CORA Cork Open Research Archive
Cartlann Taighde Oscailte Chorcaí

Title	Migration, memory and place: Arts and walking as convivial methodologies in participatory research - A visual essay
Authors	O'Neill, Maggie;Giaquinto, Bea;Hasedžic, Fahira
Publication date	2019
Original Citation	O'Neill, M., Giaquinto, B. and Hasedžic, F. (2019) 'Migration, memory and place: Arts and walking as convivial methodologies in participatory research - A visual essay', in Berg, M. L. and Nowicka, M. (eds) Studying Diversity, Migration and Urban Multiculture - Convivial Tools for Research and Practice, London: UCL Press, pp. 96-119.
Type of publication	Book chapter
Link to publisher's version	https://doi.org/10.14324/111.9781787354784
Rights	© 2019, the Authors. This work is published under a Creative Commons 4.0 International licence (CC BY 4.0). This licence allows you to share, copy, distribute and transmit the work; to adapt the work and to make commercial use of the work providing attribution is made to the authors (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work). - https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/
Download date	2026-11-06 09:29:40
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/11985

UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

6

Migration, memory and place: Arts and walking as convivial methodologies in participatory research – A visual essay

Maggie O'Neill, Bea Giaquinto[1] and Fahira Hasedžić

Beginnings

Writing this chapter created the opportunity to introduce and discuss a walk,[2] undertaken by all three authors, which took us back to our first participatory arts research collaborations twenty years earlier. In this chapter, we define our participatory arts approach to research as convivial by discussing two projects that we conducted twenty years apart, their underpinning principles, and the analytic possibilities of our convivial research. Through the lens of the second project, a walking biographical interview ('walking with'), we argue that walking opens an embodied, convivial and kinaesthetic space for dialogue and understanding, challenging sexual and social inequalities; indeed, opens the possibilities for a radical democratic imaginary. A convivial sensibility is not just about cognition, affect and the relational offered by the arts as we experienced in the first project, but about the body too.

Our engagement with convivial research and convivial collaborations began in 1997 with a desire to conduct participatory research with the newly arrived Bosnian community in Nottingham. Maggie (a sociologist working at the intersections of the arts and collaborative social research that she describes as 'ethno-mimesis') set out to connect with the Bosnian community in order to share their stories of exile, displacement,

arrival, settlement and belonging. She was introduced to Fahira, who was then the secretary of the newly formed Bosnia-Herzegovina Association. Fahira invited Maggie to attend the association meetings with the whole community to discuss her ideas about the research. At this point, Maggie was introduced to Bea, who was the manager of City Arts in Nottingham and interested in collaborating.

All three of us held a commitment to the transformative role of the arts in social life, to the importance of stories and storytelling for sharing lived experience and for challenging the myths and stereotypes that were impacting on the Bosnian community; they were experiencing racism and incivilities. We agree that art is a feeling form, and that the relationship between art and society is mediated by the 'sensuous knowing, the playfulness and creativity of the artist and the historically given techniques and means of production' (O'Neill 2008, n.p.). Art forms are also constitutive; they bring something new into being, and can make experiences, hopes and ideas visible. As we shall see later in this chapter, art also provides a reflective space that contributes to knowledge and understanding. We all felt it was important to value and recognise the expertise, experience and knowledge in the newly arrived Bosnian community by conducting research in partnership with them. The Bosnian community wanted to share their stories with the wider community so that they might understand why they had been forced to flee and why they were now living in the East Midlands.

Our collaborative participatory action and arts research included work with three commissioned artists and a female translator (O'Neill and Tobolewska 2002). The regional arts council supported refugees and asylum seekers in developing arts infrastructures and policy, organising a conference and funding a post in a regional support organisation. The research also fed into other policy and practice discussions in the East Midlands region, and allowed for developing follow-up projects.[3]

Twenty years after our first meeting, we met in September 2017, to take a walk together as part of Maggie's Leverhulme Research Fellowship on borders, risk and belonging. The fellowship consolidated a long history of using walking and participatory methods for doing social research with artists and communities on asylum, migration and marginalisation. It offered a great opportunity to reconnect with Fahira and Bea and the earlier project that had focused upon global refugees, exile and belonging.

Maggie, Bea and Fahira had kept in touch via Facebook and sent Christmas cards and birthday greetings to each other. Maggie sent an invite to Bea and Fahira, asking them if they would like to get together

and walk with her, telling them a little about the project. Both accepted her invitation. Despite the intervening years, the attunement with each other and the fondness we held for each other remained. Both O'Connor (1992) and Spencer and Pahl (2006) discuss the importance of friendships in women's lives, the bonds of friendship, and the sociological and political significance of these, what Spencer and Pahl (2006, 2) call 'personal communities'. For us, our relationships were forged within an arts/research project that involved: connection and understanding, marked by attentive listening to life stories; empathy (we were all women and mothers, and shared something of each other's stories in the process of working together); trust, a basic element in friendships and 'personal communities'; and mutual recognition, marked by social class, gender and being mothers. Bea and Maggie connected at a very personal level with Fahira's story of loss and displacement (as mothers), of sending her children away to protect them, not knowing where they would end up, but hoping for the best. This is also because of a shared empathic connection with each other and a growing sense of friendship (see Cotterill 1992). As Holland (2007) identifies, emotions are important in the production of knowledge, and are a powerful (and often unacknowledged) part of our understanding, analysis, interpretation and indeed motivation for doing research.

