1 Introduction

Arts-Based Methods for Decolonising Participatory Research

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The foundations of academic knowledge production are increasingly questioned and contested from a diversity of perspectives. On the one hand, academic research has suffered from a legitimacy crisis in the so-called post-truth era, which has transformed the meaning of ‘truth’ and shaken the position of scientific knowledge in society (e.g. McIntyre, 2018). On the other hand, within academia itself, a wide range of epistemological criticisms stemming from various critical approaches have emerged and are challenging conventional forms of academic knowledge production, along with its ethical premises and value base. Calls for more participatory, horizontal and democratic research practices have become widespread.

Due to what has been called the ‘participatory turn’, the growing relevance of participatory research—that is, research done in close interaction with people, groups and communities—or community-based participatory research (Leavy, 2017), has been manifested in many fields. The emergence of concepts such as *collaborative research*, *research partnership*, *co-creation* and *co-production of knowledge* is one result of this. This turn to participation has taken place simultaneously with the growing popularity of arts-based research methods, in parallel with the turn to community in the arts (Badham, 2013; Bishop, 2006; Wyatt et al., 2013), and they have also become intertwined. As a result of this, substantial contributions to the role of arts-based methods and arts-based research in participatory research have been made (e.g. Kara, 2015; Leavy, 2015, 2017, 2018; Liangputtong & Rumbold, 2008).

Arts-based methods represent a wide umbrella category under which there are many art forms, genres and practices—including *visual art* (painting, drawing, collages, installation art, photography, three-dimensional art, sculpture, comics, textiles, needle crafts, quilting); *audio-visual art* (film, video); *multimedia forms* (e.g., graphic novels); and *performative arts* (theatre, dancing, music, creative movement, poetry) (Leavy, 2018, p. 18). Even more broadly, activities such as narrative and poetic inquiry, creative writing, essays, novels, storytelling and screenwriting can be considered arts-based methods. They may also include multimethod forms that combine two or more art forms (p. 18). Arts-based methods refer to ‘any social research or human inquiry that adapts the tenets of the creative arts as a part of the methodology’ (Jones & Leavy, 2014, p. 1) and can be used in different phases of research: as methods for data collection, in analytical processes and in interpretation and wider dissemination of research outcomes as communicative or aesthetic elements (Leavy, 2015). Creativity in research is context-specific—it depends on the knowledge, skills and abilities of those involved

and where the research is conducted (Kara, 2015). Some researchers understand arts-based research as a paradigm (Gerber et al., 2018, p. 13; Leavy, 2015).

The potential and benefits of arts-based methods for participatory research have been discussed widely. Studies have explored, for example, the role of art in participatory development (e.g. Cleveland, 2011; Coemans et al., 2015; Michelkevičius, 2019), fostering plurality through social design methodologies (Akama & Yee, 2016), collaborative design where power relations are more equally distributed (Sanders & Stappers, 2008) and participatory service design which looks at service production from the user's point of view (Miettinen & Vuontisjärvi, 2016). A plethora of arts-based methods are used in various practices, as illustrated by studies in areas of education (e.g. Baden & Wimpenny, 2014; Barone, 1995; Cahnmann-Taylor, 2013; Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2017; Kamler, 2013; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013), health (e.g. Boydell et al., 2012; Fraser & al Sayah, 2011; Wang, 1999) and arts therapy (Chilton & Scotti, 2014; Coholic et al., 2009; Connellan, 2019; Ledger & Edwards, 2011; McNiff, 1998).

While the participatory turn has been embraced for its transformative potential, it has been also critically discussed from various perspectives. It has been argued that more attention should be paid to the questions of power, diversity and intersectionality, as well as decolonising participatory research (e.g. Baum et al., 2006; Cooke & Kothari, 2000; Eubanks, 2009; Genat, 2009; Gill et al., 2012; Hickey & Mohan, 2004; Kincheloe, 2009; Schurr & Segebart, 2012; Sherwood & Kendall, 2013; Tolhurst et al., 2012; Tuck & Fine, 2007; Zavala, 2013). As noted by Kassem (2019), decolonising participatory research can benefit from critical methodologies and interdisciplinary work. Our book seeks to continue the important work that has been done in this regard, focusing especially on the potential of arts-based methods for contesting hierarchies in research, increasing multivocality, and developing new and more transparent forms of participatory research.

