CUADERNOS DE APOYO | 42

ARTEFACTS FOR COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH *with youth*

Editors
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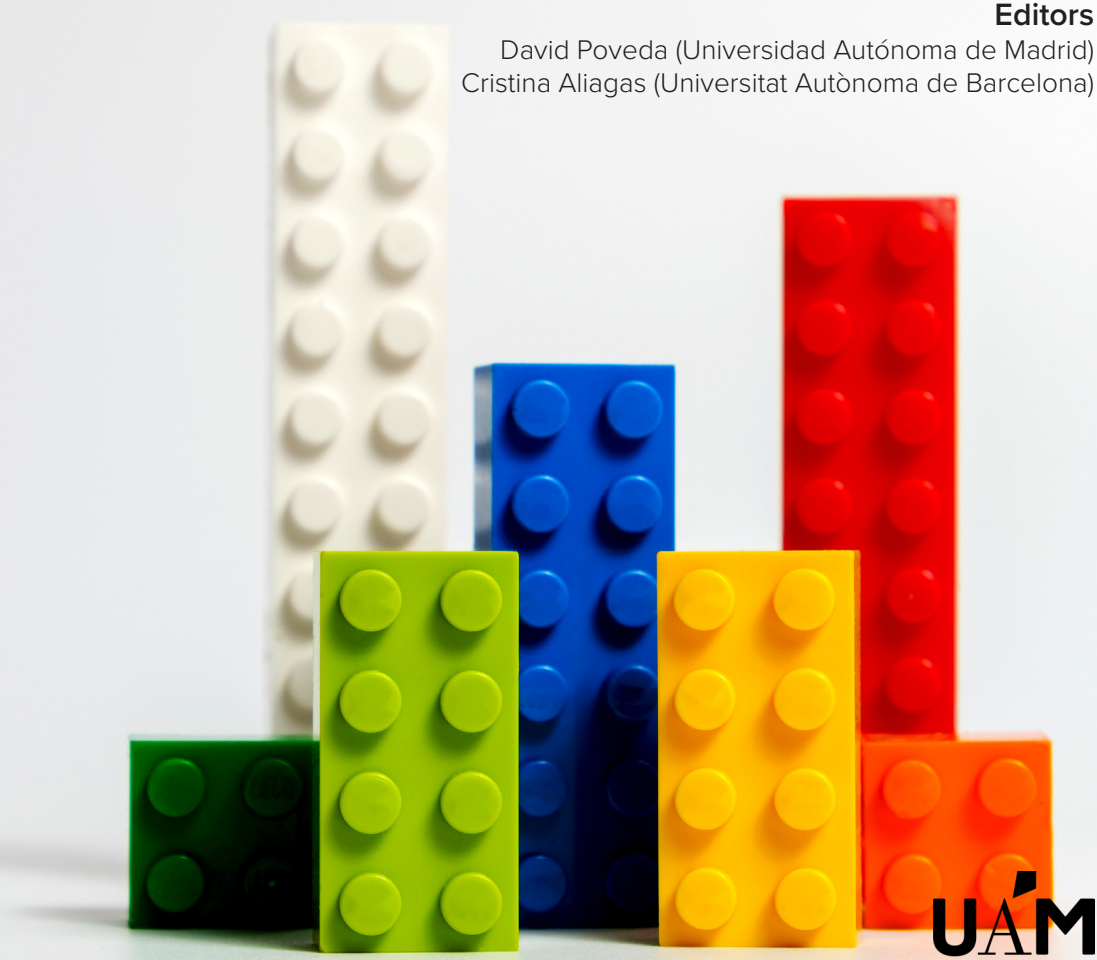

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION: ARTEFACTS FOR COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH WITH YOUTH

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1. Introduction

The lives of youth are still a source of curiosity for social researchers despite the persistent effort in a wide-range of disciplines within Social Sciences to understand their experiences and viewpoints. Research in Education, Sociology, Anthropology, Linguistics or Psychology -to mention some- have developed a range of theoretical frameworks and methodologies, and have contributed with many and detailed descriptive accounts of youth's social, linguistic and cultural experiences. However, recent calls for the inclusion of youth's voices in empirical research are challenging this accumulated knowledge and arguing for more participatory approaches to understand the everyday lives and perspectives of young people. A participatory agenda in research with youth implies acknowledging that young people are social actors in their own right and that they might play a significant role in the process of research itself. It also entails a paradigm shift, moving from a conceptualization that positions young people as <<research subjects>> to accepting them as <<active partners>> in the process of research. This paradigm shift carries with it the need to revisit quite fundamental aspects of research such as the ethical and power relationships between participants and researchers, as well as rethinking how knowledge is generated in research, its production, representation and ownership. Artefacts are arguably a key element in participatory research as they mediate the co-construction of knowledge in empirical studies.

This edited volume focuses on artefacts as a substantial, integrative piece/axis in the research design and process of data gathering and data

interpretation in participatory research approaches. In the context of an empirical work, an artefact can be an object that is gathered or a newly created one. Artefacts gathered during fieldwork include (im)material objects that already exist in social life (i.e. personal or official documents, virtual spaces, cloth, a song, drawings, everyday objects, etc.) and carry with them cultural, social and personal situated meanings. According to Material Culture Studies (Hicks and Beaudry eds., 2010), social artefacts or personal objects have particular meanings and stories associated with them that people might bring as meaningful information to the research space. This idea of artefacts embedded in cultural meanings is clear when thinking of ethnologists or archaeologists who try to build insights on past cultures and societies by interpreting the attributes of cultural artefacts that remain into the present to get information on aspects related to technology, economy and social structure. Gathering social artefacts and understanding the values and meanings attached to them is also an essential task of social researchers and ethnographers in their endeavour to understand contemporary social life.

Research-driven artefacts are products of the research process itself and are typically generated as a result of participants' collaboration in fieldwork or their involvement in particular tasks oriented toward creating specific artefactual outputs (i.e. a poster, a text, a physical object, etc.). In this way, research-driven artefacts are aligned with participatory research models that acknowledge social interaction and communication within the fieldwork space itself as opportunities to access social meanings and the viewpoints of social actors involved in the research process. This perspective is also aligned with a socio-constructivist understanding of knowledge as a shared endeavour rather than an individual accomplishment. In addition, research-based artefacts can be created by individuals or co-created by participants in the study, including the researcher as a participant embedded in the process. The chapters in this book explore some of these questions and build from, among other sources, the theoretical traditions that we briefly review here.

2. Theoretical approaches to the conceptualization of artefacts in qualitative-ethnographic research

Objects and artefacts have been conceptualised in different ways in the theoretical and methodological traditions that are relevant to the re-

search projects presented in this edited collection. Each chapter will introduce the theoretical background of their project and unpack in detail how particular research objects were threaded into the research process. Nevertheless, in this section we briefly review key traditions that have engaged with a conceptualizacion of artefacts; identify the central constructs stemming from each tradition; and suggest ways in which these traditions could be put into dialogue. Hopefully, this will help situate the wider debates embedded into each of the individual projects gathered in this book.

Socio-Cultural Theory drawing from the work of Vygotsky has paid particular attention to artefacts and tools within an understanding of development and semiosis as *mediated* processes (Vygotsky, 1978). From this perspective, the relationship between human beings and <<the world>> is not direct but is, rather, structured in a triangular system in which <<tools>> mediate the relationship (Rodríguez and Moro, 2002). This conceptualization builds on a Marxist framework and understands mediation as a transformative process of both the <<tool user>> and the social and material world upon which human beings act. A Vygotskian conceptualization of tools includes symbolic systems (language, literacy, texts and other forms of representation, etc.), which become increasingly relevant through development and have been the primary focus of socio-cultural oriented developmental research. It also, obviously, includes physical objects and artefacts. Given the focus of this book, we would like to highlight three contributions of a socio-cultural approach to artefacts.

First, a socio-cultural perspective allows understanding artefacts as *historically* shaped, with meanings and uses sedimented and conventionalized through time, space and social practice into specific tools and objects (Cole, 1998). Second, a socio-cultural perspective points towards an understanding of social interaction that very often must be considered *triadic*, as an exchange between interlocutors with/around/in relation to artefacts or emergent semiotic tools and not just between interlocutors (e.g. Moreno-Nuñez, Fernández-Alcaide and Martín-Ruiz, 2021). Finally, these two premises help to understand relationships with objects and artefacts as an *appropriation* process (Rogoff, 2003); meaning as the result of socialisation processes with and to objects shaped by socially guided participation. The format, organisation and constraints of these dynamics are socio-historically shaped and vary across contexts, institutional settings and historical conditions.

The more recent approach known as Actor-Network Theory (ANT) building from the work of Latour (2005) has also provided a distinct vocabulary to think about artefacts and objects. ANT builds from an ontology of the social and material world understood as systems of relations and interconnections. From this perspective, the social <<facts>>, structures and processes discussed in sociological theory are understood as emergent and dynamic phenomena constituted in these systems of relations. In connection to discussions about objects and artefacts there are two critical aspects derived from the ANT framework that we want to highlight.

First of all, in an ANT framework the starting point may be an interest in particular objects or types of objects, yet the analysis of these artefacts does not gravitate around the object in itself (and <<surrounding>> elements). Artefacts in action are understood as part of unfolding sociomaterial *assemblages* (Farías, 2010) constituted by these objects, social actors and the constellation of elements that are deemed necessary to understand the implications of these materials. Further, the complexity and scale of these nodes within the assemblage can be very heterogeneous (e.g. from an individual piece of writing to a national policy framework, from an intimate domestic space to an urban metropolis) depending on the problems under examination and the particular dynamics of the assemblage (e.g. Farías, 2011; Poveda *et al.*; 2020). Also, Actor-Network Theory has been adamant about troubling the distinction between human and non-human or the social and the non-social world. Thus, from this perspective, if <<social>> phenomena are understood within constellations of relations, then both <<human>> social actors and objects-artefacts can become relevant nodes in these networks and are construed as *actants* (Latour, 1996) within complex systems.

Socio-Cultural Theory and Actor-Network Theory can be understood as theoretical paradigms that have been applied to a variety of research issues and fields and used (sometimes in combination) by numerous researchers. They are also frameworks that have been embedded into and combined with other ideas in particular areas of research and methodological thinking that have also contributed to the conceptualization of artefacts and objects.

One area in which these ideas have been combined is Literacy Studies, particularly within approaches centered on socio-material dimensions of literacy or Artefactual Literacies (Mills, 2016; Pahl and Roswell, 2014). If

literacy, however understood, involves the inscription of meanings into some type of material symbolic form, then it makes sense to turn attention to the properties, potentials and practices surrounding the various materializations of meaning. Or alternatively, within this same framework building from the opposite <<end point>>: how artefacts and objects are layered with meanings. More importantly for the purposes of this discussion, an artefactual approach to literacy incorporates particular analytical tools (from semiotics and language studies) that are potentially relevant for a broad range of issues and perspectives. Here we want to point out two ideas.

On one hand, Literacy Studies have underscored and developed a rich toolkit to understand the *multimodal* (Kress, 2010) and sensorial (Pink, 2009) nature of artefacts, objects and materialised meanings. A multimodal perspective provides a vocabulary and framework to understand how various semiotic systems interrelate and contribute to construct meaning. It also allows us to think about the dialectics between artefacts (and their particular materialities and design) and social actors in terms of *affordances* (Jewitt, 2013); which, in turn, introduces other ways of understanding how the appropriation of objects is socio-culturally shaped.

On the other hand, an Artefactual Literacies approach has stressed the importance of the *trajectories* through time and space of artefacts and how these trajectories constitute the uses and meanings associated with particular materials and objects (Kell, 2009). Within this perspective, the notion of *resemiotization* (Iedema, 2001) is particularly powerful as it allows identifying the particular junctures in socio-temporal paths that reshape the meanings and practices around artefacts and even, if this may be the case, qualify the general ontology of these transformations (i.e. towards more <<closed>> or more <<open>> meanings).

Finally, materiality and the artefactual have re-emerged in different contemporary approaches to ethnographic fieldwork (Rissler, Blasse, Bittner and Weuster, 2016). As ethnography is the general methodological framework for many of the chapters in this volume we will not repeat the arguments presented in later chapters. Rather, we will briefly highlight two points regarding how objects can be conceptualised within collaborative ethnographic research processes; a modality of ethnographic fieldwork where youth play a role and can be involved in key moments such as the research design, data generation or the interpretation of the findings (Heath, Brooks, Cleaver and Ireland, 2009). First, within collaborative ethnography

research design is reconceptualized as a socially emergent process in which socio-material *infrastructures* (Estalella and Sánchez-Criado, 2016) *or devices* (Ruppert, Law and Savage, 2013) are co-created by researchers and participants. Within this logic, thinking about the particular objects, tools and artefacts deployed to build the social devices becomes a relevant and methodologically reflexive issue (see chapter 7). Within ethnographic research infrastructures objects can be positioned in different ways. Artefacts can emerge as the central nodes or organisers of the research infrastructures, as for example, happens with many projects that rely on digital tools and a digital architecture for the project. Artefacts may also be construed as playing a support or complementary role to more <<traditional>> research strategies. For example, when visual materials support semi-structured interviews and conversations and, thus, objects become a research strategy to gain access to social life not just through the artefact's materiality but also through the narrative dialogue that they unchain. Finally, as pieces embedded in fieldwork social relations, artefacts may be even contested or reappropriated in different ways by participants.

Second, ethnographers building on *practice theory* (Schatzki, 2012) have developed interesting conceptual tools -which to some degree converge and build from concepts in ANT- to examine how objects and artefacts structure the social relations, practices and activities that are documented in ethnographic fieldwork from a two-sided perspective. On one side, objects and what social actors do with, through and around them constitute *socio-material bundles* (Rissler *et al.*; 2016; Ribler, Bossen and Blasse, 2014) that emerge as interpretive and analytical grids to understand unfolding social action. On the other side, reflexively turning to the ethnographer himself/herself, fieldwork and field relations can also be understood as a *material performance* in which the particular objects (e.g. notebooks, recorders, etc.) or material dispositions (e.g. clothing, appearance, etc.) deployed by ethnographers shape field relations and data collection (Laube, 2021).

The chapters in this book, implicitly or explicitly, engage with the concepts and themes we have just presented. Taken together they contribute to our understanding of the complex juncture between artefacts built around ethnographic research, work with young participants and the framing of collaborative research. In this regard, these chapters contribute to the call for participatory approaches in youth studies, and a focus on the artefactual is discussed as an element of this movement. We close this introduction briefly presenting each contribution of the book.

3. The chapters in this collection

This edited book puts together research pertaining to children and youth led by researchers based in different Spanish institutions. The projects present data from different geographical contexts and institutional settings. They also showcase very different research designs and infrastructures (building on the terminology presented above) produced by scholars in different disciplines such as Education, Psychology, Linguistics, Communication and Media or Sociology who work within a broad tradition of participatory qualitative-ethnographic research. The first part of the book presents five different research projects. In these chapters, leading researchers from the study discuss how artefacts were incorporated into their research project and how they shaped collaborative relations with young people. The chapters showcase an array of ways in which artefacts are incorporated into research and vary in how they focus the discussion on methodological issues or turn to present substantial findings from the project. The book closes with two commentary chapters in which two leading researchers discuss some of the conceptual, methodological and practical implications of the studies presented in the volume.

Mitsuko Matsumoto opens the collection with a chapter in which she discusses how she used drawings in her work with young people in post-conflict Sierra Leone. She explains how drawings emerged as flexible, accessible and simple (in terms of the infrastructures and materials used) research tools in her work focused on young people's cultural understandings of schooling and education. Threaded in this methodological discussion there is a substantial presentation of empirical findings that showcase the way in which drawings helped disentangle how youth in Sierra Leone construe what it means to be (or not) <<educated>> and the social dispositions and subjectivities associated with these dynamics.

María José Valero-Porras and Daniel Cassany present a methodological reflective chapter on field access and the construction of social relations in a mostly virtual ethnographic project on online fandom cultures in Spain. The original study they discuss is presented as a collection of case studies and the chapter unfolds as a detailed discussion of different fieldwork challenges: recruitment, participant empowerment and ethical negotiations. The chapter presents how the two researchers in the project dealt with these issues in their particular study but situate their decisions within wider methodological and conceptual debates. In addition, the authors show how specific digital tools and infrastructures (the arte-

facts of the chapter) played a key role in shaping their challenges and their situated solution to these challenges.

Marta Morgade, David Poveda and Fernanda Müller discuss photographs as research artefacts and examine their use in a comparative collaborative project on adolescent musical socialisation experiences in Madrid and Brasilia. The chapter is an opportunity to question a few taken-for-granted assumptions about visual tools and photographs in current collaborative research with children and youth. This critical discussion develops by examining how photographs were inserted in wider social and digital research devices in each setting. It also focuses on particular fieldwork incidents and telling episodes around the social uses of images and photographs in each site that underscore the ideological and socially mediated <<nature>> of photographs.

Júlia Llompart-Esbert presents her experiences in a collaborative and ethnographic educational innovation project in a secondary school in Barcelona. The didactic experience presented in the chapter centres on promoting students' multilingual practices and critical linguistic awareness. More generally, the chapter is an argument in favour of educational interventions that build on collaborative approaches with students, particularly in complex and culturally diverse contexts. More specifically, Llompart-Esbert discusses in detail how a particular research and educational artefact (a multimodal <<digital poster>> built collaboratively by students) played a key role in the rich and successful educational dynamics presented in the chapter.

Cristina Aliagas closes the collection of research-based chapters with a detailed discussion of how social relations continued to develop through time since her doctoral dissertation project on the literate identities of four adolescents in a Barcelona high school. In the chapter, she recounts how years after the project was completed and published one of the focal participants-protagonists of the study reached out via social media and how this reconnection led to revisit and extend some of the initial interpretations of the original study - allowing reflection on literacy and identity dynamics on a broader biographical scale. In connection to the central focus of this book the chapter presents an intriguing discussion of how the doctoral dissertation itself became an artefact in the unfolding and construction of these dynamics and social relations.

As said, the book concludes with two chapters of commentary in which international researchers put the individual contributions into broader per-

spective. Adriana Patiño-Santos threads a reading of the chapters through the notion of reflexivity, focusing on how social relations between researchers and participants were collaboratively built in each project. Drawing from her expertise in sociolinguistics and discourse studies, she examines how the artefacts under examination in each chapter (whether construed as particular objects or broader material infrastructures) played a central role in these processes. Andrea Dyrness builds her reading from educational anthropology and Participatory Action Research (PAR) and examines how the research dynamics and artefacts discussed in each chapter contribute to develop young people's critical awareness and broader emancipatory processes. In this way, her reading of the research experiences is much more explicitly political and invites readers to reflect on the contribution of collaborative and participatory research to social change.

Taken together, we hope the chapters in the book are stimulating to both novel and more experienced researchers and contribute to important discussions around the complexities of collaborative ethnographic research. We put the spotlight on the materialities and artefactual dimensions of research, allowing readers to take the particular paths and solutions presented in the book as inspiration for their own research projects or as an invitation for further conceptual and methodological reflection.

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CHAPTER 2
A KEY TO SUCCESS OR A SYSTEM FOR MARGINALISATION OF THE MAJORITY?: USES OF DRAWINGS IN APPROACHING THE CONSTRUCT OF EDUCATION HELD BY SIERRA LEONEAN YOUT

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1. Introduction

The chapter explores the constructs related to education held by young people in Sierra Leone. Schooling has become widely available to children in developing countries in the last few decades. The global movement Education for All (EFA) launched in 1990 has promoted the provision of education, particularly primary schooling, to all children globally. As a result, by 2014, only 10% of children of primary school age were out of school in low and middle income countries. Especially in countries affected by conflict, such as Sierra Leone, the opportunity to attend school has expanded at a striking speed after the war, which developed during the period 1991-2002. In the country, gross enrolment rate (GER) for primary schools was merely 33% in 1985 - 6 years prior to the beginning of conflict - but it rose to 104%[1] by 2004 - only 3 years after the end of the conflict (Population Census, 1985; 2004). The total number of schools (primary and secondary) also almost doubled to 5,482 in 2007 since the end of the war (World Bank, 2007; MYES, 2001). The World Bank commends the rapid reconstruction and expansion of access to education in Sierra Leone as a <<remarkable recovery>> (World Bank, 2007: 2).

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1 This number surpasses 100% because children older than the official age group of children tend to be enrolled in schools in African countries including Sierra Leone and GER is calculated as the ratio of total enrolment *regardless of age* to the population of *the age group* that officially corresponds to the level of education.

While achieving an unprecedented expansion of access to primary education, the EFA movement has also brought great imbalances in the education sector. The lending to education as a whole has not increased much (World Bank, 2017). Therefore, the greater support for basic education through EFA has led to neglect the support for other types of education such as senior secondary, vocational or higher education (Heyneman, 2010). This has severe practical consequences: while many have access to basic education, only a tiny minority has the chance to acquire an advanced level of formal education. This means that many children end up dropping out of schooling at one level or another. In the case of Sierra Leone, while 69% of primary education pupils are expected to reach Class 6, the completion rate for Junior Secondary School is 47% and for Senior Secondary Schooling it is as low as 20% (UNESCO, 2021).

This chapter explores what schooling means to the generation of young people that has experienced the rapid expansion of basic education after the war in Sierra Leone. I will show in the chapter how formal education plays a key role in the construction of social hierarchies in which the majority of young people feel marginalised. I will do so by focusing on a rigorous analysis of data from drawings. Another purpose of the chapter is to show the usefulness of drawing in research with disadvantaged children and young people, both as a tool and a source of data. Drawings are simple and familiar artefacts even in a conflict-affected country like the case of this study and yet they allow young participants, regardless of literacy and learning abilities, to communicate abstract concepts that they hold but are difficult to verbalise. By doing so, they also promote more active engagement of disadvantaged groups of children and young people in research.

2. Methodology

Data in this chapter are drawn from seven months of fieldwork in Sierra Leone in 2009 in which I explored young people's perspectives and experiences of education and the possibility of re-occurrence of conflict there (Matsumoto, 2011, 2012). Most data were collected in Makeni town in the Northern Province. Three groups of young people with different educational experiences were the main participants in the study: 1) a group of students in Senior Secondary School (SSS) (15 participants); 2) a group of youths who were in a Technical and Vocational Education and Training

programme (TVET) (15 participants); and 3) youths who were out of school (10 participants). I met with each group once a week (sometimes dividing one group into two) for three months and, depending on the themes we tried to explore in the session, I employed different research tools, such as focus group discussions, individual interviews, and task-based activities, including drawings. It is important to note that not all participants were present in each session (the continuous, committed participation is something very difficult to achieve, especially in these fragile contexts). Therefore, for instance, the drawing data I will share in this chapter were not collected from all the 40 participants.

2.1. Participants

I selected three different groups based on educational categories because I anticipated differences in these young people's socio-economic profiles and future prospects (perceived and actual), and in their views about other groups with different educational experiences. The group of SSS students was solicited from Makeni Christian Secondary School (MCSS),[2] which fits many criteria of a *typical* school (Stake, 1995). Most of the secondary schools in Makeni are mission-based, either Islamic or Christian missions. Similarly, it is a mixed school and has both Junior Secondary School (JSS) and SSS, although it did not run a double-shift like the majority of schools in the locality. For a group of students in alternative education (TVET), I solicited participants with the help of the teachers from the Technical and Vocational Institute of Makeni (TVIM). I approached Masonry and Home Management courses taking into account gender balance as well as the fact that the teachers in those courses were very keen about my research. In Masonry, except for one female, all students were male; while in Home Management all were female. For the solicitation of out-of-school young participants, the main approach I took was to work with an organisation involved with this group of people. I chose one initiated and organised by disadvantaged children and young people and supported by an international NGO: the Forum for Empowerment of Children and Young People (FECYP). After a meeting with the group leader, who himself had completed Senior Secondary Schooling but had no prospect of continuing onto college, we came to an agreement that

2 For ethical reasons, I use pseudonyms for institutions I worked with as well as for names of participants.

the group would select 10 participants for my study. However, there was a concern that I might bias my understanding from just interacting with FECYP participants: they are a particular group of young people interested in engaging with social action. Furthermore, the male members of the group could speak in English better than some of the participants who were in SSS level. Therefore, I eventually recruited two so-called *Okada* bike-taxi riders as participants. These young men provided an essential transportation service in Makeni. Many of the riders were considered to be ex-combatants in the period immediately after the war (Peters, 2007), and many of them were characterised as <<dropouts>> or were pupils at secondary schools (MCSS teacher, informal interview, 6 July 2009). The two *Okada* riders, Mohamed and Amadu, joined the study but in a different manner from the others, only having one-off individual interviews.

A total of 40 young people participated in the study. 22 participants were male, 18 were female, and among the girls at least three of them had children. They were in the age range between 16 and 30, the trainees at TVIM being slightly older than other groups as the institute only accepted students above 17 years of age. The educational background of those in the training centre and those out of school varied greatly from no schooling at all to completing SSS. The two main ethnicities identified were Temne and Limba as they are the major ethnic groups in the North of Sierra Leone, but the participants on the whole, especially trainees at the TVIM, were a diverse group of people in terms of ethnicity and geographical backgrounds, as some came from other parts of Sierra Leone.

2.2. The research tools

Given the context of Sierra Leone as a post-conflict country, various issues were taken into account in the selection of and development of research tools. I had anticipated that many participants –due to their experience during conflict or as a consequence of the responsibilities they have been obliged to take on– would have developed particular social and cognitive skills to an extent perhaps greater than their peers elsewhere. At the same time, the deficiency and paucity of service provision in conflict-affected areas may hinder their cognitive and social development (Hart and Tyrer, 2006). Ethnographic studies have clearly demonstrated that children and young people in such contexts can and do reflect on their own experiences, but they suggest that their competencies might be dif-

ferent from adults or from children and young people in other contexts and emphasise the importance of understanding these competencies and finding appropriate ways to research their experiences and perspectives (Boyden and de Berry, 2004; Punch, 2002). Given this, I had prepared in advance a range of participatory, child-centred tools, from which I could select and adjust as the research proceeded and I got to know the participants (Boyden and Ennew, 1997; Hart and Tyrer, 2006).

I had tried out some tools in a pilot stage with a group of Junior Secondary School students. Also, I consulted about the research design and tools with a few local teachers, workers of the NGO to which I was originally attached as well as a few young people. As a result of this, for the main data gathering, I used mostly focus group discussion, individual interviews, and some simple written and visual methods as stimuli (which were followed by individual interviews). I also predetermined a series of themes to be covered although, of course, it evolved as the research progressed. In that sense, engagement of the participants in the study was rather shallow (Cornwall and Jewkes, 1995, p. 1669) and it was difficult to maintain committed, continuous participation. The turnout of the pilot group towards the end of research became particularly poor. I believe that participants had an expectation of direct benefits that the study could not meet although I was transparent from the beginning about the nature and aim of the research and the benefits and rewards as I sought written consent from each participant. In the main study, I made it even clearer from the beginning, specifically mentioning the type of gifts that I would give at the end of the research process, as well as clarifying the limitations in the benefits otherwise. At the same time, I opted to set the agendas and tools on the whole, and in that way even if some missed the sessions we could still generate data (indeed, some of the out-of-school participants ended up not turning up regularly to the research sessions, and I used different formats to catch up with those who missed the sessions).

In addition, I conducted 49 interviews with key adult informants in three social roles: 1) key informants in the understanding of the relationship between education and society before and after the war at the national level (e.g. policymakers, representatives of Teachers Union, journalists); 2) informants who work closely with children and young people on a daily basis (e.g. teachers, NGO workers); and 3) informants who experienced secondary schooling immediately before the war. I also collected documents, such as statistical data on examination results and enrolment, newspaper articles related to education/schooling, educational policy

documents, reports and census data.

Both with adult and young participants I conducted the research in English, with the exception of a few youths who did not feel comfortable with English and responded in Krio, the lingua franca in the country. In these cases, I asked another participant to help translate, especially at the beginning of the fieldwork, but as I built a basic understanding of the language during my stay, I began to conduct interviews alone. For all cases, I have transcribed the interviews in English, respecting their expressions as much as possible.

2.3. Use of drawing in the research

In some sessions I used drawing as a stimulus, as an ice-breaker and to help stimulate reflection on particular themes. I had anticipated that young people, especially those who had little or no educational experience might not be able to express their ideas with traditional methods that relied on direct verbal accounts (see Boyden and Ennew, 1997; Hart and Tyrer, 2006). Drawings are considered to be useful in generating data with a greater cross-section of young people (Veale, 2005; Hart and Tyrer, 2006; Boyden and Ennew, 1997), offering an opportunity to express themselves independently of their language or learning ability (Mitchell, 2008; Pauwels and Mannay, 2020; Sandow, 1997). It is also well established that drawings are useful tools in understanding the symbolic notions children attach to social topics and issues as they reveal them in their drawings (e.g. Raty and Snellman, 1997; Raty, Komulainen, Skorokhodova, Kolesnikov, Hämäläinen, 2011; Sandow, 1997). There have been studies, for instance, that explore children's images of teachers (Weber and Mitchell, 2002), notions of an intelligent person (Raty and Snellman, 1997; Raty *et al.*, 2011), or perceptions of illness (Williams, 1998). Compared to other visual methods, the simplicity and accessibility of drawing as a research tool (essentially just needing a pencil and paper) is also recognized in researching with children and youths in contexts where the available or familiar resources to the participants are limited, such as in developing countries (e.g. Mitchell, 2011; Veale, 2005).

In my study, drawings were particularly useful in approaching the constructs related to education that the young people held. I asked each participant to draw <<habits>> (at first I used the word <<image>> but it was difficult

for them to understand) of <<educated person>>, <<uneducated person>>, and <<teacher>>. I also asked them to make a list of characteristics of each person along with their drawings. I decided to use drawing as a tool after I had difficulty exploring the implications of being educated orally with a few TVET trainees. It was difficult for them to understand what I was asking and it was difficult for me also to formulate questions. I gave a sheet of paper (A4 size) to each participant to draw <<habits>> of an educated person and an uneducated person on one occasion, and on another occasion, I asked them to draw <<habits>> of a teacher. Then, with each participant I conducted an individual interview, asking them about what he or she had drawn.

The method was inspired by a well-being exercise (Armstrong, Boyden, Galappatti and Hart, 2004; Hart and Tyrer, 2006), a method that elicits features that participants associate with well-being. Although they did it collectively, having a FGD, in my research, I have used an individual interview as a follow-up to the drawing activity. In the pilot stage, I used FGDs on many occasions, and it was useful to get a general understanding about issues and the context that surround the young people there; but I was not able to get in-depth insights on them, including their personal experiences or perspectives. Therefore, in the main stage I used individual interviews—including as a follow-up to the drawing activity—more than FGDs.[3]

Another visual method that was useful but I did not develop much was a social map exercise in which participants drew and wrote down people and places they visited regularly (Armstrong *et al.*, 2004; Hart and Tyrer, 2006). I wanted to understand how schooling or training centres and people associated with them—e.g. teachers, administrators, and friends from school, etc.—fitted into their lives. I did not conduct an interview using the map they created as the direct prompt although I asked them orally or in writing about what they did before and after school/training separately.