Research methods

Les Back describes in his blog[4] how he would do his earlier research differently twenty years on. He would develop a deeper sense of ongoing dialogue, 'not just a live sociology, but a more sociable one … where the voices and understandings of participants can appear alongside the ethnographer's interpretation' (Back 2016, n.p.). He goes on to say that 'culture here would be written within but also beyond words'. Indeed, using images, photography and music, the ethnographic practice could make 'residents into observers of their own lives'. Back (2016, n.p.) also describes, using the words of George Shire, that what he has aspired to in his work is 'listening to understand not just to respond', and that this style of thought involves a 'politics of kindness'.[5] We agree with Back's point, and would add that the material, corporeal, embodied experience of collaborating and being together was also important to our sociable, convivial encounters and relationship. To some extent, our early research achieved a sociable, live sociology that was also absolutely an embodied experience, and the opportunity to reflect upon the research through the lens and concept of conviviality is very welcome.

What do we understand by conviviality? Illich's (2001) definition of a convivial society is one where people are not slaves to tools, technology or oppressive governance systems, and where creativity and imagination are the lifeblood of society. Focusing his critique on the deadening of the imagination through a focus on productivity, acceleration, and the engineering of satisfaction and consent as a threat to society, he offers tools for a convivial society, based upon what we would define as a commitment to participatory, relational methods and the relational goods of research. For us, convivial research highlights interdependence, the relational, embodied, sensory and affective aspects of research, and is about creativity and the imagination (see also both Nowicka and Phoenix in this volume). The relational, active listening and convivial tools that we place at the centre of our research are, for us, always participatory.

In her book on Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, Anna Marie Smith (1998, 147) outlines a radical democratic pluralist future, and that the process of reaching such a future includes 'participatory mechanisms through which rigid and antagonistic subject positions might be transformed by their democratic interaction with other subject positions'. Taking up this concept of a radical democratic imaginary as the need to open and keep open spaces for dialogue, and to enable us to 'work through the past' (Adorno 2005, 89), is central to our understanding and use of 'convivial'.

Arts-based methods

Building on a long history of conducting research in partnership with artists and communities, we argue that there is a need to develop alternative forms of re-presenting or re-signifying – that is to say, 'constructed through signifying, i.e., meaning-producing-practices' (Hall 1997: 28). This is linked to Fanon's (2008) call for dignity, equality and equity in re-signifying the self. Analysing the lived experiences of refugees and asylum seekers living in the UK, and developing renewed methodologies that incorporate their voices and images through participatory scholarly/civic research, can serve to enlighten and raise our awareness of those situated in the tension that is the asylum–migration–community nexus (see also O'Neill and Tobolewska 2002 and O'Neill 2010). It is vital that people who are usually the 'subject' of research are able to speak for themselves as subjects of their own narratives. This also has the potential to produce critical, reflexive texts that may help to mobilise social change, and the potential to impact on policy.

Drawing upon Adorno and Benjamin, we suggest that the dialectic of art and society is constituted by the tension between mimesis and constructive rationality. The mimetic (playful not imitative) quality of art is expressed well by Salverson (2001, 123), who suggests that when we talk about the mimetic in art this is not necessarily about holding a mirror to reality but rather about 'an ethical approach to suffering, mimesis … may instead reach toward and engage "them" (the names, the people, the embodied event)'. In this way, mimesis can 'depict something of reality's alienating character' (Heynen 1999, 175). Hence, through the mimetic moment of cognition, we can develop a critical perspective that might include empathy as sensuous knowing.

Participatory research

Our collaborative research is underpinned by the principles of participatory action research (PAR) that include: participation, inclusion, valuing all voices, and developing sustainable, action-oriented interventions (O'Neill and Webster 2005). We firmly agree that critical and cultural analysis using participatory methods could help us to access richer understandings of the complexities of migration, especially forced migration, develop knowledge that challenges exclusionary discourses and practices, and connect researchers to more relational ways of doing research and promoting social justice.

Further, we should not only seek to understand our social worlds but also seek to change them. Therefore, we argue for the vital importance of processes and practices of inclusion in our theory, research, and social policy with refugees and asylum seekers, as well as in collaborating with artists to conduct research (O'Neill and Tobolewska 2002). Orlando Fals Borda (1996) describes PAR as a transformative methodology linked to social justice, and describes two core orientations of PAR. The first is *Vivencia* or *Erfahrung* (life experience gained through immersion in fieldwork with local communities). This involves identifying without giving oneself over or projecting oneself into the other. The second is *commitment* to change processes and their actors. He describes the existential concept of experience (*Erlebnis*) following Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset:

> Through experiencing something, we intuitively apprehend its essence, we feel, enjoy and understand it as a reality, and we thereby place our being in a wider, more fulfilling context. In PAR, such an experience, called *vivencia* in Spanish, is complemented by another

> idea: that of authentic commitment resulting from historical materialism and classical Marxism (Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach: 'Philosophers should not be content with just explaining the world, but should try to transform it').
>
> (Fals Borda 1996, 87–8)

This approach gives rise to a subject–subject approach to documenting lived experience and generating understanding and knowledge as convivial. It takes us beyond the classical 'participant observer role' (subject–object) in fieldwork and can facilitate a 'critical recovery of history' (Fals Borda 1996, 81) that fosters mutual recognition, trust and responsibility. It also enriches the life experiences and skills of the researcher. Moreover, respect for communicating such knowledge is written into the processes and practices of PAR as a convivial method, so that meanings are understood by all involved.

