lego models during the ideas discussion.

Besides Pereira, we also found fully sighted architects interested in using Lego in academic meetings and research. In 2011, KRADS Architects developed for architecture students the workshop Playtime addressing the relationship of creativity and playfulness [15]. According to MVRDV's Winy Maas, this event inspired him to develop, with the students of the Faculty of Architecture of the Delft University of Technology, the project Porous City, resulting in 676 Lego towers, all in white Lego blocks, presented at the 13th Venice Biennale in 2012 [16]. This research project, developed with the Lego group, centred on the potential of porosity in skyscrapers design in the context of urban density [17]. In our understanding, these models are storing models achieved by the evolution from thinking models, establishing a relationship with presentation models, exploring visual aspects in the search for the building envelope. Maas appreciates using Lego for its playfulness, introducing the element of joy, allowing a useful psychological dimension, making even the most serious research more bearable, and also for its relatively low cost in comparison to 3D modelling [18].

2.2 Results

The two editions of the Erasmus intensive programs in Portugal and Spain were coordinated by Marta Bordas, an architect researcher and wheel-chair user. Bordas [19] states that these programs aimed to explore design creativity, through involving architecture students and teachers of different nationalities, towards an inclusive society, where architects need to take the responsibility to generate spaces for people to use according to their individual aspirations and needs. The design studio classes of these programs were developed in a classroom with a discussion table for each teacher, with students subdivided in several groups, including different nationalities. They developed their work moving from teacher to teacher. At Pereira's discussion table, Lego blocks were introduced as a main tool to discuss design ideas. Students considered his condition of blindness as an interesting source of experience and spatial knowledge, taking the opportunity to explore information about usability for blind people. Students acted as designers, in a position near to qualitative researchers, asking Pereira about his spatial needs with the objective to explore innovative morphologies, integrating invisibility towards multi-sensory inclusive spaces. During these discussions, talking models made of Lego were quickly built and rebuilt, changing hands between students and Pereira, resulting in the development of new ideas.

During three years of these workshops, involving a total of 93 students of nine different countries, it was possible to confirm the mentioned advantages of Lego use in architectural design, as well as to identify three limitations of the use of Lego blocks as a material/tool for talking models. The first limitation is the already identified difficulty related with the specific scale of Lego blocks. The 8mm distance between the studs introduced difficulties to compare the talking models with other representational artefacts on conventional scales. The second is the presence of the Lego logo on top of the studs; some students questioned the utility of this marketing strategy. The third is the haptic discomfort in the recognisability of Lego blocks in a fast and continuous handling. Pereira identified the combination of the harsh edges of the cylindrical studs of the blocks with the Lego logo upper relief and the relationship between size and distance between studs as the factors that can make the usability of Lego as talking models for blind people difficult.

To avoid the mentioned limitations, Pereira developed a prototype that explores a new design of interlocking building blocks. It introduces a distance of 10mm between the studs, allowing to produce models on a conventional scale. The top of the studs is semi-spherical, without any harsh

edges or commercial logos, increasing haptic quality and neutrality without imposing commercial references.

2.3 Discussion

Our work illustrates the multi-sensory potential of using working models in qualitative research and design, specifically talking models in user-centred design discussion groups, using Lego as a material/tool. Our research is in line with that of Sanders and Stappers [20] who mention the interest in the development of co-designing tools and techniques, and the need for exploring tools to be used by non-designers to express themselves creatively.

It is important to remember that the design of Lego was conceived to function as children's toy, so to function as a material/tool for co-design research, it will require adaptations. Therefore, we proceed to consider how innovations in Lego blocks have been developed.

The earliest known plastic toy of interlocking building blocks is Batima made in Belgium in 1905 [21]. The blocks produced in 1930 are different in size from Lego however the interlocking studs are designed with a similar cylindrical form. Another interlocking building blocks system is that by Kiddicraft, a UK company founded in 1932, beginning with wooden toys production, and later producing plastic toys designed by the British child psychologist Fisher Page [22]. The Kiddicraft blocks of 1947 have a similar size as current Lego blocks being possible to interlock themselves, the only difference is that the Kiddicraft studs have a semi sphere on top instead of the Lego logo.

Similarly to Kiddicraft, the Danish company Lego, founded in 1934, began with a wooden toys production, and only in 1949 started the plastic interlocking blocks production. Lego is said not to have invented the plastic building piece, but to have been inspired by Page's original design [23].

The contemporary innovation process used by Lego involves user communities, which give input for the development of new products, building techniques and projects, motivating the manufacturer for future product developments [24]. This design process includes consumers, in order to receive feedback for the development of new products in a dynamic relationship with changing trends [25]. Lego communities are not limited to a specific age group, since many adults use Lego as a hobby.

However, the specific performance of Lego as material/tool in producing talking models is a new and specific use, which will require a new design considering the limitations identified.

The prototype of interlocking building blocks developed by Pereira explores a new dimension of the blocks, between the ones by Batima and Kiddicraft and Lego (Fig.1), to allow building models on a conventional architectural scale. Also he developed a new studs design inspired by Kiddicraft, maintaining the presence of the semi-spheres at the top of the studs.

We expect that these studs without the presence of the logo label will better fit the use by researchers, considering that its presence can be an imposing unwanted commercial mark in the neutrality required by a working model to be used in scientific research.

Moreover, we need to consider that the modularity of interlocking building blocks has the power to inspire architectural design approaches. The pixelization of the Lego modules has inspired the creation of architectural projects with new morphologies, developing spatial flexibility in contemporary architecture works, like the Lego Towers and Lego House, both of Bjarke Ingels Group [26].

So, we argue that increasing haptic quality in all studs of the interlocking building blocks, avoiding sharp edges, may contribute to fostering more attention for ergonomic comfort in the materiality of the physical model which may contribute for a more multi-sensory conscience of the architects regarding the materiality of the built space that they are designing.



Fig. 1. Interlocking building blocks. Left: Prototype; Centre: Batima interlocking building blocks. Picture credits: Museum of Design in Plastics, Arts University Bournemouth; Right: white Kiddicraft block interlocked with grey Lego blocks. Picture credits: Brighton Toy and Model Museum.

3 USING ELICITATION MODELS IN POST-WALKTHROUGH INTERVIEWS

3.1 Context

In spatial qualitative research case studies are of great importance, especially empirical studies centred on the interaction between users and the space in use. Case studies integrate detail, richness, completeness and variance, meaning the condition of time evolution in a concrete and holistic dimension [27]. A research method to study the quality of invisibility, integrating multi-sensory perception, is the walkthrough interview, widely explored in post-occupancy evaluation studies. Walkthroughs provide researchers a deeper perception, mainly because it may provide a concrete reality of the space being used by the interviewees. The walkthrough promotes detailed descriptions of the space by the interviewee [28].

Complementing researchers' direct observation, Preiser [29] recommends photography to register important spatial attributes. However, visual recordings can introduce limitations, not just related with participants but also with other users of the space who can be visual or audio recorded, without being previously informed. This is mainly the case in some specific public spaces, e.g. bathing facilities. Researchers thus need to make ethical choices, specifically when using visual ethnography in contexts where anonymity needs to be preserved [30].

During interviews ethnographic researchers explore memory elicitation of participants using visual ethnography [31]. Researchers often seem to forget the inclusive potential of physical models to be used during interviews. They can allow haptic perception by blind people, as well as visual kinaesthetic diversity by sighted users, who can explore different points of view. We argue that physical models allow more neutrality than visual ethnography, making the interview discourse more meaningful, and consequently allow to identify qualities related to invisibility. Physical models can express the essential spatial definition of the reality they represent. Assistive models for blind people are often used at different scales in urban representations, as well as partial models of buildings to perceive indoor spaces. Pietrzykowska [32] states that these models need to be made using simplified drawings, considering that haptics differs from visual perception: details that are unimportant need to be eliminated and, by contrast, details that are relevant may need to be enlarged to guarantee perception by blind people. A model that allows blind people to perceive architectural concepts, also provides easy intelligibility for sighted people, having the potential of rediscovering the fundamental vocabulary of the model [33].

3.2 Results

In an ongoing research project we face the problem of visual ethnography being invasive, as we are studying a bathing facility in a health and well-being centre, where visual ethnography is not allowed due to its intrusiveness in the users' privacy. In this study walkthrough participants were required to wear bathing clothes which can limit the acceptance of volunteers if we use visual recordings. Often, we do not identify participants in order not to limit the freedom of their comments, mainly in the identification of negative spatial components.

Considering the mentioned limitations, instead of the real-time conventional walkthrough, we developed a spatial walkthrough experience with 9 blind participants, aged between 5 and 77 years old and 4 fully-sighted relatives of participants aged under 18. We have not used any audio or visual recordings. Instead we just listened to their comments and observed how they interacted with the space, followed afterwards in a different space by an interview with video. In order to aid interviewees' spatial memory, we used physical models of the space and developed a post-walkthrough interview with video recording. This avoided the mentioned limitations regarding privacy and anonymity, considering that we framed the visual images just on the physical model and the interviewee's hands (Fig. 2). With these physical models we improve the usability of elicitation artifacts, allowing spatial perception by blind participants.



Fig. 2. Post-walkthrough interviews with physical models.

The mentioned method shows several advantages and limitations. One advantage is that it allows to conduct interviews with a deep spatial experience, using spaces and situations where a conventional walkthrough interview with audio and visual recording cannot be allowed. Another advantage is the ability to gather more spontaneous information from participants during the walkthrough experience, which may be limited if it was audio or visually recorded.

Furthermore, this information can be verified through exploration in the post-walkthrough interview. However, we identified a limitation regarding the participant's spatial memory. A few times the interviewees forgot some spatial details, which they perceived during the walkthrough. But, paradoxically, this forgetting can provide interesting data, because the researcher can perceive a hierarchy in the participants' comments: if an issue is really important most of the participants will not forget about it.

3.3 Discussion

In some spaces researchers may not be able to perform real-time walkthroughs with audio or visual recording due to their intrinsic conditions. Often, a post-walkthrough interview can allow a close contact with the spatial reality which they are questioning. Flyvbjerg [34] states the importance of closeness of the case study to real-life situations, arguing that the distance to the studied object may lead to stratified knowledge.

Introducing representational artefacts in interviews, to obtain a deeper relationship with the experienced spaces, was already explored by visual ethnography, specifically by photo elicitation. This technique was explored by photographer John Collier Jr. in the 1950's and presented in a research developed with Alexander H. Leighton, an anthropologist, where pictures are presented to the interviewees as an aid to interviewing [35].

In our understanding, architectural researchers who only use visual representations in their studies may be more easily inclined to gather visual details from their interviewees. If physical models are used instead, these representations can support visual perception as well as other sensory modalities. Vermeersch [3] states that representational artefacts play an important role in the reality architects work in, establishing a relationship with their design priorities.

When architectural researchers visualize they are studying, they can be sensorily limited if they are using visual ethnography only. Our findings suggest that a post-walkthrough video recording interview, combined with the model elicitation, may contribute to a more inclusive and sensory rich ethnographical achievement, integrating the invisibility qualities of the space.

4 CONCLUSION

This paper has demonstrated the feasibility of using qualitative methods for an architectural researcher in the condition of blindness. Furthermore, the methodological adaptations developed allowed to identify two different methods and their inherent techniques. The interlocking building blocks in user-centred design discussion groups and the model elicitation in post-walkthrough interviews, both hold potential to contribute towards designing inclusive built spaces in a multi-sensory way.

There is motivation for future qualitative studies to be developed: one on the comparability between the presented prototype and Lego interlocking building blocks, in inclusive creative discussion groups; the other on the comparability between real-time conventional walkthroughs and post-walkthroughs interviews using spatial elicitation through physical models.

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DIARIZING AS AN AUTO/EDUCATIONAL MOMENT FOR EARLY RESEARCHERS

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Abstract

In this paper I want to introduce some ideas to how the research diary could be an auto/educational moment for early researchers involved in a qualitative inquiry. Research diary is often conceived as a tool researchers can use to record their own experience. Furthermore, the research diary can even become a training tool especially for early researchers or PhD students. I think it could also become a reflexive journal where to write questions on how to lead a research, revealing our own prior knowledge and connecting theory with personal practice. All this could improve critical and reflective skills useful both at design time either in collecting and analysing our data. To do so it takes to locate a method and a strategy. I use this strategy in my actually doctoral research with the purpose of evaluate my theory about the reflexive diary with the practise.

Keywords: research diary, reflexivity, self-training.

1 A REFLEXIVE JOURNAL: BEYOND THE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

I'm a PhD student in Education and Communication and I'm involving in a qualitative study. When I began my PhD school I had so many questions about how to conduct a research. Some of them were: how shall I do research? What are the criteria to identify a "good" or a "bad" research? What kind of abilities do I need to conduct a research? How to make decisions about my research path? Does my research design apply parameters that are appropriate to the methodology used? What kind of cognitive and relational skills should a researcher have to do an interview? So I started to write them in a research diary. Dialogues with colleagues and tutors are invaluable resource to find out any kind of answers, suggestions and other questions. Thus I was wondering if the research diary could be a training tool for early researchers. How a research diary may be useful for me? How it may help me conduct my research? The use of the research journal was grounded in my epistemological position of social constructionism, where actions and communications:

[...] do not occur in a social vacuum, therefore we need to take account of the wider context or social embeddedness of human action in order to gain a full understanding. This is equally applicable to the research situation. [1:216]

All "truths" are contingent. By accepting Sandelowski and Barrosos' [2:215] description of findings as "partly composed of the knowledge, beliefs, and proclivities of researchers, we are and bring with us into the project". Some qualitative researchers claim that it is not possible to distinguish theory from practise, observer from observe and researcher from research. Thus any effort to control the influence of the one on the other is an illusion. [3:744] With these assumptions I have started to

write on a research diary plenty of my beliefs, knowledges and theories about what I think the researcher shall be and do. We can't consider ourselves neutral human beings. With the research diary my intent is to render as transparent as possible the subjectivities inherent to the researcher and the research process which influences the interpretations generated. [1:210] Used in this way the research diary served to record our assumptions, beliefs and goals and the interdependence of ourselves with our actions and perception. Bateson [4] introduces the idea that ontology and epistemology cannot be separated:

His [human being] (commonly unconscious) beliefs about what sort of world it is will determine how he sees it and acts within it, and his ways of perceiving and acting will determine his beliefs about its nature. The living man is thus bound within a net of epistemological and ontological premises which—regardless of ultimate truth or falsity—become partially self-validating for him. [4:314]

Many qualitative researchers are according with the idea of the presence of the researcher into the search – and not only in the auto-ethnography. [3] For example Merrill and West say:

The researcher should take into consideration his/her presence in the research: she/he takes decisions about questions, method, setting, contexts, ethics, participants. There is a personal side to the research. [5]

We are present in our research with our biography, knowledges, attitudes, desires, emotions, culture, frames of reference, set of presuppositions. Ellis and Bochner [3] support the idea of reflexive that becomes an important component in the narrative turn in the human sciences and should not be bracketed “in the name of science” [3:744]. Thus I have started to investigate on the concept of reflexivity. Celia Hunt claims that it is a:

[...] cognitive and emotional process that enable knowledge of the world and one self to be acquired through a relaxed kind of intentionality operating intuitively at a low-level of consciousness but giving rise to conscious reflection and action. [6:67]

Johnson and Duberleys' assertion that any reflexive researcher needs an understanding of their own epistemological assumptions in relation to reflexivity [1:210]. I used this term to refer to the emotional and cognitive process of critical reflection [7] on the knowledge and the experience produced during the research and the researcher's role in this process. I believe that it could illuminate the researcher subjectivity that emerges in the various search steps: topic choice, questions, research design, data gathering, interpretation data. Reflexivity is the presence of the researcher within the research process and the text. Relating to this claim reflexivity “shows that analysis and interpretation of data calls for agency and responsibility”. [8:73] Hence we have the responsibility to gain awareness of our frame of reference and the interdependence of theories and practice. Reflexive could be the way to achieve rigor in the research process. It may be that researchers are conducting their research in a reflexive way, but it is rarely being reported. [1]. For this reason I think diarizing is a very important practice. In this way the research diary becomes a reflexive journal.

2 DRAWING A DIARIZING METHOD

Keeping a reflexive journal helps to locate a method and a strategy. First, before thinking about what and how to write, it is helpful to choose an "attractive" notebook we really like, in order to stimulate

our motivation to use it, especially when we have no time or will. The aesthetic dimension is so important in our life because I think that we are more efficient and happy when surrounded by beauty. As regards contents and style, a possible strategy is that of following at least three levels of experience using different colours. These levels correspond to three different times of experience processing, trying to connect practice and theory. The first level refers to describing a research's situation; the second one relates to reflection ; the third level includes the reflexive concept. The first level contains researcher experiences and practises described in aesthetic or narrative way. Researchers could report:

- episodes (e.g. scenes of an interview);
- excerpts of conversations (e.g. the dialogue preceding the interview);
- drawings of significant places (e.g. where the interview take place);
- details that maps that could highlight the type of relationship between people(e.g. the distance between interviewee and interviewer);
- positions of the bodies in the scene (standing up, sitting on the sofa or on the chairs?).

Both the aesthetic material and the narrative transcription of dialogues have to be described from a factual point of view, trying to put our thoughts in brackets. This runs against our natural inclination to judge and use cognition to evaluate experience. Choosing words to describe something is a very hard exercise because if they are not used properly the language may not be neutral and transparent. Whether we apply language to ourselves or to the world there always is slippage, inexactness, indeterminacy. [3:747]. Sometimes it might be smart to think differently and change the way we collect details: use metaphors [9], drawing places or relations and describing scenes using just one sense (sight, smell , touch, hearing). [10] Using aesthetical languages:

Have the power to enhance stories, to include in the picture marginalized [...], to add new and unsuspected meaning, to attract and convince listeners, to create new spaces for dialogue and sharing, but also to heal the traditional disconnections between mind and nature[...].[11:11]

Using another way to communication may help us to get surprised and recognize new details, or actions, thoughts that we never imagined. Our words are revealing our inner world and how we are choosing them depends on the climate of the scene.

The second level corresponds to the Art of asking and reflection about the situation. The questions could be about the reasons of my choice (why we described this scene and not another?), assumptions, beliefs, culture frame, concepts, way of thinking, feelings, relations, and the context (visible and invisible). At this stage it becomes interesting to see how our cognitive, emotional and contextual conditions, as well as those of the others, contribute to the progress of the research (e.g. which implied theory drove our action when we got prepared to interview?) and how they meet, coordinate and live together. The second level highlights the emotional and cognitive climate of the scene (ideas, prejudices, intentions, expectations) and how it has affected what happened, observed or implemented with/by other people. In this level judgments, assessments, feelings, beliefs, purposes are very important in order to gain awareness about why and how shall we do what we do in which contexts with whom? Mezirow [7] suggests that the beliefs and assumptions shape and influence our perspective actions and being in the world. The diary could be a collection of beliefs, frames of references, premises, prejudices, arguments assertions, assumptions, hypothesis, postulates, postulations, supposition, thesis. Dirx suggests that: " the path of understanding to the

inner world leads though the outer world". [12:129] According with Dirx I would add "and vice versa". The researcher's inner world is not a monolithic and unchanging system.

In the third level the researcher plays with reflexivity. In order to understand these categories I refer to Celia Hunt's description about the difference of reflection (second level) and reflexivity (third level):

Where reflection could be said to involve taking something into oneself - a topic, an event, a relationship – for the purpose of contemplation or examination, reflexivity involves putting something out in order that something new might come into being. [6: 66-67]

This step is a further reflection produced by the connection between the first and second ones referring to the theoretical knowledge (which authors or works do we call to mind?) and the reflexive competence, both with respect to our own research path (which questions and hypotheses do we have in mind? Are they those we started with?) and the way we do research (which implied "research" theory do we follow at that particular time?). What can these distinctions be useful for? In which way does breaking down our experience into these three levels train ourselves? In the third level researchers could connect theory (lectures, books, methodological articles) and personal practice. The researcher becomes competent to go beyond the personal experience and links it with broader meaning.

3 RESEARCH DIARY LIKE TRAINING TOOL

I believe that the research diary could be a training tool. Research is a learning experience, like Formenti suggests:

While we were learning how to conduct a research we were also learning "how", "why" and "with whom" and "what for". We learn through (inter)action, experience, and conversation. [8:70]

Reflexive diary not only keeps track of the research but also trains for developing a more aware glance at the process and the interconnections between objects, people and contexts and our theoretical and epistemology premises [4]: the theories which guide our actions but also the mode of detection we prefer (e.g. visual, auditory, etc.). These premises are not stable. They could change and produce a learning process. Challenge the researcher's assumptions means "implement processes aimed to systematically challenge our perspectives [...]" [8:72]. Dirx argues that:

[...] learning experience [education] that we find personally meaningful, however, may challenge at a deep and fundamental level our existing ways of thinking, believing or feeling. Such experiences render present structures of meaning problematic, as if what we have previously known or held to be true is now hopeless irrelevant and even wrongheaded [12:132].

I think researchers need a research diary in order to gain awareness and consciousness of our frame of reference through reflexivity to notice the transformation of them. So we can be familiar with our researcher premises and during the process challenge them through the experience. Moreover reflexive journal is not only aimed to answer the reflective question: "What and how did I learn these". But also at a reflexive stage: "How did I learn about learning itself?", when it touches presuppositions, cultural frameworks, family scripts that were acting in the learning process. [8:69-70] This way the writing process is generative in at least three ways:

- improve critical and reflexive skills useful both at design time either in collecting and analysing data;
- it increases early novice researchers' expertise of observing and listening to;
- their curiosity about their posture and way of doing "research" emerging from the analysis of their experience in the field.

These skills can help us to tolerate the uncertainty, the unexpected, the conflicts and contradictions characterizing a research path.

4 CONCLUSION

Miles and Huberman argue that:

[...] the good qualitative research requires careful record keeping as a way of connecting with important audiences. The first audience is self. [13]

Hence for early researchers and PhD students diarizing is a good occasion gaining awareness about theoretical frames of reference, connecting theory and practise, and making visible research choices and process. Moreover it can even become a training tool. This way it is possible to keep track of field observation, review hypotheses, questions and methods and find new paths or lacks within a process that finally results to be other than linear. I think that to do so you need to locate a method and a strategy. The diary could be organized in this way using different colours. The first level refers to describing a research experience. The second expresses the reflections about thoughts, feelings, assumptions, beliefs from me or other participants. The last level expresses the reflections on reflections, or thinking about our thinking. Used in this way the reflexive diary serves a number of functions: to learn about how to conduct a research, challenging our frames of references about how a research should be conducted and play with reflexivity as signals of transparent and research rigor, credibility, validity of the process.

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INSTITUTIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY (IE): A METHOD OF INQUIRY TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT OF THE ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD (EHR) ON HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS AND THEIR PATIENTS.

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Abstract

One of the most significant changes in healthcare delivery has been the implementation of the electronic health record (EHR) [1]. Healthcare providers such as physicians and nurses have been largely blindsided by the revolutionary impact on their practice and the relationships they have with their patients because of the EHR [2]. Institutional Ethnography (IE) offers a method of inquiry that allows the researcher to gain insight into the impact of the EHR in everyday practice and links this understanding to the priorities of the Healthcare Institution. This approach was developed by Dorothy E. Smith and is rooted in Marxist/Feminist Theory. What differentiates IE from many other qualitative research methods is that it provides a voice to those impacted by institutional policies and priorities. This study explains how the EHR is a “black box” that structures provider practice. A “black box” can be considered a process, or device where the inputs and outputs are understood and known, however where the internal workings are unclear to the user. Key findings from this study include that the introduction has led to alienation. The focus of documentation in care delivery has shifted from monitoring individual patient progress to recording data pertinent to Institutional Priorities (IPs). This shift has decreased the autonomy of care providers, altered the trust relationship between healthcare providers and patients, and created barriers to critical thinking.

Keywords: Institutional Ethnography, Electronic Health Record, Institutional Priorities.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Literature

The introduction of the integrated electronic health record (EHR) has been one of the most dramatic changes in healthcare delivery. The integration of multiple stakeholders in a single computer application has had many unexpected consequences. Traditionally, the main stakeholders in the patient record were the care provider (e.g physician, nurse, physical therapist) and the patient. The integrated electronic health record allowed other stakeholders such as: risk managers, quality improvement officers, billers, regulators, legal departments and others to joined the ranks of patient record users [3]. With many more stakeholders having simultaneous access to and input into the health record, the EHR has introduced changes to patient care delivery that has taken many healthcare providers by surprise. Health care providers' support of the EHR was high based on important benefits such as accessibility, elimination of a illegible handwriting and safety features, however, the unintended consequences on patient care delivery and the relationship between

providers and patients has led to increased concerns regarding its effects.

From its initial purpose of being a record of the individual patient's health condition, the health record has evolved over the past century to become a tool used for institutional risk management, policy making, insurance reimbursement and assessing institutional quality [8]. This change has been amplified by the introduction of the Electronic Health Record (EHR) in which the data entered can be accessed and used with great ease [4] [5]. The Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently announced a requirement that hospitals measure their quality of care in the form of core measures [6] [7]. Although much research has been done on the time and cost benefits and the effectiveness of the EHR, little to nothing is known about the interface between the everyday care that Care providers give and how that care is reflected in the EHR. Instead, it is assumed that the EHR contains an accurate reflection of the patient care and assessments provided by the care provider. Those assumptions become increasingly important to examine as the data from the EHR are increasingly used for research and other purposes, such as making policy and measuring the quality and performance of care delivery [9]. When care providers enter the care provided in a patient's EHR, the intent is to accurately reflect the patient's clinical condition [10] [11] [12]. When documented data are used for ongoing patient care, the clinician is comparing the data from that single patient over time. The patient remains a consistent factor to fall back on and validate the accuracy of the recorded data. This does not hold true when data derived from patient records are used for other purposes, such as research to explain population-based problems or determine population outcomes. The usefulness of these aggregated data is open to question because the meaning of the data itself can be unclear (for example, the context within which it was obtained may be unknown). However, as healthcare informatics and the EHR have evolved, these data have become established as the foundation for multiple purposes, without understanding the context of how these data are collected and the variability within these contexts [15]. The use of new technologies in the healthcare setting has routinely resulted in moral issues that follow their implementation, such as life sustaining equipment, kidney dialysis [13].

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this study was to gain deeper insight into the (side) effects of the EHR. That secondary effects would occur is no surprise, as every new technology comes with unanticipated side effects. An example of this is how social media was used to influence the United States elections by distributing fake news. It is unlikely that the developers of social media sites anticipated this effect when developing their programs. Another example is how Smart phones have changed social relations and social norms such as being occupied with a device rather than with the people we are present with in real time and space. This study focuses on what the electronic health record does "with" care providers and patients rather than "for" them. Answering these questions can lead to important insights on how we can update future technology in a manner that limits unwanted effects or on how and when to use future renditions of the EHR. To achieve this goal this study used Institutional Ethnography as method of inquiry.

2 THE STUDY

2.1 Conceptual Framework

This study builds on the intellectual work of sociologist, Dorothy Smith [16] [17] [18] and two of her students, Marie Campbell and Janice Rankin [19] who are nurses in addition to sociologists. Institutional Ethnography is rooted in Marxist and Feminist Theory. Marxist Theory becomes evident in the underlying assumption that most actions by real people in everyday life are driven by the institution. With the term "institution" Smith does not refer simply to an organization but rather to something broader such as that which is commonly referred to as "the system". The "institution" of

healthcare includes all parties that impact the delivery of care--hospitals, schools and universities that train care providers, policy makers, the accrediting bodies, insurance companies, the Department of Health, the justice and legal system etc. The "institution" typically becomes visible in the form of texts. These can include policies, guidelines, documents such as insurance policies, statutes and laws. The EHR has become a unique clearinghouse of institutional texts. It is important to point out that institutional texts are not limited to paper or electronic documents; they might present themselves as signs or labels. For example, a traffic light or stop sign can be considered an institutional text. Every institution as well as individual players within an institution have their priorities. For instance, a public health department might have a priority to monitor disease activity within a certain population. These priorities are referred to as institutional priorities. Institutional Ethnography offers a unique research approach that makes visible how decisions and everyday health and care work are coordinated by institutional texts. In this study the focus will be on the EHR as an instrument that coordinates institutional texts to make visible the connection between the actual day-to-day experiences of care providers and patients and how these are coordinated by the organizational priorities.

2.2 Design

This Institutional Ethnography was designed using healthcare provider observations, focus groups with healthcare providers, and individual interviews with healthcare providers, administrators and other individuals familiar with the healthcare institution. During the healthcare provider observations, notes were made regarding how the providers worked with the EHR. During individual interviews clarification was sought regarding the reasoning behind the healthcare providers' decisions while working with the EHR, especially as they pertained to patient contact. During the interviews with administrators and experts of the healthcare institution, questions were aimed at understanding the nature of institutional texts that shaped the electronic health record.

2.3 Subjects and Setting

The inclusion criteria for this study included either participants who were professional healthcare providers and practiced in direct care provision or were administrators and institutional experts who had knowledge of both the integrated EHR and institutional priorities. Participants with different types of practice background were recruited. For the study 4 Focus groups were held at a psychiatric homecare agency on the east coast of the United States. One focus group consisted of administrators, one focus group had a mix of care providers and administrators and two focus groups only had care providers. Four additional focus groups were held at a large teaching and tertiary medical center in the Midwest. Three of these focus groups were held with care providers and one with administrators. Finally, 21 individual interviews were held with healthcare providers and administrators. These interviewees were identified based on expertise. Data for this study was collected from 2010 – 2015. An effort was made to have a culturally and gender diverse participant group.

The rationale for the selection of health organizations was: 1) the organizations had recently implemented and integrated EHR 2) there was support within the organization for this research 3) the organizations were large nonprofit healthcare providers and could be considered mainstream in their practice and philosophy.

2.4 Procedure

Institutional review board (IRB) approval and Research Ethics committee approval was obtained from the researchers' institutions and from the research organizations prior to the initiation of the study. Participants were recruited in three ways: 1) the study was explained in a staff meetings with an opportunity provided to ask questions; 2) an email explaining the study was sent to care providers from a representative within the institution to assure that the researchers do not have direct access to email addresses; and 3) a flyer was posted in the staff rooms. Interested prospective subjects were asked to contact one of the researchers who could answer any questions. Participants for individual interviews were identified by 1) Identifying experts (this was especially true for Institutional Experts) and 2) Participants who responded to the emails or flyers, but who were not a part of the focus groups.

The focus groups were held in private spaces provided by the healthcare organizations. At the beginning of each group or interview, informed consent was obtained from the participants along with the completion of a demographic information form that included age, sex, educational level, years worked as a care provider, years worked with a paper record and with the EHR. Participants were asked to select a pseudonym to protect their identity and name tags were made so that participants were addressed by these chosen names. Each focus group session lasted approximately 120 minutes. Focus groups were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim by a professional transcription company familiar with social science research and, therefore, familiar with the necessity for confidentiality.

3 FINDINGS

3.1 The "Black box"

The EHR functions as a "black box" and as thus has become the interface between the healthcare provider / patient and the institution. The term black box in both technical and social science parlance is a device or system that, for convenience, is described solely in terms of its inputs and outputs. One need not understand anything about what goes on inside such black boxes. One simply brackets them as instruments that perform certain valuable functions [20]. The care providers are asked a plethora of questions in the EHR, however they are often not familiar with the purpose. The EHR has become the ideal tool to insert questions that generate data needed to meet the institutional priorities. Historically, in the paper record, the control of what was documented lay predominantly in the domain of the care providers who performed the actual work. The integrated EHR has led to data being standardized and the need for uniform data across care settings, much of which is programmed with input from, but out of the control of the care providers. The amount of data collected has greatly increased because of the amount of data needed to meet the institutional priorities. The control of determining what is documented is no longer near the bedside but moved to the highest levels of the organization. No longer are the care providers the predominant users of the documentation system. What is documented is now equally determined by other users such as quality improvement managers, billers, legal departments etc. With this evolution in documentation, the EHR has become a black box to care providers who are responsible for inputting data.

3.2 Institutional Priorities

There are multiple institutional priorities that have entered at the bedside through the EHR. Some of the main priorities identified in this study will be discussed here. Prior to the EHR, the primary focus of the patient record was patient care and care coordination. For the other institutional priorities,

medical records were accessed on an "as needed" basis and rarely simultaneously with client care. It is important to recognize that many of the institutional priorities were already present in the paper record, however that voice and role was secondary. .

3.2.1 Legal

Legal departments have increasingly gotten more involved in the healthcare delivery process. Legal departments have a key role in determining what data need to be collected to be successful in a lawsuit or another legal situation. Examples of data that now need to be collected by care providers on an ongoing basis are questionnaires that ask about safety hazards in patients' daily lives or the documentation of frequent checks done on patients. In case a patient harms him or herself, the documentation demonstrate that procedures have been adequately followed. These requirements from the legal institutional priorities have greatly influenced the black box "inputs" of healthcare documentation.

3.2.2 Finance and Billing

Finance and billing departments have also greatly influenced what are the required inputs into EHR. Additional questions or data points are now required to maximize billing. Much of what is billed the patient is based on documentation points. For example, patients with delirium and inability to care for themselves, additional data is required to be entered, not for care delivery, but to substantiate higher payment rates. Ironically, additional time is required for documentation purposes versus increased direct care provision. Care providers are held accountable to assure documentation meets the financial institutional priorities through the required input fields on the EHR.

3.2.3 Patient Satisfaction

The online environment created by the EHR has increased the reporting of quality data and patient satisfaction data. These data are not only visible to the public but are increasingly used to pay organizations incentive or bonus payments. In some organizations, care providers are required to document certain satisfaction questions with the goal of raising patient satisfaction scores. This can include required questions regarding pain experience, repositioning needs and the need to go to the bathroom. Such documentation can change the focus of patient rounding from a personal interaction to data gathering for meeting higher institutional priorities around patient satisfaction.

3.2.4 Regulatory and Accreditation

Accreditation and regulatory organizations have historically used the patient record as a source of information to determine if hospitals or clinics are meeting certain guidelines. However, the EHR has facilitated the requirement to answer specific questions and enter data points that are monitored by external regulatory agencies. Overnight, organizations can change what questions care providers need to ask to their patients in response to changes in regulatory outcomes, ensuring up to date compliance by care providers. For example, mandatory assessments of all patients for fall risk or self-cancer checks can ensure that these institutional priorities are met, even if the questions themselves are not the most relevant for the care provision needed for a specific patient.

3.2.5 Research

It has become much easier for researchers to collect data using the EHR. This is particularly true when monitoring societal health issues or when performing research on certain diseases e.g. diabetes or cancer. An example of this is monitoring mental health well-being on patients that have high risk for anxiety or depression. Research has an increasing role in the number and types of questions being asked and analysis of the data collected, with the care provider less in control of what and how patient documentation occurs. This additional documentation is often for aggregate research data and less for individual patient care.

3.2.6 *Quality Improvement Initiatives*

Quality improvement initiatives such as LEAN can now be hardwired in the EHR to promote maximum efficiency by caregivers. The reordering of supplies and resource management such as staffing can more easily be triggered by documentation in EHR. For example the monitoring of a patient discharge according to the EHR and the actual time a patient leaves the unit can more closely be tracked and monitored for overall institutional efficiency priorities versus individual patient needs and circumstances. Healthcare organizational leadership has increased influence over what is documented in relationship to the processes they believe are important.

3.2.7 *Inter-organizational Collaboration*

Increasingly organizations are working closer to collect and share data regarding patient outcomes. Leaders in this area are the neonatal intensive care units which nationally collect data that can give insight into best practices. Even though these initiatives are laudable they often do lead to increased documentation by the care provider.

3.2.8 *Patient Care/Coordination*

Finally, a key role of the EHR continues to be to collect information that can facilitate better care delivery and coordination. Much of this information was historically collected on communication sheets or verbally by the nursing staff. These were impermanent parts of the record. Now, with the EHR requirements, the medium for this is more often electronic versus face to face conversations or communication notes outside of the formal medical record. Due to the nature of many EHR systems the contextual nature and nuances of care concerns or family preferences is lost or diminished.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Alienation

With the introduction of the EHR, there have been many changes in the work of healthcare providers and their relationships with patients. In this paper, the focus is on how some of these changes have led to a sense of alienation by the care provider. The concept of alienation was presented by Karl Marx when he observed the impact of industrialization on workers [14]. It was evident in this study that alienation still is an important change that has resulted of the introduction for the EHR. Four types of alienation were identified.

4.1.1 *Alienation of the worker from the product of their work – Alienation from Patient Care*

While working with the EHR, the focus shifts from the patient to the computer. Care providers focus on what questions need to be answered rather than focusing directly on the patient. As the EHR allows for total and real-time surveillance of the care providers, something impossible until the introduction of the EHR, care providers are more concerned that their documentation is complete and meets organizational requirements. Care providers in large part have lost control of how they manage their care. Documentation requirements now drive the prioritization of what work or tasks get performed. Often the care provider is not exactly aware why they are performing certain tasks or asking certain questions. For instance, care providers, might need to ask a nun who is in her 90s if she has concerns with her sexuality when this is a required question in the EHR. In years past this would have never been asked unless the care provider determined this was an essential question.

4.1.2 *Alienation of the Worker from the Work--Relation of the Care Provider to the Work*

There has been a decrease in the autonomy of healthcare providers. The EHR has built-in algorithms that recommend treatments or care. These needs to be followed unless the care provider can

articulate a deviation to this recommendation. Especially in novice providers, without extensive practice knowledge, this has proven to be satisfactory, "they know what to do". This knowing however does not come internally but is presented to them through the EHR. When the EHR is down or not working, the novice is unsure and unclear what they should do. The value of critical thinking is increasingly only when the EHR fails, rather than an integral part of day-to-day care provision.

4.1.3 Alienation of the Worker to Him/her-self and Relationship to other Humans-- Professional Relationships between Healthcare Providers

Much of the communication between healthcare providers has been shifted to the EHR. This has given organizations an important position as a medium between care providers. Simultaneously, care providers are less connected to each other. The communication method has often also become more scripted by requiring a certain format in which communication should occur. The elimination of more personable communication has promoted a decline in the level of interpersonal relationships and trust among care providers.

4.1.4 Alienation from Other/Relation to his Species – Changes in how Care Providers see their Role in Society and Moral/Ethical Considerations

A shift can be observed in the role of healthcare providers in society. The EHR has shifted the role of the healthcare provider from a primary relationship with the patient to more of an interface role between the patient and the healthcare institution. Increasingly care providers are not fully aware why certain assessments are made and more so how the data are being used. As data are being stored in large databases for future use, care providers cannot even know how the information they enter will be used in the future. This has introduced a new ethical dilemma in that data that are currently collected could be used in ways that might harm patients in the future. For example, data entered in the EHR could be used by law-enforcement in the future. Care providers are also unaware of many of the different forces driving the EHR. There is a general awareness that certain questions are probably asked because of certain regulatory requirements or to justify payment, however there is no certainty around this. The ability of healthcare organizations to change questions or required data entry at any time has led to a loss of control at the level of direct client care practice.

5 CONCLUSION

Even though the EHR has had many benefits for care delivery and allowed healthcare institutions to impact care delivery and measure outcomes, it has also had the unintended effect of alienation in healthcare work. Much of the focus in the EHR is on the institutional priorities. It is argued that having a more democratic and balanced approach to the EHR, namely balancing the influence of healthcare provider priorities, patient priorities and institutional priorities, would be beneficial for healthcare, especially at the individual level. Transforming the black box to a "Glass box," in which the purpose of all data collection is clear to all care providers and patients, would not only lead to higher levels of engagement and having a voice heard but also allow healthcare providers to collect and enter data that do not incriminate or harm the patient.

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LIVING REFLEXIVELY IN THE RESEARCH: AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHY IN EMBODIED PEDAGOGY

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Abstract

The article develops a narration of how the “aesthetics of embodiment” helps to inform epistemological framing in education and create our reflection in new ways. It describes an auto-ethnographical exploration - including drawing, poetry, diary - to flourish embodied reflexivity as an alternative or adjunct to traditionally written texts waiting the body’s full experience in Academy.

Keywords: Epistemology of Education, Embodied Narrative, Reflexivity.

1 LOOKING AT RESEARCH IN EDUCATION FROM THE ECOLOGY PERSPECTIVE OF IDEAS

Complexity theory is not a unified theory, and some authors suggest that it is relatively new in science [1], others would argue that the perspective is not new [2]. Though the emergence of complexity theory into public and academic awareness is often seen to be connected to the Bateson’s ideas and Matura and Varela’s work. Bateson’s approach to ideas [3] was radically different from conventional science, which is often more preoccupied with boundaries of disciplines. Bateson was a teacher asking open questions in the classroom: “Why do our schools teach us nothing about the pattern which connects?” [4] and Maturana and Varela work’s on autopoiesis and enaction studied *embodied cognition* [5]. In their view, complexity has a long been of interest to those philosophers and scientists, who are part of what Gare calls “a counter tradition within science”, which has attempted to challenge “a mechanistic, reductionist view of the world” with “an organic view of the world” [6]. These ideas offer a view of the education as composed of multiple, interrelated and open dynamic systems. In this perspective, the systems are embedded within each other, and therefore cannot be considered in isolation from each other, though not all systems, however, are complex.

*The trees speak so little, you know.
They spend their entire life meditating
and moving their branches.
Just look at them closely in autumn
as they seek each other out in public places:
only the oldest attempt some conversation,
the ones that share clouds and birds,
but their voice gets lost in the leaves
and so, little filters down to us, nothing really.
It’s difficult to fill the shortest book
with the thoughts of trees.
Everything in them is vague, fragmented.
Today, for instance, on the way to my house*

*hearing a black thrush shriek,
the last cry of one who won't reach another summer,
I realized that in his voice a tree was speaking,
one of so many,
but I don't know what to do with this sharp deep sound,
I don't know in what type of script
I could set it down. [7]*

Written texts are central to formal education, especially in Academia, but complexity theory offers a possibility to review this hegemonic idea of learning as merely individual, cognitive and acquisitive [8] in order to explore alternative ways of writing more sensitive of poetic wisdom. Complexity theory suggest individuals become interested in transformation (and self-transformation) when they accept and linger between stability and instability held within minimal structures richly connecting individuals to one another [9]. Tensions between these polarities are lived within a dialectical balance, a dynamic balance that requires attention of lived experience of the body during the learning process. The desire to be more sensitive to the body, and to the embodied and embedded relationships that are constantly built in Academic life, brought me - a doctoral student and a practitioner of the Feldenkrais Method of training - to investigate the role of the body in the research process.

November, 10, 2016, 10.00 a.m.

Milano Porta Nuova. Feldenkrais - Awareness Through Movement - Lesson

Trainer

"So maybe you open the window or go out for a walk, or maybe you sit silently, but whatever you do, it occurs to you to stay with yourselves, to go behind the words, behind the ignoring, and to feel the quality of this moment of being, in our hearts, in our stomachs, for yourselves, and for all of the millions of others in the same boat. You start to train in openness toward this simple moment. Maybe this moment of awareness becomes your personal teacher."

My resonance

Dynamic In-between space

*Stability and Change
Rigor and Imagination
Order and Chaos
Limits and Possibilities
Expected and Unforeseen.
All in all
[inner voice]
It's the tree of life.*

[Feldenkrais Method consists of movement lessons conducted with groups by verbal instructions for movement, called "Awareness Through Movement", as well as individuals hands-on explorations including manual touch called "Functional Integration". I focus on the verbal movement instruction approach in this paper.]

2 THE AESTHETICS OF EMBODIMENT

As Merleau-Ponty points out, the body lives inhabiting the world and the world inhabiting the body [10]. Where the body acts, in fact, it tells a story about the relationships between internal and external world. My understanding of practice-based research is informed by Ecology of Mind [3] and postmodern theories that understand the creation of knowledge as difference thereby producing different ways of living in the world. Lakoff and Johnson argue that the mind is inherently embodied, thought is most unconscious and the abstract concepts are largely metaphorical [11]. One way of understanding this is through theories of touch and embodied. Touch and movement become modes of knowing and making sense thought relationality and poses in order to challenge the dominant discourses in Academic contexts. Human body is not, and could not be, a mere vessel for a disembodied mind. The concept of a mind separate from the body is a metaphorical concept [12]. Metaphors are aesthetic representations of human experience; living by them all the time, we build our worlds [12]. Adult Education is an active opening of the space between limitations and possibilities. The “aesthetics of embodiment” requires an embodied experience rich of sensorial perceptions. So how might our education institutions look like if we choose to train social workers and teachers to be guided by the aesthetic sensibility rather than disembodied studies?

Jabberwocky

*'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.*

*Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!"*

*He took his vorpal sword in hand;
Long time the manxome foe he sought—
So rested he by the Tumtum tree
And stood awhile in thought.*

*And, as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!*

*One, two! One, two! And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.*

*"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"
He chortled in his joy.*

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves

*Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe. [13]*

I am committed to investigating my research practices and pedagogical practices for the purpose of explore my sensorial experiences. This process is a significant part of self-reflexivity on practice-based research and it is often relevant to recognize the resonance of human experience at many levels, personally and professionally. The way we think has a lot to do with the way we perceive. Mabel Elsworth Todd in her book *The Thinking Body*, from 1937 [14], sustains that modern Western peoples have become totally focused on the upper part of their bodies in their pursuits of intellectual gains and the development of manual and verbal skills. This has transferred the sense of power from the base of the body, through the feeling of contact between the feet and the ground, to the top part of the body. Using the upper part of the body for purposes relating to power and control has upset our natural animal functions, and we have mostly lost contact with our acute, animal sensitivity. In my proposal, listening to our bodies does not intend to draw attention to specific psychological (bio)energetic influences or manifestations [15], but rather to the exploration of embodiment through an experiential learning process that is practical and active, according to the concepts of Moshe Feldenkrais [16]. Feldenkrais developed his movement practice in dialogue with a number of leading neuroscientists of his time: his theoretical models are informed by basic neuroscientific principles from historical context ranging from 1950's to the 1970's [17]. A particularly clear definition of "awareness" (he preferred this term to mindfulness in motion [18]) was defined as "a process of full concentration, a process of clear analytic action on the points you deal with at a particular moment involving a real use of an operation procedure [19]. Being aware is to be fully present with your direct experience, whatever you are doing, thinking or/and feeling; now and here. It involves the intention to step out of automatic reacting and come back to ground of present moments in the body and the breath [20]. If you have been to a Feldenkrais class you will recognise that "Awareness Through Movement" is built on a foundation of exactly this process of connecting the sensory-motor awareness to the present moment of conscious attention, while at the same time increasing your ability to integrate this enhanced self-awareness by anchoring it to a new kind of learning. The aim is not to find the correct way to learn, but to discover many different ways of learning. The objective of the proposal is to focus on embodiment in order to reflect about "learning how to learn" [21] and to share my experience for encouraging ways of attention on sensory perception in education; in Bateson's terms *aesthetic*, meaning sensitive to the connecting structure – that the human structure is essentially ecological and dynamic, vital and is in continual movement and evolution [22].

The aesthetics of embodiment involves turning towards the complexity with curiosity and kind attention. This is a counter cultural to the dominant ways we have of living, learning, teaching and researching. From the point of view of Feldenkrais Method, we are invited to turn towards what is complex and immersing ourselves in the process of Knowledge. Feldenkrais's work was to pay attention to his own experience to see what he could learn there, experiencing it as a profound learning of how to be in his body, how his mind is constituted by more than his head, how his self is more than what he is directly aware of. He sees that allowing and accepting all he is aware of is itself a transformative process. Creating and sustaining relationship in adult learning, also in Academia, involves sitting with what is complex, difficult and troublesome – often involving emotional pain of various kinds [23].

A Feldenkrais Lesson for the Beginner Scientist – TEDx Talks

Professor Dorit Aharon (Department of Computer Science, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel)

“One day my Kung Fu teacher came to me, it was while I was doing this kick, and he told me the wait pay attention to how you return your leg back from the kick. Now, actually, I never even knew that I'm returning my leg back from the kick; it always seemed to me like the kick ended with my leg up in the air and the rest didn't exist. Then it occurred to me that what actually happens it. It's exactly how I operate in life: I throw myself into challenges and, then, I don't care about how I come back from them. What we do with our physical body are our physical patterns are actually intimately connected to how we interact with life in general.

I want to give you four principles that I've extracted from body-mind methods and those principles, I think, are useful for overcoming obstacles and learning in general and while maintaining or sensitivity and creativity and there are built and our capabilities even in front of very difficult obstacles. Now, those principles don't only apply for physical movement, I think, they're apply for challenges for overcoming challenges in general and, in fact, they apply also for my scientific research.

The guiding principles of the Feldenkrais Method are:

- *Start within your comfort zone and make it even more comfortable,*
- *Not too easy and not too hard: pick an interesting challenge within your reach,*
- *More away from your desired place, and come back to it from different angles,*
- *Play with it, connect it to what you know, make it your own.” [24]*

My resonance

Tension between polarities

Known /// Unknown:

It's not a line that separates.

Possibility is a generative space:

It's a place full of Life?

3 EMOTION, MOVEMENT AND LATERAL THINKING IN EDUCATION

My research method is auto-ethnography [25]. It incorporates theories of life history, biography, transformation and critical reflection. This method encourages me to take risks, to experiment with different discourses, and to challenge habits. My goal is to offer a testimony to the value of giving attention to the body in education. In the paper, I'm weaving personal narratives, drawing, quotations from writers, who informed and inspired me, and reflections about (my) research. These texts are social facts that challenge the academic status of “rigor mortis” [26], and offer a broad and vital qualitative research method in education. By combining body study and movement with my own experience in scientific research, I'd like to suggest ways to balance the reasons of the brain and reasons of the heart [21], where “the heart has reasons of which reason knows nothing” [27]. The increasing presence of art in learning and in narrative research is an invitation to new epistemological challenges.

*Beauty — be not caused — It Is
Chase it, and it ceases
Chase it not, and it abides*

Overtake the Creases

*In the Meadow — when the Wind
Runs his fingers thro' it
Deity will see to it
That You never do it. [29]*

Aesthetic languages have the power to enhance stories, to create new spaces for dialogue and sharing, but also to heal the traditional disconnections between mind and body and, as well as perhaps, to disrupt the barriers separating research and practice, research and real life [30]. In reality, a human being seeks, and is destined to constantly maintain, an unstable balance. In this sense, aesthetic languages that are “sensitive to the connecting structure” [3], include any form of artistic exploration including drawing, poetry, music, dance, photography and film, and they all follow the logic of abductive reasoning [4], [22]. My research opens up to the possibility of exploring artistic means of expression to gain knowledge and as a learning method for life itself, or in other words, in the search for self [30]. Art pushes us towards the approach Bateson calls “the search for *patterns*” [21]. Art in all of its forms can offer an integrating experience, which involves the cultural language of symbols, our history, our mind and our body [31]. Specifically, art allows us to perceive multiple perspectives simultaneously. In reality, attention is a practice used by artists, and practicing this in daily life can teach us how to “make a real difference in a troubled and troubling world” [29]. Artists show us, through their capability to be in “the here and now”, how to find a way to always stay in the flow of life and to perceive one's self as a part of it.

*The Gingko, that Eastern tree,
In my garden plot now grows.
In its leaf there seems to be
A secret that the wise man knows.*

*Is that leaf one and lonely?
In itself in two divided?
Is it two that have decided
To be seen as one leaf only?*

*To such questions, I reply:
Do not my love songs say to you –
Should you ever wonder why
I sing, that I am one yet two? [32]*

4 THE FIVE WAYS OF EMBODYING REFLEXIVITY

The aesthetic experience is probably the most significant in exemplifying creative processes, which can generate reflections and changes in ideas and perspectives in transformative learning [33]. If

using the imagination raises the horizons of human beings, it is important to see how all academic theories are both a pathway and an obstacle at the same time. This tension gives origin to the possibility of an extension of the self, to the creation of innovation, to the embodiment of the wisdom [19], and to the possibility of narrating aesthetics and creative experiences [31]. Our present society, so complex and fragmented, needs both science and art to train researchers and citizens, who are capable of recognising the common dynamics, which subtend human beings' chance of living their lives as a project and an invention [34]. Transformative learning [35] involves very personal and imaginative ways of knowing, grounded in a more intuitive and emotional sense of our experiences [36] because "reason is not completely conscious, but mostly unconscious" [11]. This aspect of learning reflects a dimension of knowing that is manifest in the symbolic and narrative because "reason is not purely literal, but largely metaphorical and imaginative" [11] It is a view of learning through heart giving voice in a deep and powerful way to imaginative and poetic expressions of self and the world because "reason is not dispassionate, but emotionally engaged" [11].

In general, reflective practice is understood as a process of learning thought and from experience toward gaining new insights of self or/and practice [34], [35]. I propose five embodied ways of reflexivity by heart. These variants are studied by Finlay [37] and can be applied to distinguish between the types of reflection researchers and learners could engage in when reflecting on practice. I perform them by drawing and I choose the metaphor of heart to describe these processes. Reflective practice as *introspection* - 1st way - involves the researcher in solitary self-dialogue, in which he/she analyses emotions and meanings. *Intersubjective reflection* - 2nd variant [Fig. 1] - makes the researcher focus on the relational context.



Fig. 1

Mutual collaboration is the third way of reflective practice and it is a form of reflection-in-conversation between researchers and/or learners [Fig. 2]. Reflective practice as a *social critique* - 4th way - when a researcher thinks about coercive institutional practices in educational context (e.g. questions of power). Finally, reflective practice as *ironic deconstruction*, when a researcher represents something of the multiplicity and the ambiguity of meanings in peculiar social contexts. These forms of reflexivity are desirable dimensions of action-research in pedagogy and transformative learning because reflective practice can be enormously powerful tool to transform practice and improve research [38].

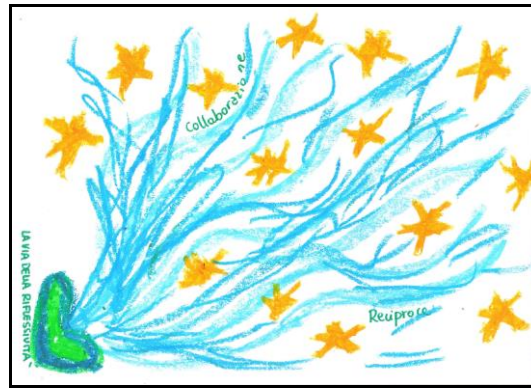


Fig. 2

This aesthetic position recognises the bond subject-world and involves being a part of the world as a whole, not as just as an onlooker. Art can help us make a difference in education because it sustains and encourages learners to value in the present the structure of our ecological bond with the “rest” of living organisms and to imagine a biologically diverse future. Bringing attention to the aesthetics of embodiment invites us to pay attention to the live of the world that surrounds us and to integrate the sense of separateness that amounts to a crisis in our times. In fact, many people today experience a separation between ethics and aesthetics, forgetting, as sustained by Joseph Brodsky, that aesthetics is the mother of ethics [39] because it actually contains it. So, attention to “the reasons of heart” is an opportunity to create interdependences between nature, art, science, research, and learning. In this way reflexivity opens us up to movement – to the dance of the world - and can generate differences.

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CREATIVE METHODS EXPLORING USER EXPERIENCE IN RESEARCH AND DESIGN OF HEALTHCARE ENVIRONMENTS: A SYSTEMATIZED REVIEW PROTOCOL

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Abstract

Increasingly we recognise attempts that explore user experience in healthcare settings both in research and design endeavours. Our primary interest is in identifying creative research methods (CRM) that are used to gauge the experience of healthcare environments. We see potential in an active involvement of patients and caregivers as experts, not only relying on their present and past experience, but also through CRM, accessing their latent needs and offering opportunities to formulate their vision of the future. We define the term creative in such a way that includes terminology common in both design and research practice. This protocol outlines the steps taken to systematically investigate what is known from existing literature about CRM exploring user experience in research and architectural design processes in healthcare generally or in cancer care in particular. It relays the search strategy for a database search and an additional search of grey literature. The protocol is expected to be helpful in carrying out reviews in related fields contributing to knowledge synthesis techniques for qualitative research. We furthermore anticipate that the dissemination of design-related research outside of peer-reviewed journals will continue and will require further work to ensure inclusion in processes of knowledge synthesis. The final review will give insight into why, where and how CRM are currently employed and applied to gauge the user experience of healthcare environments.

Keywords: architecture, design, creative research, healthcare, review protocol, user experience.

1 INTRODUCTION

In order to realise the inclusion of user perspectives in the design of healthcare environments we see collaborative efforts in research and design fields. The review reported on in this paper intends to investigate what is known from existing literature about *creative research methods* (CRM) exploring user experience in research and architectural design processes in healthcare generally or in cancer care environments in particular. Approaching patients and caregivers as experts, means not only relying on their present and past experience, but also accessing their latent needs and offering opportunities to formulate their vision of the future. Engaging stakeholders in a creative manner can be a way to gain a deeper understanding of experience. Also, co-creating experience in design is common where it concerns product design but this approach is only recently gaining ground in architectural design.

To clarify what we mean with CRM we propose looking at elements of research and design processes according to their *direction-of-fit*, a notion coined by philosopher John Searle [1] and applied to

design processes by Heylighen et al. [2]. In our search strategy CRM is one of three criteria that publications need to meet: firstly, the healthcare context as the setting; secondly, spatial experience as a primary interest; and finally CRM as part of the process or project. We go on to introduce our review case by situating it in relation to three related themes in the existing literature. Each of these themes brings together two of the aforementioned criteria and as such provides relevant terms that are used in the search. These themes are the physical qualities of the health/cancer care environment; the growing interest in ways to make sense of a building from a multisensory perspective and our communication of the experience of the healthcare environment. Fig. 1 shows

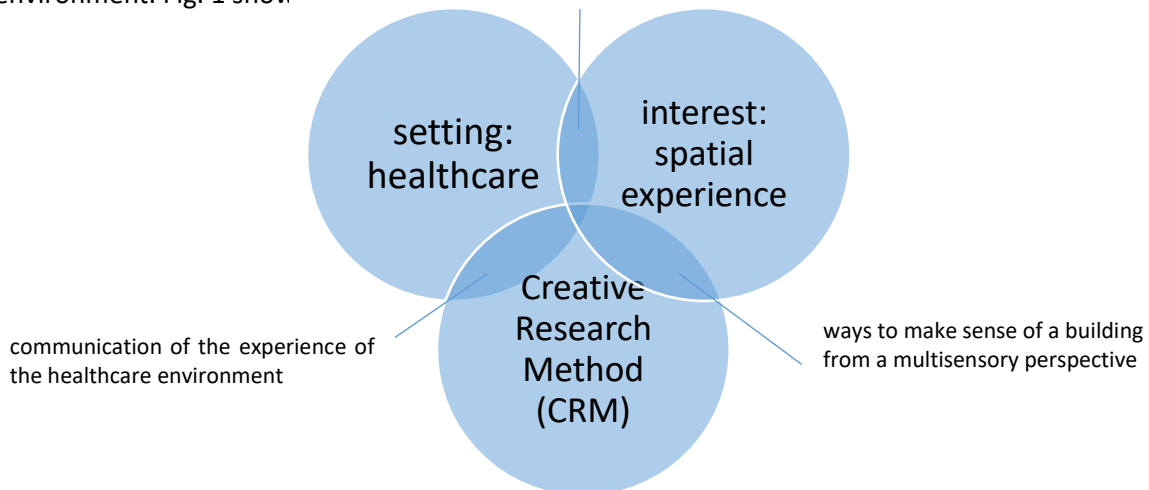


Fig. 1. Showing underlying links between search criteria and themes in the literature

By providing a protocol it is our intention to offer a detailed record of the steps taken to identify relevant publications. We limit ourselves to providing descriptive insights regarding the identification and selection process. Additionally the protocol is intended as an invitation to discuss the suitability of systematic reviews in design-related qualitative research.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Research and design

The boundaries between research and design have long since become blurred. Examples abound of human-centred design research as practiced in the design and development of products and services [3]. Designers find ways to delve into the user's perspective integrating insights to enhance and improve design. This kind of collaborative design, participatory design or co-creation considers the user a partner rather than the subject of study [4]. In a review focussing on co-creation Degnegaard discusses the concept of *dynamic value* and illustrates how, through changing roles in design process, (platforms of collected) user experience can be seen as having potential value. Researchers, designers and users switch and share responsibilities as they shift away from traditional supplier – product relations [5].