There were two considerations that I took into account in using visual methods. One was the participants' level of comfort with drawing. Lack

3 Perhaps counter-intuitively the <<impersonal>> and collective nature of FGDs was rather useful in getting the participants' perspectives on sensitive issues (i.e. about commercial sex work or their views regarding the recurrence of conflict in the country). Although I did not plan to have a FGD on commercial sex work, in one FGD session with the TVET trainees in Home Management, the discussion started to touch on it and developed. I suppose that the combination of the collective nature of the FGDs and the established rapport with me and between them helped the participants feel safe talking about the issue in a general way, without the need to relate the discussion to their personal lives.

of a sense of artistic competence was anticipated and did in fact restrict some of the participants from freely expressing themselves. This seemed to be related to the educational level of participants, as females who were out of school or in TVIM yet with little previous schooling expressed their discomfort with the method. Nevertheless, in the end, all who were at the session with drawings have done it. The second consideration regarded the analysis and interpretation of the visual products. I anticipated a possible difficulty to interpret and analyse participants' visual works as standalone pieces of data (Veale, 2005). Without additional information, drawings are more <<open>> than language-based data and there is a risk of over- or mis-interpretation by the researcher (Literat, 2013). It is more so in the case when the cultural background of the participants is different from the researcher, as in this study (Literat, 2013). Therefore, I conducted follow-up interviews; I asked participants to produce verbal accounts of their visual representation, not leaving the visual works as the only data about the themes I explored. Finally, I have analysed the generated data both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitatively, I have coded the features that appear in the drawings following the method by Raty and Snellman (1997) and Raty *et al.* (2011). I have also looked at the drawings qualitatively, putting them in the context and circumstances of the participants and analysed alongside the interview data and (when available) the written data.[4] I further corroborated my interpretations with other interview data generated in another session; for instance, in relation to the implication of being educated, I asked what they could do with education and what they could not do without it, etc. in another session. Engaging with participants from fragile socio-political settings such as Sierra Leone in the aftermath of civil conflict, it was important to triangulate their accounts not only through different methods but also on different occasions. It took time and effort to build rapport and get authentic accounts as there are great risks of getting false or exaggerated accounts without it (Hart and Tyrer, 2006; Utas, 2004). Indeed, this was the case in the study. For example, a couple of female participants (Zainab and Binta) told me in the initial individual interviews with them that it was their parents who paid their fees for the school. However, towards the end of my fieldwork, as I walked home with them after a regular research session, they told me that it was their boyfriends who paid their fees (Fieldnote, 12 November 2008).

4 As writing depends on the participants' literacy levels and English abilities, for those who did not feel comfortable in writing (even in the form of making lists), I asked the same questions orally.

3. Constructs related to education held by young people in Makeni

I will show below how, on one hand, young participants described formal education as the <<key to success>> and how, on the other hand, formal education is found to play a key role in the construction of social hierarchies. The division created by formal education was sharply visualised in the drawings participants produced in the research process. The drawings of an educated person reveal how participants perceive the educated as of a high social status, depicted with formal clothing, while those who are not educated were visualised without decent clothes or shoes. The study also reveals how the majority who do not reach this level of education feel marginalised in society.

3.1. Background

The Republic of Sierra Leone is a small country on the coast of West Africa with an estimated population of a little over six million (World Bank, 2016). The civil war that raged in 1991 by a rebel group, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), had lasted a decade and left a catastrophic effect on the country. It is still classified as a low-income country by development agencies and ranks as the 179th country out of 187 countries in the latest Human Development Index (UNDP, 2016).

Makeni is the capital of Bombali district and has a population of 125,970 according to the 2015 Population Census (Statistics of Sierra Leone, 2016). After the conflict many children who were deeply affected by the conflict, especially ex-combatants, remained and still reside in Makeni and in surrounding towns in the Northern Province. Historically, the Northern Province has been a deprived area and this includes the provision of educational services. As Makeni is the largest city in the Northern Province and the fifth largest city in Sierra Leone, young people from rural areas came to Makeni seeking educational and other opportunities before the conflict and continue to do so afterwards. The population in Makeni is ethnically diverse, with the largest ethnic groups being Temne and Limba in contrast to the Southern Province that is predominantly occupied by the Mende ethnic group.

Most of the participants belonged to large families with little education. Many of them had four to six siblings, while some had more. For

instance, Mohammed, one of the bike-taxi riders, had 14 siblings. Most belonged to the first generation to receive formal schooling. Even among their brothers and sisters, some were not attending school, having dropped out of the system or had not been enrolled at all. In the case of Mohammed, three younger sisters and one brother were in school at the time of fieldwork, while other older brothers and a sister had left school at primary or JSS levels, except for one older sister who went on to college. A similar case is Musu whose parents made a deliberate choice to focus their resources on sending their eldest son to Fourah Bay College –the most respected university in Sierra Leone–, while the education of their other children, including that of her, was neglected. Musu had to stop schooling at Class 6 as her mother told her there was no more money for her education.

All the participants had some familial responsibilities as well as some time for leisure. Among those attending the SSS or the TVET institute, most of them did some domestic work earlier in the day –such as washing dishes, sweeping, and fetching water (there was no running water or electricity in Makeni at the time of the fieldwork)– while some of them went out afterwards to do or find a part-time job to earn some money or just to be able to eat something that day. Among the out-of-school participants, some grew vegetables in their gardens or on farms, some sold goods at markets, and some females were in charge of getting ingredients at market and cooking for the family. For their leisure time, the young people spent time playing or watching football, going to the cinema, meeting with others at an *ataya-base* (rough shelters where young people, many unemployed, sit around and drink Chinese herbal tea known as *ataya*), or spending time at a friend's house. For many, religious activities such as going to church or to the mosque appeared to be an equally significant part of their lives. These places –mosque/church, a friend's house, market, *ataya*, cinema, football field, etc. as well as schools or TVET centres for those who attend them– were captured in the social maps I asked them to draw at the initial stage of our encounters. For example, a social map drawn by Fanta, a female TVET trainee, captures mosque, market, football field, and garden as well as her house and the TVIM, as essential places for her (see Figure 1 below).

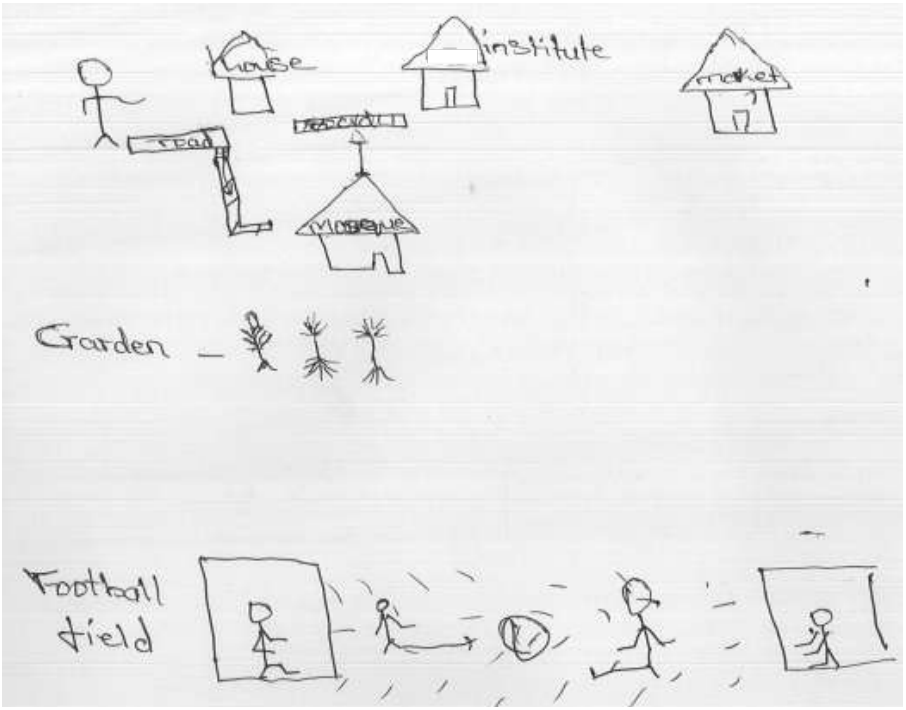

Figure 1: Social map drawn by Fanta, a female TVET trainee

3.2. Education as the <<key to success>> only available to those who have <<an opportunity>>

Young people perceive education as essential to economic and social mobility, often using the expression that education is <<the key to success>>. For example, Musa, who completed SSS but had no prospects of going to college stated: <<Education is the light and key to success... you need to learn before, then you will be lucky to have a job>>. Many SSS pupils believe that they can achieve their lofty dreams with a university degree, such as becoming a lawyer, a doctor, a bank manager, and an NGO worker. Young people also perceived the advantages of educated people through the experience of the war. For instance, Musa's father used to be a rich businessman, going to trade in Guinea, but most of his properties, including his machinery and cars, were destroyed or raided by the rebels. Now the family lives in poverty without any prospect of restarting the business. Musa said.

> <<If [my father] had been educated, after the process, let me say, he can go to any institution to apply himself, and maybe he can have a job and then be able to cater for us, but now just look at him. He doesn't have enough money to further my education. That is why people who are educated are better than those who are not educated>>.

Musa felt that the reason his father was unable to find a job after the war and his family is facing poverty is because the father lacks education. Whether or not this is a realistic view is a different matter, however, considering the scarcity of employment in the present Sierra Leone.

At the same time, the young people consider that education is only available to those who have <<an opportunity>>. The young participants –both those who are in schooling or training and those who are out of school– expressed that only those who have <<an opportunity>> can go up the ladder of the academic stream. Ibrahim, when asked about friends who are out of school, answered.

> <<I don't feel good, because I am coming to school every day but they don't have that opportunity. They want to educate [get educated] but because of financial reason or [not having] somebody to help them [they can't come to school]>>.

This idea is related to the conception of <<being educated>> in the country equalling getting a <<paper>> or tertiary level of education degree. For instance, James, an SSS student in the commercial stream, described how, <<[by] getting a paper from college, you are considered to be educated. People are fighting for this paper>>. The SLTU President further elaborated on the meaning of <<being educated>> in Sierra Leonean society.

> <<[It means] graduates of university, first degree. Having second and third degree are additional one. [It means] having higher positions, being lecturers. Those who have teaching certificate (TC) are not considered. HTC is middle… The WASSCE level are just considered as those who know how to write your name, but not considered as educated. That makes a big difference. That is why all the brothers fight to get there. Educated means you went to a university>.

These comments suggest that to reach the status of <<being educated>> one would need to get a university degree, and the young people in the country prefer to stay in the formal education track, not TVET. Indeed, the majority of the young people in the study did not want to go to TVET even if they cannot continue formal education (Matsumoto, 2018). Partly, this is because of the lower status that is associated with TVET in Sierra Leonean society. Another linked problem is that many have an excessive expectation

that one day they will be able to get a higher level of education. This was observed in the lack of alternatives to not getting the higher level of education, despite the very limited access to tertiary institutions in the country (see the following section). When asked about alternatives, young people's most frequent responses were that they would work as a teacher or find another job as a temporary alternative (or <<as a waiting room>> in their words) and save money to be able to go to college later on. Most pupils did not look beyond educational credentials into such options as starting a business. Out-of-school young people as well, except for one female, expressed a desire to go back to formal schooling or proceed to college.[5] Only those young people who were receiving TVET mentioned that they wanted to start a business or find a job with the skills they had learned. This does not mean that all of the trainees have disregarded the option of furthering their education if an opportunity becomes available; some did mention to me that they wanted to go back to formal schooling or proceed to a college (see Matsumoto, 2018).

Behind the concept of <<being educated>> equalling a university degree in Sierra Leone are scarce employment opportunities for those without it. Mohamed and Amadu, two out-of-school young men who participated in the study, exemplify the reality of the country where scarce employment exists without tertiary education qualification. They are so-called *Okada* bike-taxi riders. Both failed the WASSCE twice. Mohamed has been working as a motorbike taxi driver ever since he entered JSS in order to fund himself to continue schooling. Mohamed wants to go to a college to read for a Higher Teaching Certificate to be qualified to teach at secondary levels, but explains that this would only be possible by bribing a lecturer with 300,000 Leones (75 USD), which he does not have. Like Mohamed and Amadu, without at least being qualified to enter tertiary education, opportunities for employment and engagement in society, beyond jobs like driving a motorcycle taxi, remain limited for young people. A number of adult respondents shared the concern for young people like Mohamed and Amadu who have not achieved sufficient qualifications and thus have limited employment prospects. The President of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) commented.

> <<One thing it does is that it makes people not too qualified or not too skilled to be employed at offices where they would love to work, but then they are

5 Aisha, who does not want formal schooling, told me that she was a <<big person>> to go back. Instead, she wants to receive skills training if an opportunity arises. She was 18 years old at the time of the fieldwork and had a son.

left to labour or manual jobs, which they don't earn much or not even much available>>.

Thus, formal education is perceived to have powerful social significance in Sierra Leone. However, it is another question –and outside the scope of this chapter– whether in reality it is meeting people's expectations; in other words, if those who got the university degree in reality acquire the kind of jobs they expect to get upon graduation (see Matsumoto, 2018). It should also be noted that young people are aware that credentials alone do not determine social, economic and/or political mobility; these have to be coupled with what they call *sababu*, a connection with an influential person in society. For example, Josephine, a student at TVIM, who had worked as a commercial sex worker in the past and has a son, said: <<sometimes you may be well educated but if you don't have strong relationship they won't consider you. In fact, somebody in the office will tear up and throw away your application>>. The importance of *sababu* in getting employment was recognised, however, it was not considered as an alternative to education to achieving success. Rather, it was something to be combined with educational credentials. For example, Jamal, a student in Masonry who came to TVIM after taking WASSCE and a Limba by ethnicity, told me that even if a particular office does not take him due to a lack of *sababu*, he believes that he can get employment in other places based on the knowledge and certificate. This is because, he mentioned, education is <<inside>> him, meaning that he has knowledge that nobody can take away from him and that is not dependent on circumstantial issues, i.e. relationships with other people. He also raised a point that if somebody gets hired due to *sababu* but lacking the appropriate skills or education then he or she will not be able to do the job and hold it, like teaching. In addition, many informants suggested schooling as a way, often as a superior way, to family or ethnicity, to acquire <<good>> *sababu*. This also points to the connections between education and *sababu* and that both are perceived to be important in regard to the socioeconomic mobility of young people.

3.3. A sense of marginalisation of youths who do not reach the status of <<being educated>

<<Being educated>> as equivalent to receiving a degree from university in the country suggests that the majority do not reach this status. It

is difficult to get an accurate picture of the situation regarding access to tertiary education in a country such as Sierra Leone. However, clearly only a tiny proportion of the population reaches this level of education. Some statistics suggest that tertiary education enrollment in the whole country in the 2010-2011 academic year was 25,633 (UNESCO, 2013, p.17), and the Gross Enrolment Ratio was merely 2.1% in 2006 (DACO, 2008). This means that education is a key to success available only to a small minority and, as I will show below, the majority who do not reach the status of being educated feel marginalised in society.

The findings generated by using drawings reveal how young participants, who themselves have not reached the status of <<being educated>>, devalued non-educated people. The picture of the habits of an educated person and a non-educated person and the list of characteristics of each written down alongside the drawing reveal a stark contrast between the two types of persons. The images of an educated person are perceived as of high social status, with formal clothing and with some objects related to study and teaching (books, pens, a bag). In contrast, uneducated individuals are often viewed as farmers with agriculture related tools and objects and without decent clothes or shoes (see the Table 1 below for the quantitative analysis of the drawings).

	Educated person	**Uneducated person**
Gender	• 14 male, 8 female, 5 indistinguishable	• 9 male, 8 female, 10 indistinguishable
Clothing	• 17 with a shirt - among them 10 drew the shirt with buttons, collars, or a tie - among them, in addition to the shirt, 12 drew trousers or a skirt • 4 with a long piece of clothing • 6 without recognisable clothing	• 10 with a long piece of clothing • 7 with a shirt and a pair of trousers or a skirt • 10 without recognisable clothing
Accessories / features	• 5 with belts • 1 with glasses • 1 with a necklace, earrings, and bracelets • 1 with a hat	• 3 with beard • 1 with earrings

Shoes	• 9 with decent shoes • 9 without shoes • 9 indistinguishable	• 12 without shoes • 1 with sandals • 14 indistinguishable
Other objects in the drawing	• 13 with books • 1 with a desk and a chair • 6 with a pen • 3 with a bag • 3 with a blackboard 6 without any object*	• 12 with agriculture related tools • 5 carrying something on head, such as wood or a container • 1 with a cigarette, a desk and a chair 9 without any objects
Specification of occupation	• 6 Teachers • 2 lawyer • 2 bank manager • 2 agriculturalist • 1 government official • 1 office worker • 18 without specification of occupation	• 10 Farmers • 2 Fisherman • 2 Hunter • 2 Trader/business-person • 1 Tailor • 1 Carpenter • 1 gardener • 14 without specification of occupation

Table 1: Quantitative analysis of the 27 drawings of an educated person and an uneducated person portrayed by the young participants[6]

For instance, Figure 2 below is a drawing by Isatu, an SSS pupil in the Commercial Stream. Her drawing of an educated person has decent formal clothing (with a shirt that has buttons and pockets, and a pair of trousers) and shoes. In contrast, her drawing of an uneducated person titled <<Illiterate>> has a long piece of clothing without shoes. The <<primitive>> image of the uneducated and its contrast to the image of the educated was most strikingly visualised in the drawing by Abdul, a male SSS pupil (see Figure 3 below); the person titled <<uneducated man>> is drawn with a scruffy beard and hair, and his face and the piece of clothes he wears looks unclean. In an accompanied writing, Abdul writes <<He [an uneducated man] may some time[s] be clean or dirty because he do[es] not larn [learn]

6 Among the 27 drawings, 11 drawings are by SSS pupils, 9 by TVET trainees, 6 by out-of-school youth, and 1 without identification. As mentioned earlier, not all participants attended the drawing session; as a result the sample of drawings is smaller than the total number of participants. The analysis is based on the visual as well as the writing produced by the participants on the same piece of paper. Some drawings had more than one indication. Therefore, the sum of the total number exceeds the number of the drawings.

about cleaningness [cleanliness]... He dress[es] badly because he do[has] not larnt [learnt] about dressing code>>. Similarly, being dirty was commented as a feature of an uneducated in a follow-up interview by Musu, who stopped going to school when she finished her primary education. In addition, different gender tended to be assigned to the educated and the uneducated although I did not give specific instruction about this; as in Fatmata's case, an educated person was more often drawn and/or specified in writing as a man, than in the cases of an uneducated person. In four drawings, including Fatmata's, there were considerable size differences in the drawings: the one of an educated person always larger than an uneducated. It might imply the difference in status –the educated being drawn-larger suggesting the higher or better status associated with it[7]– but I did not verify this with the participants who drew them.

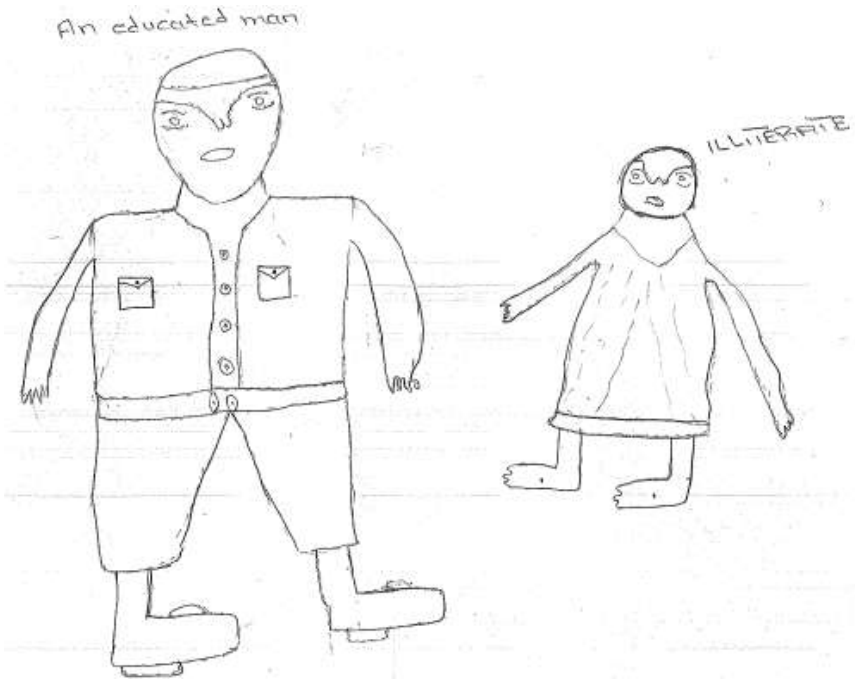

Figure 2: Drawing by Isatu, an SSS pupil, of <<An educated man>> and <<Illiterate>.

7 For instance, Burns and Kaufman (1972), analysing children's kinetic drawings of family, suggest that the size of a drawing has implications in relation to a diminished or exaggerated sense of Self.

Figure 3: Drawing by Abdul, a male SSS pupil, of the uneducated person, titled <<Uneducated man>>

The differences in occupations were also revealed through the writing accompanying the drawings. In some of the drawings, as in Figure 4 below drawn by Marai (a trainee in Home Management), an occupation was specified in writing. As in her drawing, the most frequently mentioned occupation for an educated person was a teacher, while for an uneducated person the most commonly listed occupation was a farmer. In line with the drawings, many young people named farmer and trader in interviews when asked about what occupations could be achieved without becoming <<educated>>. In relation to the types of occupations indicated in the drawing, many drawings of the uneducated are visualised as engaged in physical labour. They are bending knees, holding an agriculture related tool, as in Figure 4, or some are carrying materials on their heads, as in Figure 5. On the other hand, the educated person was often drawn motionless, mostly in a standing position, as in Figure 2 above, or in a few cases they are visualised as reading a book or sitting on a chair.

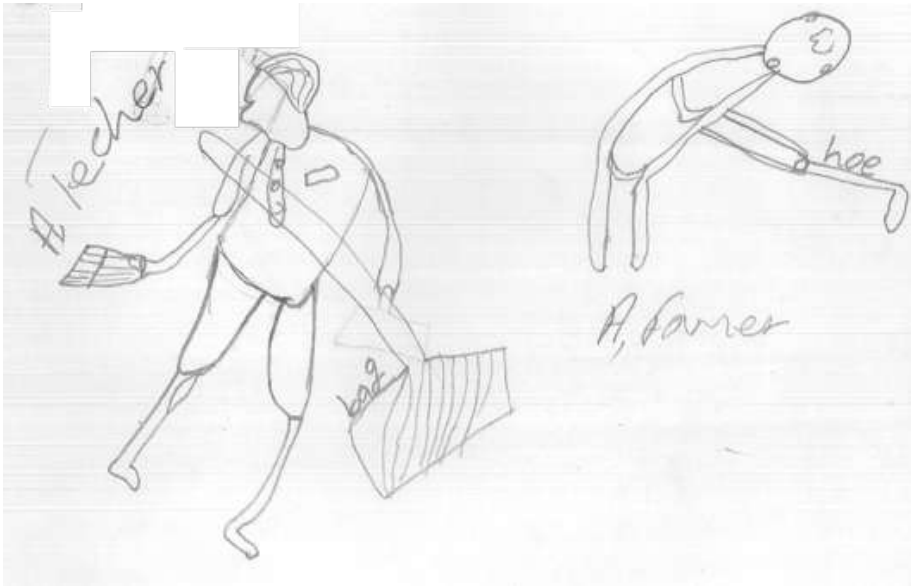

Figure 4: Drawing by Marai, a trainee in Home Management

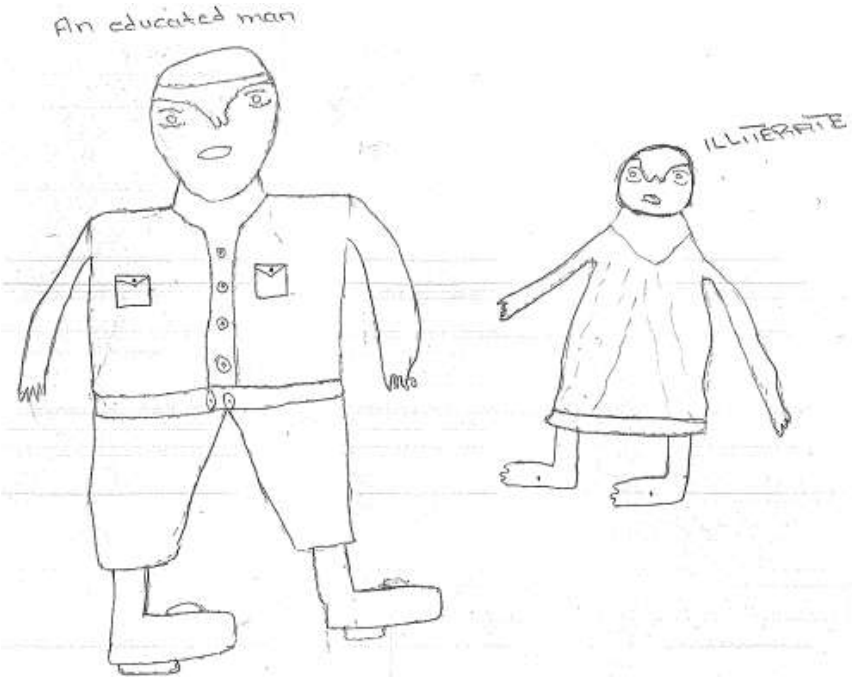

Figure 5: Drawing of an uneducated person by Alpha, a trainee in Masonry

The participants' writings and follow-up interviews further elucidated the conceptual differences they built for the educated and the uneducated individuals. In addition to associating the educated with being literate and intelligent, comments related to a higher social status of an educated person were expressed: such as being <<successful>> (Mariama, SSS), <<gentry>> (Mariama, SSS), and <<famous and respectable>> (Lamin, Out of School). Many similarly associated the educated with having <<a good job>> (e.g. Henry, SSS), typically meaning office work with a salary (e.g. Yusuf, out of school). There are also many comments that associate the educated with being moral –knowing and abiding by the law (e.g. Mariama, SSS; Jamal, TVET)–, civilised –such as having good manners and solving conflicts peacefully (e.g. Isata, SSS; Zainab, SSS)–, and also associated with being a contributive member of society– i.e. helping community and nation as well as family (e.g. Mary, Home and Economics course in TVET; Musa, Out of School).

While the majority of the comments related to the educated connote positive features as such, there were also some negative comments about it. They were mainly related to corruption and <<being proud>>. In terms of corruption, it referred to embezzlement of funds (James, SSS) or to bribery (Mary, TVET). The word <<proud>> was used mostly with a negative connotation to describe arrogance demonstrated by some educated people (e.g. Paul, TVET; Fanta, TVET). Paul elaborated on those <<proud>> of their higher level of education in an interview.

> <<Some [educated] feel proud. He doesn't interrogate [converse] with non-educated friends. Some… don't like to pay them visit[s] or get accompanied or associated with. As soon as you have [he has] degree, he will say I am above you>>.

In addition to negative comments made directly about the category of educated persons, the study also captured a complex conception of teachers held by young people. While the idea of a teacher was presented as the epitome of an educated person by many, at the same time, the profession was only considered as a temporary alternative to a more preferable (or a better paid) job. Not only that, the study revealed instances of teachers' low professional standards, such as petty corruption, corporal punishment and sexual harassment. These were commented on in various encounters, but most significantly when I asked about the <<habits>> or image of teachers or through a drawing activity. For instance, the drawing and the accompanying writing by Peter (SSS) titled <<Mr. Pain!! A weak teacher!!>> represents the antipathetic view

of the teacher by participants (Figure 6 below). His writing shows how a teacher uses corporal punishment against him if he misses school and also the inappropriate language used towards pupils. There is no space to elaborate on the findings fully here (see more in Matsumoto, 2012), so I will just focus on the practice of petty corruption. Young people commented that teachers requested and received extra money (such as for marking their assignments and giving extra classes) or received items, such as soap and toothpaste (e.g. Dauda, out-of-school). Teachers were also seen as giving higher marks to and passing pupils in exchange for money. For example, Zainab (SSS in the commercial stream) described teachers as <<wicked>>.

> <<Now... teachers love money. In exams time if you don't make it up they ask you [for] money. If you don't have money they fail you... If your parents don't have money you suffer>>.

Teachers' low professionalism is also revealed in the study when the participants were asked about their role models. Only five young people singled out their teachers as their role models while the rest (35 participants) listed other people, most often family members who supported them. Some, when asked directly, actively rejected the idea that teachers were role models. Teachers' low moral standards were also recognised as a factor for the poor performance in the standardised examinations at secondary school levels (Gbamanja, 2010) and they also contributed to the creation of *The Code of Conduct for Teachers and Other Education Personnel in Sierra Leone* by Teachers Union (SLTU, 2009).

Some adult informants suggested that the negative views held by young people reflect a significant shift in the representation of teachers in Sierra Leonean society. Teachers traditionally used to be the main role models in the country (e.g. President of SLTU, Interview, 25 October 2009; District Chairman of Principals Conference, Interview, 29 September 2009; Director of a university in Makeni, Interview, 5 September 2009). The shift in the conception was attributed partly to the reign of Stevens, in which corrupt practices permeated to the teaching profession (e.g. Director of Peace and Conflict Studies at a university in Freetown, Interview, 15 December 2009). This state of affairs was accentuated by the experience of conflict; moral sensibilities were degenerated by the conflict, including those of the teachers (e.g. Interview, Director of a university in Makeni, 5 September 2009).