Fals Borda (1996) talks of four key aspects or skills that are part of PAR's contribution to social research methodology: 1) an emphasis on collectivities; 2) critical recovery of history based upon use of personal, folk and archival materials; 3) devolving knowledge in understandable and meaningful ways; and 4) the production of 'symmetrical communication', indeed 'symmetrical reciprocity', which reinforces the need for dialogue and interpretation, and can lead to conscientisation. In a nutshell, PAR as a relational, convivial method can empower, be inclusive, mobilise and transform. PAR is, however, not a panacea; there are challenges, and ethical considerations must be at the centre (Banks et al. 2013).

Participatory arts

Combining community and participatory or socially engaged art forms in the research process involves working with 'feeling forms' (Witkin 1974), such as art, life-story narratives, film and dance, to re-tell and re-present the multiple stories generated through interpretative ethnographic research. Representing social research and lived experience in art forms (using photography, poetry, film or creative writing) can help audiences access a richer understanding of the complexity of lived experiences. Mark Webster (1997) defines participatory arts (PA) as a set of techniques and practices that help to make visible people's experiences and ideas for change. He argues that communities should be involved directly in making art, individually or as co-creators, not as the audience or recipients. PA is reflective and transformative, and emphasises

problem solving. It focuses on process and production, and is linked to community arts, a strong movement in the UK underpinned by democratic values that seek to challenge inequalities and support participation in art and art making. In our research, we have sought to challenge the myths and stereotypes of 'asylum seeker' and 'refugee'.

The challenges of conducting both PAR and PA are many. They need time: time to build relationships of trust, time to collaborate and dialogue, time to get to know each other, to work collaboratively and to be cognisant of shifting power dynamics and different sensibilities and affective states. Working with different agencies can also be demanding, as can working with different cultures of work and perceived status differentials. Initially, Maggie was aware of how she was perceived by two of the artists as embodying the institution of 'the university' and had to work to gain their trust, so that they knew that she was not flying in and out to do research in a way that cast them as 'use value' and stepping-stones in building her career. Valuing the expertise of all partners and developing relationships of trust is important. Community artists often build up extensive expertise and experience over a long history in a community; this knowledge is considerable. Working together across the arts and social research brings skills of archiving and curating, and of conducting research in systematic and rigorous ways, with the creative processes and practice of artists skilled in working with communities. This collaborative work at the borders of arts and social research is an invaluable aspect of ethno-mimetic research.

Ethno-mimesis

Exploring the possibilities for research conducted at the borders of art and ethnography in order to explore ways of transgressing conventional ways of collecting, analysing and representing research data, O'Neill et al. (2002) developed what Maggie calls 'ethno-mimesis'. The concept of ethno-mimesis expresses the combination of ethnographic and arts practice in social research, and especially in participatory action research. Participatory research facilitates sensuous, embodied knowing, the playful, imaginative and performative qualities of knowing and understanding. Ethno-mimesis is a theoretical construct, as well as a process and a practice. It is ultimately rooted in principles of equality, democracy and freedom, and what Jessica Benjamin (1990) describes (drawing on Hegel, Kant and Adorno) as a dialectic of mutual recognition. The key concept used here to express the re-presentation of life stories in artistic form is 'mimesis'.

Following Adorno, 'mimesis' does not simply mean naive imitation, but rather feeling, sensuousness and spirit, the playfulness of our being in the world in critical tension with the 'out-there' sense of our being in the world. Taussig (1993, 68) understands 'mimesis as both the faculty of imitation and the deployment of that faculty in sensuous knowing'.

As performative praxis, ethno-mimesis seeks to speak in empathic ways with people, re-presented here through photographic and performative texts. As Nowicka (this volume) states, central to understandings of conviviality is the recognition that we engage with each other empathically. If we think about PAR as a way of doing conviviality in research, then PAR facilitates empathy through a relational orientation to the other, which elicits a convivial sensibility, an openness and attunement to the other's lived experience, without either projecting oneself into the other, or collapsing the 'I' and 'you' into a totalising 'we' (see also Phoenix in this volume). Moreover, the mediating role and constitutive nature of art means that it does not need to be merely representational or produce mimesis (as in mimicry) to communicate and share experience that challenges identity thinking and opens a 'potential space'.

Our participatory, ethno-mimetic approach to research seeks to develop a radical cultural imaginary that challenges exclusionary discourses and produces counter-hegemonic knowledge. This is a knowledge that engages with feelings and the relational in tension with the cognitive, rational, constructive aspects of our lives and social worlds. Ethno-mimesis is both a practice (a methodology) and a process aimed at illuminating inequalities and injustice through sociocultural research and analysis.

As a convivial process and practice, ethno-mimesis can serve to focus our attention on history and the unspeakable, the transgressive acts and everyday resistances, and the relational dimensions of shared experiences. It emphasises the democratic processes and possibilities for social justice, citizenship, rights and freedom. Listening (in an affective sense not just literally, and in and through the art forms) to the voices and experiences of the Bosnians arriving in the UK from UN/Red Cross camps in Croatia in the mid-1990s encourages us to engage with ethics, within a moral order and reasoning based on thinking, feeling and compassion. The importance of empathy, of relational connectedness, of working *with* people experiencing forced migration, not on or for them, cannot be overestimated. Such research may inspire praxis. Research on the asylum–migration–community nexus that uses narrative, biographical and participatory methods can contribute to convivial methods at the level of theory, experience and praxis, and in so doing contribute to

social justice. The worry is that during the twenty-first century, there will be an increase, not decrease, in war and crimes against human rights, and increased breakdown of law, justice and protection of peoples, hence the need to prioritise convivial and participatory methods in social research.