The aim of the book is to explore how arts-based methods can be utilised in developing better research practices—for doing research that supports the perspectives, needs and interests of the research participants in their place-based and cultural contexts. While engaging in ongoing, lively discussions on the need to decolonise research, we draw on postcolonial, decolonial and other critical perspectives, as well as their cross-disciplinary intersections. We ask questions such as: Can arts-based methods contribute to decolonising participatory research, its processes and practices—and if yes, how, under what conditions and on whose terms? How can arts-based methods, for example, challenge hierarchies, foster pluralism, increase multivocality and facilitate dialogue in research? What practical, political and communal issues need to be considered when designing arts-based processes and participatory activities from a decolonising perspective? What kinds of tensions, ethical issues and concerns arise when using arts-based methods in participatory research? How can they be addressed? We pay attention, for instance, to questions of representation, authorship and ownership created and shared through participatory artistic processes, research ethics and practical artistic production. We seek to present new perspectives, methods and processes to promote as well as to problematise the use of arts-based methods for decolonising participatory research—that is, we explore *both* the transformative potential *and* the challenges and limitations of arts-based methods.

Our main focus lies in the interface between social sciences, service design and art, but we also reflect on the recent discourse concerning the need to decolonise

design (Akama & Yee, 2016; Chaturvedi & Rehn, 2019; Jansen, 2019; Pissarra, 2011; Raghuram et al., 2009; Tunstall, 2013; Yamamoto, 2018), which is underpinned by the values of postcolonial and feminist theories in design practices. Design innovation has been criticised for sustaining colonial and imperialistic ways. As an example, Tunstall (2013) discusses how the ascendant influence of design innovation practices is reflected through the segregation of traditional craft and modern design, which ignores other intrinsic forms of design innovation amongst local communities. Additionally, a perception of design thinking is maintained as ‘a progressive narrative of global salvation’, which undermines alternative ways of reasoning, knowing and becoming (p. 235). Too strong of a focus on European, Euro-American and Japanese design and the development of solutions at the level of prototypes further limits the positive impact that design can have on communities. The effect of design on communities is illustrated in the way designers in India and Africa, for example, have creatively responded to challenges within their communities, which are often underpinned by hegemonic processes of capitalism and (neo)colonialism (p. 236). Decolonising design, through practices and thinking, seeks to question dominant narratives and relationships of power that perpetuate delocalised and disembodied perspectives of the Global North/West and eliminate other ways of knowing (Tlostanova, 2017; Venn, 2006). While there already exist some good discussions on the theme of decolonising design, the debate can benefit from practical examples and case studies.

It needs to be noted that debates on decolonising through arts-based methods are not a recent phenomenon, but draw on a longer history. Since the early 1980s, Wa Thiong’o (1992/1981) commenced his discussions on the role of the arts on the decolonisation of the mind. For him, decolonisation represented an ‘ongoing process’ that is ‘based on a critical view of the self that emerges from states of not knowing, hearing or seeing’. He reflected on the role of fiction, drama and poetry as ways to reconnect with broken roots of the past: first, by looking at the past critically and, second, by helping build healthy societies (pp. 42, 57, 60, 63). Other postcolonial scholars have also reflected on the role of arts-based methods in decolonising. For instance, for Mbembe (2016), they offer avenues for overcoming the ‘dualistic partition’ or ‘split between mind and body, nature and culture’ and opportunities for embracing ‘a horizontal strategy of openness to dialogue among different epistemic positions’ (pp. 37, 42).

Conceptual Clarifications

Decolonisation itself has been defined in many different ways and for many different purposes. Traditionally, it has referred to formal decolonisation, to the process in which the colonial powers, principally European nations and their administrators, were compelled to give up, whether voluntarily or by force, their overseas possessions in various regions (e.g. Le Sueur, 2003). While this process usually required armed resistance on behalf of the colonised, the debates about psychological decolonisation—that is, about the destruction of socially and culturally constructed mental structures and discursive hierarchies which tried to produce the colonised as inferior to the ‘civilised’ coloniser—were also central to these struggles (e.g. Fanon, 1963/1961). Over time, the meaning of the concept has expanded beyond these particular decolonisation processes, and it now refers to a variety of different ways in which colonial/ity and hierarchical relations of power that characterise the present world order and societies might be undone and replaced

in different spheres of contemporary life, including education, media, economy and political systems, as well as science and academic knowledge (see e.g. Laako, 2016).