We recognise an enriched type of communication in the use of probes [6–8] and design games [9]. Yet others stress the importance of productively combining methods such as in the dialogue-labs

approach [10] and hybrid methods [11–13]. Collaborative design initiatives seem to surround us and as an umbrella term it can be considered a true buzzword [14]. Although these initiatives may not always have the exploration of user *experience* as primary goal we consider them methods that are used to creatively produce knowledge and disseminate results whilst emphasising the value of the voice of the user.

In a healthcare and design state-of-the-art review the authors acknowledge the need for CRM in healthcare settings particularly [15]: *“Using creative methods to engage people potentially allows the flattening of hierarchies that abound in the bureaucratic world of health and social care providing a voice to often marginalised stakeholders”*. They furthermore pinpoint challenges inherent to reviewing literature about healthcare and design research and practice. Where health research focusses on peer reviewed publications, their findings acknowledge that creative practitioners have a more varied approach including exhibition and performance, also using what they call ‘journalistic’ titles or unique names for research methods.

We also see research endeavours that wield arts-based terminology. There is a widespread understanding that arts-based methods in qualitative research have enabled in-depth access to the lived experiences of participants [16] and are considered particularly helpful in health research [17]. Boydell et al. phrase it as follows [18]: *“The arts in qualitative research were considered an opportunity for enhanced engagement of participants and audiences alike, a way to enrich communication and make research accessible beyond academia, and a method for generating data beyond the scope of most interview-based methods.”* At the same time it has become apparent that the generative skills are not always possessed by practitioners who have traditional research backgrounds [19].

Finally there is acknowledgement for the fact that field research results are not finding a way, a suitable format or ‘successful representation’ (as Diggins and Tolmie call it in [20]) to be communicated to design practice. The data are often there, yet the challenge is to transform them to designerly knowledge [21]. Where it concerns architectural design multiple studies have shown that gathering and/or using data about the situation architects are designing for is not prioritised [22]. There seem to be limited examples of CRM informing spatial or architectural design processes, although Sanders and Stappers recognise an emerging architectural discipline that they refer to as ‘design for serving’ which takes longer views and larger scopes of inquiry [3].

2.2 Using the term creative

In this review project we attempt to span both arts-based and design research methods, hence the choice for the term *creative*. In the following section we attempt to define a theoretical framework that allows room for both of these, defining what we consider CRM.

Where there is a mental state (a belief, desire, understanding, plan, ...) it is directed at an object. This intentional state can be described as having a directedness. It is Searle who first suggests a "direction of fit" for these intentional states [1]. Applying these ideas to design process Heylighen, Cavallin, and Bianchin [2] identify a distinct difference between design and research. In research the predominant direction of fit is world-to-mind: the better the insights gained in the world match with the truth in the mind, the more success. For the design practice it is rather a mind-to-world direction of fit. There is a search for new or better solutions to problems encountered in everyday living, in the world. Knowledge is created as a by-product of an activity with a different aim. Although there is a risk of over simplifying the matter, it is maybe sufficient to claim here that the majority of elements in a traditional research process have a world-to-mind direction of fit while a design process, aimed at changing a state in the world, has a predominantly mind-to-world direction of fit.

We consider all CRM as having components with a mind-to-world direction of fit and an attempt is made to position them on a continuum (fig. 2). At the one extreme we see research that – in the

interaction with users - generates artefacts, new or adapted materials that contribute to meaning making in combination with more traditional techniques. The predominant direction of fit is world-

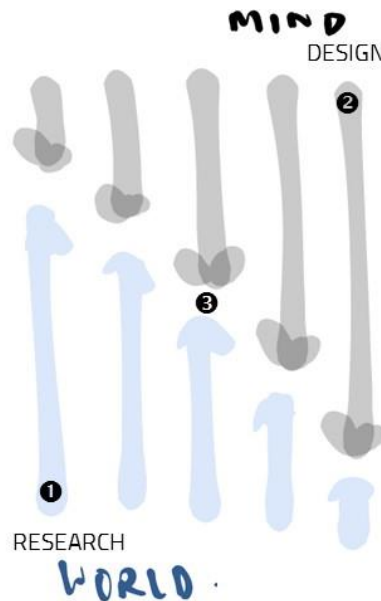


Figure 2 Positioning creative research methods on the basis of direction of fit.

- ❶ predominantly world-to-mind with mind-to-world elements
- ❷ predominantly mind-to-world with world-to-mind elements
- ❸ both mind-to-world and world-to-mind direction of fit

to-mind with mind-to-world elements. At the other extreme we see a design that is realised with the involvement of stakeholders through collaborative design activities. Here we speak of design activities with predominantly mind-to-world directions of fit. In the middle we see for example a case

where traditional research methods inform a design process. It is expected that only a limited number of studies include research methods with a mind-to-world direction of fit, as well as a process description of these data being utilised to inform an actual design.

2.3 Introducing the review case

2.3.1 Physical qualities of the cancer care environment

A growing body of research indicates that the physical healthcare environment has a considerable impact on patients' recovery and satisfaction [23,24]. For people in cancer care facilities the emotional and physical challenges are substantial and studies have already shown that a building design that takes into account the emotional needs of the user, can indeed play a supportive role [22,25]. A significant focus in the current design of healthcare facilities has been on outcomes that incorporate research and practical knowledge in evidence-based design. It does seem however that isolated factors of the built environment that have proven, positive clinical effects are rarely considered in a holistic way [23] or are even found to be in direct conflict with each other when compared [21].

Contemporary cancer care in academic hospitals encompasses a complexity and flow that patients become a part of, increasingly as outpatients [26], expected to travel to and fro for consultation and treatment, integrating a variety of new spaces into their lives. These centres generally have a scale that stands in stark contrast to the individual experience. Furthermore, little seems to be known regarding the particular characteristics or additional sensitivities of people affected by cancer when it comes to their experience of the built environment.

2.3.2 *Sensing and making sense of the building*

The question of how one experiences a building is not a new one and a consideration that architects and 'users' have held in mind throughout history. However, it is in the late 20th century that an interdisciplinary shift takes place in an attempt to embrace and understand multisensory experience. We consider this 'corporeal turn' an influential concept that allows us to set a timeframe. Paterson for example recognises a return to the senses in social research from the early 1990s onwards [27]. In reviewing the evidence on the importance of sensory design for intelligent buildings Kerr states that it is through the senses and through the application of sensory design that buildings come to life affording value to occupants [28]. He states that the expectations of stakeholders have simultaneously changed with respect to how buildings should react, interact and adapt to the natural environment and to the needs of the occupants.

Alongside the focus on the sensory we see a clear emphasis on *place* in research methods. Sarah Pink emphasises the importance of place in sensory ethnography. The place allows access to an intersubjective space that is co-created with participants [29]. Other studies also recognise the importance of experiencing place together to access knowledge, embodied knowledge that may not otherwise become apparent [30,31].

This goes hand in hand with development of tools that assist gauging or mapping the experience of the built environment such as a notation system for the senses [32] or layered scenario mapping [20]. The latter is a detailed scenario concerning spatial use over time and technical demands of a ship's bridge. The author (and practicing designer) claims the technique could also prove valuable in other professional, designed settings "... such as hospitals where health care professionals collaborate on treating patients over time in different locations" [20].

2.3.3 *Communicating about the experience of the healthcare environment*

For the patient the experience of the healthcare environment is intertwined with the healthcare service experience. To understand patients' experience it is vital to gather information about what they feel, sense and think and to facilitate a reflection on the experience [33]. There are examples of patients being creatively involved in designing the interface between user and service [34,35]. Where this includes a broad understanding of the subjective experience - *physical, sensual, cognitive, emotional, kinetic and aesthetic* – we have to acknowledge that it may be challenging to distinguish spatial aspects from service-related aspects. In a study of two day surgery centres findings suggest that managerial and spatial organisation are intertwined [36]. The designed environment communicates and implicitly conveys or conflicts with the hospital's care vision. Both affect patients' experience.

We see attempts to understand temporal and embodied experience of the healthcare environment [29,37,38] and examples of methods employed with people living with cognitive or sensory impairments [39]. Elements concerning the experience of the healthcare environment are also touched upon in a systematic review of the patient perspective on the quality of care [40].

3 METHODS

3.1 Objectives and research questions

As the use of CRM methods gains popularity so will the need for overviews of available literature. The objectives of this systematized review are therefore to: 1) carryout a systematic search to identify both research and design related publications using CRM; 2) examine and compare the features of the found methods; and 3) synthesise and summarise findings. On the basis of this review we intend to make an informed decision with regards to fitting methods for future research. It will therefore be crucial to include a quality assessment in a final stage [41,42].

Many key characteristics of scoping reviews are applicable to our approach however it is the intent to include an appraisal [43]. *“Simply producing a short summary or profile of each study does not guarantee helping those readers who might have to make important decisions based on the study findings”* (Pawson in [44]). As a final step of the review we will attempt to describe to what extent the chosen method of interaction with (potential) users or stakeholders is effective considering the purpose of the study or project described.

3.2 Technical details

3.2.1 Eligibility criteria

To be selected publications have to contain terms included in three search strings. The PICO and SPIDER search strategies for qualitative research as described by Cooke, Smith and Booth (2012) were used as a guideline in deciding on number and focus of search strings. These were defined as follows: (1) Setting: Healthcare Context (2) Interest: Spatial Experience (3) Design/ method: Creative Research. The study population or stakeholders were not specified although by including the term *patient* in search string 1 the population could be a deciding facet in meeting the Healthcare Context selection criteria. Search terms refer to a wide variety of care facilities. The MeSH term *delivery of care* was included here too.

The Spatial Experience string (2) ensures inclusion of studies relating to the design of the building or its interior. The aim is to find research that has been conducted to explore what happens to ‘products’ when they are used by people in the real world. The product being space, the architectural environment. This is also intended to include yet-to-be realised built environments. MeSH search terms *cancer care facilities, hospital design and construction, interior design and furnishings* were included here.

For the Creative Research string (3) the aim is to bring to the forefront all creative approaches or research methods where active involvement of stakeholders is emphasized. As previously described we define this based on a mind-to-world direction of fit. Due to the nature of our research and a commitment to engage with participants to gain understanding of both their unique and their common experiences, it is with this search string that we aim to incorporate studies that explicitly aim to give voice to the user. Techniques adopted in user-centered (design) research imply an active involvement and/or contribution that offers insights into their personal experience, however this alone does not imply inclusion as the mind-to-world direction of fit is the determining criteria here.

3.2.2 Information sources

Together with an information retrieval specialist decisions were made concerning the databases to search: Scopus, Web of Science, Ebsco, ProQuest, PubMed and Cochrane. To supplement the database findings a search of grey literature was conducted. The sources were chosen in consultation with all researchers. This search involved scanning titles in the following conference proceedings: Design4Health European Conference; Arts-based Research and Artistic Research Conference; Design

& Emotion Conference; Include Conference; CWUAAT and The European Academy of Design. The content lists of the following journals were also scanned: Health Environments Research & Design Journal; CoDesign; The Design Journal and Qualitative Health Research. The timespan searched was 1990 –June 2016 (or inception). For practical reasons the publications have to be written in English.

3.2.3 Search strategy

Key terms are listed for the three search strings. Compiling a comprehensive list involves searching

String 1 Healthcare Context	String 2 Spatial Experience	String 3 Creative Research	String 4 Search	
patient OR wellbeing OR "well-being" OR hospital OR healthcare OR "health care" OR "health-care" OR "healing environment" OR "care design" OR hospice OR clinic* OR infirmar ² OR "palliative care" OR "nursing home" OR cancer OR oncology OR Maggie* OR "social welfare" OR "hospice care" OR "delivery of health care"	"physical environment" OR "healing environment" OR "built environment" OR "interior design" OR "interior architecture" OR "spatial experience" OR "building experience" OR "physical surrounding" OR "building appearance" OR (building w/6 hospital) OR (physical w/6 architecture) OR (built w/6 architecture) OR "cancer care center" OR "cancer care centre" OR "cancer caring" OR "health* environment" OR "cancer care facilities" OR "hospital design and construction" OR "interior design and furnishings"	"co-creation" OR "co creation" OR cocreation OR "co-design" OR "co design" OR codesign OR "collaborative design" OR "arts-based" OR "arts based" OR "art-based" OR "art based" OR "co-research" OR "co research" OR coresearch OR "collaborative research" OR "arts-informed" OR "arts informed" OR "design inquiry" OR "context mapping" OR "design probe" OR "cultural probe" OR "empathy probe" OR "creative research" OR "creative practice" OR	"generative toolkit" OR "generative techniques" OR "mobile diary" OR "design charrette" OR "participatory design" OR "co-production" OR coproduction OR "co production" OR "user-centered design" OR "user centered design" OR "user-centred design" OR "user centred design" OR "design team" OR "critical design" OR "design workshop" OR "design lab" OR "critical artefact*" OR "critical artifact*" OR "people centred design" OR "people centered design" OR "human centered design" OR "human centered design" OR "multi*sensory ethnography"	#1 AND #2 AND #3

for commonly used terms in the literature. Particularly for search string three this requires an extensive and iterative process to define what terms meet the requirements of CRM as formulated in the background of this review. For every database the search is adjusted during an initial iterative process of trial and error. Searches are fine-tuned taking into account database-specific use of Boolean operators and wildcards. Fig. 3 shows an example of the search strings as they are used in the Scopus Database Search.

Fig. 3. Search strings (as used in the Scopus Database Search)

3.2.4 Study records

The first researcher carries out all initial searches and coordinates the management of the data. A logbook is used to keep a record of every search. Each search is given an identifying code and this same code is used as a tag for the retrieved publications. These are saved to a reference manager for future reference.

3.2.5 Selection process

Duplicates are removed and abstracts, with accompanying bibliographic information are collected in a MS Word/ Excel table. These are screened independently by two researchers. Disagreements are resolved in consultation. An item is given the benefit of the doubt and included when - due to a limited amount of information - it remains unclear whether a publication meets the selection criteria. Fig. 4 is a schematic representation of the search process including the number of publications selected at each step. Abstracts retrieved from the database search are added to those selected in the grey literature search. These are selected by scanning titles only. Here too the abstracts are screened independently by two reviewers.

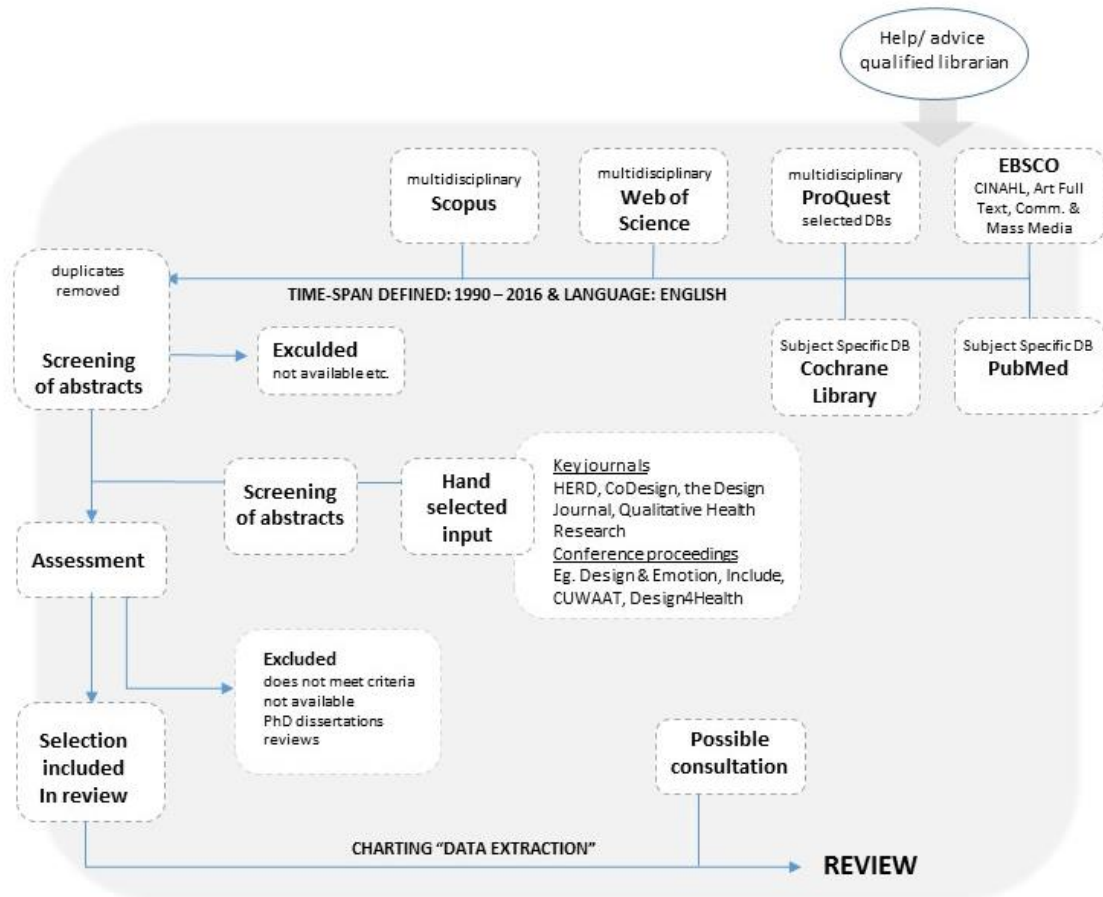


Fig. 4. Schematic representation of the systematized review

3.2.6 Data collection

In the first step of assessment full texts are collected where possible. Authors of the identified publications are approached when items are not available through library and online resources. We exclude reviews, theoretical and opinion papers as well as PhD dissertations. An initial data extraction overview is made while reading the first full publications. This extraction describes the following core features of the project or process described: why, what, who, where and when

A data extraction template is then made in MS Excel allowing a second researcher to extract data in an identical tabular and systematic manner. This includes an assessment regarding the effectiveness of the method.

4 DISCUSSION

A review protocol can potentially assist other researchers who embark on a similar review project. This protocol is the result of an iterative process that took place as we prepared our own review. As the research is ongoing we will briefly discuss some of its limitations.

The list of search terms was completed when a point of saturation was reached. However, it could be debated whether this process was indeed exhaustive. In cases it was challenging to decide whether a particular method is considered an umbrella term and is as such used as a keyword, or whether it is labelled and included through an with a general keyword such as *art-based methods*. In the case of *photovoice* and *photo-document* for example it was decided to exclude these. In particular database searches this changed the number of hits considerably. If one would decide to include as search terms specific methods the number of retrieved publications could increase considerably. At the same time it would be near impossible to then achieve an exhaustive list. It is important to keep in mind what Bettany-Saltikov says that *"... the validity (truthfulness) of the review results is directly related to the thoroughness of the search and its ability to identify all the relevant studies"* [46].

As Chamberlain et al. found, the use of *unique identifiers* is something that can make design projects hard to find [15]. Rather than using keywords that indicate commonality, creative practices often generate a unique name for a design method, product or project. We found that design games and methods that are developed over the course of time in different contexts especially confirmed this finding.

In the search for grey literature it is challenging to assess inclusion on the basis of the title only which implies that the manual search is sensitive to bias. For example, we realise that one item selected in the search of the grey literature would most likely not have been retrieved on the basis of our search strings (even) if it had been indexed in a database. We are also aware of the language bias introduced by limiting the search to English language results. No geographic region was specified, however the choice of databases will result in a geographical bias. In the Medline database (including PubMed) for example, approximately half of all publications originate in the United States [46].

In the initial screening of abstracts it was found that the description available was sometimes missing or inadequate to determine whether the publication falls within the scope. When researchers both indicated doubt it could well be that at this stage, due to a lack of information provided in the formal abstract relevant publications were excluded. In a few cases texts were found to not meet the criteria only once the full text had been retrieved. Assisted living for older people was a common theme that did not meet our healthcare setting criteria. There was also a case that described a process of co-design with stakeholders in such a general manner that no type of CRM could be extracted.

5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Where in healthcare it is common practice to disseminate studies through peer reviewed journals we realise that limiting our search of grey literature to key journals and conference proceedings may not capture all relevant design-related dissemination. Doing a more extensive search of exhibitions and journalistic publications or requesting contributions from an expert group could provide additional and valuable contributions. Lastly, we are aware that our ambition is to include a broadness with relation to the source while at the same time extracting examples of a very specific nature on the basis of the CRM definition. After selecting and screening systematically, extracting the data and conducting the necessary assessment in the next step of our review project will be key.

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INQUIRING THE EVERYDAY – LEARNING FROM ACTION RESEARCH TO INTERVENE IN AUTONOMOUS, SPATIAL TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES

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Abstract

Haspengouw (Belgium) is a region characterized by small-scale projects that are often initiated by individual actors. We take the silent, small and incremental character of these projects as the starting point to question where and how they start to form an issue of concern for broader society. Precisely by publicly debating these small-scale changes in the everyday, we design strategies to intervene in this process of 'autonomous' transformations [1]. Within the frame of an Action Research approach we set up different forms of interaction (i.e. walking, scenario thinking, envisioning, enacting, prototyping, etc.) to stage such a public debate. The objective of this paper, is to discuss in what way this approach of Action Research offered a framework to address this double perspective, namely to inquire the small-scale by (collective) small-scaled interventions in the everyday environment -and at the same time- to debate issues taking place at a larger scale, inciting (collective) reflection.

Keywords: Action Research, spatial design, everyday habitat.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The rhythm of the village: slow and silent: What is the issue?

Haspengouw is a region of fruit cultivation in the east of Flanders characterized by small-scale changes e.g. a farmer that adds a barn, a low trunk orchard that replaces a high trunk orchard, small farms that make room for detached houses, etc. Just like natural (environmental) changes these changes cause an 'autonomous' process of transformation [1]. The open landscape harbours an increasing number of claims (housing, agriculture, recreation, watermanagement, etc.) and gets privatized and cut into bits (by horsification, garden sprawl [2]). Grasslands and the remaining open inner areas and orchards are slowly built over with generic houses that hide behind hedges and automatic garage ports, the village shop and the local bakery close, and the dispersed mode of building makes it impossible to organize an efficient public transport [3]. Slowly, the once autonomous villages are turning into purely residential areas, with the public domain transforming into a transit zone [4].

These transformations are initiated by individual decisions, and the speed of these transformations is slow enough to digest and does not trigger a collective protest, resistance or debate, unless they are of a larger scale or commissioned by a public authority touching on private property (e.g. a bicycle path at the border of private gardens). The involvement of actors is mostly limited within the clear borders of legal procedures linked to structural plans or building codes. But then the projects are so small that these procedures mainly address neighbours. The majority of inhabitants live in comfort,

the village is the place where they found their residential dream in the form of a detached house with a private garden. For them there is no issue of concern in how the village is transforming.

1.2 Public debate as a practice to intervene

Although these incremental transformations are not a prominent issue for public debate nor a clear object of planning strategies, they do effect the social and spatial reality of rural villages. Via the often invisible interactions between each isolated change, they start to form an issue of concern for broader society. The more generic character of housing as well as the increasing diversity of inhabitants have an impact on the use of the public places. There are sites where the public character is threatened by privatization (e.g. green structures that become an extension of a garden, a farmer that closes the road to a public orchard, streets with front gardens as parking lots) or get claimed by new groups or a dominant use (e.g. a parade for Sikhs on the church square that is mainly used as parking) but moreover there are sites that are underused, where any ownership is lacking, where there are no claims at all.

Apart from strategies to intervene in these complex processes of spatial transformations, in Flanders we lack a culture to publicly debate what is (spatially) changing in our daily environment. What is going on, who uses, claims ownership and maintains public or common places? We do formally involve citizens in spatial planning processes. The type of involvement in these non-urban regions is however, limited to participatory activities within procedures. Hence, despite of the increasing focus of policy makers on participation this citizen involvement does not lead to an open and public debate, i.e. it does not lead to an active citizenship as this requires a collective reflection and trust. [5][6]

We hypothesise the challenge is to involve different actors in an open and continuous public debate, beyond a specific project or dominant agenda, as everybody is continuously involved in how space transforms in their everyday habitat. [7][8]

2 APPROACH

2.1 Inquiring the everyday versus issues on the larger scale and longer term

By publicly debating these small-scale changes in the everyday, we want to design strategies to address the issues that occur on the larger scale and on the long term. As we do look for ways to intervene in these autonomous transformations and more specifically how to steer them towards more spatial and social quality (e.g. by densification of housing tissue, improving the relation with landscape, increasing biotopes, biodiversity, and diversity of housing types and (informal) meeting places) and in a more democratic direction (e.g. the cost of certain ways of living are made by some, but have to be paid by all, e.g. public transport, services, etc.).

Within the frame of an Action Research we set up different experiments to stage a public debate. The objective of this paper, is to discuss in what way this approach of Action Research offered a framework to address this double perspective of inquiring the everyday (by means of interventions and collective action) versus issues on the larger scale and longer term (inciting collective reflection). And the democratic challenge this entails, not only to 'empower' a specific or vulnerable group, [9] towards a more dominant actor or prominent agenda, but to open the debate towards a diversity of actors.

2.2 'Illuminating what is' versus 'creating what has to become': learning from Action Research

Writing on research methods in social sciences, [10] made the difference between research as observing, describing, reporting on *what is* (which we can relate to the small scale actions in the everyday), and research as to create *what has to become*, or a future-forming orientation to research (which we can relate to the debate on the larger scale). Any research that describes human behaviour, Gergen states, also establishes the grounds for possible action (or resistance), however researchers failed to explore these productive possibilities. The vast share of research remains dedicated to 'revealing', 'illuminating', 'understanding', or 'reflecting' a given state of affairs. In conducting research of what exists, we lend inertia to conventional forms of life. We do not ask about what does not yet exist, or about ways of life that could be created. In effect, the mirroring tradition of research favors the maintenance of the status quo.

Roose and De Bie [12] suggest that action research operates as a democratic practice: that is a practice that involves the participation of all involved. Such participation needs to emerge from real questions and issues emerging from the situation rather than questions formulated by researchers from the outside. This means, that action research is not primarily focused on the implementation of solutions but rather on challenging and questioning existing interpretations and understanding. This questioning is needed to connect the diversity of the interpretation of the same situation, and the contradictions in these interpretations, to the practical demand for change. The transformative character of future-forming orientation Gergen wants to assign to research emerges from understanding and questioning of what is already there. Action Research is therefore no method to reach a predefined problem, it is a way of inquiry that moves towards a problem definition in order to change the situation in collaboration with people involved while striving for the development of theory [12].

Action Research faces the same double perspective of inquiring the everyday in coming to a better understanding or moving towards a problem definition (what is) in order to transform the situation (what has to become). As a method it is not providing any tools, moreover, these scholars have attention for the social implications this shift toward inquiry as future-making has to take into account. As research in a future forming mode unsettles the structure of political power and researchers themselves become agents of social change; in contrast to the 'mirroring tradition' where conclusions have little impact on societal wellbeing - as the laboratory situations created for 'testing' general hypotheses are typically remote from everyday life. Hence, Gergen offers no tools but 'three registers of inquiry', being (1) liberatory, (2) practice producing, and (3) action centred, to illustrate this potential of what this future orientation in research. We will apply these three registers to our inquiry of the everyday.

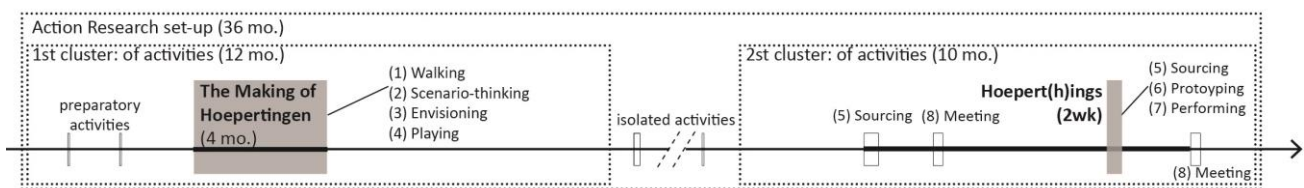
3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research integrates aspects of Action-Research with aspects of a Participatory Design framework. The following scheme presents the steps taken, where the research activities can be seen as design activities, interacting in the everyday environment, and where individual research activities alternate with participatory or collective ones. The research frames within a Phd project in search for strategies to intervene in a process 'autonomous' transformations in more rural regions, beyond a project or the juridical logic of a planning procedure. As scholars refer to the importance of a public debate but give little concrete examples of how to do so, the objective of this research is to 'practice' to stage such a debate. There was no actor who asked for this practice, or commissioned this research, however the choice for the village of Hoepertingen was motivated as it was a test-case in another project funded by the European fund of Rural Development.

In this paper, the three registers for inquiry (liberatory, practice producing and action centered) we selected from the literature on Action Research, will be used to learn from fieldwork that was set up within a participatory design framework. The ‘practice’ we want to improve is that of the ‘spatial practitioner’, however not in collaboration with spatial professionals or designers only but with a diversity of actors (villagers with different backgrounds and abilities, professionals (from local governments, non-profit associations (e.g. civil or nature organisations), entrepreneurs, academia, planners, activists, etc.).

4 FIELDWORK

During approximately 3 years we engaged in Hoepertingen, a growing residential village (with up to 2000 inhabitants) that is hosting different groups of newcomers in Haspengouw (Belgium). The



activities that took place can be clustered in two sets of different forms of interaction. In 2013 there was ‘*The making of Hoepertingen*’ based on the principles of the game ‘*The Making of*’ of Venhuizen[13]. After a break of almost two years, in September 2015 we set up a live project ‘*Hoepert(h)ings*’. In between there were isolated design studio’s and we participated in local activities and the village council.

4.1 The first cluster of interactions: ‘The Making of Hoepertingen’ (timeframe of 12 months)

A first insight in the spatial transformation processes of the village was built up by reviewing policy documents, a general field observation, by reconstructing the historic evolution via cartography and interviews, and a mapping of the village with children. In a focusgroup we formulated a statement on the identity of the village. All these activities were a preparation for a game we called ‘*The Making of Hoepertingen*’. In the course of this game (4 months) we addressed a diversity of stakeholders (villagers, administrators, policy makers, regional organisations) in different settings and roles, by means of the four different forms of interaction (i.e. **(1) walking**, **(2) scenario-thinking**, **(3) envisioning** and **(4) playing**).

In the first three months there were 3 sessions were we walked these routes, each time with different teams of villagers, in a 4th session the team consisted of participants of regional organizations and urban administrators. In between each session we visualized the different proposals that the teams made in collages. In the 4th and last month there was a concluding and final game; a debate were all opinions, ideas and proposals were collected; at that point the policymakers came in.



Fig. 2. A debate with villagers in an orchard [Figure 4] Constructing as a trigger for conversations



4.2 Second cluster of interactions: Hoepert(h)ings (over a timeframe of 10 months)

In spring of 2015 we spread a ‘call for projects’ in the region in search **((5), sourcing)** for local actors to mentor and host a *live project* (i.e. a teaching program that takes master students of Architecture out of the studio into the ‘real world’ to build). Two local actors of Hoepertingen combined their agenda’s, continuing on the outcome of the earlier activities. They proposed to visualize and physically shape a green route throughout the village in order to connect people and places. With these local actors we coproduced a design brief for the *Hoepert(h)ings* referring to constructions to be built as informal meeting places on this route, and chose the exact locations or connections. As a next step we further **(5) sourced** the material and ambassadors. In an intensive summerschool the students stayed on location for two weeks **(6) prototyping** the constructions and **(7) performing** on site; by literally building and interact with local villagers. Only after the final event we set formal arrangements in **(8) meetings** with the village council and other actors to connect the actions on a longer term.

Fig. 3. Built construction by the end of the summerschool

5 FINDINGS

5.1 Liberatory

In order to responsibly address the question ‘to what kind of future can I contribute?’ is to face complex questions of the good. When the traditional claim that science is concerned with what is, rather than what ought to be, is reversed, one is fundamentally addressing issues of value. The

question of what 'ought' to be is a personal one is: 'what future do I value?'. However, there is an important way in which the logic shifts the site of moral choice from the individual to the relational sphere. [10]. Next to the attention for this relational aspect of future forming research, Gergen refers to the 'critical movement' with its attempt 'to draw critical attention to existing way of life, and to engender a critical consciousness from which social change might spring'. The hope is that 'seeing with new eyes' can incite resistance to the status quo. The goal of such research is to free the reader from traditional or common-sense ways of constructing the world.

If we look to our fieldwork from this 'liberatory' register, we aimed to keep the debate open. The variation in form of interaction and type of activity addressed a variety of actors. Furthermore also the composition of participants changed; from a diverse and large group of actors, to only a few villagers, from one-to-one interviews and small meetings, to a debate with local actors and policy makers. In this way we supported to make explicit a diversity of agenda's, with a diversity of settings in time and space, in interaction with other participants. While walking the different personal agendas were expressed, before thinking 'what future do I value' collectively in the scenario-thinking. Often participants had a very clear idea on what needs to be changed, and which places should be renewed for example. Towards the end of an activity these ideas changed in interaction with the site, new understanding or other participants, and they start to defend the proposal they made with the group. The composition of the different interactions thus enhanced to make explicit diverging opinions before searching for a consensus. In smaller 1-to-1 settings we first built up trust before confronting conflicting viewpoints in meetings.

However, a farmer closed the road to the site (a public orchard) that 'won' the debate. He never participated in any of the activities, although he helped us preparing the walk. Instead of opening up this public site for different users, the opposite happened and it physically got blocked off. One neighbor of the fruit track asked a politician directly to cancel the engagement of a nature organisation taking care of a public green zone (on a former railway track) as he partly appropriated this green zone as an extension to his garden.

5.2 Practice producing

In many domains the traditional attempt to solve problems through scientific research has been frustrating or ineffective. Gergen refers to different research projects in which knowledge is acquired through the complex and creative process of constructing a successful practice (see also [14]). When such knowledge is shared it becomes a resource for others. As multiple practices are generated they provide alternatives from which one can select as best fits local needs, or from which new hybrids can be formed. In what way did we 'produced a practice' and can our fieldwork some insights on the role of the 'spatial practitioner', inspirational insights for other actors, as well as clues for implementation? What were the elements that induced 'concrete results'? (e.g. designation of a new track for non-motorized traffic, restoring a high trunk orchard and revaluing it as a semi-public place, the agreement on maintenance and engagement of 'park-rangers', etc.)

Some initiatives were connected to ambitions on a larger scale or an existing rural development project for instance. These connections were made because there was a more intense interaction between different actors or roles (e.g. a villager who is also a representative in a nature organisation). Without this connection of actors and roles, the follow-up initiatives have little chance to be sustainable. As it are people (neighbours, volunteers, owners) that need to come to an agreement of how to use and maintain these common spaces. They need to get to know each other, build up trust to value and respect each other's role as well as the initiative. At several points these initiatives ran into resistance, or lack a follow-up by administrators, and proofed to be very fragile.

Local administrators (culture and spatial policy) declared the changing attitude of policy makers towards participation after taking part in this final. Although there was no follow-up by the

municipality, one administrator approached us with a question for support as a villager himself. A regional organisation (Flemisch Land Agency) started 'walking' with stakeholders in preparation for a design proposal for the plan for land consolidation and invited us to share insights on the fieldwork in workshops. A regional nature organization worked further on the consolidation of the ideas for a common orchard.

5.3 Action centered

Any research that describes human behaviour, Gergen states, also establishes the grounds for possible action (or resistance). In effect, in their descriptions of human activity, communities of social science have the capacity to transform the society more generally. However, limitations are in the fact that the capacity for creation remains primarily in the hands of the research community. Therefore Gergen refers to the promising alternative to work collaboratively with those outside the academy in achieving social change. Which is at the core of action research.

By walking, prototyping as well as performing on location, the debate was more visible and accessible to 'unintended' participants; villagers that might not join in the debate otherwise (e.g. children, passers-by). By physically act together within the everyday environment we "*focus on what people do, rather than what they say*" [15][16], and met new actors.

Already by walking participants explored issues by doing; they tested for instance how to make a route throughout the village avoiding as much motorized traffic as possible. With this task they felt confident enough to ignore signs of privatization, but just as well reflected on the role of their own garden within a network of open space and explored this by passing there with other participants. Inspired by the proposals made in the scenario-thinking game, participants were triggered to bring in their own resources, use or behaviour, e.g. a local centre for care started to allow children to play on their private plot, that connects the neighbourhood with a hidden green zone, and adapted this towards the live project. The second cluster of interactions was even more focused on concrete interventions and testing and made villagers more explicitly ask to clarify our objective: what did we want to do and why? Students sourced materials and tools via the informal networks, but mostly they asked direct neighbours for help, which resulted in neighbours cooperating by helping to dig for example. The built constructions were not the mere results (some of them already made space for another project), but they facilitated a discussion on maintenance, on agreements and how to connect these ideas to existing funding.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

By 'making' (e.g. prototyping) and acting (e.g. walking) in the daily environment with participants we inquired insights on what works, reflected on what could be, and as such produced a practice for spatial professionals. The three registers of inquiry offered a framework to illustrate the potentials inherent in a future making orientation to research, and hence to debate issues of concern in the everyday environment. However as we learned from the opposing reaction of some actors, we may have challenged the status quo (as a liberatory potential), but in constructing a 'new world' the opposite happened. In envisioning future scenario's a consensus was built amongst participants but it was not made public or openly communicated. The challenge is how to articulate different agenda's as well as communicate or document a common or shared vision for the future without becoming exclusive. In Hoepertingen we did not invest enough in 'creating' a community to support the debate, as strong and dominant voices easily took over.

Articulating an agenda and defining shared values takes time and confidence to do so. There is not a clear cut method to 'build' this confidence, but as stated before it is important to view Action

Research as an approach to inquiry rather than a methodology. [11] The experiments presented are some out of many ways of conducting public debates, and do not lead to the practice of a specialized set of methods. The challenge is how to share skills or transfer knowledge on these type of very local, collaborative and situated practices.

Acting in a concrete and everyday habitat proved to be a valid way to inquire knowledge on how the village works as well as to test certain choices and to visualize its consequences (i.e. the societal value of semi-private ownership of public domain). It triggered resistance as well as the engagement of new actors (e.g. nature organisation) and hence it triggered a new debate with new and different actors. The first cluster of interactions focused more on understanding what is going on, sounding different viewpoints, but just as well lead choices, to concrete actions. In this way the physical interventions can be considered as a 'result' of previous interactions and discussion, but are just as well a way to debate. Despite the temporal character or the resistance these outcomes may trigger; acting, experimenting and testing lead to new insights, deeper understanding. This 'learning by doing' is a valid approach for spatial practitioners to go beyond a specific project or dominant agenda, and to test, facilitate, moderate and take part in the debate; to collectively reflect and act with villagers, local and regional organisations on the ongoing political process of spatial transformations.

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ROOTS IN THE SKY. AN ANALYSIS OF TIGHTROPE WALKER, A FIGURE BETWEEN PERFORMING ARTS AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES.

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Abstract

This research, as a result of the first PhD Student year (University of Milano Bicocca) and a personal experience on the field as professional in educational circus arts, wants to investigate the implicit elements inherent to tightrope walking practice and its possible contributions to the field of education and training. Considering pedagogy of the body a discipline which favour each human being's vital balance [1],[2] and tightrope walking an elective study [3], this project sees in the tightrope walker's self-training and training the privileged path to be pedagogically investigated focusing on balance, as a constantly precarious condition, and on the possible contribution for those who work in education field. The tightrope walker's discipline is able to rule over mind, making it actual in order to create a transformed body [4], glorious [5], a body of the art which needs authenticity and a live participation. During the performing act the performer's body renews itself and "occurs" [6], causing a deep change even on audience's usual posing which is no more frontal and controlling, on the contrary it becomes open to the unexpected and unknown.

In order to prove this, the present research, will use different interwoven points of view:

The performer and audience's point of view reported through semi-structured interviews/ participant observation/ photographic documents/videos/ questionnaire for the audience.

The trainer and trainees' point of view reported through semi-structured interviews/ participant observation/ photographic documents/videos/ questionnaire for the trainees.

The researcher's point of view: with her own tightrope walking training together with pedagogic documentary research and a self-investigating diary.

The main aim is to investigate human development as an incessant, necessary and essential research of balance - never permanently reached - and as a consequence learning becomes an ethical transformation through aesthetic events [7]. The research of balance can be found in the process itself, as an actual dialectic, a creative force between educational practice and pedagogic theory, looking at the phenomenological-hermeneutical method [8] as a possible point of view on the data and finally the tightrope will be the symbolic link between scientific rigour and a new opening to the new and the unexpected.

Key words: tightrope walking, pedagogy of the body, performing arts.

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1 PRELUDE

Want the Change. Be inspired by the flame
where everything shines as it disappears.
The artist, when sketching, loves nothing so much
as the curve of the body as it turns away.
What locks itself in sameness has congealed.
Is it safer to be gray and numb?
What turns hard becomes rigid
and is easily shattered.
Pour yourself like a fountain.
Flow into the knowledge that what you are seeking
finishes often at the start, and, with ending, begins.
Every happiness is the child of a separation
it did not think it could survive. And Daphne, becoming a laurel,
dares you to become the wind.
Rainer Maria Rilke *Sonnets To Orpheus*

Imagination lives between earth and the sky.
It lives in the ground and in the wind.
Gaston Bachelard, *La Terre et les Rêveries du repos*.

Alice laughed. 'There's no use trying', she said.

'One can't believe impossible things.'

'I daresay you haven't had much practice', said the Queen.

'When I was your age, I always did it for half-an-hour a day.

Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast'.

Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*



Fig. 1. Philippe Petit, *Galaxy fm*, 1974

New York, 7th August, 1974. The *petit* Petit -the tightrope walker endowed with extra-ordinary courage- hovers in balance between earth and sky, not worrying about the 400 metres high; he, lightly, dances between the Twin Towers on his thin, iron tightrope.

2 THE TIGHTROPE. ART OF LIFE

But where is danger

a rescuing element grows as well.

Friederich Hölderlin, *Patmos*

Contrary to popular opinion, Petit's art work doesn't challenge death but it affirms life, a life, intensely lived, to the limit of what is possible. He himself declares so: "I am not invincible, [...] I am not immortal: on the contrary I am very mortal and that's the reason why I am always very careful. I must know my limits, because I would face death if only I thought being invincible" [1].The tightrope

experience needs to accept new rules, in order to enter a space and a time completely different from daily routine, where the vertigo and height symbols become concrete during the material walk.

The tightrope walker is a bearer of a kind of organic poetry practise and performing discipline and, walking on his tightrope with accuracy and exceptional freedom, performs a ritual which is performance in itself-according to Grotowski [2], a performing act carried out with determination, humility, courage, loyalty to the tools of the trade. " And the one who does not want to undertake a stubborn fight made up of useless efforts, deep dangers, the one who is not ready to give everything to feel alive, does not need to become a tightrope walker. Above all, he could not" [3].

His pace, accompanied by continuous micro-movements, reveals the slight adjustments that our body daily performs to find out a balance² which constantly turns to be precarious. The tightrope walker shows us that the perfect balance, seen as an eternal stability, cannot exist, it would put an end to any kind of research or creative tension. It would mean stagnation. Even when we stand still we cannot remain motionless, even when we are convinced we are, tiny micro-movements move our body weight and precisely these continuous micro- movements are the source of life which enliven the tightrope walker's presence [4].

Barba defines as a play of the opposites the practices and the techniques used by the masters of eastern theatre to produce an energy so peculiar to let them perceived as alive and intensely present. The theatre anthropologist remind us that these practices and techniques are not only opposite to the daily body practices but, at the same time, they always produce new vital tensions. They are out of ordinary techniques, they tend to the information, they shape the body, making it artistic/artificial but credible [4]. The actor,dancer,tightrope walker's basic movements come out from an overturning of the ordinary balance typical of the everyday use of the body. In this way a new kind of balance is investigated, a balance which now needs greater efforts and new tensions to support the body [5]. Here both the physical and the spiritual elements coexist and interact, going beyond the traditional dichotomic distinction between body-soul/consciousness. When the performer is able to transform his own body in a living, energetic one, he emerges as an embodied mind that is a being in which body and soul/consciousness cannot be divided at all and always appear together [5]. This circulating energy is the vital force able to transform in an event something absolutely ordinary: the peculiarity of the human being to be embodied mind [6].

The tightrope walker's precarious balance becomes an invitation to come out of what is known ad reassuring 'comfort-zone', it becomes an invitation to abandon the daily routine automatism of usual, mechanical actions in order to access what Csíkszentmihályi [7] defines as "flow": psychophysical experience of absolute present, peculiar condition where an alert concentration and a deep concentration are experimented. The author highlights that the artists, the performers, the scientists are the ones who can have an immediate and favoured access to this state of ecstasy since, through a repeated and intense discipline, they managed to suspend their own "I" to immerse in a greater entirety, in this reaching a harmonic balance with the outer world.

Therefore this research want to observe and investigate the tightrope walker's self-training and training process, considering it as a peculiar psychophysical practise of discipline for every human being's formation, practise which wants to favour a deeper awareness of one's own body-mind, overtaking limits, oppositions, fears to open up to a new freedom [2]. Pedagogy and tightrope walking meet and contaminate in the subtle and crucial research of a balance which is always dynamic and precarious. The first is meant as a discipline particularly apt to favour human beings vital balance [8] , [9] while the latter guides the body in expressing itself in the balance as the elective art [10].

² Balance, the human ability to stand and move in the space keeping that position, is the result of several muscular connections and tensions in our body [4].

3 ON THE TIGHTROPE. EDUCATIONAL AND PERFORMING PROCESS

Uprightness needs a long apprenticeship:

Who wants to learn to fly soon or later,

Above all must learn to stay [...].

You can't learn to fly, flying!

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus spoke Zarathustra*

Both the educational process and the performing one have the *oscillation* as a constituent element, innate to the formative path as well, so it seems it proceeds to get closer and closer to sorts of knowledge and experiences not immediately legible and recognisable but not less relevant for this reason why. Here's the point where the traditional pairs body/mind, full/empty, sense/emotion lose their focus and their perfect distinction, so acquiring movement and starting oscillating [5].

The thought hit by the experience is that kind of thought which becomes concrete action [11] able to transform our presence in the world, on the performing set as well as on the educational one. The performer is the one who has the possibility to give shape, to show and consequently make present, visible, real our relationship with the outer world, letting places and people be connected instead of being separate forever. "With my rope, for a brief and evanescent period of time, I create something in that space; the rope disappears but the people keep its memory. I think it is very important in life, at all levels, to create this kind of connections, not only for an artist. [...] It is something like creating a connection between two human beings, something extraordinary" [12].

The tightrope walking discipline, being so essential and complex and the same time, needs a peculiar care: something in performer's imagination³ must be true and real [13], that means alive, totally participating in each moment: this is the only way to come across the empty space in order to amaze and seduce his audience. In order to do so imagination [14] is an essential cognitive faculty, and the performer's imaginative capability is not something merely theoretical but something concrete, used to transform our usual posture which is no more frontal and dominant but open to the unexpected. "Images are not vague, detached, evanescent representations, on the contrary they produce transformation in the ones who meet them, with their own personal body and emotions, as we can feel on the emotional basis which sometimes penetrate our defences and makes us shiver" [15]. A displacement is occurring, not only cognitive but physical and emotional as well, which tends to the whole comprehension of the human being, and to a thought able to become body, sensitive to the world [11] and rooted in the world. In an age devoted to the antithesis [8], hit by mainly daily, diaretic images used to divide, organise, hierarchize, the tightrope walker's cross stands out like a poetic image with a strong formative value, being it an experience able to balance the image system where we daily move through, and able to rejoin the physical dimension and the symbolizing process, microcosm and macrocosm. When art meet our body, then a deep, alchemical, spiritual transformation happens, opening up to the double perspective of height and depth. Unlike the gymnastic movement, the performer's silent and elegant pace on the tightrope, being it essential and extreme at the same time, is something that cannot be neither judged nor measured. It is an extreme situation but simple and archaic as well, something which belongs more the world of beauty than the one of rationality. We are facing a reduction and substitution process which let the essential emerge from actions and distance the body from daily techniques, creating a tension and a potential difference which let energy pass through [4].

If it is true that education is a process implying the human being's transformation thanks to an encounter [16], the tightrope walker's self-training and training process allows to experience a new

³ Brook [13] defines imagination as muscle able to move anything.

kind of reality where the traditional boundaries between body and mind, sense and sensibility, earth and sky, micro and macrocosm become less distinct and more fluctuating; the same happens in the play, an activity naturally ends in itself [17], devoted to the useless and the entertainment. Petit's own words prove this, when he answered there was not a reason why when asked why he performed an act so redeeming and extreme. "On one hand you make a thing considered impossible, on the other hand you make a wonderful thing, which is not harmful but gives something as well" [18].

4 ON THE ROPE. A NEW KIND OF BALANCE.

Discipline is a sharp sword.

If it simply goes down on you, you must reject it,
but when you manage to handle it, you can advance secure.

Wu Ming 2, *The Path of Gods*

A new kind of balance is in the running and it needs efforts and strains, discipline and freedom in order to support the body-mind whole in the gesture of walking, the easiest and most natural for a human being but at the same time the most complex and structured. This small, celestial walker is asked nothing but walking. Though this gesture, so mechanic and usual, at many metres of height becomes complex and risky; it needs a kind of energy different from daily routine and demands absolute presence, strict freedom and fearless discipline. Refusing the "natural" balance, the tightrope walker uses a "luxury" balance [4], complex, classified as redundant, energy consuming.

"We will be asked if walking on the set is different from common walking. Yes. It is". This what Stanislavski said [19]. On the set we learn walking again. The experience is presented in a condensed way, during the performance as well as during the educational act. We are in front of a body-mind whole able to allay the mind, making it concrete in the present to give birth to a transformed body [20], glorious [2], a body of art in which authenticity and live presence are essential. These elements are fundamental even for those who daily work and investigate the educational and pedagogic field, looking for a research whose aim is interweaving and linking more than dividing.

In order to prove this, the present research, will use different interwoven points of view with the aim of creating a study both well-structured and suitable to the case :

The performer and audience's point of view reported through semi-structured interviews/ participant observation/ photographic documents/videos/ questionnaire for the audience.

The trainer and trainees' point of view reported through semi-structured interviews/ participant observation/ photographic documents/videos/ questionnaire for the trainees.

The researcher's point of view: with her own tightrope walking training together with pedagogic documentary research and a self-investigating diary.

The interviews, as a verbal testimony, will stimulate the speaker to some considerations about tightrope walking, the masters, their being trainers and trainee and three different kinds of languages will be used: an iconic, a poetic and a performing one [21]. In particular the interviewees are asked to draw their personal image of balance, then they are asked to describe the tightrope with poetry/with a metaphor and finally they are asked a brief performance to show their idea of tightrope walking. The main aim is to investigate human development as an incessant, necessary and essential research of balance - never permanently reached - and as a consequence learning becomes an ethical transformation through aesthetic events [22]. The research of balance can be found in the

process itself, as an actual dialectic, a creative force between educational practice and pedagogic theory, looking at the phenomenological-hermeneutical method [23] as a possible point of view on the data and finally the tightrope will be the symbolic link between scientific rigour and a new opening to the new and the unexpected.

According to Wunenburger [24], our relationships with our images depend on a sort of ethics, so we could imagine each truly formative path as on a tightrope, precarious between freedom and rigour, humility and perseverance, empty and full. As a consequence the real learning will be a behaviour modification through performing events, following a continuous tension between ethics and aestheticism. Moreover, according to Bachelard [25], the tightrope walker would represent the elective connection between human beings and the world, between the micro and the macrocosm if we focus on imagination as living between the earth of childhood that feed its roots and the sky which it tends to. We are able to understand the deep connection between this artistic discipline and education -based on special experiences able to transform - if we focus on the consideration that we, as human beings, satisfy our innate need of elective moments, separate from ordinary life [26], when self-training and training, mainly through emotionally intense experiences. When we fluctuate in this subtle boundary line, we give the possibility to the new to open up, searching our *roots in the sky* [27] looking through a rigorous discipline and a passionate disposition towards the world. Living this rope, in balance between pedagogy and tightrope walking, is an invitation to come out of the 'comfort- zone', not to surrender to comfortable habits, to intentionally choose hard paths, in order to embrace fear and dance gestures that let you fly.

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DEVELOPING AN ECOLOGICAL SENSITIVITY IN SEARCHING FOR EVIDENCE ABOUT PROFESSIONALS' AGENCY IN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES. REFLECTIONS FROM A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

This contribution proposes a reflection upon the development of ecological sensitivity in inquiring the educators' agency in two Municipality-led after-school programmes in NE Italy. Ecological sensitivity is a researcher's disposition to maintain an encompassing perspective during the fieldwork, in order to highlight the 'gravitational world' [1] that impacts over the educators' agency in their daily practice. As a consequence, ecological sensitivity is the researcher's constant attitude of critical inspection on the relevance of context in analysing human activity. In developing an ecological sensitivity during the fieldwork, the researcher keeps an enlarged focus of observation to connect the educators' agency to their past experience and motives in practice, the complex texture of the situation at hand, the tools and the events in the setting.

In this proposal, I discuss the recognition of the gravitational forces that affect the educators' agency in a case study research, by focussing on two interactional situations emerging in the context of a Municipality-led "Schooling Integrative Support", which are specifically designed services to support the children's homework duties. I select situations as the relevant units of analysis to support ecological sensitivity because they contain all the characterising elements of a given activity and the specific contingencies in which the educators' agency unfolds. Situations are interactions that are nested within institutional activities and are based on children's emergent interests and improvisations. The educators interpret the ongoing situation and intentionally act in order to achieve educational objectives by recognising constraints and resources in the setting, through the use of specific repertoires of practice.

In the two different situations presented in this contribution, the different paths of the educators' agency are analysed in terms of their relations with the repertoires of practice, the nature of the school tasks and the educators' positionality in relation to their institutional mandate, as well as to the schoolteachers.

The development of an ecological sensitivity in the case study research can improve the analysis of professional agency by highlighting:

- the different paths that professional agency can follow in a single institutional practice;
- the complex and conflicting relationships among different educational practices and the overwhelming role of schooling in other activities;
- the potential directions for participatory action research, based upon ecologically valid evidence of the practitioners' professional experience.

Keywords: ecological sensitivity; professional agency; educational practice.

1 ECOLOGICAL SENSITIVITY

Ecological validity focuses on the relevance of those contextual dimensions in the institutional practices [2] that potentially affect human experience and agency; since it considers the extent to which research data are congruent with the reconstruction of participants' agency in the conditions of their daily activity, it is a recurrent topic of reflection in the methodological debate. Therefore, a constant critical inspection of the data generation, in term of a constant attention to the relevance of context in analysing human activity, is needed. In this contribution, the agency that education professionals develop in their everyday practice is highlighted through a focus on the opportunities and constraints in their interactions with children, oriented towards educational goals.

1.1 Contextualising Agency

Gathering evidence about professional agency is complicated by the elusive nature of its object of inquiry in different contexts of practice.

1.1.1 What is Professional Agency

From the point of view of the philosophy of action, agency unfolds neither as the simple instantiation of personal beliefs and intentions, nor as determined by the institutional mandate and the organisational structure of the practice [3]. It can be conceptualised as the human capacity to introduce changes on some elements of the social organisation [4]. Agency consists in the coordination of imagined sequences of actions to achieve intended objectives in practice, the development of specific repertoires that mediate the interaction among people [5] and, more importantly, it implies an "as if" attitude [6], that is the envisioning of alternative actions, through the reorganisation of the cultural resources of a practice.

1.1.2 Approaches to Professional Agency

The "What works" approach describes professional agency by isolating a set of fully-fledged procedures from the background of the contextual conditions of their occurrence and evaluates their effects on educational outcomes through standardised measures. However, the transferability of the procedures from a given practice into another is questionable, since the relevant evidence about what is considered as the best practice is gathered in simplified conditions. The agencies the participants develop in practice as well as the specific histories of diverse educational settings are not considered. Another approach to the study of education professionals' agency is based on the use of questionnaires aimed at the elicitation of the educators' attitudes towards specific aspects of their profession. Respondents are expected to select their answers from multiple-choice alternatives, expressed in a standard linguistic formulation. Both these research methodologies do not assure ecological validity, since the encounters between researchers and practitioners are based on short interactions and are focussed on a sequence of questions about isolated elements of professional experience. The relationships between the educators' agency and the interactional organization of their everyday practices have only narrow consideration [7].

In limited researcher-stakeholders encounters, the work of the practitioners can be described only from the point of view of the researcher, "as it were effortless, taking place in a universe from which social gravity is absent. What is left out is the weight of history and of immediate material circumstances", as Erickson has aptly expressed [1].

In this contribution, it is assumed that ecological sensitivity should recognise that social gravity is an essential part of the flow of agency that characterises education professionals in their everyday contexts and activities. Therefore, the researcher spends time and talk in order to highlight the fine texture of daily practices as well as the contingencies of events that require professional agency in achieving educational goals.

1.1.3 An Appropriate Focus of Inquiry

Situations emerging within institutional activities can be considered as acceptable units of analysis in inquiring professional agency with ecological validity as a methodological concern, since they condense all the relevant elements that characterise the educational activities and present also unforeseen events that require agency in order to achieve the intended goals of the practice. Situations are local ecologies of mutual influence in which the educators' agency may create opportunities for children's learning in the actual contingencies of joint activities [8]. Situations are the mediating links between the institutional mandates and the subjective initiatives. Institutional activities are planned in order to achieve explicitly stated objectives, whereas situations are contingent interactions that are nested within institutional activities and are based on children's emergent interests and improvisations. However, even if unexpected, they can be transformed in educational opportunities by practitioners' agency. The educators interpret the ongoing situation and intentionally act in order to achieve educational objectives by recognising constraints and resources of the setting, through the use of specific repertoires of practice, that is the set of strategies the professionals have learned by observation and professional exchange, which are attuned to situations.

2 THE CASE STUDY

The case study was conducted in two different Municipality-led "ricreatori", which are after-school centres that have been characterising the community educational and leisure activities of a town in NE Italy since 1905. The system of "ricreatori" offers 6-11 year children, from different backgrounds and interests, supervised activities such as play, music, drama, figurative arts, psycho-motor activities and also educational support in their homework duties, as required by the school teachers.

The educational goals are the promotion of children's well-being, the development of prosocial behaviour and the contrast to school underachievement. The "ricreatori" are public funded with small household fees. For the Municipality this is an opportunity to promote social cohesion, civil and social rights. The services are not part of the National System of Primary and Secondary Schools, although there are some protocols of joint activities and some shared commitments.

The professionals are called "social educators", since they are neither schoolteachers, nor instructors in the vocational education sector; they hold different qualification levels. They supervise children's free play in safe areas; support their homework duties in dedicated rooms; conduct small laboratories in arts and psycho-motor education. Activities are established according to educators' competencies and children's interests. However the competencies are greatly differentiated, and the interpretation of their professional mandate is highly variable, conducting to different strategies in their everyday practice.

The typical daily schedule of the "ricreatori" is:

- 13.00: lunch in school
- 13.45: free play in the after-school community (in playground or gym)
- 14.45: homework duties in groups according to children's age: (in rooms)
- 16.00: snack and free play
- 17.00: art, psycho-motor activities (in gym and rooms)

19.00: closing time.