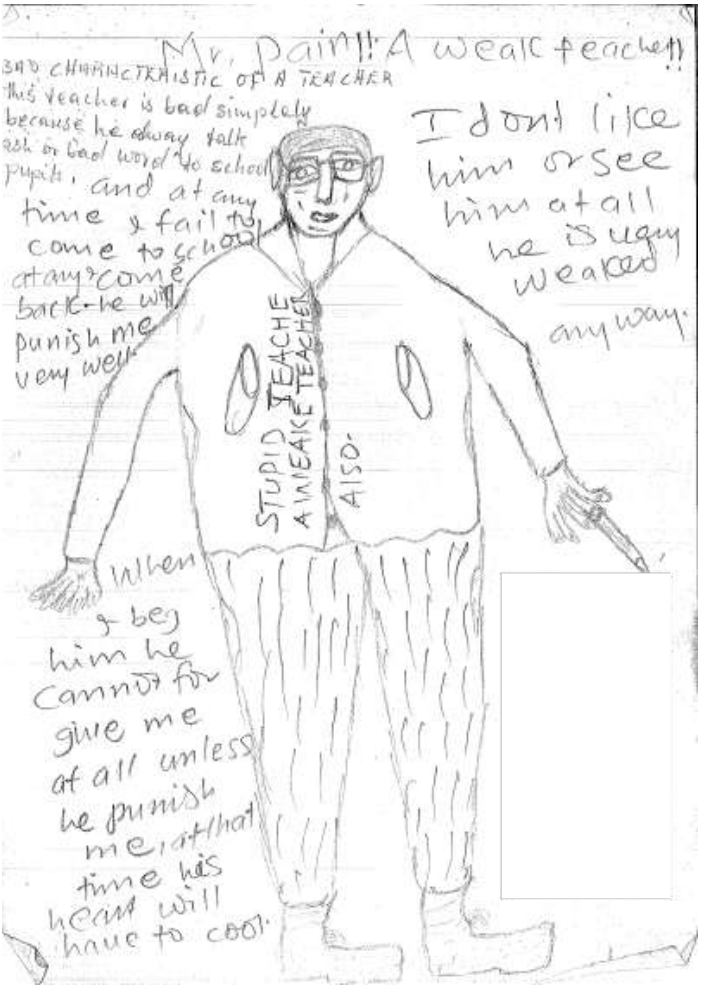

Figure 6: Drawing of teacher by Peter (SSS pupil) titled <<Mr. Pain!! A weak teacher!!>>

Nevertheless, on the whole, we can say that a positive image was held about the educated person. In contrast, the comments on an uneducated person were predominantly negative. There were, as expected, comments regarding being illiterate/ ignorant, holding low social status and not having enough money. In addition, many described an uneducated person with undesirable characters, using expressions such as <<wicked>> (Samuel, SSS), <<indisciplined>> (James, SSS), <<no respect to others>> (e.g. Henry, SSS), <<no respect for the law>> (Mariama, SSS), and <<stubborn>> (elaborating what he means by saying <<I tried to show a solution but they

don't agree>> (Samuel, SSS). There was only one positive comment about an uneducated person around his/her generous nature: <<If you harvest they give them to relatives and people around them. They offer things>> (Jalikatu, SSS). Another positive feature of the uneducated, not directly mentioned as such but apparent from the drawings and their comments is that they are considered to be hardworking. As discussed above, they are visualised to be conducting physical labour, and often they are associated with being a farmer or a trader. Indeed, there was only one comment (i.e. Zainab, SSS) that stated an uneducated to be without a job and sit idle. This establishes a distinction from the status of <<dropouts>> who are often commented to be sitting idle without having any work to do (e.g. Local Unit Commander of the Makeni police, Interview, 25 November 2009).

In addition to the predominantly negative construction of an uneducated person, the study further revealed a sense of shame and inferiority assumed by the <<uneducated>> participants in the study. This partially came out when I asked participants who themselves would be categorised as such in the Sierra Leonean standards to comment on the features of an uneducated person after the drawing activity. For instance, Alexis, who completed SSS but did not have prospects to go to college, commented: <<the person is always afraid of meeting elders or dignities, because they feel like they are failures>>. Similarly, Jacob, a TVET trainee, said: <<When he or she is talking to people he fears. He or she will not be able to talk to people>>. More directly, the out-of-school and TVET trainee participants expressed their sense of inferiority responding to the question of what they can and cannot do without education. There was a long list of what they could not do. For example, Musu, who dropped out of schooling after completing primary school, stated.

> <<I won't be able to help others and can't play a role in the family. I can't talk to colleagues and other people with confidence... Just have the fear that maybe if you talk to somebody who is educated they won't listen to me... [or] not interested in talking with me without education>>.[8]

This list appears to include basic things that one should feel one is able to do as a member of society, such as talking to others with confidence. Furthermore, when I asked the out-of-school participants what they do every day, they often replied to me saying that they do <<nothing>>. For instance, Dauda said <<nothing. At times I am at home, go out. During weekend,

8 This interview was partially interpreted from Krio to English by Alexis, another participant in the study.

go for watching film or football games. I go to mosque five times a day>>. These comments seem to suggest that they feel they are not doing anything <<meaningful>>, that is education or work. There was another occasion that drew my attention to how society may be marginalising children and young people who do not reach the status of an educated person, perhaps even without intending to do so. This was when I joined a radio discussion on the importance of education hosted by the Forum for Empowerment of Children and Young People (FECYP) to which some out-of-school participants in the study belong. This organisation held a weekly radio program trying to educate children on different topics, including how to prevent and treat diarrhoea and I had attended several recordings of the programme as an observer. A community worker at the radio station joined the discussion on the importance of education, but in doing so she made the comment that he or she is <<nothing to the community>> if a person is not educated.

In summary, despite the fact that very few people manage to proceed to university level, the conception of <<being educated>> only encompasses those who have received a <<paper>> from a tertiary institution in Sierra Leone. This is an understandable phenomenon in view of the scanty employment opportunities in the country; because the opportunities for employment are so scarce, one needs to have exceptionally high credentials to seize the opportunities. Nevertheless, the problem is that such representation of <<being educated>> is found to result in socially marginalising the majority of young people. That is, those who are not able to climb the education ladder to the tertiary level are considered to be mere dropouts. The study revealed the stark contrast, especially through the drawings, between the constructs of an educated and an uneducated person in this context. Further, it demonstrated the sense of shame and inferiority felt by young people who do not reach the status of being <<educated>>.

4. Reflections on the use of drawings as part of a participatory methodology with disadvantaged children and youth

Drawing has added important value to the study in two ways: as a tool and as a source of data. As a tool, it functioned as a stimulus, promoting participant's reflection on abstract concepts which were difficult to explore verbally directly. This was most evidently demonstrated in the exploration of the constructs of <<an educated person>> and <<an uneducated person>> held by participants. As mentioned, when I tried to ask

questions on the subject verbally, participants did not quite understand what I wanted to ask, but everyone understood the simple instruction to <<draw the habits of an educated person and an uneducated person>>. The concrete nature of the task of drawing helped participants to think through the constructs they have around <<being educated>>, regardless of the visual outcome of their thinking. Therefore, even when they were asked orally in the follow-up interview about the drawings, they were able to share their constructs more completely and deeply. In short, the task enabled participants to share their constructs around being educated with me in different ways, visually in drawing, in writing and/or through oral explanations.

As a result, the drawing activity promoted more active engagement of participants in the project. If we follow Shier's model (2001) to gauge the degree of collaboration, we can say that drawing helped bring up the level of participation in study; from Level 1, <<Children are listened to>>, to Level 2 where <<Children are supported in expressing their views>> (p. 111). In Level 1 children and youth are listened to only when children take the initiative to express a view in the research or intervention project in which they are involved. Level 2 requires that researchers or workers take positive action to enable children or youth to express a view, removing the barriers that may be hindering them to do so. In this study, drawings were one of the essential tools that helped remove barriers, enabling young people to share their constructs around education with the researcher.

As a source of data, the drawing generated through the research process also adds important value to the study. Raty *et al.* (2011) remind us that <<a picture is worth a thousand words>>. Drawings provided visual evidence that expressed young people's conceptions more powerfully and clearly than their verbal accounts. Abdul's drawing (Figure 3) exemplifies this: his drawing of the uneducated person strikes the reader with the primitive image drawn, in a sharp contrast to the civilised image of the educated person drawn by him (not represented in the figure). Also, the objects drawn in the pictures contributed to a more systematic understanding of the constructs in the context around an educated person, an uneducated person, and teacher. As analysed quantitatively, the presence/absence of certain objects –such as the presence of artefacts related to agriculture and lack of shoes for the uneducated while the presence of books and decent shoes in the images of the educated–, substantiate the stark difference in the status between the educated and the uneducated in the context of Sierra Leone.

Furthermore, in combination with other types of data sources, drawing data helped approach participants' perspectives multi-modally across a greater cross-section of young people. The project generated three kinds of data on the same topic: visual (through drawings), oral (through the follow-up interviews), and writing (through the accompanying writing). This meant that, on one hand, the participants were able to share in the drawing what they may have found difficult to express orally or in the form of writing (such as the holistic image of the educated, detailing the type of clothes, artefacts etc.). On the other hand, they could describe orally or in writing what they could not express in the drawing (e.g. profession).

The study therefore concurs with the claims in the existing literature that we should work with drawing in combination with complementary interviews and/or writing (Mitchell, 2011; Literat, 2013; Veale, 2005; Punch, 2002). In the study, the combination allowed not only active engagement of young people and generation of multi-layered data sources on the same topic, but also helped counter the drawbacks that drawing can have as a research method. One risk is that the drawing data could be misinterpreted, particularly when the researcher has a different cultural background from that of the participants. For instance, the distinction of gender was difficult if we just relied on the visual image. However, the participants' accompanying writing or oral accounts clarified the issue in various cases.

The other drawback that has been countered through a follow-up interview and/or writing is when the produced drawing was not very informative as a visual source of data. For instance, there were cases where the drawing of an educated and an uneducated are practically the same. For example, the only difference between the drawings made by Henry of the educated person and the uneducated person is what they have in their hands (see Figure 7 below): while the educated individual seemingly holds a book, the uneducated individual looks to be holding a kind of a tool. However, his complementary writing describes different features of the two images. While the educated person has a good job, speaks good English and supports the family (feeding, and reading and writing), he describes the uneducated person as someone who does not have <<big money>> because he has a practical job and always depends on an interpreter because he cannot speak English. There were also cases where the drawings were not well developed and could not be interpreted. This was especially the case with the participants who had no schooling (or very little), such as Kadiatu. However, having a chance to talk with participants afterwards gave them the opportunity to verbally explain the images they

had drawn - more importantly, the images they wanted to draw. As discussed above, even if the drawing as a visual artefact was not very informative the task of drawing was effective: it facilitated participants to think through the constructs they have on their own, helping them to orally convey these ideas to the researcher afterwards.

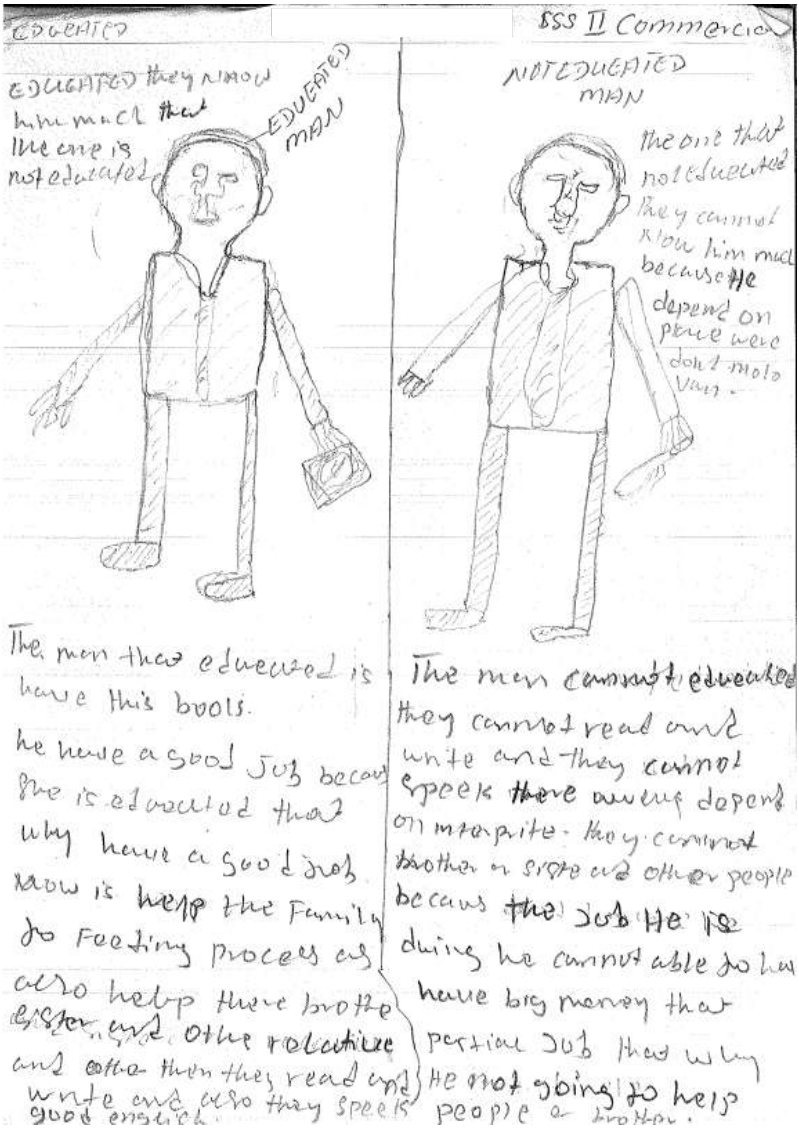

Figure 7: Drawings and the accompanying writing by Henry (SSS pupil) of educated and uneducated persons

5. Concluding thoughts

The chapter explored the meaning of schooling using drawing as a research tool, and it suggests how formal education is contributing to socially marginalising the majority of young people. In a context where the majority of young people end up in the status of mere <<uneducated>>, simply expanding basic education does not seem to help counter the problem. Rather, it increases the number of <<dropouts>> who continue to seek the opportunity to go back into the formal education track, and as long as they cannot reach the university level they go on feeling devalued in society. Having said that, I am not advocating a simple expansion of access up to tertiary education either, as the solution does not lie there. Indeed, it is beyond the scope of the chapter to suggest a specific education policy to tackle the problem. Nevertheless, what it suggests is for a policy to take into account the beneficiaries' perspectives and what education means in context. Without doing so, a policy designed with good intentions may have undesirable effects in society, as discussed in the chapter.

From a methodological perspective, the chapter has demonstrated advantages of using drawing in participatory research with disadvantaged young people, both as a tool and a data source. It is a simple, low-cost and familiar artefact that could be applied even in conflict affected countries. Despite its extreme simplicity, there are more ways to take advantage of the method, for example, adding colour pencils available to participants and including their use of colour in the analysis. In addition, although it was not suitable at the time of my fieldwork, it would be interesting to consider using photographs as another visual method in such contexts with the proliferation of smartphones in recent years (e.g. Poveda, Matsumoto, Morgade and Alonso, 2018).

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CHAPTER 3
COLLABORATION AS A KEY ELEMENT FOR BUILDING TRUST IN ONLINE ETHNOGRAPHY: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS FRAMED IN A STUDY ON CYBER-FANDOMS

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1. Introduction

Online ethnographic fieldwork raises specific challenges in aspects such as participant recruitment, rapport building, data collection and ethical integrity. These critical aspects result from the technological architecture and the social organisation of digital spaces and the transformations they bring to the ways in which relationships between ethnographers and participants develop.

The body of literature providing methodological guidelines to conduct ethnographic research online is growing (Hine, 2015; Kozinets, 2015; Salmons, 2016). These works offer useful considerations to support observation, participation, documentation and ethics in online communities. However, as Henderson, Johnson and Auld (2013) point out, most Internet researchers do not discuss the specific dilemmas they have negotiated in their projects, the practices that have proven effective or the limitations of their choices. One of the topics in need of further development is the establishment of trust relationships between researchers and participants in online settings, where questions of presence and authenticity are profoundly altered (Barnes, Penn-Edwards and Sim, 2015; Beneito-Montagut, 2011; Estalella and Ardèvol, 2007; Reich, 2015; Zimmer, 2010). As the Association of Internet Research has highlighted, <<no set of guidelines or rules is static; the fields of internet research are dynamic and heterogeneous>> (Markham and Buchanan, 2012: 2). Thus, there is a need for detailed descriptions and debates around the particular ways in which social media affects <<the human relationships

around which ethnography ultimately revolves>> (Campbell and Lassiter, 2015: 4).

Drawing on examples from our ethnographically-oriented multiple case study on the performance of identity by four members of different online fan cultures, we examine the difficulties we experienced regarding the establishment of trust with the participants. We start with a description of the project (Valero-Porras, 2018) in order to provide context for the discussion. Then, we critically analyze three challenges that emerged during fieldwork and which globally highlight the need and inevitability of a shared construction of online ethnographic fieldwork: (1) difficulties in participant recruitment and researchers' self-presentation; (2) challenges in gaining access and the need of inclusive procedures to empower participants in the process of data collection; and (3) ethical issues of online research such as privacy, confidentiality and anonymity and how involving participants in decision-making enhances ethical integrity and contributes to the development of trustworthy research relationships.

These critical aspects influence each other. Therefore, they imply interdependent methodological choices that, as a whole, have an impact on how collaboration and trust are enacted in online ethnographic research. We argue that adaptability to the participants' expectations, reciprocity and collaboration in data collection can contribute to the enhancement of psychological coordination and trust between researchers and participants, aspects that facilitate understanding in social research.

2. A study on the performance of identity in cyber-fandoms

Building upon theories of literacy as a social practice (Barton and Lee, 2013), online cyber-fandoms as participatory cultures (Jenkins, 2006) and identity as socially produced through interactions with others (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005), our study aimed to analyse how members of online communities present themselves to other members when they participate in shared digital practices. Drawing on linguistic ethnography (Blommaert, 2010) and discourse analysis (Androutsopoulos, 2008), we document these practices (i.e. participants, settings, activities, tools, etc.) and examine the multisemiotic resources (e.g. linguistic, graphic or typographic) on which our participants draw to position themselves as insiders in their particular communities and signal their cultural affiliations, interests and views.

Our multiple-case study consisted of four cases. Each case focused on one individual and the associated constellation of practices, settings and human relationships. We established several criteria in order to facilitate comparison of data and recruit significant participants: (a) Spanish nationality (to ensure a partially shared sociocultural background and mutual linguistic understanding between participants and researchers); (b) age between 18 and 30 (to narrow down the focus of the study to youth and young adults) (c) information-rich cases (i.e. frequent and intense participation in online fan activities); and (d) variation in the type of online communities (in order to reflect different perspectives of the phenomenon under study).

Four participants accepted to be involved in the study: (a) Marty, an enthusiast of retro racing cars who participates in two international Facebook groups about races and maintenance of old cars; (b) Diana, a blogger and youtuber who participates in a transnational fashion community; (c) Luthien, a video gamer who participates in multiplayer online role playing games and regularly posts texts and pictures in an online forum about the saga *Final Fantasy*; and (d) Shiro, the administrator of a Spanish-speaking scanlation community (i.e. collaborative translation, editing and distribution of scanned chapters of manga comics to make them accessible to fans).

3. Challenge 1: Recruiting participants and gaining access to their social worlds

We located websites where members of specific fandoms gathered through a series of Google searches. We explored the resulting lists of websites and we identified the type of practices in which users engaged (e.g. fanfiction, fanart, fansubbing, fandubbing, video-gaming, discussion, etc.), recurrent topics and interests (e.g. fantasy, fashion and style, sports, manga, etc.), languages employed and most active members. When a website was deemed to be a gathering place for users of potential research interest, we posted a message introducing our research and emailed salient users (gatekeepers or especially active members) whenever their email addresses were available. We announced our study in approximately 30 online settings and we estimate that more than 1000 users read the announcements. We received around 23 emails of members interested in participating in the study. We immediately started email threads with them but several issues regarding the establishment of trust and the pre-

sentation of the self in digital environments emerged throughout this process, as described in the next subsections.

3.1. Access and rapport-building in disembodied self-presentations

At the beginning we composed a brief announcement with basic data (main research goal, eligible profile and our contact details) under the heading <<Participants needed for research study on online fan activities>>. We posted it in approximately 15 sites and obtained five responses showing interest. In some cases we were perceived as outsiders and our presence generated a feeling of discomfort among group members. One participant even disbelieved our academic affiliations and referred to us as <<potential scammers>>.

The ineffectiveness of this strategy led us to reflect on the importance of researchers' virtual self-presentation to potential participants. In offline ethnographies, the common association between embodiment and authenticity helps researchers establish an initial dialogue with potential participants. As reported by Bakardjieva (2005), and Kozinets (2015), posting texts in online sites to try to recruit subjects of potential research interest raises some challenges regarding access and rapport-building due to the virtuality of the medium. Researchers cannot draw on dress, voice, gesture or other embodied meaning-making elements (Markham, 2013). These <<cues from the physical>> (Thomas, 2007: 5) need to be replaced by strategic discursive cues in the texts researchers use to present themselves as honest and likeable.

In order to address members' distrust, we looked for more appropriate manners of introducing ourselves in each online setting. While Hine (2000) suggests sending a formal letter on institutional e-letterhead, others (Kozinets, 2010) recommend a more casual approach to try to present themselves as insiders in the targeted communities. In our second attempt, we combined both orientations. Our text included the following discursive moves: (a) self-introduction (with our full names and academic affiliations); (b) plain explanation of the topic of our study; (c) description of the eligible profile and the reasons for the suitability of the targeted community (based on information we had previously observed in the website); (d) personal interest in the core activities (we tried to reduce social

distance by showing our previous knowledge about the topic or, if we had any, and our eagerness to learn about it); (e) definition of the data collection tools (emphasising their adaptability and negotiability), the length of the study (stressing our flexibility to participants' circumstances, e.g. possibility to interrupt data collection due to amount of workload, holidays or exams) and main ethical procedures; (f) contact details (with our institutional email and the links to our websites); (g) invitation to potential participants to start a dialogue and discuss with us any aspects of the study that they did not understand or wanted to negotiate; and (h) strategic disclosure of some information about our offline lives (e.g. region of origin) or commonalities found in demographic information (e.g. the first researcher's age). Regarding writing style, we employed a more personal tone and we combined a standard normative orthography and a slightly formal register in the body of the email with a more expressive style in the salutation and the closing sentence (e.g. smileys or exclamation marks). These discursive strategies generated more positive responses among group members; we used these personalised announcements on 15 occasions and obtained approximately 18 positive responses. Conveying a sense of formality in the main body, introducing ourselves as insiders (or *newbies* when we knew little about the topic) and emphasising the transparency and flexibility of our methodological procedures helped us to represent ourselves as professional (but not authoritative), forthright and trust-worthy and concurrently triggered reciprocity and readiness to collaborate among members of the targeted groups.

3.2. Participants' anxiety about being misrepresented

Throughout the process of negotiating access to participants, we realised that explaining our epistemological position as sociocultural and collaborative (i.e. opposed to other approaches where the participants are positioned as mere <<subjects of study>>) helped to attenuate their reluctance to get involved in the study, since these approaches were deemed as less threatening to their self-image. Although we assured confidentiality, some members of the targeted fan cultures expressed their concerns about the way in which they were going to be represented in published articles. For instance, video gamers and manga fans accused the mainstream media of stereotypically representing them as fanatic and socially unskilled and voiced their fears about the possibility of being <<judged and unfairly represented in the study>> (in Luthien's words). These feel-

ings are consistent with the concepts of *alienation* (Bakardjieva and Feenberg, 2000) and *betrayal* (Newkirk, 1996) in qualitative research, which imply violating participants' stances, attitudes or interests by appropriating information generated in one situation and embedding it in another. For this reason, a collaborative and consensual approach in which participants have control over the information they provide and the portrait researchers elaborate was perceived as a warrant of *contextual integrity* (Markham and Buchanan, 2012; Nissenbaum, 2004) and as a more engaging experience.

3.3. Identity verification

We provided potential participants with means to verify our identities. We sent our Curriculum Vitae to interested candidates, so they could check the consistency of the information through online searches. We also offered them the possibility to befriend us on Facebook and all the potential participants preferred to do so. As one of them expressed, <<I also want to know who I am dealing with before making a decision>>. There was a perceived imbalance in the degree of online exposure of participants and researchers and having access to our Facebook accounts was a way of accessing multiple kinds of personal and biographical information. In view of the candidates' demands of reciprocity in the degree of self-disclosure, we renounced the idea of creating a special Facebook account for the study (where we could have more control of the information transferred to the participants, as done by Barnes *et al.*, 2015) and used our personal accounts instead. Researchers and potential participants mutually used the information found in Facebook as an additional means to check the alignment of the other side's digital identity (for example, through photos and information published in different online settings). We welcomed the idea of befriending our participants, as it would allow us to introduce a more casual and likeable self-image. However, this decision also represented a shift in power, since issues of privacy, research intrusiveness and context collapse (i.e. bringing together people from different social domains in a social network; Marwick, 2011), started to affect us and had to be equally negotiated.

3.4. Control of information regarding the researchers' digital identity

Issues of self-image constantly arose throughout participant recruitment. For example, we scrutinised our Facebook accounts and erased any content that we perceived as sensitive (e.g. links to any ideologically-loaded or controversial issues) before accepting the candidates' friend requests. We also took precautions concerning our status updates and kept a watchful eye on the comments our friends published on our Facebook timelines. Nonetheless, researchers do not have total control over the flow of information found either in social networking services or through web searches. Throughout the two months we invested in participant recruitment, Google searches for our names increased by six, as reported in the analytics dashboard of our Academia.edu pages. These statistics raised concerns about the type of information the potential participants could be accessing and its impact on our chances to gain consent. For instance, participants could access our previous scientific work and evaluate it, as described by Reich (2015). In one conversation on Facebook, one potential participant alluded to one past academic article we had published in a pedagogically-oriented journal. This article was aimed at assessing the critical reading strategies of 13 university students and the methods moved away from ethnography (e.g. they drew on a more etic approach). The participant's comment was appreciative. However, we were concerned about how other potential participants could be interpreting this article (for example, we feared being viewed as disrespectful of the students' interests or goals) and we considered the way in which these interpretations could damage our image and compromise our relationship with them. As Reich (2015) asserts, the current easy access to information stresses the researchers' need to monitor their online presence and watch the actions they carry out and the positions they express, as they will be stored on the Internet.

3.5. An alternative route to participant recruitment: targeting potential participants offline

In the course of our search for online fan communities, we realized that some of the digitally-mediated settings we were visiting were connected to physical ones. For example, video gamers in the city where we

reside congregate in approximately 15 cafes and shops located in one specific area known by the fan community as the <<Geek Triangle>>. We visited these establishments and we explained to the owners the type of participants' profile we were seeking. Many of them, who were themselves video game players, volunteered to introduce our study to those regular customers who, according to them, best met our criteria. Shortly afterwards several video gamers contacted us. Visiting the Geek Triangle offered some other advantages.

1. Allowing the owners to decide which customers they would refer to us seemed less intrusive, since we did not ask for any personal contact details.
2. Physically visiting the Geek Triangle highlighted our insider knowledge of the local video gaming community.
3. Our research was introduced to potential participants by acquaintances who had met us face-to-face and this increased their confidence.
4. The concentration of all the targeted settings in one small geographical setting facilitated the arrangement of face-to-face interviews with potential participants and eased questions of access.

For example, the owner of a popular café in the Geek Triangle introduced the study to a co-administrator of a big Spanish online forum devoted to the saga Final Fantasy. He contacted us and we interviewed him face-to-face. After the interview, he introduced us via email to his Spanish friends who, according to him, fulfilled our criteria. This allowed us to develop a snowball sample that culminated in the recruitment of Luthien. This strategy minimised problems of identity authentication and facilitated initial contacts with Luthien. Prior to giving her consent, the video gamer also stressed the importance of picturing how we were going to work together and treat each other and issues of research transparency, reciprocity and mutual respect were addressed in subsequent conversations.

4. Challenge 2: Empowering participants in the data collection process

Initially, we intended to collect four types of data: (a) *observational data* of ongoing digital practices (b) *archival data* (textual artefacts produced by the participants); (c) *elicited data* (e.g. interviews); and (d) *fieldnotes*, to

chronologically record participants' observed activities and describe our subjective impressions (Kozinets, 2010). This raised questions among our participants: they were not comfortable with the idea of not having control over the sites in which researchers could lurk or the information they could archive and some participants were unwilling to do ethnographic interviews in the orthodox sense using Skype and suggested using more <<casual>> means. On the other hand, the digital medium also posed some methodological challenges for us. The multiplicity of connected online fan sites and the overwhelming amount of available data involving different degrees of ethical sensitivity could hinder the definition of the field, complicate the selection of archival data and jeopardise the ethical integrity of the study. This led us to a deep reflection on the ways we were conceptualising participation in our study, positioning participants as target-objects of the study instead of active contributors that could give us the clues to understand their fanworlds. The participants were claiming for more agency in the study. Therefore we deployed a series of collaborative procedures aimed at the negotiation of fieldwork practices in order to re-position the participants as contributors to the study, timidly orienting the methodology to a collaborative one.

4.1. Enabling participants to self-generate and self-select data

We suggested to participants that they use screencasting software (Camtasia and Fraps) to capture video clips of their screens while engaged in their fan practices. We accessed the videos in a shared folder in Dropbox. Screencasting software has been used in previous research on digital practices (Coiro, 2009; Garcia, Standlee, Bechkoff and Cui, 2009) but it has mainly been under the researchers' control. In our study, participants were conferred the power to decide when to record and what data to share or delete.

This methodological change was not free from challenges. First, technical issues such as adjustments in image resolution and available space in participants' Dropbox accounts had to be addressed. Then, we had to train the participants to use the software, so we recorded two 10-minute video tutorials (using screen recordings) to show participants the basic functions of Camtasia and Fraps. Finally, issues of data selection had to be dealt with. To this aim, we asked the four participants to record disparate digital fan activities in which they usually participated during the

first month of fieldwork. At the end of the month, we discussed with them which practices seemed to be more relevant for the study. Furthermore, we emphasised their freedom to record any other activities which they deemed significant or to discuss any new practices with us.

In the course of the study, participants started to insert messages to us in the videos (either typing or speaking out loud) whenever they wanted to give brief clarifications about their own behaviour. These unexpected combinations of observational and *self-elicited* data gave us a deeper insight into participants' performance of identity in their respective fan communities. For example, Luthien explained in one video that, when playing with international members, she always typed <<gg wp>> (meaning <<good game well played>>) at the end of the game because it is an interactive ritual that operates globally among gamers, <<just as the final handshake between two tennis players>>.

Participants also spontaneously uploaded in the shared Dropbox self-generated artefacts they thought of importance and inaccessible to us (e.g. Diana uploaded drafts of blog posts to provide us with some evidence of the composition process) or videos recorded with their mobile phones (e.g. Shiro showed the differences between professional and fan translations of manga using her phone camera and her collection of paper comic books). Finally, participants tagged us in posts in social networking services like Facebook when they thought their content was of special significance to us, so we did not overlook any relevant posts and we received a notification every time there was a change, such as a new comment or a *like*.

We used these artefacts as a starting point in interviews. For example, we showed a number of these artefacts to participants at the beginning of the interview and we asked questions which moved from a general level (purpose of the artefact, intended audience, etc.) to specific issues (reasons behind one particular semiotic choice). The use of these artefacts in interviews helped us to reinforce participants' impression that they were guiding the research process, since they could see that the topics we brought up were grounded on the data they emphasised as relevant. This also helped us plan more specific, relevant and straightforward interview questions and to obtain more emic interpretations of the collected artefacts.

