

Participatory Theatre as a Social Research Method to Engage Marginalized Participants Online Learning Resource from PASAR project

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This presentation is based on our research project Participatory Action Research (PAR): Participatory Theatre and Walking Methods' Potential for Co-producing knowledge with Migrant families

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In this project we worked with 3 groups:

a) Migrant mothers b) girls from migrant families c) Black migrant mothers with No Recourse to Public Funds to look at how these methods

- generate research data,
- engage participants in dialogue with other social groups
- policy makers and practitioners in an integrated way from research, to dissemination.

We collaborated with Counterpoints Arts ,
Praxis, RENA ISI, The Runnymede Trust

For more resources see

<http://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar>

Participatory Performance Practice (Kaptani, 2005-2017)

- Playback Theatre, drawing on Jonathan Fox
- Forum Theatre, drawing on Augusto Boal
- Psychosocial exercises including:
 - Physical theatre exercises of everyday movements and interactions,
 - emotion based mapping of the participants' localities,
- 'Talking to the Policy Panel'



Participatory Theatre methods emphasise

dialogic, performative and embodied ways of knowing
(Kaptani & Yuval-Davis 2008)

- the exploration of research questions pertaining to lived experiences which are difficult to verbalize, such as experiences of discrimination, which may be conveyed through bodily postures and gazes.
(Erel/Reynolds/Kaptani,2017)



- Augusto Boal (1979) developed Forum Theatre as part of the Theatre of the Oppressed,
- based on principles of collective empowerment and emancipation by Paulo Freire, theorist and practitioner of the Pedagogy of the Oppressed.

Forum Theatre is useful:

- to reflect on the social construction of reality
- to Identify social structures which lead to oppressions
- to try out interventions for social action
- to validate participants' local, subjugated knowledge.

Challenges of using participatory theatre for social research

- Working across academia and participatory arts' different practices.
- In Forum Theatre it is important not to simplify analysis of power or oppression to interpersonal relationships or individualise social problems and their solution.
- Ensuring that participants are invited to give shape to the themes and issues they want to explore in order to avoid a hegemonic gaze which casts them only as having problems.

Participatory Theatre Methods

- contribute embodied, dialogic and affective knowledges to social research.
- hold the potential to articulate subjugated knowledges collectively
- through research dissemination can reach wider audiences.
- participants can co-produce knowledge about themselves and contribute to developing policy and practice about the issues affecting them.

For more information visit
www.ncrm.ac.uk