2.1 Methodology

My fieldwork is part of a six-year in-service education programme for social educators in the Municipality educational services. At its beginning, the programme had been designed as a sequence of lectures by experts on relevant educational issues. However, some educators expressed a different commitment to their participation in the programme and proposed the idea to establish an action-research project. The participant educators accepted to ground the action-research on observational notes focussed on their agency in practice. This approach allowed me to enter in the services in order to conduct observations. The observational notes started with a very structured focus, by selecting some categories of activity, based on a post-vygotskian approach [9]. During the initial stage of my fieldwork I realised that all the activities did not follow a rigid script of actions, but they were local ecologies in which different situations emerged, in relation to the children's interests as well as to the educators' educational goals. An open observational protocol was worked out, in order to focus on the unfolding of different situations, as they were developed by participants. The format enables the recognition of the complex texture of educational situations that evolve within the same activity, in which the children work out their centres of interest and the adults mediate new perspectives in the activity. Ecological sensitivity requires the adaptation of the researcher's moves in the setting, a shifting focus of observation, by recognizing the competing and simultaneous situations into which each activity evolves.

As a consequence, I focused my notes on the different interactional situations in which the educators' agency was developed in relation of the contingencies of their practice. More specifically, in this contribution I focus on the different paths the educators' agency unfolds in the situations emerging within the institutional activity of supporting children's homework duties in two After-school Clubs, which are called "SIS" (Schooling Integrative Support). In the SIS activity, children do homework together, according to their grade. The organisation of the activity is very flexible, according to the tasks; usually the children work in small groups, with the adult supervision.

All the names are pseudonyms in order to protect the privacy of the participants.

2.1.1 *Research Objectives and Method*

In this contribution, data from the homework activities in two "ricreatori" are presented in order to highlight:

- the educators' different agencies and the possibilities they envision in their practice;
- the impact of institutional conditions on the development of professional agency;
- the contrasting motives that are mediated in the development of educational activities.

Ecological sensitivity requires the study of agency in the context of its emergence, by giving a detailed account of the settings, the participants' contrasting intentions, the professional repertoires of practice. Among my notes, I select two situations that are representative in terms of people, settings and everyday activities and that can make manifest all the elements that constitute the "gravitational world" [1] of their agency.

The field notes are used as a common reference for conducting informal talk with the educators and as the basic elements for the development of an in-service action research programme, starting from Winter 2016. One objective of the action-research is the extension of the repertoires a professional can adopt in supporting children's homework assignments, in order to promote a more reflective stance on the implicit meanings of the school tasks and to enable children to develop thinking strategies rather than procedural learning.

2.2 Situation 1

In the following observational note, I highlight the constraints that the structure of a scholastic task shapes on the opportunities a child has to understand the meaning of mathematical symbolism and the limited interactional conditions to mediate his understanding.

The setting: April, 1st, 2014; children in their 3rd and 4th grades: 2 boys and 16 girls (8-9 years of age); 1 female educator (Maria) and 1 male educator (Gianni), working in two separate wings of the same room, supervising groups of children doing different assignments. Both the educators develop a more flexible script than that in use in the classrooms. The children do their tasks sitting in groups of 2 or 3, each at a personal pace. They are allowed to ask for help from their peers. When a child needs the support of the adult, goes to the educator's desk. The adult scaffolding can focus either on the indication for the correct procedure, or on the evidence of a mistake. Only a limited metacognitive support is offered. Children may move around the room if they need to, in order to relax or to concentrate. Ambient music plays in the background.

The educator Gianni tells me that there is no joint planning with the school teachers. Maria, the other educator, adds that sometimes the teachers agree to let the children do a limited number of the assigned tasks. There can be local agreements on simplified tasks for specific children, in specific periods of the year. I am also told that families consider the "ricreatori" mainly as the sites to support their children in doing homework and sometimes they ask the educators to take the responsibility to talk to the teachers and to follow closely their children's progress.

Zlatan a 10-year old immigrant child, in his 4th grade, but at-risk of school failure, moves from desk to desk in search of help for his arithmetic assignments. Now he is struggling with the task of inserting the correct numbers into the slots created by the given matrix (as in Figure 1), according to the implicit rule he is required to discover.

:7		
63	9	0
21	3	0
50	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>
42	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>

Fig. 1. The task Zlatan struggles upon (the numbers inserted by Zlatan are underlined)

In this case, the school task is formalistic and abstruse, since the given grid does not have any mathematical meaning. The simplest form of a matrix is the "case x variable". It is composed by a set of cases and a set of variables that describe the relevant properties, on an assigned scale of measurement. To establish the relationships between cases and variables, a grid is constructed by assigning in each slot the value that each case assumes for any specific variable. Matrices are useful tools to analyse complex phenomena of reality. However, in this specific task the tool is decontextualized from any realistic meaning. The children are expected to complete the grid with simple numerical expressions, but the children's contributions are limited to the recognition of the hidden trick of the task.

Zlatan receives the advice to perform the divisions. The child completes the matrix, without any further reflection (for example; he does not check the correctness of his entry in the 4th row; he doesn't notice in the last row that the remainder would round to an upper divisor of 42). The educator invites the children to revise their task solutions, but the structure of the grid is not questioned or modified to promote the children's metacognitive competence.

Although in the SIS a supportive interactional script is established, in order to promote children's collaboration and well-being, the procedural logic of the school tasks seems overwhelming. The educators rely specifically on procedural help to enable the children to solve the tasks and do not foster a meaningful approach to mathematics.

2.3 Situation 2

March 2nd 2016; two educators (Alice and Elisa); 10 boys and 7 girls (10-11 year olds) in their 5th grade.

The room is very small; in the first row there are a single desk and a 3-4 place desk. In each of the other three rows there is a 4-5 place desk. On the front of the desks there are a blackboard and a clock. Alice tells me that on the blackboard are always stated the homework tasks and the time when the children are allowed to have a little break. This arrangement is intended to enable the children to self-regulate their efforts on the tasks. The educators bring to the SIS some personal books to support the children's understanding of specific subject matters.

The educators are on the opposite sides of the room. One works with children who need more direct scaffolding (i.e. the order of executing the operations in the arithmetical expressions). Elisa supervises the other children doing their tasks in small groups, either exchanging information or reasoning together (she gives the children also support to promote their metacognitive and regulatory strategies). The two educators establish a shared activity -doing homework- and offer differentiated scaffolding, according to the children's cognitive efforts. There are 4 different centres of learning and scaffolding. No child is doing the tasks alone: a child who has already finished an expression helps the others in the group. Stefano is invited to make the expressions at the blackboard with Alice's supervision because he is losing attention at his desk.

A group of children goes in the corridor to study History, as they need a quiet setting to read and memorise dates and events in Ancient Greece. Another group does English, completing close-ended tasks.

2.3.1 Interview with Alice and Elisa

March 31st 2016: The two educators tell me that they put great effort to promote children's group work; they don't want the most vulnerable children are isolated and stigmatised (Elisa quotes the title of Yang Zehmou's movie "No one less" as their maxim). They have talks with parents in order to work out shared strategies to support their schooling. In many cases they also discuss strategies with the school teachers, but they complain that this happens only in individual cases, although there is a formal protocol. Elisa says that they systematically read the children's notebooks, in order to explain their progression to parents (who, in some cases, may not understand the school tasks). Elisa hopes that there will be more opportunities to establish structured strategies with families at the beginning of the school year.

Alice tells me that the educators have an unconditioned acceptance of the children, but they do not accept lack of rules; as she says: "I do not accept that you don't want to read; but I'll help you in reading; if writing is too effortful for you, I'll write for you until you are able to".

Elisa finds a constraining condition to the development of the SIS, namely the fact that the Municipality organisation does not support their imagination and commitment to introduce changes

in the institutional practice. Their efforts risk to be isolated and localised strategies. It seems the Municipality does not scale up innovations. Elisa concludes: "If we do not have more agency (in developing strategies to support children's learning and in influencing schools and colleagues) we still remain spare wheels in the schooling practice".

2.4 The Educators' Agency in Their Everyday Situations

The inquiry has highlighted the "gravitational forces" of the professional world in which the educators' agency unfolds. The educators who participate in the research have developed different repertoires of practice in balancing the concurrent objectives in their support of children's homework: their intention to promote school achievement and learning, their confrontation with the children's interest to save effort and time in doing homework duties, the school leveraging on the SIS as a complimentary setting for homework assignments and the families' expectations of adult support for their children's schooling.

Some institutional conditions constrain the development of a more encompassing agency in promoting children's learning and school success. One is the educators' positionality, in relation to the Municipality and the schools. Since they are not entitled to have a formal teaching role, they are considered to have a peripheral and simply remedial role in the complex network of schools, educational services and families. As a consequence, some educators accept to limit themselves to control children in doing the tasks and to check the correctness of their results. The majority of educators give only procedural scaffolding, as the nature of the school tasks requires the recall of facts and the recognition of given information. Other educators (such as Alice and Elisa) try to develop a more encompassing agency, by sustaining children's group work and the promotion of self-regulated learning, each attuned to the evolving situations. However, there is no structured ground to develop a collaborative design between school teachers and educators, in order to give sustained and consistent support to promote children's learning.

Another problematic aspect to be considered is the condition that, although the interactional organisation at SIS tends to change from the typical school script, the nature of the tasks and the established institutional mandate of the SIS are constraining the opportunities the children have to develop meaningful learning.

2.5 Towards an Action-Research Programme

The observational protocols of the emerging situations in the SIS activity can become a common reference point for joint reflection between the researcher and the practitioners, in order to recognise the "gravitational forces" that impact over the educators' agency in practice and to develop alternative strategies in supporting children's learning. Therefore, an action research programme is planned starting from winter 2016, in order to promote the educators' reflection upon the nature of school tasks, the development of innovative strategies to support the children's learning of metacognitive and regulative competencies, rather than limiting the activity only on the procedural support to solve the assigned tasks.

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IN SEARCH OF GOOD CARE: THE METHODOLOGY OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL, THEORY-DIRECTED “N=N-CASE STUDIES” IN EMPIRICALLY GROUNDED ETHICS OF CARE

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Abstract

Aiming at contributing to the tracing, promoting and maintaining of practices of good care, our care-ethical empirical research is a moral and ethical enterprise. In this paper, we offer a proposition regarding the methodology of qualitative inquiry in ethics of care, and a standard against which its quality and rigor can be evaluated. We do this against the background of the intensive discussion about the methodology of empirical bioethical research and some discussion about the methodology of empirical research in care. From the start of the ethics of care in the empirical research of Carol Gilligan, there has been critique of its methodology caused by misunderstandings concerning its aim and the nature of its claims. The qualitative inquiry we do, opens up and makes understandable what participants in practices of care are doing, refrain from and are undergoing. Our interest is a phenomenological one: which phenomena in practices of care manifest themselves to those who, primarily, receive and those who give care? What do those involved in the practice undergo and how do they call that? Participants in the researched practice, especially care-givers, are installed as co-researchers, with their own responsibilities. And we are interested in the development of theory. Because we want to study real life complexity, our empirical data consist of extensive and comprehensive case descriptions. That is why we characterize our research as “case studies”. For our research aim, the number of cases is not decisive, as long as the analysis of these cases provide deep enough theoretical insight into the studied practice. The validity and transferability of our research results are based on the rigor of the analysis, the innovative power of the developed theoretical concepts, and the approval the results get from the participants – not on the amount and representativeness of the cases. In distinction to single-case studies (N=1) and multiple-case studies (N=n), we propose to characterize the design of our research as “N=N-case studies”. This is a proposition in a much broader context, we can only outline in this paper.

Keywords: ethics of care, qualitative inquiry design, methodology, empirical ethics, N=N-case studies, quality criteria.

1 INTRODUCTION

Aiming at contributing to the tracing, promoting and maintaining of practices of good care, our care-ethical empirical research is a moral and an ethical enterprise: moral in the sense that we as

researchers have orientations with regard to what good care is about, be it in a self-critical way; ethical in the sense that we position our scholarly activity in the geography of theories on care and account for our theoretical position. In this paper, we offer a proposition regarding the methodology of qualitative inquiry in ethics of care, as we practise it, and a standard against which its quality and rigor can be evaluated. The problem is this: on the one hand, we as researchers want to help promote and strengthen good care, and think, and have partial proof from past research, that what is good in care practices can be found inside care practices and does not have to be brought-in from the outside (by principles, values et cetera). But on the other hand, we must face the fact that existing methodologies in social sciences and empirical bioethics are helpful, but, at the end of the day, do not suffice to fathom what is good, in the moral sense of the word.

One aspect of the constellation in which our problem arises, is that we have sometimes strong intuitions about what is good or what is bad. Often, these intuitions become confirmed, but they are also deepened and sometimes corrected. A second, related, aspect is that we are working towards ethical theories, not a social scientific theories. We are looking for practically proven “stepping stones” that enable us to deal with following moral issues. These aspects are not sufficiently faced in conventional methodologies. Interestingly, from the start of the ethics of care in the empirical research of Carol Gilligan, there has been critique of its methodology caused by misunderstandings concerning its aim and the nature of its claims [(1, 2)]. A third aspect is the question of theory development and empirical research, often framed in the terms of induction, deduction, and abduction. The question, in the framework for the social sciences, is indeed addressed in the different grounded theory methodologies. We however tend to think that in the framework of developing (care) ethical theory, the issue has to be reconsidered. We do not have the pretence to solve it, but to make a mid-way proposition: extensive descriptions can be brought on terms, terms of their own. On a more detailed level of research, because we want to study real life complexity, our empirical data consist of extensive and comprehensive case descriptions. That is why we characterize our research as “case studies”. But, what kind of case studies? We will discuss briefly different kinds of case studies and present and explicate our choice for a particular kind of case studies and our proposal for a specific name. It is a proposition in a much broader context, we can only outline in this paper.

2 EMPIRICAL ETHICAL RESEARCH

There is an intensive discussion going on about the methodology of empirical bioethical research [(3)] and some discussion about the methodology of empirical research in care [(4)]. We believe that two relations have to be considered together and as intertwined: the relation between empirical research and ethics and the relation between empirical research and theory development. The first relationship, we discussed in a previous article [(5)]. We take the position of what we call “empirically grounded, normative ethics (of care)”. Essential to this position are (a) the assumption that reality is morally laden and (b) a kind of ethical reflection that helps to articulate this moral ladenness. The second relationship, between empirical research and theory development, is what concerns us here. Because we as care-ethicists are interested in ethical theory, it is important to us to consider both relationships in connection to one another. This connection is situated in our phenomenological interest in the lived experience of the persons who act and suffer, and their first-person perspectives. For reasons following from care ethics and from extensive qualitative empirical research we position ourselves, not in the epistemological-egological tradition of phenomenology (Husserl, Schütz), but in the tradition of political phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty), and the “responsive phenomenology of the alien” by Bernhard Waldenfels [(6)].

In our previous article, we found a distinction made by the German sociologist Gesa Lindemann illuminating [(7)]. She points out, that in qualitative research theoretical assumptions go into the data

collection and analysis. Those assumptions cannot be challenged by empirical data and thus cannot be developed further. In order to do justice to this mixed empirical groundedness, Lindemann proposes to distinguish between different levels of sociological theory development. The first level consists of what she calls "Sozialtheorien", that is, "diejenige Annahmen, durch die festgelegt wird, was überhaupt unter sozialen Phänomenen verstanden werden soll und welche Konzepte zentral gestellt werden". The second level consists of "Theorien begrenzter Reichweite", that is, theories about certain social phenomena (including grounded theories and middle range theories). The third level consists of "Gesellschaftstheorien", that is, theories about "historische Großformationen", such as modern society (p. 109). In order to organize and examine the empirical groundedness of "Sozialtheorien" and "Gesellschaftstheorien", according to Lindemann, the means of verification and falsification do not suffice. She proposes to investigate the empirical groundedness of "Gesellschaftstheorien" with the help of the difference between "plausibler und unplausibler Gestaltextrapolation", and of "Sozialtheorien" with the help of the difference between "Präzision und Irritation" (p. 114). Theoretical concepts are to be understood and pursued as "Sehinstrumente". The irritating experience that one cannot capture reality precisely enough, can become a motive to develop further the theory as an observational instrument.

In our proposal for an empirically grounded ethics of care, theory development and empirical research are interrelated. Theoretical and conceptual reflections are used in order to recognize particularly relevant and very complex details, to look more closely at what is seen, and also see what was unseen before. Empirical research is being carried out to repair and enlarge deficient concepts and to further develop theories of limited scope. In this pendulum movement between theory development and empirical research, ethical and social science research by other scholars is also important, on both sides. The empirical and theoretical research findings of others can broaden our knowledge, raise questions or offer concepts that support and maintain the pendulum movement. Sometimes the results of the pendulum movement have to be adjusted until they are satisfactory. From time to time, it can also be useful to stop the pendulum movement and search for helpful results from empirical research or theory work. Gradually, the researchers thus gain a "deeper" understanding of the situation or the practice, develop so to speak "clearer" theoretical concepts, and avoid empirical naivety on the one hand and fact free reasoning on the other hand. The focus is always on the practice and the acting, the knowledge and the practical wisdom of those who offer professional care and help. At the same time, theoretical understanding is further developed, from concepts to grounded theories to more comprehensive theories that point beyond the concrete situation or practice. This reciprocal approach focuses primarily on the theory development on the first two levels, distinguished by Lindemann. Essential to our proposal are (a) the assumption that every experience contains theory-in-nuce and (b) a procedure that helps to articulate the theoretical implications of the practice, instead of distorting it or even replacing it with inappropriate theoretical concepts.

3 OUR RESEARCH: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COMPLEX, REAL LIFE PRACTICES

So far, the theory. In practice, we do qualitative inquiry, that opens up and makes understandable what participants in practices of care are doing, refrain from and are undergoing (8). Care-ethical "critical insights" guide us in this search of good care. Our interest is a critical phenomenological one: what phenomena in care practices show themselves and what do practitioners (and others involved in the practice) perceive? What do they consider? How do they act and how do they evaluate their acting? What do they undergo and how do they call that? Those who are involved in the researched practice, especially care-givers, are installed as co-researchers, with their own responsibilities. And we are interested in the development of theory. We use 'grounded theory' procedures and criteria, such as theoretical sensitivity of the researcher, the inscription of experience and observation (through diary entries, field notes, interview transcripts), coding along various dimensions (initial,

focused, axial and theoretical coding), constant comparison, memo writing and sorting, saturation, and theoretical sampling in our research.

We consider three examples of our care-ethical empirical research: into neighbourhood pastoral care, into how hospital staff deals with the family of a patient, and into end-of-life care by general practitioners⁴. Each one of these studies started with a strong intuition, namely, that sound and thorough qualitative research would deliver an insight into the practice considered, substantially different from, and better than, the current insight. In each one of these studies, a limited number of comprehensive cases was studied. What is central in these cases, is how and what participants in a certain practice perceive, consider, assess, weigh, act and evaluate – and not their beliefs, opinions or responses to prefabricated vignettes. In these three studies, respectively two, one, and six cases were studied⁵. In the analysis of the cases, a lot of qualitative analysis was carried out. And a lot of conceptual and theoretical work was done to be able to observe well and to name well what was observed. The reconstruction of what came out of the analysis, was subsequently put before the practitioners who participated in the study, and supplemented, corrected, and finally in general terms confirmed by them. Of course, the researchers are responsible for the detailed outcomes and the wording of them.

The above-mentioned studies resulted in the reconstruction of what became named the ‘practice of presence’, the development in the layered emotions of the family of a hospital patient, respectively, the perceiving, considering, assessing, weighing, acting, and evaluating of general practitioners, especially their practical wisdom. An important criterion of the quality of these studies is the nature and extent of the approval these reconstructions get from the involved practitioners. The acknowledgement and the approval in all these three studies were considerable, and had the nature of recognition: “Yes, that’s how we do that! Yes, that’s how it is for us!” That recognition was substantial. And it was critical. Even though one easily thinks so, our research showed that neighbourhood pastors are not systematically solving problems, emotions do not come in phases, and general practitioners are not rational choice actors, performing separate, contextless actions in plan-do-check-adjust cycles.

4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS: GROUNDED THEORY METHODOLOGIES, ABDUCTIVE ANALYSIS, MYSTERY AS METHOD, INTUITIVE INQUIRY

In the social science research methodology, there is a lot of discussion about empirical research and theory development. We will present some of the proposed methodologies. The first is, of course, the so-called ‘grounded theory methodology’, a family of methodologies of developing theories out of empirical data collection and analysis and in that sense ‘grounded’ in empirical data. In the most radical form, it is stated by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss as an inductive method:

“Clearly, a grounded theory that is faithful to the everyday realities of the substantive area is one that has been carefully induced from the data” ([15], p.239).

Essential in the discovery of grounded theory is conceptualization, abstracting from time, place and people, and relating concepts to concepts ([16]). The quality criteria of a grounded theory are: the theory has to fit the research field (fit). The theory has to thematise the basic processes and the most important problems in the field (relevance). The theory has to offer an interpretation and explanation of the researched phenomenon (work). Nearly fifty years old, grounded theory

⁴ The main publications about these studies are in Dutch: [(9-11)]. In English, the first study is discussed in [(12)] and [(13)]. In German, the first study is discussed in [(14)] and the outcome of the second study relevant to our discussion here is presented in [(5)].

⁵ In the first study, the two central case studies were embedded in a multiple case study.

methodology has evolved from the postpositivism of Glaser and Strauss, to the symbolic interactionism and pragmatism of Juliet Corbin and Anselm Strauss, to the constructivism of Kathy Charmaz [(17, 18)]. Since Glaser and Strauss, at least in the work of Strauss, grounded theory methodology has become more and more abductive [(19)].

Stefan Timmermans and Iddo Tavory propose to transcend the grounded theory methodology to a methodology of 'abductive analysis':

"Abductive analysis is a qualitative data analysis approach aimed at generating creative and novel theoretical insights through a dialectic of cultivated theoretical sensitivity and methodological heuristics. Abductive analysis emphasizes that rather than setting all preconceived theoretical ideas aside during the research project, researchers should enter the field with the deepest and broadest theoretical base possible and develop their theoretical repertoires throughout the research process: [(20)], p. 180).

According to Timmermans and Tavory, abductive analysis arises from the researcher's social and intellectual position. It has to be further aided by the methodological steps of revisiting the same observation again and again, defamiliarization of the known world, and applying alternative casings to the observations. Abductive analysis can be evaluated with three criteria: the theoretical claims have to be supported by the empirical material (fit). The theoretical claims have to be stronger than competing theories (plausibility). The theorizations matter in the community of inquiry (relevance).

Mats Alvesson and Dan Kärreman developed a research methodology, in which 'breakdowns' in understanding – deviations from what would be expected, given established wisdom, in empirical contexts – are studied, and sometimes induced. Some of these breakdowns might turn out to be of theoretical interest, leading to novel theoretical ideas. Alvesson and Kärreman call these breakdowns of theoretical interest 'mysteries'. 'Empirical material' fulfils the role of inspiring the problematization of existing theoretical ideas and vocabularies. Rather than a judge or a mirror, empirical material is conceived as a critical dialogue partner. Alvesson and Kärreman draw attention to friction rather than harmony in the interplay between theory, researcher subjectivity, and empirical material. Theories are instruments that provide illumination, insight, and understanding. Rather than emphasising procedures and techniques for collecting and analysing data, they are interested in the researcher's reflexivity in dealing with the empirical material [(21, 22)].

Another methodology, of interest to our thinking about methodology, is that of 'intuitive inquiry', developed by the psychologist Rosemarie Anderson:

"Intuitive inquiry is a hermeneutical research method that joins intuition to intellectual precision. Intuitive researchers explore topics that claim their enthusiasm and invite the inquiry to transform both their understanding of the topic and their lives. As a method, intuitive inquiry seeks to both describe what is and to envision new possibilities for the future through an in-depth, reflection process of interpretation" [(23)], p. 307)

Anderson distinguishes five types of intuition, of which the last two are: compassionate knowing and wounds in the personality of the researcher. Intuitive inquiry consists of five cycles of interpretation: (a) clarifying the research topic by an imaginative inner dialogue; (b) developing preliminary interpretative lenses in interaction with the literature; (c) collecting and analysing data and preparing descriptive reports; (d) transforming and revising interpretative lenses; (e) discussing and confronting with the literature of the final lenses and their theoretical implications. Anderson proposes two new bases to determine external validity: 'resonance validity', the capacity to produce sympathetic resonance in its readers, and 'efficacy validity', the capacity to give more value to its readers' lives.

We have questions regarding all of these four alternative methodologies. Nevertheless, they delineate in a relevant way a field of discussion about the role over empirical research, abductive reasoning, existing theories, researcher's subjectivity, intuition and reflexivity, and the community of inquiry in theory development. They also offer different accounts of how and by what criteria qualitative research can be evaluated. Some of these criteria apply in one way or another to our own research, especially: fit, relevance (to the field and to the community of inquiry), illuminative power, and resonance validity.

5 N=N CASE STUDY

Because we want to study real life complexity, our empirical material consists of extensive and comprehensive case descriptions. That is why we characterize our research as "case studies". Case studies can be distinguished in different ways: according to the kind of cases that are studied, according to the purpose of the study, according to the method of analysis et cetera [(24, 25)]. Regarding theorising from case studies, one can find in several publications a certain typology, the two dimensions of which are causal explanation and contextualization. The four types of this typology are called "inductive theory building" and "natural experiment", both from a positivist orientation, "interpretive sensemaking", from an interpretive/constructionist orientation, and "contextualised explanation", from a critical realist orientation [(26)]. We find ourselves somewhere in-between the last two positions.

For our research aim, the number of cases is not decisive, as long as the analysis of these cases provide deep enough theoretical insight into the studied practice. In distinction to single-case studies (N=1) and multiple-case studies (N=n), we propose to characterize the design of our research in a concise way as "N=N-case studies". A more accurate, but lengthy characterization would be: "phenomenological, theory-directed N=N-case studies in empirically grounded ethics of care". The validity and transferability of our research findings are based on the extensiveness of the case(s), the rigor of the analysis, the innovative power of the developed, empirically grounded theoretical concepts, and the approval the findings get from the participants – not on the amount and representativeness of the cases.

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LESSONS FROM JAZZ IMPROVISATION TO QUALITATIVE INQUIRY AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

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Abstract

In this presentation I will focus on lessons from the arts to qualitative inquiry, especially, what reflection on jazz improvisation may bring to qualitative inquiry. First, I will make the general suggestion that qualitative investigations, seen as reflective practices, have much in common with – and probably much to learn from – jazz improvisational practices. The complex processes of hermeneutic understanding include laying bare the researcher's pre-understanding as well as, in the interpretation of statements, the dynamics between their holistic coherence and the agent's intentions. Through interview excerpts, the important phenomenon of breaks in the conversational flow will be shown to have great significance to qualitative inquiry as a reflective practice, pointing to improvisational practices as relevant providers of solutions to the problematic dynamics of understanding, pre-understanding, self-understanding and misunderstanding. Second, I will discuss a number of 'lessons' that reflection on jazz improvisation may bring to qualitative research. One lesson concerns the dynamics of different kinds of authenticity. Just as jazz improvisation can be authentic in more than one way, so can research. A second lesson concerns the dynamics of observation and interpretation. Just as jazz improvisation can be viewed both as a response to external impulses and as a manifestation of internal gestures, so can research. A third lesson concerns identity. Just as the notion of changing narrative identity can be seen as key to jazz improvisation, so may an expanded notion of prolonged engagement emerge as highly relevant to qualitative research processes.

Keywords: jazz improvisation, qualitative inquiry, reflective practice.

1 LESSONS FROM JAZZ TO QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

In this presentation I will focus on 'lessons' from the arts to qualitative research – especially from jazz. On a general level, I think there are a number of 'lessons' that reflection on jazz improvisation may bring to qualitative research. One lesson concerns the dynamics of different kinds of authenticity. In jazz music, authenticity is considered crucial – but the term can mean quite different things. A jazz musician can be authentic with regard to the musical tradition, but it is arguably often considered just as important to be authentic with regard to oneself. In jazz improvisation, the rules and conventions of musical tradition merge seamlessly with the expression of an individual voice. In short, there is tradition-authenticity, and there is self-authenticity. I suggest that just as jazz improvisation can be authentic in more than one way, so can research.

A second lesson concerns the dynamics of observation and interpretation. In jazz improvisation, the musical outcome is a product of response to external impulses – in time and in space. This includes musical tradition as well as interplay with fellow musicians and audience. At the same time, the

musical outcome is also a manifestation of internal gestures. I suggest that just as jazz improvisation can be viewed both as a response to external impulses and as a manifestation of internal gestures, so can research.

A third lesson concerns the dynamics of improvisation and composition. In jazz improvisation, the process is the product. I suggest that just as jazz can be seen as process rather than product, so may research.

2 JAZZ AND QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

However, the main point I wish to make in this presentation is that qualitative investigations and hermeneutic understanding have much in common with – and probably much to learn from – jazz improvisational practices. I hope to show through interview excerpts that the important phenomenon of breaks in the conversational flow has great significance to qualitative inquiry. I will argue that improvisational practices can provide relevant solutions to the problematic dynamics of understanding, pre-understanding, self-understanding, and misunderstanding.

A few years ago I made an empirical investigation, based on open-ended interviews, of how jazz musicians conceptualize their craft [1]. My argument today has been inspired by my experiences from the empirical study. When I analysed my interviews with Swedish jazz performers, it occurred to me that not only was improvisation the topic of our talks; the reflective processes in which the interviewer and the interviewee indulged together were themselves improvisatory to an important extent.

Liora Bresler [2] has stated that 'life [...] requires improvisation' (p. 33). On a similar note, Mary Catherine Bateson [3] has suggested that jazz is a suitable metaphor for life, which is an improvisatory art. Her collection of comparative biographies of five women is, in her own words, 'a book about life as an improvisatory art, about the ways we combine familiar and unfamiliar components in response to new situations, following an underlying grammar and an evolving aesthetic' (p. 3). In a sense, then, it might be argued that any living creature would know in principle what jazz improvisation is about.

Inspired by Bateson's perspective, Penny Oldfather and Jane West [4] address methodological issues in a playful attempt to shed light on the nature of qualitative inquiry through a metaphor of qualitative research as jazz. The uniqueness of each improvisation, they hold, corresponds to the adaptive methodologies and contextually bound findings of each qualitative inquiry.

Svend Brinkmann [5] argues that there is much to learn from interviews that contain 'misunderstandings or other breaks in the conversational flow': 'Aspects that stand out as strange may often prove to be valuable to understanding how talking about the subject matter in a specific way constructs what we may know about it' (pp. 65–66).

Steinar Kvale's [6] general view on qualitative interviews is very much in tune, I believe, with learning ecologies of jazz contexts: this holds for the view of conversation as a basic mode of knowing, as well as the view of knowing as a right to believe rather than as having an essence, and the view that we constitute ourselves and our worlds in our conversational activity. I find very fascinating the notion that the interviewer/traveller (in Kvale's metaphor) may not only gain knowledge but change in the course of the interview/journey.

3 ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW EXCERPTS

I will return to the perspective emphasized by Brinkmann [5]: how 'misunderstandings or other breaks in the conversational flow' (p. 65) – may serve as important potential knowledge sources in qualitative inquiry. In order to provide a richer picture of the dynamics in an interview situation, I will present an extensive excerpt from my talk with alto saxophonist Amanda Sedgwick. In it, there are, I believe, a couple of rather instructive examples of how perspectives of the interviewee (AS) and the interviewer (SB) may differ at some points and coincide at some, and how the interview works as a sort of mutual journey towards a deeper understanding of issues in question.

Following the excerpt, I will discuss briefly a couple of points of disagreement that I think of as very productive misunderstandings or breaks in the conversational flow. They are marked with bold font and letters **A** and **B** in the excerpt.

SB - What makes a good jazz improvisation good?

AS - To me it's impossible to take that out of its context. I think what makes a musician good is a whole life. I don't think you can pull it out of its context. A musician who has something to say, something important, is a whole and interesting human being, full of nuances.

SB - And you can hear that in the music?

AS - Yes, of course. That's how it works. It's a very spiritual thing we're into. A spiritual or universal principle. If it's in a certain way within, that will show.

SB - Let's turn it around: what sorts of things could prevent you from being a whole person in the way that is relevant here?

AS - That's a good question, I think, because I think it's exactly that way of viewing things. That may be another question, but that view is common in today's education, I think. **I'm very much against that (A)**, and so are many colleagues. But I'm digressing from the question, sorry, ask again.

SB - Well, if you say the condition is to be a whole and... well-integrated human being...

AS - **No, I don't think that you necessarily have to be well-integrated (B)**.

SB - No, I'm sorry, I made that word up myself. But an interesting...

AS - Interesting. To be that you don't have to be balanced or integrated or even intelligible. There are many bizarre and difficult people who are great musicians. But I think you have to be an interesting person in order to have something to offer.

SB - You used the word whole.

AS - Yes. Good that you mentioned that. I don't mean whole as in balanced, but whole as in honest.

SB - That's a big difference, of course. But if you try to nail that which comes out in the music, in the jazz improvisation, what is it that can prevent that?

AS - Yes. It's exactly this kind of view, I think: what makes a jazz improvisation good?

SB - That it's a too narrow view?

AS - Not just too narrow. It has nothing whatsoever to do with creating. And that brings me to this sidetrack about jazz schools.

SB - Yes, I'm very interested in that, so I'd like you to follow that track.

AS - I believe, like many others, that jazz schools have ruined a lot of the music life. It's just an intellectual view, and the way of teaching is very narrow. To learn this and this style. And many believe you can think it out, like... (PAUSE.)

SB - I'd very much like to get at the things I believe you're thinking of now.

AS - You're welcome to put words in my mouth...

SB - Yeah, and then you can correct me. What is done in teaching may to some extent be guided by the fact that it's easier to teach things that can be written down?

AS - Partly that. And partly that people have an idea about creativity... that it has to be something new all the time. And they miss out on the fact that the new stuff, the creative stuff, happens in the moment, it happens because you're honest. And they miss out on that it's necessary to know the tradition. You have to have roots.

[...]

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

I will comment briefly on issues **A** and **B**. Obviously, these comments are based on my interpretations of the dialogue. By presenting and discussing them as openly as possible, I hope to enable you to develop your own view of the conversational dynamics and the construction of understanding in the interview.

A. Amanda Sedgwick is annoyed by the way I formulated the interview question, 'What makes a good jazz improvisation good?' I thought it was a very good question to start with. It seemed highly relevant to any jazz improviser, and in most cases it was a very efficient way to get the interviewee to start talking.

But in Sedgwick's opinion, this formulation is problematic because it relates closely to problems she perceives as acute and very distressing in jazz schools.

Fundamentally, Sedgwick believes that you have to be a 'whole' person in order to play good jazz improvisations.

My question 'What...?', however, may indicate a mistaken presumption that one could point out isolated qualities that are sufficient in order to make jazz solos good.

Sedgwick relates this formulation to her view of the 'narrow' teaching at jazz schools, as well as to what she perceives as the schools' mistaken views (and focus) on creativity.

B. In her first response, Sedgwick mentions the condition that a musician ought to be 'whole and interesting'. When I return, after a few moments, to that statement, I misrepresent her phrasing and intention by saying, 'whole and... well-integrated'. As Sedgwick protests, I respond, 'I'm sorry, I made that word up'. This was not entirely true; the view that a jazz soloist ought to be a psychologically well-integrated human being had been put forward shortly earlier by another of my interviewees.

This mistake on my part had at least two positive consequences. First, Sedgwick found reason to offer even more careful and thorough formulations of her own view regarding necessary personality traits in the successful jazz soloist.

Second, as a consequence of having exposed Sedgwick to another interviewee's opinion (one she did not agree with), I gained material for an interesting comparison of diverging opinions regarding which psychological qualities may be valuable when improvising jazz.

I don't think it would be meaningful or even possible to draw any general conclusions on conversational dynamics from these observations. Interviews do not proceed in accordance with mechanisms; they develop in different and unpredictable ways. The point I wish to make is simply that these excerpts can be viewed as exemplifications that indicate considerable similarities between "life as an improvisatory art" ([3], p. 3), jazz, qualitative inquiry, and reflective practice as improvisatory art. These similarities would seem to regard, for instance, the need for structure as well as continuous impulse fluidity, and the need for receptivity as well as initiative. In particular, it is

illuminating to observe how knowledge, meaning, and understanding can be generated as direct consequences of "breaks in the conversational flow" ([5], p. 65); in the excerpts from the Sedgwick interview, this is exemplified by the issues A and B. The excerpts I have cited are nothing more than a few scattered examples of how processes of deepened understanding may develop. The notorious richness of this field, obviously, calls for a careful, sensitive, and thorough analytic approach.

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LOOKING AFTER PSYCHÉ. PHILOSOPHICAL PATHS AND EDUCATIONAL SCENARIOS FOR THE ANALYTICAL CARE IN ITALY.

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Abstract

My current PhD research this short paper wants to present focuses both on a particular educational scenario for the analytical care in Italy which doesn't recognize psychoanalysis as a medical practice and on the seek for the philosophical nature of depth-psychology. That's something halfway between qualitative inquiry and theoretical work because of my double belonging to education as well as to philosophy. It's a challenge I think to face with the help of a narrative ethnographic approach in order to connect practice and theory and to allow the last one to emerge and intertwine with the first, thus revealing the biographical roots of its genesis and its meaning.

Keywords: Philosophical Practices, Psychoanalysis, Training.

I started dealing with psychoanalysis seventeen years ago. I was a young freshman in philosophy and at the same time I had just undertook my personal analytic path. On one hand I was studying the relationship between depth-psychology and pedagogy [1], while on the other I was bringing into the room 'symptoms' that - I thought - needed to be cured. At that time I still didn't know I would have finally got a meaning for them without their necessary and complete disappearance. What I developed, then, was a 'philosophy of the lived life', a form of deep self-knowledge that orientates the everyday 'practical' dimension, a kind of self-education. Nothing different from what actually philosophy was at its origins, as Hadot [2] and Foucault [3] showed us. Nevertheless I wasn't aware of all this, at least not in these terms. Getting older and moving forward with studying led me to meet the 'renewed philosophical practices'[4] [5]. In these years I've properly understood psychoanalysis inherited - in a specific phase of western history - the 'therapeutic' and educational role that ancient philosophy lost from Middle Ages on, becoming an abstract speech. In spite of the fact that its founders were physicians, psychoanalysis can't work within a medical model aimed to defeat symptoms, restore some supposed preliminary 'healthy' condition and promote adaptation. It is 'just' a self educational thinking practice. The epistemological status of psychoanalysis is hotly debated since its own foundation and, to date, though its interpretation as a psychotherapeutic cure properly managed only in the medical or scientific-protocolar field [6] is commonly prevailed, many authors offer a different vision both on the nature of the discipline and the question of analytic training: as many European psychoanalysts and other professionals state, psychoanalysis is born precisely where 'change' - and especially 'awareness' - insert itself in the place of 'therapy', which aims at eliminating symptoms and at re-establishing a more or less pre-existing order of well-being [7]. Then, the question of the analytical training is still open in different countries and psychoanalysis constantly faces the risk to be "swallowed up by medicine" as Freud feared [8]. In fact the "absence of status for the psychoanalyst is still the rule in Europe, but the absence of ruling has become exceptional. For a long time, any local psychoanalytic society, in agreement with the procedures defined by the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA), made decisions on the training of

analysts, on their recognition as such and on the possible conditions for exclusion” [9]. Today this occurs only in very few countries. “Everywhere else the training and practice of analysts are subject to partial rulings which differ widely from country to country” [9] but, in general, when “psychoanalysis appears in an official document it is frequently as a variety of psychotherapy” [9]. In spite of this, throughout Europe there are different forms of political and cultural resistance to a growing medicalization of the psychoanalytic speech. Italian legislation doesn’t name psychoanalysis at all. Psychotherapy is instead regulated as health care practice by the Act 56/1989, “colloquially called the Ossicini Law by the name of its main promoter” [10], and “psychotherapeutical practice is allowed to all who are registered in the Psychological Association or in the Medical Association, and who solemnly declare to having completed all the necessary professional training in psychotherapy, providing relevant certification, indicating the place, period and length of training” [10]. Although a first draft of the law mentioned psychoanalysis among the other psychotherapies, every similar reference was then voluntarily omitted by the legislator, intending to exclude psychoanalysis from the remit of the measure, as the parliamentary debate witnessed. What a confusive exclusion, though, since it wasn’t an explicit one and everything could have been interpreted as if psychoanalysis was included instead [11]! After the law was approved an intense debate arose between two opposite schools of thought. “The first believed it was obvious that psychoanalysis wasn’t regulated by the law, because it wasn’t named, and it follows, the only reason for this was that psychoanalysis, whatever it is, is not psychotherapy, it is not aimed to heal a symptom, and if you get any relief from it, it’s just a collateral benefit. The second thought it was obvious that psychoanalysis was a psychotherapy, and if the law doesn’t mention it, it is because there is no need: what else should psychoanalysis be, if not psychotherapy? Why should someone pay for a long and expensive treatment if not to be relieved from his disorders? If the problem is to know yourself, they said, you’d better consult the Delphic Oracle, and so on” [10]. Italian psychoanalysts divided and many decided to be registered as psychotherapists, thus betraying Freud’s own view and contributing to make analysis be silently equalized to therapy; others proceeded their way, not bothering about a law that effectively didn’t rule their work but often exposing themselves to absurd trials for malpractice even if almost all “the lawsuits that have been brought against psychoanalysts for malpractice have been lost by the plaintiffs, and the psychoanalysts have [...] been acquitted” [10]. Act 4/2013 about unregulated professions then offered the chance to rethink the question and many ‘lay analysts’ (not physicians nor psychologists) are now working in different ways to promote a change. I mapped more than forty Italian cultural and educational realities eleven of which offer indeed some training for ‘lay’ analysis.

The book I have recently published [12] constitutes the starting point of my present work. The text is, in fact, the final product of a previous theoretical research on psychoanalysis as spiritual quest, ethical practice, self-care and science of education whose I want to underline the philosophical nature. In doing this I pursue Romano Màdera’s attempt [13] of renewing the way of life of the ancient philosophical schools [14], adapting it to the specific characteristics of our age and integrating it with the lead of Jungian depth psychology [15]: what follows at Philo - Higher School of Philosophical Practices in Milan - is the proposal of a Philosophically Oriented Biographical Analysis (POBA, English literally version of the original Italian expression ABOF - Analisi Biografica a Orientamento Filosofico), inserted in those philosophical practices Màdera calls ‘renewed’ [4] [12]. This kind of analysis - not aimed to treat mental illness, but the “normal” pain everyone daily experiences as human being looking for a meaning [12], thus clearly outside of the health care field - far from being a mere profession is a way of staying in the world, in the relationship and in contact with the self [16] analyst and analyzant share in their encounter. From this bi-univocal experience a philosophical discourse able to give expression to a particular life slowly takes shape [4] [12] reconnecting the individual to the mythical collective it belongs to [16] [17] [18]. So, on the footsteps of Màdera and Montanari [19], I started to trace the outlines of a possible “depth philosophy” [12] [20] firstly by stressing the philosophical core of Freud’s and Jung’s works [21] and then by considering the important contributions of the ‘Jungian School’ (e.g.: Hillman, Neumann, Bernhard)

[22] [23]. However this perspective of a “depth philosophy” still requires further steps, moving beyond Jungism, towards contemporaneity, and even going back to well before Freud [12] by recovering the proto-psychoanalytic dimension hidden in classical and archaic thought [24] [25] [26]. Now my current study consists both in a complete-member research [27] about this particular educational scenario for the analytical care in Italy POBA is (and I’m attending as learner) and on the seek for the philosophical nature of depth-psychology, with the intent of outlining what I’ve already called a “depth philosophy” (back to the Pre-Socratics and up to now). That’s something halfway between qualitative inquiry and theoretical work because of my double belonging to education as well as to philosophy. It’s a challenge I think to face with the help of a narrative ethnographic approach [28] [29] [30] in order to connect practice and theory and to allow the last one to emerge and intertwine with the first, thus revealing the biographical roots of its genesis and its meaning. This way the theoretical goal of the research becomes clear along with the hope to provide Philo and the broader Italian psychoanalytic world new insights and matter of debate. Theory, in fact, isn’t anything separated from the practical realm - as too often it is incorrectly perceived; it arises from the field, tries to understand and explain it and sometimes wants to transform or develop it, as the Greek etymology of the word helps us to remember (*theo, orao*: watching/observing, contemplating, examining) [12]. Can theory and field-work go along together, blurring the boundaries between languages and styles (scientific argumentation, philosophical speculation, literary exposure)? I want to try to answer this question by telling the research process itself and its backstage in a sort of confessional tale [31] [32] that includes (and starts from) the researcher’s subjectivity.

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MANY CHILDHOOD IDEAS FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN: TOOLS AND TYPES OF INTERVENTION FOR SOCIAL WORKERS. A RESEARCH IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF GENOA (ITALY)

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Abstract

The present research takes place coming from the interaction between scientific interests (academic research group) and professional needs of workers (educators, municipality social workers, National Civil Service's volunteers) in educational and social services for refugee and asylum seekers (families/minors).

These two groups, who are going to work together at the research, aim to investigate the construction of social representation and image of migrant children in contexts of emergency. The research is paying particular attention to the dimensions of ethics; rights; legal protection and citizenship.

The objective of the research process is to develop skills and functions of these workers' categories in order to enhance and improve services' quality.

The research is going to be developed in the city of Genova, connecting the research team with the local institutions, involved in the educative and social process of refugees/asylum seekers welcoming, caring and legal protection.

The study allows to investigate two different systems/services:

- unaccompanied migrant children
- asylum seekers

These different research fields are going to be analyzed according to three different action levels (local, national, Community), using different perspectives that refers to: services' organization (political dimension), services' quality (operative dimension), services' action models (theoretical dimension), operators' and experts' skills (with a focus on National Service's volunteers).

The emergency's interventions need a human based approach. This approach grant not to reduce the image of migrant children only to their origins or to their material needs.

The research intend to: promote circularity among practices; encourage a reflective approach; facilitate the design of professional longlife learning classes.

The educational framework refers to these concept:

- intercultural education;
- Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity;
- Intercultural competence (Deardorff: 2009, Santerini: 2010, Berardo, Deardorff and Mitchell: 2012);

* Andrea Traverso wrote Research methodology , Paola Alessia Lampugnani wrote Data analysis and discussion, Alessia Olivieri wrote Theoretical Framework, Helena Barbera wrote Introduction and Conclusion.

- Childhood safeguards.

We used a qualitative approach useful to combine procedural and processual needs, with the objective of paying attention also to the stories of who is involved in the system (users, operators, decisors' makers). We are also going to use tools of quantitative data collection that will contribute to reveal conceptual intersections with qualitative data.

Keywords: social workers, unaccompanied migrant children, social services, education.

1 INTRODUCTION

This research was born, on the one hand, from the practical needs shown by the Social Consortium named Agorà in relation to training its educators and the National Civil Service's volunteers, and on the other hand, from the theoretical interest showed by Genoa University (DisFor) to investigate better and more closely the concept of childhood when combined with the migration process.

During this investigation, we want to work with the recollections of childhood that Social workers and migrants have, and uncover what they represent.

The close cohesion, collaboration and participation between Agorà (Social Services) and the Department of Educational Science (University) during all research paths will fulfil the want to clearly define the will of social change and improve current methods for welcoming migrant minors.

Through semi-structured interviews created by the research team and submitted to unaccompanied migrant children, hosted in Agorà's services, we want to investigate which is the thought of childhood within the migrant and how this can change (if it change) during travel. Childhood is culturally connoted, but in this research we want to look for its specific meaning, not only as a stage of life, but as a category to preserve and enhance.

The purpose of this study is to give conceptual and operational tools to Social Workers working in an intercultural context. Additionally, the objective of the research process is to develop the skills and functions of educators in order to enhance and improve the quality of services.

Children should not only be seen as a social category or under a normative label. We want to prevent childhood from going undetected in an emergency context, and also from paternalistic interventions which do not enhance the educational path or independence level.

The research will be developed in the city of Genoa, connecting the research team with local institutions who are involved in education and social process of refugees/asylum seekers to welcome them and offer care and legal protection.

The study allows us to investigate two different systems/services:

- unaccompanied migrant children
- asylum seekers

These different research fields will be analysed according to three different action levels (local, national, Community), using different perspectives which refer to: service organization (political dimension), service quality (operative dimension), service action models (theoretical dimension), operators and expert skills (with a focus on National Service's volunteers).

In our first approach to this issue, we analysed the theoretical framework from a pedagogical perspective (childhood, migrations) as well as the normative perspective, focused on international and national reconnaissance.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE RIGHTS

In recent years, Europe and Italy have faced a severe emergency relating to migration, whose victims include men, but also whole families and unaccompanied children. To date, the topic has been approached from different points of view but just marginally in a pedagogical or educational perspective.

Recent data shows an incessant increase of arrivals, raising 1,59% in 2015 for adults and 25% for children, from the previous year. Available data for 2016 refers to the first 9 months of the same year (Ministero degli Interni, 2016 :10).

Such uninterrupted growth of asylum seekers in the territory has caused a large increase in demand for social services. Consequently, a pedagogical reflection is necessary in order to ensure that for all asylum seekers, and in particular for children, rights are safeguarded and protected.

What is the concept of childhood owned by unaccompanied children who have left their home country, where they have experienced war or extreme conditions of poverty, to reach a new State with different cultures, habits and traditions?

From these questions the need was born to start an action – research, after the social service request to have pedagogical grounds, that must be oriented with educational actions.

To understand how it's possible to ensure childhood protection, in particular into the services, it's necessary to know the laws which exist around the complex topic of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children.

The historical process, to ensure the rights and protection of children, has been long and complex, taking into account the large number of international Declarations, Conventions and Laws.

The "Convention on the Rights of Children" is one of the main legal instruments which guides the defence and the security of children. The CRC is considered to be the milestone of this long path, because it introduces for the first time the principle "Best interest of Child", which should be the primary consideration of all actions affecting children at an international level. Furthermore, in light of the Convention, children are specific right owners such as the right to life, the right to survival and development, and the right to express their views freely. With particular reference to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children, there also exist, in addition to the above mentioned principles, the Conventions regarding the International Protections (Convention of Ginevra, Dublin, Shenghen Agreements, Stockolm Programme, Lisbon Treaty).

Concerning the specific case of Italy, the protection system seems to be so complex due to the existence of different laws for different cases: Unaccompanied children or unaccompanied children who are also asylum seekers.

Additionally, for children who are not international protection applicants, the importance of analysing Italian laws must be looked at, because they present a rich thematic area which must be followed: childhood rights, immigration rights and specific guidelines for unaccompanied children.

Moreover the local legislation in Liguria - where the research will be developed - regulates all educational actions of unaccompanied children, relative to L.R. 20 February 2007 for "regulations for the hospitality and the social integration of foreign citizens". This law draws attention to the fact that unaccompanied children are considered more as foreigners than as children.

This preliminary study will allow us to understand the difficulties present at the normative level relating to the protection of childhood, mostly in the particular cases of those found in this research.

For the topic of asylum seekers, it's also fundamental to know the hosting system - in particular the First Reception and the Second Reception, in order to understand the path of the children, and if they are protected during the different steps of their travel.

The study about different legislation is important because:

- it defines who they are in front of the Law, and how they are represented and perceived in society;
- it allows us to understand what the borders are in the Services and which services and relative educational actions have to stay.

2.1 Developing research theoretical framework: the pedagogical perspective.

The topic of immigration, in particular asylum seekers and refugees, needs: a scientific reflection about the dimension of values and education that are grounded into the hosting system; and an educational plan which is able to think in primis to the best interest of the child and to protect childhood, particularly minors, for their specific condition. These actions must also have a long term goal to create autonomy and inclusion.

In the framework of this research, we focus our pedagogical attention on the risk that sometimes minors may stay trapped in the concept of "refugees" or "foreigners", while the condition of being a child becomes secondary (Catarci: Macinai: 2015).

To be a foreign minor presents another difficulty for the relationship between culture and the building of one's own identity. Culture becomes synonymous with identity, as both a marker and a differentiator of identity. The news consist of the fact that groups formed around these identity markers ask the State and their agencies to legally recognize different cultures. The idea of identity is strictly linked to one of alterity, because it's only through dialogue that it's possible to be aware of our own uniqueness and diversity from another human being. The will to meet others means not being afraid to questioning ourselves and to have the courage to go over the border of our experience. Consequently, the concept of culture itself can change (Benhabib: 2002).

Nowadays there is a new vision of culture, where it's not possible to identify a unique culture, but also requires us to talk about cultures (Mantovani: 2004). This consideration allows to think that it's much more appropriate to use the term "multicultural".

The multiculturalism born from different features of our society:

1. the globalization of the economical market of the product system, deeply changes the logic at the base of product and trade-off systems, which causes the transfer of some part of the product system to other Countries. This aspect, instead of reducing migration flows and creating job opportunities, tends to increase it through the creation of situations of mistreatment. People are then forced to emigrate, looking for new and better conditions.
2. The facility and the speed of the material and virtual movements in all the world: it's a real revolution that allows us to totally change the idea of the relation between the person and their country of origin, reducing the concrete distance and promoting new contacts, which was not possible even a short time ago (Pinto Minerva: 2015).

In Italy the relationship with cultural diversity is controversial and may even generate feelings of hate and fear, which could contribute to worsened condition for unaccompanied children.

In this context, the foreigner is considered through social categorization: a social and cognitive process that through similarities and differences lets us create different opinions about anybody and anything (Goffman: 2003).

Consequently, throughout this system of categorization, a natural process which leads to prejudice takes place (Allport: 1954) and, just for the reason above, all pedagogical actions take on great importance in intervening between prejudices and discriminating attitudes. At the base of psychological processes which lead to prejudice, we find the ingroup/outgroup mechanism described in the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel: 1978).

Prejudice is a natural process of human beings, nevertheless the role of pedagogical sciences is to investigate the channels through which it's transmitted and to also demonstrate how to face it. The categorization originates in the encounter, in the formal and informal places of socialization and education, especially in families (Boyd: 1989) and at school. To go over this mechanism, it's necessary to focus the attention on the pedagogical and intercultural categorizations: interaction, exchange, dialogue and communication which allow a reasoning of diversity (Spitzberg: 2009).

Furthermore, if for the minor the experience of migration represents a traumatic event, the fact of carrying it out alone, without a parental support or an adult reference, makes everything much more complex and difficult. The risk of losing the identity landmark is really concrete for the minor.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children, beyond being foreigners and forced to face all the factors mentioned above, also have the particularity of being adolescents (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2015:8) which promotes a fast process of becoming an adult and, at the same time, the loss of childhood. This, on one hand involves children having the responsibility to take care of themselves and their family expectations, while on the other hand shouldering the strain of separation from their family (Catarci, Macinai: 2015).

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children represent a theoretical challenge and an educational workshop where it's possible to rate our social policies (Kohli and Mitchell: 2007) and our pedagogical and intercultural theories, but also the concrete and real capacity to exist in a society of rights.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was born from the specific needs of the Agora Social Consortium (Genoa). The best research approach, in this situation, is that of participatory action-research. This approach has allowed, in all steps of the process (theoretical framework, construction of the research tool, sample selection, data analysis), a collaboration between researchers and social workers (coordinators of educational services, educators, social workers, volunteers) which granted efficacy in understanding the problem and in the final construction of the interpretative model. In particular:

- A thorough understanding of the services for the first and for the second reception;
- A de-construction and re-construction of the childhood concept in emergency situations, in particular for MSNAR;
- A good accuracy of the search tools from a linguistic and intercultural perspective;
- A strong adhesion and a good participation of children involved in the research;
- An opportunity to generate and transfer knowledge and research skills (for social workers).

Combine a scientific approach with an operational approach is required to address a complex issue and give answers and advice (guidelines) to educational services, especially those that deal with the protection of children's rights.

We have not used search patterns of anthropological and ethnographic subjects - most commonly used in these particular contexts of study and analysis - for the fragility of the population (as we see below). The attendance of children, especially in the CAS (the extraordinary reception centers) is very discontinuous, subject to large fluctuations and does not allow the possibility of a constant presence of educational facts and relationships.

The research questions, shared in the working group are:

1. Which idea of childhood emerges in contexts that involve MSNA?
2. Is the idea of childhood in the MSNA and MNSAR, libale to changing in relation to their migration patterns?
3. How could the social and educational services to guarantee the protection of children and their rights?

The population considered is: all the unaccompanied minors and the MSNAR in the structures of first and second reception managed by the Consortium Social Agora in the City of Genoa and, in particular, minors housed in the CAS and in SPRAR project. The population was considered in the period from September to November 2016, since it is subject to many variations for the many movements (escapes, abandonment, transfers, exits) of minors.

In this first phase of the search, which ended 30 November 2016, we interviewed 13 minors, from Mali, Guinea Bissau, Ghana, Niger, Bangladesh, Afganistan.

With a training program which involved the research team and volunteers of civil service and educators of the structures (with lectures, focus groups and project work) it has been prepared an interview, given face to face.

Each interview has been conducted by a researcher at the University with the support of a voluntary civilian service as non-participant observer. In some cases the interview was also attended by the reference educator (as request of the child) or linguistic mediator to facilitate the understanding of the questions and provide effective responses. In two cases the interviews were given in English (in full) and French (partially).

The interview was structured in 5 core concepts and 9 questions:

1. Childhood in the country of origin

- Can you tell us how you held the children's days in your country?
- When did you live in your country yet what did you want for your future?
- How is it that so many guys leave from your country to come here?

2. Childhood traveling

- Based on what you saw, how are these trips for children?
- We know that on these trips there are children traveling with parents and children traveling alone. Do you think kids and teens just are helped in their difficulties? From who? How?

3. Childhood and landing

- When they arrive in Italy, like the guys just are helped?

4. Children and reception

- How is organized your days now? You're happy?

5. Childhood and the future

- What would you like for you today?
- Today, what expectations do you have for your life?

Some questions - probe have helped the interviewers to support the narrative of the child investigating specific aspects of the research problem.

The conceptual progression that sustains the interview is that of a narrative that allows to explore the personal path from the country of origin to the country of current residence through the critical moment of the choice/obligation to leave and travel. The decision not to use the life stories is justified by the need to give evidence to the theme of childhood enhancing the stories and experiences, either directly (by tellina about themselves) or indirectly (by telling about other children/ youths in the country of origin).

1 DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In the first research step, we analysed the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Minors Interviews by manual analysis. In this paper, we will focus on the first interview question, which concerns the theme of

childhood in the place where minors grew up. The question “could you tell me how was the daily life of children life in your place of birth” was aimed to evoke memories about their life, granting them - thanks to the impersonal construction - the possibility not to speak about their personal experiences, which could

potentially bring them feelings of sadness or pain.

Despite this, we noticed all the interviewed preferred to speak about their own life, even those who answered using the second-person plural form. In this part of the interview we wanted to understand - through short tales –which are the emerging dimensions of childhood in different places and contexts and which conceptual categories could be linked with them.

Analysing the related answer frames, it has been possible to identify five different themes:

- school
- work
- playtime
- parents
- spaces, places and contexts

Some of these themes arose directly, and some of them didn't arise directly from the interviewees tales, and therefore we needed to ask interviewees to speak about them using further questions.

The themes which directly arose from tales were “school” and “playtime”, which represent privileged activities for children. Despite both themes appeared in all the interviews, there is an important difference between them. In fact, they are both recognized by the interviewees as an “official” option to the family dimension, but where all interviewees share the experience of playing (“children went outside and played. All of them”; “we spent all our time playing with other children”), not all of them had the possibility to attend school (“I wanted to go to school”) or, at least, they reported that school was not yet accessible to all children (“There also were children that didn't attend school. They were many”; “It's difficult for those children whose parents don't have money. No school. There are problems... not for food, but you grow up without going to school. So, it is very difficult for us”).