So, ethno-mimesis provides a theoretical organising construct that describes a convivial research process, as a relational 'feeling form'. Coming to understand in a reflexive and purposeful way, through ethno-mimetic processes, the relationship between lived experience, wider social and cultural structures, processes and practices, is constitutive of what we call a 'politics of feeling'. Of course, the materiality of everyday life, and indeed relationships between ideology, knowledge and power, need to be understood within the context of wider structures of signification, and legitimation and control (Giddens 1984).

Global refugees: Exile, displacement and belonging

The research undertaken from 1997 onwards combined participatory action research and participatory arts using ethnographic approaches made up of biographical interviews and arts-based workshops. In 1997, we worked with three artists in the East Midlands in order to represent experiences of exile, displacement and belonging of members of the Bosnian community. Two communities took part in the research: the newly arrived Bosnian community living in the East Midlands who were 'programme' refugees arriving from the same UN camp in Croatia, and an Afghan community living in London, made up of three waves of Afghan migration. The people involved were keen to represent themselves, raise awareness about their community with their neighbours and wider communities, and develop connections with other community groups to facilitate a sense of belonging. As one of the participants reflected at the time:

> We wanted to show how quickly things can change and how much we hope this will never happen to you. Everything changed so quickly. One morning my best friend said that her parents had told her she could not play with me anymore because I was Muslim. Soon afterwards, my Father arranged safe passage across the border and we ended up in a refugee camp in Croatia. We were then given a choice: Britain or America. My Mother chose Britain because it is closer to home.
>
> (V., quoted in O'Neill and Tobolewska 2002, 124)

The partnership included Nottingham City Arts, a community arts organisation, managed by Bea, and Exiled Writers Ink, a London-based support group for exiled artists, performers, film-makers and writers, managed by Jennifer Langer. Together with community co-researchers we conducted biographical interviews and the participants re-presented their life stories in artistic form with the support of artists and writers in creative arts/research workshops. Bea commissioned artists with experience of working on sensitive issues, and facilitated the participants representing their stories in artistic forms. The London-based group worked with Exiled Writers Ink to produce creative writing, poetry and short stories. We focus in this chapter solely on the ethno-mimetic research with the Bosnian community.

The image in Figure 6.1 emerged from Fahira's life-story interview, and was created first as an installation then digitally photographed and developed in Photoshop at the arts workshops based at City Arts. The narrative underneath the image, in English and Bosnian, tells that Fahira's neighbours held a meeting and decided to protect the three non-orthodox families in the block. Fahira and her family (husband, son and daughter) needed her neighbour's key for three years, and would hide in her neighbour's flat when soldiers were looking for Muslims. One



Figure 6.1 *Good Neighbour* installation by Fahira Hasedžić. Source: Karen Fraser

day she baked bread for her neighbour (having had supplies from the Red Cross) and took the bread to her neighbour's flat. A soldier was in her neighbour's flat asking for 'the Muslims' and her neighbour kept silent. The soldier asked Fahira, 'Who are you?' and she replied, 'You know who am I, I would not be here if I were Muslim.'

This example was created by Fahira and had a profound impact on Maggie and Bea, which stayed with them throughout the intervening years. The image and text tell of the possibility and actuality of a greater humanity than experienced by many during the war, through the protection and care offered by her neighbour. The image and text tell the story and offer thanks in the gifts to her neighbour – the good things denied during war and sanctions – bread, chocolate, lights, fruit; it is a hopeful image. A crucial point here is that in her experience of being 'protected' by her neighbours, Fahira's Muslim identity was acknowledged, and she was able to hold on to this. The artwork, produced by Fahira with the support of artist Karen Fraser, represents this experience, as well as the emotions involved, in the intersection of the image and the text. It is effectively a convivial integration of ethnography, life-story research and art. The impact on audiences when we exhibited the work was also considerable. People commented that they related on a personal level very strongly with this image and text, feeling that 'it could have been me'.

The artwork produced through the project was exhibited in galleries and community centres and reported on in the local press. It helped to challenge attitudes, myths and stereotypes about 'asylum seekers' and 'refugees'. At one exhibition in a community centre, a woman, clearly moved by the experience of seeing the work, said to us this 'could be us, my family, my grandchild'.

Walking borders

In October 2017, twenty years after the first PAR project, which brought us together, Maggie invited Fahira and Bea to meet and go for a walk as part of her Leverhulme Research Fellowship[6] that builds upon and focuses upon the usefulness of walking as a biographical research method. Taking a walk with someone is a powerful way of communicating about experiences; one can become 'attuned' to another, and connect in a lived embodied way with the feelings and corporeality of another. Walking with another opens up a space for dialogue where embodied knowledge, experience and memories can be shared (see O'Neill and Hubbard 2010).

When thinking about who she would like to walk with, Maggie reflected upon the participatory research they had conducted together, the importance of this research to her, the bonds they had shared, and the passing of time. The three of us met at Fahira's flat and shared our stories of the intervening years. It was as though the intervening years melted away. We hugged, and fell into conversation about our respective families and the changes the years had brought. Fahira made Bosnian coffee once again. She had already thought about the walk she would lead us on and had drawn a route. It was a walk she liked to take her grandchildren on and led to Nottingham Castle. This is the visual story of our walk accompanied by Fahira's text.