While these collaborative procedures may raise criticism regarding observer effects, data contamination and researcher-induced distortions (see LeCompte and Goetz, 1982), we consider that these constructs result

from positivistic-biased epistemological views. According to the philosophical assumptions of qualitative research, reality is multiple and subjective evidence from participants is needed in order to assemble different perspectives in a study. In our experience, this empowered position reduced participants' anxiety about the way they would be represented in findings, focused our attention on the most relevant aspects of the process, enhanced emic interpretations and provided us with data that would have remained hidden if we had imposed more constraints on participants. As Monahan and Fisher (2010: 357) note: <<instead of aspiring to distance and detachment, some of the greatest strengths of ethnographic research lie in cultivating close ties with others and collaboratively shaping discourses and practices in the field>>.

4.2. Co-creating a digital database with participants

Once researchers have access to many online contexts, their presence can be undetectable and, in our case, this awareness causes some anxiety among participants. For this reason, some participants voiced their willingness to know how the study was developing. They shared the feeling that, although they had given us access to the digital spaces they deemed relevant for the study, the lack of awareness and control over the data we were going to collect was a threat to their privacy. To address this issue, the four Dropbox shared folders were used as databases co-constructed by participants and the researcher and we set the participant's permissions so that they could add, view, change or delete files to their folders without restraint. Participants uploaded the videos of onscreen activity they wanted to provide directly to the folders we shared with each of them. We also stored there any documents or artefacts we collected (e.g. copies of Diana's blog posts, chapters of manga comics translated by Shiro, or pictures of Luthien's avatars in *Final Fantasy*) and transcriptions of their interviews.

Thus, each participant knew in which spaces we lurked, had access to the artefacts we archived (excluding the screen recordings, which were moved to an external hard drive on a daily basis due to their big size) and shared control of the database with us. In the process, we realised that, as Gstrein and Beaulieu (2022) note, in online spaces the sense of privacy is connected to the possibility of the individual to be aware and keep control of the personal data which circulate about oneself.

We also kept four diaries containing field-notes about each participant and stored them in the corresponding Dropbox shared folders. Participants were invited to read, make changes or additions (preferably in other font colour) and discuss the fieldnotes with us whenever they wanted. In the end, none of them made any changes to our fieldnotes (and possibly they only read them at the beginning of the process), but placing our fieldnotes in a shared space was perceived as an honest practice and an opportunity to have continued access to our interpretations and provide us with further nuanced contextual information whenever they felt their actions and views were not fairly represented.

Our awareness of the possibility of being read by the four participants had effects on our writing style: we did not censor any information, but we became especially thoughtful about how our impressions would be reflected in each diary. In contrast with the traditional construct of fieldnotes as <<running commentaries to oneself>> (Eisenhardt, 2002: 15), <<in collaborative contexts (...) fieldnotes are not accorded any assumed privilege of privacy>> (Campbell and Lassiter, 2015: 74). The agreement on this procedure generated some initial psychological resistance on our part, since we thought it could prevent us from recording all our personal impressions. However, the procedure proved very effective for various reasons. First, it contributed to re-imagining power dynamics. Both sides could symmetrically observe and participate in the other side's activities. Second, in spite of our initial fears, awareness of participants' access to our fieldnotes led to a more thoughtful writing process, since it allowed us to identify when we were imposing our understandings, interests or theoretical constructs over the participants' ones and what questions needed further discussion with them.

4.3. Accommodating participants' preferred online communication channels in ethnographic interviews

We initially took for granted that the interviews would be conducted through embodied, oral and real-time channels such as video chat services in order to replicate <<as closely as possible, given the constraints, the normal processes of qualitative face-to-face interviewing>> (James and Busher, 2006: 405). We also assumed that the participants would prefer a medium where our presence seemed less virtualized. However, these assumptions did not always match the participants' expectations. For ex-

ample, Diana complained about practical constraints, such as difficulties to agree on a time due to her irregular working hours, and Luthien argued that she preferred to know all the questions beforehand to think about her responses slowly.

In the end, we adopted a flexible approach about the employment of different channels to meet participants' self-expression preferences. The channels we used were email, Facebook Chat and also Skype (but less frequently than planned). As fieldwork developed, participants took greater agency and began to create new hybrid forms of online interviewing. On one occasion, we emailed Diana a list of interview questions about the composition processes of her blog posts and the linguistic and visual resources she had learnt from other beauty bloggers. Unexpectedly, the response came in the form of a 45-minute video of onscreen activity. There she offered a multimodal account of her writing process and the <<inspiration taken from other bloggers>> combining oral explanations with visual data (e.g. digital drafts of her blog posts and visits to other bloggers' sites).

The employment of multiple digital tools with different affordances (e.g. synchronicity or asynchronicity, text or video transmission, etc.) allowed participants to have control over aspects such as: (a) the forms of self-representation (e.g. real physical bodies, avatars, etc.); (b) the prevalent modes of communication (e.g. oral language, written language, gesture, typography, etc.); (c) the pace of communication; (d) the early availability of the questions; (e) the possibility of offering clarifications and follow-up discussions; (f) the length of the responses; and (g) the familiarity with the technology.

By accommodating their preferences for digital communication channels, participants were encouraged to <<open up>>, leverage their personal expression skills and voice their own understandings in ways that were significant to them. This empowering practice improved their self-confidence and their confidence in us, since they felt that, instead of accepting the methodological impositions of the researcher, they were working together with us to structure the rules of data collection (James and Busher, 2006). Furthermore, we agree with Garcia *et al.* (2009) that these modes of online interviewing do not necessarily undermine the quality of data. On the contrary, participants may be more relaxed and less stressed about the impressions they are making, leading to <<more thoughtful and denser information>> (Garcia *et al.*, 2009: 67).

4.4. Establishing a sense of co-presence through an ongoing dialogue with participants

Internet-based technologies allow for the establishment of a permanent and free-of-charge two-way communication channel between researchers and participants. As Bakardjieva and Feenberg (2000: 238) note, thanks to digital communication channels <<subjects retain the opportunity to talk back at any time, at no extra cost or inconvenience, thus sharing with the researcher the ability to initiate interaction and, potentially, to influence the direction of the study>>. In addition to being the chosen channel for a number of ethnographic interviews (in the orthodox sense), Facebook Chat also boosted spontaneous conversations often initiated by the participants themselves. As they were unscheduled, these interactions were more casual and less structured than an interview and the length of the participants' interventions and ours was more balanced. The topics of these conversations varied greatly. For example, on one occasion, Marty initiated a conversation to comment on one song the first researcher had posted in her timeline. This type of interactions did not contain any evidence with regard to our research questions and were not saved in the database, but created the impression of mutual self-disclosure and served to nurture our relationships with participants, raising some ethical considerations regarding the blurred line between research collaboration and friendship (Stille, 2015). On other occasions participants asked for updates on the progress of the study.

These dialogues helped us to: (a) enhance research transparency; (b) further involve participants in the study and consider them as research partners (we used these conversations to seek advice regarding aspects like the best times to visit the sites, any codes of conduct we should know about how to participate in the fan cultures or the sensitivity of certain pieces of data); (c) foster a more symmetrical relationship with the participants (this adaptation located us in a more humble position and led to recognition of our participants' extensive insider knowledge); and (d) give a sense of ongoing co-presence and reduce the participants' anxiety about our invisibility in the online research sites (Baker, 2013; Hine, 2015).

4.5. Serving the participants' personal interests

Finally, we tried to establish a more reciprocal approach by also serving the personal goals of participants. Many scholars have described the

dynamics of reciprocity as an inherent consequence of the intimate relationships that define ethnography (Huisman, 2008; Lassiter, 2005). However, we found it useful for trust-building to explicitly negotiate with participants how they could benefit from our relationship. The materialisation of this agreement varied greatly among participants. For example, we assisted Shiro in some translation tasks (English-Spanish) of manga comics. Diana considered the study as a good opportunity to gain visibility and was glad to have us as new subscribers of her blog and her YouTube channel. Further, she asked us to carry out some promotional tasks such as pressing the *like* button in published contents and commenting on the videos and blog posts. Finally, Luthien was interested in creating a YouTube channel to publish commented gameplay clips, so she started to use the gameplay videos she recorded for us as a form of training in the genre (she humorously narrated the events on the screen as she played and used us as a mock audience).

5. Challenge 3: Negotiating ethics

Several issues of Internet research ethics have been present throughout the chapter. In previous sections we have tackled questions of power and authority, collaboration in data collection and data archiving, research transparency, respectful representation of participants' views and reciprocity. In this section we will address three established principles of research ethics: privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. We will argue in favour of discussing specific ethical stances and dilemmas with participants instead of imposing "one-size-fits-all ethical standards" (Cahill, Sultana and Pain, 2007: 307). We advocate for a contextually situated approach that tailors the core ethical standards included in governmental codes, institutional protocols and general guidelines of Internet research ethics (Ess and the AOIR ethics working committee, 2002; Markham and Buchanan, 2012) to accommodate differences in participants' expectations and interests. Involving participants in decision-making regarding ethical issues helps us to present ourselves as morally responsible to them and engages ethnographic practice on a more personal level. This collective and responsive approach might require increasing the number of stages in the design of the study but is supported by the flexibility of the medium, which allows for frequent interactions between participants and researchers (Bakardjieva and Feenberg, 2000; Estalella and Sanchez-Criado, 2015).

5.1. Privacy

Privacy can be defined as the domain in the life of an individual that is set apart from what is public. We describe as "private" the activities, behaviours, information or communication that belong to an individual alone and are free of interference or unwanted observation. From a legal point of view, privacy is a human right. However, the emergence of digital technologies, the development of new social practices connected to them, and the rise in datafication (i.e. turning many aspects of our life into data) has blurred the distinction between the public and the private spheres and has complicated the interpretation and enforcement of traditional privacy norms.

Some scholars guide their ethical decisions about the use of online data on the basis of the public or private organisation of the digital technology employed by participants. For example, logs of private real-time interactions in online chats are treated differently from posts in open discussion forums (Estalella and Ardèvol, 2007). However, technical criteria do not always match social and psychological expectations.

Our stance on this issue is that the participants' expectations of privacy rather than the technological affordances of the site should be taken as the benchmark for ethical decision-making (Lomborg, 2013). This perspective is based on the conceptualization of privacy as contextually situated. Privacy is preserved when the flow of information generated by an action is coherent with the expectations, interests, and values of the individuals involved and its purpose or function is legitimate and significant in a particular context (Gstrein and Beaulieu, 2022).

Our participants expressed different understandings of privacy at different moments and these divergences had to be acknowledged and integrated in our research design in order to increase their confidence and enhance the ethical integrity of the study. For example, Shiro and the other members of the scanlation community (composed of 23 active members) allowed us to join their Facebook Group and participate in the group's Facebook Chat. Access to these private spaces came at the cost of several restrictions on the data that we could collect from these channels. The scanlators authorised us to archive posts and fragments of chat logs containing discussions about translation strategies (e.g. translation techniques to represent themselves as experts in Japanese language and manga before the readers) but prohibited us from storing conversations

around more personal issues (e.g. conflicts with other groups of scanlation). Despite the fact that the group blog is publically available, the scanlators imposed the same restrictions to the archiving of blog posts. As we observed, scanlators introduced frequent descriptions of personal experiences and problems in these sites (both in the public and the private ones) to socialize or to seek support from a reduced network of peers and were not willing to have these posts archived for research purposes.

Diana's YouTube videos, blog posts and status updates on Facebook also contained personal information. However, her individual perceptions of what constitutes private information were different. Due to her increasing popularity (over 450.000 subscribers and around 30.000.000 views on her YouTube channel), she perceived herself as an emerging YouTube public figure. For her, disclosing details of her everyday life in the contents she created was critical for performing authenticity and intimacy in front of her audience and gaining followers. At the beginning of fieldwork Diana authorised us to collect and store any digital contents she disseminated through social media, with one exception. In the third month of fieldwork she uploaded a special video to her YouTube channel. In this video, she voiced her discontent regarding the scarce number of registered views of a previous video, which had been costly and time-consuming. Contrary to her expectations, this video sparked strong criticism from many fans who argued that Diana was not in the position to demand any kind of <<loyalty>> from them. Two weeks later Diana deleted it from her channel and asked us to do the same with the copy in our database. Although the video was publicly accessible for a while and was watched by thousands of subscribers, Diana preferred to erase any traces of it because she thought that it could harm her image in the future. It was easy for us to fulfil the request because the video had not yet been included in any published findings. However, this experience revealed that changing circumstances can alter consensual commitments between researchers and participants even in cases when the collected digital contents were initially produced for global audiences and published in open websites.

We find a final example of mismatch between technological and psychological privacy in the case of Luthien and the videogame community. Luthien regularly played two multiplayer online videogames in technologically private platforms (which required registration and selection of a password). Luthien and the video gamers with whom she regularly played authorized us to record and save their gameplay sessions. They did not understand in-game interactions as private, since: (a) participants were

masked under avatars; (b) they did not exchange personal information; and (c) it is common for video-gamers to record their screens while playing and upload the videos to open websites to show their gameplay skills and help other players to level up. However, we were not authorized to lurk (or collect data) in the online discussion forum devoted to *Final Fantasy* where she participates (and administers several threads). Although this forum is public, Luthien and her peers perceived this space as more private and familiar, only visited by a reduced group of friends with a shared enthusiasm for the saga.

These examples illustrate the difficulties in making decisions on the treatment of data based on the public or private configuration of the technology used without jeopardising our relationship with participants (Hine, 2015; Snee, 2013). Definitions of publicness and privacy on the Internet cannot be considered out of local contexts and the assumptions of researchers need to be confronted with participants' perspectives, values and circumstances. This kind of consensual approach complicates the establishment of rigid top-down ethical protocols prior to fieldwork. However, in practical terms the ubiquity of online communication facilitates the involvement of participants in the design of the research project (Bakardjieva and Feenberg, 2000). Again, participatory, bottom-up and emergent designs appear as possible solutions to the challenges of cultivating relationships between researchers and participants on the Internet and help to achieve an emic perspective in the interpretation of the collected data.

5.2. Confidentiality

Internet researchers may observe illicit behaviours of participants in the course of fieldwork (Henderson *et al.*, 2013). The four participants of our study recurrently used, manipulated and disseminated multimodal material without permission. The clearest example of copyright infringement we encountered is scanlation, which involves the manipulation, reproduction and global dissemination of copyright-protected cultural products (i.e. manga comics) by groups of fans without authorization. As noted by Lee (2012: 138), scanlation communities have promoted a <<flexible and socially situated perception of copyright>>. In Shiro's words, scanlation might not be a <<legal practice>>, but it is a <<moral practice>> because it relies on voluntarism and free-sharing (i.e. economic gain is forbidden according to the scanlators' ethical code). Also, scanlators view

themselves as supporters of the official cultural industries, since they only translate those comics which are not officially available in one language. According to their ethical code, once the comic is licensed and officially translated, the fan translation must be deleted from host sites in order to protect the economic rights of professional publishers. The issue of the unlawfulness of scanlation emerged at the beginning of our interactions with Shiro. She showed a genuine interest in the topic of the study and expressed her willingness to participate. Nonetheless, she was reluctant to allow us to investigate her practices or enter the community because she did not want to run the risk of being sued or compromise the group's activity, for example, by causing the deletion of the group's blog or the removal of the group's works from host sites.

Following the precedents set by previous studies on fan activities and digital practices (Androutsopoulos, 2013; Black, 2005), and in spite of the ethical concerns our decision could cause, we chose not to report Shiro's unethical usage of media material and preserve her confidentiality. Nonetheless, Shiro requested us to materialise our commitment in the informed consent form. We decided to involve Shiro in the composition of the informed consent form (stored in our shared folder in Dropbox) to tailor it to her needs and expectations. The section on confidentiality was formulated as follows.

> <<The researchers will hold personal data provided by the participant confidential. They will not report the group's activity to any official publishing company. Materials will only be archived with the participant's consent. Stored information will remain de-identified and will only be used within the context of the study. Researchers will conceal the group's name and its members' identities (their real names and their nicks) in published findings and will send copies of the study's products to the participant. The participant will be able to access, correct or cancel any pieces of data by means of a written statement.>>.

The collaborative composition of the informed consent form reassured Shiro about our ethical commitment to her.

5.3. Anonymity?

When we started to plan the study, we assumed that the four participants would need to remain anonymous and similar standard ethical procedures regarding identity protection would need to be followed. How-

ever, during the process of negotiating ethics, we observed substantial differences among participants' expectations. Shiro's case raised specific challenges due to the illegality of her fan activities and the perceived risk of real harm to the group (e.g. deletion of the group's blog). In order to minimise potential mistakes in the estimation of data sensitivity, we agreed with Shiro that she would act as a consultant. In practice, this agreement resulted in three different measures: (a) Shiro indicated us any specific elements which needed de-identification in self-generated or self-selected data (e.g. she uttered these clarifications out loud in self-recorded screencasts or changed the font colour of elements that needed anonymization in texts); (b) we consulted Shiro via email or Facebook Chat any time we had doubts about the sensitivity of a piece of information (for example, we agreed that explicit allusions to the titles of the manga comics she translated should be avoided in any published reports of findings); and (c) we committed to edit any written or visual text collected from open websites to avoid identification through Google searches and share the result of our editing with her. For example, we applied several filters and visual effects to distort the colors, lines and textures of the manga avatar which Shiro displayed in the group's blog and used the <<search by image>> feature of Google Images to verify that the original image was not retrievable by entering the distorted image in the search box. Once this process was completed, Shiro authorised us to use the distorted image in published findings.

In sharp contrast with Shiro, Diana explicitly expressed her willingness to use her real identity in published reports of findings. Popular beauty gurus and fashion youtubers place high social and cultural value on their image and expertise. When they acquire popularity, these elements are even used as commodities (e.g. they earn money with YouTube advertisements; they promote certain brands; etc.). Diana did not view anonymity as a protective measure, but as a missed opportunity to gain visibility and recognition and an unfair way to conceal her contribution to our study. This situation underscored the importance of shifting ethical decision-making to the research process and negotiating ethical commitments with individual participants. As Lassiter (2005: 90) notes, <<while many ethnographic projects clearly call for anonymity and confidentiality (…), the uncritical acceptance of the convention, as often inscribed in professional ethical codes, presents its own ethical dilemmas when applied to specific projects>>. We chose to respect Diana's request of attribution of authorship and we materialised this commitment in the informed consent form. The recognition of Diana's moral right to be acknowledged as the

author of part of the texts we used in the study strengthened the sense of partnership between both sides.

6. Conclusions

The apparent ubiquity of the Internet, which allows for the retrieval of data from any user from anywhere and anytime in the world, is not so absolute or clear. Researchers and participants need to trust each other and this kind of confidence is often easier to achieve through offline communication. As Beneito-Montagut (2011: 718) argued, virtuality <<hampers careful and informed interaction of researcher and participants, usually one of the main strengths of ethnographic research>>. This chapter does not provide universal guidelines to gain access to participants' social worlds and collect online data. Rather, it describes some of the heterogeneous and context-dependent strategies we followed in our ethnographically-oriented case study on the identity performance of four members of fan cultures.

In our experience, the establishment of trust between participants and researchers in online environments requires the adoption of greater equity and reciprocity. During the process of finding participants, we learned to carefully plan our textually-mediated self-presentations in order to avoid being perceived as authoritative (and outsider) experts looking for subjects of study. We discussed strategies to ensure contextual integrity (Nissenbaum, 2004) and discussed methodological issues with participants (who acted as counterparts or consultants in certain research processes) to accommodate their ethical expectations and serve their personal interests. Furthermore, we made some of our biographic information available to participants and accepted their friend requests on Facebook. As Reich (2015) argues, these types of strategies generate new ethical and methodological pitfalls regarding, among other aspects, expectations of privacy (i.e. potential discomfort of researchers with regard to befriending participants, consideration of the degree of researchers' personal self-disclosure, etc.). Nonetheless, these strategies provided participants with means to verify our identities and were perceived as <<morally fair measures>> that mitigated their feeling of being observed by unknown, disembodied and invisible researchers who do not belong to the community.

Regarding data collection, participants' anxieties about potential misrepresentations were mitigated through collaborative procedures aimed at the negotiation and support of the participant's involvement during the research process (Bakardjieva and Feenberg, 2000; Campbell and Lassiter, 2015). A digital medium provides researchers with different means to empower participants to: (a) self-select data and self-generate artefacts; (b) have control over the database; (c) accommodate their preferences for self-expression; and (d) take part in continued dialogues about fieldwork and research ethics. The easiness it allows to maintain a two-way ongoing communication with researchers and the possibilities of having control over the amount and type of information participants provide partially compensate for the lack of embodied social contact.

Enabling participants to self-select data and upload self-generated artefacts to the shared databases played a major role in the strategy to enhance collaboration and trust. Moreover, these methodological choices led to a more equal distribution of power between participants and researchers throughout the study and, thus, had a positive impact on the analysis and interpretation of the collected data. Participants helped us focus our attention on the social and discursive practices which they deemed important in the construction of their identities in their respective cyber-fandoms. Also, participants' constant inclusion of spontaneous explanatory comments in self-generated data and our use of these data in subsequent interviews were essential to achieve an emic perspective in our understanding of the situated meaning and motives behind the fan practices of participants. They were also useful during the writing stage, as they allowed us to explain the data using participants' concepts and terms (i.e. insider knowledge) and to include a large number of quotes from participants. These quotes facilitated the nuanced representation of the attitudes, purposes and views of participants and contributed to a sense of authenticity.

The digital network evolves rapidly and new fields of study are emerging with unexpected features, such as only voice social networks (*Clubhouse*) that allow the ethnographers to collect only spoken spontaneous data (Urrutia, Dos-Santos and Cassany, 2022). In this changing context, the collaborative procedures described in this chapter presuppose methodological flexibility and responsiveness on the part of the ethnographers (Cahill *et al*., 2007). However, these procedures offer multiple advantages. In addition to contributing to trust building in online environments, they promote the inclusion of participants' voices, perspectives and frame-

works and result in more context-sensitive, dialogical and reflexive ethnographic practices. As described by Campbell and Lassiter (2015: 65), ethnography involves participation in the lives of others and, thus, it can be defined as an intersubjective intellectual process <<in search of *understanding* between and among people>>. So far, the majority of ethnographic studies drawing on reciprocal and collaborative approaches take place in physical settings (see Banks *et al.*, 2013; Campbell and Lassiter, 2015; Davies, 2015; Lassiter, 2005; Ntelioglou, 2015; Pahl and Allan, 2011). This chapter aims to illustrate some of the ways in which these approaches open up new possibilities to conduct online ethnographies and address the specific challenges that the virtual medium poses to fieldwork.

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CHAPTER 4
MULTIMODAL/SENSORIAL ARTEFACTS AND PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH WITH TEENAGE STUDENTS: INSIGHTS FROM A COMPARATIVE PROJECT ON MUSICAL SOCIALISATION IN MADRID AND BRASILIA

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1. Introduction: Photographs and visual materials in collaborative research with youth

Utilising visual, digital and/or multimodal materials has practically become a taken-for-granted assumption in collaborative research with children and youth (Morgade and Müller, 2015; Ortiz, Prats and Baylina, 2012; Poveda, Matsumoto, Morgade and Alonso, 2018). Research has accumulated over the last two decades showcasing successful experiences with children and youth drawing from visual and digital artefacts in the research process; generating data and forms of engagement with children and youth which do not seem possible with *traditional* research procedures and in the context of traditional research relations (e.g. Mitchell, 2011). Two relatively distinct features of collaborative visual research further support this claim. On one hand, visual and multimodal research has emerged as a contact space for disciplines that until very recently did not seem to engage in much dialogue: Geography, Media Studies, Psychology, Education, Anthropology or Linguistics (Reavey and Prosser, 2012; Pain, 2012). On the other hand, the research record can credit various examples of successful projects under a wide variety of linguistic, cultural, socio-economic or institutional conditions. In fact, this feature has given support to the claim that collaborative and visual research can play an important role in working with and access-

ing *hard to reach* populations often ignored and underrepresented in social research, whether this inaccessibility is defined by age (Heydon, McKee and Phillips, 2016), institutional or legal status, linguistic, cultural or socio-economic circumstances (Mitchell, 2011) or functional diversity (Alper, 2018).

In addition, each of the topical components of this chapter (visual methods / collaborative research / child and youth research) are often characterised by their methodological reflexivity. Most probably, reflecting on and re-inspecting the research process itself is an unavoidable imperative in projects that venture into procedures, relationships and populations not often contemplated in standard social research approaches. This has resulted in a number of significant publications systematically discussing the affordances, challenges and assumptions tied to visual / collaborative / youth research in which a number of reflexive insights are put forward. These claims can be originally presented as stemming from particular research experiences and circumstances but may end up being decontextualized from this original discussion and re-presented as relatively general statements about the nature of visual artefacts, collaborative relationships or even age cohorts.

In fact, from our perspective, as visual and collaborative methods normalise their presence in research and even public-policy driven and applied research, it seems that universalistic ideas about the intrinsic possibilities and benefits of certain methodological artefacts and relationships are becoming more frequent. In particular, there are three interconnected assumptions that we will problematize through the examination of some of the materials generated in a comparative collaborative project on adolescents' musical socialisation in two cultural contexts. It should be noted that each of these assumptions may be hedged in a number of ways and extended with additional provisions aimed at responding to the more obvious criticisms that can be made when crudely presented. These discussions move the debate both to the terrain of ontology-epistemology and practical-research design issues. Our goal is not to systematically review these debates, but, rather, to enunciate two key propositions and point out the issues that we will reexamine through the research process discussed in this paper.

(1) Images and photographs, while acknowledged as cultural and technological artefacts, provide a more *direct access* to the experiences and perspectives of participants (cf. Harper, 1998). This general idea, in turn, is intertwined with two other propositions. First, the lesser-mediated status of images is usually constructed through the contrast with other mediational semiotic systems,

noticeably oral and written language. Oral language most often is presented as a limited research resource in work with children, because as a developing skill, it complicates adult (researcher) / child (participant) communication and reinforces or reifies their asymmetrical relationship (Holloway and Stevenson, 2017). Written language, in turn, is also seen as potentially problematic as for most children and young people it is deeply intertwined with schooling and the relationships to literacy and identities that schooling rests upon. Second, in the digital technological context developed over the last two decades, photographs and images are presented as more direct windows to experience because of their ubiquity: images can be generated, manipulated, shared and stored with relative facility by even young children under a wide variety of conditions, with increasingly simple and affordable devices and allow delegating much responsibility in the documentation of experience to participants *on site* (Capello, 2005).

(2) Setting up a research device with youth that involves digital technologies and media *motivates* and *engages* youth participants (Jenkins, Purushotma, Weigel, Clinton and Robinson, 2009). Thus, a research project that attempts to work successfully with contemporary youth should integrate or put at the centre of the research process some type of digital set-up. More obviously, this tenet draws from acknowledging the time young people spend engaged with digital technologies (currently, most often mobile devices) and the critical role these play in the organisation of their social relations, identities and interests. In turn, this taken for granted interest rests on two ideas. First, closely connected to the point above, digital technologies are seen as increasingly resting on visual, tactile and multimodal interfaces that make their use transparent (intuitive and natural) to youth and other users. Second, contemporary youth have been *born into* digital technologies and think of digital media and digital objects as part of their daily experiences and environments which do not require much explicit learning (cf. Livingstone, 2018).

By now photographs are well-established (even *old*) visual media artefacts that have been proceduralized into structured research techniques, such as photo-elicitation interviews, photo-diaries or even content analysis techniques drawing on relatively large images banks generated by children and youth (Rose, 2001). Under these circumstances, there is an accumulated research literature utilising similar research procedures from which current and future works can draw and to which they can contribute with new findings. Yet, a potential risk is that through the *replication* and *standardisation* of the ways in which photographs are used in research with young people, researchers may begin to impose expectations and work strategies to the ways in which youth use photographs, rather than continue thinking of photographs as artefacts that are potentially

well-suited for experimentation and open-ended collaborative work with younger participants (Kullman, 2012). Further, for some, the notion itself of research collaboration crystallizes in the use of visual techniques. That is, the use of visual artefacts and photographs is stipulated as a collaborative research technique by virtue of the type of material being used (i.e. photographs), and, consequently, the inclusion of these techniques redefines *per se* a research project as collaborative (cf. Poveda *et al.*, 2018).

In this chapter we unpack parts of a comparative research project that took place in educational institutions in Brasilia and Madrid centred on exploring with students their socialisation and experiences with and around music (Morgade, 2015). The project was set up as a collaborative research experience (and also curricular innovation program in the case of Madrid) that drew heavily from adolescents' engagement with digital, visual and multimodal media. Here we piece apart aspects of the research process in each site to show how we had to modify, renegotiate, revisit and question some of the assumptions presented above as we confronted unexpected difficulties, dilemmas and critical incidents during fieldwork in each site. To advance the heart of our argument, we put forward two claims. First, by paying particular attention to photographs as research artefacts we will show how images and visual materials such as photographs are deeply mediated and mediatized cultural objects, co-created through the insertion of photographs in wider research devices and multimodal assemblages (Jewitt, 2013). Second, a comparative approach contributes to denaturalize assumptions about collaborative research and visual methods; as it helps put into perspective both participants actions and the expectations and analytical moves by research teams in each site.

2. Methodology

As advanced above, data for this chapter comes from a comparative project focused on the place of music and adolescents' musical socialisation in Madrid (Spain) and Brasilia (Brazil). The study took place during the 2013-14 academic year as a workshop project to be developed in schools in Madrid and Brasilia and was co-designed by university researchers, the collaborating teachers in each site and students between 12-15 years of age. In this section we present the general architecture of the workshops / project design and then introduce some of the particular adaptations in

Madrid and Brasilia, which we later delve into as we present and discuss the findings.

2.1. The initial design of the collaborative workshop

From a procedural perspective, the initial idea was to have students work in small groups (4-5 students) and engage in various data gathering activities, such as photographing and soundscaping (Samuels, Meintjes, Ochoa and Porcello, 2010) their daily experiences and the place of music in their daily lives, discuss and examine these materials in class and co-create in each small group a multimodal video composition (called <<project>> in each site) that reflected and synthesised their work during the project and how adolescents engaged with music (see Morgade, Verdesoto and Poveda, 2016). From the beginning, these workshops were created with three distinct features in mind that, as we discuss in the chapter, were implemented in different ways in each research experience. First, given that students were going to collect, archive and work with digital materials (image, video and sound files), the workshop would rest on setting up a collective digital platform for students to archive, curate and share their materials (cf. Wargo, 2017). Second, the creation of these student projects would culminate in some type of formal presentation of their work to the school and/or community (Poveda, Morgade, Cruz, Piñeiro and Gallego, 2021). Third, to familiarize students with the steps and work involved in these workshops and the preparation of each group project, visual artists and musicians were invited to the sites to share their experiences and work strategies around the materials of the workshop (i.e. image, sound, video, music, etc.).

