



Participatory Arts in Research and Practice:  
Facilitating Convivial Spaces with Migrants to  
Create Democratic Processes for Social Integration,  
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# Research Rational

Our research challenges such pathologizing representations. The theoretical starting point for our work is that migrant mothers perform caring and cultural aspects of citizenship ([Erel, 2011](#); [Erel and Reynolds, 2014](#); [Erel, Reynolds and Kaptani, 2011](#)).

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1468794117696029>

Our conception of citizenship goes beyond a legalistic notion of formal rights and duties to include wider sociological meanings of participation and belonging, which challenge hegemonic racialized and gendered norms of 'citizenship'.

# Convivial living

- ▶ Based on the Latin roots for 'with' and 'living', the term 'conviviality' has long been associated with sociable, friendly and festive traits. Yet, from cultural studies and philosophy to urban geography, sociology and anthropology, its current usages convey a deeper concern with the human condition and how we think about human modes of togetherness. (Nowicka & Heil, 2015).
- ▶ Conviviality has a conceptual family resemblance to several other notions currently in public and academic circulation, including cosmopolitanism, civility, trust, multiculturalism, diversity, integration, cohesion and social capital, whereby conviviality appears as an alternative to cosmopolitanism (Eurocentric and Colonial) (Gilroy 2004).

# Contextual Background

- ▶ Migrants families are often overlooked in public debates about citizenship and democracy. They mainly become visible in discourses of integration ([Hack-Polay, 2016](#)).
- ▶ Racialized groups of migrant families are portrayed as posing a risk to social and cultural cohesion, or standing in the way of their children's successful integration into society, therefore threatening the very foundations of democracy (see [Cameron, 2016](#)).

# Epistemological view

- ▶ The study aimed to bring migrant mothers' subjugated knowledges into dialogue with researchers' and practitioners' knowledge through embodied practices.
- ▶ The epistemological framework for the study acknowledges the situatedness of knowledge ([Haraway, 1988](#)) and views knowledge as embedded in the lives and experiences of participants.
- ▶ Participatory theatre as research method 'creates' knowledge that are performative, embodied and dialogical (Kaptani & Yuval Davis, 2008).  
<http://socratesonline.org.uk/13/5/2.html>

# Embodied Transformative Pedagogy

- ▶ The body is a site of knowledge and is socially and culturally constructed. The body embodies identities and its manifestations and vice versa. In aesthetic pedagogy it is the creator of a performance.
- ▶ The body's language is doing so using the body in research you are doing and by 'reflecting on the body' you read its actions, desires, contradictions and its silences.
- ▶ Physical theatre (Lecoq) Image theatre(Boal) and Playback Theatre(Fox) engages the participants' bodies as are present intentionally in the creation of performances but also in a reflexive capacity when is part of socially orientated goal.
- ▶ The body in physical theatre doesn't only describes, explains or show but becomes!
- ▶ The body becomes a subject of knowledge, a creator of knowledge in theatre for social research and pedagogy.

# Body in ETP

- ▶ **creating images (without words) with the body like corporeal installations of the social world where we reflect on self and public practices of everyday life, where we enter with our bodies to explore them and change them. These static Images when are entered by us and moved reveal and create practices.**
- ▶ **The body moves, explores, becomes, reveals and experiments with the 'familiar' and 'normative' to defamiliarize it so we can reflect on it aiming at re-appropriating it and changing it. The Aesthetic processes in social research are there to reflect and intervene to sociocultural processes.**

# Aesthetic Transformative Pedagogy



- ▶ Playback Theatre      Group work  
                                 Forum Theatre,
- ▶ Physical theatre      Visualisations      mapping  
walking,      reflective images      Talking to the  
panel
- ▶ Letters to..      Installations of boxes  
                                 circle of stories



# Playback

celebrates everyday stories

creates reciprocity, care and respite,

creates a deep attention

engaged public through narrative dialogue

generative themes (Freire) to reflect on and act upon.

An affective exchange between narrative and

performance, between telling, seeing and acting.

# Forum Theatre practice

There are embodied Suggestions for an alternative course of action through interventions in the performance.

Trying out different solutions to the problem

Creating different knowledges and different ways of engaging with the situation. Generating local knowledges.

Social contextualisation of personal experiences as it addresses structural oppressions.

Free the bodies from the internalised feelings of guilty, self loath, self blame and fear that are projected on and attached to 'oppressed'.

Build solidarity and collective action to address the oppression through time.