> I would like to go to Nottingham Castle, it is Robin Hood's Castle, I don't know why. When I came in England a long time ago it was 20, nearly 21 years ago, when I came here, I was surprised. The first time I came to Rugby, and then I moved to Nottingham. It was a surprise for me because I heard, when I was child, I heard a lot of things about Robin Hood and it was amazing for me to see exactly what is it, and they told me, 'oh, it is in Nottingham, it is Nottingham Castle'. It was my first impression to see how it was and the history about Robin Hood, about everything what's happened. It was amazing for me because I like to go, and I still like to go there because it reminds me when I came and how it was a surprise for me, and it was lovely to see everything about its history.

We talked together about what Nottingham Castle meant to each of us. Bea and Maggie used to take their children there, and Fahira now takes her grandchildren. We talked about what connected us back in the mid-1990s. Fahira said:

> You were both working with us, as well with the Bosnian Association. It was amazing, it was so nice, it was very helpful, very, very, we never forget you, both of you, we never forget you. Sometimes we talk, and when you sent a card for me, I said to all my friends 'Oh, Maggie sent card'. Oh, that is so nice; they are happy because it was really good, very, very helpful. When you are lonely, when you haven't got anybody, when you don't know nothing about system how it works, how it is, any help is amazing for you, yes.



Figure 6.2 Nottingham Trent University. Source: Bea Giaquinto

We head out for the walk. Fahira said:

> This is Trent University [see Figure 6.2], it reminds me every time when I pass here about when I came here for the first time. When I came in Nottingham I was lost and couldn't find my way back to my house, my flat; because all streets looked the same to me. I didn't know what can I do but then I saw this building, because it is amazing and it's an unusual building. I said, 'Look at that, oh I know where I am, and I know my street is opposite this building'. And I saw from here where my flat is located. It was funny.

Maggie replied:

> When I used to come to your flat, I would drive up that street there and then turn left, but unfortunately you can't do that anymore. But you know, when I interviewed Enisa all those years ago, she was telling me that her and her son went out for a walk from their flat and they were looking for Nottingham, they were looking for the city centre and they walked and walked and they couldn't find it and so then they came back to their place and it was only a short time later that they realised how close they were to the city centre before they turned back.

This story by Enisa, told in her life-story interview, was a formative point in Maggie's turn to walking-based methods. Walking is a convivial form

of finding your way, which elicits a sensory, embodied connection and attunement with the environment, as well as with co-walkers.

Fahira said:

> Yes, true but it happened to me again. I was out in the night-time, at night-time everything changes, everything looks different. I was in the city centre, and I was standing looking and thinking, 'it's not my town' [laughs]. It was horrible! I said, 'where am I now, look at that'. In the dark, I was walking round, thinking 'what I can do now?' I really didn't know where I am, it was one of the first impressions for me, but I never forget it. I walked and walked round, and again I found this building again. Yes! It's funny, it's funny.

Bea replied:

> Yes, so this building was also how you found your way in the dark as well.

Fahira:

> Yes, because it was, yes [laughs]. When I was walking again, I said, what I am doing but I didn't know how to ask anybody where is this building, I knew it is called Trent University but I couldn't ask, I didn't know English then, 'oh my God, what I can do?' It was horrible. When I find it, 'oh again I know where I am'.

This story was also formative for Bea in her practice as an artist and arts manager, as she goes on to describe:

> You'll be very glad to know that I remember you telling me that. So, when I was working in the Education Department and when I was running the Refugee Forum, every time I met a new person, I would go on Street Map and find a building that they recognised, and I put that on a map for them with their house at the other end. So that they could carry around a laminated map. That was influenced by you saying you need landmarks.

Fahira:

> But for me always, always when I was in town I stand and watch and look all round. I came from this building with the two windows and

so I have to go straight up [laughs] in order to remember, because it is important, you know, Nottingham is quite big if you are lost.

Maggie:

It is, and walking is so important isn't it? Because when you walk, you get a mental map and the places become familiar.

Fahira:

Yes, but it is more difficult if you don't know the language. If you can ask, now it's no problem for me because I can go anywhere in England, I travel a lot but when you first come you don't know nothing and it was funny, the first time I wanted to go to a shop, Wilkinson's, as I needed a sewing machine needle. It was horrible [laughs] and my son, he knew much more as he was in college and he told me, 'Mam, you have to learn, you have to learn, I am not here non-stop, you have to learn'. I was in Clarendon College to learn, but at the beginning I didn't know nothing, and so I took my dictionary, I wrote down exactly how I would say in my language, it was funny. I can't remember exactly how I wrote it down, but I translated the words exactly … When I saw the cashier, I just put the piece of paper down, because I didn't know to ask, and she was reading it, she did not know, and she read again. She said something, but I don't know what, and she called manager and she took this paper to her. Then she was reading it and nothing, and, oh, she said, 'oh yes, sewing machine'. Yes, yes, and so she took my hands and she took me inside Wilkinson's and she said, 'is it this one'? Oh yes this is it, I was so happy, I was so happy, many things like that, oh dear. I never forgot this because it was the first time I went to shop by myself without any words.

The relational and embodied aspect ('she took my hands') of the communication, the connection and empathy the cashier shares with Fahira, through listening, touch and care/concern, is highlighted here by Fahira as being very important for her.