2.2. Local realisations of the workshops in Madrid and Brasilia

In Madrid, the workshop was implemented in a subsidised (i.e. a school run by a private organisation but financed and, to some degree, regulated by public authorities) secondary school located in a Southwestern district of Madrid. This school primarily serves lower-middle class and working-class students from the surrounding neighbourhoods and is well known as part of a network of schools in Madrid run by a socially progressive educational organisation. The workshop was incorporated into Music

Education, a compulsory subject in the second year of secondary education, for Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) students. The project was co-designed with the music teacher, who also took-up the project as a curricular innovation experience and as an opportunity to implement changes in the Music Education curriculum of the school - which have continued in subsequent years. Workshops ran for a full semester (January / June 2014), occupying weekly one-hour classes planned for Music Education. The activities took place primarily in the computer lab of the school, which allowed each group of students to share a computer terminal connected to internet and work with the Tumblr blogs set for the workshops as well as the audio and video editing programs installed to work on their project (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Students organised in working groups in Madrid

In Brasilia, the workshops were organised in a full time public secondary school (the majority of Brazilian public secondary schools are part-time) located in the *Plano Piloto* (the modernistic planned region of Brasilia), that welcomes mostly poor students from areas in the periphery of the Federal District. In Brasilia the workshops were run during Arts classes, which usually focus on drama. Students have two hours of class per week with a college degree teacher. The teacher was extremely open to the project and gave several practical tips, but she did not get involved in co-designing the project. The workshops in Brasilia ran for three months (October / December 2014) and took place in the classroom, the only available space to conduct activities. The local research team brought to the school laptops with software installed that made some of the tasks possible; such as audio, image, and video editing software, and a mobile connection that would allow posting in a private Facebook group. The equipment was used collectively by groups of students in the class (formed by 4 or 5 students).

Figure 2: Students posing in their classroom in Brasilia

As we will see from the examples below, this work inside the school workshops was complemented with substantial engagement outside the classroom by the participating students: they took photographs and audio-recordings of their daily lives, edited and worked with digital materials outside school hours and interacted with each other through the media platforms used in the project. In addition, as part of the ethnographic documentation of the project, all students and key teachers were interviewed by researchers and multiple documents were gathered from each site. Finally, the workshops in each site culminated in a public presentation of parts of the project: in Brasilia during a holiday festival of the school and in Madrid with an installation-exhibit and roundtable presentation at the host university of the project (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid).

3. A comparative analysis of two social media set-ups for collaborative research

The first aspect we want to discuss is the digital set-up or *research device* that was co-constructed in each site to manage the digital objects generated in the course of the project and workshops. We use the term research device (Ruppert, Law and Savage, 2013; Estalella and Sánchez-Criado, 2016) to describe an assemblage of social relations and material objects (i.e. digital

technologies, analog research instruments, etc.) that structure and project courses of action. In each local site, collaborators and researchers had to design an initial research device adjusted to, on the one hand, the possibilities and constraints of the schools where the project was implemented and, on the other hand, the material circumstances of participating adolescents in each setting. In turn, when this initial device was put into motion, as an organic element, social relations, practices and events unfolded in unexpected and unplanned ways. In particular, certain critical incidents worked as telling cases (Bloome and Carter, 2014) that helped reveal institutional dynamics and some of the social/media ideologies (Gershon, 2010) underpinning relationships between participants, adults and adolescents.

Madrid	Brasilia
Digital media tools *Tumblr* blogs.	**Digital media tools** *WhatsApp* and *Facebook*.
Initial rationale (a) Tumblr: Designed to work with multimodal materials and digital files. (b) Tumblr: Allows for social media activity. (b) Tumblr: Mobile-friendly and multi-platform.	**Initial rationale** (a) WhatsApp: Allows communication outside school via personal and family mobile devices. (b) Facebook: Work as the central repository, even if accessed sporadically by students. (c) Facebook: Can be monitored and administered by adult researchers / Responding to concerns about privacy and ethics.
Initial social set-up (a) Each student work group opens and curates a Tumblr blog. (b) All participants, at the very least, follow each other. (c) Researchers create and curate a general (meta)blog for the whole project fed by each group blog and additional materials.	**Initial social set-up** (a) A single WhatsApp group for all students in the classroom to share materials and comments. The group is administered and monitored by adult researchers. (b) A "Facebook group/page" restricted to students who participate in the project and administered by adult researchers. Adults have, in practice, much more control over how materials are posted in the group - often previously shared via WhatsApp or saved in a memory stick to be uploaded later.

Table 1: The initial digital research device in Madrid and Brasilia

In this section we trace and compare how aspects of the project unfolded in each site. Table 1 summarises the initial architecture of the research device designed for each project and some of the very initial assumptions that guided decision-making in each case.

As the comparison shows, from the outset the collaborative set-up had to be designed differently in response to local working conditions. These initial circumstances included both accounting for the material realities in each site and different assumptions (ideologies) in Madrid and Brasilia about the media practices and experiences of adolescents who participated in the project.

In Madrid, classroom activity was organised to take place in a relatively well-equipped school computer lab where groups of four to five students would be able to share a computer terminal with a high-speed Internet connection and work on their blog and materials with additional audio and video software. The assumption was that practically all students owned a mobile phone and had access to a computer and high-speed Internet in their homes, so they would be able to continue work on their projects and blogs without much difficulty after school. Also, researchers at the Madrid site did introduce (i.e. impose) the use of a particular social media digital platform (Tumblr), apparently given the good technological fit between the platform and the objectives and types of materials that were going to be shared in the project. At the time of the study, researchers were aware that Tumblr was not a social media tool frequently used by the students but the assumption was that these students were avid users of social media and would be able to transfer with certain ease their social media practices and strategies (e.g. sharing, commenting, posting and reposting, tagging or curating and personalising a blog site) to the Tumblr blogs used in the project. Finally, while both the school and the research team were aware of the ethical and privacy issues surrounding adolescents' use of digital media, the assumption was that by negotiating certain guidelines and, especially, through the digital security system already in place in the school, most <<risks>> associated with adolescents' engagement with social media could be controlled.

By comparison, the project in Brasilia worked within stronger material constraints. In the school, access to computers and an internet connection was limited, so the classroom workshops were organised drawing from a few laptop computers provided by the research group and the often faulty Wi-Fi connection of the school. Consequently, student work groups had much more restricted access to a computer or laptop to work on their own materials and

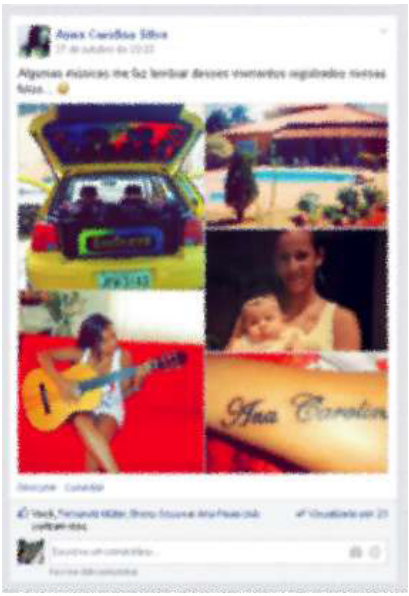
the project. In addition, access to computers was often mediated by adult researchers. Consequently control over the laptops within each group was a frequent source of tension, so adults had to intervene often in relation to how this resource was being used by students. More critically, decisions regarding what social media tools would be used in the project responded to the fact that some students participating in the experience did not have access to the Internet and computers in their homes and many did not have personal mobile phones. Under these conditions, the two social media platforms used in the project were chosen by the researchers because: (a) they were already used by participating adolescents and, thus, did not involve introducing social media tools unfamiliar to students and with which they might not be able to experiment and *tinker* informally outside the spaces and times of the project; (b) they made possible a two-step chain of digital communication in which students could draw from family mobile phones, their data plans and intermittent access to Wi-Fi connectivity. In this context, first, adolescents relaid materials to adult researchers and, then, adult researchers uploaded and shared these digital materials to the collective Facebook repository. This digital arrangement inside and outside school, in which the adult researcher had much more control over the process and served as a critical communication node, also sat well with the more stringent privacy constraints present in Brasilia, where it was expected that none of the materials generated in the project would be publicly accessible or visible.

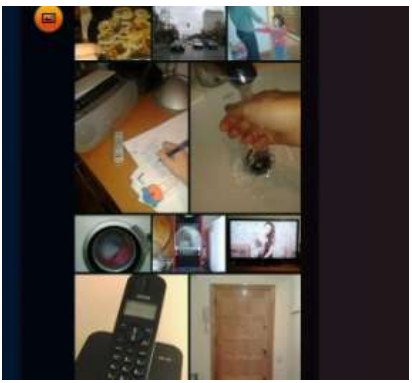
These set-ups reflect initial arrangements that come to life and become sites for activity and social interaction as they unfold in the project and the workshops. The implementation and constant readjustments during the course of the workshops illustrate well two known premises of collaborative work. First, as an experimental collaboration, the project necessarily develops within spaces of uncertainty, improvisation and constant mutual re-arrangements in which decisions have to be made, plans re-adjusted and alternative solutions have to be created on-site (Estalella and Sánchez-Criado, 2019; Moscoso, 2017). For example, in both sites there were constant rearrangements and attempts to work-around the gaps between what should <<supposedly be possible>> given certain digital tools and technologies and what *in practice* worked when using these tools. Adults and researchers, often supported by the creative work of adolescents, had to solve connectivity problems, issues with incompatibilities between platforms, devices and operating systems, school regulations regarding access to digital networks, etc. in which the distance between the claimed affordances of digital technologies and daily usage could be substantial. Second, particular incidents and dynamics emerged as moments that condensed the social dynamics and ways

in which the digital infrastructure created for/by the collaborative project was appropriated by adolescents. The following section illustrates these dynamics in action, particularly as adolescents worked with photographs.

4. Producing, circulating and troubling photographs in Madrid and Brasilia

The comparison between Brasilia and Madrid uncovers points of convergence in adolescents' uses of images but also critical divergences in how research devices were appropriated by students in each context. In relation to points of contact, adolescents in Madrid and Brasilia used photographs to document their daily lives and in response to the goals of the project and workshops- situate music and sound in their daily experiences and routines. The outcome in both sites are collages of images that work as a chronicle of teenage daily life shared in the social media sites used in the project (Figures 3). Further, despite differences in the experiences of each individual student, there were noticeable convergences in the photographic themes of students within each site and even across sites.





3a: Facebook post in Brasilia	3b: Tumblr post in Madrid

Figures 3 (a/b): Photo-collages in Madrid and Brasili.

Adolescents converge in portraying their family and home life, consumption / production of music in daily activities (such as playing the guitar at home in Brasilia, listening to music while doing homework in Madrid) and the soundscapes of their everyday activities and environments, such as running water in Madrid -incidentally a recurrent theme among Madrid adolescents- or vehicle sound systems in Brasilia. A systematic analysis of this corpus of images is beyond the goals of this chapter; what we want to highlight are the ways in which adolescents themselves engaged with these images and, particularly, the action trajectories that each digital set-up seemed to enable for students. Here is where the divergences between Madrid and Brasilia became more visible.

In Madrid, Tumblr was incorporated by the research team as part of the digital set-up of the project. Despite this being a new tool for students, we hoped some of their informal and out-of-school social media practices would spill over to how they used this blogging tool in the workshops. That is, that they would share, comment, repost their images and materials with some intensity and generate via the blogs an expanded conversation and generate a trail of on-line interactions related to the materials of the project and workshops (Deumert, 2011)—in other words, simply put, that they reproduced in these Tumblr blogs some of the recurrent practices and conversations we assumed they had in platforms they did use, such as Instagram or WhatsApp. However, these dynamics only emerged (if at all) very gradually and Madrid adolescents seemed to clearly delineate the differences in how they used social media in the context of the research project and the school setting and in their informal-peer social media practices. In fact, noticeably, Tumblr as a digital tool eventually served its purpose well in the experience but, perhaps, not for the reasons and possibilities initially envisioned in the project. In part, there were *technical* constraints. The tool worked well to publish and share multimedia materials (video, images, texts, embedded links, etc.) but not to retrieve and reprocess these materials outside the blog platform. Also, differences in the operating systems of students' mobile phones, the school computer network and institutional limitations in terms of network accessibility generated unexpected difficulties when sharing materials and interconnecting devices—but precipitated a number of creative and emergent solutions on the part of students. In short, students' unfolding digital engagement with the digital tools of the workshop underscored the naivety in our assumption that adolescents would mimic their informal practices in the digital media tools generated for the project.

However, of more interest for our discussion, participating adolescents did generate particular uses and practices around the digital tools that neither reproduced their use of social media in other contexts nor, for that matter, repeated the more common practices reported around Tumblr for youth and adolescents (cf. Wargo, 2017). Rather, progressively Tumblr blogs emerged as something akin to personal repositories for the primary materials each work group used to generate their final multimodal projects.

> **Excerpt 1: Analytical Memo (Madrid / June 2016 - Marta Morgade)** << (...) When students organised the final round-table at UAM (13th November 2014), the group of students in charge of the oral presentation spent three weeks preparing their talk. They volunteered for this and the main tool they used to review what they had done and the activity was the Tumblr timeline. Most of the materials posted and shared through Tumblr are their photographs and references they tracked down for their projects (...) It seems, Tumblr was used as a documentation resource even though it was not one of the social networks they used in their peer networks (...)>>

In other words, Madrid students seemed to progressively incorporate into the digital tools presented through the workshops practices specifically tied to the experimental collaborative research activity developed in the project. This includes specific practices such as documenting daily life via different audio-visual formats, archiving and organizing this information, analyzing the compiled materials, re-composing materials into different multimedia compositions, communicating or sharing the outcomes in different venues and formats (Mendoza and Morgade, 2018). Further, these emergent practices can be seen, at least partially, as distinct to the workshop space and are not necessarily continuous with academic and school practices outside this curricular experience or adolescent peer and informal digital media practices.

In contrast, in Brasilia, students seemed to find ways to transfer with more ease peer and informal social media practices and forms of communication to the digital set-up created for the project. This allowed for more fluid digital communication between adolescents and collaborating researchers in Brasilia—and even, eventually, some small interactions with visiting researchers from Madrid (cf. Poveda, 2019). Yet, it also led to critical moments in which forms of interaction between peers found unacceptable by adults emerged, precipitating much more explicit directives from adults. Figure 4 illustrates some of the materials shared between adolescents and adult researchers as part of the documentation of their

everyday lives. The example captures two female participants sharing a *selfie* photograph in which they reproduce the body posture and <<kissy face>> lip configuration (masked in the image) that is part of a practically universal repertoire of social media selfie poses among contemporary female teenagers (Linne, 2016).

Figure 4: Selfie Shared in the Brasilia Facebook Grou.

The circulation and archiving of these images among class members also allowed participants to remix and work with the materials in ways that were completely removed from the goals of the collaborative research experience. In a revealing critical incident, adolescents in the workshop found ways to engage in peer harassment through the social media tools introduced in the research experience. These transgressions also explored the limits and nature of the relationship between researchers and adolescents in ways that would, most probably, not be contemplated within a teacher-student institutional relationship. Excerpt 2 captures a field-diary summary of a controversial episode in Brasilia:

Excerpt 2: A critical Incident in the Brasilia Project (Field-notes / November 2014 - Fernanda Müller)

<<The last session (objective: compile photographs, videos, sounds, and songs to create a narrative) introduced a huge controversy. The *Hemp Generation* group took from Facebook (FB) many photographs of a girl (Lorena) who belonged to the *Elite Ladies* group. They organised a slide show, combined with a rap song and sentences they created and added to the video. The rap contained sexual insinuations and the sentences were offensive to Lorena; they wrote she was ugly, a troublemaker and stupid. As usual in school, the Internet was not working, so they relied on me (Fernanda, the researcher) to post their narrative on FB. They avoided showing me the video in class, but eventually, at the last minute, they did. The Elite Ladies were angry; they had a vague idea regarding the nature of the video and were all defending Lorena. Since the class was over I did not have time to discuss the incident and my decision with the class, but I did not intend to post the video. Throughout the weekend I received FB personal messages from Hemp Generation members demanding I post it. I responded I would talk to them personally the following week. They did not stop texting until it was clear to them that the video would never be posted in the FB group>>.

The narrative of the incident captured in the excerpt brings to the forefront how features of the research device created for the project can be reappropriated and transformed by adolescents for non-sanctioned purposes. From a *procedural* point of view, the Hemp Generation work group engaged in some of the tasks contemplated in the project: they recovered materials generated in the class and shared through social media and they remixed and reconstructed these materials into a multimedia/multimodal artefact to be shared with the class. However, they also did this in ways that are problematic for the class and the dynamics of the workshop by simultaneously breaching three (up to this moment implicit) expectations: (1) they drew from materials not generated by group participants and, thus, cannot be claimed to reflect their personal experiences and life circumstances; (2) they constructed an artefact gravitating around a contentious narrative theme not connected to the explicit goals of the research project; (3) the artefact was created as a relational aggression instrument targeted towards a class peer. Each breach can bee seen as increasing in gravity and, in combination, they turn the slideshow video into an object designed to test the boundaries (cf. Star, 2010) of the workshop research device and social system.

However, given the crucial role the adult researcher plays in the social media communication set-up in Brasilia, this transgressive/aggressive

exploration of the social dynamics of the research device, rather, ends up encapsulating how the adult researcher positions herself *vis a vis* the students and the class activity. This outcome unfolds regardless of whether it was what members of the Hemp Generation group *intended* to do or was the unplanned outcome of how the material and technical constraints discussed above structured digital communication in the Brasilia site. As the narrative shows, the researcher had control over if, how and when the video would be shared with the class. Given the polarised confrontation it generated in the class group and the content of the video, Fernanda decided not to share the video and ignored the persistent requests made to her by the male adolescents in the Hemp Group via private social media messages. In short, she was interpellated to enact her own ethical views and position of authority in the project. Yet, even though the outcome involves an adult reproducing a position of moral authority over adolescents, the means through which this negotiation and positioning was made visible (open classroom discussion, messaging in social media, etc.) illustrate some of the complexities and liminal spaces created by the collaborative experience within an educational institution.

5. Conclusions

The comparative discussion of two realisations of collaborative workshops within the same research project illustrates how similar semiotic devices (photographs) and digital and social infrastructures were taken up by adolescents and led to different participation trajectories in each context. As discussed in the first part of the chapter, each workshop had to conform to different material and organisational constraints and was implemented with students from very different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. These macro-level and institutional differences can be brought in as interpretive resources to understand how adolescents in each context engaged with digital technologies and the objectives of the wider research project. Indeed, potentially, the wider data-set collected in the project can be informative about contemporary adolescent socialisation experiences and identities across cultural contexts - or historical moments (cf. Poveda and Morgade, 2018). Yet, in this final discussion we want to develop further how the results and our experience in the project complicate the methodological assumptions we presented in the introduction of the chapter.

To begin with the second point, the workshops relied on relatively complex social and technical arrangements involving desktop and laptop computers, digital video-cameras and mobile phones and different interfaces to connect devices and put on-line these devices. These technological infrastructures were implemented in two school settings, with different material circumstances and within different curricular areas. The settings and the technologies put to work in the project were familiar to the students and, while the study involved addressing research questions tied to the researcher's initial interests, arguably the general topic (adolescent musical experiences and music socialisation) occupies an important place in the lives of participating adolescents (e.g. Lahio, 2004; Miranda, 2013). In short, the theme and digital orientation of the project would seem to facilitate a collaborative experience and engaged participation on the part of the students. Moreso, given the imagined continuities between the research device of the project and adolescent informal socialisation practices, we expected some spill over of these out-of-school practices to the workshop context.

The experiences and incidents presented in this chapter suggest that each of these assumptions needs to be hedged or involves much more complex and situated realisations. To begin, as we discuss more extensively elsewhere (Morgade, Verdesoto, Poveda and González-Mohino, 2016), the incorporation of visual and digital technologies into the workshop activities in a school setting did not mean students naturally brought into the activity their informal socialisation and digital practices. These informal practices were not directly transferable to the workshops because, despite the efforts made by researchers to frame the activity as a non-academic activity, students still saw it as a school project structured by the relational dynamics between adults and students that permeate school life. In other words, the socio-material infrastructures created in the workshop emerged as a *hybrid space* (cf. Gutiérrez, 2008; Moje *et al.*; 2004) in which adults and adolescents had to improvise and generate situated visual and digital practices specific to the aims and unfolding logic of the workshop. For example, as discussed for the workshop in Madrid, repurpose the functionalities and more common uses of a micro-blogging platform (Tumblr) for the emergent tasks of the workshop. Finally, as illustrated in the critical incidents in Brasilia, *informalizing* the dynamics of the workshop could bring into the activity more problematic forms of peer relations (e.g. bullying through social media) and precipitate situations in which adult researchers reclaimed their authority.

The workshops in this project drew on photography and digital images (among other semiotic resources such as sound, video, etc.) as one of the raw materials with which students were asked to work. The starting assumption was that photographs are ubiquitous in adolescents' lives and participants would find them easy to generate, circulate and examine—drawing from readily available and relatively cheap technologies. In many ways, the practical experience of the workshops corroborated these assumptions but what became much more problematic was to believe that the meaning of photographs was transparent and/or that it provided a less mediated window to adolescent experiences. Two experiences in the workshops clearly refute this assumption. First, the workshops created face-to-face and digital spaces to comment and discuss student-generated photographs and the conversations and discussions around these photographs generated multiple meanings and interpretations—even within students of the same workgroup who used images towards a shared project. Second, as said, there were certain similarities in the content and format of some of the images taken in Madrid and Brasilia (e.g. selfies, references to water, etc.) but the social meanings ascribed to these images and the ways they circulated were specific to each context.

In short, the project discussed in this paper incorporated certain materialities and social devices with the explicit intention of developing a research process that moved beyond some of the strategies and assumptions of *conventional* ethnography; primarily by creating a much more collaborative stance with participants and by generating documentation practices and materials that moved beyond field-notes and observational data. Contemporary ethnographic research prides itself on putting reflexivity and self-monitoring at the centre of the research process (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Davies, 2012). Co-creating research spaces with participants and relying on technologies that might be more familiar to participants' experiences does not undermine this imperative and also requires careful examination and reexamination of the assumptions that are put to work in the research process and the social dynamics that develop during the project.

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CHAPTER 5
DOING SOCIOLINGUISTIC RESEARCH USING A DIGITAL POSTER: EMPOWERING YOUTH THROUGH A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

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1. Introduction

Many areas of the world have experienced, since the final decade of the last century, profound sociodemographic and sociolinguistic changes. The transformations that have taken place in various areas are due to two major phenomena: migration and the expanded use of deterritorialized forms of communication through the Internet. Some areas of Barcelona, like many other cities, can be considered super-diverse (Vertovec, 2007) with diversity manifested in the great multiplicity of ethnicities, trajectories, language skills and forms of local and translocal communication (Appadurai, 1996).

There is no doubt that educational institutions are sites of sociolinguistic drama, in which social changes, conflicts, and contradictions are produced and reproduced (Nussbaum and Unamuno, 2006) and where social inequalities are reinforced when schools and educators value or devalue non-curricular languages. Some schools in the city of Barcelona enrol more than 90% immigrant students; most come from Morocco, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, the Philippines or Dominican Republic. This great diversity of origins and linguistic competences has been a challenge for educational institutions. Specifically, in the Barcelona high school we focus on, given the great linguistic diversity reported by youth and given that Spanish is a sort of *lingua franca* of the neighbourhood, the Linguistic Project of the high school is aimed at ensuring that Catalan is the vehicular language of education. But the application of the centre's linguistic objective is carried out in different ways in classrooms: from a monolingual perspective or from a plurilingual perspective (Llompart-Esbert, 2016a), both resulting in different outcomes.

Certainly, in multilingual locations such as Barcelona schools must face a double challenge in order to offer an equitable education: first, they have to integrate the linguistic diversity of the environment into their language education programs; second, they have to modify the methodology of language teaching to encompass and include the linguistic repertoires and the communicative practices of students as a way to build the new competences demanded by the school (Llompart-Esbert and Nussbaum, 2018). Educational institutions tend to treat students as homogeneous instead of taking advantage of their linguistic diversity. In fact, on many occasions, educational institutions perceive diverse students as people who <<do not know language>> because they are not native speakers of the official languages or of the languages being taught, thus adhering to a certain deficit theory (Llompart-Esbert, 2016b). As Nussbaum (2012) points out, partial plurilingual skills and a wide variety of communicative resources are often perceived as an obstacle rather than as a learning asset. Moreover, although contemporary *active* pedagogies based on Freire, Freinet, and Dewey situate students as actors in their own learning, these pedagogies are not routinely applied in classrooms.

In this chapter, I present and unpack two collaborative and participatory didactic proposals that were developed in a secondary education school with great linguistic and cultural diversity in the city of Barcelona. I discuss one of the artefacts employed by the students in the school in order to offer a reflexive analysis of two issues: a) a methodological reflection regarding the benefits of this collaborative research and work for the language learning of plurilingual students and of the place of the artefacts we used as research and didactic devices; b) a reflection on the possible empowering of the students observed in the shift from the traditional roles of teacher-student to a new vision for some of their daily activities. In section 2, I offer a theoretical framework to support this type of didactic proposal and artefact. In section 3, I summarise the development of the project. In section 4, I present and analyse the artefact used in one of the projects. Sections 5 and 6 focus on three excerpts to evaluate the transformations experienced by the students and the teacher. Finally, I discuss the main outcomes of the project and their methodological implications.

2. A plurilingual collaborative work project: A possible ensemble for language teaching and learning in diversity

For socio-interactivist scholars (Atkinson, Churchill, Nishino and Okada, 2007; Hall, 1993; Hellermann, 2007; Young, 2003, 2007), learning is a social process that unfolds in and through interactions, a socially situated activity (Mondada and Pekarek, 2004) deployed in communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Thus, socio-interactivists consider changes in a learner's ways of participating in socially located activities—in the <<language in use>> in interaction (Hall, Hellermann, Pekarek-Doehler, 2011)—to be evidence of learning. In fact, according to these approaches, difficulties in accessing the learning community (exclusion or marginalisation) reduce chances for participation and can therefore contribute to failure to learn. Therefore, didactic approaches should favour student's participation and promote their agency (Llompart-Esbert and Nussbaum, 2020).

If we focus on plurilingual students, they might not be able to participate in some activities– especially during the first stages of learning– without the support of their full linguistic repertoire (Llompart-Esbert and Nussbaum, 2018). As some research points out, in the process of developing expertise in a new language, plurilingual practices can scaffold both participation and learning (Lüdi and Py, 1986; Swain and Lapkin, 2000; Masats, Nussbaum and Unamuno 2007; García, 2009; among others). According to some scholars, plurilingual practices are inherent to what Coste (2001) defined as plurilingual competence and are the medium that plurilingual speakers use to participate in communicative practices (Gafaranga, 2005). Over the last decades, Gumperz's (1972) and Hymes' (1972) concepts of linguistic repertoire and communicative competence—respectively—have influenced the renovation of language teaching pedagogies (see, for example, Lomas, Osoro and Tusón, 1993; Lomas, 2014) and, certainly, language teaching pedagogies have tried to adopt a socioconstructivist vision of language learning (Zuengler and Miller, 2006). Didactic propositions such as those of the GREIP research team—but also other groups—adopted this vision by creating projects that promote plurilingual practices and teaching sequences that allowed the participation of all students. Our proposal—following Duverger (2007), for example—seeks to promote plurilingual practices by transforming them into a pedagogy, a didactics of plurilingualism (Moore and Llompart-Esbert, 2019). The didactic sequences prepared for this project included the use of different

languages, both in oral and written form, and guided the students to construct a plurilingual product—the Glogster—and a unilingual product—an oral presentation for university students—.

The collaborative project carried out with youth is inscribed in the active and critical pedagogies of Freire and can be considered a useful tool for meaningful learning. Following socio-constructivist theories, learning is a situated practice (Nussbaum, 2017) and it is, therefore, necessary to present knowledge in context and involve students in the realisation of socially significant practical activities through the implementation of educational projects. According to Perrenoud (1999), as described in Llompart-Esbert (2016b), project work presents a series of common characteristics: a) it is collective and collaborative; b) it intends to build a final product through the accomplishment of various tasks; c) this final product is real and can be transferred to other situations; d) it enhances knowledge about the management and implementation of projects; and e) it favours the learning of different curricular areas. Through work that allows students to be active and responsible agents of their learning, students develop other relevant abilities, such as the ability to self-evaluate, to work autonomously and to cooperate with others. In addition, it allows students to raise their self-esteem and to acquire linguistic competences in order to access knowledge.

As examined in Llompart-Esbert and Nussbaum (2020), in project work, moving from the figure of the teacher as the sole carrier of knowledge to the possibility of shared access to information modifies radically the roles of both students and teachers and helps develop students' autonomy, self-reflection and critical thinking. Positioning students as actors, collaborators and participants of their own learning can lead to transformation of their social world (Stetsenko, 2014). Following these types of propositions that situate students as active agents, participatory action research (Rodríguez and Brown, 2009) and projects that place students as researchers (Kellett, 2005; Thomson and Gunter, 2007) are two movements that can lead to liberating and transformative educational processes. On the one hand, participatory action research focuses on working on real problems, the needs and the expectations of students, by emphasising their active participation and positioning them as experts. On the other hand, these methodologies influence the way students learn and understand their own processes at an epistemological level, at a methodological level, and at a dissemination level (The Open University, 2016). Finally, these approaches encourage empowerment by giving voice to youth (Llompart-Esbert, 2016b).

Our proposal clearly intended to encourage learners' participation and to situate them in <<doing>> to be able to access and analyse their own linguistic practices. Although our design is original in the use of this artefact, we drew from previous experiences and research that have adopted this didactic and research scheme of students as researchers, literature that situated students not only as actors but as sociolinguists (Egan-Robertson and Bloome, 1998; Lambert, 2005, 2012; Patiño and Unamuno, 2017). This research emphasises some of the benefits of this proposal: students improve their self-concept (Mercado, 1998), they make visible their inherited languages (Thomas and Mayin, 1998), they develop a sociolinguist research competence (Cheshire and Edwards, 1998) and they learn the specific written language of ethnography (Curry and Bloome, 1998; Mercado, 1998).

The following sections detail the implementation and development of the project-based work and one of the artefacts that allowed the students to create a final product in a unilingual mode required by the school by making use of their full repertoire and competences.

3. The methodology: From ethnography to the development of the project through artefacts that allow plurilingual practices

From 2012 to 2015, I carried out ethnographic research[1] which included preliminary observation for familiarisation with the institution as participant observer and successive phases of cooperative work with teachers. This ethnographic work, extended over time, allowed me, on the one hand, to collect data from informal communicative situations, conduct group discussions, record class sessions, and obtain data recorded by the students themselves acting as researchers of their own practices inside and outside the classroom. On the other hand, this work was a method to uncover the linguistic repertoire of students, the language ideologies of students and the teacher and the existing dynamics among them. This first stage of intense ethnography was vital to discover what Cicourel

1 All of this data, which includes 56 hours of audio and video recordings, were reviewed for analysis and subsequently selected and the most relevant fragments were transcribed in detail for the study using the conventions listed in the appendix. The data obtained have been explored following Conversation Analysis techniques of ethnomethodological orientation (Garfinkel, 1967; Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974).