With respect to science and academic knowledge, knowledge processes and knowing subjects, decolonisation usually entails both critique and the visioning of alternatives. Firstly, criticism of the way in which colonial power relations and Eurocentric forms of knowledge are reproduced in Western epistemologies and their claims to objective and value-free science. Secondly, it has the aim of creating alternative theories, methodologies and epistemological inquiries to open new, less Eurocentric forms of knowing and inquiry to support the perspectives and political projects of the colonised and/or subaltern layers of the society. We are aware that, in recent years, decolonising has become something of a trendy buzzword within Western academia, one that too often serves as a metaphor instead of contributing to concrete practices of decolonisation, which is also illustrated in debates around decolonising knowledge production. As Tuck and Yang (2012) argue, ‘when a metaphor invades decolonisation, it kills the very possibility of decolonisation; it recenters whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future’ (p. 3). Therefore, it has been emphasised that decolonising knowledge should be regarded as a means to end colonisation, not as an end in itself (Essen et al., 2017). Yet, the extent to which it is possible to contribute to decolonisation through research is very much debated, especially when taking place within the Eurocentric academia. As McEwan (2019) states, ‘scholars located in the North face a double bind: decolonization as a force to dismantle the power structures of modernity can never be achieved from within its own theoretical orthodoxies and infrastructures’ (p. 91).

This relates also to critical discussions about the differences and tensions between postcolonial and decolonial perspectives. While postcolonial theory struggles against ‘epistemic coloniality’, critiquing Eurocentric knowledge production based on European traditions and experiences; that is, ‘a particular anthropological knowledge, which is a process of knowing about Others—but a process that never fully acknowledges these Others as thinking and knowledge-producing subjects’ (Mbembe, 2016, p. 16), decolonial theory rather ‘attempts to envisage alternatives to European traditions and experiences and demands that decolonizing efforts go beyond critique and towards the removal of enduring forms of colonial domination’ (McEwan, 2019, p. 91). Many theorists consider these approaches incommensurable. For example, Mignolo (2007) regards postcolonial theory as a ‘project of scholarly transformation within the academy’ grounded in the Eurocentric post-structural theory of Foucault, Derrida and others, which remains within the confines of the modernist, Eurocentric project even when critiquing it (p. 452).

Indeed, decolonial thinkers differentiate their work from postcolonial theory in several ways. In discussing modernity/coloniality, they start with the Conquest of the Americas in 1492 instead of the European Enlightenment. This means that although postcolonialism and decoloniality have ‘both emerge[d] out of political developments contesting the colonial world order established by European empires’, their understanding of the historical basis of this emergence differs in terms of geographical location and time period (Bhambra, 2014, p. 119). Instead of academic institutions, many decolonial scholars build on the world views of marginalised groups in their politics of liberation (McEwan, 2019, p. 93). In drawing on non-European sources beyond the metropolitan academy, decolonial theory seeks to delink from Eurocentrism, go beyond critique and embrace decolonial thinking and doing (Mignolo, 2007); thus, it can be considered more strongly linked to material and socio-economic aspects than is postcolonial theory (Bhambra, 2014).

While our approach comes closer to the postcolonial approach in many ways, we simultaneously emphasise aspects that are relevant in the context of decoloniality. This is because we are not interested in critiquing only academic knowledge production or power relations in participatory research as such, only in the abstract, but our broader aims are related to transforming—that is, decolonising—these practices while seeking to develop alternative practices, some of which may also have some material effects beyond these projects in the sense that they can inspire and support communities to actively challenge colonial structures and practices, demand what rightfully belongs to them and create new transformative practices on their own terms. It is in this way that our approach connects with the decolonial perspective.

We depart from the perspective that, while there are clear and undeniable differences between postcolonialism and decoloniality, there are also important interlinkages and similarities. As McEwan (2019) points out, they both are concerned with present-day global inequalities, suggesting that a closer dialogue between them is needed (p. 95). Decolonising should take place in our everyday practices in academia, in the field, in the classroom and everywhere we come across colonial structures and practices on a daily basis (Rutazibwa, 2019; see also Jong et al., 2019; Maldonado-Torres, 2011). This is why we consider both approaches necessary for decolonising participatory research in practical terms, which in our understanding benefits from the important power/knowledge critiques of postcolonial theory and from the strong focus on transformative political practice of the decolonial approach.

