

Territorial Development Series



Roots and Wings of Action Research for Territorial Development

Connecting local transformation and international collaborative learning

Edited by Miren Larrea

Roots and Wings of Action Research
for Territorial Development

Connecting local transformation and international
collaborative learning

Roots and Wings of Action Research for Territorial Development

Connecting local transformation and international
collaborative learning

Edited by
Miren Larrea

2020
Orkestra - Basque Institute of Competitiveness
Deusto Foundation

Territorial Development Series

Note for the reader

The contributions in this book have been written in English, Spanish and Portuguese and their contents synthesized also in Basque, Norwegian, German and French. By choosing to have an inclusive approach to all these languages we want to generate awareness on the fact that action research is conducted throughout the world in diverse cultural contexts and in multiple languages, although many of these languages disappear when action research enters the academic realm.

To go beyond the symbolism of this decision and make our work understandable for as many readers as possible, we will publish in 2021 a book that will mirror this one by sharing its contributions in English translated into Spanish and its contributions in Spanish translated into English.

Notas para los lectores

Las contribuciones compartidas en este libro han sido escritas en inglés, español y portugués y sus contenidos resumidos también en euskara, noruego, alemán y francés. Nuestra decisión de tener una aproximación inclusiva al uso de todos estos idiomas responde a nuestro deseo de generar conciencia de que la investigación acción a lo largo del mundo se hace en diversidad de contextos culturales y en múltiples idiomas y que muchos de estos idiomas desaparecen cuando la investigación acción llega al ámbito académico.

Más allá de la dimensión simbólica de esta decisión, queremos compartir nuestro trabajo con el mayor número de lectores posible y en 2021 publicaremos un libro que será un espejo de este y que presentará las contribuciones publicadas en inglés en este libro traducidas al español, y las contribuciones en español traducidas al inglés.

Cualquier forma de reproducción, distribución, comunicación pública o transformación de esta obra sólo puede ser realizada con la autorización de sus titulares, salvo excepción prevista por la ley. Diríjase a CEDRO (Centro Español de Derechos Reprográficos, www.cedro.org) si necesita fotocopiar o escanear algún fragmento de esta obra.

© Instituto Vasco de Competitividad - Fundación Deusto



Mundaiz 50, E-20012, Donostia-San Sebastián
Tel.: 943 297 327. Fax: 943 279 323
comunicacion@orquestra.deusto.es
www.orquestra.deusto.es

© Publicaciones de la Universidad de Deusto
Apartado 1 - E48080 Bilbao
Correo electrónico: publicaciones@deusto.es

ISBN: 978-84-1325-098-4

Chapter 10

Responsible Research Communication as an experimental approach to Third-Person Inquiry in ARTD

*Patricia Canto-Farachala*¹

Resumen

Comunicación de la Investigación Responsable como una aproximación experimental a la investigación acción en tercera persona en la IADT

La Investigación Acción para el Desarrollo Territorial (IADT) nace como investigación en segunda persona y ha explorado la investigación en primera persona. En este capítulo propongo un enfoque experimental para la investigación en tercera persona. Ésta trata de promover el cambio dentro de las organizaciones, regiones o sociedad en general. El enfoque que propongo vincula específicamente la investigación en segunda persona con la investigación en tercera persona a través de la difusión dialógica de los resultados académicos que resultan de los procesos en segunda persona.

La investigación en tercera persona y la IADT conectan a través del marco de Comunicación de la Investigación Responsable (CIR). La CIR, desarrollada dentro de IADT, propone un marco para comunicar los resultados de investigación que surgen de procesos de investigación en segunda persona de forma dialógica, con el fin de que estos sean accionables en otros contextos.

Este capítulo parte del planteamiento de que la CIR puede ayudar a crear espacios experimentales para desarrollar procesos en tercera persona en la IADT. Para explorar este argumento, analizo los elementos del marco de la CIR en la práctica. Ello permite identificar su relevancia para la investigación en tercera persona. Con dicho fin estudio el caso de un espacio virtual diseñado conforme al marco de la CIR para compartir un resultado académico específico: un libro. Al momento de escribir este capítulo, el espacio virtual había estado en línea durante casi dos años, lo que permitió explorar si la CIR puede ayudar a crear espacios experimentales para procesos de investigación en tercera persona en la IADT.