Stopping outside Nottingham Theatre Royal (see Figure 6.3), Fahira tells us:

This is my favourite building, I like it.



Figure 6.3 Nottingham Theatre Royal. Source: Bea Giaquinto

Maggie:

> Why is it your favourite building? I love it as well.

Fahira:

> I like theatre, I like theatre but usually I go to see my favourite, *Swan Lake, Swan Lake*. Yes, this is my favourite, it's lovely. Yes, I like the old-fashioned buildings, it's absolutely nice, it's very different.

Walking down King Street, we approach Market Square (see Figure 6.4), and memories return of being there together. Fahira likes the traditional buildings, and remembers dancing there with her folk group.

Fahira:

> Yes, we were dancing because it was Lord Mayor's Day in May, I think, 5th of May was Lord Mayor's Day. Did you see the picture?

Maggie:

> Yes, and after that, didn't we go to the Bosnian Community Centre for a party?



Figure 6.4 Nottingham Market Square. Source: Bea Giaquinto

Fahira:

> Yes, yes, yes.

At Nottingham Castle (see Figure 6.5), Fahira shares her memories of arriving in Nottingham and feeling connected to the castle:

> I really like this place, it reminds me about stories which I heard when I came here and about everything that's happened around here with Sheriff, with Robin Hood, and yes, I like the festival, the Robin Hood Festival and they do a lot of things, they have tent, they have fire, they have fighting in there on horses, it's so nice. Yes, it's lovely, it's nice for children as well, and it's so good. They are making food, traditional food.
>
> I like this castle and always when I am coming back from Birmingham or from Derby when the train is passing there, I always see my castle [laughs].

We walked past flower beds that we all remembered as having such striking displays, and Fahira remarked on the importance of walking and being outside:

> I like to walk, I like be out. If somebody took me prison, I would die [laughs]. To walk, to be out in the fresh air with friends, just to have coffee, to chat.



Figure 6.5 Castle mosaic. Source: Bea Giaquinto

We walked to the castle walls and looked over the city, remembering our past times here and how the vista had changed.

Fahira:

> I like the view in the round, I like this. Yes, you can see Nottingham on three sides.

Bea:

> This is where you can really see how Nottingham's changed over the last few years.

We looked at all the new housing, factory and office developments, and a new retail park, and all commented on the expanse of trees and green.

Fahira:

> It is the best place to come with friends [laughs]. I think in Nottingham, I like it.

Fahira said her grandchildren like it too. She pointed out People's College:

> My son, he started to learn there when he came, it was where he first went to learn English. He knew English, but it wasn't perfect,

but he knew a lot from the Bosnian schools. However, for university he needs some more, and he needs all the diplomas and everything, he had to pass first college and then university.

He came one year, one month before me. Yes, he was in Croatia in a refugee camp for one year and after that he came here, and he applied for us to be together because he was young. Yes, and when he left Bosnia, he was 16, and when he came here he applied for visa for us, his parents, to be together and after one month, we had it, and we came by Red Cross, British Red Cross from the UN, and they took us from Banja Luka to Croatia, from Croatia to England. Yes, it was good, it was very helpful for us.

I think we would die if we didn't leave. I think they would kill us. Every day it was like that, and my husband, he was really, really poorly and he was beaten a lot. I think they will kill us. We were lucky. I always said 'Thank you, England' [laughs] for everything what you have done for us. I can't forget it, for all people were very, very helpful, yes it was amazing.

Fahira goes on to say that when she goes to Bosnia she feels like a stranger:

Because everything has changed. You know I like my country, I like being there, but every year I go minimum once just to remember and to be there, but I feel sorry about everything that's happened.

Bea remarks that this must make her feel sad, and Fahira replies that it does indeed, and returns to talk about her memory of the war:

Yes, I am still very sad, I am still very sad. People, ordinary people, didn't like this war.

I hate war, because I know what is it, it is horrible. I respect all difference, but I hate what happened, because if you say you are different, because you are a different religion or something, it makes conflict, it makes people hate each other and the conflict, but always conflict, make wars, killing people and people dying, hating each other. They lose everything, everything, and most of all you can lose your family. For example, my family is everywhere around the world, my husband's family is everywhere, in Germany, in America, in Sweden, in Denmark, in Bosnia, in England; everywhere around world. We tried to be together, but no country wanted us all together. I don't know any family which are together.

> You know how I feel when I think about my mum, how I feel when I think about my daughter, my grandchildren, so it is something which is very close to my heart. You can't, you can't feel good. You need to keep your family close and don't let anybody do what they did to us. It's horrible. Any war, anywhere around world makes horrible things, nothing good. They made everything worse, they destroyed it completely, everything, everything, all country, the fabric, everything what we had, all lives and everything, it's horrible.

We talked about Tito and the 'brotherhood and unity' philosophy that Fahira remembers:

> You know, I think nobody will create what he did in the future because in Bosnia we had 29 different religions all mixed up, we lived normal, like brothers and sisters and good neighbours, good friends … . I never followed my children when they started to walk, I left them out, I never followed them, they were playing out a lot, and lots of children did, not just mine. They played together and we never had any accident with the children, we never had any problem with anybody round there, no attack, no, no nothing, nothing, and because we felt free, all people felt free, we had a good life. We didn't have any reason to make crime because we had a good life and those who wanted to work had a good choice, and then it stopped when he died, everything changed.
>
> We knew something will happen, and straightaway it started. In Bosnia, three different religions on three sides, and Orthodox in Bosnia, they had somebody who supported them, and they made genocide, big genocide. I think after Second World War it was the biggest one, and they killed, in seven days they killed eight thousand people.
>
> Most of them are Muslims, and most of them are men. It's horrible. You can't believe it. You can't understand it. I have to talk about this because if anyone starts something like that you have to stop them straightaway. I can't explain it. It's not possible, you had to be there, it is something, which one can't forget never, never, never, it's horrible.