Power, Privilege, Positionality

We are aware that many Western scholars working with colonised and marginalised communities are increasingly criticised for succumbing to ‘innocent colonialism’ that is falsely represented as ‘solidarity’, for arguing that they are engaging in processes of decolonisation while their work is not really connected to the needs and interests of the communities and even for using research to reproduce their own positions of privilege (Tuck & Yang, 2012; see also Dey, 2018; Tuck & Fine, 2007, 2014; Simpson, 2017; Smith, 2012). Too often, research still segregates ‘knowledge from the people, from its contexts and local histories’ (D’Souza, 2011, pp. 236–237; see also Battiste, 2007; De Sousa Santos, 2014; Escobar, 1995; Icaza, 2017; Jauhola, 2020; Kothari, 2005; Lincoln & Cannella, 2009; Mignolo, 2009, 2011, 2012; Mignolo & Escobar, 2013; Mohanty, 2003; Motta, 2011, 2016; Simpson, 2017). There is also a great deal of critical discussion on questions such as who should be the key agents of decolonisation, who are entitled to act as allies or solidarity actors and in what ways should they engage with colonised people so as not to ‘take over’ their ownership of these processes, and thereby end up reproducing colonial power relations (e.g. Land, 2015; Nagar, 2014; Smith, 2012; Tuck & Yang, 2012; see also Spivak, 1988). Indeed, it is essential to remember that research always involves power—it is not an innocent exercise ‘but an activity that has something at stake and that occurs in a set of political and social conditions’ (Smith, 2012, p. 5). The question of power is especially important in postcolonial contexts due to the highly negative historical experiences of research which was ‘inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism’ and the ways in which knowledge was extracted and appropriated (pp. 1, 61). We must not forget that, in the present as well, researchers have the ‘power to distort, to make visible, to overlook, to exaggerate and to draw conclusions, based not on factual data, but on assumptions, hidden

value judgements, and often downright misunderstandings', a fact that concerns also participatory research (pp. 128, 178).

We consider these kinds of critiques fundamentally important and justified. We also believe that the need to decolonise is such an *urgent, broad and demanding task* that it should take place across different levels and by various actors at the same time. As Tuck and Fine (2007) suggest, 'decolonization must be a common project on multiple social justice agendas' (p. 145). We understand that there is always a risk of enforcing and reinforcing colonial attitudes under different names, concepts, terminologies or methods. As noted by Smith (2012), emancipatory models of research have not 'freed researchers from exercising intellectual arrogance or employing evangelical and paternalistic practices', including ethnographic and qualitative methods which 'may sound more sensitive in the field, but . . . can be just as problematic as other forms of research' (p. 180). Building on the legacy of Lorde (1984), she refers to methods as master's tools which will not dismantle the master's house (Smith, 2012, p. 40). Yet, she points out that decolonising does not necessarily require 'a total rejection of all theory and research' (p. 41).

While the most significant processes of decolonisation probably happen elsewhere—that is, outside of academia, in the social and political realms—we have a responsibility as researchers to contribute towards the aim of decolonising academic research through our own active engagement; that is, by decolonising our research practices and 'knowledge-practices' (Casas-Cortés et al., 2008). We believe that many scholars engaged in participatory research and collaborative partnerships with communities are genuinely interested in supporting the perspectives and advancing the priorities that the(ir) communities consider important. Many researchers also have, over time and through their active and long-term engagement with communities, become aware of the complex contradictions that are related to power relations and hierarchies between themselves as researchers and the(ir) communities they work with. These are the kinds of experiences and processes that we seek to visibilise in this book, including analysis of and reflection on *both* successes and good practices *and* shortcomings, failures and challenges, involved in these processes. By introducing a broad spectrum of case studies and practical examples, we seek to illustrate what and how arts-based methods can contribute to decolonising participatory research in different research contexts, while also discussing challenges and ethical concerns this involves and how they can be addressed.

We do not claim that we can offer any kind of 'perfect' solutions—far from it, as we are only learning ourselves in the process. Moreover, we do not propose that our findings are generalisable or can 'travel' as such from one context to another, as any context or community is always unique and particular. However, we hope that the value of the experiences presented in this collection as a whole might exceed the personal and particular and provide some useful examples on the ways in which a variety of power/knowledge relations and hierarchical structures intersect and are negotiated in practice when engaging in participatory research through arts-based methods.