Directly bonded to the theme of equity in school access, is the theme of work. As a matter of fact, the interviewees reported work experience in childhood (“I’ve ever done both. I went to school and worked. Also other children”; “I was ten years old and I worked as bricklayer. I was used to build walls with bricks, I liked very much skimming walls”) and the need to support their parents in feeding the whole family. The “work theme” is the only theme in which fragments of tales about family and parents appeared, whose role seemed to be strictly limited to a working function. None of the interviewees reported episodes or memories of childhood events linked to relationship with parents, sisters or brothers.

Also the “home” is remembered only as a “coming back place”: “then we was used to go back home and we read school books”; “We were not used to stay at home”; “At noon we came back home, we had lunch and then we walked outside all together”; “Then the night we were used to going back home”. On the contrary, the interviewees reported the fact that they spent their playtime and free time in streets, squares, in the cities, near the river, and that in all this places they were always together with other children (“during the weekend we walked and played around the city. All children. All together”).

The elements we have briefly reported allow us express a group of questions: What are the elements which could explain the choice not to speak about some dimensions of childhood? Is that because it is difficult to recollect these experiences to the memory? Or because they are painful dimensions? Or because these dimensions are not “so important” to be the subject of tales?

What actually is, the difference in what they can speak or decide to speak about? And how can we recollect and retrieve the unvoiced themes?

2 CONCLUSION

The research is working on two different levels which are going to intersect since the aim of the research is a social change.

One level concerns the methodology: the whole research was born from the meeting between the social workers’ needs and the theoretical and formative University’s features. For that reason we decided for a participated research, where each of us can bring their personal skills.

Thanks to the strong synergy in the research group we shared the methodological choices, enhancing that as a formative moment for the educators and the National Civil Service volunteers (to improve their theoretical knowledge) and for the university team (to increase their practical information).

The other level is conceptual. We focused on the reinforcement of the idea of childhood in emergency contexts.

As emerged from the normative and pedagogical analysis, unaccompanied migrant children may stay trapped in the concept of “refugees” or “foreigners”, while the condition of being a child becomes secondary. We are wondering which concept of childhood has been left in this guy’s stories, past, travel, present and future. How are the characteristic aspects of childhood present in this guy’s lives? We want to define the concept in practical applications in emergency cases.

The next step will be to report to the social workers the importance of the pedagogic category of childhood that must not remain abstract, but has to find the way to be applied every time there is a human being in front of them, even in the migration crisis.

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DYNAMIC EMBODIMENT AND TEACHING: A PROJECT OF INQUIRY THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL ANATOMY

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Abstract

In this contribute I will describe a still ongoing research based on Experiential Anatomy, in the specific approach developed by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, called Body-Mind Centering.

Experiential Anatomy focuses on the connection between the perception of one's own body and movement. It is a way to enter in contact with the structure of the body through touch, perception and kinetics. Since 1970s it has been used in different contexts: dance training, physiotherapy, psychomotricist settings.

For my actual PhD research I designed a research based on bodymindcentering practices and addressed to primary school teachers. The aim of the research is to explore bodily dimensions involved in the teaching process, focus one's own way to "embody" teaching and figure out new possibilities coherent with this style.

The research, inspired to the principles of the co-operative inquiry (Heron & Reason, 1997), is developed in six meetings, three hours each. Every meeting starts with an activation based on Experiential Anatomy and looks for connections between the body perceptions and the teaching performance through the use of auto/biographical methods. In the structure, each meeting follows the methodology of the Spiral (Formenti 2004), so teachers try out the research process passing through different forms of knowledge.

The aim of the work is to give teachers the possibility to look back at their way of teaching, to critically reflect on their inner pedagogy, in a training context with colleagues, using a particular tool, the Experiential Anatomy, that can also be used as didactic content in the classroom.

Keywords: 1: Embodied teaching, 2: Experiential Anatomy, 3: Cooperative Inquiry.

1 THE RESEARCH

I have been for several years an "external expert" in schools, working with both children and teachers in dance and theatrical workshops, in kindergardens and primary schools and in the last years I developed the interest, instead of offering a specific technique to be integrate in the didactics, to explore the embodied teaching dimension starting from what does it mean for teacher to explore bodily dimension involved in the educative process, and starting from here to explore together their inner Pedagogy, figuring out new possibilities coherent with their style.

This is the starting point of this inquiry.

The epistemological frame of the work is the Embodied Theory and in particular the area of the Pedagogy of the body.

The basic assumption of this pedagogical approach is to reconsider the role of embodied knowledge in educational processes, connecting areas that in children but also adult education are traditionally separated like thinking and perceiving, speaking and acting, moving and teaching/learning [1].

This research is inspired on cooperative inquiry when it considers participants as active subjects of the research and, as Heron and Reason are used to say about co-operative inquiry, is a research “with rather than on people”[2]. The teachers that participate at the research are interested in making new and creative sense in relation to their working context, finding a way to change things they want to change and find how to do things better.

So teachers are active agents of the research and the outcome of the research is not only theoretical but also practical, believing that is “the creative action of people to address matters that are important to them” [2].

However, in the designing part of the inquiry, when I entered in the school and I met teachers to build our “research agreement”, I met their mostly implicit request to receive from the inquiry workshops new tools for daily didactic work in the classroom. Therefore I decided to build a stronger structure of each meeting, going little far away from the cooperative inquiry method, defining my role both as researcher and trainer.

The participants are not exactly involved in designing all the practical moments of the research; this gave me the possibility to a priori baste a structure of each meeting, using a specific practical approach which is the Experiential Anatomy; so teachers are invited to try specific, practical proposals and guided to rethink their theoretical knowledge about body anatomy starting from specific activities.

From this side, in the design, the research is probably more near to an action-training research than to a cooperative inquiry, which still remains as a fundamental inspiration.

As co-operative inquire, the epistemology underlying the inquiry method integrates different kind of knowing, presentational knowing, propositional knowing, practical and experiential knowing, combined in a cycle of four phases of reflection and action.

Specifically I integrated the guidelines of Heron and Reason with Laura Formenti’s interpretation of the cooperative inquiry cycle, that she calls “The Spiral”.

For the experiential, as I shortly touched on before, a specific somatic approach has been chosen as theme and starting guide, and also content, for each meeting: the Experiential Anatomy, in the particular declination that is the Body-Mind Centering, founded by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen.

This somatic approach was born in 1970s in the United States and its main characteristic is to study the live and lively body through experience and perception; in the classic anatomy the body is studied as an object, compared to models, through atlas or skeleton observations.

Tradition Anatomy started in Seventeenth Century from the practice of dissecting dead bodies and it is connected with the birth of medicine as empiric science itself. The epistemological frame is the mechanismism which consider the body as an object, an aggregate of different parts.

“If the Anatomy is the study of body’s organs in their exterior side, if the Physiology is the synthetic reconstruction of the living being starting from this exteriority, Anatomy and Physiology are structurally unable to deeply understand the body, because they consider it just a particular manner of the death”[3].

It’s not possible to compare the body with the statute of an object because it is constantly being perceived.

In the Experiential Anatomy the body is not considered as a simply object, but primarily as a living system; proprioception, kinesthesia and interoception are used to identify, articulate, differentiate and integrate different tissues of the body, discovering the different qualities that contribute to the

movement, how they evolved in the develop process and the role they play in the expression of the mind [4].

This practice is not exactly a technique, is an approach that opens the possibility to study anatomy starting from a different epistemological perspectives that integrates information coming from senses, touching and movement.

Experiential Anatomy settles in a systemic paradigm when is interested in the connections between the smallest levels of activities in the body and the macro movements [4].

The territory of the living person's somatic experience is different from the map of the body.

One thing is to study a map, another one is to explore and live the territory: I can have a more clear idea of the territory through the map, but the two experiences are in two completely different levels.

The Body-Mind Centering starts from the principle that the consciousness of soma teaches to experience ourselves as a live, awake and fully present [5].

The main target of this approach is not to copy a model, is not the alignment itself, but the constant research of dialogue between awareness and action. The aims is being aware of the relationships that exist in our body/mind and acting starting from that awareness. For this reason is an interesting lent to look forward educational settings and events.

Body-Mind Centering studies all the body systems (muscular, circulatory, nervous..). In this inquiry I've used Experiential Anatomy with specific attention to the skeletal one for different reasons. The skeletal system is a good starting point for exploring the structure of our body, it is generally easy to contact it, as we can touch most part of our bones and it is the basic shape through with we can move in the space and act in the situations, in relation to the world [3].

Embodying the skeletal system the Mind becomes structurally organized, provides the base for our thoughts and the space between the ideas for articulating and understanding their relations [3].

1.1 The structure of the research: an example

This still ongoing action-research involves twelve Primary School teachers as participants.

The setting is a comfortable psychomotric room where the participants can stay without shoes.

Every meeting has a circular development.

The starting point is always an anatomical theme, regarding a specific anatomical part of the skeletal system.

I'll use as an example the description of one meeting focused on foot bones.

We begin with a fast brainstorming in a sitting circle about this anatomical part: the free association of ideas, sketches a starting picture of the group related to the theme.

Then we take few minutes to individually draw the bones on a white paper: just few minutes to contact the first shape that each participant has of that part.

We shortly share all this and we go to compare with anatomical models, atlas in books and moving images projected on the wall, through interactive and three-dimensional applications that help to give primacy to the relations in the skeletal system.

Going away from the idea of a "right" or a "wrong" drawing, the work is to activate a reflection on what is more familiar/known/perceived in that specific area of the body, not only concerning the shape dimension, but the relation between the single elements that it is composed of.

For example, we take time to name all the 26 bones of the foot, exploring the connections between them, and we try to identify the anatomical principles that have more heuristic impact on the group.

Looking the sketches of the foot bones, it was evident that a common idea was that the shape of all the complex of our foot bones is somehow flat. So the principle on which I tried to carry the attention of the group was the tridimensionality of the foot bones, highlighting the distinction of the calcaneus-foot and the ankle-foot, at two different levels in space. One of the functions of the foot is to support the weight of the body, the gravity, so is connected with the ground and it is a structure, a tridimensional architecture on which the joins between the 26 bones have space. The more we move this in-between-space, the more the experience of the moving foot will be enriched of lighthearted quality and levity.

With this considerations that are still at an introductory level, the research now moves on the practical experience.

It's the phase that Heron and Reason call "the touchstone of the inquiry method", where the co-subjects of the research become fully immersed and engaged with their action and experience: the function of this moment is to create the possibility to lead them "away from the original ideas into new fields, unpredicted action and creative insights"[2].

We begin going through the experience of the touch: in couples we carefully and patiently try to trace the bones, starting from the distal phalanx, intermediate, proximal, then metatarsus.... And so on.

To "trace the bone", as Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen teaches, means to touch the bone from a specific point and to follow its shape, trying to integrate the proprioception with the pre-knowledges, to build a new map, a new anatomical map in our mind.

We continue this experiential part with different moving proposal that are focused to give evidence to the anatomical principle that we have observed, more specifically, playing with the polarity grounding- lightness.

I guided to a more and more fluent movement, we use music and we enter in the last part of the moving experience in which we try to embody, in a free moving, the part and the principle that we have nominated.

Still inside the aesthetic phase, we quickly take a white paper and "give voice" to the part of the body that we have observed, touched, imagined, moved.

After having been in contact with a living metaphor, now we can use as aesthetic representation for giving words and express it in a free and personal writing; it's the presentational knowing. The indication to the group is: "Imagine now to give voice to your feet bones and to tell a story about a specific moment in the classroom".

We now enter in the third phase: the participants assemble to share their writings and their "experiential data".

Slowly we pass from the aesthetic and narrative moment to a propositional one in which we consider the original ideas emerging from the writings and develop or frame them in relation with the teaching style of each participant.

The passage is from the analogic, poetic, embodied world of the metaphoric speech/writing to a different use of the language, more reflexive.

"We build a speech and this is carrying us immediately in the social environment, of institutions, communicative relationships, rules etc..." [6].

The last part of each meeting is focused on announcing a purpose: a "deliberated action" [6], the practical knowledge [2]. The sense and the main task of comprehension is to open to action so,

taking into account the knowledge coming from the meeting, teachers are invited to express, to declare an action that they want to try to perform in the classroom context. The action can have different forms and being developed in different directions, depending on the style of teaching that each participant has: it can result in a change of the “posture”, or in an attention to a particular didactic content.

Teachers will annotate in a special diary their pedagogical actions, drawing the attention to something new they have founded, if so, in their work. This material will be the starting point for the following meeting.

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SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS IN A SCOPING REVIEW ON POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY: ASSESSING THE FEASIBILITY OF REPORTING CRITERIA IN MIXED STUDIES REVIEWS

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Abstract

In this paper, we report on the findings of a sensitivity analysis that was carried out within a previously conducted scoping review, hoping to contribute to the ongoing debate about how to assess the quality of research in mixed methods reviews. Previous sensitivity analyses mainly concluded that the exclusion of inadequately reported or lower quality studies did not have a significant effect on the results of the synthesis. In this study, we conducted a sensitivity analysis on the basis of reporting criteria with the aims of analysing its impact on the synthesis results and assessing its feasibility. Contrary to some previous studies, our analysis showed that the exclusion of inadequately reported studies had an impact on the results of the thematic synthesis. Initially, we also sought to propose a refinement of reporting criteria based on the literature and our own experiences. In this way, we aimed to facilitate the assessment of reporting criteria and enhance its consistency. However, based on the results of our sensitivity analysis, we opted not to make such a refinement since many publications included in this analysis did not sufficiently report on the methodology. As such, a refinement would not be useful considering that researchers would be unable to assess these (sub-)criteria.

Keywords: sensitivity analysis, reporting criteria, methodological quality.

1 INTRODUCTION

In this paper, we will report on the findings of a sensitivity analysis that was carried out within a scoping review on the topic of police accountability. Given the importance of this subject, we aimed at identifying empirical research on the topic, including both qualitative and quantitative or mixed method-studies. Police accountability is an important subject considering the powers the police are granted when fulfilling their job and the possible implications of their actions [1]. It is a subject that is often reflected upon, but which is less often studied empirically. The content, reporting quality and methodological quality of the empirical studies may vary considerably. Sensitivity analyses allow for a contemplation on that quality. Previous studies have already carried out sensitivity analyses [2] and most have found that excluding inadequately reported studies or lower quality studies did not significantly affect the results of the synthesis content wise. These studies often fail to go into the experienced difficulties when conducting sensitivity analyses. We aim to fill in this lacuna by conducting a sensitivity analysis based on reporting criteria within one (mixed studies) review comprising primary studies using not only qualitative and quantitative methods, but also mixed methods, which is, according to our knowledge, a quite innovative approach. The aim is to scrutinize the sensitivity analysis in terms of its *impacts on synthesis results* and in terms of its *feasibility* (e.g. in terms of required expertise of researchers and required methodological information). Additionally,

given our experienced difficulties in the past in using reporting criteria in a consistent manner to assess methodological quality [3], we experimented with a refinement of reporting criteria based on the literature and our own analyses. However, as we experienced in the current sensitivity analysis that many authors do not report their methodology sufficiently, creating a refined instrument for the assessment of reporting criteria may not be helpful at this point. Therefore, we would like to recommend researchers to improve their methodological reporting before creating a (standardised) instrument for the assessment of reporting criteria.

This paper is divided into three sections. First, the main information concerning the process of the review will be highlighted. Second, the sensitivity analysis will be discussed. In the last section, some concluding remarks and points of discussion will be clarified.

2 SYSTEMATIC SCOPING REVIEW ON POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

The scoping review, based on the principles of a systematic review, aimed at identifying how police accountability is conceptualised and at identifying the topics that are (empirically) studied in this regard. Fig. 1 summarises the different steps in a systematic review. The review was steered by one research question and the following inclusion criteria: empirical research, published in English or Dutch, published from 1990 onwards and have an association with internal and external accountability, integrity and police misconduct or transparency and oversight. We only included English and Dutch literature since these two languages are well-understood by the authors. Dutch studies, specifically, were included to disclose these publications to a non-Dutch-speaking audience.

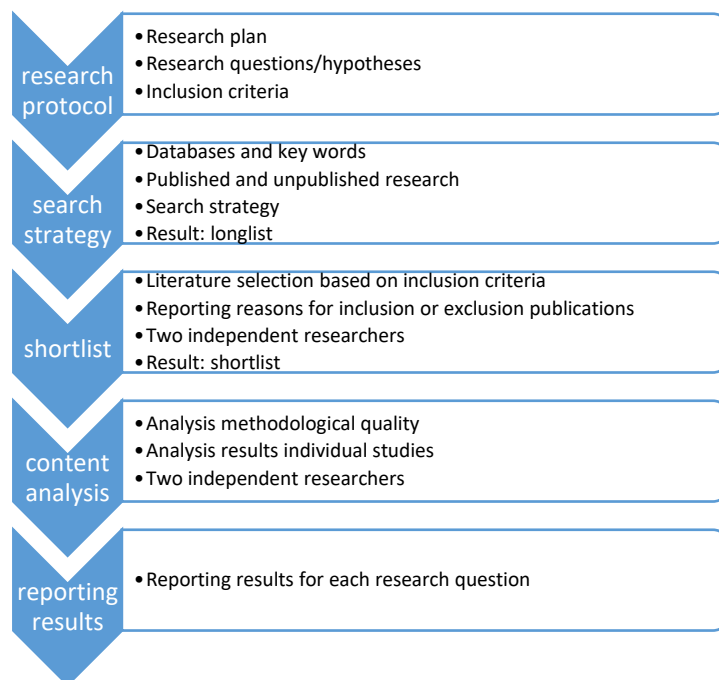


Fig. 1. Steps in a systematic review [4]

The English search was based on 7 keywords⁶, used in 17 databases⁷. The Dutch search was based on 9 keywords⁸, used in 14 databases⁹. We analysed the titles of publications generated by this search strategy on their (possible) relevance for our research question. After this assessment, an English longlist of 862 publications and a Dutch longlist of 86 publications remained. Subsequently, we assessed if these remaining publications met the inclusion criteria, which resulted in an English shortlist of 77 publications. Only 41 of these publications were relevant for the research question. A Dutch shortlist of 3 publications remained, all relevant for the research question. In sum, 44 publications remained for this sensitivity analysis [5].

Subsequently, we conducted a quality or critical appraisal, which was based on reporting criteria [6]. Following the critical appraisal, we excluded studies of which the methodology was not adequately reported. The full selection process is demonstrated in Fig. 2. Finally, we analysed the findings from the selected studies and summarised them by means of a thematic synthesis [7]. Our thematic synthesis was limited to the two first phases (i.e. line-by-line coding and developing descriptive themes). For this paper, we compared the results of these studies with the results of all the papers on the shortlist (both adequately and inadequately reported studies). In the next paragraph, we will elaborate on the reporting criteria used and the feasibility and results of this sensitivity analysis.

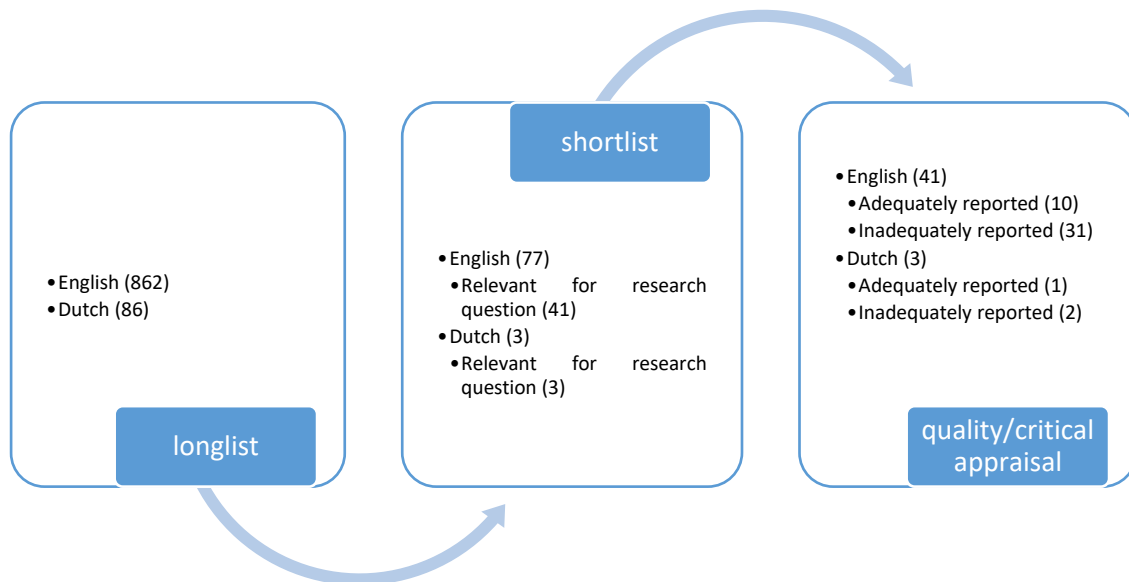


Fig. 2. Summary selection process

This review was initially conducted by two researchers. However, one of these researchers fell out after the creation of the English shortlist, after which the first author conducted the review on her own. Nevertheless, independent feedback from the other authors was sought whenever something

⁶ Polic* AND accountability, polic* AND misconduct, polic* AND integrity, polic* AND transparency, polic* AND oversight, polic* AND control.

⁷ Web of Science, Sociological Abstracts, Campbell Library, International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS), Google Scholar, Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice, Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management, Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology, The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles, Police Practice and Research, Policing and Society, European Journal of Policing Studies (EJPS), Cahiers Politiestudies (CPS), American Society of Criminology (ASC), European Society of Criminology (ESC), Criminology Library Grey Literature (CrimDoc) and Social Science Research Network (SSRN) e-library.

⁸ Politie* EN verantwoording, politie* EN integriteit, politie* EN optreden, politie* EN controle, politie* EN toezicht, politie* EN transparantie, policing, accountability.

⁹ Vlaams Academisch Bibliografisch Bestand (VABB), Antilope, Belgische Bibliografie, Tijdschrift voor Criminologie, Tijdschrift voor Veiligheid, Justitiële Verkenningen, Panopticon, Politie en Wetenschap, Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Documentatiecentrum (WODC) website, European Journal of Policing Studies (EJPS), Cahiers Politiestudies (CPS), LibHub, Google Scholar and Handboek Politiediensten.

was unclear or open to interpretation. In every phase of the process, the researchers planned meetings in order to solve difficulties and ensure the possibility of discussion concerning the choices made.

3 SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS

This section is dedicated to the sensitivity analysis. In the first paragraph, the reporting criteria will be presented. Second, we will highlight some problems regarding the assessment of these criteria, both in terms of required expertise and in terms of required methodological information. Finally, the results of the sensitivity analysis will be discussed.

3.1 Reporting criteria

This sensitivity analysis was based on reporting criteria. The researchers evaluated the quality of the publications on the basis of five criteria: (1) Are the research questions/objectives clearly mentioned?, (2) Is the selection of participants described explicitly?, (3) Is a full description of the characteristics of the sample given?, (4) Are details of the data collection method given?, (5) Are details of data analysis presented? [6]. We assessed which publications on our shortlist reported on at least three of these criteria. As such, a distinction was made between adequately reported publications (three or more criteria) and inadequately reported publications (two or less criteria). In order to enhance the consistency of the assessment, we added some sub-criteria to the aforementioned reporting criteria.

- The first criterion did not need any sub-criteria. However, we did note if the objectives mentioned in the publication referred to the aim of the study or the purpose of the paper itself. Nevertheless, both sorts of objectives qualified as a 'yes'.
- With regard to the selection of participants, the following sub-criteria were added: (a) Why were certain people (not) selected? and (b) Which sort of sample was used (e.g. purposeful, convenience etc.)?
- The characteristics of the sample were assessed in terms of the following sub-criteria: (a) Is the number of participants given? and (b) Is the sample adequately described (e.g. is a distinction made between gender, age, ethnicity, function etc.)? Both sub-criteria had to be present to qualify as a 'yes'.
- The data collection method was considered to be adequately described if sufficient information was available on the (sorts of) questions that were asked, information request procedures etc.
- With regard to the data analysis, we assessed if (a) Information was available about the way in which the data were saved (e.g. fieldnotes, tape recordings, transcriptions etc.), (b) Statistical methods (e.g. creation of Likert scales) were explained (quantitative) and/or (c) If the authors mentioned how the codes/themes were formulated and how they appointed certain information to a particular code (qualitative).

This assessment was conducted by the first author, under supervision of the other authors. Whenever the first author doubted a certain assessment, a second researcher independently assessed the criteria. Of the 41 English publications, 10 reported on three or more of these criteria, 31 on two or less. Regarding the 3 Dutch publications, only 1 article reported on three or more of these criteria. Hence, a comparison was made between 11 adequately reported publications and the total number of 44 publications (for an overview, see Fig. 1). The amount of publications which reported on less than three reporting criteria is quite striking (75%). Especially the methods of data

analysis were underreported (89%), followed by the sampling (80%) and description of the sample (80%). The methods of data collection are not that extensively reported either (only 34%). The research questions and/or objectives were most frequently reported (up to 80%). Table 1 summarises the amount to which a certain criterion was reported.

Table 1: Reporting criteria

	N reported (%)	N not reported (%)
research questions/objectives	35 (80%)	9 (20%)
sampling	9 (20%)	35 (80%)
description of sample	9 (20%)	35 (80%)
methods of data collection	15 (34%)	29 (66%)
methods of data analysis	5 (11%)	39 (89%)

In sum, 21 publications reported on only one criterion (48%), 7 publications reported on two criteria (16%), 6 publications reported on three criteria (14%) and 5 publications reported on four criteria (11%). None of the publications reported on all five criteria. Even more surprising, 5 publications did not report on any of these criteria (11%). This is a stunning finding, which highlights the need to stimulate researchers to include sufficient methodological information in their publications.

3.2 Difficulties in assessing reporting criteria

Generally, it can be assumed that the assessment of reporting criteria is quite clear: a publication either reports a certain aspect of the research methodology or not. Nevertheless, some difficulties might occur when conducting this assessment.

First, this assessment largely depends on the sections of the article in which the researchers decide to look for information. On the one hand, researchers can choose to look at particular sections only, which is less time-consuming. On the other hand, they can look for this information throughout the entire text. Based on our experiences, we suggest to look at the full text. Our own analysis was initially based on the sections 'Introduction' and 'Methodology', but we soon discovered that some information was reported in other sections as well. An example is the information regarding the sample, which can also be given in the results section. The finding that this information is reported throughout the entire publication can be indicative of a need for general guidelines concerning the reporting of methodology. Some publications, for instance, presented their methodological information in different footnotes, which made it very unclear (and time-consuming) to figure out the methodological approach and which information of the publication was based on which source (empirical research vs. literature). Moreover, sometimes the methodological information was so confusing (or absent) that we started to doubt if the respective publication was indeed empirical.

Second, if multiple methods were used in a certain publication (e.g. surveys and interviews), some authors fully described one of these methods (e.g. the survey was described in all its aspects), but reported very restrictedly on the other method(s) (e.g. no description of the interviewees).

Third, the reporting criterion related to the research question(s) and/or objectives raised questions. Strikingly, most publications did not report their research question(s) and if they did, this was not

often done directly. Most authors only mentioned their objectives. A certain number of authors only reported the contribution they aimed to make to the existing literature, without mentioning the specific aim of the research itself. Although these two might overlap, this is not necessarily the case. Some aims gave a quite clear view on the (unmentioned) research questions, e.g. when an 'evaluation of a particular system' was the purpose. In such cases, separate research questions are not required to understand the research process. However, other kinds of studies might want to report the research question(s) in order for the reader to fully understand the process and/or aim(s) of the research.

Fourth, contradictory to our presumptions, not only journal articles reported inadequately on their methodology. We assumed that authors of journal articles would report least on methodological information due to the limits on word count. However, this was certainly not always the case. Of the 11 adequately reported publications, 9 were written as journal article. Of the 33 publications that inadequately reported upon their methodology, 8 were book chapters and 5 were research reports. Since some of these research reports were quite extensive, it is hard to imagine there would not be enough space to properly describe the methodological process. This clearly indicates that limited word count should not be used as an excuse to report poorly on methodological information.

The extent to which it is feasible to assess reporting criteria is a difficult question. Three factors contribute to the feasibility: the extent of available methodological information, the researcher's methodological expertise and the nature of the reporting criteria. Based on our experience, we think that expertise of the researcher is certainly helpful, but less necessary than adequate reporting and clear reporting criteria. As many authors fail to offer sufficient information, many publications are considered as inadequately reported based on the existing reporting criteria. This finding leads us to encourage researchers to adequately report on their methodology. Initially, we aimed to refine or reorient the reporting criteria in order to enhance the feasibility and consistency of the assessment. However, one of our main findings in this regard was that authors do not sufficiently report on their methodology. As such, a refinement of these criteria would not be useful unless the reporting on methodology is improved.

3.3 Findings

The most important question to be answered in this paper, is whether or not the exclusion of inadequately reported studies made any difference with regard to the topics found. Contrary to some previous sensitivity analyses [2], we did find some differences between adequately reported studies and the total sample. The exclusion of inadequately reported studies posed two problems. First, within the topics additional information could be found. The most obvious difference was that not all of the countries reported on in the inadequately reported studies were represented in the adequately reported studies. Since many countries use specific accountability mechanisms or procedures, the exclusion of certain countries could reduce the general image that would be obtained when all publications would be included (e.g. the 'Algemene Inspectie AIG' in Belgium). This is, amongst others, important because all these accountability mechanisms have different powers. In short, we lose a part of the broad view on the domain. On top of that, there was information that we missed when only looking at adequately reported studies, for instance which people are more likely to file a complaint [8], possible consequences of a complaint instead of an investigation as such (e.g. decisions concerning promotion are put on hold when a file is opened against a police officer) [9] and motivations to become an oversight investigator [10].

Second, three new themes were discovered that were not found in the initial analysis: 'early intervention program', 'effectiveness' and 'performance indicators'. As such, the inadequately reported studies did make a substantial contribution to the analysis, content wise.

Table 2 gives a summary of the themes found and the number of publications in which these were covered. A distinction is made between the adequately reported studies (11) and the total sample, including both adequately and inadequately reported studies (44). However, three inadequately reported publications did not clearly distinguish between the literature and the empirical results of the study. Although these publications were also analysed once the researchers thought it to be empirical, these publications were only provisionally included in the counting. Due to the uncertainty of the researchers to determine which of these facts were based on empirical evidence and which on the literature, they were counted separately. Nevertheless, we did find it relevant to mention these codes as to obtain a full picture of the number of themes covered in the publications. None of the themes found was entirely based on one of these three publications. However, had they been excluded, relevant information within these themes would have been missed.

Table 2: Number of identified themes

	adequately reported studies (11)	all publications (44) (of which 3 are provisional)	difference
History	4	11	7
What is accountability?	4	9 (1)	5 (4)
To whom do police officers account?	6	15 (2)	9 (7)
How to achieve accountability?	5	14 (1)	9 (8)
What is integrity?	1	2	1
Affecting factors	6	18	12
Early intervention program	0	3	3
Police misconduct	6	30 (1)	24 (23)
Investigation	7	36 (2)	29 (27)
Outcome	5	13	8
Consequences	5	20	15
Effectiveness	0	5	5
Performance indicators	0	4	4
Satisfaction	3	8	5

It can also be informative to report on the number of themes to which a publication contributes. Surprisingly, substantive texts sometimes covered only one or few themes (e.g. a book chapter of 34 pages and only 1 theme), whereas publications which were limited in empirical research proportionally contributed to a (lot) more themes (e.g. a paper of 6 pages which contributed to 5 themes). As such, the amount of empirical research is not indicative of the number of themes it covers. Table 3 summarises the number of publications that contributed to a certain number of themes. None of the adequately reported publications reported on only one theme, whereas 3 inadequately reported publications did. Moreover, one adequately reported publication (book) contributed to 11 themes. The highest contribution of inadequately reported studies was 9 themes. Taken into account the extent to which inadequately reported publications contributed to the themes, it would be better to include them in the review to obtain a full image of the topic under research. These texts can possibly present different points of view or critiques in comparison with the other group of texts.

Table 3: Contribution to themes

themes	N of adequately reported publications (11)	N of inadequately reported publications (33)
1	0	3
2	3	2
3	2	8
4	0	6
5	2	8
6	2	3
7	1	2
8	0	0
9	0	1
10	0	0
11	1	0

In sum, it seems as if the exclusion of inadequately reported studies does have an impact on the results of the synthesis. The number of topics differs to a certain extent, but it is mainly the information within these themes that is significantly reduced when excluding these studies. For instance, the inadequately reported studies included certain countries that were not included in the adequately reported studies. Since every country has specific organisations that are responsible for ensuring the accountability of the police, it would be best to include them all.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this paper was to report on a sensitivity analysis, based on reporting criteria, carried out within a scoping review. By discussing experienced difficulties and the results of the analysis, we aim to contribute to the state of the art on critical appraisals in mixed methods reviews.

Some concluding remarks and points of discussion are in place. The most prominent finding is the absence of or limited information concerning methodology in many of the publications, which may be indicative of a call for better methodological reporting. Only 25% of all publications included in this sensitivity analysis reported on three or more of the reporting criteria, despite the importance of methodological information to fully apprehend the results of the research (e.g. in terms of context, participants etc.). Therefore, we would strongly like to encourage researchers to report more thoroughly on their methodologies. Another concern regarding this analysis was the sometimes unclear distinction between empirical evidence and literature. Especially when the methodology was inadequately described, we sometimes had difficulty distinguishing between both. It can hence be recommended to develop a more standardised approach of reporting methodology as a guideline for authors and journals.

Based on this sensitivity analysis, we do not recommend the assessment of reporting criteria for a scoping review, which implies that also papers that inadequately report on methodology should, in our view, be part of a scoping review. This recommendation is based on the larger variety of some themes within some inadequately reported papers (and hence richness of the data), but also on the discovery of new themes. The inadequately reported studies, in spite of their limited report on methods, thus contributed both to the amount and the thickness of the themes. The exclusion of inadequately reported publications may have an impact on the image obtained regarding a certain subject. Of course, this suggestion only applies to scoping reviews, which precisely aim to offer a (broad) view on the existing literature on a certain topic. Reviews that aim to give an insight into the practices that (do not) work, could indeed benefit from the exclusion of lower quality studies. It should also be kept in mind that not reporting certain aspects of the research does not necessarily imply that these studies are of lower quality. On the contrary, the quality can simply not be assessed since the information is not available. A possible solution could be to weigh different studies according to the (perceived) quality of the study. In order to give a balanced review, those studies that inadequately report their methodology could be given a lesser weight than those that adequately report it [11].

Furthermore, we would like to point out that the themes presented in this paper were generated on the basis of on only those publications that adequately reported their methodology. As such, the theme 'investigation' contains information with regard to investigative bodies, oversight bodies, investigative powers and the process of investigation. Due to the limited amount of information on this topic in the adequately reported studies, the information could all be appointed to one overall code. However, if we had conducted the thematic synthesis on all the publications from the beginning, we probably would have divided this overall code into different themes.

In this paper, we also aimed to suggest some refinements for existing reporting criteria. We wanted to make the assessment of these criteria less complicated and confusing by adding sub-criteria, meanwhile enhancing the consistency of the assessment. A new criterion in this regard could, for instance, be 'Is it clear whether or not the authors conducted an empirical research and if so, do they distinguish between their own research and the literature throughout the text?'. However, based on the results of this analysis, we recommend to first work on the enhancement of the quality of methodological reporting. Only when more methodological information is reported, will a refinement and/or reorientation of these reporting criteria be useful. This can also positively affect the assessment of quality criteria, which, according to the literature, are more difficult to apply [3], especially when publications inadequately report on their methodology. In order to test this hypothesis, it can be useful to conduct sensitivity analyses on the basis of quality criteria and

compare those results with the findings of sensitivity analyses based on reporting criteria. But, as always, we need to take one step at a time.

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POWER RELATIONS IN EDUCATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COMMUNICATION: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE 'LEARNING STYLES' DEBATE

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Abstract

This paper presents a critical discourse analysis of scientific communication on learning styles, which is a concept in educational theory that assumes that students learn through different patterns. Four texts are used in order to demonstrate the articulation of discourse on learning styles. Therefore three elements in these texts are analyzed: (1) arguments, (2) epistemology, and (3) discursive practices that refer to unbalanced power relations between researchers and practitioners. Results show how unbalanced power relations are established based on a positivist epistemology. The articulation of discourse on learning styles as presented in this study leaves no space for teachers' professional decision making. These unbalanced power relations may present a cause for the large gap between theory and practice in educational science. Implications for educational scientific communication are discussed.

Keywords: Learning styles – critical discourse analysis – scientific communication.

1 INTRODUCTION

What conclusions could a teacher draw from the ongoing learning styles debate? Over the past decades a variety of typologies have been proposed theorizing on students learning styles. All of them have in common that they categorize student learning along different typologies. Learning styles could provide teachers with more insight in student diversity and are often intended to impact instructional design. Coffield et al (2004) see 13 major types. A large number of these typologies is non-scientific, but also scientific research has led to a diverse set of typologies and strategies. Some of the high impact studies reach both a broad scientific public and a large amount of practitioners (Felder & Brent, 2005; Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Vermunt, 1996). Rationale behind the apparent popularity of the topic lies in the intuitively appealing character of the idea to relate student diversity to student learning. Popularity is even said to be culturally rooted in European individualism (Scott, 2010).

Theory on learning styles is fiercely criticized (Willingham, 2015). Notwithstanding this critique many practitioners continue to use learning styles theory. The large gap between educational theory and practice concerns many researchers, and is interpreted with several arguments. Scholars argue that educational science is not presented accessible enough and that teachers show not enough interest. State that practitioners are not always convinced by the results of educational research and that they often lack the necessary competences to use it. Levin (2004) therefore advocates employing "people who are skilled in 'translating' research results into plain language for distribution to non-specialist audience" (p. 15).

In this study, we analyze the relationship between educational researchers and practitioners focusing on the topic of students' learning styles. In what follows discourse on learning styles is analyzed,

rather than learning styles as a construct on itself. Therefore, we choose not to define learning styles nor do we reflect on the effectivity or validity of the proposed strategies. A research hypothesis is that in addition to the factors that have been summed up, the gap between research and practice may also be caused by different epistemological assumptions between researchers and practitioners. Moreover, these different epistemological conflicts may relate to underlying power conflicts between researchers and practitioners. Therefore, the research questions that guides us in this study are the following: (1) How is discourse on learning styles constructed in a selection of educational publications? (2) Does critical discourse analysis reveal any power conflict between educational researchers and practitioners?

2 METHOD

Bourdieu (1984) has pointed to the fact that scholars do not stand out of the societal hierarchy of status and power. As a result of that a whole field of critical theory has developed that reflects on the relationship between science, society and culture. Following critical theory, scientific researchers' discourse must be subject to the same criticism as other discursive practices in society must be (Guess, 1981; Horkheimer, 1982). Building on this argument, this study analyses the construction of discourse on learning styles in a selection of critical publications. The method of critical discourse analysis (CDA) is used for this purpose (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; Fairclough, 2003).

A selection of four critical publications was made based on the first authors own practice as a teacher educator. The texts are in use in many teacher education institutions in the Flanders (Belgium). They represent a sample of relevant texts that a practitioner could use when informing himself on the appropriateness of learning styles in an educational context. The selected publications all aim at a public of teacher educators or at teachers and warn against the use of learning styles in education. In Flanders they may be seen as influential experts in the field.

Whereas the type of publication and the claimed readership of the sample are different, the topics of all publications are clearly related. As a whole the text represents a sample of critical literature on learning styles in Belgium. The following CDA considers only those semiotic elements, that clearly refer to learning styles and associated introductory paragraphs that make claims on the authors aims or articulate some of the authors epistemological convictions. Each text is analyzed in order to deconstruct discourse on learning styles. Therefore, the following three steps are taken. Firstly the argumentative structure of the text is shown. Reflections are made upon how this reasoning intends to be convincing for the readership. Secondly, a paragraph is dedicated to the epistemological assumptions of the authors. To analyze these assumptions both explicit references to epistemology and implicit use of epistemology through the arguments of the authors is used. Finally, discursive practices that disclose the relationship between the authors of the text and the readership are elaborated. To do so both textual and visual elements are interpreted and related to the argumentation of the authors and their used epistemology.

3 RESULTS

In the following section a critical discourse analysis is made of discourse on learning styles in four texts on learning styles that are in use in the Dutch-speaking teacher education circuit. We demonstrate that the articulation of discourse on learning styles in these texts is such that unbalanced relationships between practitioners and researchers are established. For each text the steps as described in the method section are taken to analyze discourse.

3.1 Text A

Text A (Kirschner & Merriënboer, 2013) is an extended study of 2716 words, not counting introduction and conclusions. It's said to be written for a diverse international readership, including teachers (see table 1). However, the argumentative structure and the scientific vocabulary and grammar suggest a rather scholarly readership.

Three main arguments are given to criticize learning styles: (1) the assumption that people can be clustered in different groups is not supported by empirical evidence; (2) information that is used to do so is inadequate, as clustering is usually based upon self-reportage; and (3) the large number of typologies is impracticable. References to a number of peer-reviewed studies illustrate these arguments. In order to convince the reader, citations and supporting arguments are provided. In a following section, the authors try to answer the question whether instruction must be tailored to self-reported learning styles. Again a lack of empirical proof for such tailoring is used to convince readers to avoid this strategy.

Several elements in the text refer to the positivist epistemological assumptions of the authors. It is discussed which 'evidence' would be supporting the 'learning-styles hypothesis' following the authors. Firstly, a statistically significant interaction between learning style and instructional method is to be determined. Secondly, crossover interactions between instructional method and learning style would, following the authors, provide acceptable evidence. The point that this evidence is lacking is illustrated with several references to studies and the arguments cited in these studies. Subsequently the authors come to the conclusion that "the field of learning styles (...) so far does not yield any valid educational implications" (2013, p. 176). The rejection of the usefulness of learning styles and its educational implications is based on positivist scientific categories such as dichotomous categorization, validity and statistical significance in randomized control groups.

Based on this rejection, the authors state that also teachers "should reject educational approaches that lack sufficient scientific support and methodological sound empirical evidence" (2013, p. 178). In order to reinforce this claim several textual elements are added: (1) the designation of learning styles being 'urban legends'; (2) an introductory example of an urban legend about an alligator in the New York City's sewers, which suggests learning styles are as irrational as this prototype of an urban legend; and (3) a claim that pseudoscience is jeopardizing the quality of education. No other graphic semiotic elements are used.

3.2 Text B

The second text (De Bruyckere & Hulshof, 2013) under scrutiny is presented as the first one amongst 36 'educational myths'. The chapter with the first 'myth' on learning styles is much more straightforward in its argumentative structure than text A. The text starts with a puzzling introduction that presents a series of claims on learning styles. They are followed by the statement that all of them are 'persistent myths'. This claim is illustrated with a quote and based on two main problems: (1) the lack of scientific evidence for learning styles and (2) the scarce added value of considering learning styles in the classroom. These claims are not supported by further arguments. The reader is supposed to accept the claims based on the authors' expertise and the reference to a peer-reviewed scholarly article.

It is remarkable that this text fails to give any explanation to why it would be wrong to use learning styles in the classroom. The argumentative structure is almost completely relying on arguments referring to claims of educational researchers and experts. Whereas text A tries to convince its readership with arguments and references to the epistemological categories where they are based upon, this does not happen in text B. Justification of statements lacks any reference to the used methodology or epistemology.

Both authors reflect in the introductory part also on their own educational conviction ('our vision to education'). They claim to stand 'critically-positive' against social constructivist, behaviorist and cognitivist educational theories. Although the authors aim at 'cleaning up' the most important myths of which soundness has not been proven, the authors do not specify their vision on what good 'evidence-based' strategies would be. Nor do they specify upon which epistemology the dismiss strategies as 'pure nonsense' (2013, p. 11).

Again several elements serve to reinforce the argumentative power of the text. Firstly the articulation of learning styles as a myth uses to negative connotation of this term to convince the reader on the irrationality of learning styles. Secondly, a semiotic reinforcement is added through a sad smiley that is translated in the introduction of the book as follows: 'the statement is completely or almost completely false, or there isn't any proof for it' (2013, p. 19). In both of these reinforcers, sounds much more conviction than in the actual chapter on learning styles in the book, and certainly louder than in some of the studies on which the claims are based.

The authors fail to appeal for the readership's professional qualities. Instead of elaborating the readers professional decision making capacities through providing evidence for their reasoning, including argument for and against it, the authors stick to power arguments and an implicit appeal for trust in their expertise.

3.3 Text C

Text C (Van Camp, Vloeberghs & Tijtgat, 2015) presents a paragraph on grouping based on learning styles in 778 words. The paragraph is part of a chapter on tailor-made learning in which also gendered grouping or grouping based on brain anatomy are considered. The arguments in text are comparable to this of text B. Several references are made to the same studies that are also mentioned in text B. Here, also the example of critique on the learning styles-model that distinguishes between auditive, visual and kinesthetic learners (VAK-model) is used as an example to warn against all types of learning styles. Again a lack of evidence for the strategy and a lack of correlation between performance and self-reported learning styles is stated referring to peer-reviewed scholarly studies.

Still, the argumentation of text C differs in an important way from texts A and B. In the second part these statements are compared to what neuroscience 'learns us'. Four studies are shortly presented and it is explained why and how neuroscience supports the criticism on learning styles. These arguments are again criticizing the VAK-model by illustrating how interconnectivity in the brain works best when using auditive and visual stimuli simultaneously, instead of using them separately. Important is also that the presented claims are based specifically on neuroscience.

The paragraph is concluded with a scheme presenting the argumentation graphically. Again a large claim on students learning ('students with the same intelligence seem to differ in the way they process learning activities'), is on a delimited basis: the VAK-model as a cognitive theory finds no support in neuroscience as it is clear that all students process information through all modalities.

Comparing text C with texts A and B it differs in two important ways: (1) it grounds its claims on a particular type of science, namely neuroscience, and (2) the text makes no use of power arguments to warn a practitioners readership against the use of learning styles in an educational context. Trough providing arguments out of this specific scientific domain the work seems to be done. The authors leave it to the practitioners to draw conclusions for their practice. No semiotic reinforcers of the arguments in the texts are used, except for the word 'neuromyths' which is used throughout the text, and which is reflected upon extensively. By avoiding generalizing conclusions on the wide field of learning styles they concurrently put their own argument into perspective, and they leave it to the professionalism of the reader to decide whether to make use of learning styles or not.

3.4 Text D

Text D (Tijtgat, 2016) is part of a website on 'neuromyths'. It introduces a graphic presentation of a man's brain with several spots with hyperlinks. Each hyperlink provides a controversial thesis. In this section a thesis on learning styles is analyzed: "We only want to be taught at in our own learning style!". The reader is then prompted to make a choice between "True" and "Not true". Depending on the answer a new part of the text appears. Both options are similar except for the introductory sentence.

In a section on the website the author elaborates on what he sees as 'neuromyths'. He acknowledges that most myths have a small 'nucleus of truth', but he warns also against 'the exaggerated use of some insights'. In addition to this the author warns against the representation of brain-images in order to give more credibility to reports and articles on brain research. The author does not elaborate further on his own epistemology. Although it is hard to deduce the author's epistemological assumptions from the actual text itself, it is clear that the author has a preference for a neuroscientific evidence-base to inform educational decision making. This preference may suggest a rather positivist epistemological belief.

The intention of the project of which text D is part is "to debunk myths on learning styles, and to inform teachers and educational practitioners and stimulate their thinking". This claim suggests an equal relationship between the author and its readership. Other elements in the text reveal a rather unequal relation in which the author uses his power as a researcher to impose his conviction. (1) The first sentence that after a reader chooses "true" as an answer to the thesis on learning styles is: "Do you really believe visual learners must only be prompted with images? The present neuroscientific world proves you wrong.". Without references to any study or without reasoning the reader is supposed to accept this powerful claim. (2) A second element that suggests an unequal power relation between the author and his readers lies in the graphic representation of the text against the image of a brain. Strangely, it seems as if the author uses the same mechanism that he warns against for to re-inforce its own claim against learning styles: he introduces the whole text with a background of a brain representation. This frames the text as being solid and credible compared to the neuromyths that are criticized. (3) Thirdly the use of term myths as a header of the website may be used to reinforce the authors statements and to suggest the irrationality of the use of learning styles.

4 DISCUSSION

The four texts that were selected in this study are all articulating vigorous critique on learning styles. Each in its own way intends to convince teachers not to use them as basis for educational practice. This discourse against learning styles is articulated differently in texts of the sample under scrutiny. Based on the critical discourse analysis as shown in the results section, we see the following techniques to convince the readership of the texts: (1) providing rational arguments or evidence from scientific studies; (2) referring to statements of experts or own statements rejecting the use of learning styles; (3) reinforcing the message through semiotic elements. These semiotic elements found in the texts of the sample are the terminology of learning styles being urban legends or myths, and the use of graphic prompts to summarize the significance of the reasoning. The four texts use these techniques in different proportions. In our view only the first one of these techniques takes the educational practitioners serious as professionals. Both other techniques rely on power arguments that may be detrimental for the relationship between educational researchers and practitioners.

We argue this claim as follows: the use of vocabulary such as myths and urban legends, and the proposed metaphors relies on a hegemonic structure in educational science that considers positivist

scientific concepts such as external or internal validity as the only valuable concepts to evaluate the quality of scientific research. For almost two decades educational researchers and policy makers are stating a case for evidence-based teaching practice (references) The rationale behind this plea is found in medical clinical practice (Elliot, 2001) where nurses are expected to act following strict protocols and procedures. As a result of that positivist epistemology, procedures that are in use in the medical field are now applied to educational sciences (Pirrie, 2001). Although comparison of educational practice with medical practice has been critiqued (Simons, 2003), the quest for 'what works in the classroom' continues.

We believe the exclusive use of positivist epistemology yields two major problems. Firstly, it leaves no space for input of the readership. Secondly it presents researchers as actors with privileged access to the truth. Both these problems may be indicative to explain the large gap between theory and practice in the field of learning styles. We must therefore consider to which extent the use of evidence-based epistemology is fruitful for educational sciences and in particular for the communication on it between researchers and practitioners. Teachers who dare to resist and continue to use learning styles are marginalized as being a threat to educational quality and they are framed as being irrational through the use of terminology such as 'myths' or 'urban legends'.

Biesta (2010) has argued why the use of this epistemology may be inappropriate for educational practice. The reason is that scientific claims that rely on a strictly positivist instrumentality leave no space for more value-based decision making or for contextualization of research result. equally urges a need for reflective teachers whose reflective practice goes beyond instrumental or technical decision-making. We believe that this study demonstrates how discourse on learning styles that is using the aforementioned technique fails to take into account this need for teachers' professional reasoning and decision making. In our vision the use of these discursive practices discloses an attempt to silence other discourses that may be based in rather constructivist epistemology. As a result of that, an imbalanced power relation is established.

5 IMPLICATIONS

The large gap between educational research and educational practice is recognized to be problematic. In the learning styles debate researchers engage both in scholarly texts and in vulgarizing publications. We argue in this study that the articulation of discourse on learning styles with the use of the aforementioned techniques has a potential impact on the gap between research and practice. The underlying epistemology and explicit warnings of some publications may be interpreted as signs of a unequal power relations between educational researchers and educational practitioners. Drawing on this claim we plea for a thoughtful articulation of discourse on learning styles in particular and educational research. Scholars should consider these power relations between researchers and practitioners when communicating on their research. In order to diminish the gap between research and practice in this field it may fruitful to articulate educational research discourse by providing arguments that question the methods used by some studies on learning styles, rather than questioning the existence of learning styles with power arguments. This would enhance teachers' professional decision making capacities and leave them more space for professionalism. The gap between educational research and practice is to be reduced by the use of this strategy rather than by the use of power arguments.

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QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STUDIES IN THE CONTEXT OF LITERATURE REVIEWS: MOVING SMOOTHLY FROM ONE DECISION POINT TO ANOTHER

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Abstract

This contribution summarizes content of chapter 4 from the following handbook: Heyvaert, M., Hannes, K., Onghena, P. (2016). Using mixed methods research synthesis for literature reviews. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. I am grateful for the critical comments of my co-authors on initial drafts for chapter 4 that have shaped the final version.

Quality assessment of primary studies is generally perceived as a valuable asset in the development of a literature review. A plethora of instruments to assess the quality of qualitative studies is currently available in the scientific literature. Academic debates on what an acceptable degree of methodological quality is for different types of qualitative studies are ongoing. In this contribution we offer guidance on (a) whether we should consider quality assessment in a literature review and why, (b) what the different approaches to quality assessment are for different study designs, including how we can motivate our choice for a particular approach to judging quality and, (c) how we are supposed to deal with the findings of a quality assessment in terms of including or excluding primary studies from our literature reviews. Rather than imposing a straight forward solution into these debates, I offer a flowchart that guides participants through the major decision points to be made, including some personal reflections based on previous experiences of conducting quality assessment in the context of reviews.

Keywords: quality assessment, qualitative evidence synthesis, critical appraisal.

1 BACKGROUND

Quality assessment (also called 'quality appraisal' or 'critical appraisal') refers to the process of systematically examining research evidence to assess its validity and its relevance before including it into MMRS that feed into our daily decision making processes [1]. In essence, quality assessment assists us in evaluating whether a primary research study has properly been conducted and whether the evidence it produced can be trusted. Several review authors and non-profit organizations involved in the production and dissemination of systematic reviews have contributed to the debates on whether or not we should appraise and if so, how. Opinions on the type of criteria that should generally be promoted differ between research traditions and between individual authors. Review authors subscribe to a variety of ontological and epistemological positions that may lead them into agreeing on a basic set of quality criteria but disagreeing on another. There is little disagreement among review authors on the importance of judging the overall quality of a research study in terms of providing a neutral research account, that brings clarity, consistency, and added value in terms of

implications provided for policy and practice. However, there is considerable disagreement about how these values should be translated into criteria that do justice to the quality of research studies.

1.1 Problem statement

Many early career researcher struggle in defining their position in these debates. Many of them make irrational choices in thinking about quality assessment of primary studies in the context of systematic reviews. Examples include: using a particular quality appraisal instrument because it has been used by others, because it is commonly mentioned in other studies or because it is easy to use for novice researchers. None of these are strong arguments to inform a synthesis project. In fact, a non-reflective attitude on this matter may seriously affect the findings and interpretation section of a synthesis, similar to a weak development of clear inclusion and exclusion criteria for studies to be considered in the qualitative evidence synthesis produced [2].

1.2 Objectives and research questions

The main objective of this contribution is to identify important decision points in whether, what and how to assess the quality of primary qualitative research papers considered for inclusion in an evidence synthesis. A decision tree that can guide such processes will be offered in a full paper on this topic. We propose the following initial questions to be answered by authors from qualitative evidence syntheses:

1. Will you assess the methodological quality of the primary studies?
2. Will you use an overall judgment approach, a domain based approach, or a checklist based approach?
3. Will you opt for a generic tool, or for a design-specific tool?
4. Will you limit the type of criteria to those that allow you to evaluate methodological rigor, or will you also assess the relevance of study results in the context of the storyline you develop?
5. Will you weigh the studies based on their overall score on quality and decide on a cut-off point for scoring papers?

2 FINDINGS

2.1 To appraise or not to appraise.

Review authors engaged in qualitative evidence synthesis may take radical philosophical positions towards quality assessment that sometimes oppose each other. A first group of qualitatively oriented review authors would argue that the focus on limiting bias to establish validity is antithetical to the philosophical foundations of qualitative approaches to inquiry. They are located in diverse understandings of knowledge and do not distance the researcher from the researched. The researcher is the instrument through which data are collected and analyzed. Consequently, the data analysis is legitimately influenced by the researchers when they interpret the data. These researchers would emphasize the important aspect of 'relevance' of an insight from a primary study to complete their understanding of an issue. They generally downsize the importance of methodological quality [3, 4]. This point of view is more likely to occur in review authors subscribing to a postmodern, idealist discourse in qualitative research. A second group of qualitative review authors promotes the principle that qualitative research studies should be assessed using the same criteria as used in appraising quantitative research, that is, the quality of original research should first of all be evaluated in terms of their ability to produce valid, reliable, and generalizable research findings [5].

This point of view is mostly associated with review authors taking a realist stance to synthesis. There are many positions in between both ends.

2.2 Type of assessment

Review authors need to decide whether they are going to use an overall judgment approach or some form of criterion or domain based judgment approach. Review authors may vary in their viewpoint about the level of detail required in an appraisal framework. Experienced review authors may prefer to work with a minimum set of criteria for concomitantly appraising the methodological quality of the qualitative studies in their review. They may actively search for a selection without which a judgment about quality cannot be made. These review authors most likely have the knowledge to supplement their checklist approach with an expert judgment that will implicitly be used when discussing the outcome of the quality assessment exercise with fellow review authors. Other, less experienced review authors may feel more comfortable with an extensive list of criteria, supplemented with a user guide on what exactly to look for in the article text. An assessment of the available levels of expertise in your review team is crucial to a successful endeavour in critically appraising research and in choosing the instruments that will be more likely to provide the right guidance. Although checklist approaches outlining clear criteria have gained popularity in the last couple of years, the power of an overall judgment approach conducted by methodological experts should not be underestimated. Experienced methodologists have valuable insights, for example into potential flaws in the logic of conceptualizing a study that are not at first apparent when quality is evaluated through a checklist approach. The use of checklists does not decrease discrepancies in judgment between different review authors, nor do they allow us to identify the quality of the decisions made by the researchers, the rationale behind these decisions, the responsiveness or sensibility of the researcher to the data [6]. They do invite us though to clarify for which particular criterion a study fails to convince us and why it should be excluded from our evidence syntheses. This level of transparency gives structured or checklist approaches to quality assessment an advantage over expert judgment in further discussions within the team.

2.3 Generic or design specific?

The review author needs to decide whether he/she will opt for an integrative quality assessment framework with generic criteria cutting across the different qualitative research approaches promoted in the primary studies or a design specific tool. Some authors plead for an approach in which a unique set of criteria is used for each different types of studies. This is generally referred to as a 'separate approach' [7]. Examples of such frameworks are the one developed to critically appraise action research proposed by Herr and Anderson [8] and the quality criteria proposed by Barone and Eisner [9] to make sense of Arts-based research. The most appealing advantage of choosing an all-inclusive tool is the comparability of the quality assessment scores or judgments across all studies. While it is theoretically possible to generate a generic set of criteria that will enable us to cut across qualitative study designs, it may risk to come too close to common sense and therefore hardly support us in judging the merit of a study from a quality point of view. In another potential scenario a generic set of criteria may cover at least one approach well enough, but will fail to be relevant or far too general for other qualitative research designs. For example, grounded theory would require a different set of quality criteria with credibility as the main focus of interest than ethnographical designs that usually invest more in confirmability issues, seeking a transparent audit trail of their work. An example that comes close to a generic tool is the one proposed by Toye and colleagues [10], who developed a few overarching guiding questions that may assist you in judging the interpretive rigor of most qualitative study designs, including (a) What is the context of

the interpretation?; (b) How inductive is the interpretation?; and (c) Has the researcher challenged his or her interpretation?

2.4 Type of criteria?

The ongoing debates on what constitutes quality in research and which criteria to opt for in the assessment of quantitative and qualitative studies show that quality is a multi-dimensional concept. Overall, quality criteria are chosen based on general agreements between researchers on what constitutes quality in a particular research tradition. Some would only include criteria that evaluate the level of methodological soundness of a study. Other instruments stimulate review authors to assess the importance and value of a particular article for progressing the knowledge base in their field of interest. Overall, our judgments based on criteria outlined in checklists determine the extent to which we have confidence in the competence of the authors to conduct research that follows established norms [3]. Whatever list of criteria review authors decide on using in their review, they can and will be subject to critique, because they are used to decide which articles are 'good enough' to be part of a qualitative evidence synthesis and which are not. We advise review authors to think carefully about which instrument you choose, how they intent to use it and what motivates them to opt for a particular set of criteria [11, 2]. If methodological quality is more important than relevance, review authors should focus on criteria that allow them to distinguish fatal methodological flaws in a research study (that is, impacting on the trustworthiness of a study) from methodological compromises that each researcher has to make to be able to complete a study. Most review authors adopt an existing quality framework. It saves them valuable time that can be spend on the actual data extraction and synthesis phase. Also, most of these instruments have been developed by experts that have given their selection considerable thought. It provides a better guarantee in terms of the consistency of the instrument, regardless of who uses it. Some other review authors, however, may find existing instruments too restrictive or potentially unsuitable for their review. Some may want to consider an adaptation of an existing instrument to better fit their goals. Alternatively, they may want to develop their own. Reasons for adapting existing instruments or developing new ones may be epistemologically inspired or design related. In any of these cases, review authors should justify not only their choice for an instrument, but also for the selection of criteria they will work with.