We walked into the castle together, and Fahira showed us where she had had an exhibition of Bosnian dance costumes that she had made. We continued into another gallery and a large ram was on display, Private Derby, a regimental mascot. The invigilator was a retired soldier, and he opened a conversation with us and gave us a brief history of the uniforms on display

from the Napoleonic War at the end 1812, right through to the present day. We were polite and listened respectfully, but it was an uncomfortable coincidence that having just spoken about the Bosnian War and the impact upon the communities living in Bosnian-Herzegovina, we walked into an exhibition on the British Army, war and regimental mascots. We thanked him for sharing this information and talking with us. On leaving, we remarked on the coincidence of talking about war and walking straight into an exhibition on soldiers, their mascots and war throughout history. Fahira thought it might be interesting for students 'to learn about war, about what's happened, but for me it's not, it's something really sad'.

We moved into the next gallery and looked at the ceramics, Wedgwood pottery, the art gallery and fashion through time, our feelings a little lighter. We then headed to the cafe for lunch.

Walking back to Fahira's flat afterwards, we reflected back over the last twenty years, to the initial project. Our conversation reinforced for us the importance of participatory and arts-based research in providing important counter-voices of subjecthood amid narratives of deeply painful experiences, as well as documenting the migration journeys and the resilience and courage of the people involved. The research we conducted twenty years ago, and the walk we undertook together, enabled the foregrounding of feelings, meanings and experiences, and reinforced the way that creative, cultural, participatory and arts-based research is inherently convivial.

Walking enabled us to connect with and attune to each other in kinaesthetic, embodied and convivial ways. Walking opens a dialogue and space where embodied knowledge, experience and memories can be shared. Walking focuses attention on the sensory dimensions of lived experience, and the relationship between the visual and other senses. The walk described in this chapter enabled 'a series of relationalities and dialogues between walkers' (O'Neill and Hubbard 2010, 50). When we walk side by side with another, following the routes of others, it can bring the experience and feelings of the other into visibility and recognition in a feeling way and enable what Roy (2016: 207–8) calls 'caring encounters'.

Conclusion

Participatory action research, participatory arts and walking as ethno-mimesis are convivial because they are reflective (providing opportunities for people to think through issues and make visible their

concerns, experiences, hopes); they open a space for dialogue that is relational; they can produce change at any and every point of the process; they can be transformative *with* the participants not *on* or *for* them; and they can challenge stereotypes. In relation to partnership working, it is constitutive and can bring something new into the world, including new knowledge and understanding, as in the image *Good Neighbour* created by Fahira to thank her neighbours for their protection (see Figure 6.1). We discovered, working together in the late 1990s, and again in 2017, that working together to develop analysis and collective responses and outcomes, in and through participatory and convivial methods, enables people to have a stake in their community/society, fostering inclusion and belonging. At the very least, PAR/PA as ethno-mimesis can help highlight, reinforce and support skills and capacity development. It uses a range of research methods as appropriate – mixed or multiple methods, including arts-based methods. Both the arts/research workshops and life-story interviews in the first project and the dialogic space created through the walk enabled a relational, reflective, safe space for embodied connection, dialogue, listening and understanding. It was a privilege to spend time together, to reflect on the first project and the intervening years. Taking the walk together, as well as writing about it, reinforced the importance of convivial methods and convivial tools for social research, in the spirit of Les Back's (2016) 'politics of kindness'. By this, we mean appreciation for each other and for the process of ethnographic and participatory research, the time it takes to truly engage in affective listening and in working together to create change. We would like to return to Back's (2016, n.p.) retrospective reflections on his own ethnographic practice mentioned in the opening to our chapter, and his vision for the future of ethnography: 'I am imagining an augmented ethnographic practice that would allow and facilitate a greater openness of representational space where the voices and understandings of participants can appear alongside the ethnographer's interpretations.'

For us, this is what our process and practice involved. Together, participatory action and arts-based research as ethno-mimesis opened a convivial space for dialogue and embodied understanding, a radical democratic imaginary and psychosocial mattering (to be of importance to count, see Schultheiss et al. 2011). Working and walking together, we sought to produce knowledge to support social change, to challenge social inequalities and promote social justice. As Fahira states, she is committed to sharing what happened in her country 'so that it is not forgotten and that same thing never happens anywhere and to anyone again' (Hasedžić 2016, 48). Our research *with* each other constitutes a

being together in difference – the differences of where we live, our ages, stages of life, experiences, and social class differences too. However, ultimately for us, convivial research is both a deeply engaged and respectful approach to conducting research (that is, walking with – side by side) and has analytic power; it is potentially transformative.

Notes

1. Bea has reverted to her family name – Giaquinto. Previous research with Maggie was published under her then surname, Tobolewska.
2. Undertaken as part of Maggie O'Neill's Leverhulme Research Fellowship in 2017.
3. Subsequent research focused upon examining new arrivals' access to education and to employment, training and social enterprise. The arts-based outcomes provided very powerful messages. O'Neill led on the research grant applications, and the subsequent AHRC-funded work is documented in O'Neill (2010) *Asylum, Migration and Community*.
4. The blog was written by Les Back after the 'New Urban Multicultures: Conviviality and Racism' conference at Goldsmiths, University of London, in May 2016.
5. See Brownlie and Anderson (2017) on the importance of a sociology of kindness.
6. See: https://www.walkingborders.com.