Defining Decolonising in This Book

For the purposes of this book, we define decolonising as a process or practice that actively seeks to transform colonial and Eurocentric research practices based on

hegemonic Western epistemologies by repositioning the research participants at the centre of the research process and developing alternative ways of engagement to support their perspectives and interests. From researchers, this requires self-reflection and unlearning the old ways—that is, the process of decolonising does not start with the ‘other’, but rather trying to decolonise oneself and transform one’s practices (e.g. Motta, 2011, 2016). Despite this general definition, we have given our authors a free hand to decide how they define and use the concept of decolonising in their chapters. We believe that it is necessary to allow different understandings of decolonising to emerge for two reasons: first, because the debate on decolonising is constantly evolving and developing into new directions; and second, because the chapters and their cases are very diverse contextually, empirically, theoretically and methodologically. In fact, there are three types of chapters in the book: those describing research processes that have built on the perspective of decolonising from the very beginning, those contributing some useful examples to already existing theory and arguments, and those not originally drawing on a decolonising perspective but presenting some retrospective reflections on how certain parts of their research processes and lessons can potentially contribute to decolonising research practices.

This clarification is important as one of the most recent debates deals with ‘demetaphorisation’ of decoloniality, emphasising the need of especially Western scholars who have become increasingly interested in decolonising ‘this and that’ to clearly define what they are *decolonising from*, stressing the importance of conceptual clarity and proper analysis of what is being decolonised (Dey, 2020–present). Yet, there cannot be one fixed definition, but it needs to remain open-ended for different kinds of contexts and purposes (e.g. Dey, 2018). While recognising diversity, different conceptions and alternative ways to decolonise (and encourage people to find their own ways), it must be noted that diversity in this context is not only a positive thing, as the meaning of decolonising can become easily obscured—the definition cannot be too broad, as it would empty out the meaning of the word and lead to metaphorisation.

Situating Ourselves

It is important to reflect upon our own positionalities and academic histories to offer a transparent account of the motives that have inspired us, as scholars and individuals, to edit and write this particular book. We, the three female editors, have become interested in the theme of decolonising through our own research when working with communities in various contexts, including countries such as Nepal, Namibia, South Africa, India, Bangladesh, Australia, Finland and Russia (e.g. Khanam & Seppälä, 2020; Miettinen, 2007; Miettinen et al., 2016a, 2016b; Miettinen et al., 2019; Motta & Seppälä, 2016; Sarantou, 2014; Sarantou et al., 2019; Seppälä, 2014, 2016, 2017; Seppälä et al., 2020). As white, privileged Western scholars, we have tried to find ways to deal with complex issues, such as white privilege, problems of Eurocentric knowledge production and existing hierarchies of power/knowledge, as well as our own situatedness, positionality and ethico-political responsibilities as researchers.

For us, this book represents a conscious and *collective* effort to address some of the previously mentioned issues. Through sharing our experiences and learning from each other, as well as from the other authors in this book, we seek simultaneously to *self-educate* ourselves—an important task for scholars interested in decolonial research (e.g. Land, 2015; Smith, 2012; Tuck & Fine, 2007)—and provide some practical examples of the use of arts-based methods for students and other scholars working

with similar issues. The fact that the three of us are from different disciplines—service design, art/artistic research and social sciences—means that we sometimes tend to emphasise different kinds of perspectives. While we have had many debates and also some differing views during this co-learning–editing process, we have noticed more commonalities than radical differences in our approaches and have become convinced that bringing different fields together can contribute to collective learning through epistemic dialogue. However, there remains so much for us to learn, especially from post/decolonial and Indigenous scholars who engage and do research with and about their own communities and their struggles. Our positionalities are quite different, and we acknowledge that this has an influence on how we think about and do research.

During the process, we have discussed the reasons why each of us has become interested in working with communities on the margins. Seppälä's research in South Asia has been influenced by the fact that she is originally from Enontekiö, one of the most northern municipalities of Lapland, where the Indigenous Sámi community continuously struggles for its existence and right to self-determination. While these contexts are very different from one another, they both are characterised by structural violence and injustices related to processes of (settler) colonialism and manifest how the historical and present-day injustices are intimately intertwined. Sarantou was born to a mixed heritage settler family in Namibia, where she lived and worked for almost 40 years. She initiated and taught fashion at the University of Namibia (1998–2008). Miettinen has become interested in marginalised communities due to her engagement with local crafts communities in Namibia, South Africa, Lapland, Ostrobothnia, Australia, Chile and Azerbaijan in searching for ways to improve their livelihoods. As Smith (2012) points out, many scholars who study margins 'come from the margins or . . . see their intellectual purpose as being scholars who will work for, with and alongside communities who occupy the margins of society' (p. 205). Even though we have become interested in margins for different reasons, what ties the three of us together in the present is our current academic location at the University of Lapland. While socially engaged or arts-based research is not generally much appreciated in the neoliberal academy (it is difficult to gain funding and the funding instruments are not always suitable), it is especially challenging at smaller universities which receive less state funding and have to compete with larger universities that have broader international networks. Often, it is also hard work to justify that Global South–North collaboration is truly important.