Como resultado del análisis surge un marco reformulado para experimentar con procesos de investigación en tercera persona. En el marco reformulado, *smart* (inteligente) es una

¹ Orkestra- Basque Institute of Competitiveness, University of Deusto.

característica central porque aborda directamente el desafío del alcance que afrontan los procesos en segunda persona. Además, esta característica tiene una dimensión facilitadora *ex ante* e *in situ* que debe combinarse para que los resultados académicos de procesos en segunda persona sean accionables en otros contextos.

Una futura línea de investigación que surge de este capítulo es demostrar cómo se crean las conexiones entre la investigación en primera, segunda y tercera persona en la IADT. Por lo tanto, este capítulo es una invitación a la comunidad que trabaja en el marco de la IADT a utilizar el marco propuesto y asumir el desafío de experimentar con procesos de investigación en tercera persona. También es una invitación a la comunidad de investigadoras en la acción para continuar reflexionando sobre el reto de escalar el potencial de la investigación acción para promover el cambio social de forma democrática.

Abstrakt

Responsible Research Communication als ein experimenteller Ansatz für Third-Person-Befragungen in ARTD

Aktionsforschung für Territoriale Entwicklung (ARTD) entstand als 2nd-Person-Aktionsforschung und hat die 1st-Person-Aktionsforschung später exploriert. In diesem Kapitel schlage ich einen experimentellen Ansatz zur Untersuchung von 3rd-Person-ARTD vor. Die 3rd-Person-Befragung versucht den Wandel innerhalb von Organisationen, Regionen oder der Gesellschaft im Allgemeinen zu befördern. Der in diesem Kapitel vorgeschlagene Ansatz verbindet insbesondere die 2nd-Person-Forschung mit der 3rd-Person-Forschung durch die dialogische Verbreitung akademischer Ergebnisse, die aus 2nd-Person-Prozessen resultieren.

Die Verbindung zwischen 3rd-Person-Forschung und ARTD findet sich im Responsible Research Communication (RRC) Rahmen. Der Rahmen entstand innerhalb der ARTD, um Forschende mit anderen Forschenden und Praktizierenden in Dialogen zu verbinden. Darin sollten sie Konzepte und Rahmen kommunizieren, die aus ihrer 2nd-Person-Prozessen in Büchern oder akademischen Ergebnissen konzipiert wurden. Das Ziel ist es, diese Konzepte und Rahmenbedingungen auf andere Kontexte zu übertragen.

Ich argumentiere, dass das RRC-Framework dazu beitragen kann, experimentelle Räume für die Untersuchung durch 3rd-Person-Befragungen in ARTD zu schaffen. Um dieses Argument zu untersuchen, analysiere ich die Merkmale des RRC-Frameworks in der Praxis, um deren Relevanz für die Untersuchung durch 3rd-Person-Forschung zu ermitteln. Dies ist möglich, indem der Fall eines virtuellen Raums analysiert wird, der gemäß den Merkmalen des RRC-Frameworks entworfen wurde, um ein bestimmtes akademisches Ergebnis, nämlich ein Buch, gemeinsam zu nutzen. Zum Zeitpunkt des Schreibens war der virtuelle Raum seit fast zwei Jahren online. Die in diesem Zeitraum gewonnenen umfassenden Erkenntnisse haben dazu beigetragen, zu prüfen, ob RRC dazu beitragen kann, experimentelle Räume für die 3rd-Person-Forschung in ARTD zu schaffen.

Die Analyse führt zu einem neu formulierten Rahmen, um mit der 3rd-Person-Befragung von Dritten zu experimentieren. Im neu formulierten Framework ist «smart» (klug) ein zentrales Merkmal, da es die Herausforderung des Umfangs von 2nd-Person-Prozessen in ARTD direkt angeht. Darüber hinaus weist dieses Feature eine Ex-ante- und eine In-situ-Dimension auf, die kombiniert werden muss, um die Funktionsfähigkeit der Konzepte und Frameworks, die in anderen Kontexten geteilt werden, zu verbessern.