2.5 Assigning weights to criteria and the use of cut-off points?

Ones the list of quality criteria has been fixed review authors need to decide whether they will weigh assign more weight to primary studies that score high on methodological quality in their study. Review authors that use this particular strategy stress the importance of including all valuable insights of the original studies but agree on the fact that some studies would be featured more prominently than others. For example, they might want to exclude a study when it does not show any proof of the findings being grounded in the data, while other methodological flaws might be perceived as having a smaller impact on the robustness of the results. Review authors who opt for weighing studies often include a sensitivity analysis in their project. They first analyze the findings from all primary studies and then evaluate whether there are particular insights that would not have been found if low quality studies would be excluded. The findings of studies that have applied a sensitivity analysis to qualitative parts of a review are not straightforward. Thomas and colleagues [12] and Noyes and Popay [13] claimed that the findings of the studies rated as low quality did not contradict those from studies of higher quality. In other words, their synthesis would have come to the same conclusion. Caroll and colleagues [14] support this line of argument. However, they also report on the partial loss of information in their review due to exclusion of low quality articles. More research is needed to provide readers with any firm conclusion on the relevance of low quality

studies in qualitative evidence syntheses. Review authors should also choose or opt out of a potential cut-off point for including studies. Currently, there is no standard for a cut-off point that review authors agree on internationally. Even when we decide on a cut-off point of 7/10 criteria we still need a judgment, particularly for those studies that are on the verge between inclusion and exclusion.

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PROFILING COMPETENCES OR PORTRAYING ANTI-OPPRESSIVE PRACTICE? VIDEO-ANALYZING THE BEHAVIOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE PRACTITIONERS ENGAGED IN SOCIAL CIRCUS

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Abstract

Social circus is a social welfare practice that includes teaching circus techniques to socially vulnerable groups. It is often used as a tool for social intervention. Since the 90s, the interest in social circus practice as a catalyst for change has increased. More attention is being given to the role of practitioners involved in social circus. Several studies have profiled them based on the set of competences they should master to achieve anticipated outcomes. We challenge the very act of profiling, arguing that the way practitioners and participants 'connect' via social circus should be understood through observing the way they put themselves 'at disposal'. By means of a video analysis, we aim to portray rather than profile practitioners involved in social circus. This moves us into visualizing the anti-oppressive practice promoted in the social work discipline and out of the competence based discourse that currently dominates professional development discourses.

Keywords: social circus, social work, vulnerable population, video analysis.

1 BACKGROUND

Social circus is a social welfare practice that promotes teaching circus techniques to socially vulnerable groups, while simultaneously aiming to promote solidarity, inclusion and social change. It uses circus techniques as a medium for social intervention [1], particularly when working with vulnerable populations. By vulnerable we mean children, youngsters and adults with socially, economically or politically disadvantaged backgrounds, low socio-economic status or difficult life circumstances. People are trained in a variety of techniques, for example acrobatics, juggling, improvisation theatre and aerial circus arts. Since the 1990s, the interest in social circus practices has increased. It is now commonly used as a form of community outreach [2] [3]. Several research projects have been launched to study the impact of social circus, for example its potential to (a) achieve positive outcomes and joyful experiences in youth at risk [4], (b) promote social inclusion and improve people's social position [5] [6], (c) contribute to skill acquisition [7] [8] and (d) reduce problematic behaviour [2] [9].

1.1 Problem statement

So far, only a limited amount of studies focused on the role of the social circus practitioner or trainer. Those who do mainly create profiles based on a set of competences these trainers should master. Notable examples are the 'Framework of competences for social circus trainers', produced by Caravan ,an international association for youth circus that supports circus practices in youth

education [10] and the list of twelve social and relational skills for trainers working with groups 'at risk' from Milagre, Passeiro, and Almeida [11]. With this paper, we intend to move the discussion away from the connection between input (the use of competent practitioners) and output (achieving the intended goals with the vulnerable population). From the anti-oppressive perspective that characterizes much of our social work practice, the very fact that an output 'should' be achieved through social circus may be perceived by many as an act of oppression in itself. In the search for an authentic portrait of social welfare practitioners active in social circus, we believe there is much to learn from how they connect to participants by observing what 'happens' in the relationship between practitioner and participant involved. The domain 'relationships' has been described as one of the more easy contexts within which the anti-oppressive characteristics of social work practice can be pursued: "Even if we feel we cannot have great influence over cultural or structural forces, we can strive to be personally anti-oppressive towards those we meet" [12]. Because of its accessibility and attractiveness to vulnerable populations, social circus is an interesting case to explore and learn from.

1.2 Objectives and research questions

A video analysis was used to try and understand what is going on between practitioners and participants involved in social circus, with the overall aim to create a portrait of the social circus trainer. A portrait differs from a profile as used in the competence based discourse. With a profile we aim to identify a trainer based on competences and the sort of tasks that he or she engages in. A portrait shows trainers in the way they put themselves at disposal. It provides us with a sketch of what this person could mean to society and what affects him/herself [13]. This particular focus has been inspired by the work of Maus [14], who describes in his book 'The Gift' that every action that we undertake is a reaction. He emphasises a pattern of exchange including giving, receiving and reciprocating. The primary research questions in this study are: (1) What 'happens' between the social circus practitioner and the participant?; (2) What sort of authentic portrait of a social circus trainer can be developed from here? We believe this creates a learning curve for social welfare practitioners on how to relate to others and which mechanisms are important to consider in connecting with participants.

2 METHODS

We conducted a qualitative, visual research project, using video analysis as the main analytic technique. Video fragments were identified via a scoping review. We systematically searched the World Wide Web to identify fragments related to social circus practice. Next, we developed concepts guiding the visual search for meaning on the social circus training acts identified. We deliberately screened for possible ambivalences that were revealed from studying the literature and comparing these insights with the interpretations resulting from the visual sources we consulted, a strategy called 'oppositional talk' analysis [15]. In the last phase of the analysis, we related our inferences to the competence-based discourse and checked for differences and similarities, based on the principle of thematic analysis. We then created an authentic portrait of a social circus practitioner, following a heuristic approach in which we present our findings as an invitation for further elucidation [16].

3 FINDINGS

Our initial search retrieved 268 potential relevant information sources, most of them via Youtube. Initially, 54 video fragments matched our inclusion criteria. We started our analysis with the video

fragments from the 'Cirque du monde' initiative from Cirque du Soleil and then gradually added additional video fragments. After observing and analyzing another 8 fragments from Youtube and 1 additional fragment found via exploring the websites of the social circus initiatives (Educircation) we reached saturation in our set of concepts and ideas. The majority of the included videofragments was shot with the purpose to promote social circus, either to inform the broader public about social circus or to highlight a specific initiative. Most continents were represented in the set of videos analysed. The quality of the videos varied with only half of them produced by professional film makers. In most videos images and spoken words were combined, with only three of them exclusively made of moving images. Most of the included videos showcased projects conducted with youngsters. A minority addressed social circus activities with smaller kids. The link to the videos can be obtained from the lead author. A full paper is currently in development, including the strong visual component in the analytical part that is lacking in our current description.

3.1 Interpretive findings

We identified three major themes that emerged from the findings as a result of combining insights from the observations in relevant categories. A first theme addresses the role of the social circus practitioner. Secondly, we define the trainer by means of his/her relationship with the participants. A third theme has been developed from observing the reciprocal aspects of guiding and being guided, as well as transformative capacity.

3.1.1 Role

The most important role of the social circus practitioner is to infect participants with enthusiasm and passion. Sharing enthusiasm can briefly be defined as doing something with intense enjoyment and excitement, hereby stimulating others to try. In this particular case that 'something' refers to circus techniques. What most social circus trainers share is a high level of energy, cheerfulness and expressive gestures. There is a serious attempt to try and involve everyone. This enthusiastic attitude of the social circus practitioner towards the participants is fundamental. In the transcript below, Karine describes her formal trainer Paul: "Meeting with Paul is like magic. He speaks with his eyes, with his smile. He doesn't have to do anything. People are drawn to him..." (Tr 3:14). We also noticed intense movement while explaining things. Most of the social circus trainers speak in an encouraging voice that brings about positive power. The trainer directs people's attention to social circus techniques. He/she helps participants to find the courage to try new things, to act and further explore their potential. This level of joy that the trainer displays in the activity of social circus is what enlightens participants and transfers the passion from the trainer to his/her trainees. Passion is a strong characteristic of social circus practitioner. It forms the basis for the interactions with participants.

3.1.2 Relation

Here, we discuss the characteristics of the bond between the practitioner and his/her participants by focusing on what they do to establish a meaningful connection with the participants. The core elements of successful connection are openness, a non-hierarchical connection, being in an action together, providing a safety net and providing participants with a 'here-and-now'-experience.

First, we noticed that an open relationship is important to achieve a positive interactional atmosphere. Openness means acceptance, or embracing participants in every aspect of their being and acknowledge individual differences between people: "There are many differences between the participants; we see little children jumping chaotically around, but also youngsters who are more calm and standing tough against the wall. There are many different nationalities, different skin colours, different hair types, etc." (Obs. 14:14). This observation says as much about what is expected from a social circus trainer as about what social circus is and what it does. It is in line with

what Rivard and colleagues [17] define as a circus that speaks to all; young and old, ordinary and important, men and women, professional or not, athletic or not, nicely summarized as “[t]he only obvious requirements are willingness to move and the ability to make others move” [17,pp.187]. Where acceptance is a personal attitude of a social circus trainer, the process orientation generally observed creates ‘a possibility’ for participants to experience something different, new, daring and affirming, that is linked to small experiences of success in the process of social circus.

Here, social circus is more than collecting knowledge or competences; it is an elevating of the capabilities of individuals. Sloterdijk [18] claims that individuals who often are neglected in society transcend from their position and exceed their possibilities in a vertical way, by raising above the expectations of others. He considers vulnerable people the only ones who have an authentic existence, because they have experienced difficult situations. They are forced to start from the possibilities rather than from current expectations. In social circus, participants are part of a team and therefore “searching for spectacular and artistic exercises by experimenting with movement, creating circus together; electing the compositions, planning the show at the end of the circus program, choosing the title for this event, etc.” (Obs 12:14). This creation can be anything; it is not set at the beginning of the training, but grows by experimenting. It implies a searching without knowing towards what. More importantly than defining outcomes is to offer a space and time to experiment [19]. In other words: “...it is not the result that matters but the path taken to get there” [17, pp.184].

A second element of the relationship between social circus practitioners and their participants is a non-hierarchical connection, referring to a bond based on equality. This equality also acknowledges imperfections on both sides. It is not the knowledge or skill that the social circus trainer has or his/her level of expertise that contributes most to a meaningful relationship. It is the fact that they put themselves out there. This includes an exposure, a full devotion to the subject and the participants [19]. Several scenes show a caring and stimulating practitioner, who is close to the participants, both on a cognitive and physical level. On the cognitive level, we noticed that social circus trainers are ‘at distance’, but involved. They anticipate on potential consequences for the youth at risk; a hand behind their back, eyes fixed on the movement of participants and often throwing themselves into the act of social circus and becoming one of the players. Such a horizontal relationship allows for a form of training without explaining [20]. Interactions and learning processes float on equal intelligence from the practitioner and the participant, allowing an advanced form of apprenticeship to occur. In social circus, inability is never underlined. The trainer sees a youngster capable of doing the same thing as him/herself. The fact that some participants are capable to surpass the trainer is applauded [17]. We also noticed a tendency to maintain a non-hierarchical relationship in how the social circus practitioner positions him/herself in the group of participants. In most video fragments the trainer is not a central point of attention. He/she is not dictating what should be done, but is situated in between the participants and becomes one of them. The circle is a much preferred form for exercising.

Being ‘in action’ refers to a state of movement, exercises, physical activities and the ability to communicate through body language, which is a third important aspect. Without this focus on working and creating together a concept such as social circus would be empty. First of all social circus creates potential, or the experience of being able to act by getting involved in some form of physical labour. We observed enjoyment and physical effort and... “the drift to perform; they all clap their hands and keep on smiling and jumping around throughout the whole video. We see a desire in participants to show the best of themselves, to do tricky performances, to amaze the audience. A boy is cheering and laughing after doing a cartwheel” (Obs 11:14). A lot of strength, perseverance and repetition appears to be needed to master the circus techniques. Such corporal activities have been defined by Vlieghe [21] as ‘being entirely flesh’ in its most democratizing form. The physical exercises are experienced as valuable in itself, hereby disconnecting them from any functional goal. It is not about what one can do, but about what one is capable of doing. Following Agamben [22] it is

in these moments of 'pure mobility' that 'the possibility that we can move' arises. Social circus practitioners create an awareness of this sort of potential in the participants. Secondly, social circus practitioners 'demonstrate' a lot. They use their body language to show how something can be done. We observed a lot of non-verbal communication on the video's: a bodily commitment through gestures, eye contact and moving arms and hands. The trainer thus embraces the language of the body to communicate with youngsters with a variety of cultural backgrounds. Body language is a language that everybody can speak and understand, hence strengthening its democratic capacity and inviting people to join the activity as is shown in the snap shots below. This corporal form of communication has been supported by amongst others Cornelissen [23], arguing that too many explanations are distracting and may paralyse the willingness of participants to put effort in an activity and undermining the chance for true apprenticeship. Most practitioners we observed put participants 'in motion': "Young people just need us to show them how, and then they can go beyond that" (Tr 2:14). In social circus, bodies are literally pushed out of balance: participants stand upside down, roll over and jump further than we would first have expected. This constant struggle to find and maintain balance is part of the life of many social circus participants. However, in circus we accept being out of balance. It creates the potential for a new (bodily) position that one could master to become balanced. The third element that characterizes most social circus practitioners is the safety net that they provide for participants. Feeling safe means being comfortable with an activity, even when being pushed to the limit. We observed signs of physical and psychological safety nets. The net refers to the place where social circus programs are offered: "We see children who are hiding in a dark corner and seem to be insecure and children who are running in the streets with dangerous traffic situations ahead of them. Directly after, we see safe places, like sport halls or open fields with green grass. This is where circus techniques are instructed" (Obs 4:14). For those living on the streets this almost sacred area is very important. It implies disclosure and includes an escape from everyday life (Gumbrecht, 2009). We also notice the importance of a physical safety net while performing. Co-performers are often anticipating a possible failure or fall. For example, we observed safety in the meaningful performance of e.g. constructing a human pyramid, where people were literally leaning on each other.

Fourth, A lot of what social circus does is just 'being in the moment' [24] and experiencing intense episodes of concentration or focus. In the snap shot below such an episode is illustrated by a boy who's mind and body are fully occupied with the juggling technique; his eyes are on the juggling balls, he is not distracted by children that are running. The complex level of bodily engagement that circus requires puts participants in a here and now position. Participants who try to master three or more juggling balls or have to keep their balance on a beam are nowhere else but there. In many fragments participants as well as trainers show signs of being attentive. The mechanism behind such attentiveness is devotion and what needs to be mastered or needs to be done is the appealing subject that initiates attentiveness [19]. Being in the moment also means not speculating about things from the past or the future. Valuable moments are these when one acts and loses sight of time. A lot of what social circus practitioners do is facilitate such moments. They allow participants to be 'present'. This presence or bodily involvement includes a material and physical state of being in the moment that is both temporary and unpredictable [25]. It serves as a strategy for re-enchancement and re-discovery of a valuable presence in the lives of vulnerable people. We perceive social circus practitioners as those standing in the background, but at the same time being part of this here and now moment of the ones they work with.

3.1.3 Reciprocity

A social circus practitioners' role in stimulating participants and relationship with them were two very important aspects in the search for an authentic profile. Without proper bonding the portrait of a social circus practitioner would be incomplete. The last characteristic that we have defined as reciprocity builds on this insight. It refers to the commitment of giving and receiving between people. Social circus is a worldwide phenomenon with many social circus trainers crossing the

borders between countries and working with vulnerable populations elsewhere. We observed a large sensitivity of these practitioners to cultural differences, pushing themselves into a naïve incompetence position: “You land in Ethiopia – how does Ethiopia work? When you’re in a new country, you sit, you listen, you watch, and then you talk. In Burkina, they warm up with djembes and lots of dancing. It’s different in Lebanon, it’s different in Mongolia – it’s a constant concern for us to make sure, for example, that partners in Rio adapt social circus their way, at their own pace and within their own cultural background...” (Tr 5:14). Social circus is often called ‘a collective adventure’. Its intention is not to dictate what should change, but to listen to the needs and the strengths of the group. It stimulates them to take over projects. We frequently observed the fact that youngsters were given a chance to express themselves and adjust techniques or exercises. The activities were ‘handed over’, always in the companionship of the practitioner that has a responsibility to protect the youngsters and the central ideas underpinning social circus.

Many practitioners claim that their main marker of success is to make a difference in one kid’s life. It moves them to see the kids accomplish things. We observed many non-verbal reactions showing the trainers being amazed about what participants could do. This back and forward move in social circus trainers of pushing participants to the limit and at the same time finding out that some of their initial expectations or judgments are incorrect creates learning potential. It stimulates them to fight their own prejudices. Likewise, there is a lot to say about our attitude and how it changes in the encounters with the participants. Maus [14] acknowledges the fact that reciprocity can include a gratification with regard to welfare of mankind, a surrender to a specific experience of social involvement, a feeling of doing something for people at risk and receiving an indescribable return. One of the most striking returns of the work of a social circus practitioner is the generativity principle. Frequently, participants mentioned that they want to become a trainer like them one day and true friendships are developed between practitioners and participants: “At the end of the Palestinian circus camp, the participants and the social circus practitioner are hugging each other, some of them are crying. It is very emotional to say goodbye. They have become really close” (Obs 12:14).

4 DISCUSSION

We briefly mentioned other frameworks in the introduction section of this paper, most notably the one from the Caravan Circus Network [10]. In this framework, the main focus is on the social circus trainer as an actor that can organise, plan, manage and develop a social circus program. We promote a portrait that highlights the capacity of social circus practitioners to establish authentic connections that are reciprocal in nature, in the sense that practitioners guide participants and practitioners are guided by their participants. We emphasize the symbolic relationship between both parties that may push the so-called developmental and artistic outcomes achieved backwards in favour of the many achievements that have not been formalized up front or that one does not fully anticipate on. We observed, rather than questioned and evaluated social circus practice. The observational findings highlight the important of reciprocal relationships between stakeholders involved in social circus. In these relationships, practitioners equip themselves with knowledge about participants’ culture, life circumstances, beliefs and individual capacities in order to create a safe environment for experimentation, without too much expectation or predefined outcome measures. It is the anti-oppressive nature of how practitioners connect to their participants and relate to the activities they are involved in that shapes the portrait of social circus trainers. It remains unclear whether it is the anti-oppressive nature of social circus itself that has contributed to social welfare practitioner’s involvement in this field, or the anti-oppressive nature of practitioners involved in social circus that has made it an attractive home base for many deprived and disadvantaged populations.

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METHODS FOR ANALYSING PHOTOGRAPHS IN COMPANY REPORTS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

Critical accounting literature has suggested to take pictures from company reports into considerations in order to go beyond the textual and to explore realities behind pictures [45], [56]. Some researchers have been developing that idea further since the 1990s (see e.g. [7] [19], [44]). However, visual management studies with a focus on reporting remain underrepresented and calls for more research on depictions in reports have been getting louder [6]. This paper aims to review the visual analyses of company reports starting from the 1990s until today. The focus is on the lenses used by the researchers in order to investigate the pictures. For this, the papers on visual analyses of reports will be investigated in terms of “lenses” and methods used. Interestingly, only few papers (e.g. [11], [51], [57]) question the approaches of interpreting pictures from the perspective of the individual researcher. This paper argues that even though researchers undertake quantitative methods such as content analyses, there is a qualitative aspect inhered which is about interpretation and critical reflection. Since pictures are always objects to be “read” and understood by the one interpreting it - the researcher - it is questionable if the researcher’s perspective is enough in order to understand the pictures’ meanings. Results of this paper show that there is no unifying method for analysing pictures from reports. Further results show that there is a growing interest in using thematic perspectives on reports and their pictures instead of quantitative methods such as content analysis. A recommendation is made to make use of a mixed-method strategy when undertaking a picture analysis. Using different approaches such as a visual content analysis combined with photo-elicitation might help to develop a broader understanding of the meaning of pictures in reports.

Keywords: accounting, reporting, visual management studies.

1 INTRODUCTION

“Corporate annual reports are an important example of [] surface information” [37, p. 220]. This quote stems from Lee’s reflection on the changing form of annual reports and does not only apply to annual reports but probably also to other form of company reports. Pictures additionally represent the company. All the more important it is to investigate the pictures displayed in reports, especially once researchers decided to reveal what is behind the pictures. According to Strati ([52], [53], [54]) it is the researcher who has the ability to experience aesthetics due to own experiences [57].

This paper is a literature review of papers which address photographs in company reports. In particular, it reviews the methods used in these papers in order to provide an overview of methods,

but also to interrogate papers which do not choose a particular method for analysing, but use a specific method or “lens” for interpreting.

The review is based on 25 papers which have been selected and screened for information regarding methods, themes, perspectives and theories applied for analysing photographs in reports (see Tab. 1). An in-depth analysis of the results and a comparison of the types of literature found is the aim of this literature review and hence the most comprehensive part of this paper.

Our research aims to inform the design and conduct of future visual management / accounting studies. Researchers who acknowledge the importance of pictures should have methods at hand to disclose information and to analyse or interpret it. Moreover, recommendations will be made regarding the mixture of methods for photo-analysis in company reports.

2 BACKGROUND

The background of our research are the theoretical debates of critical accounting and of visual management studies. Whereas the latter is a newly developed and used approach in management and organisational studies, critical accounting has a longer history among accounting scholars. As the VMS is partly derived from the critical debate on accounting, we will begin with a short introduction of the accounting discipline.

To account for something literally means “to present an account or reckoning of (one’s actions); to answer for, to explain or justify” (Oxford English Dictionary). In management studies, it is for instance reports which show the accounts of multiple performances (economic, ecological or social) a company is (held) responsible for [26]. The disciplines of accounting and reporting, however, are under critical academic investigation since the expected full insights and ethics have been prevaricated during several reporting cases [4], [32], [38].

When speaking of company reports these reports are understood as accounts of a company’s actions which (should) address the expectations of stakeholders [41]. Meeting the expectations of stakeholders through a report then means to prove responsibility for impacts on society and the natural environment and accountability to society (for these impacts and related actions) [26], [43]. Accountability can be discharged through a variety of reports, including financial, annual, corporate, sustainability and environmental reports. What allies these reports is the use of standards and national requirements [31], general texts, graphs, figures (e.g. [5]) and also pictures and photographs.

Research interest in images depicted in company reports is evident since the 1980s, but it took decades for more comprehensive investigations of the usage of images in reports (Warren, 2008). The general interest in the visual, on the one hand, goes back to the growing awareness of aesthetics in organisational studies [57] and the “crisis of representation” regarding the former “positivist/functionalist” towards an “interpretative/critical” understanding of representations [55, p. 1212]. On the other hand, there has been a growing critical contestation about reporting, accountability and pictures as accounts [33]. The so called VMS result from these critical perspectives in organizational and accounting research [6].

About 30 years ago, Fyfe and Law [24] demanded that the visual shall play a greater role in sociological sciences. Later, in 2005 Guthey and Jackson [30] even called for a loosened dependence on empirical data and the use of interpretive methods in various disciplines. Our research responds to these calls by investigating what methods or ways of interpretation are used for analysing photographs in company reports. Hence our research belongs to those studies “(...) that privilege the researcher’s voice (...)” over “(...) the voices of organizational members” [57, p. 563].

3 PROBLEM FORMULATION AND RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION

Research regarding the analysis of pictures in company reports is less prevalent than other research on reporting [11]. However, during the last three decades a constant, although slowly increasing, consideration of the visual in company reports from a critical accounting perspective has been evident [6]. This development has brought about methods for picture analyses in management studies. However, only few authors addressed the phenomenon of missing or unreflected methods in the so-called VMS. The problem we instigate here is hence a critical reflection of and the search for available methods for picture analyses of company reports.

In 2013 Bell and Davison [6] published a review on VMS in which they used a framework categorising approaches into empirical and theoretical research. Even though their research did not only focus on company reports, they also included 15 papers which addressed pictures in reports. Drawing on their work and given the progress in time and methods development in VMS and reporting, we aim to give an overview on not only what techniques are used to analyse pictures in company reports, but also to give an overview on *how* they are used and with which effect. This leads us to a discussion of interpretation as a valid method and the possible need for mixed-method approaches when it comes to the analysis and the interpretation of photographs in company reports. This is also in line with calls for a deeper analysis of company reports, in particular concerning the role of pictures within reports [6], [13], [33], [56].

4 METHODS

Every paper has been screened for the overall theme as well as the applied perspective, theory and method. Not all of the papers address all of these aspects, but every paper has been at least writing about one of the aspects. The term *Theme* explains the chosen genre (e.g. gender). *Theory* (e.g. Roland Barthes' repetition) also accrued from reading the specific papers. *Perspective* describe the focus or "lens" which has been applied to look at the investigated reports. Based on McGoun *et al.*'s [39] description of lenses as specific perspectives, and given the broad approach of this research, the term *Perspective* has been chosen over 'focus' and 'lens'. *Methods* were identified through the respective sections (e.g. "Research Design") or the Analysis sections in which methods have been applied. This step included the findings of papers which explicitly mention and apply methods for picture analysis and of other papers which do not mention any method at all except for the theories that have been applied. Those papers were then identified as papers which use a theory as a perspective to look at company reports.

The journal papers have been found through snowballing. This is, references from papers have been analysed and in return new references occurred which again have been analysed and so forth. Inspiration on how to structure the methods for this literature review came mainly from Bell and Davison [6] and Taylor and Hansen [55].

There has not been any usage of a particular search string for this review as there are too many terms used in VMS and reporting literature which describe the same issues such as "picture" and "photo". Through database research with the key words "picture", "photograph", "visual" "visual analysis", "visual management" in relation with "report" there were only minor results which led to the decision of using the snowball systems and resulted in 25 papers, which suited our previously set inclusion criteria:

- The papers address photos in company reports, use them as data and apply methods for the purpose of a picture analysis.
- Papers must be published between 1990 and 2016. Although the 1970s/1980s constitute the early rise in reporting literature, the analyses of pictures in reports started not before the 1990s.

- There is no need to display the pictures which have been analysed in the paper, however there should have been a clear indication and description in the papers about the analysis of pictures in reports.

Exclusion criteria is based on the following:

- Papers which focus only on text, graphs, depictions or colours in company reports, but not on pictures. However, the excluded papers have been used for background information about reporting and the change of reporting styles. Furthermore, these papers provided insights into the need for research on the visual of reports.
- Those papers, which do not explicitly address pictures in reports or analyse them, but contributed to the understanding about VMS or the visual research in company reports and accounting, have been also used for gaining knowledge regarding methods and approaches in VMS.

The article selection process has been as follows:






- The leading author has selected the papers based on the mentioned selection criteria.
- The papers have been screened for the following issues:
 - Focus on photographs (as this is the topic of this paper)
 - Perspectives, themes and theories through which the authors have looked at their papers
 - Methods for analysing the results
 - Types and number of reports
 - Types of sectors of reports
- By company reports, the following types of reports are meant and possible for investigation:
 - Financial, annual, corporate, environmental, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), ecological, social or sustainability reports

5 LIMITATIONS

Within this research it has not been intended to discuss the role of photography or even criticise photographs regarding their subjective connotation or social determination [30], [49]. Consequently, issues such as (1) the discipline of accounting in general [39], (2) the usage of photographs in reporting in particular [33], (3) photography as a way of seeing [50] and finally, (4), the discourse of objective hermeneutic and interpretation as valid method for ontological sense-making [58] have not been addressed in detail. It has rather been intended to reveal various methods to analyse photographs in company reports. Nevertheless, we see the need for investigating these issues with regard to reporting and VMS, as many other authors do as well [6], [51], [56].




6 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Using our selection criteria 25 papers were found which address photographs in company reports and use these photographs as data. Tab. 1 shows the results.

No.	Author, Year	Journal	Theme	Applied Perspective	Applied Theory	Applied Methods	Degree of Interpretation
1	Anderson, C. and Imperia, G., 1992	Journal of Business Communication	Gender	Gender 	Goffman's gender studies (1979)	Quantitative Content Analysis	Low
2	Benshop, Y. and Meihuizen, H. 2002	Accounting, Organizations and Society	Gender	Gender 		Scorecard, Logit Regressions	moderate
3	Bernardi, R., Bean, D. and Weippert, K., 2005	Critical Perspectives on Accounting	Gender Diversity	Gender Diversity 		Quantitative Content Analysis	low
4	Bernardi, R., Bean, D. and Weippert, K., 2002	Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal	Gender Diversity	Gender Diversity 		Quantitative Content Analysis	low
5	Breitbarth, T., Harris, P. and Insch, A., 2010	Journal of Public Affairs	Corporate Social Responsibility	Semiotics		Quantitative and Qualitative Content Analysis	low
6	Campbell, D., McPhail, K. and Slack, R., 2009	Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal	Faces	Levina's and Bauman's (1993) ethics, Site of the Audience 	Levina's and Bauman's (1993) ethics	Illustration of the Site of the Audience, Interpretation	high

7	David, C., 2001	Journal of Business and Technical Communication	Mythmaking	Mythologies	Roland Barthes' cultural myth theory (mythologies)	Interpretation guided by Perspective	high
8	Davison, J., 2014	Accounting, Organizations and Society	Rhetoric and Repetition	Roland Barthes' (1982) Visual Rhetoric	Roland Barthes' (1982) Visual Rhetoric	Interpretation guided by Perspective	high
9	Davison, J., 2011	Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal	Accounting Communication	Roland Barthes's (1953) connotation and denotation	Roland Barthes's (1953) connotation and denotation	Interpretation guided by Perspective	high
10	Davison, J., 2011	Critical Perspectives on Accounting	Paratexts	Gérard Genette's (1987) Paratexts and Transtextuality	Gérard Genette's (1987) Paratexts and Transtextuality	Interpretation guided by Perspective and Theory	high
11	Davison, J., 2010	Accounting, Organizations and Society	Portraits of Business Élite	Visual Rhetorics		Interpretation	high
12	Davison, J., 2009	Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal	Visual Branding	Icons, Iconography, Iconology	Icons, Iconography, Iconology by Roland Barthes (1982), Panofsky (1939), Peirce (1960)	Interpretation	high
13	Davison, J., 2008	Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal	Rhetorics in Reporting	Repetition	Roland Barthes' (1982) Rhetorics of Images	Interpretation	high
14	Davison, J., 2007	Accounting, Auditing and Accountability	NGOs	Barthes's studium and punctum	Roland Barthes's (1980) Studium and	Interpretation guided by Perspective and Theory	high

		Journal			Punctum		
15	Davison, J., 2004	Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal	Myths	Mircear Eliade's (1963) Aspects of Myths	Mircear Eliade's (1963) Aspects of Myths	Interpretation guided by Perspective	high
16	De Groot, E., Nickerson, C., Korzilius, H. and Gerritsen, M., 2015	Journal of Business and Technical Communication	Cultural Diversity in Reporting	Visual Rhetoric	Hyland and Tse's (2004) Metadiscourse, Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) Multimodality, Coniam's (2004) Rhetorical Functions	Visual Metadiscourse guided by Theories, Quantitative Content Analysis	moderate
17	De Groot, E., Korzilius, H., Gerritsen, M. and Nickerson, C., 2011	IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication	Cultural Differences in Reporting	Intercultural Perception Of Communication Strategies	Similarity-Attraction Paradigm	Quantitative Content Analysis through Questionnaire	low
18	De Groot, E., Nickerson, C., Korzilius, H. and Gerritsen, M., 2006	IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication	Cultural Differences in Reporting	Themes in Reports	Genre Theory	Comparative Content Analysis, Multimodal Discourse	Moderate
19	Duff, A. , 2011	Critical Perspectives on Accounting	Gender and Race	Accountability		Quantitative Content Analysis, Scorecard	Moderate
20	Graves, O.F., Flesher, D. and	Accounting, Organizations and	Rhetorics	Accounting Practice vs. Value and Truth		Interpretation guided by Perspective	high

	Jordan, R., 1995	Society					
21	Karreman, J., De Jong, M., Hofmans, S., 2014	IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication	Perception of Corporate Reputation 	Perception of Corporate Reputation		Quantitative Content Analysis through Photo-elicitation and Questionnaire	moderate
22	McKinstry, S., 1996	Accounting, Organizations and Society	History of Reporting Design	Comparison of Previous Reports and Economic Performance of Company		Interpretation guided by Perspective	high
23	Kuasirikun, N., 2011	Critical Perspectives on Accounting	Gender Construction 	Gender Construction	Habermas' (1974) Theory of Communicative Rationalisation	Quantitative Content Analysis, Interpretation guided by Perspective	high
24	Preston, A. and Young, J., 2000	Accounting, Organizations and Society	Globalisation 	Globalisation	Appadurai's (1990) Five Dimensions of Global Cultural Flow	Interpretation guided by Perspective and Theory	high
25	Preston, A., Wright, C. and Young, J., 1996	Accounting, Organizations and Society	Messages of Images	Postmodernism		Interpretation guided by Perspective	high

Tab. 1: Analysed papers which address pictures in company reports.

Legend for Tab. 1:

Theme: This category describes the overall topic that has been addressed in the respective paper. It is most dominant category of all papers as every research focuses on a particular theme.

Applied Perspective: It is often a particular research interest or *lens* of the researcher that influences the perspective on an investigated theme. Some but not every perspective equals the overall topic of a paper.

Applied Theory: The application of a particular theory depends on the research approach. Some papers state theories related to the chosen theme, but do not apply the theories. *The category is left blank then.* Others apply and hence work with a theory which relates to the theme of the paper or chose even different theories.

Applied Methods: This category is about the methods that have been stated and used in the paper. If no particular method has been mentioned, we assume the usage of interpretation as method.

Degree of Interpretation: Here, we differentiate between a low, moderate or high degree of interpretation. The deeper the analysis of the results or the stronger the debate about applied theories in relation to the pictures in the company reports, the higher is the degree of interpretation.

- Low = description of results without any interpretation of pictures and reference to theories or further literature OR application of theories or further literature only in conclusion
- Moderate = description of results with few interpretation of pictures and referring to theories or further literature
- High = description of results with much application of theories or further literature OR deep analysis or discussion of reports in accordance with perspective or theory.

A low degree of interpretation shows that there is not my speculation done by the researcher and that objective results have been described based on the findings of the analysis. A high degree, instead, shows that the researcher has been interpreting (even though with the help of further literature) the pictures based on the perspective on the pictures, hence with more speculations included and very subjective.

Following the structure of Tab. 1, it is first the academic *Journals* in which the papers have been published that are noticeable. The journals that incorporate the topics of company reporting and pictures belong to two fields of research: management/accounting and communication. Namely, the journal of *Accounting, Organizations and Society* (seven papers) and *Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal* (seven papers) are most prominent. In total, 18 papers have been discovered in accounting journals and seven in communication journals.

The *Themes* discovered in the 25 papers do not show a great variety. Topics covered are mainly gender and diversity. This is no surprise considering that diversity in company reports is easily displayed through photographs and also supposedly easy to discover by looking at the photographs (e.g. male or female, black or white skin) (see e.g. [7] or [36]). The next most frequent theme is the one of pictorial repetition in reporting (see e.g. [21]).

Looking at the *Perspectives* that have been applied to the research, the following types of perspectives have been identified (see Tab. 1):

- I. Papers that are based on the theme, which lead to the perspective.
- II. Papers that are based on the theory, which lead to the perspective.
- III. Papers that are based on the perspective, which leads to the theory.
- IV. Papers that have a different perspective than the theme and have no theory applied.
- V. Paper that have different perspective, theme and theory.

Most papers do not use a specific perspective in order to analyse photographs in company reports, which has been already claimed by Stanton and Stanton [51]. However, obviously the perspective used – even though unconsciously – has been either the theme chosen or the theoretical framing of the papers. This comes particularly clear with regard to Jane Davison's research in which she used e.g. Roland Barthes' theory of rhetoric and repetition as a perspective to look at company reports [15], [17], [20], [21].

The *Theories* applied differ in as much as regards the chosen themes. Ten papers do not make use of any theory at all. Some, however, state a theory but do not apply the theory (e.g. [8]).

All papers have one *Method* in common and that is interpretation. In order to analyse pictures, the researcher always has to make a meaning of the visual and therefore need some own imagination and way of understanding [57]. Even when applying certain techniques for analysing the pictures, there is some interpretation of the pictures involved. However, we found that there are two types of papers that have to be distinguished when it comes to a comprehensive interpretation of photographs in company reports: (1) those papers which explain certain methods, apply them and analyse the results without further interpretation or only few discussion; and (2) those papers which do not show any method used for the picture analysis, however, these papers interpret the pictures to a far extent and reveal insights into the pictures and the relation to their reports and accountability.

Those papers that belong to the first type of papers are categorised into *low or moderate degrees of interpretation* (see papers 1-5, 16-19, 21 in Tab. 1). The authors use quantitative methods, such as a scorecard or a content analysis combined with regressions or simply averages to conclude on the impacts of photographs. The methods are explained at length and later applied during the picture analysis. To a certain extent all of these papers do analyse the results and connect ideas and theories to the outcomes. Nevertheless, they remain on the surface as what regards detailed analyses and interpretations. The interpretation of the results is based on the statistics of pictures in the investigated reports and relate to the themes, but a deeper understanding of how pictures have been used or how certain pictures might influence readers of the respected reports are left beside.

The second cohort of papers, which do not explicitly elaborate on methods for picture analyses chose interpretation as a method for analysis over other methods, even though it is not expressed that way. These papers are hence categorised as holding a high degree of interpretation. This is

interesting because using interpretation as a method to analyse reports (which contain pictures and narratives) calls for a hermeneutic understanding of texts [58]. Frosh [23, p. 21] wonders “(...) whether it is appropriate to analyse visual images using a theory that implicitly takes language as paradigmatic for meaning”. The question is if the authors do not address hermeneutics because they deal with pictures and therefore do not have to consider the ability to interpret texts. Research on reporting styles (not in particular on pictures and therefore not included in this review) shows that Guthey and Jackson [30, p. 1064] are a rare example of those who talk of a possible “(...) methodological bias towards the supposed certitude of empirically verifiable ‘science’ over the indeterminacy of visual and aesthetic interpretation” (see also [34] or [42]).

Our focus is on reporting and the visual and therefore strongly connects to the question of pictures as accounts [33]. Hence, our perspective on the investigated papers is the one of accountability and with our research we aim to address those interested in visual management studies, reporting and accounting. Most of the investigated papers included within this literature review, however, fail (or simply do not intend) to mention or reveal the addressees (with the exception of those papers that use the audience site as possible addressees: see Tab. 1, papers 6, 16, 21). In terms of hermeneutics and meaning making it indeed matters who the potential addressee is, especially when it comes to often subjective interpretations of pictures in company reports [10], [58]. Concerning company reports the stakeholders and shareholders in particular [3] are the ones addressed at. Research papers which analyse pictures of reports, however, address those interest in meaning making of pictures and (probably) the topic of accountability. None of the investigated papers indicate certain addressees.

Interestingly, there are many papers which do not make use of an explicit method to analyse the data. Rather, these papers use interpretation as a valid method to better understand the results and to comprehend on the outcomes from the various types of picture analyses. Obviously, and being published in highly ranked journals might further support this observation, interpretation is an acknowledged way to explore the visual in reports. The qualitative aspect very much helps to deepen knowledge about the use and impact of photographs in reports. This observation, however, is in contrast to Baker and Bettner’s [2] investigation regarding interpretative and critical research in so called mainstream accounting journals. The authors found that interpretation is less evident in accounting journals. One of the papers included in their research was the *Accounting, Organizations and Society* Journal. This is the journal where we found six papers published falling under the category of high degree of interpretation.

Generally, it must be considered that interpretation of pictures is purely subjective and “done” through the eyes of the researcher. Even though, some of the authors who fall into the category of “high degree of interpretation” make use of a theory such as Jane Davison and her analyses based on Roland Barthes’ repetition and iconography, there is no exact explanation of how the theory has been applied and what method has been used in order to interpret. Not even the usage of the term “interpretation” is found in those papers. This, nevertheless, is in line with Taylor and Hansen’s [55, p. 1213] impression that “(...) aesthetic knowing is driven by a desire for subjective, personal truth usually for its own sake”. Their impression is furthermore in line with the overall understanding that photographs have different meanings for different viewers, photographers and the users of the images or the ones depicted such as organisational members in company reports [57]. It can thus be argued that due to the anyhow subjective connotation of photographs, the interpretation of images in company reports through the eyes of a researcher can never be objective and hence does not need the use of specific methods for analysis and interpretation [48]. The paper by Breitbarth *et al.* [10] is the only one that mentions the viewer’s perspective of pictures but accepts this as necessary and unavoidable condition of picture and reporting research.

Using quantitative methods for understanding photographs in company reports, however, gives the impression to obtain objective results, as long as there have been clear descriptions of categories and definitions of signs or indicators. Qualitative methods, still, inhere the possibility to generate detailed

insights of pictures and companies at the same time. Of course, the interpretation is subjective. Nevertheless, the analysis as well as the discussion of the results does not remain on a descriptive level as the investigated quantitative studies usually do. Chances are that interpretative methods help to better understand the usage of photographs in reports and on the other also help to generate a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of photo usage in reports and this is crucial for accountability disclosed through reports.

To us it seems important to be aware of the subjective position of both the viewer of the photographs in company reports, but also of the researcher writing about picture and reporting research. This reflection should be visible in the papers concerned with VMS as it enriches the debate about pictures as accounts and the diverse ways of seeing these accounts. A useful approach to make such a reflection visible could be the application of a method mix, such as quantitative and qualitative content analyses with objective averages, counts of pictures and deeper investigations of means and interpretations by different stakeholders. Gillian Rose's [47] three sites of a picture seem to be promising here. According to her approach, different perspectives on pictures help to better comprehend on the meaning of photographs. These perspectives, which she calls the "three sites of a picture", are those of the audience, the production site and the image itself [47]. By combining these sites with the application of different methods to learn more about the audience or the production of the image, the researcher steps away from his/her subjective and single-minded view on the picture.

7 CONCLUSIONS

During the last three decades there has been a growing interest in visual management studies and the accountability of photographs in reports [6], [33], [57]. This occurrence led to the development of various methods for picture analysis, such as the scorecard by Benschop and Meihuizen [7], content analyses (e.g. [1] or [36]) or the use of different academic perspectives on an annual report (Stanton and Stanton, 2002). Only a few authors, however, remarked the non-diverse approach of applying only one method or make claims in using both quantitative and qualitative methods from various disciplines [6]. Even fewer authors suggested to look at the different sites of a picture [47] and to acknowledge the difficulties of sense-making and meaning of the visual [46]. The critical contestation with photographs in reports through interpretation shows that pictures can be more than surface information and can be interrogated as accounts of a company's understanding of its social responsibility.

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NOTES FOR A PUNK ETHNOGRAPHY: DOING RESEARCH IN PARTICIPATORY CULTURES

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Abstract

This paper aims at confronting the epistemological, ethical and practical complexities and contradictions of doing research in participatory cultures: cultures and communities that thrive across digital and “real” contexts, and that blur and complexify the all too often rigidly institutionalised boundaries between learner and teacher, professional and amateur, producer and consumer, outlining new conceptualisations of (multi)literacy and citizenship.

Drawing on a multi-sited ethnography conducted within amateur, Do-It-Yourself game creation communities, the paper will discuss a trans-contextual series of vignettes and sketches collected across virtual communities, “game jams” and hackerspaces. In doing this, it will trace the methodological challenges and insights that marked a research project rooted in subcultures that, against still widespread stigma, have been praised by scholars for their fundamental unity of morals, aesthetics and politics. Through this unification, they will be shown to follow patterns of grassroots appropriation of the means of cultural production characterised by the same “honesty in materials” and “authenticity work” that were foundational in the “punk” subcultures of the Seventies and Eighties.

The paper will propose grounded, plural accounts of how the inherently hierarchical and “ordering” character of academic endeavours can clash with the horizontal, creative, playful and often explicitly subversive “mess” inherent to these communities, generating an epistemological faultline that can be healed through a necessary, and at the same time paradoxical, reflection on authenticity and through an explicit critique of hierarchical, outcome-oriented, reductionist epistemologies.

Through the diverse sites and communities of cultural production explored throughout the study hereby discussed, the discourses of reflexivity and the manifold claims and perspectives on what constitutes “quality” in research and aesthetic expression are articulated and vividly embodied in in everyday practices of systemic and narrative bricolage. This allows for the exploration and adoption of different, subversive (“Punk”) criteria and opportunities for research and education, therefore touching from a new point of view, and further complexifying, not only the issues of voice, validity, authority and legitimation, but also the often misconstrued, dehumanising “seriousness”, “rigour” and “discipline” of academic work itself

Keywords: Do-It-Yourself, Ethnography, Participatory Cultures.

1 WHO MAKES MEDIA? WHO MAKES KNOWLEDGE?

This paper recounts the key turning points of a Ph.D. Research based in ethnographic practice, focusing on the close links and the parallels between the shifts in power dynamics that characterize emerging, participatory modes of media production (specifically, those employed by informal, amateur networks enabled by the diffusion of networking technologies) and the necessary complexification and hybridisation of practices and methodologies of academic knowledge production.

To navigate these emerging issues in methodological discourses and practices, the paper will support theoretical and epistemological argumentation with fragments from my ethnographic fieldwork in amateur game creation communities, both in online and offline contexts, interrogating the ways in which the legitimacy and quality of qualitative research have to be reframed in the light of more and more widespread participatory co-construction of practices, aesthetics and knowledge. These dynamics are not specific to the digital age, as, among the first to displace the centrality of intellectuals in the definition of discourse and highlighting the necessity of a strong reflexive position for academics, French philosopher and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu wrote, almost 40 years ago:

Each and every cultural act, be it production or consumption, implies the affirmation of a right to legitimate expression, and therefore involves the positioning of the subject in regards to the intellectual field and the avenues of expression he or she claims. [1]

In putting forward this argument, Bourdieu is also among the first scholars to notice how subtle shifts in the loci and ownership of the means of cultural production, due to the spreading of capitalism modes of production themselves, which aims at selling to the workers the products of their own labour [2] generate partial re-distribution, through the democratisation of media, of "technopolies" of cultural production, to use Neil Postman's lexicon [3]. These arguments notwithstanding, the positivistic metaphors of transcription and reproduction of scientific data that dominate scientific and methodological discourse to this day are in themselves still deeply gutenbergian, in that they entail a technopolistic system of reproduction and distribution of knowledge which strongly favors the written word, and its organization in a linear, categorizing, hierarchical and finite fashioning. Following Bourdieu's suggestion, I will argue throughout this paper that the technological and economic processes which enable the so called "amateurs" [4] [5] to self-produce cultural artifacts relying on the networked infrastructure of "digital distribution" and on the infinite replicability of software, can create an explicit, public spaces of discussion about the places and displacements of creativity and management thereof, including a re-articulation of the creative practices that are weaved with socially and culturally engaged research.

2 PARTICIPATORY MESS

These mediated dynamics call us to inquire into small trans-contextual realities, to look into them for reflections of the whole and vice-versa, working both to create new connections and to deconstruct the abstracting push of hegemonic cultural frameworks and epistemologies. Putting forward a seminal description of the then marginal contexts of media appropriation, American "fan theorist" Henry Jenkins discussed the "convergence" of media which in just a few years widened from such above mentioned "geek subcultures" to embrace almost the whole of cultural production (Jenkins, 2006), new forms of cultural organization emerge, which the author calls "participatory cultures", the members of which engage in circulation, discussion and production of "remixed" or completely innovative content on an informal basis. These cultures are voluntary associations founded in an affinity of interests or narratives, associations which share both skills and resources, and paradigmatic of how strong heterarchical [6] push of networking technologies and the deep

sociological and epistemological mutations they entail, could find recognition as a push for present and future developments in human and social sciences.

In confronting these complexities, and the delocalisation and messiness of contemporary cultures, British sociologist of science John Law in his *After Method* puts forward a complexifying position: being the social world such a messy place would anything less messy make a mess of describing it? Or, to quote him more at length:

"I'm interested in the politics of mess. I'm interested in the process of knowing mess. I'm interested, in particular, in methodologies for knowing mess. My intuition, to say it quickly, is that the world is largely messy. It is also that contemporary social science methods are hopelessly bad at knowing that mess. Indeed, it is that dominant approaches to method work with some success to repress the very possibility of mess." [7]

It's important to notice that its first point of interest for Law is "the politics of mess": it's not any inherent truth-value, he implies, which should guide us in seeking to embrace and allow for mess, but instead a preoccupation with the political consequences of the expunction and simplification of mess. In discussing those consequences, my preoccupation is with clearly pinpointing emerging contexts and patterns of aesthetic and knowledge production which, by virtue of their messiness and living character, resist being managed by institutionalized knowledge production practices.

A key author to guide my approach to the re-articulation of ethnographic work is again Pierre Bourdieu, who directly confronted the dichotomy of plurality and abstraction, and especially the contrast between the formalized order of theories and the emergent self-organization of practices, highlighting how this contrast is indeed one that is much reflective of academic standings as pertaining to social sciences. Bourdieu ultimately suggests that questions about the legitimacy of insider theories are radically wrong: inhabitants of cultures do not have such systematic representations, and regulations of behaviour are often left to "fair play", to the same risky practice of fabricating and upholding that will be discussed in the fieldwork section of this paper, a practice which is both inherently playful and aesthetically complex. My choice of Bourdieu's approach to ethnography is also intended to echo his deep, reflexive awareness of the role of institutional limitations in the production of knowledge, suggesting that "a sociology of sociology is a fundamental condition of sociology itself" [8], and cultural production is "historical through and through".

As we are pushed toward systematicity during all of our training, we tend to see systematicity in those things we explore and examine. We see cultural agents following clear, explicit, well established rules, we see them follow determinate and well thought strategies, because this is what we did to "survive" to a stage of education that allows us to make our first tentative forays in knowledge production [9]. This same "habitus" that leads us to seek for systematicity and order makes it hard to theorise (etymologically, to see) the "fuzzy, messy patterns of the social world, its practical, embodied, contextualized and therefore mutable nature, resistant to be encompassed in a system of knowledge production still deeply entrenched in machinistic epistemologies and practices. The researcher is at risk to find himself or herself "mistaking the things of logic for the logic of things", to quote Bourdieu, himself quoting Marx [10]. A researcher who is truly interested and invested in generating reflexive research in these cultures will therefore choose to focus on the unconventional, the resistant, the divergent, even in respect to their academic work itself, and throughout the rest of this paper I will discuss and exemplify this approach through the metaphor of that of "Punk Ethnography".

3 PUNK ETHNOGRAPHY: NOISY NARRATIVES

Which is to say that, to highlight fringe, informal spaces' relevance in cultural production, I chose to resort to a punk attitude in my epistemological framing, fieldwork practices and representation

strategies, where by "punk" I mean anti-authoritarianism, a Do-It-Yourself ethic, non-conformity, direct action, not selling out, and a strong value posed on upfrontness and authenticity". The roots of this metaphor are of course artistic: punk, as a musical and aesthetical subculture, originated from another wave of technological/cultural appropriation. In fact, as electrical musical instruments and recording implements became available to wider audiences during the Sixties, so called "garage-rock" bands emerged, ensembles whose young members received little if any formal training in musicianship, and whose performances, often intentionally raw and crude, often revolved around the traumas experienced within institutionalized learning spaces, or the arbitrary character of social mores (see Widdicombe & Woofit, 1995, for a history on punk cultures[11]). Embracing fragmentation and marginality, punk cultures adopted an adaptable "make-up-as-you-go" attitude, and created their own channels of sharing, in a bricolage which manages to incorporate and criticize elements of hegemonic culture to refigure their uses and meanings (Shuker, 1988). [12]

This adaptability of punk cultures soon manifested its polymorphous influence on a wide variety of post-modern, politically charged narratives, a wide set of hybrid, technologically diverse narrative genres ("Steampunk", "Dieselpunk", "Biopunk", "Nanopunk"). As the musical genre which gave them rise, these genres were characterized by a caustic questioning of established authority, and use a composite, bricoleur style and themes to reflect on possible, often dystopian, scenarios of social restructuring brought on by fictional variations in the history of technological infrastructure, thus exploring the com-positional relationship of science, technology and society. These "blurred genres" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2001) [13] echo Joe Kincheloe's methodological take on bricolage, highlighting its criteria of relevance and its politically charged implications:

"Rigor in the ruins of traditional disciplinarity connects a particular concept - in contemporary education, for example, the call for educational standards—to the epistemological, ontological, cultural, social, political, economic, psychological, and pedagogical domains for the purpose of multiperspectival analysis." [14]

A polymorphous, composite "rigor in the ruins of disciplinarity" is a fitting definition for a punk attitude, which intends to uphold political and ethical values even in this historical conjuncture where knowledge-making institutions have increasingly socially disengaged models and procedures, in a technocratic/bureaucratic dystopia of regulations and standards. A punk approach to research therefore entails and celebrates how actors both within academic contexts and in the context that fall under academic scrutiny don't speak with a unified voice (or even with neatly distinct, paradigmatically characterized voices), but engage in messy, noisy dialogues where voices both mix and clash. Going a step further than a similar, arts-based metaphor, that of "remix" employed in ethnographic practice and writing by Baym and Markham [15], suggesting the need to confront the selective and compositional nature of methodology, and to develop alternative forms which select for properties other than order and linearity, a punk approach endeavours to weave and make explicit the fundamental connections and conflicts of epistemology, representation and politics, to support researchers in conducting relevant and disruptive research, and cultural actors in raising their voices against the colonisation of academic descriptions themselves.

4 I DON'T WANNA BE LEARNED: A CRITICAL INCIDENT

To explore the quandaries of informal learning and methodology in our connected age, my research focused on Do-It-Yourself creative practices as pertaining games (Rowe, 2014), which is often limited to "mods" of a simplistic nature, but are paradigmatic of a need for participation and punk-like media production which claims legitimacy and visibility independently from the mastery of high level game design or coding skills.

These completely free, barely 'sketched' Do-It-Yourself games, products made not for the mass market nor for mere sustenance of artistic fringes, but made for the sake of making or, to quote game designer and cultural critic Anna Anthropy, "not to make games for more kinds of people, but to have more kinds of people making games" [16]. Wanting to explore these spaces and cultures only barely colonized by the distortions brought on by market economy, one of the main sites of my fieldwork was ModDb.com, widely recognized as the historical, independent and fully "grassroots" hub of "modding" (as in, the practice of producing modification, or even completely new versions of other, commercial games [17]). With its 300.000 registered members this site, founded in year 2002, has become the aggregator of underground auto-production dynamics, in resistance to the only recently loosened closures of mainstream industry, dynamics that emerged starting from the second half of the Eighties, at the intersections of the spreading of networking, videoludic culture and hacker culture.

Another site of the online part of fieldwork was the GeekDo community, which, while founded in 2000 around board games and rapidly becoming the main online aggregator for this area of interest, has opened its doors to virtually any kind of games. "The Geek", as colloquially called among members, is constituted by a million users, and its characters of transmediality and abstraction were probably why, as of the end of my fieldwork, it was the most relevant community, and the one which provided many of the forum excerpts included in this paper.

After a few weeks of participant observation in these communities, in the effort to systematise my findings I moved to the next intended phase in my inquiry, that is, trying to employ crowdsourcing practices [18] to cooperatively generate accounts of these communities' cultural practices compiled and publicly discussed on a wiki platform (<https://participatorygamedesign.wikispaces.com/home>). I chose a custom-made wiki, a place external and transversal to single communities where I hoped to spark a discussion on a general theory of participatory game creation.

However, quite unexpectedly for me, the wiki was greeted with a diverse set of reactions: while many users found the initiative to be interesting, but too complicated, too abstract or too artificial ("*This is interesting, but looks convoluted, and hard to use in any practical way*" "*I will need a lot of time to dig through this*"), other community members refused the initiative outright, disqualifying or suggesting others to ignore it ("*Why should I be doing this? You are the researcher, so just do it for us.*" "*I have no interest in this whatsoever*").

This was, undoubtedly, the hardest moment of the whole research, both scientifically and emotionally, but at the same time it offered the most important self-examination cues, both from a methodological and researcher positioning point of view. I realized how I had unthoughtfully constructed a paradoxical inquiry: "To appreciate you as autonomous creators, become my subject in colonizing systematisation!" After this epistemological and methodological realization, I chose to revert to a less pressing way of researching, that is, I chose to continue contributing to the communities instead of mining them for all-too-ordered patterns. The form I had given, until then, to my inquiry was much too abstract, much too distant from the daily, practice oriented needs of the "world makers", and too directed at ordering and taming the very messiness which gives life, meaning and flexibility to these online contexts. I chose, ultimately to respect this messiness, and my inquiry changed its form to a resonantly messier and more organically participant one, from focusing on "what" and "how" to "where" and "with whom".

This reevaluation of my chosen fields' character was central in opening up my observation beyond them to inquire into the larger patterns of ludic production and consumption. This wider perspective reached a key turning when I read Zoe Quinn's manifesto 'Punk Games' and its surrounding discourse:

Games need a united punk movement [...] While some might see that and think "oh great more crappy work", I feel that completely misses the point. [...] You're starting with a truly blank canvas, and that has just as much potential to yield truly experimental work as it does to produce crap.

Holding strong to these redefined perspective, I started my work anew with a completely different intent: not anymore to order and 'code' online gaming communities and their practices, but to provide the fragmented communities and practices of players with possible, practice-oriented, discursive bridges. Most importantly, I intended to give the communities something that they could really consider useful and interesting, even at the cost of renouncing the neat and ordered character of academic inquiry. To do this, I made good use of my trans-community experience to construct an hybridized meta-resource, compiling a comprehensive index of all the community generated resources intended to support DIY game design, be them pertaining boardgames, role playing games, video games, interpretive games, be them wikis, professional courses, free e-books, videos. This generated a turning point where the discussion attracted users with different positions as pertaining Do-It-Yourself game making, and reached its most conceptual, abstract level, exposing tensions and contested positions about the access to productivity which reflected my wider inquiry perspective. Realising the plurality of voices in these subcultures, I also endeavoured to find opportunities to explore them in a more direct, embodied and messier dimension, and therefore, to complement the online ethnographic fieldwork I also attended a variety of Game Jams, events devoted to gather amateurs in focused efforts to generate DIY games on very short timescales (usually 2-3 days), and where the distributed openness, inclusivity and "punk" approach to "game making for all" I researched in online spaces finds its embodied and even messier counterparts. I did this, again, bringing my contribution as an amateur game creator, and not my instincts as a researcher to the foreground, highlighting a new possible role for the ethnographer.