Structure of the Book

The book is divided into three sections that address different fields of research but are interrelated and weave together a whole that provides a nuanced picture of the theme. The first section of the book, edited by Tiina Seppälä, presents cases mainly (but not exclusively) from the field of social sciences, also exploring certain forms of participatory research that are not that often associated with arts-based methods. In Chapter 2, Vishnu Vardhani Rajan, Shyam Gadhavi and Marjaana Jauhola discuss connected entanglements and disruptions with care through their collaborative quilting process. In describing their process of co-creation in India and Finland in the form of a conversation, accompanied by videos and audio-visual material, the chapter demonstrates the power of sharing, learning and doing together as a means to visibilise unspoken histories and reverse power hierarchies across the boundaries of colonality. The chapter itself is an example of creative co-writing, including poetry and excerpts

from letters. It also challenges the conventional practice of using only standard English in academic publications—some parts are written in other languages.

In Chapter 3, Susanna Hast explores movement as a research method in her study of capoeira for refugee women and children in Jordan. She illustrates that while capoeira may offer valuable tools for developing movement pedagogies that are helpful in addressing some challenges in the everyday life of refugees, these methods are restricted by factors such as the short-term nature and discontinuity of activities. Sunniva Hovde, Asante Smzy Maulidi and Tone Pernille Østern continue with the theme of movement and embodied research in Chapter 4. It underlines the importance of incorporating decolonial perspectives into research design from the very beginning. The authors argue that through collaborative and embodied approaches based on dancing together, teaching/learning dancing from and with one another enables taking small steps towards more *just* dance research. Through an analysis of ‘stop moments’, they also discuss some tensions and issues of controversy in their research process. In Chapter 5, Tiina Seppälä describes a participatory photography project co-organised with women’s rights activists in Nepal. In analysing the process through the perspective of decolonial feminist solidarity, she demonstrates that participatory photography can advance more horizontal and intimate engagement, learning and sharing between the researcher and participants, as well as enable important dialogue amongst research participants. The chapter also highlights the importance of researchers critically reflecting on their positionalities/privileges and being alert to the risk of producing a ‘romanticised’ view of participatory photography, as unequal power relations cannot ever be fully avoided in research, no matter how participatory it is.

The second section, edited by Satu Miettinen, focuses on the ways in which participatory serviced design (PSD) can facilitate transformation (Irwin et al., 2015) and transition processes to create solutions, have an impact and promote social change. Service design approaches enable participation, both digital and face to face, and thus address inclusion, community penetration and barriers to engagement with arts and culture (Eça et al., 2016). PSD manifests itself as a collaborative activity (Sanders & Stappers, 2008) whereby power relations are carefully considered (Ehn, 2017), and the designer’s role is facilitative (Howard & Melles, 2011). Design for social innovation can be seen as a community-driven process of change emerging from the creative re-combination of existing assets and a bottom-up approach (Manzini, 2015). Armstrong et al. (2014) argue that social design highlights the concepts and activities enacted within participatory approaches to research and creates new transitional approaches. Service design adds value to systems and processes, while social design seeks to question and improve social conditions (Bailey, 2012). PSD practices with communities can be related to fostering social cohesion, participatory and democracy goals, increasing trust and accountability of services and creating sustainable social innovation. This section of the book integrates arts-based methods into service design by connecting art and design through fruitful collaboration, instead of creating artificial divisions between them.