(2007) calls ecological validity and also to determine what kind of project and what type of artefacts would be better for the participation and learning of students. After several months of participant observation, a first pedagogical project was proposed by me and organised with the teacher. In the first project (Project 1), carried out with 15 and 16 year old students with different origins, students had to research and document their own language use as well as their language brokering activities and present the results of their ethnographic and sociolinguistic work through a particular artefact (a digital poster in the platform Glogster), to a class of university students. This particular artefact was chosen by me and the teacher because of its multimodal nature: it allowed the inclusion and organisation of the different kinds of data (audio, video, image and text) that the students collected, and of different languages. Moreover, this artefact was a perfect companion to the oral presentation to the university students. In fact, Glogster was chosen because it was considered to be an ideal tool for the particular communicative event between the young researchers and the university students: its format would allow the presentation of their sociolinguistic research, as we will see in the next section.

After the success of Project 1, over the following months, the teacher designed and implemented, in collaboration with myself and the students, a second project (Project 2) which was also presented to university students. In this second project, the students focused on researching, reflecting and discussing linguistic diversity and linguistic repertoires to create a second artefact, a plurilingual and visual encyclopaedia, called Pluripedia (see Llompart-Esbert and González, 2018), which included all the languages of the class in order to help recently arrived students to communicate with others at the high school. In this chapter, although I will present some fragments of data collected during the development of both projects, I will focus on one of the artefacts: the Glogster.

4. Collaborative project work and Glogster for sociolinguistic research and dissemination: Benefits and challenges

In both collaborative pedagogical projects, students had to research, document and reflect on their linguistic repertoires and practices in order to present as experts the outcomes to an audience—in one of them, supported by a digital poster—. The students went through several phases, guided by various tasks designed to assist them in the collection and pro-

cessing of data, to help them reflect on their plurilingual repertoires and language use. For this, they had to follow several steps: 1) observe their sociolinguistic reality and practices; 2) reflect on and plan how to capture the evidence of what they were observing, 3) collect data, 4) reflect on and conceptualise their data in group meetings and, 5) prepare the Glogster or the Pluripedia and the oral presentation. This last step and the possibilities of the Glogster determined the collection, the analysis and the organisation of the data because it had to be adequate for this artefact and for its presentation to the university students.

Following these steps, typical of sociolinguistic research methodology and of ethnography, had benefits related to the school demands and objectives and related to the empowering of students. First, the objectives that had been previously established for each of the projects–reflect on the linguistic diversity of the class group, learn how to use technologies, learn to observe and understand the environment, and learn how to prepare and do a formal oral presentation–were achieved. Furthermore, all students were involved in practical and significant tasks that they had to solve in order to create the final product; during this process, they interacted in the different languages of their repertoires. This mobilisation of resources and the metalinguistic reflection that it encouraged allowed the students to build their final products (the Glogster and the oral presentation at the university) in Spanish, as well as the co-construction of potential acquisition sequences (in terms of De Pietro, Matthey and Py, 1988). Second, project work allowed those students who were not participating in regular classes to take a different role and to get involved in the activities by contributing with their particular skills and, thus, they learnt to participate in group work. This type of work enhanced instances of possible teaching and learning among peers and allowed students to become experts of the subject they were studying. This didactic proposal of turning students into ethnographers of their own language practices–in the first project–and to make them reflect on the languages of their repertoires and contrast them with their peers' repertoires–in the second project–led to the development of metalinguistic reflection of their own practices and their sociolinguistic reality.

Aside from the benefits of this type of didactic proposal, the digital poster turned out to be a very productive and challenging artefact for the students. Let's observe and analyse the following example created by the group working on language brokering activities:

Figure 1: Digital poster on youth language brokering

As simple as it might seem, this type of discursive genre is complex for two main reasons: it has space and format limitations and it integrates several text genres, videos, audios and images. These complexities forced the students to organise, classify and decide which data could be included, in which format and its length. The coherent integration of several text genres, videos, audios and images was one of the main challenges of using Glogster as an artefact for sociolinguistic research dissemination. Certainly, learning the specific characteristics of each genre involved additional work for the students. But, as we can observe in the example, they succeeded in creating a cohesive and organised final product that integrated: 1) two expositive texts, 2) two descriptive texts of the videos and the audios, 3) two videos with evidence of practices, 4) one picture and 5) two audios with data recorded at the doctor's office that included the language brokering activity. Drawing from plurilingual

practices and data, students could, on the one hand, shape a cohesive and organised final product suitable for an oral presentation and, on the other hand, create a final product in an unilingual mode as required by the educational institution.

These outcomes indicate that, in highly diverse environments, this type of methodological proposal can help to achieve what Nussbaum (2013) considers the challenge of schools nowadays: building from students' previous competences to learn new ones. Furthermore, collaborative project work and the students-as-researchers methodology enhanced the empowerment of students. In the next two sections, I will present excerpts of data that provide evidence of these transformations of the participants in the projects: the students and the teacher. Section 5 focuses on the changes in the students, whereas the central point of section 6 is the transformation that occurred in the teacher.

5. Changes on the horizon: From silenced competences to public participation

As mentioned before, recently arrived students are categorised as non-experts in institutional languages (Catalan and Spanish) and their various linguistic competences are silenced because they are not valued by the school. The effects of this were certainly visible during my observations: these are the students who get the worst marks in regular classes. However, the proposed collaborative activity and the various tasks students had to solve in order to prepare the final common product helped all students use their various competences through oral and written interaction. Usama was one of the students who was considered to be a non-expert in languages by himself, by the rest of the students and by the teacher. During the project, he was categorised in his own working group as a non-expert and I could observe how he accepted this categorization. Despite this initial consideration, he was able to perform, together with his colleagues, a presentation of his digital poster in front of a large group of university students. At the end of the presentation, the researcher interviewed the students. In the following excerpt, the researcher asks Usama his opinion about his performance.

Excerpt 1

Participants: RES (Researcher), USA (Usama), DOL (Dolores)

01 RES	usama
02 USA	qué decimos:/
	what do we say
03 RES	qué te ha parecido la experiencia/ qué quieres explicar tú/
	what do you think about this experience/ what do you want to explain/
04 USA	bueno: ha estado muy divertido (0.2) estaba bien (0.6) no sabía que
	well: it was very funny (0.2) it was fine (0.6) i didn't know that
05	puedo hacer así (1.6) y:: bueno (1.2) ya está
	i could do it (1.6) a::nd well (1.2) that's it
06 RES	o sea te lo has pasado bien
	so you had fun
07 USA	sí (0.2) muy bien
	yes (0.2) a lot
08	(1)
09 RES	muy bien
	that's good
10	(1.1)
11 USA	alguna pregunta/
	any questions/
12 RES	alguna pregunta ((laughs))
	any questions
13 DOL	((laughs))
14 USA	claro
	of course
15	(0.9)
16 USA	eso es lo que:: quiero decir yo pero si quieres preguntar
	that is what:: i wanted to say but if you want to ask something
17	(2.6)
19 RES	te ha parecido difícil (.) hablar delante de tantas personas/
	was it difficult for you (.) to talk in front of so many people/
20	(0.5)
21 USA	bueno (0.8) parecía (0.5) pero:: ya no
	well (0.8) it looked like it would be (0.5) but:: it doesn't any more
22	(0.7)
23 RES	ahora ya podéis ser conferenciantes
	now you can be lecturers
24 USA	sí
	yes

In this excerpt, two relevant aspects of the transformation and empowerment of the student can be observed. On the one hand, there seems to be an improvement in his self-esteem and his beliefs regarding his linguistic and communicative abilities, as can be noted in his statements that contrast the past with the present: <<I didn't know that I could do it>> (in lines 4-5) and <<it looked like it would be (difficult) but it doesn't any

more>> (in line 21). Based on the observations and data collected during the ethnographic period, we can state that there has been a transformation in Usama in relation to his own vision about his possibilities regarding linguistic competences. In this sense, the project work allowed him to use all his linguistic repertoire. The Glogster, which helped him to collect, organise and integrate all the information, and the oral presentation were both crucial in this change. On the other hand, in this excerpt we can observe this transformation in action: not only does he talk about the experiences when asked to give his opinion about them but he pushes the researcher to ask him more questions (in line 11) which implies more talk from him. His demand was received by the researcher and the teacher with surprise—as observed with the laughter—especially because he was a student who did not participate in the communicative events in the class before the project. Drawing on the socio-constructivist theories presented in section 2, we could claim that Usama is a more competent learner now because there has been a change in his ways of participating in the interactions. It seems that this experience of participating in the project helped him overcome the initial exclusion from some school activities.

Another observed transformation was related to the recognition of the translation and interpreting task carried out by many students of the high school, which was not initially valued or recognized by educational institutions (see also Valdés, 2003). The collaborative project made visible a relevant competence carried out by a lot of students, especially girls, in their everyday lives: language brokering (see also Llompart-Esbert, 2017). This activity, that as Tse (1996) points out consists of translating and interpreting for adults, is carried out by immigrant origin children and young students in different contexts to help their families, teachers, as well as other adults of the community (for a detailed description of the contexts and the activities see Llompart-Esbert, 2016b). We will now focus on Rania, a girl who acts as the language broker for part of the Bengali population in the neighbourhood. The following excerpt was also recorded during the interview that took place after the students' presentations at the university.

Excerpt 2
Participant: RAN (Rania)

01 RAN	nos han hecho preguntas y les ha gustado mucho el trabajo (0.4) **they asked questions and they liked our work and**
02	creo que ha- yo he aprendido mucho con mi trabajo porque:: porque **i think that i have learned a lot with my work because every**

03	diario a diario mucha gente lo hace esto de traducir: la mediación:.
	everyday a lot of people translate and mediate
04	(0.3) nos- no::- lo hacemos muchas veces nosotros (.) sin darnos
	we we we do it a lot of times not being
05	cuenta también lo hacemos porque: es que muchas veces con amigas o
	aware of it also we do it because a lot of times with friends or
06	sea puede ser con un conocido porque no todos a la fecha tenemos el
	maybe with someone that we know because not all of us at this point have the
07	mismo nivel (.) no todos conocemos las mismas palabras (0.3) no todos
	the same language level not all of us know the same words not all of us
08	hemos llegado al mismo tiempo (0.2) algunos hace cuatro años atrás.
	arrived at the same moment some arrived four years ago
09	(0.7) entonces eso nos facilita a los que sabemos más cosas nos
	so that helps us to those who know more things
10	facilita para ayudar a los demás
	that helps us to help others

After referring to the presentation and the university students' reaction to it, Rania's discourse then emphasises two relevant aspects related to transformation: a) that the project revealed the value of language brokering activities and b) that now there is a reflection on and personal vision about what language brokering is for her. Thanks to the project and the Glogster, she can explain and give importance to this activity; situating it in this way makes the work visible to and valued by an educational institution. In this sense, we agree with Valdés (2003) on the positive effects of recognizing the language brokering work of young students; as she points out: <<The implementation of a curriculum focusing on interpretation and translation, moreover, offers to such youngsters genuine career preparation and a view of themselves as part of a group of respected professionals'>> (2003, p. 197). Given the abilities that young interpreters develop when language brokering for adults or peers, some authors suggest that educational institutions could help them develop and boost these special abilities (Valdés, 2003; Orellana, 2009; Harman, 1994), and, at the same time, encourage the empowerment of young students. This important visibility of language brokering activities was strengthened by the use of the digital poster because this artefact enabled the inclusion of audios and videos of their daily translation and interpreting work. The analysis of these materials showed the complexities of the activity as well as the language brokering abilities and competencies of these young girls.

In addition, through the collaborative project students engaged in and incorporated a particular way of conceptualising these language brokering activities. As we can observe in line 3, Rania uses the word <<mediation>> to describe what they do. The identification of language brokering as a mediation activity is due to the reflexive discussions which occurred during the project, during the preparation of the Glogster and also while they were reflecting on the oral presentation. In this sense, having to present their language brokering activity to an audience required a conceptualisation of the activity using their own words. In the creation process of their Glogster, they looked for definitions of the activity but they did not find many. For this reason, they decided to search for definitions of <<translation>> and <<mediation>>. The resulting conceptualisation included both concepts and was original and personal: it is an activity that consists not only in the translation of words or ideas but that includes a mediating activity between people with the main objective of being helpful.

The transformation of these youth into more competent participants and learners or into experts in their linguistic practices was even stronger in some instances when there was a shift in the traditional roles of the classroom. In the next section, we will analyse one of these relevant instances.

6. Changing the roles in the classroom: From teacher to student and vice versa

Linguistic expertise is traditionally assigned to the teacher but, through the collaborative projects this expertise was distributed among students and the teacher (see also Llompart-Esbert, 2021). In this sense, the teacher changed her view on the competence of the students who were considered experts and, at some point, became language teachers. At the end of one of the sessions, during which the students had to write in their home languages the most common greetings and questions that can be exchanged when people meet, Dolores—the teacher—sat down with the group that worked on the formulations in Urdu and asked them about what they had written, as we will see in the following excerpt (see also Llompart-Esbert and González, 2018).

Excerpt 3
Participants: Dolores (DOL*, teacher), Nora (NOR), Deena (DEE)

01 DOL	cómo te llamas no pero yo quiero xx xx
	what is your name no but I want xx xx
02 NOR	*ap ka*[k*ya*
	what is
03 DOL	[*ap ka kya naam hai*: ((slowly and looking at the paper))
	what is your name/
04	(0.4)
05 DOL	yo sí que he aprendido *hai*: ((laughs))
	I have certainly learnt hai:
06 DEE	((laughs))
07 NOR	*ap*
	where
	*****looks at the paper-->
08	(1.2)
09 NOR	*ap ka*
	where are
10 DEE	hay mucho *hai* en urdú
	there is a lot of hai in Urdu
11	(0.2)
12 DOL	*ap kana* (0.2) *se* (0.3) *ay hai* ((slowly and looking at the paper))
	where are you from
13	(0.3)
14 NOR	*ap kana* (fig.1) *se ay hai*: ((moves hand marking the syllables).

fig.1

	where are you from
15 DOL	*ap kana se ay* ****hai*:: (fig.2) ((faster))
	-->****looks at NOR-->
	where are you from

fig.2

16 (0.4)
17 NOR *ay hai*::
->*
from
18 DEE *ay hai*::
from

In line 1, Dolores wants something more than a translation of the sentence: she asks them to teach her to pronounce it, identifying the girls as Urdu language experts. Nora, in line 2, answers Dolores' request by offering the beginning of one of the sentences that, in overlapping (line 3), Dolores reads syllable by syllable from the sheet. In the next turn (line 5), Dolores focuses on the fact that the word *hai* is very common in Urdu and that is why she has learned it. Later on, in line 7, Nora and Dolores are again orienting towards the didactic activity: Nora categorises herself as a teacher and reads, syllable to syllable, another sentence while Dolores looks at the sheet. After a long pause, in line 9, Nora continues her didactic project followed by Dolores in line 12: she reads slowly the sentence proposed by Nora. Once Dolores has read it all, Nora offers the sentences again with a faster pronunciation, but marking every syllable, also in a multimodal way (fig.1). Dolores, then—in line 15—repeats the phrase faster and when she pronounces the word *hai*, looks at Nora, as a way of searching for her positive assessment (fig.2).

As we can observe, these girls (especially Nora) are categorised as experts in Urdu and are situated in the role of teachers, whereas, at the same time, Dolores acquires the role of student, categorised as inexperienced. Several studies about talk in the classroom have pointed out that teacher-student talk is *asymmetrical* (Myhill, Jones and Hopper, 2006), in expertise and in the amount of talk. The asymmetric distribution of knowledge between teacher and student results in instances

where the teacher repairs students' utterances. As Kasper (1985) indicates, the preferred repair type—of the four types proposed by Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977)—in language-centred instances are teacher-initiated repairs (or other-initiated repairs) of student's utterances. The young girls participating in the excerpt are the ones initiating the repair of Dolores' utterances—for example, in line 14, when Nora repeats Dolores' sentence as it was considered not acceptable—and, by doing so they are taking the role of teachers (see Llompart-Esbert, 2021, for a detail analysis).

Moreover, the girls' teaching technique is sophisticated and ordered. First, they offer Dolores the model phrase so that she can repeat it; second, once Dolores is able to pronounce it, the girls repeat the sentence at a greater speed (line 14) and multimodally mark the pace of each syllable, in order to facilitate the pronunciation for Dolores; then, Dolores pronounces the phrase with the rhythm indicated by the girls; third, the girls seek to improve the part of the sentence that seems to be more difficult for Dolores and, therefore, they repeat the word *hai*, extending the vowel. The phases that these young girls follow in order to teach Dolores the phrase have also been observed in Llompart-Esbert (2017). The realisation of the projects seems to have given Dolores—the teacher—a different perspective of her students' competences and as agents of the didactic action and, as a consequence, she modified her didactic plan to take advantage of the sociolinguistic reality of the young students.

7. Discussion

Schools in superdiverse contexts such as that of Barcelona must increasingly shed their traditional monolingual methodologies and adopt new ones. Carrying out a collaborative project and using the digital poster with plurilingual young students proved to be a way of (1) dealing with the complex and rich sociolinguistic situation, (2) improving the language learning outcomes of students, and (3) empowering youth by giving them voice and by valuing their language expertise. Apart from the positive results and benefits that this didactic proposal entails, having selected a digital poster as the central artefact to collect the students' findings as well as to present them to a real audience generated several relevant questions related to teaching methodologies.

In terms of language, the educational curriculum of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2007) recommends the interconnection of various competences: communicative, aesthetic and literary, and multilingual and intercultural. Taking this proposal into account, languages should be taught in an integrated manner (language and content). For several years, sociocultural approaches to language learning –to which we adhere– have followed this same logic: they propose not to teach linguistic forms but rather discursive genres through didactic sequences (Camps, 2006). In line with this perspective, our proposal allowed students to integrate language and content and also to learn several discursive genres: the expositive text, the argumentative text, the descriptive text, etc. These discursive genres are usually presented in class separately, however, the digital poster permitted the cohesive inclusion of several of them, which moves students and teachers away from the traditional discursive genres proposed in language classrooms.

Documenting collaborative project work and the use of a digital poster to organise and present the results points towards the contrast between traditional monolingual didactic proposals (that our students would not have been able to follow) and more active and multilingual proposals, which reinforce and adhere to the idea of <<learning by doing>> and participating with all the resources that one has. From a socio-interactivist lens, the new and increased participation of students in socially located activities presents evidence of learning. The results achieved by this type of project and artefact can help highlight the true needs and learning paths of plurilingual students. As schools continue to witness the diversification of students and take responsibility for their learning, project-based work that positions youth as researchers offers a valuable pedagogical tool to develop plurilingual pedagogies.

Moreover, these types of proposals do not only shed light on language teaching and learning methodologies but also on the benefits of carrying out action-research in collaboration with teachers and students. According to Heller (2008), research activity can sometimes be an exercise of power that it is legitimised, especially, with publications and for the benefit of the researcher. In this sense, the proposal that we have presented breaks some of the inequalities between researcher, teacher and students to open the way to equal access to knowledge and the distribution of expertise. Thus, both the teacher and the researcher became guides, but the true experts on their linguistic practices were the students. Positioning youth as experts and researchers with wide and valuable communica-

tive repertoires allowed them to be resituated in the class, as well as in the high school environment, because they moved from being considered non-experts to having a new relationship with teachers and with academic knowledge.

Appendix: Transcription conventions

Pseudonym of participant: ABC
Overlap: [
Pause: ()
Comments: ((laughing))
Rising intonation: /
Falling intonation: \
Lengthening of sound: : ::
Abrupt cut off: -
Multimodal actions: **
Translation: **translation**

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CHAPTER 6
TRANS-SPATIAL AND TRANS-TEMPORAL ASPECTS OF ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH: THE IMPACT OF BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVES ON THE SUBSEQUENT LIFE OF A PARTICIPANT

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1. Introduction: Beyond the time/space of case study ethnographic research

Let me begin with an extreme comparison:

Thousands of molecules are examined daily in labs around the world. Molecules are separated, isolated or bonded in chemistry experiments with the aid of highly complex technological equipment. The gains or losses that such experiments leave on the states or identities of molecules are not an ethical consideration. Indeed, it would be absurd to consider asking the molecules in question for their informed consent, as a requirement for their participation in an experiment that will provoke a permanent transformation in their structure and nature. It is certainly extreme to compare molecules to human beings. Molecules are governed by energy states or magnetic fields, whereas human beings have complex self-awareness and can, thus, make decisions and even change their minds about decisions taken previously. However, in some respects, the logic of a positivistic approach to hard sciences still seems to apply in some aspects that shape ethnographic culture and research praxis in the Social Sciences: although ethnographers have developed a strong awareness of the qualitative impact that the framework of research has on participants during their involvement in a study, there is scant reflection on the impact that it might have on the participants' lives and identities beyond the space and time of fieldwork.

It is well known in Ethnography (and in the Social Sciences generally) that participating in a research study has an impact on how participants display, behave and talk about themselves and others in the context of the research

(e.g. Blommaert and Jie, 2010). The feeling of "being observed" by a researcher sets a kind of cognitive frame that shapes a participant's behaviour, their social interaction and their self-image, as displayed within that context. It also frames the ethnographic engagement being documented, which is the basis for weaving an ethnographic account that is, according to Clifford (1986: 98), allegorical both at the level of its content and of its form. The allegorical stories embodied in written reports, academic publications and talks, based on the ethnographer's observations, might empower or disempower the participants, depending on how they are interpreted and used by the researcher and the research community. The act of empowering or disempowering concerns complex processes, such as textualisation (i.e. lexical selection, since words are used for labelling people in one way or another) and the ways researchers use the stories: what and for whose benefit they write (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). People's ethnographic narratives are written in a tension between oral narrative and ethnographic knowledge and participants might lose control of their own stories in the interests of that allegorical story.

The point here is that even when the ethnographer has control of another's story, in the sense that s/he writes it down, the resulting ethnographic text (understood as a literary artefact, an object) might still be perceived as an expression of identity for those closely involved in the narratives. How do participants make sense of their participation in a piece of ethnographic fieldwork after and beyond the study? What do they experience when they disagree with the ethnographic portraits that researchers have drawn of them and disseminated within the academic sphere? To what extent might ethnographic writing have consequences, whether positive or otherwise, for the participant's life and identity? These are some of the questions I seek to tackle in this case study, by way of an actual personal experience. The focus of this paper emerges from personal reflexivity regarding research practice, and has implications for ethics in case study research within the ethnographic field. This reflection on the impact of research on the participants is especially relevant in ethnographic case studies where relationships between participants are inevitably more intense.

An understanding of the consequences that engaging in research projects has for the participants is of considerable methodological significance in experimental fields such as Psychological Research or Medical Research. This is particularly true when the study is more long term and carries emotional risks, such as in research focused on trauma, or in studies dealing with painful experiences or memories of illness or death. A few studies, within the field of research on narratives and health, that have

documented participant's responses to the research methods employed, argue that the experience of participating can be positive overall, despite the distress of recalling painful memories and the ambivalent feelings that participation in a study might provoke.

In this regard, Grinyer's (2004) study, which used a written narrative approach in a 4-year follow-up study with 28 parents of young adults with cancer, concludes that the act of writing was therapeutic for participants, who contributed with written accounts of the life, illness and (in some cases) the death of their son or daughter. The study shows that participation helped to reduce a sense of isolation. The study also shows that participants made sense of the outcomes of the study, published in the form of articles and a final-project book, as a lasting memorial to their son or daughter. The book, which was appropriated by the participants as an artefactual object that <<encapsulated>> aspects of their past lives, gave to this memorial a tangible dimension. On this aspect, Grinyer (2004: 1333) argues <<the significance attached to the outcome of the research has been shown to have a powerful impact when it is perceived to be positive>>. However, regardless of the satisfaction of parents with the publication of the book, they took their time (some of them a year or more) to read it or to lend it to wider family members or friends, as the participants were aware of the intimate details of their family life that were disseminated with that act of sharing. Beyond the findings of the research, the study also highlights the responsibility that researchers have when writing, analysing and disseminating others' stories.

There are scant studies looking at the influences—whether positive or otherwise—that research has on participants beyond the time and space of an ethnographic study in the area of Social Research and Education. Wolcott's book, *Sneaky kid and its aftermath* (2002), dealing with a case of <<school inadequacy>>, is an exception to this tendency, with a reflective account of intimacy in ethnographic case study research between the anthropologist and the informant. This general lack of reflection on the wider consequences for participants involved in ethnographic research is quite astonishing when we consider the strong awareness that ethnographers have developed around how their methodological strategy and interaction with participants during fieldwork does influence participants and, in the end, the type and quality of data being gathered. The implication here might be an assumption that a study influences its participants until the end of the fieldwork but not thereafter. The neglect of the <<after-fieldwork>> period in the literature on ethnographic studies

might be pointing, among other aspects, to the positivistic understanding of research that has traditionally dominated Social Sciences. If we go back to the foundations of ethnography (e.g. Malinowski), it emerged as a method for understanding other cultures and behaviours built around positivistic influences (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). Despite the shift to a phenomenological paradigm in the field, there are still strong echoes of this past in some aspects of ethnographic research, such as the example presented in this chapter. This reflection emerged when I received a Facebook message from one of the teenagers who had participated in a longitudinal ethnographic study about youth reading identities and practices, which, at the moment of the study I naively considered <<finished>>.

2. An unexpected message on my Facebook

In 2010, I completed three years of ethnographic fieldwork in which I documented the role that reading had in the lives, both in and out of school, of a group of four teenage friends at a high school in Barcelona: Arnau, Ferran, Manuel and Jaime. They were regular readers of sports newspapers, biographies of football players and popular fantasy-role-playing books. However, in high school, they were positioned as students with <<school-ache>> (Pennac 2009), uninterested in studying, in books or in culture. I recounted their reading life stories in relation to their literacy identities across time (16 to 19 years old) and social domains (home, school, leisure time, workplace, off- and on-line social network contexts), and shaped their stories in an ethnographic text that was published as a doctoral thesis entitled *El desinterès lector adolescent* (*The adolescent lack of interest in reading*) (Aliagas, 2011) and in some other articles in Catalan, Spanish and English (e.g. Aliagas, 2009; Aliagas, Castellà and Cassany, 2009; Aliagas, 2011; Aliagas, 2016). The voices of these boys provided me with data through which I could explore the complex interface that fuses literacy, identity and educational narratives during adolescence (14-18 years old) in relation to young people's social practices and academic trajectories.

Since the oral defence of a doctoral thesis in Spain is open to the public, I invited the boys to the event and they agreed to come. I remember them being seated in the first row of the auditorium, listening attentively to the presentation and the lengthy comments of the examiners. They continually whispered to each other. At the end of the defence, I gave

them each a copy of the thesis. I still remember their barely restrained smiles: they all felt very proud to be leading actors throughout the story. After the defence, I wrote to them individually to express my thanks and exchanged a couple of messages with them. They agreed to stay in contact and maintain our Facebook friendship. Occasionally, I left a <<like>> on content on their Facebook pages. Two years soon flew by.

In 2013, I received a Facebook message from Arnau, the focal informant in that ethnographic research. He was writing for two reasons: to ask me to help him WITH research FOR a university essay, and to update me on his academic trajectory. The update was delivered within the message in the form of what Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008) term <<small stories>>; fragmentary stories or everyday occurrences that pop up in conversation but are apparently incidental to the primary topic. This is the message I received on Facebook (see the original transcripts in Appendix 1).

Excerpt 1. Arnau's message sent to the researcher on Facebook two years after the PhD. defense

1	Cristina!
2	HOW ARE YOU?
3	Today I was thinking of you!!
4	I have to do a research essay at Uni... and I remembered the days when we met
5	each other, your transcriptions... everything! Actually, when I got home
6	I started searching for information for the essay and I read your thesis
7	again, looking for information about qualitative research and stuff,
8	to see if it might be useful for my essay, I think it will. I was also wondering
9	if you could help me if I am unsure at any point. I will ask you... At
10	the same time, I decided to read some parts of the thesis again and I was
11	mostly reading the introduction about how we met and I love it because every time I
12	read it I see it in a different way, I guess that's because I'm getting older I begin
13	to see things differently.
14	That's it really, I wanted to let you know, and also to know how you are and
15	I thought you'd be happy to know that I'm studying CAFE
16	[science of sport and physical activities] at Uni and that up to now I have
17	successfully passed all my exams on the first try and with very good marks

18	Let me know how things are going!
19	A kiss and a hug!
20	ARNAU!
21	hahaha [laughing at his own use of his anonymised name]

The Arnau represented in that message stood in contrast to the Arnau I depicted in the PhD thesis, whose attitude when talking about school was one of resistance, that of a <<cool>> teenager who would assert with conviction things like: <<Although I don't read very much, I know that I'm smart, I don't want to seem arrogant, but I know that I'm smart, it's just that I'm silly when I have to put it into practice [at school]>> (Aliagas, Castellà and Cassany, 2009). Interestingly, in the Facebook message he was aligning himself with the culture of formal education: <<I have to do a research essay at Uni>> (4), <<I'm studying CAFE at Uni>> (15), <<I have successfully passed all my exams>> (17). He seemed proud of having passed his exams <<on the first try>> (17) and <<with very good marks>> (17). Thus, he now positioned himself as an <<insider>> within the culture of academia and seemed to have accepted the rules that he criticised so harshly during his time in secondary education. He had developed a new academic voice. I suddenly felt deep curiosity about what had happened, in terms of his life, identity and trajectory, to turn the Arnau I had studied into the Arnau who presented himself as an active reader in a Facebook message containing statements such as: <<I read your thesis again, looking for information about qualitative research and stuff>> (6-7). Those small stories concealed themes relevant to the development of young readers' identities and I was determined to explore them. In addition, such small stories were also challenging the <<big>> story in my PhD thesis, revealing a structural tension within ethnography: life is fluid whilst writing is fixed.