# EAP with groups in research

- ▶ **Bringing in the school environment a pedagogy that contributes to “consientization” (Freire 1972) where the participants become the subjects of knowledge by ‘performing’ their neighbourhoods, family relations, youth identities and social environments.**
- ▶ **Becoming the subjects of knowledge by creating performances through embodied and dialogical means of reflection and action.**
- ▶ **The participants became a group through these methods and found a ‘safe’ space through the structures of participatory arts to share their experiences through physical, visual and visceral processes of theatre).**
- ▶ **Liberated from the self blaming and the internalised anti migrant, racist and sexist attitudes from services and state discourse that perpetuate social injustice and inequality.**
- ▶ **Create convivial spaces to address their issues with social workers, policy professionals, politicians and vice versa**

# Methodology

- ▶ There is a critique about the colonising extraction of knowledge and the objectification of the research subjects as data that can be validated by the experts by turning them to rationalist positivism Eurocentric based world views while they exclude 'othered' realities and the processes they are created from. Furthermore, Hegemonic Eurocentric Knowledge can only be protected through being owned by individuals or institutions that perpetuate colonisation.

# Decolonising methodology

- ▶ In response to this domination a different construction and dissemination of knowledge that comes from the global south (Santos) and indigenous knowledge (Smith) is offered that resembles arts practice as the process is
  - ▶ relational and reciprocal,
  - ▶ collectively generated,
  - ▶ communicated orally and corporeally,
  - ▶ openly shared and used.
- ▶ It is an informal innovation as the performance making that comes from collective creation.

# ETP for embodying decolonising methodology

- ▶ In order to work towards developing a more inclusive knowledge, it is critical to engage multiple and subjugated world views and overcome the 'obstacles' of the recorded word, rational structure, representation and coherence. One way of accomplishing this is through highlighting the significance of the BODY as an important locus of learning.
- ▶ The act of reading the socially constructed body ('othered' 'decentered' racialised, affective, outplaced, subjugated, knower, active, ambivalent) will move us from an object to a subject – the liberated body'.

# Challenges in using art in academic research

- ▶ The dominance of positivism knowledge, sets the operation of epistemology that values the creation of an 'objective' and measured knowledge than different ways of seeing, performing and living together in the same world in question.
- ▶ Decolonising knowledge-Overcoming the 'obstacles' of the recorded word, rational structure, representation and coherence as the only way of constructing knowledge.(Santos, Smith, Law)
- ▶ Funding shapes the research resources. Linear time and prescribed outcomes that can be translated to impact than process and time for developing relationships and collaborations for transformative processes.
- ▶ Research practices that compartmentalise, instrumentalise, extract, alienate and dominate reinforced by the neoliberal context of managerial audits, hypersubjectivity , outcomes driven, hegemony of skills gaining and adaption to global markets

# Suggestions

- ▶ Go against outcome driven compartmentalisation of aesthetic process. If you want to do this work then have the time, energy, bodies and resources to do it. Aesthetics are not commodities to bargain with but transformative processes.
- ▶ Don't Make them a spectacle, an object to be 'looked at' and one way communication process-(policy day image).
- ▶ Do not Portraying the lives of people as problem (by compartmentalise the process and show it to an audience that doesn't share the same sociocultural positions). Which stories? How are portrayed? Where are they shown? For which audiences?
- ▶ Don't use aesthetic transformative pedagogies to extract data (take stories)-colonisation of research. It is a process of transformation, healing, reciprocity, valuing knowledge and experiences. It is completely different methodology and process to that of interviews and focus group so have in mind a very different research design.



# Recomendations

- ▶ Work interdisciplinary, take risk to train yourself in different methods and form collaborations even if this means interdisciplinary anxiety.
- ▶ Think always what has been absent from the research process.
- ▶ Inform yourself through Feminist, postcolonial and ANT epistemological theories their intersections and their critics of each other.
- ▶ Engage yourself in a pedagogy of transformation and care (Think why do you want to do it?)
- ▶ Make research/fieldwork 'alive' and engaging by the use of methods that include different aspects of the world and human experience. The physical, the visual and the visceral.
- ▶ Ask to spot what can be changed-Encourage impromptu reflection and analysis
- ▶ Multiply and contextualise the personal/individual experience
- ▶ Attempt to break 'expert' and 'community' witnessing! Who is the expert?\_who can be a 'knower' and what things are 'known' (see Harding 1987).
- ▶ Is language on its own sufficient to validate knowledge?