References

Adorno, Theodor W. 2005. *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*. Trans. Henry W. Pickford. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Back, Les. 2016. 'The Politics of Kindness'. https://newurbanmulticultures.wordpress.com. Accessed 29 April 2019.

Banks, Sarah, Andrea Armstrong, Kathleen Carter, Helen Graham, Peter Hayward, Alex Henry, Tessa Holland, Claire Holmes, Amelia Lee, Ann McNulty, Niamh Moore, Nigel Nayling, Ann Stokoe and Aileen Strachan. 2013. 'Everyday Ethics in Community-Based Participatory Research', *Contemporary Social Science* 8 (3): 263–77. doi:10.1080/21582041.2013.769618.

Benjamin, Jessica. 1990. *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism and the Problem of Domination*. London: Virago.

Brownlie, Julie and Simon Anderson. 2017. 'Thinking Sociologically About Kindness: Puncturing the Blasé in the Ordinary City', *Sociology* 51 (6): 1222–38. doi: 10.1177/0038038516661266.

Cotterill, Pamela. 1992. 'Interviewing Women: Issues of Friendship, Vulnerability, and Power', *Women's Studies International Forum* 15 (5–6): 593–606.

Fals Borda, Orlando. 1996. 'A North-South Convergence on the Quest for Meaning', *Qualitative Inquiry* 2 (1): 76–87. doi:10.1177/107780049600200111.

Fanon, Frantz. 2008. *Black Skin, White Masks*. London: Pluto.

Giddens, Anthony. 1984. *The Constitution of Society*. Cambridge: Polity.

Hall, Stuart. 1997. 'The Work of Representation'. In *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, edited by Stuart Hall, 13–74. London: Sage.

Hasedžić, Fahira. 2016. 'Fahira Hesedžić'. In *My True Story*. Derby: Bosnia & Herzegovina Community Association.

Heynen, Hilde. 1999. 'Mimesis, Dwelling and Architecture: Adorno's Relevance for a Feminist Theory of Architecture'. In *Adorno, Culture and Feminism*, edited by Maggie O'Neill, 174–90. London: Sage.

Holland, Janet. 2007. 'Emotions and Research', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 10 (3): 195–209. doi: 10.1080/13645570701541894.

Illich, Ivan. 2001 [1973]. *Tools for Conviviality*. London: Marion Boyars.

O'Connor, Pat. 1992. *Friendships between Women: A Critical Review*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
O'Neill, Maggie. 2008. 'Transnational Refugees: The Transformative Role of Art?', *Forum: Qualitative Social Research/Sozialforschung* 9 (2): Art. 59. doi:10.17169/fqs-9.2.403.
O'Neill, Maggie. 2010. *Asylum, Migration and Community*. Bristol: Policy Press.
O'Neill, Maggie, Sara Giddens, Patricia Breatnach, Carl Bagley, Darren Bourne and Tony Judge. 2002. 'Renewed Methodologies for Social Research: Ethno-Mimesis as Performative Praxis', *The Sociological Review* 50 (1): 69–88. doi:10.1111/1467-954X.00355.
O'Neill, Maggie and Phil Hubbard. 2010. 'Walking, Sensing, Belonging: Ethno-Mimesis as Performative Praxis', *Visual Studies* 25 (1): 46–58. doi:10.1080/14725861003606878.
O'Neill, Maggie and Bea Tobolewska. 2002. 'Global Refugees: Ethno-mimesis as Performative Praxis'. In *Divers(c)ities: Recoveries and Reclamations*, edited by Judith Rugg and Daniel Hinchcliffe, 141–55. Bristol: Intellect Books.
O'Neill, Maggie and Mark Webster. 2005. 'Creativity, Community and Change: Creative Approaches to Community Consultation'. In *The Social Animator: Role or Profession*, edited by Piotr Henzler and Bohdan Skrzypczak. Warsaw: Centrum Wspierania.
Roy, Alastair. 2016. 'Learning on the Move: Exploring Work with Vulnerable Young Men through the Lens of Movement', *Applied Mobilities* 1 (2): 207–18.
Salverson, Julie. 2001. 'Change on Whose Terms? Testimony and an Erotics of Injury', *Theater* 31 (3): 119–25. doi:10.1215/01610775-31-3-119.
Schultheiss, Donna E., Jane Watts, Ljaja Sterland and Maggie O'Neill. 2011. 'Career, Migration and the Life CV: A Relational Cultural Analysis'. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 78 (3): 334–41. doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2011.03.013.
Smith, Anna Marie. 1998. *Laclau and Mouffe: The Radical Democratic Imaginary*. London: Routledge.
Spencer, Liz and Ray Pahl. 2006. *Rethinking Friendship: Hidden Solidarities Today*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Taussig, Michael. 1993. *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses*. New York, NY: Routledge.
Webster, Mark. 1997. *Community Arts Workers: Finding Voices, Making Choices: Creativity for Social Change*. Nottingham: Educational Heretics Press.
Witkin, Robert W. 1974. *The Intelligence of Feeling*. London: Heinemann Educational Publishers.