The section starts with an exploration of two metaphors through which world views on designing can be understood. In Chapter 6, Yoko Akama posits that by thinking through the metaphor of islands, dominant design can shift to ‘archipelagos of design’ that embrace a ‘plurality of ontologies’, thus enabling reimagination and connectedness to places and location. In Chapter 7, Mariluz Soto, Katherine Mollenhauer, Satu Miettinen and Melanie Sarantou discuss the important role of communication in service design. The chapter sheds light on the process, its initiation and its efforts to decolonise a design process in a project related to creation of a community

in the context of a postgraduate design programme in Chile in which students, graduates and professors were the co-creators. In Chapter 8, Caoimhe Isha Beaulé, Solen Roth, Anne Marchand and Karine Awashish describe how the relational dimension of participatory design can be developed through creativity-based methods. They demonstrate that using a creativity-based approach—one that draws on arts, crafts and design—throughout the collaborative process can be one step towards building more respectful, reciprocal and relational collaboration with communities. In Chapter 9, Maija Rautiainen, Michelle Van Wyk and Satu Miettinen explore the themes of participatory arts, service design and grassroots development in communities. The chapter illustrates how arts-based methodologies can be utilised for local empowerment, stakeholder dialogue and discussing local democracy. In particular, it shows how arts-based methods enable inclusion and multivocality in service development.

The third section, edited by Melanie Sarantou, explores collaborative development and participatory arts methods and practices that generate creative energies that have the ability to re-humanise (Bishop, 2006) research practices that are often fragmented and driven by hegemonic forces. The approaches that underpin a social turn to the arts are, to name a few, community based, socially engaged, collaborative and research based (Badham, 2010; Bishop, 2006). This social turn, however, has been criticised for its focus on a British and American art history and visual arts practice, as many societies peripheral to the West have not necessarily departed from art as social practice (Badham, 2013; Wyatt et al., 2013). The challenge posed by the social turn to the arts is that this view is specifically Western. Another way in which arts practices and methods can contribute to decolonising is through a place-based focus in the arts, which adopts a deep consideration of the ‘place ethic’ (Lippard, 1997), or the cultural value of place, by acknowledging that place is deeply rooted in cultural meanings and traditions, which are often rendered invisible or silent due to the hegemonic forces at play.

The section starts with Chapter 10 by Nithikul Nimkulrat, who reflects on the philosophical background of arts-based research and its application in literary, performative, visual and audio-visual arts. It describes the potential of arts-based methods for decolonising from the perspective of the author’s own scholarly expertise which intertwines research with textile practice through a focus on experiential knowledge in art and craft processes. In Chapter 11, Heidi Pietarinen and Eija Timonen introduce and discuss methods for multicultural artistic expression. They demonstrate how a project titled ‘Flying Ants and the Beauty of Ice’ enabled listening ‘around and beyond words’ and resulted in innovative embroidery art. The role of participatory arts is to ‘go beyond’ the obvious—for example, dominant narrative structures such as language—to (re)discover traditional making and transform this knowledge into innovative artworks. In Chapter 12, Nina Luostarinen and Kirsi MacKenzie describe their practice-based research project ‘Paint That Place with Light!’ and discuss the potential applications of the method of light painting in the context of arts-based placemaking projects and the decolonising of locations. In Chapter 13, Tuija Hautala-Hirvioja discusses John Savio’s art as a part of early Sámi decolonisation practices in the 1920s and 1930s by examining how he used his Sámi-themed woodcuts as a tool for decolonising. The author uses research materials such as Savio’s landscapes of Finnmark- and Sámi-themed woodcuts that belong to the collection of the Savio Museum in Kirkenes to illustrate how he embraced a stand against colonisation through the themes that he selected for his woodcutting.

Key Findings of the Book

As a summary of our key lessons from the case studies presented in this volume, we propose that the most important aspects of arts-based methods for decolonising participatory research are that they

- can be useful in designing research to support the perspectives and needs of communities in their place-based and cultural contexts;
- can help to base research on principles and practices of openness, respect, dialogue, reflection and collective problem-solving;
- can enable more horizontal relationships, foster pluralism and increase multivocality;
- can support in centralising and amplifying marginalised or devalued knowledges;
- can allow both the participants and researchers to think, learn engage and express differently;
- can foster mutual respect and empathy as well as critical awareness;
- often work to challenge elitism and centredness on expert knowledge;
- can enable access to, or creation of, alternative knowledges;
- can activate and strengthen links within communities and create new social practices;
- may involve the sharing of emotions—that is, learning to listen where other people are at;
- can help envision new ways in which to create connections, reciprocity and care;
- enable the researcher and participants collectively produce multiple and diverse forms of knowledge (e.g. written, visual, oral, embodied);
- allow the researcher and participants to reflect on what kind of knowledge is relevant for them; and
- challenge individualism and instrumentalism of conventional research practices by emphasising collective doing and co-creation of knowledge.