I was transfixed by one of his closing comments: <<I thought you'd be happy to know that I'm studying CAFE [the science of sport and physical activities] at Uni and that up to now I have successfully passed all my exams on the first try and with very good marks>> (15-17). What did he mean when writing that I would be <<happy to know>>? To what extent did that comment challenge the story—his story? my story? our collaborative story?—already published as a PhD thesis and in some research papers? Did I behave appropriately after the oral defence when moved from having a research relationship to becoming contacts on Facebook? And what could I learn from that message? Suddenly, I realised that in fact that fieldwork, which I thought had ended in 2010, was still incomplete from

his biographical point of view. Although it was complete from the point of view of the specific piece of research, it was still unfinished from the point of view of Arnau's constantly evolving reader and learner identity. Paradoxical knots were attached to the ethnographic text as an artefact. In ethnography, the process of understanding is structured within the particular time/space defined by fieldwork. The ethnographically derived text crystallises and closes the research process, and this closure is governed by research criteria and might thus be arbitrary from a biographical point of view. Although people and groups obviously have a life that starts prior to the time/space of the ethnographic study and continues to evolve thereafter, ethnography, despite its biographical nature, is inevitably limited to a frame of time/space that represents no more than a snapshot taken at a particular point in people's lives. In this regard, Arnau's case was challenging the academic and social expectations placed upon him and was therefore also challenging the big story or narrative I had recorded, published and preserved some years ago.

3. Updating the published ethnography and the emergence of new research questions

That Facebook message led me to revisit my own ethnographic work and to meet two of the participants three years after the end of fieldwork (two years after defending the thesis), but through a new lens and with new interests and questions. The task of revisiting involved implementing new interpretative strategies towards both old and new data. First, I checked the corpus of primary and secondary data in order to analyse episodes where, fortunately, Arnau's feedback on the ongoing fieldwork was registered (e.g. interviews, the research-diary and other para-data such as emails). Secondly, I met Arnau again to gather new oral data in an informal meeting at a cafe—rather than an interview—where we freely exchanged memories of participation in the ethnographic study. I also gathered data, such as photographs of handwritten notes that Arnau had appended to his printed copy of the thesis, an artefact that he voluntarily brought to the meeting. Arnau's exercise of revisiting data, memories and textually-captured identities was helpful to me in revealing traces of the influence that his experience of participating in an ethnographic project had had and was still having on his inevitably dynamic identity as a reader, as a student and in general.

Strictly speaking, I did what Burawoy (2003: 646) defines as an <<ethnographic update>>, which he explains <<brings an earlier study up to the present but does not reengage it>>. Potentially this might be seen as a <<punctuated revisit>>, since I do expect to conduct further stints of related fieldwork over the years to come. However, an <<ethnographic update>> is not the same as an <<ethnographic revisit>>, which is when the ethnographer undertakes participant observation with a contrastive approach, and neither is it an <<ethnographic reanalysis>>, which Burawoy explains as involving the interrogation of an already existing ethnography without any further fieldwork.

When I met Arnau again I was driven by curiosity and to understand why he had reopened the research-based relationship with me. We agreed to meet in a cafe he proposed, next to his old high school, and to place a recording device on the table. The copy of the book thesis that he brought with him was an artefact that became central to how our conversation developed and it demonstrated that material objects or artefacts derived from the study were important to him. During the conversation an emerging research interest began to take form: What changes in his personal, academic and reading life were relevant in his eyes? How did he make sense of the things that had changed for him in relation to the life narrative crystallised in the thesis? Later on, during the analysis of the data arising from our meeting in the cafe, my interest focused on the <<trans-spatial>> aspects of narratives encapsulated in ethnographic writing: uses and meanings of the ethnographic narrative by the principal actors. Based on these interests, the following are the two interrelated research questions—the first general, and the second more specific—that I attempt to tackle in this chapter:

- How do participants/storytellers make sense of the research in which they are involved (i.e. their experience, the derived materials, the researcher) in their private lives after the study fieldwork has ended?
- How do they personally appropriate the research-based artefactual narratives (i.e. ethnographic narratives, articles, books, etc.) of which they are the subject? What do these research narratives mean to them and how might they influence them?

The aim of this chapter is to present a reflexive and critical discussion on the trans-temporal and trans-spatial aspects of ethnographically-based narratives, which involve biographical information, identity and

writing artefacts. I bring together the fields of literacy narratives (Barton and Hamilton, 1998) and identity representation in ethnographic writing (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Atkinson, 1990; Clifford, 1986) with studies on artefactual literacy (Pahl and Rowsell, 2011) and small stories (Bamberg, 2004; Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008) from which to develop the notion of ethnographic written text/narratives as artefacts of identity and life. I argue that it is important to pay attention to the unintended impact that ethnographic writing has on the lives and identities of the tellers after publication. Ethnographic writing can be shaped in the form of reports, PhD theses, books or articles, and any of these, if shared, might become artefacts of identity and reflection for the participants. By understanding how participants/storytellers appropriate the written narratives within their lives/identities, it is possible to recognise the ways through which participants are (dis)empowered by ethnographic research and how research can unleash processes of transformation and agency.

3.1. Literacy narratives and storytelling the other in ethnographic writing

A literacy narrative is a first-hand story about reading and/or writing that can be delivered in any form (e.g. oral, written, audio-visual, multimodal) and that can be of any length. It tells a story about reading and writing in the context of particular events or as a general experience and therefore it contains traces of spaces, people, experiences and feelings. In a literacy narrative, the teller positions her/himself as a reader, a writer, a literate or an illiterate person, and positions her/himself in terms of her/his literacy self-image in relation to what she or he considers habitual or desirable. Typically, literacy narratives highlight the struggle and the triumph of confidence (Corkery, 2005).

Literacy narratives have become central in the field of Literacy Research (Rowsell and Pahl, 2015), above all in pedagogically-oriented research on literacy (Clough, 2002; Corkery, 2005) and in ethnographies of reading and writing (Barton and Hamilton, 1998). The narratives on literacy in people of a wide range of ages, cultural backgrounds and social institutions have been particularly relevant for New Literacy Studies (NLS; Barton and Hamilton, 1998), the framework with which I am aligned, in order to defend an understanding of literacy and learning as a social practice. This view challenges established psychological and cognitive literacy

ideologies; it is a sociocultural approach focused on what people do with literacy in everyday and institutional contexts as well as the subjectivities, values and ideologies that are attached to those practices.

Drawing from the NLS framework, my PhD thesis (Aliagas, 2011) analysed the reader-based identities and practices of Arnau and his group of four high school friends. In the research-based texts (e.g. articles, book-chapters, talks) I tried to make Arnau's literacy vivid in writing, and so at times I revealed concrete details of his learning and reading experiences by quoting his own words. Rather than focusing on aspects of reader identities I sought to understand Arnau's experience and trajectory as a reader from his own point of view and in the context of his life, and this implied selecting episodes from his life and revealing anecdotes or details.

In the field of Literacy Pedagogy, literacy narratives have been studied as autobiographical writing in the classroom, and have been identified as a powerful tool for shaping or changing literacy identities (Williams, 2003; Corkery, 2005). During the process of writing a literacy narrative, students (in their role as writers) have to negotiate the different aspects that mould their experiences with literacy. In this regard, storytelling provides an opportunity for reflection and transformation that might influence the development of students' literacy identities. As Corkery (2005: 51) argues, <<literacy narratives can offer students a chance to adjust their self-images to place themselves comfortably within their new academic community>>. This is supported by the findings of an ethnographic study by Rymes (2001) that showed that students with a discontinuous trajectory at school—as was Arnau's case—reshaped their identities in narrating their stories of <<dropping in>> and <<dropping out>>. Thus, the teller can re-script him or herself through narratives that erase past identities to the benefit of a <<discursive creation of a coherent self>> (Klapproth, 1962). In other words, young people might alter their role in the story for their own personal, social or academic benefit (Corkery, 2005).

Narratives can leave room for the transformation of identity and self-image because narratives have a dynamic nature and are produced and remoulded in social interaction. Narratives do not depict reality precisely (in the mimetic sense) but represent it, and so, from the framework of narratives as a social practice (Klapproth, 1962), they are understood as a way of constructing and shaping imagined worlds, identities and experiences. Context shapes narratives and narratives are shaped by the contexts where narratives circulate and are (re)interpreted. Life and narratives are

intertwined in the iterative dynamics of mutual feedback. Narratives can adopt the form of "big" narratives, when these relate a complete idea, but might also pop up in interaction or texts in the form of <<small stories>>, which Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008) define as pieces of big narratives that turn up in conversations, without being the main topic. Small stories are usually ignored in research, although they can be a useful tool for revisiting research data from a complementary angle. The key point here is that narratives gathered in a research context are shaped by interactions in the field, which are, in turn, shaped by the tools employed for gathering data (e.g. an interview, a diary, an observation). Narratives that emerge from a study have social value beyond the field of research and the scientific community. Therefore, it is prudent to think that, while people's life narratives shape ethnography, ethnographies also have an impact on participants' lives—the issue explored in this paper.

3.2. Ethnographic writing as an artefactual object of life/identity

Ethnographic writing can take place in various media, such as handwriting on paper or typing on a screen, and can take on a <<thing-like>> status (Brandt and Clinton, 2002) in many forms, such as a notebook, a book or an article in a paper or digital journal. It can also adopt immaterial forms, such as a narrative instantiated within an audio-visual production, or be inserted as online content on a website. Any of these forms, even those in digital format and therefore intangible, can be seen as artefacts or objects that contain traces of the lives and instances of the identities of the participants in the study.

The understanding of ethnographic writing as materially constituted is aligned with the theory of artefactual literacy, which emphasises the material aspects of literacy. According to Pahl and Rowsell (2011: 130), artefactual literacy <<examines objects and their meanings in everyday life and also acknowledges the situated nature of texts in places and communities>>. From this framework, writing is understood in its dimension as a material object and texts are seen as artefacts with a story that carries traces of narratives, power relationships and identity.

Capturing life and representing identity in ethnographic writing has been an issue for ethnographers. Ethnographic writing is a representa-

tional process in itself. Clifford (1986: 98) sees <<ethnography itself as a performance emplotted by powerful stories>>. In the stories we can recognise cultural norms, common human experience and cultural patterns, which can be ideologically charged. In the same vein, Clough (2002: 83) argues that researchers place instruments between themselves and their subjects because <<the researchers must show that their understanding always refers to a scheme of things constituted by the community>>. Following Clifford's reasoning, <<ethnographic texts are inescapably allegorical, and a serious acceptance of this fact changes the ways they can be written and read>> (p. 99).

Since writing about others involves their personal histories and the narration of self, sharing copies of the final reports and publications with the participants is considered good practice. As an example, contemporary ethical guidelines, such as BERA (2011:8), remark on the need to give something back to the participants.

> The Association considers it good practice for researchers to debrief participants at the conclusion of the research and to provide them with copies of any reports or other publications arising from their participation. Where the scale of the research makes such a consideration impractical, alternative means such as a website should be used to ensure participants are informed of the outcomes. *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* (p.8).

This increasingly common praxis reinforces the responsibility we have to understand the trans-spatial and trans-temporal aspects of ethnographic texts and the sorts of influences ethnographic research studies and derived objects have on the participants' lives.

4. My case study: A layered analysis of Arnau's case, post fieldwork

The exercise of reencountering Arnau in a cafe in Barcelona (the interaction was audio-recorded) to talk about the changes in his life and his memories of his participation in my ethnographic fieldwork showed the ways in which he had made sense of that research experience. It also made clear that the paper copy of the PhD thesis, which he brought unprompted to our meeting, had been constructed as a symbolic object linked to that research experience. The printed PhD thesis was key to the process of appropriation of the experience, since it was a material object that held memories

for him but also aided him in the construction of his present self-narrative. I developed the analysis of the reencounter by coordinating different strategies, which constituted, overall, a complex approach to the research questions and revealed different layers of meaning. The first analytical approach, materially driven, focused on documenting the notes Arnau had made in his copy of the thesis—basically, handwritten annotations on certain pages and appended post-it notes. It signalled the importance of particular experiences and personal uses of the thesis. A second approach, narrative driven, focused on the personal meanings attached to the research experience, and helped me understand how Arnau had situated the PhD in his life.

4.1. The meeting, in a cafe in his neighbourhood

After receiving Arnau's Facebook message, I felt it was important to meet him again and document that reencounter. Since I was living abroad at that time, it took about 6 months to schedule a meeting. We met in a cafe in Barcelona, close to the high school where he completed his secondary education. During ethnographic fieldwork, we used to meet in cafes around the school (always suggested by him) and so the idea of meeting in the same area quickly situated us in the past experience of the ethnographic fieldwork. He was already in the cafe when I arrived. He was reading his copy of the thesis (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Arnau in the cafe, prior to our reencounter, reading his copy of the PhD thesis.

I went to that reencounter without any clear idea of the goals in terms of research, with no detailed agenda or planned outcome. I wanted to hear about him personally and I also wanted to understand the impact that being involved in research had had on his life. In an email prior to the meeting, I did define it as <<an exchange of experiences and viewpoints about the ethnographic fieldwork>>. During the meeting we talked freely and informally, navigating through anecdotes and memories. The first topic directly related to the thesis that cropped up was the participants' pseudonyms, a detail which Arnau defined as <<funny>> (*divertido*). He liked being called <<Arnau>> and it was interesting to note that the fact of having a pseudonym did not cause him to feel distanced from his own story. We then talked non-stop for two hours leaping from one topic to another.

4.2. A material-driven approach: The PhD thesis as a resource for recalling experiences and a prompt to self-analysis

The fact that Arnau brought the thesis to the meeting suggested that it held a symbolic value for him. During the conversation he pointed to it insistently and used it to evidence and justify his memories and explanations. He displayed a knowledge of its different sections and found information nimbly by flipping pages back and forth. The copy appeared worn, with the spine damaged (Figure 2), suggesting that it might have been consulted intensively, transported or perhaps neglected. <<I have sometimes used it as a ruler>>, he admitted at one point, with an embarrassed smile.

Of Arnau's two forms of annotation of the text, the function of the post-its was to mark information in the book, whilst handwritten notes revealed his thinking and feelings, which, for some reason, he had chosen to write down. Post-its had been stuck strategically on certain pages to locate information about qualitative research methodology (Figure 3), since during his first academic year at university he had had to design and carry out a small study with interviews and questionnaires. <<This [definition] of qualitative research, as inductive, was something I looked up to explain it in my essay>>, said Arnau pointing at the book. His experience participating in a longitudinal ethnographic research project and being interviewed by a doctoral researcher had been so exceptional that he immediately connected that life experience to his own university research assignment from the moment the teacher explained the aims of the task.

> A: I remember that the teacher explained that we could do a quantitative or qualitative study, something I had seen written here (*he searches for the page in the thesis, flicking pages back and forth*) and I related it [*to the Thesis*]. And I remember that the teacher said <<interviews can be done in different ways; either one person asks questions and the other person answers, and that's it, although, depending on the context, [*the interviewee*] might elaborate more and... or you can also do a focus group, which is with quite a lot of people>>. He also talked about interviews in helix, which is to corroborate whether what they are telling you is true or not (...). When he said this, I was totally shocked and I'm sure I wrote in my notes <<speak to Cristina>> [*the researcher*] because I had been used, in a way, like that, you know? And that was when I realised. (See original in Appendix 1, Transcript 1)

That moment of understanding the links between that assignment and his previous research experience was the motivation for contacting me on Facebook.

Figure 2: Arnau's copy of my PhD thesis

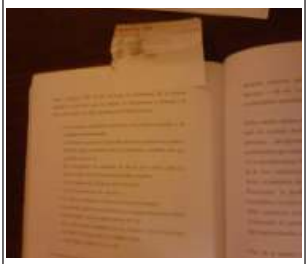

Figure 3: Post-its marking information about qualitative research methods

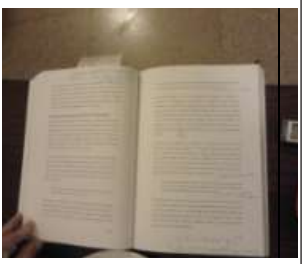

Figure 4: An example of handwritten notes

Handwritten notes in pencil documented Arnau's thoughts while reading the thesis. He took the time to provide context for each of the written notes and to explain their meaning. These notes had been added at different moments over the previous years. For instance, one of the chapters was an analysis of his different literary identities in relation to the practices of vernacular writing (mainly personal writing: love letters and letters to friends). As an example, in that chapter there was a rhetorical analysis of one of his personal texts, titled *Tic Tac. Paraules d'un adolescent* [Tick Tock. Words of a teenager]. He wrote the text impulsively, in the small hours, after a dinner with a girl he liked called Mònica (pseudonim). In that text he expressed his feelings—the feelings he did not dare to express to her directly.

My analysis focused on the rhetoric of the letter and how he managed to employ literary resources, such as the metaphor of the clock, as well as how deep feelings activated his literary resources in relation to his identity as a <<romantic guy>>. In the updating interview I learnt that Arnau read that analysis from a very personal perspective and used it to reflect upon his behaviour and feelings at the time. He concluded that he was blocked by the situation and wrote down in the lateral of the page: <<syndrome of abstinence: I want to give, but I can't>> (Figure 4). This is an example of the extent to which the thesis gave him the opportunity to analyse himself psychologically. In the same vein, he also mentioned that it was interesting for him to read his transcribed words, as an exercise in self-exploration.

In this regard, the thesis fulfilled a personal function in inspiring inner reflection. For him, it was a kind of biographical snapshot of his past life with which he could compare his present self: <<I read it again, and because it's about me it's like *here is where I was before and here is where I am now* and it helps you to know yourself>>. This was possible because the fieldwork and writing adopted a specific form based around biographies and case studies, a form that then allowed a participant to read the text as an archive of his past history.

4.3. Locating the thesis in everyday life: About social prestige and secret love

I was quite intrigued to discover where the thesis-object was stored in Arnau's home space. He explained that he kept the thesis in his bedroom, on a shelf above his desk. This placing suggested how important this object was to his identity as a student.

> C: Where do you keep the thesis? Where is it.
>
> A: (…) in my bedroom, where I keep my books. That's where I keep the thesis too. It's on my right. I see it when I sit down and I've also used it as a ruler. It's there, next to me. I sometimes look at it. I like to re-read the texts I wrote and my words transcribed. It's really shocking! Reading yourself and seeing the tone of voice you have… with [written] words y'know? Because with the commas and everything. You say <<Shit! It's me>>' That's really incredible. (See original in Appendix 1, Transcript 2)

Arnau also mentioned the habit of bringing the thesis to the living room to show it to friends and guests. In this regard, the meanings attached to

his participation in the ethnographic study were extended to the family sphere. His mother liked to show the publication to guests and displayed pride in Arnau being a participant in a university study. These small stories about the physical location of the thesis signalled its importance as an object that brought <<social prestige>> to the family, presenting Arnau as someone interesting enough to be observed by researchers. Showing the thesis gave rise to conversations about Arnau's research experience in which his identity as a student, learner and reader was negotiated socially within the family and their social network.

Interestingly, during the month prior to our meeting Arnau had not had his copy of the thesis at home. He had lent it to the girl with whom he was so in love. In the days before we met, Arnau put a lot of energy into recovering the document, since he wanted to bring it along to our meeting, and it was only at the last minute that he managed to retrieve it.

> A: Yesterday night I met her and said <<you have to give me the thesis back>>, that I lent her like a month ago (...) I met up with her last summer and we went to the Gracia party [a famous celebration held in a neighbourhood of Barcelona] and then she came back to my place. In fact we were pretty hammered. We hadn't seen each other for a long while and I don't know why but the topic of the thesis and stuff cropped up. She had asked to read it before and I had always said yes, but I felt a bit odd about giving it to her. And... just as she left, I said <<go on, take it>>. Next morning I got up and thought <<I gave her the thesis because I was drunk and now she'll know that>>... y'know? Lately we have seen each other more and she was amazed. We haven't talked a lot about the thesis because she feels a bit weird about it but she has talked to her twin sister about it and you can tell she just loved it. (...) The only thing she said was <<well, maybe I've written a little something too, which is somewhere around>>. I was like freaked. But she hasn't shown me it. (See original in Appendix 1, Transcript 3)

This story about the recovery of the thesis revealed another hidden function of the thesis: its use as a strategic artefact in expressing his love to the girl he liked, given that it contained an analysis of some of his love-inspired vernacular writing. In one chapter of the thesis, I had analysed the textual and poetical complexities of some of the vernacular writings by Arnau. Although I read many private texts and love letters by the boys participating in the ethnographic fieldwork, they chose which ones they wanted me to publish in the thesis. One of the texts that Arnau proposed I use was a private letter that he had never delivered to the girl he fell in love with, Monica. In the thesis I report how he narrated the background to that text: one morning, early, he was listening to the <<tick tock>> of

the clock and he suddenly blurted out his feelings in a beautiful letter that was secretly addressed to Monica. He decided to title it *Tick tock. Words of an adolescent*, and in the text he used the clock as a metaphor for the idea of someone patiently waiting for something to happen. In the secret letter he wrote things such as: <<I know that every second I spend thinking about you is not wasted, because I'm thinking about you>>. And he finished the letter with the words: <<I don't know the words to use to express my feelings, that I'm feeling good right now and that I love you>>.

Lending the thesis to Monica was a way to deliver the letter to her, although many years after the writing. Thus Monica read Arnau's private letter by reading a research text that offered three manifestations/interpretations of the letter: a scan of Arnau's handwritten letter itself included in the thesis; the scientific analysis of the letter from the literacy perspective; and Arnau's own introspective notes, written in pencil, as he read my analysis. Certainly, Arnau gave communicative use to the thesis as an artefact!

4.4. The impact of the thesis on Arnau's reader identity

Aspects of what Arnau said during our meeting positioned him as a reader of my PhD thesis. He said things like <<This chapter is the one I enjoyed the most>>, <<when I read this I remembered the moment perfectly>> or <<I identified myself in the writing>>. He mentioned that he particularly liked the subtitles because they were like a scheme of some important moments in his life. His favourite was <<Mother as a Muse>>. He mentioned that he had particularly enjoyed the experience of reading his words transcribed, one by one (the quotations), since he became aware of nuances in what he said. He also read with interest the quotations from the friends who were also involved in fieldwork, although the perspective he adopted and the motivation for his reading was self-centred.

Taking his handwritten notes as a structure, he made an effort to narrate in detail the contextual situation surrounding each reading of the thesis and what had triggered him to leave a note. He narrated concrete moments and the feelings attached to that particular reading experience. For example, one of the notes he had written stated: <<I want to sleep but I can't>>. He explained that he had written this on a trip to Mallorca by ship (he has family there):

> A: I wrote this while travelling to Mallorca. I couldn't sleep on that trip. My brother was sleeping. I was there on the sofa, which was red, reading this. I've almost never been so hooked on reading something. (See original in Appendix 1, Transcript 4)

Another aspect that deserves to be mentioned is that Arnau excused himself several times for having underlined some part of the text: <<look, here I underlined something. Here. I'm sorry because it's your thesis and I really want it to be nice but that day I thought to myself: "It's mine so I can do what I want">>. This comment also reflects a sense of ownership over literacy narratives. To whom does an ethnographic literacy narrative belong? Even if ethnographers/writers own the text, the stories themselves seem to belong to the people who tell them originally.

5. Conclusions: Implications for ethnography and ethics

Ethnographic writing integrates realistic portraits in an attempt to give a convincing and rich account of the participant's life. It is precisely the biographical dimension to ethnographic writing that strengthens the participant's relationship with ethnographic-based texts and derived objects. In this regard, *my* thesis on Arnau and his friends, as a distillation of his literacy-related memories, became a meaningful object in his life, lending it certain personal and academic functions and associated meanings, which can be summarised as follows.

The thesis had an impact on Arnau's reader identity, his academic trajectory and his life. It had an impact on his literacy identity because participants are potential readers of the scientific texts produced in the research in which they participate. In Arnau's case, this reading experience also prompted a degree of reflexivity and self-analysis. Moreover, the thesis was also used in a utilitarian sense, having proved to be a useful resource for Arnau's own university course (as well as being a good ruler!). As a strategic artefact in its printed form, the thesis also impacted Arnau's life, since it served to negotiate social identities and his life narrative with relevant others, and even to reveal his private thoughts and feelings.

Arnau's story, post-fieldwork, intertwined with my own, is merely a small example that hints at the potential value of narrative, ethnographic research beyond the time/space of the study itself, as well as how researching literacy outcomes can influence a participant's life. For some

reason, the period after fieldwork has been neglected in ethnographic research and here I have suggested that this is partially due to traces of the positivistic logic that have articulated social research. Another reason is the material and practical difficulties of doing such follow-ups. However, the influences and longer term effects of research have strong ethical implications for the field of Ethnography, including the question of privacy—since personal stories are published—and for the participants' identities—since their involvement in the research might signify multiple things for them in their everyday lives. Moreover, writing about the other leads to a paradox, which involves encapsulating the other's stories in a fixed form (writing), despite the fact that life and identities are active and shifting.

This book chapter has sought to bring the period <<after fieldwork>> to the forefront of Ethnographic research through an unplanned case study that sheds some light on how participants might appropriate the ethnographic research experience in their private lives and personal identities. However, more data about transtemporal and transpatial aspects of this kind of research engagement would be needed to fully understand the interplay between the influences of ethnographic research, the participant's experience and the ethics involved.

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Appendix 1: Original transcripts

Facebook Message

Cristina!
¿ COMO ESTAAAAAS????
Hoy a sido un dia en el k me e acordado muchisimo de ti!!

en la uni tengo que hacer un trabajo de investigacion... y empezadoa rekordar los dias en los k kedavamos, tus transcripciones, como empezavamos... todo! es más depsues de todo e llegado a kasa empezadoa buskar informacion sobre el trabajo k kreo k hare i me puesto a leer tu tesina de nuevo, para leerme algo de tu recerka qualitativa i alguna kosa mas, para ver si m podria servir k kreo k alguna kosa si, tmbien me a venido a la kabeza k kiza pdonas ayudarme en alguna kosa, pero si me surgen dudas en algun momento ya te lo preguntare.. alavez que me a dado por volver a ller algunas partes, i e leido sobretodo el principio de komo empezamos a konocernos i tal, i me enkanta pork kada vez k lo leo, lo veo de formas diferentes, supongo que el echo de hacerme cada vez mas grande veo las cosas totalmnte distintas en algunos kasos...

I nada, keria komentarte esto, saber como estabas y nada decirte que supongo k te alegrara saber k estoy en rpimero de CAFE (ciencies activitats fisico esportives) i ke de momento lo e aprovado todo a la primera kon muy buenas notas 😁 .

Ya me diras komo te va todo! un beso i un abrazo!

ARNAU! Jejejeje

PD: una pregunta que escriví en la tesina, pagina 411, la primera vez ke me la leia cuando viajaba en barco hacia ibiza, és: que se siente cuando conoces tanto a una persona?... y a medida ke me as ido konociendo k pensabas? (personalemnte, fuera del ambito de la tesina!)

Transcript 1

A: me acuerdo que el profe nos explicaba que podíamos hacer un trabajo cuantitativo o cualitativo, que esto lo había visto aquí escrito (busca en la tesis, pasando páginas) y lo fui relacionando (con la tesis). Y me acuerdo que el profe decía <<las entrevistas las podéis hacer de diferentes formas; o uno pregunta y el otro responde y se ha acabao, aunque según el entorno en el que esté puede dar pie a que se explaye más y... o también puedes hacer un focus group, que sería con bastante gente>> (...) también habló de entrevistas en espiral, que es para corroborar si lo que te están diciendo es cierto o no (...) Cuando dijo eso me quedé pilladísimo y seguro que en mis apuntes dije <<dile algo a cristina>> porque yo había sido, en cierta parte, utilizado así, ¿sabes? Y ahora me estaba dando cuenta.

Transcript 2

C: ¿La tesis dónde la guardas? ¿dónde la tienes?

A: (...) en la habitación, donde tengo todos los libros allí y está la tesis también. La tengo a mi derecha. La veo cuando me siento e incluso la he usado

de regla (*se ríen*). La tengo ahí al lao. La voy mirando, a veces. Normalmente me leo los textos que escribía. O me leo bastante las transcripciones. ¡Impacta mucho! Leerte a ti mismo y ver el tono de voz que tienes… con palabras (*escritas*) ¿sabes? Porque las comas y todo dices <<coño! Soy yo>>. Es una pasada, eso.

Transcript 3

A: Ayer quedé con ella, por la noche, y le dije <<me tienes que devolver la tesis>>, que se la dejé hace cosa de un mes (…). Quedé con ella, en verano, y fuimos a las fiestas de gracia y vino a casa. En realidad cogimos un buen pedo. Hacía mucho que no nos veíamos y no sé porqué salió el tema de la tesis y cosas así. Ella la había pedido para leer y yo le había dicho que sí siempre, pero también me daba cosa dejársela. Y… tal como se fue le dije <<va toma>>. Al día siguiente me levanté y pensé <<con la borrachera le di la tesis y ahora sabrá que… ¿sabes?>>. Últimamente nos hemos ido viendo más y ha flipado. No hemos hablado mucho de la tesis porque le da cosa pero sí que ha hablado con su hermana gemela y se ve que le ha encantado. (…) Lo único que me dijo fue <<ah, pues quizá… yo también he escrito alguna cosilla y la tengo por ahí>>. Me quedé pilladisimo. Pero no me la ha dejado

Transcript 4

A: esto lo escribí yendo a Mallorca (…) Yo no podía dormir, en ese viaje. Mi hermano estaba durmiendo. Yo ahí en el sofá, que era rojo, leyéndome esto. Pocas veces me había enganchado tanto a leer.

CHAPTER 7
COMMENTARY: PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES, REFLEXIVITY AND RESEARCH ARTEFACTS

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1. Presentation

All the chapters in this collection illustrate well how conducting collaborative and participatory research with young people, far from being a straightforward process, entails a set of challenges, dilemmas and decisions when dealing with the contingencies of fieldwork and the socio-economic conditions under which research is produced. As with any kind of qualitative research, conducting collaborative research needs to be underpinned by the questions on why we conduct this kind of research, under what circumstances, and with what consequences for the participants of that research, including ourselves, the researchers. Inspired by ideas of social justice and the awareness and negotiation of power relations between the researcher and the participants, conducting collective and participatory research raises questions on what counts as knowledge and how knowledge is (co)produced by all the agents involved. The discussion arose in sociolinguistics through Deborah Cameron and her colleagues in an intriguing article published in 1993 (Cameron, Frazer, Harvey, Rampton and Richardson, 1993). There, they tried to make sense of the complex relationship between the researcher and those being researched by looking into three ways of doing research in social sciences: working *on*, *for*, and *with* the participants. <<On>> refers to the positivist stance towards the study of human conduct, where the researcher observes and measures human behaviour from a distance (*ethics*). <<For>> makes reference to the kind of research where the researcher speaks on behalf of those researched, and <<with>> is the kind of research wherein an attempt is made to diminish power relationships between researchers and those researched and the participants are involved in the construction of the knowledge produced. This last form, labelled by them as *advocacy*, has been revisited and questioned by the authors in more recent works (Cam-

eron, 1998). As Bucholtz, Casillas and Lee (2016) point out, <<Cameron and her colleagues note the difficulties with this perspective, including such fundamental questions as what counts as power, what counts as research, and what counts as knowledge>> (p. 26). Bucholtz and colleagues then include in the discussion the idea of <<accompaniment>>, borrowed from Freire's critical pedagogy, as a way to indicate how to negotiate power relations and avoid speaking on the participants' behalf or misrepresent the knowledge produced.