While the space constraints of this paper do not allow to explore the details or the inclusive diversity of these environments, suffice to say that beyond the undoubtedly different backgrounds, career perspectives and even political outlooks of all the participants in these spaces ground their activities in an ethos of authenticity, sharing, openness and diversity which constitute the unavoidable, punk-like cultural roots of the Game Jam movement [19], and its effort to move beyond "mass appeal" games into truly disruptive explorations of the medium. Game scholar Jesper Juul [20] refers to these practices of independent game creation as "authenticity work", an effort made by this communities to configure the "quality" of their creation as different from that of mainstream games not as the result of scarce resources, but as a conscious choice political and aesthetic choice [21], and looking at research methodology through the lens of DIY game design (in that both endeavours have as a final objective the creation of systems of meaning that other people will be able to engage with, as discussed by Mayra [22]) I could once again realise how, as qualitative researchers, the "quality" and "rigour" of our messy fieldwork and practices are constantly negotiated between the richness of our lived environment and the demands of mainstream academic politics of evidence [23], and how resistant, equally political methodologies will need to be developed.

5 CONCLUSIONS: PLAY, PUNK AND POLITICS

Indeed, in the following months of fieldwork, one of the most central discussions revolved around the more and more widespread creation of so-called "crap", low quality, maybe even unplayable games emerged, often considered as a necessary step of learning any creative process, but most importantly recognizing their inherent value [24]. This debate continued for weeks, across a variety of communities and platforms, with a general emphasis toward the "noisy", "punk" practice of making for the sake of making, as exemplified by this paradigmatic comment from an amateur game creator:

P: The best way to propagate game making is for makers to put out their design process, unfortunately, in this world of copyright bullshit, there's a lot of people paranoid about being stolen their (mostly unoriginal) ideas. Best thing you can accomplish would the creation of a design group, share resources, share opinions, discuss...

It is interesting, again following Mayra, to highlight how relevantly these creative mindsets can also apply to academic research and methodologies: academics are often reclusive and/or fearful about their ideas getting stolen or refuted, due to the noxious dynamics of both the academic publishing market and the academic job market [25], ever more reliant on simplifying metrics and that run against the interest of knowledge making and sharing. Another relevant fragment of discussion with a game creator highlighted another aspect of how DIY creative practices can resist exclusion and the tyranny of the market, independently from the quality of their outcomes:

D: I'm seeing this in a maker perspective, not the player's one. Making for the sake of making, the result is secondary in importance. [...] There are no best practices in creation, walk the beaten path and you end up on the same spot again and again. Discrimination invariably fails at elevating any medium. It creates elitism and therefore more closed doors, more closed paths.

Again, this is a precious insight for a qualitative researcher: there are easily replicable “best practices”, especially if you are “making for the sake of making”, that is, you are exploring alternative configurations of configurations of social reality that respect its multifaceted and messy character, without ever forgetting how researchers themselves are parts of it, being first and foremost living, embodied people living out their own messy lives. Or, again finding a parallel in the words of D., an organiser of DIY game creation events:

If game creators are more humane, if their life is rich and diverse, they will work from different premises, they will be able to create richer and more diverse games, not only the usual "shoot-your-way-to-objective" stuff.

In the same way, the “quality” and the meaningfulness of our research does not need to rely on established practices, and indeed critical and marginal narratives might become impossible to share, if we remain within the boundaries of what is considered successful and “legitimate”. Ultimately, a punk approach to ethnography, and to social sciences in general takes on itself the responsibility to not resist the normalisation of hierarchical, sterilising ordered descriptions of the social world, and instead to choose, live, share and even critically contributing to mess, noise and playfulness to sustain spaces of collective meaning making [26], so that we may never succumb to the inability to see that the world-that-is is not an inescapable, ontological order, and the messy worlds-that-together-we-make might, in fact, be better places to live in.

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QUALITY IN EDUCATION – MOVEMENTS WITHIN A ZONE OF INDETERMINACY

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Abstract

The paper address quality in education, and is inspired by a student's question about my thoughts of children using hijab in kindergarten. The question made me "stumble" (Brinkman, 2014) as teacher; vibrating through my body and mind arousing flows of affects (Massumi, 1995), hesitation, pondering and ideas. Hence, the "hijab-question" thereby became data; data I cannot escape from, leave undone or untouched. It will not leave me in peace – yet. Therefore, it is this piece of data I need to re-turn (Barad, 2014) (to) over and over again, provoking new theories and potential becomings (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Inspired by Barad (2007/2014) I explore my data with(in) a diffractive methodology, stumbling and re-turning (to) the hijab-question repeatedly.

Keywords: quality, diffractive methodology, stumbling data, affect, becoming.

1 STUMBLING NOMAD – BREATHING ...

As teacher, I wander like the *nomad* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Always in-between and never satisfied – seeking and struggling. Struggling to give the students good answers, "correct" answers – while knowing most themes are far too complex to give "correct" or even better answers to. Confronted with a former student's question about my thoughts of children using hijab in kindergarten – I stumble (Brinkman, 2014). Hesitating, pondering with what to answer the student. It is no rush though; the question is not asked in class. I received it as a text message on my private cell phone – and it upset me. Following Brinkman (2014) "stumbling data" is data that one stumbles upon that triggers astonishment, mystery and a breakdown in one's customary understandings. The hijab-question has efficacy, it can do things, has sufficient coherence to make a difference, produce effects, and might even alter the course of events (Bennett, 2010). Confronted with the question I find so hard to answer on my cell phone, flows of affects (Massumi, 1995) vibrate through my body and mind, making me hesitate, pondering. It feels even more difficult because the student is political engaged and are writing a chronicle. I am entangled in a supersticky web of cell phones and text messages, student and hijab-questions that disturb equilibrium.

Vibrant hijabs floating through and around my body

Bumping into my mind, disturbing thoughts and ideas

Affecting and rearranging everything – disrupting my calmness

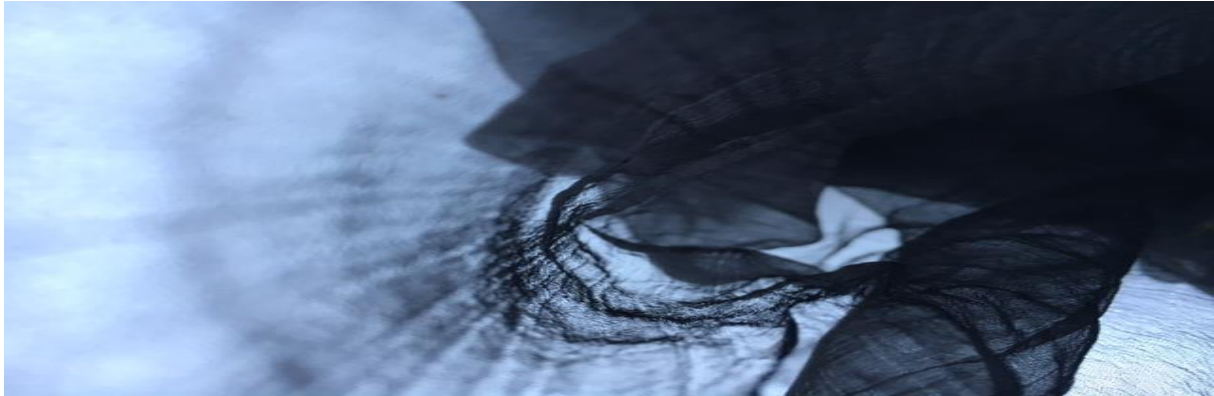
Troubling and challenging my autonomy as teacher

Wishing to respond accordingly – being doubtful, fearful; hesitating

Swirling and twirling, words spinning around

Turning the question over and over again – seeking, pondering

Breathe, breathe again...



The paper is divided into interconnecting sections where attempts are made to move in and around theory and data. Such movements allow opportunities to appreciate being affected and infected by entanglements of data, theory, text and illustrations. In and amongst this matted web of encounters in-between human and non-human bodies, affect and sensations, something different in terms of knowledge and understanding might then emerge.

2 TROUBLING THE CONCEPT “I”

What am “I”? Who or when am “I”?

I am woman, teacher, white, living in the western world – I am you, you are me, entangled, committed, always *becoming* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) through encounters that transform, disturb or provoke. Who am “I”? I am changing. I am entangled. I lose and find “myself”. I cannot escape – what am “I”? When am “I”? I am different from yesterday, yet the same – in some ways. I ponder, but my thoughts are not just mine – they are entangled to the world around me in so many unpredictable ways.

I am (wo)man, student, Muslim – I am you, you are me, entangled.

“I” could be anyone/anything/anywhere/anytime – a *voice without a subject* (Mazzei, 2016) echoing through time and space – becoming. “I” might be fantasy, reality – timeless. Thinking with Barad, “the past is never left behind, never finished once and for all, and the future is not what will come to be in an unfolding of the present moment; rather the past and the future are enfolding participants in matter’s iterative becoming” (2007, p. 234). Intra-actions in-between and amongst entangled bodies and ideas, produce effects that are unforeseen and unexpected. The complexity of the world does not set the scene for easy answers. Therefore, “I” ponder the hijab-question – *acting with a force that wounds* (Barthes, 1980/2010 in Mazzei, 2016, p. 159).

3 INTRA-ACTING WITH DIFFRACTION – CUTTING DATA TOGETHER-APART

Turning the hijab-question over and over again, virtual potentialities are released – like *lines of flight* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). When we are *re-turning* (Barad, 2014) (to) an event, we can see or read what emerges through the entangled assemblages in different, new and/or other ways. In turning the data repeatedly, something new and/or different might emerge. Doing (re)search in this way resonates with Barad’s (2014) term *diffraction*. She explains the term with the help of an illustration

of how waves combine when they overlap and the apparent bending and spreading of waves that occurs when waves encounter an obstruction. It is this movement of overlapping where the waves change in themselves in intra-action with the obstacle – a huge stone for instance – with each wave accumulating, which signifies *diffraction* (Barad, 2007, p. 71-83; Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 535). In other words, diffraction effects can be explained as effects of interference, where the *original wave* – *the text message with the hijab-question* – partly remains within the new wave after its transformation into a new one, and so on, wave after wave (ibid.). Hultman and Lenz Taguchi write; “When reading diffractively, seeing *with* data, we look for events of activities and encounters, evoking transformation and change in the performative agents involved” (2010, p. 535). Seeing or “reading” the text message/data diffractively, means installing myself in an event of “becoming-with” the data (Haraway, 2008, p. 16; Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 537). Following Hultman & Lenz Taguchi (2010) diffractive “readings” requires that you activate all of your bodily affective perceptions when intra-acting¹⁰ with data (p. 537).

Re-turning can be explained as a mode of intra-acting with diffraction (Barad, 2014, p. 168). Barad (2014) writes; “intra-actions enact agential cuts, which do not produce absolute separations, but rather cut together-apart (one move)” (p. 168). Hence, cutting data together-apart is not about breaking something into two, or producing dichotomies (cutting into two). Rather, it is about exploring affects and effects (diffractions) of encounters in-between different bodies and ideas – and although these intra-actions may have “agential separability”, they are always entangled and intermingling with multilayered diffraction patterns. Barad (2014) explains; “Diffraction is not a set pattern, but rather an iterative (re)configuring of patterns of differentiating-entangling” (p. 168). Hence, there is no moving beyond, no leaving the “old” behind, and there is no absolute boundary between here-now and there-then (ibid.). Quoting Barad; “There is nothing that is new; there is nothing that is not new” (ibid.).

4 VIBRANT HIJABS SWIRLING THROUGH HISTORY ...

Intra-acting (Barad, 2003) with hijabs, these pieces of headgear that so many Muslim women wear, arouse flows of affects (Massumi, 1995), emotions and ideas in my body and mind. The Islamic dress code is carried out differently within different families, communities, and throughout history. I am an outsider – I am an insider. Like a nomad I am moving in-between and amongst culture, tradition and religion, crossing “territorial” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) borders.

I see Muslim women wearing hijabs in the classroom, on the bus, on the street, in cafes, in the supermarket, in kindergarten. I see Muslim women wearing hijabs on TV, on the internet, in papers and magazines. I see Muslim girls wearing hijabs in school and even in kindergarten. A hijab covers the person’s head and hair, but not their face or body like the niqab or burka. Different clothing affect and infect us differently. A hijab is not just a piece of fabric that women put on their head to cover their hair, it has religious and symbolic value – it possesses power as an active force intra-acting with human bodies and theories. Through encounters with children, white women, black women, newly converted women wearing hijabs, multilayered affects will infect my body and mind.

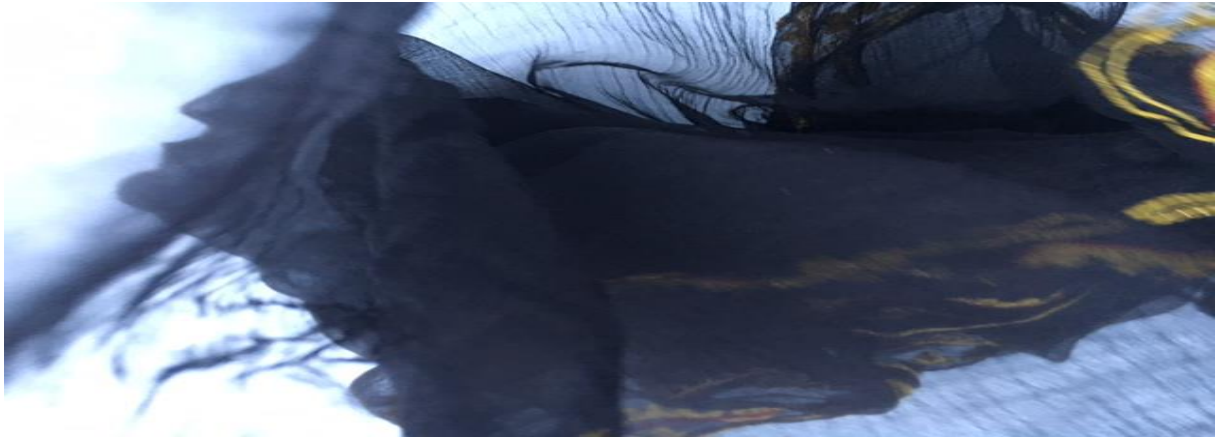
Fe(male) forces intertwined, becoming with ...

religion, culture, tradition, habit, coercion, fear, faith, joy, belief

Headscarf, hijab, niqab, burka – confronting territories

¹⁰The term “intra-action” was introduced by Barad and can be explained as the inseparability of “observed object” and “agencies of observation” (Barad, 2003, p. 814). For Barad, things or objects do not precede their interaction, rather, “objects” *emerge* through particular intra-actions.

Dark shadows, multilayered, vibrant colours
Fabrics transforming human – exposing, protecting, molding
Fe(male) child entangled with(in) family, religion, tradition, history – predestined
Questions with(out) answers
Hesitation, crossing borders
Doubt, Hope ...



5 TURNING MY DATA OVER AGAIN ...

Quoting Barad; “The world is an ongoing open process of mattering through which ‘mattering’ itself acquires meaning and form in the realization of different agential possibilities” (2003, p. 817). “I” am an “apparatus” perpetually open to rearrangements, rearticulations, and other reworkings through intra-actions with matter and meaning (ibid.). Confronted with the hijab-question, I struggle to come to terms with myself, what to answer the student, how to follow up accordingly. The student’s political engagement combined with the chronicle to be printed, make me hesitate. How might my voice be heard/read/understood by the student, why is my voice important – and when or how I might yet again be confronted with my advice, opinion, redeeming “truth” on this political vibrant matter.

What do you think of children wearing hijabs in kindergarten?

Would the question affect me differently if it was asked in class – probably. The how and when does matter. In a classroom setting multiple impulses are at work, and the impulses might vibrate back and forth and in-between matter and theories in more redemptive ways. Forces of written contra spoken opinions infect and confuse. Documentations like a text message are easy to pin down, dissect and criticize – spoken words are impermanent and will be gone by the wind if not recorded or documented in other ways. Still, every uttered word, either written or spoken, might linger with us through eternity, like voices swirling and twirling through time and space – reminding, touching within an intermingling pastpresentfuture.

6 TEXT MESSAGE VOICES INTERMINGLING – AND WHEN ...

“The problem is too complex to answer in a text message”

Following Barad; “Matter, like meaning, is not an individual articulated or static entity” (2003, p. 821). Both matter and meaning transform, evolve, crash and dissolve through encounters with other matter or meaning in time and space. Hence, the complexity of the simple hijab-question asked by the student is intriguingly overwhelming – even though it could be answered with a short phrase like “I think it is quite alright” or “I do not like it”, I ponder. What sort of diffractions might my choice of answer initiate and produce, how will my voice infect the discourse further, how will my answer play with other matter and meaning through history? I feel discomfort of being exposed, yet obliged to elaborate on the issue. I need to break down invisible walls and exceed limiting boundaries. I need to challenge compelling discourses intermingling in-between and around everyone and everything. I need to explore and re-turn, over and over again. While pondering with a more fulfilling response than my text message simply stating that “the problem is too complex to answer in a text message”, I find no rest until I have sorted out some of the question’s complexity. I know my first response to the question is not good enough or in any way fulfilling – although it might actually embrace more truth than I was aware of initially. Having answered the student’s text message, I wait – wondering if the student will interpret my answer as an invitation to dialog in alternative ways.

7 APPRECIATING AN ETHICS OF IMMANENCE – AND TROUBLING QUALITY IN EDUCATION

Inspired by Deleuze (1988a), Colebrook (2002) and Lenz Taguchi (2010) I will emphasize “an ethics of immanence and potentialities”. Following Lenz Taguchi, in an ethics of immanence “the teacher cannot understand the student, the content or the methodology as a fixed entity, separated from everything else” (2010, p. xvii). An ethics of immanence in education is concerned with “the inter-connections and intra-actions in-between human and non-human organisms” (ibid.). Therefore, teaching/(re)searching with(in) an ethics of immanence suggests that I have to consider myself in a constant and mutual state of responsibility for what happens in the multiple intra-actions emerging in learning events – as I both affect and are being affected by everything else (ibid.). When emphasizing an ethics of immanence, I give up the search for “the truth”, in favor of “collaborative innovation and creation” (ibid. p. xviii).

An ethics of immanence appreciate and stress both human and non-human opportunities and potential – embracing “virtual” (Deleuze, 1988b) possibilities and what might *become*. Likewise, *quality* can be understood as always in process of becoming through intra-actions and intermingling amongst and in-between both human and non-human matter, affect and sensations. Osgood and Scarlet/Giugni (2015) propose as follows, “a post-humanist commitment to reconfiguring quality involves grappling with processes of be(com)ing and engaging with assemblages as political, ethical, onto-epistemological relational entanglements that produce and are produced by everyday life” (p. 8). Hence, “quality is everywhere and part of everyday life” (Haraway, 2008; Osgood & Scarlet/Giugni, 2015, p. 1), meaning that quality must be understood as contextual. This challenges and questions the idea of quality as a “universal formula”, and it advocates more open-ended considerations, perceptions, explorations and actions in a multilayered and complex world. Osgood and Scarlet/Giugni (2015) write; “In contrast to measurability, grappling with the fabricated, relational, intraactive qualia of quality opens up new, and leaky possibilities” (p. 9). Hence, the posthumanist logic provides,

(...) a means to question, reconfigure, challenge and reach beyond narrow constructions that limit and distract what we can be and do; it offers the potential to engage with multiplicities, material as mattering, the interconnections and entanglements that allow us to see ‘quality’ as a series of lots of little be(com)ings

that shift, slide and mutate and reconfigure through time and space (Osgood & Scarlet/Giugni, 2015, p. 12).

8 MOVEMENTS WITHIN A ZONE OF INDETERMINACY ...

Entangled in a complex net of humans, text messages, hijab-questions, ethics, expectations and policy, my attempt is not to “get it right”, but to question and make the familiar strange – to explore and open up for messiness in my/our interpretation of the world. Meaning, not letting go of what I/we think we know, but to generate new understandings that might move us elsewhere. Forces of responsibility are at work in the multilayered intra-actions in-between both human and non-human bodies. Suggesting that *responsibility* is built into the immanent relationship between all matter and organisms – it is not something we choose, but it is part of life and deals with influencing and being influenced (Deleuze, 1988a; Lenz Taguchi, 2010). What can I do here and now to affect something or someone in a different way in line with an affirmative thinking of unknown potentialities? How can I/you/we move beyond our preconceived understandings and practices?

Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (1999; 2007) introduce the concept of “meaning making” while turning “quality” over and over again to extract the contents of this complex and ambiguous term. Complicating “quality” as a language or practice of evaluation that fails to recognize an entangled, complex, multilingual world and, in so doing, denies the possibility of other languages and practices – Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (1999; 2007) suggest an alternative flight line; *meaning making*. Meaning making speaks of “evaluation as a democratic process of interpretation, a process that involves making practice visible and thus subject to reflection, dialogue and argumentation, leading to a judgement of value, contextualized and provisional because it is always subject to contestation” (2007, p. ix). The intention here is not to set up binary oppositions – rather, it is about exploring the complexity of ethics, quality and meaning-making intermingling in-between and amongst human and non-human matter. Moss and Dahlberg (2008) ask how *quality* could take into account context and values, subjectivity and plurality – and they ask how the phenomenon may accommodate multiple perspectives, with different groups in different places having different views of what quality should be or different interpretations of criteria (p. 4). Hence, they propose a redefinition of *quality* as a subjective, value-based, relative and dynamic concept – while at the same time analyzing how the concept of quality assumes the possibility of deriving universal and objective norms, based on expert knowledge (ibid.).

I am not striving to conform to certain norms or standard procedures when intra-acting with quality in education. For me, quality is diverse, forever changing, entangled in a matted net of human and non-human matter, producing multiple affects and effects – always *becoming*. I consider values, ethics and quality closely intertwined and intra-acting. When connecting with students through actions and ideas, core values will probably infect behavior. Everybody has some values that they cherish, I presume. However, values differ and are multiple – sometimes they might even be absent. My values might differ from yours in many ways – my values might even be different from yesterday and yet again different tomorrow. Therefore, I act in line with what I consider best for the moment. What I consider best might not be what you consider best, though – regardless, we are entangled and interdependent on each other. You show me trust, and I cannot let you down – I feel *responsible*.

The flow of events (...) becomes a collective responsibility on behalf of all organisms present, whether they are human or non-human (Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. xvii).

9 TEACHER/STUDENT-ENCOUNTERS

How do I make you feel? Do I inspire you? Affect you? Do you feel safeguarded, respected? Do I take you seriously? I *do* take you seriously – I am you, you are I. Multiple, diverse, intertwined, connected and obliged. My voice reach out for you – your voice touch me, disturb and infect.

Inspired by Barad's concept of *diffraction* and Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "mapping", I am not tracing reality in representation – assuming the world being static and resistant to change, *not* becoming. My (re)search is open-ended and without given answers. I play with lines of flight, vibrations and diffractions emerging through poems and photos, text lines and ideas. I wish to affect and infect, surprise and inspire, disturb. Re-turning, going back and forth, turning my data over and over again – I explore, feel, sense, fear. My data do not fit into solid categories or structures, I cut together-apart, stumble and re-turn. Like the Deleuzian *nomad*, I wander, restless, always in-between. Haraway (1992) writes; "Diffraction does not produce 'the same' displaced, as reflection and refraction do. Diffraction is a mapping of interference, not of replication, reflection or reproduction" (p. 300).

As (re)searcher I cannot be separated from my data – I cannot escape my data, I am entangled and obliged. Thinking with Barad; "To be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another, as in the joining of separate entities, but to lack an independent, self-contained existence. Existence in not an individual affair" (Barad, 2007, p. ix). As a "rhizome" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) that continuously grows and spreads in various directions, as creeping rootstalks, the matted web of multiple becomings connected to my data will continue to evolve and stretch. Every word in this text will communicate with other matter and ideas out there – they will clash, bump and swirl through time and space. How will my words vibrate through my student? What diffractions will be put in motion?

Cutting together-apart

Entangled bodies and theories

Feeling responsible, aware

Political, ethical – doubtful, hopeful, stumbling

Becoming (wo)man, genderless, gay

Muslim, praying - cut

Teacher, student, text message, hijab, child

Encounters, moving boundaries, crash

Timeless, restless, nomadic

Transforming, multilayered, transparent

Affecting, disrupting – cut



10 BECOMING CHILD WITH HIJAB

The child is multiple, entangled and becoming. Multilayered intra-actions will affect and transform the child through time and space. Intra-actions in-between and amongst child/parents/tradition/religion will affect and infect in multiple, unpredictable ways – while becoming child. Barad writes; “(...) the universe is agential intra-activity in its becoming” (Barad, 2003, p. 218).

How does it feel?

Am I allowed?

I love my mum – my world circles around her

Kind eyes, big smile, soft skin, gentle hands

Laughter and joy – mildness

I feel safe, secure, happy

I admire my mum – my mum is genuine

She covers her hair with soft fabric when she leaves home

She sings to me, call my name

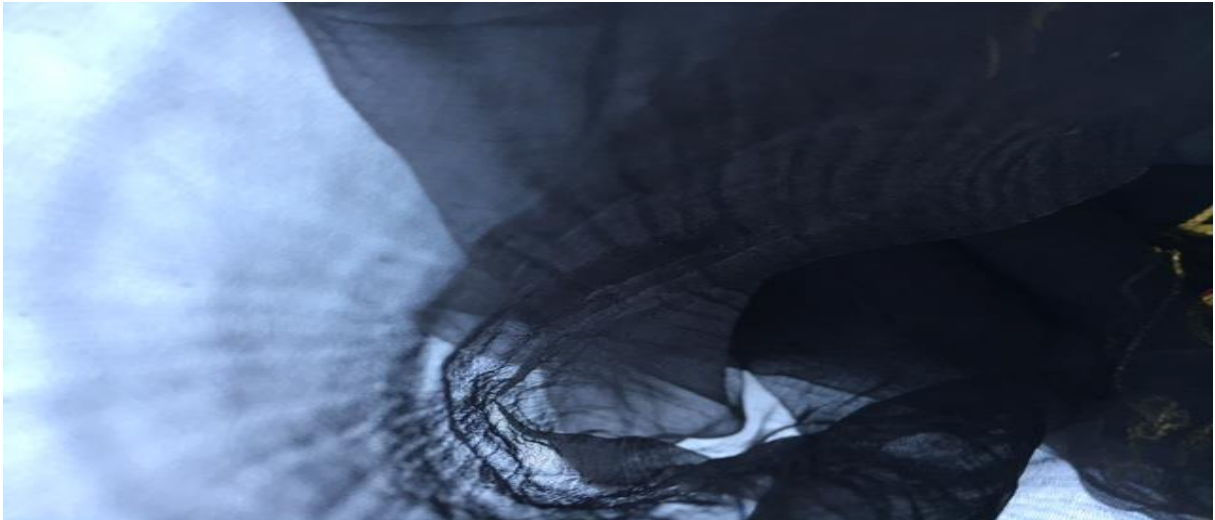
I beg, I explore – I dress up and mimic my mum

I swirl colorful fabrics around my head and hair

A big smile to the reflection in the mirror

I am ready – I am allowed

I leave for kindergarten – so proud...



11 RE-TURNING ...

Turning my data over once more, I find yet again something new/different/surprising – something that was already there, waiting to be revealed, but which I did not see before. I breathe and breathe again, feeling released in some ways – though still pondering, grappling with new/other questions related to my data. Thinking with Barad; “We don’t obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because we are of the world” (Barad, 2007, p. 185).

There are challenges and dilemmas that are felt in minute-by-minute minute material-semiotic encounters but embracing an opened up view of the world is to focus on the seemingly inanimate/insignificant and this will afford generative possibilities in the field of early childhood to realize the ambition of going beyond.

(Osgood & Scarlet/Giugni, 2015, p. 12)

Thanks to my student who has inspired this paper!

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Photos and poems by Cecilie Ottersland Myhre.

REFLEXIVITY IN ACTION IN THE ERA OF “ACTIVE AGING”

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Abstract

The question of aging population is one of the biggest challenges facing Europe and the rest of the world. It is a priority issue for policy, business, and research. On one hand, researchers should deal with the changes that such a societal transformation brings on. On the other hand, they should analyse the impact of their professional perspective on the research process. Reflexivity is a valuable tool to gain insights while tapping into a dialectic between research experience and awareness. This contribution relies on my research experiences on older people and technologies and it could be considered as an example of “reflexivity in action”: a discourse about reflexivity by reflecting on research practices and knowledge developed into a specific field. In this paper I refer to inclusive design (ID) for older people. Such a focus enables a discussion about the paradigmatic shift design researchers should accomplish for dealing with challenges posed to mainstream design by the population aging. Such a change relies on the engagement of older people as co-designers and the design researchers’ reflexivity is crucial to this social innovation process.

Keywords: engagement, inclusive design, social innovation.

1 INTRODUCTION

As the number of people aged 65 and over is growing, efforts to understand the needs of older adults have become a priority for research and policy. Development of innovative technologies and services for older users are driving European framework programmes which stress the important role of design in creating a unified society that celebrates difference and offers participation to all [11]. However, care systems are generally based on the understanding of aging as a medical and economic problem to solve. The basic idea is that design and use of special solutions can enable an active and healthy aging process. When following this medical model, designers and researchers tend to be focused on notions of loss and decline, so that ageism and stereotypes risk to be reproduced ([34], [36]). However, there was a move in the early 1990s to encourage professionals in design field to shift this paradigm by considering older people as a heterogeneous group which demonstrates considerable diversity in resources, capabilities, age, lifestyle and culture, physical and emotional wellbeing ([6], [35]). Such a line of reasoning characterizes the notion of “design for social innovation” ([32], [38]) and it discloses new scenarios for doing innovation *with* older people.

Relying on my research experiences (e.g. [12], [13], [14], [15]), and by drawing on literature in participatory design and sociology of health, I articulate an overview of inclusion and innovation, by referring to the field of design for older people as one growing field of research [45]. Such discussion sheds light on how the ongoing changes related to the aging population influence design perspectives which, in turn, play a central role in defining, enabling or disabling, living experiences of aging people. It is all the more important that design researchers engage in a reflexive, critical understanding of their practices so that reflexivity becomes itself a practice [19]. As a sort of

“reflexivity in action” – that is a discourse about reflexivity while acting reflexively – the paper first introduces the relationships between societal transformations and design change, by providing definitions of approaches to aging, ranging from “universal design” (UD), to “inclusive design” (ID) and “design for all” (DfA). Next, by focusing on the European context, connection of ID and social innovation is discussed. A paradigmatic change in designing for older people is, then, conceived as necessary to avoid ageism. This step serves the understanding of aging as a “wicked-problem” that urges alternative strategies instead of mainstream thinking. I maintain that a process of reflexive and mutual understanding between design researchers and older people can positively affect both professionals and participants. In accord with the participative theoretical foundations of the reflexive practice (e.g. [23], [24]), this new view calls attention to engagement as a design practice for supporting the participation of elders as co-designers. Finally, trajectories for future work are sketched.

2 SOCIAL CHALLENGES AND DESIGN CHANGE

In contemporary society there is a growing trend to recognize age and disability as something we will all experience, and therefore part of the normal life course. In particular, aging is characterising our historical period: never before could people expect to live so long.

According to [54], the population in the European Region is aging rapidly: its median age is already the highest in the world, and the proportion of people aged 65 and older is forecast to increase from 14% in 2010 to 25% in 2050. Even though the chances of spending later years in good health and well-being vary between countries, the aspiration to “age actively” – to use a buzzword – is shared by the majority of older people who reject dependency and institutionalization [46]. However, for a long time design practice has been inspired by the mass production doctrine “one size fits all” [17].

While mainstream design disabled and excluded many people by applying a normalisation approach ([37], [44]), more progressive designers, from a variety of disciplines, showed growing interest in approaches, strategies, and research methods for social integration and innovation ([3], [32]). This transformation is culture-related ranging from UD in the United States to the European perspectives of ID and DfA. All these approaches can contribute to developing a sustainable society, where all people and communities have the same possibilities to live well, that is to be what they want to be, and do what they want to do.

2.1 Working Definitions

Design can play an important part in counteracting social exclusion. This idea is at the origin of UD, ID, and DfA. Sometimes the terms are used interchangeably, but such overlapping hides their different origins, although they share a human-centred approach.

UD is culturally rooted in the American Civil Right Movement and it can be defined as the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without adaptation or specialized design: “in other words, it does not discriminate against users based on their ability” [31].

Differently, both ID and DfA correspond to a European model. ID was introduced by Roger Coleman and his colleagues at the Royal College of Art [10] when they launched the DesignAge programme in 1991. Such an approach to design was related to the consideration of life-course as a whole, along which everyone can experience difficulties or disability (e.g. sport injuries, occupational induced conditions like repetitive strain injury, bad posture, inappropriate diet, and lack of exercise).

According to [40], ID goes beyond older and disabled people - although they are very important issues - to focus on other excluded groups to deliver mainstream solutions without stigma. Close to ID is the definition of DfA which started by looking at barrier-free accessibility for people with disabilities [51], but became a strategy for inclusive solutions.

Looking at the specificity of design of interfaces for older people, [22] elaborated on the “User Sensitive Inclusive Design” (USID). Firstly, they stressed the need to capture and meet the variability of abilities and needs which are dynamic over time and space. Then, they propose the USID to tackle the limits of the user-centred design [42]. Specifically, they maintained that “inclusive” is a more achievable objective than “for all” or “universal”, and that “sensitive”, rather than “centred”, reflects the practical and ethical attitudes which are instrumental in recognizing and promoting diversity into design processes. Furthermore, such a framework frames the relationship between ID focused on older people and design for social innovation. By assuming a European perspective, I elaborate on this focus in the next section.

3 INCLUSIVE DESIGN FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION

An important part of European policy addresses social challenges which make creativity and innovation even more important to foster sustainable growth, secure jobs and boost competitiveness. Actual trends influence also the conceptual model and practice of design. The traditional idea of design as an expert activity has gradually been redefined by cultural transition to a wider field of application (from products to services and to organizations), group of actors (from experts in other disciplines to end users), and relationship with time (from closed-ended to open-ended processes) [32]. Regarding aging, the sheer numbers and proportions of older people, together with their spending power, provide a considerable field for designers and manufacturers to cater to older consumers [9]. Furthermore, Europeans live longer and healthier [18] and they represent an incredible resource of knowledge and experience that designers should recognize, reinforce, and connect. Networks and collaborative environments enable different actors (e.g. experts and nonexperts, young and old people) to solve problems that had previously been seen as very difficult, if not intractable ([20], [32]).

“Social innovation” relies on such interactive modes and refers to “new ideas (products, services, and models) that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. In other words, they are innovations that are both good for society and enhance society’s capacity to act” ([38], 3). This formal definition allows the understanding that social innovation has always existed, but it is assuming unprecedented characteristics related to technological development (e.g. social networks), on the one hand, and an increasing quest for well-being, on the other hand. Social innovation appears all the more important when facing intractable problems, that is problems that call for new ways of dealing with them.

Trying to combine social innovation with design, [32] recently introduced the concept of “design for social innovation”. He defined it as “everything that expert design can do to activate, sustain, and orient processes of social change toward sustainability” (62). In this way, social innovation implies also a change of the role played by design experts. They should act as a kind of craftsmen who consider their creativity and culture as tools to support the capability of other actors to design in a dialogic way [47]. Designers should recognize opportunities and make them visible. The case of older people as co-designers is noteworthy and deserves attention because it exemplifies the need to shift the design mode, both in terms of form (i.e. language, terminology) [45] and function (i.e. utility of solutions) [33]. Such a meaningful turn is based on the idea, simple as well as often trivialized, that people are (and must consider themselves) the asset in the changing world.

3.1 A Paradigmatic Shift in Understanding Aging

The spreading discourse about social innovation is due to failures of classical tools of government policies on the one hand, and market solutions on the other, as well as mainstream design, displaying their inadequacy to meet issues of aging. In the face of actual demographic trends, it becomes clear that designing specifically for older people could create more problems than it solves through an over-attention to frailty [16], and therefore reinforcement of a dominant medical model as opposed to the social model of age and disability.

The prevailing medical model has turned aging into illness and pathology [8]. The American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine – one of the bigger anti-aging organizations - formulated three basic rules of anti-aging (i.e. don't get sick, don't get old, and don't die) which are the most extreme expression of ageism [26]. From a medical perspective, people are highly dependent on their housing conditions, their environment and network as they age, and this decline must be avoided at all costs. Furthermore, the approach stresses that, in living longer, older people place an unsustainable burden on care services. Expressions like “the approaching storm”, “silver tsunami”, “age time bomb”, and “avalanche” framed older people as essentially problematic [36]. Such stigmatising and ageist rhetoric, which have addressed design practice over the past decade, proliferates largely unchallenged. Technology usually targeted to older users is labeled as “assistive” [2] in that it is primarily associated with either short-term recuperation from injury or illness, or long term functional support [41]. Assistive technology is a subset of rehabilitation engineering and, according to [37], “rehabilitation” is an ambivalent expression. Ambivalence is between the desire to help someone (who exceeds the “normality”) and improve his/her life on the one hand, and the fact that differences are defined as lacks or deviations that ought to be corrected (with functional devices or services) on the other.

In contrast, social model was developed by and for differently abled people. It sees people as disabled and enabled by the social context in which they function and it proposes that changes in the social context or environment can remove or alleviate disability [39]. This approach includes the aforementioned idea of life-course as a whole. Furthermore, it fosters looking at those who have traditionally been considered as “people with problems” (i.e. the stereotype of older persons in need) as people with knowledge, time, and energy who can usefully contribute to innovation process from its inception. [32] said this clearly: while a mainstream approach to aging population leads to the creation of more dedicated professional social services, a radically innovative stance is to “consider the elderly not only as a problem but also as possible agents for its solution; support their capabilities and their will to be actively involved, and optimize use of their social networks” (17). This line of thinking is rooted in the “capability approach”, developed by the philosopher Martha Nussbaum and the economist Amartya Sen [43]. This approach is controversial and it would merit a wider discussion. However, I want to draw from it a basic idea, very relevant to this discussion. The authors maintained that instead of considering people as carriers of needs to be satisfied (by someone or something), it is better to consider them as subjects able to operate for their own well-being. In fact, according to [43], what determines well-being is neither goods nor their characteristics, but rather the possibility of acting by using those goods or their characteristics. Such a perspective introduces the concept of “active aging” [34] while opening a critical discussion.

4 AGING AS A WICKED-PROBLEM

Today's older people (at least in so-called developed countries) are fitter, healthier and more independent than ever before and, both in Europe and in United States, the foremost policies address how to allow them to age well. Concepts are referred to as “active aging” and “successful aging” in Europe and in the United States there is the conveyed notion of “aging well”.

There are a number of articles which provide a critical perspective on these concepts (see the special issue of *The Gerontologist*, 2015, vol. 55(1); for the European perspective see: [21,] [34]). [34] dated back to the late 1990s the concept of active aging, when World Health Organisation began to promote the passage “from a ‘needs-based’ approach of passivity to a proactive ‘rights-based’ approach that encourages participation and ‘equality of opportunity and treatment’” (317). According to this perspective, active aging is strongly related to the functional capacity and engagement in social and productive activities throughout the life course. Such a life-style is meant as disability prevention and maintenance of independence which are key goals. However, [27] observed that there is no a universal definition of what “activity” means. Furthermore, he argued that the emphasis on activity in later life, although it seems unquestionably a healthy recommendation, is rooted in the liberal philosophical tradition while delegating to (older) people the responsibility to function at a higher level, even when that is difficult or not desired. The consequence of such normalization through activity regimes is a polarization between older people who “age well” as competent and autonomous beings and those who are not (e.g. those with dementia) [53]. In contrast with this simplification is the realization that the older population is heterogeneous. Thus, the notion “aging well” does not make sense [25] but, if considered as an intractable problem or “wicked-problem” [5], it becomes relevant for design.

The wicked-problem approach was formally described by [46] while looking for a design approach suitable for facing the social complexity, as the mainstream perspective revealed its weakness to this end. A definition was previously provided by [7] who, referring to a Rittel’s seminar, described wicked-problems as “a class of social system problems which are ill-formulated, where the information is confusing, where there are many clients and decision makers with conflicting values, and where the ramifications in the whole systems are thoroughly confusing” (B-141). This definition matches well with the idea of inclusive design for social innovation as this deals with the multiplicity of actors’ motivations, expectations, and needs. Heterogeneity of human beings, whose complexity cannot be expressed in unidimensional terms, calls for a new design culture and reflexive practice which enables an understanding and combination of different wishes, needs, capabilities, and personal resources. Knowing that social innovation concerns intractable social problems, and assuming that aging can be considered a wicked-problem, inclusive designers should, then, enable a mutual-learning process with older people [49]. As a matter of fact, people know most about the context into which designers would embed solutions. Such relationships between domain experts and design experts leads to defining a common ground of collaborative working. Thus, aging individuals can be appreciated as experienced and resilient instead of doddering and feeble [25]. To enable the participation of older people in design process, it is of prime importance that they are engaged. Engagement allows for combination of the problem resolution or problem-solving model and the problem-understanding or sense-making model [46].

4.1 Problems to Solve, Sense to Make, People to Engage

One of the main approaches discussed in the design field is the rational, analytical, problem-solving model. It is usually associated with Herbert Simon’s work, *The sciences of the artificial* [48]. He defined design as concerning “with how things ought to be – how they ought to be in order to attain goals and to function” (4-5). Although Simon had the merit to introduce important notions such as that of “satisfying” rather than simply “optimizing”, paying attention also to the complexity of environment and its influence on the design problem [1], he underestimated the creative aspects of design, the multiplicity of situations that designers can encounter, and the heterogeneity of participants to engage. While seeing designers as agents for solving problems at all levels by using formal methods of analysis, the design space risks to be reduced to top-down definitions of what a problem and its solution are. This is a perspective very far from being dialogic [47]. Furthermore, it could generate unsatisfactory solutions when applied to wicked-problems that design for social

innovation should deal with. In fact, the rational model misses both the open-ended nature of social processes, such as aging, and the need of cooperation and collaborations that societal changes bring into design.

Let me give you an example. I contributed to a project aimed at improving the conditions needed for people to live safely and independently in their own homes for as long as possible. The partnership involved both companies and research units. In order to identify the older people's needs, the research partners in charge of designing the research activity decided to adopt the diary technique, asking 20 participants to note down any critical event in their daily life for two weeks. There was disagreement about using such a technique, especially because it implied a view of older people as people with problems to solve. Furthermore, the interaction with the participants was mediated by a template (i.e. the diary) structured into questions such, for example, "What happened and where?", "What was the problem?" or "How was the problem solved?". Only five people returned their diaries, not even completely filled out. By reflecting on these results, we decided to interview those participants and some of them spontaneously commented on the diary activity. In short, they criticized both the format of the research method and its style which emphasized problems in everyday life. Interviews enabled the (re-)construction of a mutual trust relationship with the participants that actually became passionate storytellers. Moreover, according to a sense-making approach, the interviews allowed us to frame the participants' needs into their everyday life.

A sense-making approach moves design to the field of culture, language, and meanings prompted by experiences and events that people live [32]. Framing the problems into their actual context stimulates workable solutions in so far as domain experts are engaged in achieving solutions based on their actual life experience. The participation of older users in design breaks with the medical model by recognizing the value of their active contributions as actors with instrumental capabilities. Engagement opens the design space to creativity of non-designers, and the interplay between designers and participants can lead to something new that neither could have anticipated at the outset. This is in contrast with the dominant mindset in the field of assistive technologies for active aging. Most telecare solutions are off-the-shelf packages for users "not known or knowable in advance" ([50], 188) and, when involvement is accomplished at design phase it is merely informative or consultative [28]. However, literature presents successful initiatives based on the engagement of older people (e.g. [6], [29]). Literature confirmed that engagement enabled designers to activate, sustain and increase the capabilities of participants, while contributing to shift the designers' perspective about older people. [29] said that, by engaging, designers gained insights that altered their thinking about the relationships between digital technologies and older users. Similarly, Chamberlain and Craig [6] underscored that engaging activities, which they provided through a transnational research platform, acted as a scaffold upon which non-designers expressed their talent creativity and engaged in collective creation with designers. Furthermore, the authors maintained that by engaging in conversation with participants, achievement of common purposes was possible as well as a break from mainstream ways of designing. Such social conversations are, for all intents and purposes, co-designing activities: dynamic processes in which participants intervene bringing their own particular knowledge, design capacity, and interpretative perspective. This view of older adults can be particularly important to prevent a stigmatising design in that they are domain experts, meaning people that potentially experience, and recognise, age stereotypes and rhetoric embedded in discourses, spaces and things.

Motivations to improve the level of engagement with older adults is underpinned by political arguments – people should have the right to influence their life conditions – and pragmatic reasons focused on the concept of capabilities that they bring into design.

5 CONCLUSION

We are living in a historical period when aging people form a large proportion of the total population. Never before have physical and mental capabilities remained so high into advanced old age. Also design is influenced by social dynamics while it re-defines behaviors, perceptions, and lifestyles associated with aging. Inclusive designers are aware of constraints of the mainstream approach to addressing issues of aging and they work to promote a viable way to deal with the complexity of an ever-changing world. The theoretical overview enabled envisioning the engagement of older people into design process as a promising strategy for innovation while sustaining the agency of participants. The engagement is key to managing the intricacy of wicked-problems, although it is not a solution per se. Innovation calls for a contextual and dialogical reflexivity meant as a way to deal with the heterogeneity of older people by developing a positive and continuous conversation with them ([4], [52]). Such a relationship is not exclusive because it involves many different actors (e.g. caregivers, family members, public institutions, businesses) along with designers and older people, and reflexivity is not a “privileged status” of design researchers [30]. I maintain that it should be a distributed practice that all actors involved in designing, implementing, and using assistive technologies (e.g. designers, researchers, consumers, managers, policy makers) should embed into their way of doing.

The concept of reflexivity in action – as a contextual, dialogical, and distributed practice – pinpoints two interconnected themes about inclusive design *for* and *with* older people. Future researches need to point out whether a reflexive design is actually a way of increasing the attention for the voice of older people or a mere product-oriented approach masked by inclusive intentions. Furthermore, future work calls for making visible the practical consequences of older people self-awareness as it is prompted by their engagement. I hope that such lines of inquiry spark a genuine interest to explore further the distributed effects of reflexivity *in-action*.

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THE GENDERED EXPERIENCES OF AFFECT AND FLOW OF ACCLAIMED GREEK CONTEMPORARY PERFORMERS/SONGWRTIERS DURING STAGE PERFORMANCE AND SONGWRITING

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Abstract

This study attempts to explore the experience of affect and flow states of acclaimed Greek contemporary performers/songwriters during stage performance and songwriting, while at the same time examines the gendered role of these experiences. There were three research questions identified; firstly, the in-depth investigation of the performers/songwriters' actual experience of affect and flow states during music performance and/or composing, as well as the positive emotions resulting from those states. Secondly, detecting any emerging differences in affect and flow between stage performance and composition and finally examining the role that gender plays in the experience of affect and flow states. The sample consisted of 6 performers/songwriters, 3 men and 3 women aged from 30 to 65, selected with purposeful homogeneous sampling. The data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured, open-ended interviews. The research approach was qualitative and the data were analysed with the methodology of interpretative phenomenological analysis. The data analysis was thematically categorized and presented in a table. Next the data were analysed and discussed in reference to the relevant literature and the main findings suggest that a) affect and flow states were both experienced by performers/songwriters during stage performance and music composition leaving an intense emotional impact, fostering further positive emotions which help develop psychological resilience, b) the experiences of affect and flow seem to hold a more prominent position in music composing; performers/songwriters colourfully describe these experiences through metaphors, emphasizing on their unique, often transcendental nature, c) concerning the role of gender in the experiences of affect and flow, the differentiation is one of texture; female performers/songwriters infuse a psychotherapeutic aspect in these experiences, likening them to an intense game while male performers/songwriters compare them to a fierce struggle, which eventually becomes a general pursuit of self, creation and existence. Finally, both male and female performers/songwriters describe those experiences as instances of true transcendental expression, which give essential meaning not only to their music profession but also to life as a whole.

Keywords: Affect, Flow, positive emotions, Greek performers/Songwriters, Gender.

1 INTRODUCTION

The current study attempts to undertake an excursion into the human condition in an effort to illuminate the emergence of affect and flow while their complex, often indefinable, workings take place in the background leaving an undeniably distinct mark on the individual. The first researcher stumbled upon this very idea while attending a live performance finding herself wondering whether the performer/songwriter experiences a state of affect and/or flow on stage or when writing a song. Being herself both an avid music lover and an amateur singer/songwriter, she felt the need to explore the inner workings of the body, mind and soul of acclaimed performers/songwriters of contemporary Greek pop music through their narrative accounts concerning the experience of affect and flow on stage or during songwriting as well as the deriving positive emotions. In addition, the gendered experience of those states presented a particularly interesting topic of exploration. Such venture involved a challenging, different approach since it examined those experiences through the prism of the actual music creators and performers and not through the listeners', classical musicians' or jazz instrumentalists' perspective that tends to be the norm research-wise.

This study will attempt to examine and reflect on the experiences of affect drawing from the theories of Seigworth (1995), Russell & Barrett (2009) and Brennan (2004), the experience of flow based on the flow theory by Csikszentmihalyi (1990) and the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions by Fredrickson (2001).

Seigworth (1995) acknowledges affect as a prelinguistic language, a learnt quality prior to being able to make sense of words. This embodied understanding of affect is not seen as another mere bodily mechanism but the very function that further gives the individual the sense of existence and feeling of being alive, attributing a significance to it that transcends consciousness or emotion. Affect is described as a circuit between our bodies and souls and is found at a prior to conscious thought state forming a bridge between our bodies and the outside world. Affect functions both as a precondition and a conditioner of our ability to feel happy, sad, angry, etc., encompassing all these accumulated every day affective insignificances that go unnoticed and register with no particular emotion attached to them; Whereas, in reality, these insignificances make up of who we are or how we act in a certain context. While it being difficult to signify something that does not signify itself, the music experience, entangling our bodies, minds, memories, histories, thoughts, and feelings compelling us in a way to feel and move to its rhythm, presents an appropriate context to explore such a phenomenon.

Adding to the bigger picture Russell & Barrett (2009) confirmed that "core affect" is a fundamental, neurophysiological, primitive state referring to the most elementary consciously accessible affective feelings that are not directed to anything in particular. It is ever-present even when the individual is in a neutral state (Russell & Barrett, 2009). One way to see it is as a neurophysiologic barometer of a person's relationship to an environment at a given point in time with the person's self-reported feelings serving as the barometer readings (Barrett & Bliss-Moreau, 2009).

Finally, Brennan (2004) suggested that affect can be transmitted from one person to another in a given environment. The transmission of affect, whether it is happiness, grief, anxiety, or anger, is originated socially or psychologically. Also taking into account that the "atmosphere" in a place, such as in a concert venue, is generated by physiological, social and psychological factors gives us a better understanding of this elusive term. The transmission of affect is also responsible for bodily changes; some are brief while others are longer lasting altering the biochemistry and neurology of the individual.

Turning to the experience of flow, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) argues that flow is defined as the mental state when an individual is fully immersed in the task at hand feeling intensely focused, absorbed and actively engaged in the activity, while, at the same time, derives enjoyment from the process. In essence, Csikszentmihályi (1990) attests that with increased experiences of flow, individuals experience growth and flourish while their accomplishments increase. As a result, individuals acquire

an enhanced cognitive, emotional, and social intricacy. In order for an individual to enter a flow state the goals should be clear, feedback should be immediate while a balance between the subject's capability and the activity should exist. In addition, the individual should be utterly focused on the present moment, experience a feeling of temporal distortion and the loss of self-consciousness and have a sense of personal control over the activity while merging action with awareness. Those aspects can appear independently of each other. However, combined they are able to cause a flow state to arise and ultimately lead to an autotelic experience where an individual experiences the activity as intrinsically rewarding able to engross the person to such an extent as to perceive other needs, such as hunger or thirst, as negligible. Csikszentmihályi (1997) claimed that happiness derives from personal development and growth. In consequence, flow situations allow the experience of personal development while leading to positive affect (Schüler, 2007).

Fredrickson (2001) confirms that positive emotions serve as markers of flourishing, or optimal well-being while the overall balance of people's positive and negative emotions has been shown to predict their judgments of subjective well-being. The "broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions" states that certain emotions such as happiness, joy, interest, contentment, pride and love are able to "broaden people's momentary thought-action repertoires and build enduring personal resources, ranging from physical and intellectual resources to social and psychological ones" (Fredrickson, 2001, p 3). The theory claims that positive emotions have more longer-lasting effects on the individual since positive emotions are seen as vehicles for individual growth and social connection. In specific, the broaden-and-build theory argues that "multiple, discrete positive emotions are essential elements of optimal functioning while positive emotions (a) broaden people's thought-action (b) undo lingering negative emotions (c) fuel psychological and (d) build psychological resilience and trigger upward spirals toward enhanced emotional well-being" (Fredrickson, 2001, p 10).

Adding to the study of positive emotions Panzarella (1980) explored the peak experiences in the world of music and arts concluding to four different factors emerging from these experiences (a) renewal ecstasy, providing an altered perception of the world creating the impulses to make music or visual art (b) motor-sensory ecstasy, involving alterations in body rhythms, or changes in posture (c) withdrawal ecstasy, involving loss of contact with both the physical and social environment while a perceptual narrowing occurs while attention is focused on the aesthetic stimulus and (d) fusion-emotional ecstasy, which entails fusion with the stimulus, is also accompanied by emotional responses.

Naturally, there is a growing volume of research emphasizing on how music listeners perceive emotions expressed through music (Schafer et al., 2013) or focusing on classical musicians and their performance anxiety (Gabrielsson, 2003). Musical performance presents a challenging and demanding context through which a musician could experience intense positive emotions and peak experiences (Lamont, 2012). Consequently, in the past decade research has taken a turn to how music is involved in positive emotions (Juslin & Sloboda, 2001; Gabrielsson & Lindström-Wik, 2003; Lamont, 2012; Van Zijl & Sloboda, 2013). Equally an increasing body of evidence confirms a close relationship between musical experiences and flow states (Bakker, 2005; De Manzano et al., 2010; Dietrich, 2004; Peifer, 2012; Rogatko, 2009; Schuler, 2012). Vallerand (2012) stresses that positive emotions emerge during regular activity engagement ultimately preventing negative affect. Piano players experience flow through the interaction of positive affect and intense concentration (De Manzano et al., 2010) while Van Goethem & Sloboda (2011) suggest that music is directly associated with affect functioning as affect's regulation device. Concerning the gendered experience of music, Sergeant & Himonides (2014) research findings suggest that music structures are not inherently gendered while performers do not impart their sex-specific qualities to the music. Lastly, Csikszentmihályi (1990) claims that accounts of flow experiences did not differ between women and men.

2 METHOD

This study aims to explore the gendered experience of flow and affect of acclaimed Greek contemporary performers/songwriters during stage performance and songwriting. In an effort to make sense of the participants' lived experience a qualitative approach was considered appropriate and an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA, Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) was employed to analyze those experiences.

2.1 Research questions

There were three research questions identified:

1. Do performers/songwriters actually experience affect and flow on stage and during songwriting; do positive emotions derive from such experiences?
2. Are there any emerging differences in affect and flow between stage performance and composition?
3. Does gender play a role in the experience of affect and flow?

2.2 Participants

The sample interviewed consisted of 6 performers/songwriters, 3 men and 3 women aged from 30 to 65, selected with purposeful homogeneous sampling for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Patton, 2005). An important requirement concerning the participants was for them to have rich experiences both in songwriting and on stage performance. Therefore, experienced recording artists and on stage performers having 10 or more years of experience were preferred. It was also equally important to not only be performers, singers in particular, but also songwriters, composing music and writing lyrics. Last but not least, they should come from Greece.

2.3 Data Collection

The first researcher approached the participants through their official websites, sending them information regarding the research and an invitation to participate. After having responded to the invitation the participants were given detailed and thorough information about the research and each participant was accorded a date of interview. The interviews took place in their homes, enabling true and undivided expression in a familiar setting. Written consent was obtained from each of the participants and it was made clear to them that they had the right to withdraw at any time and request their interviews to be destroyed. Next, the researcher and the participants together agreed on a code name such as ($\Delta 1$) and the participants were ensured that their true identity would be kept private. The data were collected through an hour-long, in-depth, semi-structured, open-ended interviews while the interview topics covered a comprehensive description of flow and affect both on stage and during songwriting, the positive feelings deriving from those states, the differences of affect and flow states between the two contexts of stage performance and songwriting as well as the gendered role of these experiences. The questions were used to guide rather than dictate the course of the interview. Participants were treated as experiential experts and any novel areas of inquiry they opened up were followed. Data collection lasted approximately 2 weeks and resulted in 6 hours of data. The interviews were recorded onto a minidisk recorder. All interviews were transcribed verbatim using a simplified form of transcription.

2.4 Data Analysis

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was employed since it aims to explore the participants' lived experience in detail as it is expressed in its own terms and not according to predefined categories. This analytical method attempts to zoom in the personal experience of the participants who are trying to make sense of their own world, acknowledging at the same time that this eventually becomes an interpretative endeavor for both the participant and the researcher as the latter tries in turn to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Although it may not be possible to access the participants' lives directly since there is no immediate window to their lives, delving deeper into how events and emotions are experienced and given meaning can provide a fertile ground for ideographic and hermeneutic analysis. Researchers choosing to employ a qualitative approach are interested in the construction of social reality and the relationship between the researcher and the phenomenon of interest, even in the obstacles that may be encountered in the process (Willig, 2001). In this study the analytic process involved the careful transcription of the interviews. After careful study intuitive notes were made of anything that appeared significant or of interest, leading to the emergence of the first more specific themes or phrases. After several transcript readings the data were reduced by establishing connections between the preliminary themes and transforming them into appropriately named clusters. Extra attention was given so that the link between the participants' actual words and the researcher's interpretations was not lost. Lastly, the super-ordinate themes and the emergent sub-themes were arranged and presented in a table along with the corresponding transcript examples.

3 ANALYSIS

According to IPA dictates (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009), drawing from the data of the six conducted interviews there are three emergent super-ordinate themes accordingly consisting of sub-themes. In the table below the themes are respectively presented along with transcript examples.