Most of these aspects are related to very practical activities taking place during the research process. Here, again, we draw on Smith (2012), who emphasises that the processes themselves are, in many projects, ‘far more important than the outcome’ as they ‘are expected to be respectful, to enable people, to heal and to educate’ (p. 130). She also underlines the role of art, imagination and creativity, as channelling collective creativity enables ‘people to rise above their own circumstances, to dream new visions and to hold on to old ones’—that is, it ‘fosters inventions and discoveries, facilitates simple improvements to people’s lives’ (p. 159). In other words, arts-based and creative methods, if used in the right way, can help create avenues for envisioning alternative futures and working towards social change.

However, it is important to underline that arts-based methods are not decolonising *as such*. There are many general limitations with regard to their use—some of which are more practical and some much broader. Arts-based methods are not suited for all kinds of research, they require a deep understanding of the specific context and participants, and usually only a relatively small number of people can participate. Using arts-based methods often necessitates building trust and may require long-term partnership and engagement. The researcher must self-critically reflect on her position and privileges; have an attitude of openness and flexibility; and place a strong emphasis on ethical considerations.

While it is often argued that all humans are creative, it is not easy for all to engage in creative processes: not every participant or researcher is comfortable with arts-based (especially embodied) practices, with high levels of proximity and intimacy. From the perspective of decolonising, the most crucial issue to understand is that using arts-based methods can create new kinds of hierarchies, power imbalances and ethical concerns; at worst, it can (re)colonise. As Smith (2012) stresses, ‘the potential to reproduce colonizing ideologies and colonizing perspectives is always present’ (p. 174). An idealised view of arts-based methods, or any form of participatory research, must be avoided for the simple reason that it is not possible to erase existing power relations and inequalities in any research.

In other words, using arts-based methods can potentially *but not automatically* contribute to the effort to decolonise participatory research. It is essential to know what one is decolonising from and ensure ethical, respectful and reciprocal engagement with the participants. Constant critical reflection is required—researchers must ‘continuously develop their understandings of ethics and community sensibilities, and critically examine their research practices’ (Smith, 2012, p. 205). One challenge is that decolonising is considered such a challenging and difficult endeavour that many shy away from it completely. While these efforts should take place in more systematic and ambitious ways, we believe that we have to start doing our own part in this collective task, by taking small steps, even if they are not always perfect; there will also be mistakes. As Smith (2012) puts it, ‘Research for social justice expands and improves the conditions for justice; it is an intellectual, cognitive and moral project, often fraught, never complete, but worthwhile’ (p. 215).

Many cases presented in this book are intentionally small-scale examples to demonstrate that arts-based methods can enable taking humble and small practical steps, while carrying with them some transformative potential that not all other methods necessarily have. At the same time, some of the cases show how difficult an endeavour decolonising really is; how imperfect and partial, and sometimes even controversial, many of the efforts to decolonise are. The process of editing this book also reminded us of the limits of academic publications in exploring the potential of arts-based methods for decolonising. For example, the language editing process of the texts illustrated our own obliviousness to certain internalised colonial practices, such as the preference for the use of standard English, which was justifiably criticised by some of our authors. Conventional writing and publishing practices sit deep and are not easy to challenge. In an attempt to move beyond established format and create alternative platforms, this book is accompanied by a website where the authors are invited and encouraged to provide the readers with more information about their projects and processes on their own terms and in multiple forms and languages. Each chapter has its own website that is accessible through an embedded link at the bottom of their title page.

In decolonising participatory research, using arts-based methods is only one approach amongst many. We need to continuously work hard to find new ways to rethink our encounters and our work ‘in a radically different way . . . to push more seriously for ways to make these encounters a mutual, two-way street affair’ (Rutazibwa, 2019, p. 174). Decolonising should not be about ‘making feel good’, but transforming and changing something radically; hence, it takes time and requires collective action and consistent work—practical, pedagogical and intellectual (Dey, 2020–present). Addressing broad structural aspects related to de/coloniality is beyond

the scope of this book, but we believe that researchers should not avoid taking part in difficult discussions and that, all in all, they should play a much more active role in a world characterised by deep inequality and injustice.

While the call for decolonisation through the arts has been advocated for the past 40 years (Wa Thiong'o, 1992/1981), the value and practical application of arts-based methods needs further concretisation. We hope that our effort to demonstrate some of their potential benefits for creating more horizontal and reciprocal practices in participatory research, while also discussing their limitations and challenges, provides some new insights that may encourage other researchers to reflect on these issues and continue to develop further the contributions of this book.

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