The collection of studies brought together in this book returns to these questions by distancing the writers from research *on* and *for* young participants and addressing complex considerations regarding the common dilemmas involved in doing research *with* the participants and looking to accompany them. Throughout the different chapters, we observe how all the researchers faced similar dilemmas and paradoxes while conducting collaborative and participatory research. They had to work on how to communicate the purposes of their research to (other) participants, deal with the ways in which young participants wanted to or were able to participate, and the (social, political, and economic) circumstances under which research was to be conducted. From all the research experiences reported, we can see how carrying out participatory and collaborative research is a social practice in itself, and demands a set of commitments from all the parties involved, time investment, an open attitude with a readiness to change or adjust plans, and establishing a dialogical attitude towards the other participants, which demands a continual renegotiation of the social relations that we construct in the *field*. Reflexivity becomes the way to continually monitor the consequences of the activities that they are planning (Patiño-Santos, 2019).

The works presented here offer a number of different angles for the interested reader, since they present and discuss a variety of approaches to the design of collaborative research. However, for the purposes of this afterword, I want to focus on the ways in which objects were employed in order to execute the research. Interestingly, in all the chapters of this volume, objects are seen as (research) *artefacts*, vested with meanings for those involved in these studies (adult researchers, teachers, gamers, and young participants). As highlighted by Olsen (2013) and Budach, Kell, and Patrick (2015), we live surrounded by objects and they can enter into the process of inquiry in various significant ways. In their thorough discussion on the long-neglected role of objects as representational tools, and the advantages that their acknowledgement might bring for discourse

studies, Budach *et al.* (2015), foreground the fact that artefacts can impact and generate human activity, shape interactions, and contribute to social meaning-making, across time and space(s), whilst Fenwick and her colleagues (Fenwick, Edwards and Sawchuk, 2015) make us aware that <<Material things are performative and not inert; they are matter and they matter. They act together with other types of things and forces to exclude, invite, and regulate particular forms of participation in enactments (...)>> (p. 4). This is precisely what we can see in every chapter of this volume. As discussed below, the ways in which artefacts enter into the works reported in this book, allows us to see how they help the participants to make meaning. For example, drawings were used to represent the value of education for young people in post-conflict Sierra Leone, or posters produced on a digital platform, allowed multilingual students in Barcelona to construct an identity as language brokers outside of school. The actions planned and the artefacts used during the research design provoked unexpected responses from participants, which sometimes obliges us to rethink our original plans (see, for example, the many struggles of Valero-Porras and Cassany to find the right way to involve the young participants of their research in different moments of the fieldwork). More precisely, according to Budach *et al.* (2015), there are at least three ways in which objects can relate to humans.

1. <<Human orders achieve durability and stability beyond particular contexts of action and this can only be explained with respect to the active role played by material objects. Objects stabilise meanings in context and carry meanings across time, space, and scale>> (Budach *et al.*, 2015, p. 391). Trajectories can be traced through the resemiotization of the meaning of objects and artefacts across time and space. We can see, for example, how in Aliagas' case, her PhD thesis acted as a meaningful artefact that triggered certain actions by the participants, including contacting the researcher a few years after the thesis was produced. The thesis became a kind of personal archive for Arnau's memories that he consulted to remind himself of who he was at school, and to whom he related.

2. Once we are aware of the presence of artefacts, they themselves can structure interaction and perform specific functions in the context of the research. From the works presented in this book, it is clear how the use of digital artefacts can organise activities and shape social relations. Thus, for example, Llompart-Esbert could make visible the language practices of the multilingual students in the school she vis-

ited through the use of digital posters on *Glogster*. The task of documenting their own language practices to present them through digital posters, allowed these young people to think about ways in which they could film and report their linguistic repertoires in action.

3. Objects can change the way in which people communicate. They are invested with emotion and can structure affects; they have aesthetic and instrumental value, which can be experienced in multimodal ways, and not necessarily linguistically. All the works reported in this volume, for example, show how the use of artefacts allowed young participants to express the feelings associated with the activities they were carrying out. The production of photographs, drawings, sounds, narratives, posts of social media, and digital posters provided many opportunities for all the participants, as well as the researchers, to express themselves creatively and meaningfully.

It is important to note that artefacts are contextually dependent and their availability and use for research purposes depends on the access that all participants have to them. Socio-economic conditions would shape some of the resources that the participants drew on to plan their research and capture their *data*. Some of them could choose, and some others had to accommodate themselves to more limited circumstances, as we shall see. We must also note the agency deployed by all the participants to deal with the resources they had in order to accomplish the tasks. Bearing in mind the previous reflections, artefacts are related to the research of the works collected in this volume, in different ways.

2. Towards youngsters' active participation: Artefacts and contextual conditions

The different material conditions under which participatory and collaborative research is carried out has consequences for the kind of knowledge produced and how it is produced. Digital devices were one of the preferred artefacts that the adult and young researchers in this volume engaged to varying degrees. By acknowledging the ubiquitous presence of digital and technological artefacts in the lives of young people, mostly through mobile phones, it is rare that collaborative research does not draw on these resources in research design, as noted by Morgade, Poveda and Müller. The fact that the young participants in the works contained

in this volume are from a generation in the 21st century that has been socialised under such digital literacies, makes them a *natural* choice as a resource with which to capture the information sought during fieldwork, without significantly altering the daily life routines within the spaces that researchers have constructed as their *field* or obstructing the research process. Such an idea was central to Valero-Porras and Cassany's research, which focuses on digital activities that occur within online communities of young people in Barcelona. Digital artefacts figured in this research as the subject matter as well as the medium through which to collect data and negotiate the relationships with the participants.

The use of artefacts shaped the kind of interactions that happened between adults and young co-researchers, and/or amongst peers in the various projects documented in this volume. This use produced positive results, such as encouraging young participants to express themselves and share personal information with others. However, the use of digital artefacts can be limited by socio-economic factors that might restrict their availability. In Morgade, Poveda and Müller's case, digital devices became the medium to collect data, but also to communicate to the young participants preliminary results about their own music socialisation. Photographing and soundscaping structured the social relations between the different participants in both sites, Madrid and Brasilia, but the appropriation by students of the activities and artefacts, as well as contextual factors, led to different participation trajectories in each site. These students are immersed in a world of photographs and music but the fact that the activity was held at school, produced school material. That is, the students did not readily share information about their spontaneous vernacular practices that the adult researchers were expecting to collect. The students in Brasilia used the activity to display tensions amongst peers, which demanded the intervention of the adults. Additionally, limited access to adequate technology made the experience in Brasilia more restrictive and raised tensions among the students. In the latter case, the researchers had to create a chain of communication in order to receive the information from the students about their out-of-school activities through their parents' devices and then upload these materials to a Facebook webpage shared by the whole research team, including the students themselves. All these complexities led the researchers, amongst others, to question idealistic ideas about collaborative research, and assumptions such as the idea that digital artefacts and technology facilitate doing research with young people. As mentioned before, this kind of research is situated and highly dependent on the material conditions under which it is conducted.

Similar use of digital artefacts occurred in Llompart-Esbert's research at a secondary school in Barcelona focused on plurilingual practices at school and at home, but resulted in high levels of student and teacher engagement. The activity was framed as a school task from the very beginning, but, interestingly, the students perceived an atmosphere of trust, which encouraged them to share their out-of-school language practices comfortably. This research revealed, amongst other things, the role of students as researchers of their own practices and as language brokers for their families and communities. Through the digital artefact *Glogster*, multimodal posters were produced and used to disseminate the results from research conducted by students themselves. This proved to be a meaningful participatory activity in which the students engaged creatively. Even though the task was proposed as a piece of school-work, the use of digital artefacts to document the lived language experiences of students served to extenuate power relations and created an environment of trust and rapport in which the students felt able to express themselves and share information in their second and sometimes third languages. Some of them overcame the silence they had adopted in class, as students of migrant backgrounds in the Catalan education system, who lacked confidence because they felt non-competent as Catalan speakers.

The experience between adult researchers and young participants in Matsumoto's work, in the context of post-conflict Sierra Leone, was organised around the production of drawings. The participants were invited to represent their beliefs about the role of education in life, as well as their ideas about how an educated person looks. The drawings allowed the researcher to interpret how education is perceived as a <<key to success>>, associated with privilege and social hierarchies in the country. Through the use of drawings, the researcher managed to challenge language barriers as well as to encourage people to express themselves artistically, even though not all the participants felt that they had the necessary skills. Importantly, the researcher contrasted information gathered and interpreted from the drawings with interviews. Such a combination proved to be fascinating in terms of meaning-making since participants had the opportunity to reflect upon difficult experiences in their past, and connect them with their present and imagined future experiences—full of hope—as <<educated>> or <<potentially educated people>>. All the emotions attached to these experiences allowed us to understand the ideas about education, as a desirable goal in order to succeed, that are mobilised amongst all the groups of participants who experienced conflictive traumatic events directly or indirectly. Unfortunately, imagination contrasts

with the difficult realities described by the author of the chapter. A lack of the necessary material conditions make access to education difficult, if not impossible, for many of the participants of this research, something that is complicated by the scarcity of employment. All in all, drawings, as a tool for accessing lived experiences, turned out to be very effective.

Another way in which artefacts helped organise the relationship between adult and young participants in the collaborative projects collected in this volume is manifested in Aliagas' work. She shows how artefacts can be used to prompt stories, and how the original purpose of an artefact can be resemiotized by the users. As in Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, Arnau, the main character of her PhD thesis, escaped from the context in which he is presented therein, and comes back after a few years embodying the identity of an <<evolving learner>> who wishes to reopen Aliagas' research. It seems that he wants Aliagas, as the author of his literacy trajectory at school, to note that he has become a higher education learner, as if suggesting her to revisit (Burawoy, 2003) the original work in order to complete it. Discussing the thesis and the evolution of Arnau's literacy identity frames new forms of interaction between the author and her former participant. Aliagas realises the consequences of her work: Arnau has appropriated the (big) narrative that she had constructed about him a few years earlier. Arnau had converted Aliagas' PhD thesis into an artefact that carries meanings across time and space for him, but also as an object invested with emotion and affective value. As mentioned earlier, the thesis is represented as a personal archive of memories that he needs to contrast with his new reality.

The active involvement of young participants and the interesting ways in which artefacts were used by the agents involved in the research process materialise in an insightful way in the work by Valero-Porras and Cassany. The fact that they were looking into the identities performed by four members of different online fan communities, and the fact that their site was digital, obliged the researchers to enter into continual negotiation with the young participants involved, and demanded constant reflexivity. In their own words: <<Online ethnographic fieldwork raises specific challenges in aspects such as participant recruitment, rapport building, data collection and ethical integrity>>. Digital artefacts became central to the negotiation of each stage of the research process, posing a set of challenges for adult researchers over the whole project. This piece of research shows how negotiating power relations when doing collaborative research can become a difficult, constantly evolving process, which

demands many concessions. The participants in this case exercised high agency, laid down conditions, and set limits for their participation across all the stages of the research from the very beginning: when and where they would be prepared to meet, the kind of information they wanted to share, the ways in which they wanted to be represented, etc. They negotiated positionings that in alternative approaches to research would be impossible. They were not prepared to be passive participants to be observed, nor the kind of participants on behalf of whom researchers speak. Such a form of participation obliged the researchers to share information and to maintain an attitude of <<you need to give to receive>> in order to gain access to some of the daily digital practices of these four members of the fan community in Barcelona. We perceive an intriguing, ongoing duel between the participants' demands and the sometimes creative ways the researchers found to respond to, and negotiate the unexpected challenges posed by the gamers.

3. Concluding thoughts

All in all, the five interesting stories of collaborative and participatory research included in this volume foreground important complexities and dilemmas, when conducting participatory and collaborative research, regarding the relationships established with the participants, the roles played by all the social actors involved during the fieldwork, and the ways in which what counts as knowledge is produced. In most of them we have seen how investigating young people's perceptions, courses of action, such as the construction of their own identities and experiences, entails dealing with a cohort of people who were born and raised during the digital era. For that reason, the research design draws on these artefacts in order to elicit information, but also to organise activities and disseminate results. The ways in which the digital artefacts were appropriated by the different groups of participants, as well as the material conditions affecting their access to certain artefacts and technologies, gave rise to unexpected trajectories. By drawing on Cameron and collaborators (Cameron *et al.*, 1993) and Bucholtz and her colleagues (Bucholtz *et al.*, 2016), we might highlight the fact that a *participatory* approach entails going beyond doing research *on* or *for* the participants of our research, to embrace a research *with* them, in which we *accompany* the social actors who agree to share their thoughts and experiences, and allow us to accompany them in different daily activities. *Collaborative* entails the negotiation of power relations and continually adjusting

our aims, stances and expectations. We need to attend to a set of issues: our relations with the people we work with, as well as the constraints imposed by the material, economic and social conditions under which we conduct our research. All these aspects will shape what we produce as <<results>>. The challenges and dilemmas expand beyond this process, to include questions about the dissemination of the research and the audiences and formats that we will choose for such dissemination.

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CHAPTER 8
COMMENTARY: PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH, ARTEFACTS, AND YOUTH CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

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What is gained when young people are offered a more active role in the research process and are able to set the terms of what counts as knowledge and why? What are the implications for the researcher and research participants of attempting to shift the terms of knowledge production in this way? The chapters in this collection present diverse examples of collaborative research in which the use of visual and multimodal artefacts positions young people, who are usually research *subjects*, as co-producers of knowledge. Although these projects operate in distinct contexts and with distinct theoretical traditions, in this reflection I want to raise implications for a transformative social science that is aligned with the tradition of participatory action research (PAR). Building on the legacy of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1970/1999), PAR asserts that ordinary people, including youth, have the capacity to analyse their social realities and generate the knowledge they need to become agents of change (Dyrness and Sepúlveda, 2020; Cammarota and Fine, 2008). As an epistemological stance, PAR calls for research and/as action towards liberatory projects, counting on the people as agents of their own liberation through inquiry and action (Fals-Borda and Rahman, 1991; Torre and Ayala, 2009). In the brief comments that follow, I highlight some outcomes of the use of artefacts in these projects that lend themselves to a transformative social science, and some lessons or considerations for future research that would push collaborative research towards its emancipatory possibilities.

1. Promoting self-reflection and critical awareness of youth participants

Most striking in these cases are the diverse opportunities artefacts offered youth to reflect on and represent their own realities, often in ways that challenge dominant understandings or representations of their identities and circumstances. This was the case when they were invited to produce the artefact(s) themselves, and even, somewhat more surprisingly, when they engaged with an artefact produced by the researcher, as in the case of Aliagas' doctoral thesis. Many of us who engage in collaborative research with youth assume that our written products, produced for scholarly audiences, will be of little interest to our youth participants. Cristina Aliagas argues, in an intriguing study of her own doctoral thesis as it was taken up by one of her youth participants, that ethnographic writing in many forms can become artefacts of identity and reflection for the participants: tools for self-analysis and reflection that serve participants' efforts to refigure their roles and identities in the world. In her study, her doctoral thesis influenced her focal subject's <<reader identity>>, his academic trajectory, and his life. It was clear that not only the opportunity to participate in the ethnographic research process, but also the opportunity to read the written narrative about his life years later, was transformative in promoting his own self-reflection.

For Freire (1970/1999), individual and collective reflection that promotes critical awareness of the conditions that structure our lives is <<conscientization>>, or the coming to critical consciousness, that is at the heart of full humanization. Freire understands critical thinking as <<thinking that perceives reality as process, as constant transformation>>. Seen in this light, young people who think their identities have been fixed in time and place—by educators, policymakers, and even researchers—realise that they are in fact, in process, and have the ability to re-make and reenact their identities in transformative ways. Visual and multimodal artefacts are important tools for this reflection.

In another example, Llompart-Esbert's study of diverse immigrant-origin youth in Barcelona highlighted students as ethnographers of their own linguistic practices, making digital posters (Glogsters). Llompart-Esbert's chapter focuses on the learning and empowerment of the students, especially as it related to their academic trajectories, as they engaged in the process of researching, reflecting on, and representing their linguistic practices for a digital poster. In this case, the development of metalinguis-

tic reflection was politically transformative, since it made visible (for both students and teachers) the invisible skills and work of immigrant youth as language brokers in their daily lives and challenged dominant images of them as academically or cognitively deficient. Llompart-Esbert argues that this process led to the transformation of students who had been failing in some of their classes into public participation.

Self-reflection can take a variety of forms and does not require the use of digital technologies. Matsumoto used drawings with out-of-school youth in Sierra Leone to elucidate their ideas about what it means to be an educated person, and the differences between <<educated>> and <<uneducated>> people. Matsumoto argues that simple pencil-and-paper drawings were useful as a tool and a rich source of data. As a tool, they were a stimulus for young people's reflection on abstract concepts that were difficult to talk about directly. The process of drawing and then talking about their drawings facilitated their thinking through of the constructs they had, and also, it seems to me, their critical consciousness about inequalities and injustices in their society. Matsumoto argues that the meanings built by youth around education reflected social hierarchies between educated and uneducated people and internalised shame and inferiority of uneducated people. But she also shows they had latent critiques of <<educated people>>, as shown in their representations of teachers who were corrupt, who used corporal punishment or otherwise degraded their students. In this way, when given a venue to reflect, young people expressed the beginnings of awareness that social hierarchies do not correspond to the moral worth of people. Drawings as a prompt for reflection and discussion elucidated young people's complex and nuanced understandings that challenged dominant discourses of education and moral worth.

The use of drawings might be an especially important medium for children from marginalised groups to process the messages they receive from society and articulate their own understandings. Reva Jaffe-Walter (2016), in a study of Muslim immigrant youth in Denmark, used identity maps, which she defines as <<visual depictions of the messages that they received about their identities in different spaces>> as tools <<to acquire information that might not emerge in the course of traditional focus groups>> (p. 107). Conversations about these drawings in focus groups became <<counter-publics>> spaces where immigrant young people <<challenge the ways public discourse represents their race, ethnicity, gender, and religion>> (p. 107). Invited by a simple prompt such as, <<Everybody has different selves they carry around in the same

body…>> immigrant youth were encouraged to draw themselves in the different spaces of their lives: their homes, with family, at school, with friends, and in their homelands (Jaffe-Walter, 2016). These maps became a vehicle for shared reflection and collective dialogue about racialization and assimilation, as well as a space to critique and speak back to these processes.

2. Helping youth negotiate social identities and relationships

The above examples suggest an important aspect of critical reflection promoted by collaborative research with artefacts. They showcase the way young people are invited to negotiate and refigure their social identities and relationships in potentially transformative ways. In the presentation of digital posters about their language skills (Llompart-Esbert, chapter 5), for example, immigrant youth who were previously framed as failing or academically deficient positioned themselves as skilled language brokers whose multilingual capacities and expertise helped meet the needs of their families, community members, and even teachers. Of course, they were always language brokers, but it took the opportunity to reflect on this ability—to develop metalinguistic reflection—to position themselves in the public sphere in this way. Likewise in Jaffe-Walter's (2016) study in Denmark, immigrant youth countered dominant discourses that positioned their homelands as violent by depicting their homeland experiences as <<protective, sustaining them through experiences of discrimination in hostlands>> (p. 121).

The story of Aliagas' ethnography, and the revisiting of her ethnography prompted by one of her youth participants, shows how an outside researcher's analysis of students' identity formation and literacy trajectory, when shared with the participants, can become a tool for them to contest and renegotiate those identities. Aliagas' focal subject challenged his depiction as a non-reader and someone who was not oriented toward higher education—which may have been true at one point in time—by engaging the very theories and methods of the thesis about him in his own quest for higher learning. What is encouraging about this is how he took up the narrative of the thesis in its static and limiting form, not with bitterness or resentment, but as an invitation to reinvent himself—an orientation that was no doubt made possible by the trusting relationship he had with the researcher. Like the Llompart-Esbert study,

this shows that the analytical processes researchers use to understand and explain the world are also useful to our research participants in their own quests to develop themselves personally and professionally (Dyrness, 2011).

By giving youth the tools to analyse how they are positioned in the world and renegotiate their social identities, participatory research with artefacts has its most transformative potential. As I have argued elsewhere, <<PAR can both investigate and help create spaces and processes that support displaced youth to analyse how they are positioned within multiple identity categories and create their own identities from a place of difference and resistance>> (Dyrness and Sepúlveda, 2020, p. 30). The collection in this volume reminds us that these processes can take many different forms, and come with their own complications and tensions. Importantly, the case by Morgade, Poveda, and Müller (chapter 4) reminds us that students may try to negotiate their social identities and relationships in ways that do not align with our research goals or our visions of a more equal and just social order. In a <<critical incident>> in Brasilia, the authors describe how when youth participants transferred their informal socialising practices to the research medium, it led to non-sanctioned activity in the form of cyber-bullying that challenged the research goals. Some students sought to produce and use research artefacts to degrade and insult a female student in another group. It stands to reason that when we invite students' worlds into our research—or invite them to use research in their worlds—all the conflicts, tensions and contradictions of their social identities and relationships will also be brought into the research. How we as researchers respond to these tensions has implications for whether collaborative research challenges or reproduces dominant roles and power relations in society. In this case, the authors write, the response reproduced adult authority and control over the research process, since the adult researcher refused to post the youths' artefact on the research Facebook page. In doing so, however, the researcher interrupted processes of gender violence and misogyny that victimise young women in this context. We don't learn in the chapter whether and how the researcher discussed the issue with the youth participants in ways that might have deepened their own critical awareness, but this is certainly the great challenge and possibility of participatory research with youth. In giving youth the opportunity to step back and examine their reality from a critical distance, collaborative research with artefacts can offer youth tools for critical reflection on their roles and relationships and, ultimately, an invitation to reinvent themselves.

3. Allowing youth participants to guide the research process

A strong theme throughout all these chapters is how the use of artefacts allowed youth participants to more directly engage with and guide the research process. The authors suggest that this more direct engagement and control over the research by youth participants facilitated richer, more meaningful data—ensuring that it was relevant to their lives—and more trusting relationships between researcher and research participants. These are important outcomes for a transformative social science, but I suggest it is up to the researchers to excavate and cultivate the transformative potential in both the data and the research relationships. For what ends do we want more meaningful data and more trusting relationships? How can we harness these outcomes for social change in ways that benefit our youth participants, especially if they are from marginalised groups?

In her chapter, Matsumoto argues that drawings were an essential tool that helped remove barriers to self-expression and participation of her youth participants. By allowing youth to draw their ideas of an educated and uneducated person, she opened up avenues of discussion and reflection that were otherwise closed to her. Not only did the process of drawing and explaining the drawings stimulate reflection for the children, as I discussed earlier, but the drawings themselves provided visual evidence that became a one of a multi-layered data source, along with oral data from the follow-up interviews, and textual data from the accompanying writing of the participants. The use of drawings in this case elicited young people's complex and nuanced understandings of education in ways that potentially challenged dominant narratives of the relationship between education and moral worth in Sierra Leone. This raises interesting questions of how this critique could be cultivated or carried forward to transform existing educational arrangements and public discourses of merit, mobility, and opportunity in this society. Probing young people's critical reflections on notions of shame and inferiority of unschooled people has the radical potential of deflecting their own shame, increasing their confidence and their motivation to contest unequal structures of opportunity.

In my research with immigrant teens in Madrid (Dyrness and Sepúlveda 2020), I found that direct questioning of the youth about their identity did not yield productive responses, and that focus groups by themselves were not likely to generate complex responses or critiques of dominant discourses. This could be because my way of asking the questions was not

relevant or meaningful to the youth, or because the setting mirrored the formal interactions of *school* and thus encouraged a parroting of school-like responses and behaviours (as Morgade, Poveda, and Muller found in their case study in Madrid), or because the youth were afraid to challenge dominant ideas of immigrant assimilation. As Mica Pollock has written about race in the United States (2004), interviews about politically charged topics are likely to yield scripted responses, in which respondents repeat what they think researchers expect or want them to say. In these contexts, artefacts have an important role to play in facilitating more direct self-expression of young people that is not controlled by the researcher. In Madrid, my partner and I introduced identity molecules as a way of inviting immigrant youth to express the different parts of their identities by identifying the different social groups they belong to (Dyrness and Sepúlveda 2020). These artefacts turned out to be rich prompts for discussion, generating stories of strong pride students associated with their ethnic backgrounds as well as sharp critiques of discrimination they experienced for their membership in these ethnic groups. The use of artefacts provided openings for a silenced dialogue that unearthed students' lived experiences of racial discrimination in Madrid, as well as their emergent critique of this.

In their case study of collaborative research as a key element for building trust in online ethnography, Valero-Porras and Cassany (Chapter 3) argue that their methodological choice to allow their participants to self-select and upload artefacts to a shared digital database led to a more equal distribution of power among researchers and participants and also afforded the researchers an emic perspective in the understanding of the situated meanings and motives behind the participants' practices. The ability of participants to choose what was shared about them and to offer their own interpretations <<reduced the participants' anxiety about the way they would be represented in findings, focused our attention on the most relevant aspects, enhanced emic interpretations and provided us with data that would have remained hidden if we had imposed more constraints to participants>>. This points to an important function of allowing youth researchers to direct the research process: feelings of trust and safety on the part of participants strengthens their ability to generate knowledge useful to them. The authors argue that these trusting relationships had a positive impact on the analysis and interpretation of the collected data—thus possibly producing better research.

If it is clear that multiple forms of collaboration produce richer and more meaningful data, it remains important to ask, for what ends?

Especially when our studies include marginalised, misunderstood, or understudied communities, artefacts offer a way to avoid imposing dominant categories and understandings through researcher frameworks, and to elicit complex, alternative, subjugated knowledges and worldviews with subversive possibilities. Whether and how we recognize these subversive possibilities and choose to take them forward is a question that should guide participatory research with emancipatory aims.

4. Lessons and considerations for future research

The cases in this volume offer a number of important lessons and considerations for future research that hopes to capitalise on the affordances of collaborative research for transformative possibilities. Here I will focus on two.

4.1. Embed artefacts in multiple contexts

First, it is important to underscore that artefacts do not stand on their own and cannot be interpreted at face value, apart from the contexts that produced them. In all of the cases described here, the artefacts were useful to the extent that they were embedded in interactions with participants, which were themselves sources of data as well as venues for collectively analysing data. For example, Valero-Porras and Cassany explain that they used the artefacts their participants uploaded as a starting point in interviews and that the use of these artefacts helped ensure that the interviews were relevant as well as generating more accurate, emic interpretations of the collected artefacts. Likewise, Matsumoto followed up on the drawings with interviews with each of the participants in which they explained and helped interpret their drawings. As an outsider to that context, she believes she would not have been able to interpret their drawings meaningfully without these interviews.

In addition to using artefacts as prompts for discussion and reflection in interviews, I would argue that we should also embed artefacts (and our interpretation of them) in participant-observation in multiple contexts in order to observe naturally occurring interactions of our par-

ticipants in everyday life. Morgade, Poveda, and Müller point out that simply discussing the artefacts with the youth produces multiple interpretations, even among students in the same group. In order to arrive at more contextualised understandings of their use and meaning, we need to observe our participants engage with and talk about these and similar artefacts on their own. Each data source helps provide a more complete and nuanced picture of the complex reality our subjects inhabit. For example, in our research with immigrant youth in Madrid we used poetry written by migrant youth in the U.S. to stimulate discussion among the youth and then encouraged the youth to write their own poems in response. The poems produced by our participants provided a powerful counter-narrative to the dominant discourse of assimilation, highlighting their feelings of pain, melancholy and conflict at being separated from their countries of origin and not fitting in in Spain (Dyrness and Sepúlveda, 2020). However, our informal interactions with the youth offered nuance to the interpretation that they were conflicted or angst-ridden. One day towards the end of our fieldwork, while sharing a meal at McDonald's with a group of youth participants, we learned that one of our focal students was planning to move back to the Dominican Republic in two weeks. I listened as she and two other Dominican-origin friends engaged in cheerful, easy banter about life in the Dominican Republic and what it was like to go back and forth. Their conversation normalised the move as part of everyday life and affirmed the cultural knowledge they gained from this movement. <<Their tone was jovial and light. Far from lamenting Razena's need to leave Spain, their conversation was a celebration of their lives in between>> (Dyrness and Spúlveda, 2020, p. 173). This conversation—not directed by me—turned out to be a crucial data source for our analysis of transnational youths' identities in between, which we could not have arrived at with only the focus groups or only the poems our students produced.

If we hope to understand the worlds our youth participants inhabit, and the transformative possibilities of their ways of being in the world, we need to include opportunities not only for them to collect data and produce artefacts, but also for us to observe them at work in their daily lives when we are not directing their activities. This is a call for more ethnographically informed collaborative research, in which collaboration is not a substitute for but rather integrated into sustained observation and listening to young people in everyday life.

4.2. The need for flexibility and adaptability in research design

The cases in this volume strongly underscore the need for flexibility and adaptability in research design in any kind of collaborative research with youth. This is shown most clearly in the chapters by Morgade, Poveda and Müller, and Valero-Porras and Cassany. Morgade, Poveda and Müller reflect extensively on confronting unexpected difficulties, dilemmas, and critical incidents in fieldwork and the need for constant readjustments. I have also found this to be the case in every one of the PAR projects I have conducted with youth. If we hope our research will be meaningful and useful to the youth with whom we collaborate, we must be responsive to the material conditions that shape their lives, adjusting our activities to the constraints of the context. In some cases, artefacts are a way to respond to the context: for example, Matsumoto turned to drawings after she had difficulty exploring questions of schooling orally with her participants, and because of the limited availability of other resources in this post-conflict setting. Valero-Porras and Cassany made methodological changes in response to their participants' claims for more agency in the study, and like Matsumoto, found that the resulting data and analysis were far richer than they would have been otherwise. Responding to the contingencies in our participants' lives necessitates changes in research design that can both increase trust between researcher and participants and generate more meaningful data. The question I return to is, how can we ensure our research products are useful for marginalised subjects in their own struggles for self-definition and social change? What kinds of questions would we need to ask when adjusting our research design so that the activities are not only meaningful in the context, but also serving the aims of transformative knowledge production.

Feminist and Borderlands scholars using PAR remind us that <<knowledge production is a political activity and that researchers come from particular communities with their own historically rooted relationships to research and power>> (Torre and Ayala, 2009: 388). Recognizing how the members of our research collectives are differently situated in relation to privilege and power, and negotiating the tensions collectively from the space in between, can push PAR towards its liberatory potential. We call this process *acompañamiento*, when researchers accompany youth who are positioned on the outside of mainstream categories of belonging, in analysing and negotiating borders of difference, inequality, and power in the quest for their full humanity (Dyrness and Sepúlveda, 2020).

We must remember that the purpose of transforming power relations in research is to transform power relations in the world, giving our research participants, especially those from marginalised communities, new tools for understanding and intervening in the structural inequalities that impact their lives.

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