Table 1: Analysis

<u>Super-ordinate themes</u>	<u>Sub-themes</u>	<u>Transcript examples</u>
1. Affect and Flow during stage performance and songwriting.	Affect	<i>«It's the energy in the room.. if those kind of things interest you as a scientist... yes, I don't know... I can't really explain these things, it's just that you feel a good vibe in a place and a bad vibe in another, so to speak... I'm afraid that these kind of things are in me... they might be... It has happened to me before, to feel weird about some reason... and to feel that the audience isn't having fun and it's me that has to do something to speed things up because I felt that the people</i>

	<p><i>were bored» (Δ5)</i></p>
Core Affect	<p><i>«it's like being on a platform, I mean for a few seconds there is nothing.. there's nothing going on inside of me.. I'm just left there, kind of going out of consciousness.. as if time doesn't exist.. like falling into the void.. like being on a break» (Δ2)</i></p>
Transmission of Affect	<p><i>«you feel it.. it keeps you going, you keep it going, you build it up... it builds you up.. I want you to feel that love and magic and you will feel those things because we are in sync and I will induce that syncing feeling between us and it will exist only for us so that we can feel good in this invisible thing» (Δ3)</i></p>
Flow	<p><i>«it's like climaxing during sex.. it blows your mind.. and you think to yourself, 'damn it's only going to last a few seconds' but it does last longer and you feel a tingling sensation, your stomach feels tighter, your chest stretches, if you see me at this point my chest stretches way more, I stretch as if I want to listen closely.. I'm there, all of me and my body tells me that I have to do my best.. because that's the way it is, so you give it your best. (Δ1)</i></p>
	<p><i>«I'm happy, you see.. I'm very happy and it's like climaxing during sexual intercourse..» (Δ1)</i></p>
	<p><i>«There was another time recently at Chalkida that I felt the love from the audience and</i></p>

	<p>Positive emotions emerging from flow and affect</p>	<p><i>the musicians, when we sang for the refugees, and I played with incredibly talented and world-renowned musicians.. I felt so much love from the musicians as well, it was a magic moment» (Δ3)</i></p>
	<p>Happiness</p>	<p><i>«I feel joy, you see, I feel joy.. I feel that what I do brings joy» (Δ2)</i></p>
	<p>Love</p>	<p><i>«I'm ecstatic in a way, I'm so very happy and there is an automation in the way I do things, I mean the way I sing and play my songs, I don't think about it, it just happens naturally.. it's like the effect of drugs.. like being in a hazy and weird but really enjoyable kind of trip...» (Δ5)</i></p>
	<p>Joy</p>	
	<p>Ecstasy</p>	
<p>2. Affect and Flow during songwriting in contrast to stage performance</p>	<p>Experiencing flow during songwriting is seen as a more rewarding and liberating experience</p>	<p><i>«this personal battle, let's say. this internal fight with yourself in order to write songs, that is the whole essence of things, I can't imagine myself living without it and I dread the very idea because I know that one can't be very productive as a songwriter in a much older age...» (Δ7)</i></p> <p><i>«So you have to be ready to grab the thunder and hold it as long as you have to, to unite</i></p>

	<p>Flow and Affect during songwriting</p>	<p><i>with it and become like a fiery ball to be able to do this.. and that's when you are in an absolute nirvana state of intense concentration, over 100%, and now you have entered a state where you can't do anything else, you mustn't do anything else until you finish what you started, however long it takes.. that's what it's about...» (Δ3)</i></p> <p><i>«sometimes I feel like I'm crying.. that.. and then it stops.. I mean there are tears coming from my eyes and as if those tears signal that I'm in the right path.. and that I should travel down that road.. that it's ok to go that way.. that..» (Δ2)</i></p> <p><i>«I'm ecstatic in a way, I'm so very happy and there is an automation in the way I do things, I mean the way I sing and play my songs, I don't think about it, it just happens naturally.. it's like the effect of drugs.. like being in a hazy and weird but really enjoyable kind of trip...» (Δ5)</i></p>
	<p>Flow and Affect during stage performance</p>	<p><i>«because you know that something is about to happen.. for a few seconds I find myself in a neutral zone.. how can I explain it to you, it feels as being in a fridge, like there's nothing.. no feelings» (Δ2)</i></p>
<p>3. The gendered role of Affect and Flow</p>	<p>Female Songwriters - Music as a psychotherapeutic experience</p>	<p><i>«it's a psychotherapeutic process, what I mean is that most of the music and songs I've written were at times when I felt kind of heavy inside and the fact that I've written those songs made me feel better, so yes, this process is something I want to keep in my life.. very much so» (Δ5)</i></p> <p><i>«it's like playing a computer</i></p>

Female Songwriters - Songwriting seen as a game	<i>game, you lose track of time, have you ever played an adventure game on your pc? Day, night, time, what, where, who? You totally lose track of things» (Δ1)</i>
Male Songwriters - The fierce struggle of songwriting	<i>«And it will be like a thunder that you'd have to hold and keep for half an hour, a whole hour, an hour and a half, however long it may need for you to keep it so you can finish what you started and you have to be there only for that and do only that, until the song is finished and ready» (Δ3)</i>

3.1 Affect and Flow during stage performance and songwriting

Experiencing affect and flow constitutes the first research question of this study. The intense moments of experiencing affect and flow during songwriting and stage performance, emerge from the participants' vivid accounts, along with various positive feelings stemming from these experiences.

3.1.1 Affect

According to Seigworth (1995), affect is a "conduit" between our bodies and souls and is found at a prior to conscious thought state. Affect functions both as a precondition and a conditioner of our ability to feel happy, sad, angry, etc.

The artists describe those instances as being in an antechamber contemplating on the kind of action that should be employed.

«It's the energy in the room.. if those kind of things interest you as a scientist... yes, I don't know... I can't really explain these things, it's just that you feel a good vibe in a place and a bad vibe in another, so to speak... I'm afraid that these kind of things are in me... they might be... It has happened to me before, to feel weird about some reason... and to feel that the audience isn't having fun and it's me that has to do something to speed things up because I felt that the people were bored» (Δ5)

The whole experience feels biological having an inexplicable embodied aspect to it, a very puzzling physical nature.

«something happens in the cells of your body, in your soul, in your heart, in your very core, it's a molecular, biological thing and that's when, out of nowhere, inspiration bursts out»

Nevertheless, the experience has a particular physical intensity, therefore the artists strive to comprehend what it signals and the course of action that needs to be followed.

«sometimes I feel like I'm crying.. that.. and then it stops.. I mean there are tears coming from my eyes and as if those tears signal that I'm in the right path.. and that I should travel down that road.. that it's ok to go that way.. that..» (Δ2)

3.1.2 Core affect

Drawing from the performers' accounts two types of affect were identified, 'Core affect' and 'Transmission of affect' respectively mentioned by Russell & Barrett (2009) and Brennan (2004). Core Affect functions as a neurophysiologic barometer of a person's relationship to an environment at a given point in time with the person's self-reported feelings serving as the barometer readings (Barrett & Bliss-Moreau, 2009).

The experience of core affect is described as a subtle neutral state functioning as the individual's security device safeguarding the individual's own mental state to safely navigate themselves to a desired course of action.

«because you know that something is about to happen.. for a few seconds I find myself in a neutral zone.. how can I explain it to you, it feels as being in a fridge, like there's nothing.. no feelings» (Δ2)

Contrary to the above, core affect can also be seen as a state bordering on trembling or even as a serene, grounded feeling that again both serve as a way to mentally prepare the individual. Core Affect provides the performers the information needed to assess the current situation between themselves and their environment, such as a crowded venue, which in turn can aid or hinder the process, and finally decide on the course of action.

«I felt a kind of tremble and as a result some really demanding parts in the first part of the concert were, in a way, hard for me to play, my reactions at that point were extremely nervous» (Δ7)

«I feel very grounded in a way.. I can't tell you I'm happy because I don't feel happiness at that point.. I feel calm.. I think that at that point I feel more.. humane» (Δ1)

3.1.3 Transmission of Affect

Brennan (2004) argued that affect can be transmitted from one person to another, let alone in a crowded venue during a live performance.

The performers/songwriters notice a change in their emotional state and as according to Brennan (2004) the transmission of affect alters the individual's biochemistry and neurology as well.

«yes... you feel it coming a few seconds beforehand.. the people in the audience 'open up'... their energy starts becoming more positive.. you see them smile, their eyes open up and their body posture changes» (Δ1)

During a stage performance there is a transmission of energy that has to do with the venue and the audience itself. The audience affects and is, at the same time, affected by the performance. Therefore the audience's reactions affect the performance as well as the performer/songwriter who in turn affects the audience. An ongoing reciprocation of energy with physical and emotional reactions attached to it.

«you feel it.. it keeps you going, you keep it going, you build it up... it builds you up.. I want you to feel that love and magic and you will feel those things because we are in sync and I will induce that syncing feeling between us and it will exist only for us so that we can feel good in this invisible thing» (Δ3)

3.1.4 Flow

The performers/songwriters vividly narrate their experience of flow during songwriting and stage performance in accordance with Csikszentmihalyi (1990) and his flow theory. Emerging from their accounts are instances where the physical aspect of the experience is prominently described along with an intense and focused concentration on the present moment, the feeling of temporal distortion and the loss of self-consciousness. They describe the sense of freedom that comes with the experience of flow which they ultimately describe as an autotelic experience giving them a sense

of meaning in life while often acquiring a transcendental aspect that connects them with the sublime.

The physical sensation is likened to sexual intercourse and the reactions such an experience causes.

«it's like climaxing during sex.. it blows your mind.. and you think to yourself, 'damn, it's only going to last for a few seconds' but it does last longer and you feel a tingling sensation, your stomach feels tight, your chest stretches, if you see me at this point my chest stretches way more, I stretch as if I want to listen closely.. I'm there, all of me and my body tells me that I have to do my best.. because that's the way it is, so you give it your best» (Δ1)

Intense concentration, full involvement and immersion in a feeling of energized focus can produce the desired outcome.

«and that's when you are in an absolute nirvana state of intense concentration, over 100%, and now you have entered a state where you can't do anything else, you mustn't do anything else until you finish what you started, however long it takes.. that's what it's about...» (Δ3)

Although the set of goals is clear the distortion of the temporal experience along with the loss of self-consciousness cause a creative ambiguity ultimately leading to a peak experience.

«and that's when this kind of 'hazy' thing starts.. haziness.. different than before when everything was normal in a way.. when I'm on stage it's even more, totally different than five minutes ago when there was a kind of normality... and how do I feel? It's a nice feeling, really nice..» (Δ5)

The mind and body are stretched to the limit and when the experience is complete the performer/songwriter emerges anew, feeling of having contributed to the change in the world around him.

«and you feel as you emerge that you are someone new and the world around you is different as well» (Δ7)

Feeling free the performer/songwriter can perform with ease, more confidence and less insecurity about the actual outcome delivering a memorable performance.

«..at the end of a live session I feel completely free» (Δ6)

The performers/songwriters seek the experience of flow, regarding it as an objective per se.

«if your creativity is the most fundamental of your traits and you feed off it, when you realize that it actually works there's nothing else you could possibly want.. it's the perfect drug.. you don't want anything else.. Aiki, it's the reason why I'm here!» (Δ1)

The sense of meaning in life, encompassing a certain philosophy or attitude towards life, transcends the mere means of earning and livelihood, regarding it an ideal.

«to me this feeling gives me a sense of meaning in life, I'm not saying it's the only thing that matters, my life won't stop at that, but there is a certain philosophy attached to it and music serves as the vehicle of this philosophy...»(Δ6)

Experiencing flow helps make sense of the world.

«and you cry out, Yes! it's like seeing the matrix.. it all make sense» (Δ1)

The performers/songwriters vividly portray those intense transcendental moments as highly valuable spiritual instances which enable them to connect with the sublime.

«I would tell you that there is a God and God is the extension of man.. and at that point it is as if I'm shown with a contraction and dilation that this supreme being, which in essence gives you the ability to write music and songs, exists within you somehow..» (Δ2)

3.1.5 *Positive emotions emerging from experiencing flow and affect*

In their narrations the performers/songwriters talk of the positive emotions deriving from experiencing positive affect and flow on stage or during songwriting. Drawing from the field of positive psychology certain positive feelings were common among the performers/songwriters. Overall life satisfaction can rise while experiencing positive emotions while at the same time using such resources to meet life's challenges help develop psychological resilience (Fredrickson, 2001).

3.1.6 *Happiness*

Fredrickson (2001) argues that happiness is the sum of several factors and although it having multiple empirical facets, an important one is having a balance between the sum of negative and positive emotions.

The participating performers/songwriters recall those experiences in which they felt happiness having successfully accomplished a demanding task while at the same time achieving to receive the audience's positive feedback. They also enthusiastically describe the positive impact of experiencing happiness and the morale boost it provides.

«I've never felt anything like this, people coming to shake my hand after the show, because they've felt this intense energy and I was more than happy having been able to experience such a thing for the first time» (Δ3)

3.1.7 *Love*

According to Fredrickson (2013) love is defined as a form of social connection marked by positivity and resonance, while it may be the most generative and consequential of all positive emotions. It further broadens and builds the rest of the positive emotions.

Love "echoes" among the minds and bodies between the audience and the performers/songwriters and can broaden their mindsets while at the same time act as a rewarding measure for the artists.

«they were all so happy that I was going to sing "you give me love" and I did so the best way I could because I had just come out of the hospital.. and.. I felt so much love coming from the audience" (Δ3).

3.1.8 *Joy*

Joy creates the urge to play and a readiness to get actively involved in tasks. Through the play process durable resources are created which are ultimately the skills acquired through the experiential learning that joy activates (Fredrickson, 2013).

The performers/songwriters take joy in what they do and this acts as an incentive to carry on and get all the more actively involved in the activity. Gaining more resilience during the process is one of the added benefits.

«Despite the difficulties at the end we all stood on stage feeling such joy that we had the opportunity to be standing on that stage, to having spent four days there all together and having our feelings and knowledge enriched" (Δ3)

3.1.9 *Ecstasy*

The performers/songwriters experience ecstasy as a peak experience through the fusion-emotional aspect of it as described by Panzarella (1980). Ecstasy derives from the individual's merging with the stimulus or the activity transforming the individual's perception and view of the world at a given point in time.

«I'm ecstatic in a way, I'm so very happy and there is an automation in the way I do things, I mean the way I sing and play my songs, I don't think about it, it just happens naturally.. it's like the effect of drugs.. like being in a hazy and weird but really enjoyable kind of trip...» (Δ5)

Nevertheless, ecstasy can have a withdrawal aspect to it. In order for the individual to concentrate on the stimulus and get to the core of this experience a perceptual narrowing occurs.

«this is something that I feel it's mine alone and I don't feel the need to share it by saying "I was in an ecstatic state and I wrote a song"... this experience is intense and very personal" (Δ3)

3.2 Affect and Flow during songwriting in contrast to stage performance

3.2.1 Experiencing flow during songwriting is seen as a more rewarding and liberating experience

The performers/songwriters describe the phenomenon of flow during songwriting as holding a more prominent role. Flow on stage is dependent on multiple factors, most significantly the feedback between the performer and the audience as well as the audience's engagement and reactions (Lehmann, Sloboda, & Woody, 2007). In contrast, flow during songwriting is a more personal experience dependent solely on the performer/songwriter and their involvement in the activity.

«what I've told you before about experiencing a nirvana state and being in a kind of antechamber, well, all these happen during songwriting, at least to me» (Δ3)

The performers/songwriters narrate how experiencing flow during songwriting stretches their mind and body to the limit transforming not only themselves but also the world around them.

«when I have an idea and I'm writing a song and I get it to the point that it's ok to get up from the sofa and in a way return to the world again, I feel like the world is different.. that something different has happened.. that's the magic of music.. on stage you know that what you feel is in a way exposed, stranded on a larger scale» (Δ7)

Flow during songwriting is seen as an invaluable experience, giving a sense of meaning not only to their music profession but to life itself. At the same time flow provides a liberating feeling enabling the desired outcome in songwriting while amplifying the process making it worthwhile and rewarding.

«it's one of the most beautiful things because it gives you hope. What I mean is that it's a difficult job, and when you feel the flow in it.. it's such a satisfying feeling.. you feel proud of yourself.. that's when you start feeling hopeful.. that you'll make it.. and it will get better and better.. more and more meaningful to you.. that's everything, everything» (Δ6)

3.2.2 Flow and Affect during songwriting

Affect has a very distinct embodied aspect to it and it is closely associated with flow experiences (Schüler, 2007). Experiencing affect and flow give songwriters a feeling of power while in an effort to describe the intensity of those instances they end up using striking metaphors.

«I do something repetitively for 90 times or more just because I like it.. and I keep going.. if I do it over and over again.. my eyes pop out, my chest fills up like a balloon and I get an urge, a compelling urge to write and it feels like a striking thunder..» (Δ3)

3.2.3 Flow and Affect during stage performance

On stage flow experiences are mainly dependent on the interaction between the performer and the audience while affect acts as a neurophysiologic barometer of the performer's relationship to the environment. On stage flow can also have an ecstatic aspect for the performer.

“an indescribable feeling... like a kiss, like kissing someone you don't really know that well but it feels good.. and it gives you a pleasant sensation.. like a primal instinct in a way” (Δ2)

3.3 The gendered role of Affect and Flow

Concerning the role of gender in the experiences of affect and flow, the differentiation is one of texture. Nevertheless, both male and female performers/songwriters describe those experiences as instances of true transcendental expression giving essential meaning not only to their music profession but also to life as a whole.

3.3.1 Female Songwriters - Music as a psychotherapeutic experience

Female songwriters recognize a psychotherapeutic quality in the experience of flow able to transform the performer/songwriter offering a relief of pressure.

«it's a psychotherapeutic process, what I mean is that most of the music and songs I've written were at times when I felt kind of heavy inside and the fact that I've written those songs made me feel better, so yes, this process is something I want to keep in my life.. very much so» (Δ5)

3.3.2 Female Songwriters - Songwriting seen as a game

Songwriting while experiencing flow is likened to an intense game in which the participants are enthusiastically involved.

«Oh! Very nice! At that moment it felt like an eerie thing because even the story I had come up with had a similar out of this world feel to it, kind of like tripping and at the same time it was like a game, the whole thing was very enjoyable.. and the chorus went like 'when I fly among the clouds'.. kind of like a transcendental, otherworldly but very playful feeling» (Δ5)

3.3.3 Male Songwriters - The fierce struggle of songwriting

On the other hand, the male performers/songwriters compare such experiences to a fierce struggle eventually becoming a general pursuit of self, creation and existence.

«well, I may sit down to write a song now and start going up and down the house with a guitar in my hand or while trying to find the right word I may end up going out and walking for two hours straight until I find that word.. you see that's the struggle.. it has a physical cost.. but it's ok, you eventually improve, you get better in the process, in a way it serves as training..» (Δ7)

4 DISCUSSION

The aim of the current study was to pore over the gendered experience of affect and flow of acclaimed contemporary Greek performers/songwriters during on stage performance and songwriting. The main findings suggest that a) affect and flow states were both experienced by all the participating performers/songwriters both on stage and during songwriting leaving an intense emotional impact, fostering further positive emotions which in turn help develop psychological resilience, b) the experiences of flow seem to hold a more prominent position in music composing; songwriters vividly narrate these experiences through metaphors, emphasizing on their unique, often transcendental nature, while the experience of affect acts as a neurophysiologic barometer of the performers/songwriters' relationship to the environment with their feelings acting as the barometer's readings guiding the individual to the right course of action c) concerning the role of gender in the experiences of affect and flow, the differentiation is one of texture; female performers/songwriters infuse a psychotherapeutic aspect in these experiences, likening them to an intense game while male performers/songwriters compare them to a fierce struggle, which eventually becomes a general pursuit of self, creation and existence. What both male and female performers/songwriters agree on is considering those experiences as instances of true

transcendental expression, which give essential meaning not only to their music profession but also to life as a whole. We discussed the performers/songwriters' accounts through several theories, most importantly by Seigworth (1995), Russell & Barrett (2009) and Brennan (2004) on affect, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) on flow and Fredrickson (2001) on positive emotions. It is important though, to consider the emergence/transmission of affect and flow as a practice embedded in a social context (Wetherell, 2012). Thus, we argue that the accounts of the performers/songwriters are produced in the social milieu of economic crisis in Greece, which creates novel, and maybe problematic, conditions of stage and artistic performance.

Due to the economic crisis those performers/songwriters, being usually band-leaders also need to acquire the role of producer, the manager, or even the stage technician themselves, distracting them from the task of performing. In addition, the poor economic conditions affect the live concert's overall attendance and revenue for the band, rendering them both significantly low. Last but not least, the audience engagement in the performance can greatly affect it since through interaction the transmission of affect and the experience of flow can literally elevate both the performers and the audience. In such a demanding context of stage performance, the emergence and transmission of affect and flow as evidenced by the participants can be conceptualised as a 'feeling' (Cromby, 2015), or as practices (Wetherell, 2012) of entrepreneurial, neoliberal subjects (Dardot & Laval, 2014), evident of the way such a situation of high stakes performance and pleasure can be experienced and accounted for.

Further studies including a larger sample size emphasizing more on different factors that could play a role in experiencing flow or affect such as the participants' psychosocial characteristics could give even more to the point findings. What's more an intercultural study could lead to more illuminating results regarding these indefinable experiences of flow and production or transmission of affect.

This study attempted to deviate from the norm and approach the experience of flow and affect through the accounts of the performers/songwriters themselves as they are mostly superseded by studies on the audience's reactions or classical musicians' experience while performing. A turn to the actual creators of music, being the performers and songwriters themselves, can expand our knowledge on such unique phenomena even further and provide us with invaluable results.

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AN EXPLORATION OF THE POTENTIAL OF PROGRESSIVE DISSEMINATION FORMATS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

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Abstract

Progressive research dissemination is gaining prominence in academia in a rapidly modernized society with an increasing emphasis on translation of research findings. It has become imperative to explore alternative ways in which research progress can be communicated to the public and policy makers. The aim of this pilot research study is twofold. Firstly, to identify some of the basic limitations of traditional research reporting formats and secondly, to explore the potential of alternative or progressive formats of dissemination of research findings. By reviewing relevant literature and qualitatively exploring the experiences of researchers involved in disseminating research in progressive formats, we identify the challenges and opportunities at stake for the researchers themselves as well as the recipients of their work. Seven semi-structured interviews with researchers from mixed academic backgrounds were carried out. A thematic analysis approach was used to probe further into the data. The study showed that a number of competences including seeing one's research from a new perspective, learning to communicate differently to various audiences, utilizing communication tools to invite the public into one's research domain, networking and collaboration amongst the benefits of engaging in progressive dissemination formats. Challenges included time constraints, lack of interest from academic communities, minimizing career prospects in academia as well as potential evaluation challenges. In order for progressive formats of dissemination to evolve and to establish a place within academic spheres, a continuous re-examination of the values and cultural ideas underlying what constitutes dissemination and how it can best be implemented within research fields is called for.

Keywords: progressive research dissemination, creativity in research, limitations of traditional research reporting formats.

1 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

How does a typical written master thesis or Ph.D. dissertation fit in a dynamic, ever changing, technologically ubiquitous 21st century? Are we truly, as researchers, using our own creative and technological capacities fully when it comes to conducting research or disseminating our research findings? The mass availability of tools such as mobiles, cameras, audio and speech devices, multimedia and graphic software as well as social media and the internet provide a world of new possibilities, not just for entertainment, personal and professional or business use but as this paper will highlight for academia and public engagement in academia as well.

From challenging doctoral students to explain their research to twelve year olds [1], to dancing your PhD [2], efforts to disseminate research in progressive formats are emerging out of various academic disciplines and by researchers who feel limited by the one size fits all research reporting formats available today, including the thesis or dissertation format currently promoted by many universities. An interesting counter example of the one size fits all approach to the reporting of research findings is the types of theses available at the Gallatin School of Individualized Study. The Gallatin School of Individualized Study is a small college within New York University and one of the very first colleges in the United States that offers students a chance to design a study program based on their own goals and interests [3]. The school distinguishes between 3 types of theses: a research thesis, an artistic thesis and a project thesis [3].

1.1 Limitations of Traditional Formats of Research Reporting

A number of works have discussed the limitations of the most popular dissemination format of research available to university level students and researchers today: the thesis or the dissertation. Verzelen [4], a student at the time herself, published an article in the Daily Morgen entitled “Een thesis dwingt ons om ter plaatse te blijven trappelen. Schaf hem af - Een open brief aan de Vlaamse universiteiten.” Freely translated as: ‘With the thesis concept as currently applied, we are simply treading water. Remove it from the curriculum - An open letter to the Flemish universities’. The article discussed the limitations of a written master’s thesis and in many cases the lack of congruence between a subject of study and the main method of final evaluation. Two major problems with traditional formats of research reporting including the traditional thesis will guide the following discussion: (a) Typical formats of research reporting are not always a topic or disciplinary match with the research or researcher and (b) The limitations of traditional formats of research reporting in their ability to reach the general public. From this perspective we will first explore the first problem.

2 METHODOLOGY

This study consists of two major parts: (a) a descriptive part, outlining worked examples inventoried through a study of the literature and (b) a qualitative, empirical study exploring experiences of students and researchers that already applied artistically inspired and/or alternative dissemination forms in practice. We have opted for an opportunistic review of existing literature, where necessary combined with personal communication with researchers in our personal networks, to identify relevant artistically inspired/progressive dissemination initiatives.

For the empirical component, we chose a case study approach to qualitative research, wherein semi-structured interviews are used as the main data collection tool to explore the experiences of researchers who chose to engage in progressive formats to disseminate their research findings. With a case study approach, the phenomenon can be explored and studied with the aim of providing lines for further elaboration and hypothesis creation on the subject matter [5]. In what follows, we provide a detailed description of how the literature review and the empirical study have been conducted.

2.1 Research Design

In this section, the overall strategy that was put in place will be explained in order to integrate the different components of the study (the literature review, the data collection process, analysis and discussion). The qualities of qualitative research were integral for the researcher in order to gain insights on how participants or academics perceived the process of disseminating research in a

progressive format and how they gave the process value. In order to answer my third and fourth research questions (pertaining to the values and challenges participants found in disseminating research findings progressively), I wanted to utilize an approach that brought the full depth of meanings and social experiences related to the participants' experiences of disseminating research in a progressive format into the picture. A case study approach was opted for because the phenomenon is relatively new and the aim of the data collection and analysis processes is to find means for understanding the phenomenon with greater clarity. Furthermore, the case study design can illuminate hidden issues of a phenomenon and provide new implications for practice, which is precisely what this paper aims to achieve [5].

2.2 Sampling

The participants in this case study were chosen to represent different formats of dissemination identified: Interactions (games and videos), Images (photographs, paintings, cartoons, photovoice), Performing Arts (dance/drama/music), Literary works (poetry, fictions, short stories) and Projects (the prototype). These five typologies and twelve sub categories were identified based on the work of Patricia Leavy [7] and Wang and Hannes [8].

2.3 Data Collection

Given that in our participants there is heterogeneity of representations a semi-structured interview design was employed as the main data collection tool. A rigidly structured interview was not considered optimal for this topic because the topic is still considered novel and exploratory in nature [6]. The experiences of researchers were documented in order to gain insights in to what interests, motivates, inspires as well as what limits and challenges researchers involved in progressive types of research dissemination. Some of the core questions that were asked in the interview included: What inspired you to carry out your research in this way? What did you learn from this experience? What were the major challenges you encountered in the transfer from scientific data to (insert progressive dissemination format)? What were the obstacles/drawbacks? What were opportunities that have been created in doing this? How would you feel about replacing scientific articles (written, academic accounts) with other (progressive) accounts?

Interviews were conducted between February and July 2015. Face to face interviews took place within university offices and around the city of Leuven. And the researcher's student email address was used to contact all interviewees via email. Skype was used for two online based interviews and the researcher's student email was used for one e-interview. In order to control for the researcher's personal impact on the research and data analysis process, a bracketing process was used. A personal stance, describing the researcher's background, motivations and interests was developed. Furthermore, during the data collection process, note taking and reflections were utilized as a means to keep personal impressions and biases about the research process bracketed. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim before analysis. An ethical clearance statement was given to the participants. Oral permission was given in the case of online Skype interviews.

2.4 Quality Assessment

The quality assessment process was guided by reflecting on the following questions: how do I view quality assessment? How will others know if I have accomplished the quality criteria aspired for? And what strategies will I use to ensure it? [6]. Bearing in mind the complications of sticking closely

to general criteria of quality assessment in qualitative research, plausibility was used as a core term to guide the quality assessment process. Plausibility emphasizes the idea of ensuring quality with a reader. This concept is “compatible with the constructionism paradigm, which holds that the knower and the known are interlinked and truth is negotiated through dialogue” [6]. Despite disagreement in literature pertaining to the assessment of qualitative research, we adopted a personal approach to documentation and verification to ensure quality throughout this research process. We identified a set of criteria with which we were able to evaluate the research work. Criticality, and credibility were used as a guide to evaluate researcher responsiveness and the research process as a whole. With criticality as a goal in mind, demonstrating critical and analytical thinking during the data collection and analysis phases was of paramount importance. To achieve credibility, the goal of producing a believable account of the interviewee’s experiences was set forth. Some of the strategies that were employed to demonstrate criticality and credibility were dense descriptions. Looking at individual experiences of researchers individually and cross comparing them as well as using quotations was one of the ways to achieve that. Moreover dense descriptions of methods were provided to ensure the readers grasped the entire essence, the aim and approach of the research.

2.5 Data Analysis

To interrogate the interview transcripts, a thematic analysis approach was used. The data analysis process involved identifying themes based on codes, categories and subcategories emerging from the data from the interviews. The rationale for using a thematic analysis approach is that it is well adapted for semi structured interviews and a social constructionism research paradigm. It allows for categories and themes to emerge from the data [6]. The phases of handling data for the purpose of analysis identified by Savin-Baden and Major [6] were used as a reference guide when dealing with the transcriptions and data, namely: Characterizing, cutting, coding, converting (into themes) and creating. In the characterizing phase, the data was transcribed verbatim. Given that the transcription was carried out by the researcher, whenever doubt about the intentions or emotions behind the words arose, the original tape of the recording was listened to again. In the cutting phase, particular words, phrases, sentences or meaningful chunks of data were highlighted or underlined in the word processing software (Microsoft Word) that was also used to record the written transcriptions. In the coding phase, both descriptive (codes derived from the actual language of the data) and analytical coding (codes based on meanings identified and interpreted by the researcher) were used. A code should be “a meaningful name that provides an indication of the idea contained in the data segment.” [6]. Inductive codes, i.e., codes coming directly from the data were used. Categorizing, involved identifying patterns in the codes produced and making sure the categories derived from clusters of codes were responsive to the research questions in this paper. From the categories, two major themes or more general and unifying interpretations of the codes were developed. And finally in the creating process, the individual cases were looked at to come up with a cohesive narrative of their experiences through a thematic analysis process.

3 FINDINGS

The two core elements of the findings are a categorization of different types of progressive formats based on the literature study and the findings related to the experiences of researchers. These will further be discussed.

3.1 Inventory of Currently Applied Progressive Forms

Data from the literature review was used to produce an inventory of currently applied progressive forms of dissemination formats. The categorizations in the inventory are borrowed from Arts Based Research work categorizations [7][8]. Arts based research is a broad term that encompasses the use of art in different stages of a research process [8]. However for the purpose of this study we are only concerned with the dissemination aspect that is involved in arts based projects. Wang and Hannes [8] write that “In comparison (to more conventional qualitative research methods), those engaged in ABR (Art Based Research) often try artistically inspired methods of dissemination such as collage, drawings, performances, fiction, or poetry in addition to or as a replacement of a purely academically written text.” The authors argued that the benefit of that is that “a wider audience can be reached by translating research findings into an artistic exhibition or theatre performance, as people may better connect with a piece of art work than a scientific outline published in a scientific journal to which they may perhaps have limited access.” [8].

Five main typologies and 12 sub categories were identified, namely: Interactions (games and videos), Images (photographs, paintings, cartoons, and photo voice), Performing Arts (dance/drama/music), literary works (poetry, fictions, short stories) and Projects (the prototype).

3.2 Experiences of researchers

The data from the seven interviews was analyzed by the researcher with the assistance of a senior supervisor . Codes, categories and themes were developed. The interview transcripts were analyzed paragraph by paragraph to produce appropriate codes. A list of all available codes was compiled and categories and subcategories were derived from these codes. The last step involved clustering the main categories and sub categories into broader themes. The main themes extracted from the data were: ‘added value’ and ‘challenges’ of engaging in progressive dissemination formats of research. The categories and sub categories under ‘added value’ were: ‘Benefits to researcher’ (subcategories: ‘Motivation’, ‘Competence’ and ‘Outreach’) and ‘Potential Benefits to others/audience’. The categories under the theme ‘challenges’ were: ‘Qualities of Medium’ and ‘Academic Culture’ (subcategories: ‘Expectations’ and ‘Regulations’). The codes under the main themes are shown in figures 1 and 2 below. A full paper is currently in development and will cover a more comprehensive overview of the questions introduced and the details on the in-depth analysis of the content of the interviews.

The thematic analysis showed that the majority of the codes assigned to the content of the transcripts appeared in at least four out of seven interviews (See figures 1 and 2). Nine codes out of the thirty three codes applied to at least five interviews. One code appeared in all seven interviews. That code is ‘Different ways to communicate’. The code ‘Regulations about presentation of findings’ appeared in six out of the seven interviews. Three of the thirty three codes applied to two persons only. These codes were, ‘Human brain understands in visual’, ‘Educational Outreach’ and ‘Bringing it out of the books’. The codes ‘Human brain understands in visual’ and ‘Educational Outreach’ were both shared by one senior female researcher (professor) and one junior male researcher (PhD). The code ‘Bringing it out of the books’ was shared by two female senior researchers (professors). Each code appeared in at least two different interviews.

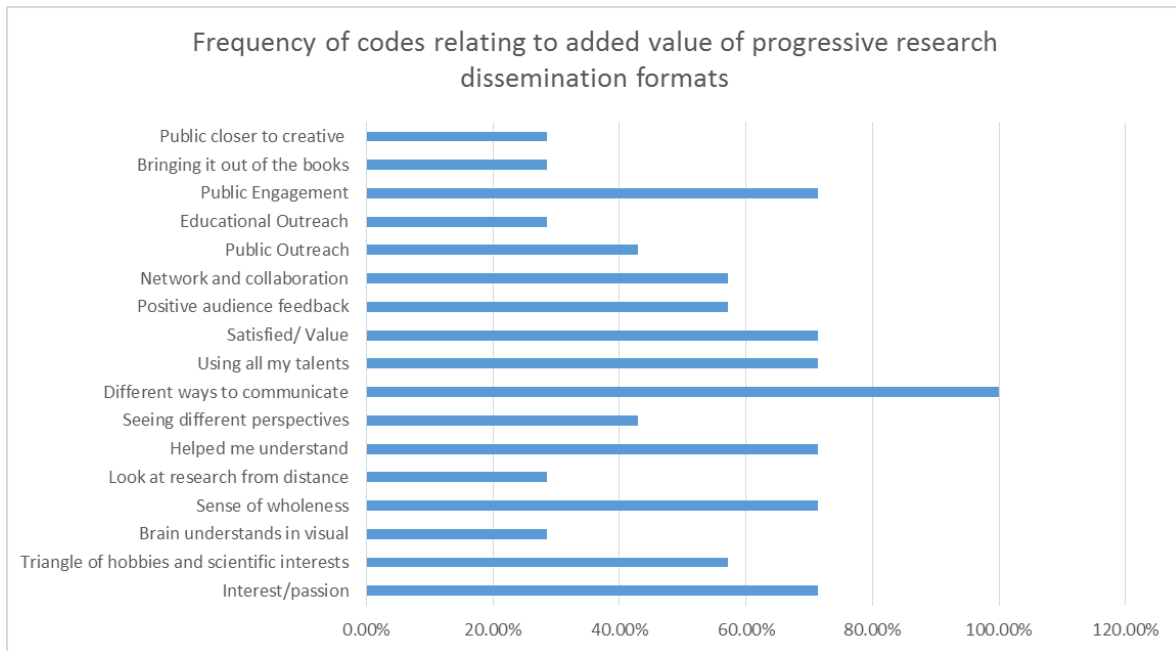


Fig. 1. Frequencies of the different thematic codes pertaining to the added value of presenting progressive dissemination of research.

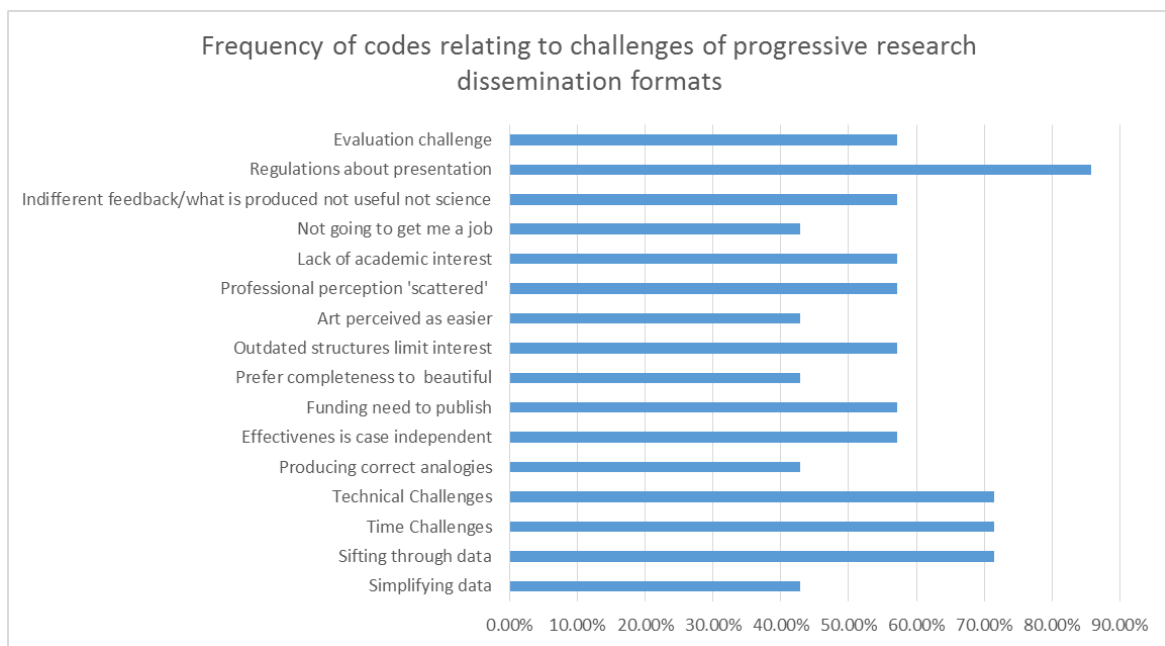


Fig. 2. Frequencies of the different thematic codes pertaining to the challenges of presenting alternative dissemination of research

4 DISCUSSION

This pilot study, investigating the potential of progressive formats of dissemination of research findings has demonstrated based on the experiences of seven participants that attempting to produce a progressive format of dissemination while beneficial in ways to the individual researchers

who choose to engage in them cannot substitute written forms of work completely unless justified in absolute terms. This study aimed to answer the following research questions: What are the different progressive formats in which research findings have been disseminated? What is perceived as limitations of traditional research reporting formats such as the thesis/dissertation or article? What are potential benefits of disseminating research findings in progressive formats? And what are the challenges and limitations of disseminating research findings in progressive formats?

The literature was used to identify progressive formats of dissemination of research findings as well as some of the limitations of traditional formats of research reporting. From the qualitative analysis of interviews, benefits to the researchers, potential benefits to the recipients, challenges of disseminating research in progressive formats as well as limitations of traditional formats were identified. Some of the benefits pertaining to researchers include finding clearer ways to communicate a scientific message to the public, combining passions in a research work and growing as a researcher, artist or creative professional. Collaboration and outreach opportunities as well as skills pertaining to the dissemination format chosen for the research were also reported amongst the benefits. Researcher's noticed more engagement and interest from the audience when choosing a progressive dissemination format over traditional formats of research reporting. Amongst the challenges identified were finding the right information to include in the dissemination format of choice, sifting through several types of data, time constraints, lack of appreciation from the academic community in general and a perceived threat to academic career opportunities. The limitations of a progressive medium can also pose a challenge for research continuation and the ability to embody any given phenomenon in all its details. And finally evaluating progressive dissemination formats within academic contexts remains to be a challenge.

Despite the challenges, there are six main reasons why we should still consider progressive formats. Firstly, traditional formats of research reporting are not serving the researchers that undertake them fully. Sidone Smith, a former president of the Modern Language Association (MLA), explained that the dissertation is one of the major obstacles behind high attrition rates and long completion times in humanities doctoral programs. "We cannot afford to lose our students and the funding we have invested in them" [9]. The format of the dissertation is a cause for concern. Dr. Graham Carr, Concordia university's vice-president, research and graduate studies and president of the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, reiterated the call to reform the dissertation and raised a critical question that is in line with our work. "The default position has always been that the dissertation should resemble a manuscript that will become a book." He explained "Is that the only appropriate vehicle?" Or does it exist "more innovative forms that would capture the knowledge and expertise that PhD students acquire equally as well and would have more practical applications to careers outside of academia?"[9].

Secondly, the topic progressive dissemination formats tie with the concept of engagement and motivation in researchers. Engagement is a topic often cited in educational contexts. The idea is that engagement facilitates learning [10][11].Engagement has a dual role in the context of dissemination of research findings in progressive formats. As it refers to both engagement with the research problem through the progressive dissemination format of choice as well as the potential for engagement by the audience members. Thirdly, the limitation and incompleteness of the word medium constrain the possibilities of dissemination. Gunther Kress, professor of Semiotics and Education in the Department of Culture, Communication and Media at the Institute of Education of the University of London has touched explained that. "Writing actually gives you merely a partial account of what is going on. It is like sentences that aren't completed If you say, 'I'm only interested in writing,' you've made it impossible for yourself to answer the question that's being asked by your PhD" [12]. Fourthly, more colourful and vivid media formats appear to have a bigger or closer impact on the audiences. Eisner [13] wrote, "Research with no coherent story, no vivid images, and no sense of the particular is unlikely to stick."

The potential of progressive formats of representation is a fifth reason. Gunther Kress [14][15] argues that literacy “calls on a repertoire of modes that can be visual in one instance or oral in another instance or moving-image based and that literacy, ideally, needs to incorporate all modes (not just words) to teach what it means to communicate today.” [16]. Image based works also according to Loi [17] by their nature allow for different points of access thus providing multiple ways to tap into ideas to ultimately empower readers. The sixth reason is the potential of collaboration in multidisciplinary contexts. Multidisciplinary collaboration can yield many potential benefits. Also highlighting the benefits of collaboration in the context of gamifying a scientific research, Wellcome Trust’s gaming consultant Tomas Rawlings shared that “Science and games are a natural fit, both are about the participant seeking to understand the rules that govern the world they find themselves within and achieving this by experiments such as trial-and-error. Gamify your PhD is an exciting twist and evolution of these areas.” [18] Evaluation and publishing are two further challenges that need to be addressed and explored further.

5 CONCLUSION

The goal of this qualitative research was to investigate the opportunities and challenges at stake in relation to disseminating research findings in a format other than the traditional written thesis report. By choosing to dance, gamify, photograph, or use other creative outlets, this research shed light on some of the benefits and the importance of combining talents and interests with academic or career goals for some researchers. The usefulness of this study is ultimately tied to the accelerating advances taking place in the fields of technology and media today. With new media and smart technologies, the production, retrieval and sharing of information have become increasingly accessible. These advancements have started to manifest their effects on issues such as dissemination of research as this study have showed. Limiting viewership of dissertations to fellow academics or just one person is a limited objective given the possibilities of what is available. In *‘Fields of play: Constructing an academic life’* Richardson [19] wrote, “it seems foolish, at best, narcissistic and wholly self-absorbed, at worst, to spend months or years doing research that ends up not being read [or viewed] and not making a difference to anything but the author’s career” (p. 87). These words were echoed by Art-based researchers Sameshima and Knowles [20] in their writings when they expressed that “There must be a commitment to making the work accessible to the audiences beyond academe” (p. 116). Future lines of study can explore the potential of progressive formats (including, artistic, creative and others) in generating public interest in science and education and the most effective methodologies that can be used to generate that public interest. This study is an invitation to continue the discussion and debate about what matters when it comes to students in higher education and the fulfilment of their academic requirements as well as their personal and career goals. What tools and dissemination media allow the biggest opportunities for growth, wellbeing and contribution to knowledge and the betterment of society at large? The debate is ongoing and further research is needed to elucidate this matter.

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RESEARCH IN EDUCATION AND ARTISTIC METHODOLOGIES: ACROSS BORDERS, CONNECTIONS AND SHARES

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Abstract

The interest in both, the hybrid methodological approaches and the ones that establish connections and changes in the way of thinking the research in education and art, in addition to the diverse range of ways of dealing with the investigative act, reflect in several papers written by researchers / teachers working with education and art. The purpose of this paper is to share recent stances about educational research in Brazil that are grounded in art on the basis of a series of researches that integrated the symposium coordinated by the authors of this article on the 24th congress organized by the National Association of Researchers in Visual Art / ANPAP in September 2015. They reflect and report ways in which art establishes sensitive pathways and potentially critical research. The methodologies of the post-critical research in education have questioned the status quo of certain discourses and methods of research. In this perspective, the researchers involve themselves increasingly in the task of exploring alternative ways of thinking, writing and in doing certain social practices. They rework and create methods that are still unknown and not recognized in the academia and by the public policy of research and education. It is in this scenario of innovative investigations that are the educational research based on art, they provide non-linear ways of thinking and investigating and at the same time believe in the connection between areas of knowledge such as scientific research and artistic creation. This was the debate initiated by the North American Elliot Eisner in the 1970s, when he pointed out the differences between the scientific and the artistic approaches in the qualitative research. He emphasized that art-based research is a type of research that uses artistic methods to perform artistic and educational experience practices involving different subjects and their interpretations, which are not visible in other researches. By relating to education, he suggests a connection between the use of artistic procedures and the experiences derived of conceptions and educational practices and research. Among the artistic research methodologies in education, there is also the A/r/graphy that integrates research, education and artistic production, which are activities that intertwine and at the same time incorporate concepts, activities and feelings.

Keywords: artistic research methodologies, education, visual art.

1 A CONTEXT: ART-BASED EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH IN BRAZIL

Recognition of artistic research methodologies in Brazil was brought about by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development - CNPq - in the beginning of the 1980s, after approval of the first Postgraduation in Visual Arts programs in the country. At that time there was significant

difficulty in defining art research. In a meeting with researchers, teachers, and artists dedicated to the foundation of the National Association of Researchers in Visual Arts - ANPAP - there were discussions filled with "many questions on how to define and conceptualize research about artistic creation" [1]. Since then, ANPAP has been arguing in favor of guidance and demonstration of studies of artistic languages. Currently, there are many studies being conducted at postgraduation and graduation levels, having as their object photographs, paintings, installations, web art, performances and movies, among other art forms. These studies reveal interest in narratives that bring art closer to life, as well as proposals for new culture-related knowledge.

ANPAP includes five committees: History, Art Theory and Critique; Education in Visual Arts; Curatorship; Heritage, Conservation, and Restoration; and Artistic Poetry, and since 2012 has organized symposiums proposed by their associates with specific investigation focus. It was under this point of view that we launched the Symposium "Research in education and artistic methodologies: between frontiers, connections and sharing", for the 24th National Meeting, held in 2015 in the city of Santa Maria, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, with the goal of sharing experiences, questioning and expanding the debate regarding the tensions that arise in the borders between our understanding of art, teaching, and investigation.

The set of investigations making up the aforementioned symposium, coordinated by the authors of this article, is presented as a way of mapping studies prepared by researchers/teachers working with education and art. They reflect and report different methods and the broadness of methodology paths regarding how art establishes sensible and potentially creative investigation directions.

Thus, we begin presenting the theoretical context that lays the foundation for contemporary methodology discussions, focusing particularly on Educational Research Based on Art and A/r/tography. Then, the cluster of communications selected in said symposium is handled as polyphony of devices tinted by artistic research processes, enabling reflections about the potency and tensions arising in the borders between our understanding of art, teaching, and research.

2 INITIAL NOTES

Subjects that live the act of investigating immersed in an experience inserted in a specific reality have found in art-based educational research methodologies non-linear ways of thinking and investigating. Approaches that connect knowledge, scientific investigation, and artistic creation territories [2] become tools for the generation of investigation and education processes, as well as ways of learning.

This was the debate launched by Elliot Eisner [3] in the 1970s, highlighting differences in the scientific and artistic approaches to qualitative research, stressing that art-based research is a kind of investigation that uses artistic methods to conduct experience practices, involving various subjects and their interpretations, which are not visibly expressed in other types of investigation. By establishing a relationship with education, he proposes a convergence between the use of artistic procedures and the experiences derived from educational and research practices and concepts.

In this sense, what characterizes investigations based on artistic methods is not the inclusion of images, literary texts, poetry, drawings, etc. in the composition of research, but rather the way these and other forms of artistic representation are integrated in the research, where they are positioned, and above all, where they position us as researchers and readers. It is not, therefore, about using certain "artistic" methods or practices, but rather connecting in a "different manner" to what we investigate, adopting a distinct type of view we recognize in the "artistic", and that enables us to glimpse what would be impossible through other methodologies. [4]

Among the artistic methods of investigation in education is also the A/r/tography, integrating research, teaching, and artistic production, activities that are intertwined while merging concepts, activities, and feelings [5]. The pieces of work that follow this point of view incorporate forms of narrative, musical, poetic, performance, and visual questioning in their study projects, and by linking distinctive identities - teacher, artist, and researcher - provoke and evoke new meanings while expanding the boundaries of investigation practices. The openness to other aspects of analysis, intersections, and interpretations also requires new ways to produce, represent, and publish these studies for the professionals and academic community, as well as the general public.

This demarcation of interest by hybrid methodology approaches, establishing connections and modifications in the way of thinking about research [6], added to the diversity of ways of positioning before the investigation act, is reflected in the goals of the symposium and this article, which aims to offer visibility to what is being done in Brazil. Where, how and why artistic productions and procedures are presented as educational research, as generators of knowledge [7], evincing experiences and new ways of knowing, while simultaneously questioning and expanding the debate about tensions that arise in the borders, in the "betweens" of our understanding about science, art, teaching, and investigation.

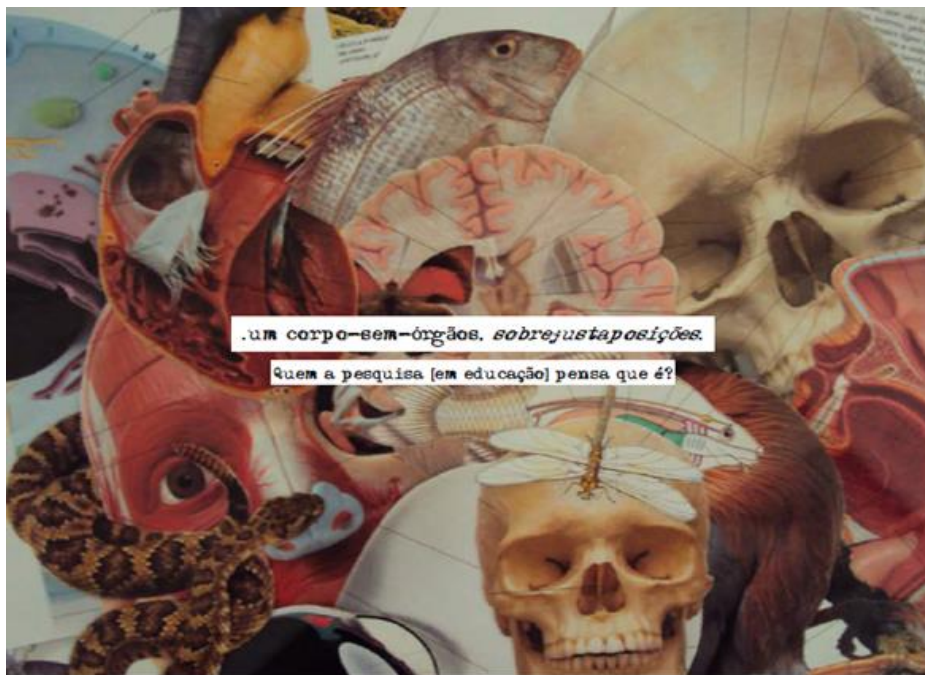


Fig. 1. Cristian Mossi. Cover of thesis defended in 2014 as artographic work.

A/r/tography presents a dynamic approach to qualitative research that challenges the naturalized and conservative notions on how to do research. It starts with the critical point of view committed to development of forms of transdisciplinary knowledge. It is a way of representation that favors both text (written) and image (visual), when they meet in moments of crossbreeding or hybridization. It offers a scale of methods that allows supporting the processes for questioning, reflection, and doing. It encourages new ways of thinking, approaching, and interpreting theoretical/practical issues [8]. Cristian Mossi, who made a presentation at this symposium, leveraged his artistic work involving collages of human anatomy to reflect on concepts of his research as artist, teacher, and investigator, theorizing and overlapping images, ideas, and texts.

3 POST-MODERN THOUGHTS AND INVESTIGATION METHODOLOGIES

Western modernity, by exalting a kind of science and thinking linked to rationality and objectivity, has deprived of value and visibility that which didn't fit in the rational ways of social organizing and rational modes of thought. It is under this point of view that Boaventura Santos [9] denounces a "contracting of the present", which hides the wealth and diversity of social experiences happening in the world. That is to say, what modern scientific thinking sets aside as inexistent, is actually actively produced as non-existent, and therefore it is necessary to "transform 'impossible objects' into possible ones and based on them transform the absences into presences" [9].

The disenchantment with objectivist ideas and their experimental and standardizing outlooks produced an array of alternative investigation models. The qualitative paradigm covers a broad spectrum of epistemological points of view, research strategies, specific techniques and interpretative practices, placing high value on the use of comprehensive, open, and qualitative-descriptive strategies [10], without leaving behind the influence of multiple ethical and political attitudes. According to Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln [11], qualitative researchers "highlight the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and the object of study, and the situational limitations that influence the investigation", highlighting how social experience happens and acquires meaning. The qualitative research, as a set of practices, also generates tension and contradictions surrounding the project, which includes the methods used and the "forms assumed by their discoveries and interpretations" [11].

The disbelief in finding the truth of reality, or the real reality, is because realities are many and diverse, and also relational, tied to the specificities of the contexts of investigated groups, schools, and people. But reality is not a piece of data, a condition, a state, but rather it is "constituted by the theoretical perspective of where we look and think this same reality" [12], and it should be continuously questioned, breaking crystallized meanings and the meanings with status of truth. The doubt, the problem, is not only of an intellectual, sentimental, bodily order, but also of an integral order. By dismantling traditional investigation methods and beliefs, such as cause and effect, supported by solid hypotheses and theoretical bases, we authorize ourselves to hesitate, review, dare, venture. It is this desire to investigate, with a mind towards pluralism, details, and peculiarities, which provides conditions for the emergence of studies and processes interested in expanding comprehension of human activities through artistic practices of investigation [3].

On the other hand, some researchers warn about the fact that qualitative studies, in general, by focusing on the empirical and experiences; hinder a deeper theoretical view of the social world. According to Roy Bhaskar [13], the problem of empiricism is the acceptance of experience as a category of analysis and essential property to view the world, negating the socially constructed circumstances, under which experience is actually epistemologically significant. In this manner, and with the intent of positioning artistic methodologies of investigation in education as a political and formative act, we need to be mindful of the analysis of broader contexts, related to the empirical, and which modify their understanding.

4 EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH BASED ON ART AND ARTOGRAPHY

The convergence of post-modern thinking with educational research has transformed and expanded ways of investigating and what constitutes valid knowledge. The strategies and tools for investigation have diversified and the traditional scientific methods share space with artistic methods, among others. The use of narratives, poetry, music, photographs, performance studies, dance-movement and visual arts has challenged and enabled other paths, other points of view and ways of building knowledge, allowing the use of various and creative forms of engagement in the investigation process, while demonstrating processes and results in unorthodox fashion.

The relational situations, involving educational, artistic, and research practices, and the construction of questions that are also challenges, provoke and encourage rhizomatic paths in multiple connections. It is no longer a theory that explains practice or a practice that produces a theory, instead putting theories and practices into action, in constant movement. A work that becomes alive in the engagement of practice with theories, in the construction of meanings and knowledge, a "living inquiry" [14].

In this sense, educational research based on art and artography, particularly, as a methodology of research derived from it, is a practice of 'art-based investigation', as well as a narrative perspective based on the acronym a/r/t 'a' for *artist*, 'r' for *researcher* e 't' for *teacher*. Meanwhile, *graphy* means 'to write, to represent graphically'. A/r/tography would thus be a type of research performed/produced by a researcher who is also simultaneously a teacher and artist.

Both methodology approaches have, among their specificities, the creation of dialogue spaces, negotiation of meaning, exhibition of singularities through artistic and author discourse, and the integration of multiple perspectives. There is thus a change in the way of investigation, more interactive, and sometimes also more collaborative.

The creation movements of a work of art are a type of cultural approach in dialogue with inquiries and questions of contemporariness, "finding echo in the sciences that discuss truths inserted in their search processes, and that are therefore not absolute and final" [15]. The author highlights the relevance of studying these creative processes, through documents, and visual and text records, which become an important source for analyzing the work and its social context of production.

However, when it comes to research employing artistic methodologies in education, such as Educational Research Based on Art/PEBA and Artography, these are still recent in Brazil. One of the first researchers to base the references and approach method for the investigation on PEBA was Maria Cristina Pessi in her doctoral thesis [16]. Pessi worked with the images selected by Art teachers in grade school to be presented to their students, using the image as substance and object of research. By reporting that "the new perspectives in educational research are focused on investigation actions and studies based on artistic productions" [16], she informs that research following this trend is presented in a less traditional format and the aesthetic qualities of these investigation tasks, formats, and languages represent elements that are not carefully selected and organized, stating "there is a variety of approaches and procedures to generate a type of research based on arts" [16].

Constituting a recent investigation approach, the protocols for execution, analysis and presentation of artistic, art-based and education-focused research are undergoing a construction process in the scientific and academic scenario. Gradually, investigations with this approach are being carried out in postgraduation courses, including in Brazil, and presented in congresses and symposiums, expanding their dissemination and encouraging the formation of groups for exchanges and discussions under this outlook, as well as the plotting of analysis criteria.

The national meetings of ANPAP have also been driving factors for expansion and debate regarding these investigations, sparking deeper analysis and interchange. Research processes motivated us to combine efforts in order to further deeper discussions between art-based research and the education field, at the Symposium happening at the 24th National Meeting, called "Research in education and artistic methodologies: between frontiers, connections, and sharing", expanded and analyzed below.

5 POLYPHONY OF DEVICES NUANCED BY ARTISTIC RESEARCH PROCESSES

A general view of the ways of doing research from bibliographic review was presented by Robson Xavier da Costa and Maria Betânia e Silva [17], and they open a path for the presentation from Sonia Tramujas Vasconcellos [18]. The latter talks about the distinction between educational and artistic processes, considering that "these investigation practices reveal situations, points of view and experiences that make up knowledge, which requires analytical and critical attitudes towards an artistic-educational discourse that is also political" [18].

Alberto D'Ávila Coelho and Luciana Gruppelli Loponte [19] report that art-based research methodologies are attractive, that is to say,

They seduce us by converging with valued concerns, and we are mindful of all discussion emerging from them. With our research, we do not aim to discover or affirm "truths", but rather to question the truths we deal with, understanding somehow the truths that contaminate the objects we plan to analyze and describe, to wit: schools, educational practices, and ways of acting in teaching. May the arts, as intensity, potency, metaphor and sensation, continue to drive us. [19]

Vasconcellos words, in connection with the quote from Coelho e Loponte, summarize the issues that appear in subsequent presentations and debates in this symposium. In the dialogue with authors such as Nietzsche and Deleuze, they claimed that art-based research methodologies break with the duality and distinction between subject and object. However, caution and rigor are required in order to maintain the intensity of theoretical foundations and questioning.

The use of methodologies such as the hermeneutic phenomenology and *Ground Theory* proposed by Leonardo Charréu and Juliana Salbego [20], and the cartographic research of Aline Nunes da Rosa [21], expanded understanding of the methodological diversity that continuously expands potentiality, moving through smooth or striated fields, with researchers mindful of their own experience and immersed into contexts and grounds that are also diversified.

The discussions regarding the very understanding of research using art as grounding and trigger also demonstrate the diversity of devices used by researchers. Many categories could be prepared for analysis of the investigation paths of presentations made during the symposium. Our goal, however, is to map the methodological ways that were handled, considering the close relationship between the research object, the selected artistic methodology, and the living experience of the researcher.

"Learning from experience, as a researcher, enables fundamental brokering between what I am, think, and do". Thus, Wolney Fernandes de Oliveira [22], from his childhood experiences, including letters with drawings exchanged with his uncle Gaspar, and the conflicts between artist and designer at the university, built a practice of education in constant movement between being an artist and a teacher. The blending of artistic and pedagogical processes has transformed his PhD thesis in a book/object and generated collective experiences that expanded understanding of drawing beyond the classroom and its mimetic representations.

With Wolney, drawing/design/experience became the field and form of research. Meanwhile, Alice Dalmaso and Marilda Oliveira de Oliveira [23] sought out the sculpting of words or the words arising from literature as fields of meaning. "Weaving as experimentation. Producing words, in a time of secreting what I can compose in a text, in a composition of writings". A similar path was taken by Luiza Christov, Giuliano Siqueira and Angela Teixeira [24], who aimed to "sketch a complicity unveiled between the discourses of literature and research".

In the first case, weavinggraphy is a form of artisanship in which words are woven, stitched like spiders and their webs, composing a research as an open and amenable plot-fabric of "dashed-woven-stitched strands of writing". Mia Couto fosters this inquiry, as do other authors. "Reading, writing, stitching amidst what we are now, what we carry as potential, is to become manufacturers

of words, meanings, and non-meanings”, and also “fabricators of silences, of instances of thought that bypass a representative way of being in the world”, report Dalmaso and Oliveira [23].

While the writer Mia Couto was the weaving driver, it is the poet João Cabral de Melo Neto that provokes writing as pulses of life, both making the encounter with the inventive genetics of literature. “The researcher learns with literature that the writing will arise from its moved presence in the world, from his hand, tongue, and intuition that his text will be invented by him, selecting and combining fragments of reality”, write Christov, Siqueira e Teixeira [24]. Words of narration and not description, words of touching, words of taking chance.

Another art-based research path possibility is enabled by photography, included as art-based investigative experience field in three presentations. For Olga Egas:

The photographic images used in Educational Research Based on Visual Arts describe, analyze, and interpret artistic and educational activities and processes; they constitute a means of representing knowledge; organize and demonstrate ideas, hypotheses and theories as do other forms of knowledge, while providing aesthetic information regarding these processes, objects, or activities. [25]

Her research digs deeper into the use of photographic-rehearsals in two works presented at the 2nd Conference on Art-Based Research and Artistic Research held in Granada in 2014. The studies highlight the aesthetic quality of photographic data and the construction of viewing methods that illuminate, under a different point of view, educational situations. These studies are driven by Joaquin Roldán and Ricardo Marin Viadel [2].

Vanessa Galvani and Mirian Celeste Martins [26] present the pedagogical documentation handled by Reggio Emilia as “a process of viewing in which teachers, by selecting what is valuable, leverage the voice of children. This precious material depends a lot on the attention of the teacher, the attention that listens, that questions, and not just what they wish to show the parents”. However, a new view of the photographs of classroom practices in children's education shows the potential of photography in art-based investigation [2], particularly with the creation of photo shoots.

The photographs, together with the narratives, were devices to retrieve traces of experiences lived in the process of research for a dissertation aimed at encircling the events in a public school by Victor Junger Silveira [27]. The intent of the study was not so much “composing a faithful portrait of what was experienced”, but rather “to present their paths and dramas”.

The tensions between images, context, and text were also translated by Cristian Poletti Mossi [28] as “ways of thinking a *smaller research*, or a *schyzoresearch*, which would be conducted through inventive overlapping, such as collages that create from translation of images and written lines”. In them there is a constant tension that throughout the research “affects the body” and “coerces thoughts into thinking”, creating a text that is in itself a laboratory. His research deviates from conventional format and creates something similar to a book-object (or text-object), in which verbal and imagetic texts, cross-connected and tensioned, dialogue, “thus offering the footprints of someone who becomes a researcher, artist, teacher, among so many other things, throughout life” [28].

The intervention or interaction with research objects were also highlighted and expanded by art-based research. Poetic learning objects were presented by Tatiana Fernández and Belidson Dias [29], who transform the concept of LO, Learning Objects. These are sometimes associated to new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and “may be instruments of hegemonization in education” [29], but including the poetic in them demands better understanding of the term. Delinking territories from proposals, instigating new ways of thinking and relating to knowledge, exploring poetic openings in learning situations in which the poetic is a “crack inserted in the artifact through which new forms of being are possible” [29]. And in these new forms, the mode of knowing is reinvented and rebuilt.

The preparation of teaching booklets for a distance learning graduation course by Francieli Regina Garlet and Vivien Cardonetti [30] proposes an invitation to the reader, surpassing single answers or limited possibilities, and are “ways of making openings, in which the reader can put himself and invent from himself, based on this singular meeting with the teaching booklet, creating new ways of thinking about himself and that which was naturalized”.

The contributions brought to this symposium through the presentations and the follow-up debates point out polyphony of devices and drive us to keep researching and practicing artistic methodologies of research in education.

6 PARTING THOUGHTS AND WISHES OF CONTINUITY

At this time, already progressing towards a conclusion and in an attempt to reflect on the contributions of artistic methodologies for education research, we highlight some aspects. Perhaps the biggest argument in favor of adopting these methodologies is to assume that research is a path built in the very journey of investigation, and in this case there is no methodology predating the existence of the process, that is to say, it is not about having a priori an investigation methodology on which to base the research, but rather the opposite. It is the process that will configure the methodology. The research as process constitutes a continuous sequence of facts or operations, which may lead to other sequences of facts or operations. That is to say, research as journey. This means a permanent disruption of established balances.



Fig. 2. Wolney Fernandes. *Carefully*, 2013.

To do research within these conceptions is to be in constant movement, in process, on the way. In this kind of investigation, the reader establishes relationships, makes his way, as the path is not previously set. Meaning is not restricted by the researcher - its options appear in his choices and hesitations, and there remains the relevance of deeper analysis of concerns that affect and are affected by subjects. They are "living" studies, something we want to continuously investigate in our lives, in the classroom, in artistic practices, in the visualities that are prepared and faced. They are, on occasion, collaborative constructions, involving collective discursive communities, and not so much original/author's individual paths.

Yes, rigor and commitment are part of research with artistic methodologies in education. Those who may think that because it is "art" everything is allowed are mistaken. The nodal issue, the pulse that drives the investigation, is that the questions of the involved subjects are immersed into rhizomatic paths, into thoughts and narratives loaded with meaning. These are studies that beyond all demands related to an investigation process, are nurtured and transformed by the artistic production and theorization throughout the whole journey. Something different from practicisism, placing theory and practice into action and in connection with the singular live experience of teachers/researchers/artists involved in educational processes.

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WEAVING INTERSECTIONALITY INTO DISABILITY STUDIES RESEARCH: INCLUSION, REFLEXIVITY AND ANTI-ESSENTIALISM

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Abstract

In recent years intersectionality has gained more and more attention among Disability Studies researchers. Using intersectionality as a tool creates opportunities to see how disability is imbricated with other categories of 'difference', such as race, gender, transnationality, age, sexuality, poverty, etc., categories that previously seemed so clear-cut, but are in reality complex, interwoven and embedded in space and time. Despite the notion of intersectionality is not new, methods for integrating intersectionality into Disability Studies research are in the nascent stages. This chapter explores three innovative ways to bring intersectionality into Disability Studies research, namely an inclusive, a reflexive and an anti-essentialist approach. The empirical part of this chapter is based on narrative research about inclusion and participation conducted in collaboration with people with disabilities in the Dutch speaking part of Belgium. While exploring the premises and challenges, we have tried to create new entries into the field of Disability Studies and to raise some vital questions.

Keywords: intersectionality, Disability Studies Research, research design, methodology.

1 INTRODUCTION

Much Disability Studies research has given voice to persons with a disability who are often marginalized by society and given limited, if any, decision-making power. This reputation, however, should be questioned, since a central weakness has been that despite its efforts to be inclusive, the traditional focal points of mainstream Disability Studies research tends to essentialize the category of people with a disability (Erevelles, 2011). People with disabilities are frequently assumed to share the same views, experiences, and priorities, regardless of gender, age, cultural background, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, religion, and other categories of difference. Consequently, primacy is given to 'disability' over other key elements, meaning that the interactions among all determinants are often neglected. Thus, the questions remain whether all people with a disability benefit, and which persons with a disability tend to be excluded from current research projects.

In response to these pressing issues, a growing number of Disability Studies researchers began to engage in intersectional research that explored multiple axes of difference. Continuous calls have been made to direct explicit attention to diversity among people with a disability (Jacob, Köbsell & Wollrad, 2010; Raab, 2007). Despite the fact that some researchers do incorporate other variables in their research, many continue to limit their analysis to comparing people 'with' and 'without' disabilities, producing binary data. Another pitfall is that they assign prominence to disability and use an additive approach that entails looking at various variables as isolated and dichotomous rather than interactive and mutually interdependent (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Moreover, it is tempting for many

researchers not to represent marginalized positions or voices, and design and produce research that tends not to benefit anyone who differs from the privileged 'norm' (Hankivsky et al., 2010). Another important pitfall in much Disability Studies research is that they tend to be inclusive, which is good and essential, but we argue that this is insufficient when conducting critical Disability Studies research. Not infrequently, this inclusive approach is the only focus. We believe that, when we really want to trace back the roots of Disability Studies, this inclusive approach needs to be completed with reflexivity and anti-essentialism, the two other approaches discussed in this chapter. To our opinion, Disability Studies research must be basically critical, embracing intersectionality as an important frame of reference. However, as illustrated above, we see that the concept of Disability Studies is frequently misused as the critical dimension is missing (Goodley, 2013; Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009). Consequently, we argue that inclusive, reflexive and anti-essentialist approaches are required for conducting critical and intersectional Disability Studies research.

This chapter will draw on current ongoing research of the authors in the Flemish Disability Studies context, in order to explore the premises and practical challenges of the processes involved in applying an intersectionality paradigm. In this context, we draw on a postmodern version of Disability Studies where different models of disability (medical, social, cultural) are considered and have their own right to exist. We recognize the existence of the different understandings of disability and undertake rigorous critical reflection of both positive and negative sides of each model. In promoting a multiplicity of readings, as Goodley and Runswick-Cole (2012) suggest, we seek to accept uncertainty, and to challenge the tendency of certain grand narratives to masquerade as truths in a postmodern era. Hence, the solution of problems cannot be conceptualized in dual thinking (in terms of 'or'), but rather in thinking in terms of 'and', as for us inspiring feminist researchers and philosophers such as Davies, Braidotti, Deleuze and Guattari as well. We seek to challenge dominant assumptions about living with a disability, and constitute disability as sites of construction and creativity rather than determination; we are thus opposed to the great binary aggregate: abled/disabled. With the latter, we make connection with feminist Disability Studies (Garland-Thomson, 2005), in tending to avoid impairment-specific or medical diagnostic categories to think about disability, and resist falling back on essentialist definitions of disability as inferior embodiment. By considering feminist Disability Studies, we go beyond explicit disability topics such as illness, beauty, genetics, etc. (Hall, 2011), and "reimagine disability", as Rosemarie Garland-Thomson states (2005, p. 1557).

Having observed the concern about these issues, we hope to provide a source of inspiration by conducting research that is based on an understanding of the complexities of people's lives and situations, and contribute to the development of concrete intersectional methodologies. While overall principles and abstract methodologies have already been discussed in the literature, debates are scarce regarding concrete intersectional methodology and analysis (Simien, 2007; Valentine, 2007). Our objective in this chapter is therefore to contribute to the development of concrete intersectional methods in Disability Studies research, based on three methodological approaches used in ongoing research of the authors, namely inclusion, reflexivity, and anti-essentialism. The three approaches will be exemplified, comments will be provided about the methodological choices, and the importance of intersectionality for understanding the research material will be elaborated. It is important to point out that the approaches do not represent a unified way or one-size-fits-all solution to conduct intersectional research, instead they offer opportunities to demonstrate the different ways in which an intersectional perspective can be applied to Disability Studies research. The common characteristic is that they can bring processes into the research leading to more differentiation and embracing complexities in people's lives.

2 INTERSECTIONALITY

An emerging paradigm for Disability Studies research is intersectionality (Goodley, 2010; Jacob, Köbsell & Wollrad, 2010; Söder, 2009). Intersectionality addresses a central feminist concern about capturing multiple positionalities, placing an explicit focus on differences among social groups (Davis, 2008). It seeks to illuminate various interacting factors that affect human lives and tries to identify how these different systemic conditions varying in place, time, and circumstance cooperate to reproduce conditions of inequality.

Although intersectionality theory emerged in the late 1970s, its roots can be traced back to Black Feminism. Female black pioneers such as Sojourner Truth (1851) used their own lives to illustrate the experience of intersectionality. In Truth's famous "Ain't I A Woman?" speech, she implied that all too often 'woman' actually meant 'white woman'. Later on, the term of intersectionality was coined in 1989 by Kimberlé Crenshaw, and since then has travelled the world as a promising concept offering understanding of how different axes of power intersect. The idea has caught the imagination of different disciplines (Sen et al., 2009), and is now recognized as a relatively new research paradigm (Hancock, 2007a) that builds on a number of assumptions regarding interactions of multiple systems at multiple and often simultaneous levels. First, intersectionality moves beyond traditional frameworks that separate social life into "discrete or pure strands" (Brah & Phoenix, 2004, p. 76). People have multiple roles and identities and being members of more than one 'group', they can simultaneously experience privilege and oppression. By no longer considering, for example, 'disability' in isolation from other categories (gender, religion, income, age, cultural background, family status, and many others), dynamic and contradictory power dynamics become more apparent and it becomes clear that no one social category is more important than any other. Second, intersectionality offers us a lens through which categories are viewed as mutually constituting processes. Rather than simply adding categories to one another, intersectionality strives to understand the unique experiences and perspectives at the intersection of two or more social or cultural categories and positions that intertwine as complex, overlapping, interacting, and often contradicting systems (Hancock, 2007b). Third, the concept of intersectionality can be used to analyze how power and power relations are maintained and reproduced. Intersectionality scholars tend to look to the perspectives and experiences of unmarked and unheard groups. In Staunæs' (2003, p. 101) words, "the concept can be a useful analytical tool in tracing how certain people seem to get positioned as not only different but also troublesome and, in some instances, marginalized".

Despite the fact that intersectionality is a topic that has caught growing interest, and produced a plethora of literature on the concept, there is a paucity of academic work on intersectionality from a methodological perspective (Bowleg, 2008; Cuádriz & Uttal, 1999; McCall, 2005). In particular, although the concept itself seems to have provided a solid framework, as Nash (2008) notes, there is a "lack of clearly defined intersectional methodology" (p. 4). With a number of studies undertaken (see, for example, Christensen & Jensen, 2012; Sen et al., 2009), the development of methodological practices has the potential to lead to both theoretical and methodological innovation in Disability Studies research.

3 THE RESEARCH

This chapter draws on an ongoing research project of the authors and discusses the challenges of implementing intersectional thinking into Disability Studies. The key aim of the research project is to examine the inclusion and participation of people with a disability in the Dutch speaking part of Belgium. Whilst people with disabilities account for 15% of the world population and thus comprise one of the biggest minority groups in the world (World Report on Disability, 2011), they seem invisible in most policy domains and have little participation in society. Before starting the research, we drew up a list of basic assumptions, in parallel with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons

with Disabilities: (a) research results should support the promotion and protection of the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities and to promote respect for their inherent dignity; (b) persons with disabilities are no longer viewed as 'objects' of charity, medical treatment, and social protection, but rather as 'subjects' with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights, making decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent, and as active members of society; (c) disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others; (d) we want to have respect for difference and accept persons with disabilities as part of human diversity; (e) we believe that full and effective participation and inclusion are important to empower individuals and to enrich society; (f) all activities (also research) should include the participation of persons with disabilities in parallel with the slogan: 'Nothing About Us Without Us'.

Within the research, narratives are collected and analyzed to map the subjective stories of people with a disability concerning their inclusion and participation. 383 persons with disabilities were interviewed in Belgium and the Netherlands (339 in Flanders and 44 in the Netherlands) to develop a picture of their personal experiences concerning inclusion/exclusion. The project was developed through a co-operative methodology (analogous to the framework of Van Hove, 1999) to access the perspectives and experiences of people with a disability, which have been often ignored or overlooked in research (Verdonschot et al, 2009). To map the subjective stories of people with a disability, open-ended questions across different facets of social life were discussed in an interview. The interview concerns two main questions: (a) "give examples of moments or situations where you had the feeling that you were taken into account, you were included, that people took you seriously"; (b) "give examples of moments or situations where you felt discriminated or oppressed". All the interviews were video recorded, producing more than 500 hours of footage. Students of Ghent University and the University of Antwerp were called upon to assist with recruiting participants and interviewing them individually at a safe place of their choice. The interviews lasted an hour and a half on average, were filmed and fully transcribed. The research population consists of 383 individuals with a disability, including 202 men and 181 women, from a variety of backgrounds, age, abilities and experiences. The formulation of Turnbull & Turnbull (2002) is used to define disability "... the new paradigm of disability is contextual and societal. A person has an impairment that becomes a disability as a result of the interaction between the individual, and the natural, built, cultural and societal environments. Accordingly, research into the natural, cultural and social environments is warranted and is targeted at enhancing enablement and preventing disablement..." Here we understand disability as a social construction that is not a unified, singular thing or a condition people have (Connor, Gabel, Gallagher & Morton, 2008), but a "quintessential post-modern concept, because it is so complex, so variable, so contingent and so situated. It sits at the intersection of biology and society and of agency and structure. Disability cannot be reduced to a singular identity: it is a multiplicity, a plurality" (Gabel & Peters, 2004, p. 588). We believe that disability cannot be placed squarely in society as the social model suggests (Oliver, 1990), but needs a more complete understanding of disability and impairment as social concepts, with recognition for individual experiences of the body over time and in variable circumstances (Crow, 1996).

It became clear that constructing an intersectional framework in this research entails thinking carefully about the research methodology. Reflecting on our own research experience, three methodological approaches are described and commented in the following section, namely an inclusive, a reflexive and an anti-essentialist approach.

4 THE INCLUSIVE PATH

Over the previous few years we have learned a lot from colleagues who we see as 'role models' while talking about inclusive/collaborative/cooperative research projects (Goodley, 2000; Walmsley & Johnson, 2003). In this inclusive approach, the research process and its methodologies must ensure that people with disabilities – about whom, and for whom the research is designed – are involved not simply as research subjects, but play a central role as researchers and research participants. We refer to inclusive research as a term that encompasses a range of research approaches that have traditionally been termed 'participatory' or 'emancipatory' (Walmsley, 2001). In Disability Studies research, the development of inclusive research, where people with disabilities are active participants, is now fairly common; its impact however has been limited (Walmsley, 2001). Inevitably, following an inclusive approach in research has not been without its critics and presents a number of ethical and methodological challenges: power differences in research relationships are fragile, giving voice can not be organized 'in a hurry', co-researchers with disabilities can get alienated from their own research process, language and reporting can be non-transparent for researchers and participants. However, analogous with our basic assumptions ('Nothing About Us Without Us') and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, we highlight the importance and challenge of involving people with a disability in the research; in order to keep the research relevant, honest, and representative; ensuring that the analysis is grounded in the lived experiences of the participants. With all involved in a process of mutual recognition and co-understanding, we try to create a discursive space where we could think and act with one another, doing research *with* rather than *on* or *for* people with disabilities, and co-constructing research where people don't get alienated from the process.

Promoting the engagement of participants in an inclusive debate on issues relevant to them, creates a productive dialogue on developing theory and connects with intersectional theory, participatory methods to achieve social change, and critical engagement with issues of power and structural inequalities (Kramer-Nevo, 2009). In particular, one of the key features of an intersectional perspective, and one which is a common theme in the inclusive approach, is that it involves the creation of coalitions and strategic alliances to alleviate social exclusion, marginalization, and subordination (Hankivsky, et al., 2010). Through the cooperative articulation of experiences and following each other's footsteps, participants and researchers got to know each other's interests and pluralist meanings while at the same time creating new ones. Moreover, in the inclusive approach, all forms of knowledge are valued as sources of data and information. It generally lends itself more easily to an in-depth investigation into the complexities and intersections of individuals' social lives. In enabling the discussion to ground itself in 'real life' where ideas can be discussed and tested against what is known, experienced, and understood (Fine, 2007; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2008), inclusive approaches are therefore particularly complementary to an intersectional perspective. It is key for developing a fully nuanced story and dissolves the distance between those labeled and categorized as 'them' or 'us', which automatically leads to communal activism and resistance in order to cultivate a desired social change.

Within our research project, the inclusive approach permeated different levels of the research process. Our belief that all participants have valuable knowledge to impart based on their personal perspectives and experiences led to different co-operative methods such as the organization of viewing days and participatory data analysis, the editing of the footage in close collaboration with the participants, the launching of a website with accessible research material and reporting, the participation of representatives with a disability in the advisory committee of the research, but above all, the continuous dialogue and intensive and close collaborative relationships between researchers and participants where opinions, interpretations, and experiences were shared. The participation through the viewing days is felt to be a crucial mechanism to achieve maximal participation from, and dialogue with, the participants within the research project. This dialogue and listening turned the known into the unknown and opens up new modes of knowing and being

(Davies, 2014). To illustrate, the researcher wrestled with the fact whether or not – and if yes, how – to use categories such as *inter alia*: age, cultural background, abilities, gender, in the research, without slipping into the trap of labeling people, especially assuming that people fall into one or two categories while realities are much more complex. Participant discussions on this topic during the viewing days, and preferred that some categories of difference should be named and used. They shared the opinion that although it is an ongoing challenge, it is difficult to talk about inclusion and discrimination without talking about people as though they belong in some categories. Beside this, participatory data analysis was also conducted on the viewing days to supplement participants' own analyses. Asking the research participants to help interpret findings brought new perspectives on data. For instance, the researchers' contribution to the analysis was discussed among the participants as the researcher saw the concept of 'role models' as an emerging theme out of the data material. Participants questioned this topic because the researcher had interpreted this theme in a passive way (namely, role models *for* people with a disability), whereas the participants saw themselves not only as recipients, looking up to others with respect and admiration, but also as people who can also be respected and admired *by* others and serve as a role model themselves (for others, with or without disabilities).

Although we have encountered some challenges when attempting to integrate these co-operative approaches into our research (with questions such as: whose voices get heard? Who is included? Who may be silenced within the research?), they provide important lenses for discerning the complexities in people's lives and for contributing to intersectional research. The study benefited immensely from the co-operative analysis and the constant dialogue with the participants, as it ensured that the research process and the findings were meaningful and respected the voices of participants themselves. So, briefly, we believe that intersectional Disability Studies benefits from an inclusive approach in research as it gives insight in the complexities and multi-layeredness of participants' lives and allows for the in-depth study of individuals' personal and unique social locations and experiences with power and privilege.

5 REFLEXIVITY

Reflexivity is intended here as 'storying' lived experiences and multiple intersections through individual and collective narratives together with continuously acknowledging your own positionalities, experiences, roles, and political and theoretical frameworks as a researcher. According to this point of view, stories of lived experience of both the subject and the researcher are co-constructed and negotiated between the people involved as a means of capturing complex, multi-layered, and nuanced understandings. These lived experience approaches have become increasingly recognized as an important strategy in Disability Studies research (Atkinson, 1997; Booth & Booth, 1996). A leading question in Disability Studies is how to capture and fully include the voices of persons with disabilities and how to provide opportunities for traditionally marginalized perspectives to be heard (Ashby, 2011; Barton, 2005; Garland-Thomson, 2005; Goodley & Van Hove, 2005). Together with the researchers' reflections on how their own narratives are built in relation to both the research and the subject, this reflexive approach has become a topic for discussion for Disability Studies research as positivistic research models are challenged (Rinaldi, 2013; Crooks, Owen & Stone, 2012). Rinaldi (2013), states that engaging reflexively with positionalities and how they affect the production of knowledge can be particularly beneficial in Disability Studies, aiding in the paradigmatic shift from research *about*, to research *by* and *for*, disabled people.

Together with Cole (2009), we believe that intersectional theory can provide major theoretical support for methodological approaches such as the reflexive approach which permit the exploration of multiple and individual experiences, different connections, new questions and alternative understandings. Meanwhile, storying lived experiences can often illuminate hidden complexities, and

invalidate simplistic binary generalizations and essentialisms. Elliot (1991) and Titchkosky (2007) argue that lived experiences have the power to disrupt dominant normative accounts of disability; they can illuminate the embodied reality and complexity of experience in contrast with professional and dominant biological models of disability. Taking personal experiences as a starting point, we agree with Hearn (2011) who in his study of men, suggested that it is necessary “to go back from masculinity to men”, that is, to allow space for embodied realities and experiences in stead of starting from subject positions. Also Butler (2011) states that there needs to be a distinction between subjects and individuals: the embodied experiences of real individuals taking subject positions are much more complex than social constructions (see also, Villa, 2011 “Embodiment Is Always More”). Different stories offer data which are open to different readings and interpretations and suggest multiple ways in which disability and other axes of difference might interact. Besides, next to differences between groups, storying lived experiences can take into account intra-group differences, an important feature of intersectionality following Crenshaw (1991, p. 1242). These narratives are helpful in reclaiming the stories of people with disabilities as suitable research material and allow differences among these experiences without the problematic emphasis on the universality of them.

Looking at reflexivity in our research, we can confirm that we concentrated on listening to a diversity of people with a disability in Flanders about their experiences on inclusion and participation in society. Our research material consists of 383 narratives from the participants with examples from their own lives, including their hopes and dreams, the many difficulties they face and their interests. This was one of the research project’s goals, as the voice and analyses of persons with a disability are largely absent from research and policy making. As such, they come across as human beings rather than stereotypes, and the findings are grounded in experience.

We argue that the narrative approach we used brings *insider perspectives* and makes room for complexities and embodied realities, illustrating that the method of interviewing allows us to bring intersecting categories into play in order to understand processes of power and inclusion. In addition, we have found that one of the best ways to get at the underlying power dynamics contributing to patterns of domination, oppression, and privilege is by raising open-ended questions across different facets of social life. By doing so we have obtained context rich information about power relations and subjectivity. It is for this reason, we acknowledge the arguments of Bowleg (2008) for a ‘qualitative stance’ of the researcher in order to address the complexities of intersectionality. He developed ideas for conducting intersectional interviews, like Cuádriz & Uttal (1999) who also state that “the method of feminist in-depth interviewing encouraged individuals to explain how they viewed their circumstances, to define issues in their own terms, to identify processes leading to different outcomes, and to interpret the meaning of their lives to the researcher” (Cuádriz & Uttal, 1999, p. 160).

We start by looking at the story of Tess, a 50 year old woman with a physical disability who said that she sometimes identified herself as a woman, other times as unmarried, other times as disabled, other times as childless, other times as having children, and other times as a committed swimming teacher, or all combined together in complex ways. She described the intersection of her identities in ways that makes these not discrete categories, but mutually constitutive and interacting. Seen through the lens of Buitelaar (2006), Tess speaks from different ‘I’-positions, she switches positions or combines different positions when she tells her life-story. Recognizing these circumstances as catalytic factors in the life of Tess is essential in understanding the ways in which various forces and events shape the lives of people with a disability. In the words of Prins (2006): the narrative scripts available for these different collective identities modify one another and produce a unique life-story. Prins argues further that narratives tell us how people draw on different categories in the construction of their life-story. She sees ‘identity’ as a narrative in which we both play the leading role and write the script (p. 281). Categories and their intersections therefore emerge in the way people tell their life-stories. From an intersectional point of view, due to listening to the lived experiences of Tess, this account shows us that disability is imbricated with other categories of

'difference' and that these axes of difference are neither hierarchically ordered, nor static or dichotomous.

Additionally, the narratives from the research project are ambiguous and they confuse and tackle certain stereotypes of people with a disability. They call for engaging reflexively with our own positionalities, and the subjectivity of the researcher, in the ongoing process of situating ourselves and acknowledging, or even making use of, our own filters and presumptions. For example, the interview with Titus, a young man with a visual disability, offers the interviewing student some unsettling moments during their conversation. At a given moment, the interviewer asks Titus how he types on his computer and if he needs a special keyboard for his visual impairment. Titus looks right into her eyes and responds very seriously: "I type blind (*touch typing*), just like you do I suppose?" This answer was very confusing for the interviewer, since it was a departure from the expected content, although the created hesitations and stammerings kept the mind of the interviewer open and responsive, just like when he said to her that he swims right, "right to *the other side of the swimming pool and then back*". The interviewer was disrupted because she expected other answers, but as a result she carefully monitored her own subjectivity. Concretely, reflexivity implies here "a critical consciousness of the discourses that hold us in place, that is, a capacity to distance ourselves from them, at the same time as we are being constituted by them; a capacity to see the work they do and to question their effects at the same time as we live those effects" (Davies & Gannon, 2006, p. 380). This interview highlights our active, and reflexive, interviewers who are aware of what we are bringing to the research, and how findings are affecting our own perceptions. These accounts also illustrate the strength of narratives because "it privileges the voices of everyday life over the researchers' pre-assumed theoretical perspective" as "researchers do not organize the world in the same way as those whom they are researching" (Cuádriz & Uttal, 1999, p. 168).

To sum up, we highlight the importance of reflexivity in research, the importance of narratives and the analysis of everyday life, and argue that taking this approach as a point of departure has potential for intersectional Disability Studies research. In attempt to unpack some of the complexities and power relations of research, this approach can function as a tool for revealing positionalities and can build a more careful representation of reality, one that is not assumed to be the objective, positivistic truth.

6 ANTI-ESSENTIALISM

The anti-essentialist perspective that Disability Studies endorses in various manifestations, is important for what it teaches us about disability and the social construction of human differences generally (Danforth & Gabel, 2007). Throughout history, the impairment label served as the signifier for exclusion, and a pathology where pre-social biological differences are suggested to mark off the 'impaired' from the 'normal'. In this view, social categories and dichotomies (impaired/non-impaired, normal/abnormal) are perceived as 'real' and fixed (Corker & French, 1999; Corker & Shakespeare, 2002; Price & Shildrick, 1998). From anti-essentialist perspectives, Disability Studies can shed new light on how institutions and researchers use the traditional deficit and deterministic approach to shape interactions and traditional parameters in the theorization of disability. Within the anti-essentialist outlook, "disability theory centers on the interrogation of cultural categories, discourses, language, and practices in which 'disability', 'impairment' and 'being normal' come into being through their social performance, and on the power that these categories have in constructing subjectivities and identities of self and other" (Thomas, 2004, p. 36).

The Deleuzoguattarian rhizome can offer us both a map and a metaphor for the field of (anti-essentialist) Disability Studies, a philosophical concept advanced by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987): "unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, there are no points or positions in a rhizome, such as those found in a structure, tree, or root. There are only

lines" (p.9). In contrast, modernist knowledge can be seen as a root tree. "The tree is already the image of the world, or the root the image of the world-tree...Binary logic is the spiritual reality of the root-tree" (pp.5-6). The rhizome opens up new ways of approaching disabled ways of living and *disability* as a word and concept, and can hold a wide variety of experiences and structured position in moments of precarious productive imbalance (Kuppers, 2011).

Following the intersectional perspective, it is important not to essentialize any group or assume that all members of a single social group share similar experiences, perspectives, and needs (Hankivsky & Cormier, 2009). On the contrary, an essentialist point of view assumes that the experience of being a member of the group under discussion is a stable one, one with a clear meaning, a meaning constant through time, space, and different historical, social, political, and personal contexts (Butler, 1990; Grillo, 2013). For example, the group 'women with disabilities' may vary considerably according to income, ethnicity, religious views, age, and geography and consequently may have very different experiences. Moreover, social categories such as disability, gender, age, ethnicity, class, geography, and so on are flexible and fluid. Following Burgess-Proctor (2006) and Weber & Parra-Medina (2003) in the intersectional perspective, we see that social categories are dynamic, historically grounded, socially constructed, and work at both micro and macro structural levels. Postmodern feminist theory has posited these categories as 'performative' (Butler, 1990). They are constantly re-made or re-written through daily actions and interactions. Meanwhile, a lot of research tries to 'fix' and solidify these performances, for example through a linear analysis. Categories and identities, such as disability, are inherently unstable and dynamic and interact with various other processes. They are not as universal and dichotomous as they look. They are created in relation, and are temporal and contextual. Furthermore, individuals speak from different positions, switch positions, or combine different positions. Telling one's life story thus consists of orchestrating the voices within us that speak from different positions and adjust the narratives for varying audiences (Buitelaar, 2006). Therefore, the concerns of people with a disability can only be properly understood when put within a dynamic context of relations and interactions. This can be likened to Prins (2006), when she makes a distinction between systemic and constructionist interpretations of intersectionality. The first interpretation assumes a more essentialist view on categories which are seen as static and rigid systems of domination. By contrast, the constructionist interpretation adopts a more relational and dynamic view of power where identity is not perceived as a matter of naming, but one of narration. People are both actors in and co-authors of their own life-stories and their positions are not static or given, but sites of constant struggle and negotiation. As such, the conceptualization of social categories involves a process of construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction (Staunæs, 2003) and asks for a more rhizomatic way of thinking in order to challenge the omnipresent perception of seeing people, society and concepts in linear arborescent ways.

In our research project, the narratives demonstrate no single reality, and consist of multilayered, contradictory, and performative stories in which different categories play a constitutive role. Overzealous focus on extrapolating the data in fixed themes is to commit the error of essentialist thinking and harks back to the positivist tenet that there is a single and fixed reality. So, in our attempts to consider the multiple layers of intersectionality, analyzing the data became more sophisticated than a linear thematic analysis. Viewing the narratives through a rhizomatic structure with multiple entryways, connections from one point to another and without beginning or end (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), allowed us to step away from understanding identities as essentialized or additive. Instead, it allowed us to see them as open, dynamic and in tactile relation with each other. This way of working is associated with the writing of a rhizomatic text where multiplicity and complexity is allowed (Sermijn et al., 2008). Deleuze (1995) writes of treating writing as a flow, as one flow among others, a flow meeting other flows. In writing 'messy texts' (Denzin, 1997), we tried to avoid linear figurations, simplistic dichotomies, and encourage the reader thinking rhizomatically, refusing "to impose meaning on the reader" (p. 224). As researchers, we had to be vigilant that we didn't pretend to reveal the complete truth, but only a part of the rhizome. Discontinuous, contradicting, and temporary elements from the narratives get a chance to contrast with linear

analysis. The purpose is to disrupt and resist the assumed and known, and give attention to the context and the subtle (Leafgren, 2009). Since there are many different readings possible in the analysis (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2012), we choose to make public the multiplicity of stories on the website. Just as a rhizome has multiple entryways, we gave people the chance to pick their point of entry. People could choose different pathways, select themes emerging from the stories, or select to view all the stories of, for example, women with a disability, or even decide to view the whole narrative of every person with a disability. By doing this, we try to show many possible truths and realities that can all be viewed, instead of assuming there is only *the* truth. People have to listen and look at the complexity, uncertainty, and the layers of contradiction that emerge when people with a disability tell their lived experience. As such, multiple, fracturing and dissident experiences can be found in a diverse array of examples.

To sum up, we believe that an anti-essentialist approach is useful in terms of providing contextual and detailed accounts that illustrate complex social relationships, dynamics, multiple realities, and contribute to an understanding not only of non linear relationships between concepts, but also the making of meaning and the processes behind those dynamics. In our opinion, this approach challenges the idea that the social world is neatly divided into categories, and contributes to the deconstruction of essentializing concepts of 'disabled' people in Disability Studies research. It helps researchers to identify, as an intersectional perspective demands, the full range of interlocking factors that affect the experiences of people with a disability.

7 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

It is increasingly recognized that there is a need for intersectional research so that the full range of experiences and perspectives of diverse people with a disability are not obscured. This intersectional framework provides important insights into the ways in which disability intersects with other identities, contributing to unique experiences. However, bridging theory and method is never an easy undertaking, yet, we see great value in making this attempt because intersectional theory can help us unmask the taken-for-granted knowledge that only reinforces hierarchies and exclusions.

In this chapter, intersectionality is addressed as a promising methodological tool to explore complex and interwoven categories of difference. By highlighting a few methodological approaches, namely an inclusive, a reflexive, and an anti-essentialist approach, the usefulness of an intersectional perspective for Disability Studies research is revealed. Inspired by our own empirical research experiences and struggles, the chapter aims to contribute to concrete innovative intersectional methodology and analysis. The three approaches illustrate how they can illuminate complexities of every day life, rejecting the separability of social categories, as they recognize the heterogeneity of people with a disability. By doing so, we aim to elaborate on the emerging, yet undertheorized, paradigm of intersectionality as an innovative framework that has the potential to counterbalance essentialist interpretations of the category *disability*.

The questions raised by these approaches expose some of the methodological realities of engaging with an intersectional framework. However, we argue that these approaches have the potential to generate complex knowledge and rectify common misperceptions about people with a disability. They can challenge the common Flemish discourse about 'us' and 'them', in the sense that they can eliminate stereotypes and boundaries. They encourage "a dialogical process where participants negotiate meanings at the level of question posing, data collection and analysis" and "encourages participants to work together on an equal basis to reach a mutual understanding" (Gitlin & Russell, 1994 in Bridges, 2001, p. 382). By doing so, the chapter makes reference to the feminist concern about capturing multiple positionalities, where researchers and participants engage in intensive encounters and relationships where values such as trust, openness, involvement, and connection are key concepts (Tillman-Healy, 2003).

Moreover, the three approaches imply an attitude of fundamental “not knowing” (Claes, 2014), an uncertainty that creates space for complexity and ambiguity, an “ignorance that does not show the way, but only issues an invitation to set out on the journey” (Biesta, 1998, p. 505). In Rinaldi’s words, by engaging in dialogue we enter “a process of transformation where you lose absolutely the possibility of controlling the final result” (Rinaldi, 2006, p. 184). This dialogue and listening turns the known into the unknown, and opens up new modes of knowing and being (Davies, 2014). This idea of experimentation concerns what is not yet known and demands more than recognizing or representing the truth (De Schauwer, 2011). This ‘becoming’ (Deleuze, 1994) rests on the capacity to let go of fixed identities and patterns, and to be open to the not-yet-known.

In this chapter, we do not want to rely on a strictly ‘methods as tools and techniques’ approach to research design, and then universalize or represent the discussed approaches as a unified way to conduct intersectional research. Instead, we demonstrate the various ways in which an intersectional perspective can be applied to Disability Studies research, by providing concrete illustrations of how an intersectional framework can be applied to research. It is our hope that our reflections can be a source of inspiration for other researchers striving to work from an intersectional perspective. In order for the full potential of intersectionality to be realized in Disability Studies research, methodologies need to be constantly questioned and improved, so that researchers can take a nuanced approach to power and the fluidity of categories. Here, we consider intersectionality as a chance to abandon Disability Studies research where impairment is the central focus, and we conclude that we have to retrace the roots of Disability Studies where the critical dimension and intersectionality should be an inherent component, and where the three approaches discussed in this chapter, namely inclusion, reflexivity, and anti-essentialism, should be fundamental principles.

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USE OF THEATRE LABORATORY FOR RESEARCH WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES PUPILS

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Abstract

The research was aimed to explore representations and meanings given by students with Specific Learning Disability on their scholastic, learning and life experiences.

Due to the mayor risk for psychopathological diseases and to a supposed more widespread existential worrying for those students, we intended explore towards a deeper knowledge of their point of view about their learning experience and relationships through an interpretativist approach. We chose a qualitative methodology, in a participant action research to develop a bottom-up process.

Participants were young pupils (9-14) who "lived with" Specific Learning Disability (SpLD). We were searching for the most ecological methodology, avoiding verbal interactions such as interviews, because of age and linguistic impairments. It was needed something working in an analogic way, allowing an expression closer to emotional dimension.

The choice was Theatre Laboratories (TL), allowing students with SpLD to express opinions and believes not directly, but delivering to scene and building it materially, feeling protected by the mask/character.

It was used techniques of improvisation, based on Theatre of the Oppressed, aimed to co-construction of a scene, allowing pupils to express "beyond" words.

Research work was developed with 6 groups (80 SpLD students, 10-18) involved in theatre laboratories to produce scenes about themes of research - school, relationship with teachers and peers, use of technologies, learning strategies- and after to discuss in focus groups contents come to notice in the improvisation, - life experiences, feelings and emotions connected with scenes, and strategies they used to cope with such experiences.

For data collection each work session was video-recorded (scenes created by pupils, their final discussions, notes of participants); the two researchers took notes during and after the session. All the data were transcribed and analyzed both during the research process and at the end. Data analysis was made with thematic categorizations with a narrative approach.

Findings were a first analisys of relevant themes (relationship with teachers and with peers, the idea of Dyslexia, emotions connected, the role of context) but also a list of themes/question important to be proposed to further groups.

Keywords: student with Special learning disabilities, meanings, theatre laboratory.

1 OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

The research is aimed to explore life and emotional experiences, and social representations [1] of students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SpLD)-such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, disortography and discalculia- interact with representations, attitudes and “naive theories” of teachers, parents and peers, without SpLD.

It is intended to explore how these elements can give a contribute to a pedagogical approach at the problem of SpLD and to educational strategies in class.

In the first part of research it is intended to explore the part regarding the students with SpLD themselves.

2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

ICD10 and DSM-V describe, at an international clinical level, SpLD as clinical diseases and give guidelines for diagnosis based on clinical deficit.

Italian Consensus Conference [2] and Raccomandazioni cliniche sui DSA (PAARC) [3] define Italian specific guidelines for identification and medical remediation. Italian Law 170/2010 define rights of students with SpLD and guidelines for education, mainly based on compensatory tools and dispensaries measures.

What can be highlighted is a medical approach both in figures, procedures, tools, words used for a difficulty that PAARC [3] as well invite to call as a Specific Characteristics of Learning. Pupils with dyslexia reading their own diagnosis ask why it is described in terms of deficit, remediation.

The most of the groups of research (e.g. in Italy Cornoldi [4] [5]) have been developing important remediation or personalized development programmes, based on developing their deficit abilities. Di Pietro [6] propose specific programmes to cope with emotion. These programmes, based on cognitivist model, tend to enforce the students with SpLD their selves, especially in learning and in the emotional context. In this kind of approach there can be a potential recovery of some ability, but it is not regarding the person in all his parts as well and in particular their relationship with “living with” a SpLD in their context of life and learning, and in the building of their personality.

Pupils with SpLD risk more than others to leave school and to fail in learning process. Vecchini [7] makes a review of scientific literature regarding the mayor grade of risk for psychopathological diseases, such as anxiety disturbances, depression, behaviour disturbances.

Moreover, all these approaches and the general approach in Italian process to afford the problem, doesn't involve the “voice” of students: it is difficult to hear their voice both because they have a scholar failure, low awareness of what they are suffering for and they feel needs not immediately readable; more, for an ethic question that makes difficult to talk with them because at risk and fragile just because of and regarding the objects of the research.

The line of research developed in English speaking countries especially with Spreen [8] and evolved in more recent researches, analysed history of lives focusing on highlighting critical factors, such as protection factors and vulnerability factors [9] throughout lifelong [10] [11] [12] [13] [14] [15] [16]. In the international panorama some qualitative studies with young adults explore through Life history or interviews [11] [12] [13] [14] attitude toward SpLD, in particular Dyslexia, and life course [10], in particular towards the different critical step of life and factors contributing to success and risk.

In Italy Ruggerini [15] [9] and Frassinetti [16] and their researches with adult with SpLD, with the methodology of Narrative Medicine, tried to explore the elements of the context that made SpLD person succeed in their formative life and in achieving a psychophysical balance.

In previous researches we supposed a more widespread existential worrying for those students expressed denying the SpLD influence or existence in their life, refusing any kind of help or support, risking an “adhesiveness” of self-representation with SpLD image, an iper-razionalization, behaviours of rebellion, aggression, provocation, social isolation [17] [18].

Other international studies confirm that young adults with SpLD define it an “hidden disability” [19]; that they don’t identify with the term “disability” or “disease” [20]; that they would imagine to change the word dys-lexia [21]; are observed attitudes of denial [10] and disavowal [22].

In literature itself it is recommended to develop and enlarge involving research based on history of life and educational experiences impacting and developing success or failure [11], the necessity of looking at the “wise” of individual experience [24], often ignored by neuropsychological research, an ethical and meaningful access to students’ voice [23] [25].

More, I notice a lack in Italian scientific literature in a pedagogical perspective, in particular for attention to the area of prevention, wellness, inclusion, aimed to develop a school approach more inclusive towards SpLD students [26], not only with a medicalization of dyslexia.

Theoretical framework of the research is based on a socio-constructivist and ecological paradigm. A starting basis is offered by a question in the PAARC [3] inviting to consider SpLD as “specific feature of learning”; then to change further focus from the disturbance or feature of the single individual, who has to work for a remediation to deficits, to a different attention to the social context in which SpLD is expressed [25] [26].

It is intended to refer to concepts proposed by disability studies [27], such as social model of health [10], the stigma [28], the definition of “norma” [29], the “oppressed social group” [30] based on a socio-materialistic analysis [11].

Wider references are oppressed Pedagogy of the Oppressed [31] and theory of social representation [1].

3 QUESTION OF RESEARCH

Question of research regarding this first part of the research intended to explore: which are life and emotional experiences of students with SpLD toward their SpLD, particularly regarding some “critical” events of their learning and life experience? Which are the representation they have of SpLD?

How they consider SpLD and share with others? How they react at the diagnosis? How they feel in some critical events?

4 INTENDED METHODOLOGY, METHODS, INSTRUMENTS

We intended to explore towards a deeper knowledge of pupils’ point of view about their learning experience and relationships through an interpretativist approach. We chose a qualitative methodology, in a participant action research [32] [33] [34] [35] to develop a bottom-up process.

This aimed to give “right of expression” to the main characters of the problem and to develop a possibility of changing of contexts: the shared building of meanings through an emic approach, allowing to analyse reality not in an “objective” way, according to post-positivistic approach, but with the same eyes of who is involved in the problem studied [36] [37]; giving possibility to the point of

view of whom “living” the SpLD considered not like an “objective reality” but like a subject who develop the research with.

On the other side it is intended to refer to the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis [38] to develop a meaning building.

5 RESEARCH DESIGN

Participants were young pupils (9-18) who “lived with” Specific Learning Disability.

Pupils involved were 80, from 9 to 18. They were divided 6 different groups.

Class attended were from 4th Primary school Class to 5th High school.

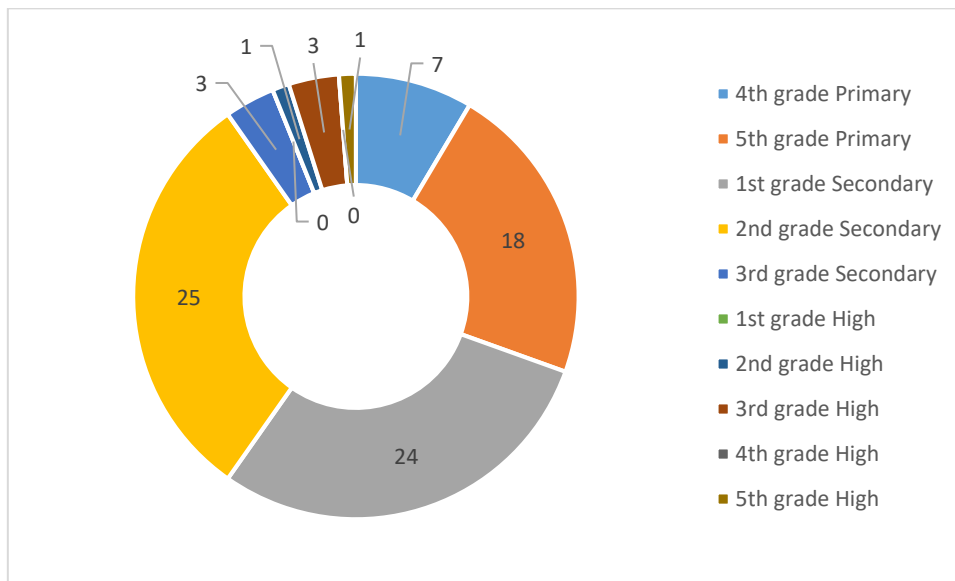


Fig. 1. Number of participant per grade

As researchers we thought to search for the most “natural”, ecological and clear methodology, even for an ethic consideration: it is not possible to face directly children some potentially problematic questions, because of their underlying suffering about it. As well, we wouldn’t have used verbal interactions such as interviews, because of their young age, because of linguistic impairments often associated with SpLD. Moreover, we wanted to avoid the problem of “politically correct” [39] answer reporting just answer taken of the expectations of parents, teachers, researchers.

The aim of “invading in the imagination” [40] is an in-deep work and words are not enough. We needed something working in an analogic way, allowing an expression closer to emotional dimension.

There was a first part of research [41] that explored different possibilities of “talking” with children: there were involved children during some educational activities specific for SpLD, such as ICT Laboratories for the use of computer in summer camps. At the end of the period, starting from an evaluation of the experience itself in a focus group of few children, there were emerging some opinions about SpLD, their experience, their beliefs and the possibilities offered by the ICT. The form was that of focus group, or of few semi structured collective interviews, but not all children participated or achieved in expressing their idea (40%); moreover, they answered only to some relevant question basing on their interest, ability of comprehension/expression, awareness.

Another step [41] was made involving children in using directly camera and video to make interview each other, or to create and write stories about dyslexia and then to act and record them. This

activity, who had an impact in the development of awareness, motivation of express themselves about these theme, and had also didactical impact, was too long, too complex and not enough structured. Some group were not so motivated, not so able in writing or projecting and lost the possibility of expressing their opinion; researchers had not means to guide them with techniques to achieve a manufact, a product or telling their story.

The final choice was Theatre Laboratories, that allowed them to express opinions and believes not directly, but delivering to scene and building it materially, feeling also protected by the mask/character and so feel more free of expressing.

It was used with techniques of improvisation, free referring to the Theatre of the Oppressed [42], of co-construction with others of a scene, not staging a text, but allowing pupils to express them beyond words. The main references referred to the theatre as a ritual and as cultural building process [43] [44] [45] [46]. The theatre as a performance involving bodies and will, with elements typical of the Italian animazione teatrale, used in 60s and 70s also in the social process of closure of mental institutions [47].

Method was for some way similar to the interaction described in the Narrative Interview [48], as it is needed to “follow” participants and something is going to be built together, depending on the hearing and attention given to them and to the creative / welcoming attention. In the development of the path, awareness and attitude were built and probably changing for the fact it was together with others and listened.

This process involved constantly the two researchers, who worked in interaction and empathy with pupils, giving stimulating situation, in a progressive co-construction of the findings that pupils, at the beginning of the work, were not aware about nor ready to express with words. It allows to share an experience about which discuss in focus groups [49] contents come to notice in the improvisation, - life experiences, feelings and emotions connected with scenes, and strategies they used to cope with such experiences-.

For data collection each work session was video-recorded (scenes created by pupils, their final discussions, notes of participants); the two researchers took notes during and after the session. All the data were transcribed and analysed both during the research process and at the end.

Themes were developed from an analisis of what each group was like to express, so tried to follow [48] and propose a theme to develop what they said previous time.

Data analysis was made with thematic categorisations with a narrative approach [48] [49] for each group, with a progressive joining and generalization of issues and themes. There were also highlighted exceptions, “singular expressions”. The general information was put in conceptual schemes. Then schemes for each group were compared and were followed common themes and differences, represented in a final synthesis.

There was not made any difference of the groups because of age.

6 FINDINGS

We could define to have developed a specific structure, thanking to these first groups [41]: the structure of Theatral Laboratories involves a part of Training – body, materiality, contact-, then a Create step in which scene are invented on the scene by the group, focusing a “problematic” situation. Then the Solution through particular techniques: introducing a character, changing position, suggesting some words to actors. After that a Review, out of the scene, where group was guided to elicit and discuss themes emerged, so just some parts of analisis and interpretation of theirs and others mise-en-scene. Then Reflect step, the moment in which is possible to discuss in group and share similar or connected experiences. Pupils are asked to comment and share it in

group, quite similar to a focus group, but not so strict in structure, or to answer to some question (not pre-structured, but based on scene), or to write a sentence about some topics connected with the scene. Depending on the involvement and availability, some pupils could express, in this discussions, their beliefs and life experiences about similar situations. This part is quite similar to narrative interviews because researches just try to make it easy to express e tell stories, what they or others' think about, make question, developing a subjective attitude and habit to interpret their own experience.

And finally close the meeting with a Project part, where pupils think about possible strategies, changes, ideas to bring out easy for them to be dyslexics

An extreme summary of findings is in the scheme below in which we counted number of occurrences on a similar theme – in particular how many groups afforded a singular theme and how many occurrences of the theme in general.

We can see that most occurring are the themes what SpLD is; having a SpLD and emotion connected with SpLD.

Other relevant themes in terms of occurrences is relationship with teachers. Relationship with peers seems to be less relevant in term of number, but on a qualitative level appeared to be more important for students, even if emerged in the late part of the work with group.

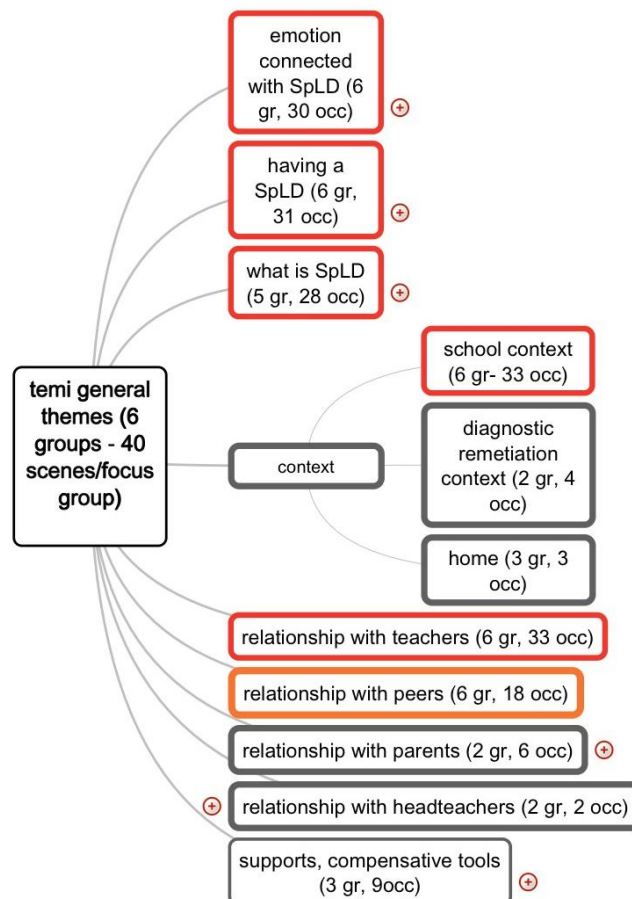


Fig. 2. theme occurrences in the 6 groups

So in a further synthesis, we could find some relevant themes in some main areas: relationship with teacher, relationship with peers, that is the more relevant in terms of importance for students, different ways of perception regarding SpLD and some emotions connected. Their idea of relationship with teachers describe teachers who often avoid to have a real relationship with students, who make them feel humiliation because of their difficulties, but there is also some teacher who accept and help their difficulties.

Relationship with peers for them is the most important: bullying and derision are the most frequent attitude they feel, together with a frequent argue about injustice regarding measures and ways of evaluation of SpLD student by teachers.

They often feel inadequate in general and having a poor efficacy in school activities; but they also imagine possibility of success by changing and acting in context, they find as a force point their imagination and intelligence. They also propose some metaphors to express SpLD. More frequent emotions connected with SpLD are humiliation, loneliness, shame and worrying about making mistakes.

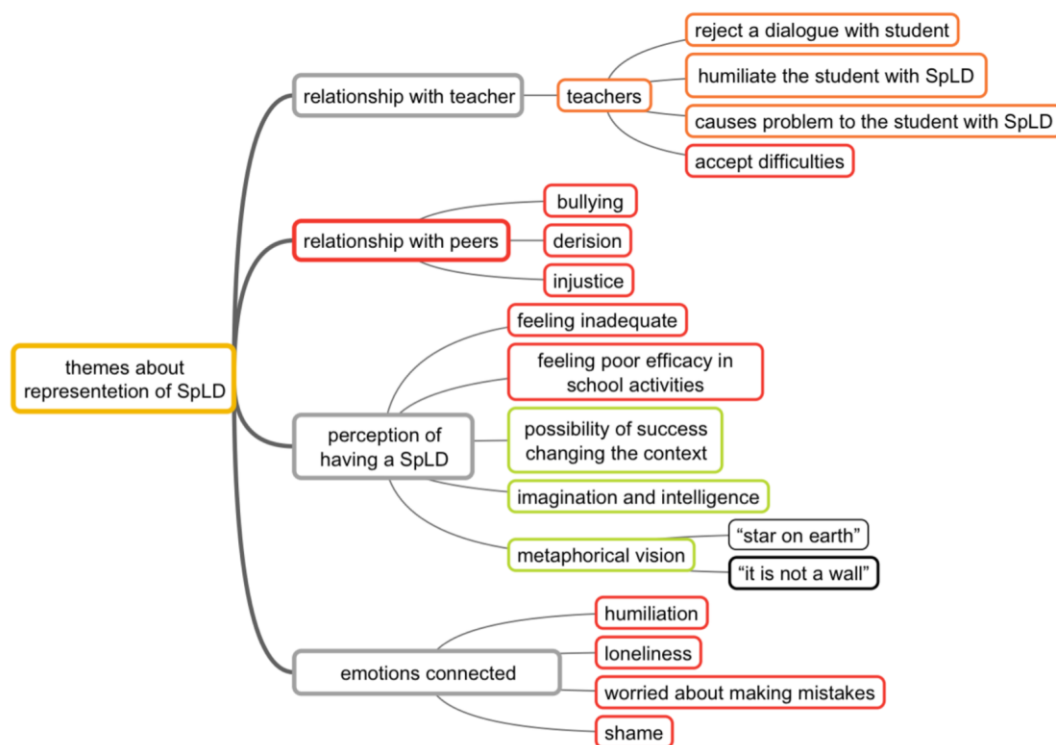


Fig. 3. synthesis of themes

From this analysis, we can derive a series of relevant themes to explore in deep with further groups of students with SpLD, but also that would be very important to explore with peers, who sounds to be so important. Nowadays, approach to SpLD in Italy gives a lot of importance to the role of teachers and parents, but we can see that peers are more relevant, as they constitute a comparison for their own building through “mirroring”. Instead they feel attacked and different from peers if things go wrong.

Themes important to afford with future groups systematically, even if in a semistructured form and preserving the way each group needs to follow can be:

1. relationships, in particular with peers and teachers, regarding the idea and way of sharing of SpLD;

2. representation of SpLD and Dyslexia also in the form of metaphors, eventually connected with concrete experiences and context students feel (e.g.: sport, movies, characters)
3. the role of strategies and supports – which, when, how to be used and which impact on peers and teacher - their eventual idea to afford difficulties in the context;
4. educational context: how organization of classroom, practice of lesson and evaluation, the role of teachers and of didactical mediators can influence
5. self-representation and influence of SpLD on it

7 SIGNIFICANCE AND APPLICABILITY IN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

It is shown how the use of Laboratory could be a tool of research with young pupils with language impairment and SpLD. We can consider a point of view that both for ethical and practical /educational consideration is important to involve.

This findings, a part constituting a first realization of the research project, was fundamental to have a first exploration of relevant themes and questions. These were organized to be developed in the following part of research to be more systematically and be extended also to teachers and parents to be explored.

8 LIMITS

Because of qualitative dimension in-deep number of participants and selection of sample can't have a statistical significance of generalization. In this study also the proposal of themes was not systematic as it was at the beginning and because of the method.

Moreover, the staff that can develop this research also in other future context is particular, as have to be expert of the theme connected to dyslexia but also in the use of theatre techniques in educational context.

9 CONCLUSIONS, EXPECTED OUTCOMES OR FINDINGS

A methodology regarding the structure of the Theatre Laboratory and relevant themes was defined. More over, some relevant themes regarding SpLD were explored with some group of pupils.

This was a first step toward a systematic mapping about students with SpLD and a hypothesis of interconnection between attitudes, representations, believes of different groups.

It is expected to extend systematically this study to other groups, making comparison based on age, gender, nationality.

It is expected in the long distance to develop a reflection about a different model of educational approach to SpLD in the school, through a sharing of experiences and exchange of different point of views about the specific experience of life each students is doing, and not only following the predictions of his/her SpLD diagnosis profile and projecting "on their heads" without listening to their voice. The aim is developing different strategies for a more inclusive school, to change the culture of differentiation toward a cooperative and constructive way of learning.

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