Zukünftige Forschungen müssen zeigen, wie Verbindungen zwischen 1st-, 2nd- und 3rd-Person-Forschung in ARTD hergestellt werden. Dieses Kapitel ist daher eine Einladung an die ARTD-Community, den vorgeschlagenen Rahmen zu nutzen und sich der Herausforderung zu stellen, mit 3rd-Person-Ermittlungsprozessen zu experimentieren. Es ist auch eine Einladung an die breite AR-Community, weiter darüber nachzudenken, wie das Potenzial der AR für einen größeren demokratischen sozialen Wandel erweitert werden kann.

Responsible Research Communication as an experimental approach to Third-Person Inquiry in ARTD

Introduction

Action Research for Territorial Development (ARTD) was born as second-person action research (Karlsen & Larrea, 2014), and has also explored first-person action research (Romano, 2019, Larrea, this volume). In this chapter I propose an experimental approach to third-person inquiry in ARTD. Third-person inquiry involves people who do not have face-to-face contact and may be geographically dispersed (Marshall, 2004). It tries to move beyond the group to reach a wider audience and promote change within organizations, regions or society more generally (Gustavsen, 2014). It has also been described as a fertile space in which others meet, often for the first time, to talk about things that really matter to them (Reason & McArdle, 2004). The approach that I propose in this Chapter specifically links second-person research with third-person research through the dialogical dissemination of academic outputs that result from second-person processes.

The connection between third-person research and ARTD is found in the Responsible Research Communication (RRC) framework (Canto-Farachala, 2019), conceptualized to facilitate connectivity. Karlsen & Larrea (2014) define connectivity in ARTD as a dialogical approach to transferability. It means that researchers may connect with other environments using the concepts, frameworks and cases developed in their second-person action research processes and enter a dialogue that enhances the workability of those concepts in new contexts. The authors acknowledge that in requiring the direct engagement of researchers, connectivity faces a challenge of scope and may only complement transferability.

RRC addresses connectivity's challenge of scope. It provides a framework to facilitate the dialogical transferability of research outputs in order to make new knowledge workable in other contexts. My argument is that RRC not only facilitates connectivity, it could also be an experimental form of third-person inquiry in ARTD. The goal of this Chapter is therefore to explore RRC as an experimental form of third-person inquiry in ARTD. Specifically, to answer the following research question: *What features of RRC are relevant for third-person inquiry in ARTD?*

In order to answer this research question, I analyze the case of a research output (a book) communicated dialogically, following the RRC framework. The dialogue that has been developing since 2017 between the authors of the book and other researchers and practitioners, provide rich insight that can help to identify the relevance of RRC for third person inquiry in ARTD.

In sum, in contrast to other approaches, that aim to expand AR's scope by connecting second-person processes (Gustavsen, 1996), so that learning can be taken from the project to the community (Marshall, 2004) or systemic level (Burns, 2014), I propose an experimental approach that connects second and third-person in ARTD through the dialogical communication of research outputs.

The chapter is structured as follows. In the first section I present the conceptual discussion that connects third-person inquiry and RRC. In the second section I describe the case and in the third section I discuss the case, drawing lessons that answer the research question.

Conceptual framework

Third-person inquiry in Action Research

Action research (AR) involves three different types of approaches to inquiry and change: first, second and third-person AR. Reason & McArdle (2004) describe those approaches as fol-

lows: (i) first-person inquiry refers to action researchers' own awareness on the effects on the outside world from their actions; (ii) second-person action research brings inquiry to face-to-face interaction in small groups on issues of mutual concern and (iii) third-person action research creates a wider community of inquiry involving persons who cannot be known to each other face-to-face. Third-person inquiry is a natural progression from inquiry in the first and second-person since, as people's understanding develops, they may want to influence a wider system (Marshall, 2004). In any case good action research will strive to stimulate inquiry at the three levels and create connections between them (Reason & McArdle, 2004) and integrate research and practice in ourselves, our teams and our organizations (Trullen & Torbert, 2016).

First and second-person AR are well established (Reason, 2001) and often seen as more directly connected because researchers involved in second-person processes need to also engage in self-reflective, first-person inquiry (Marshall, 2004). However, AR still needs to engage large systems into democratic inquiry (Reason, 2001) and extend its benefits beyond the local context (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Maguire, 2003), which calls for understanding the circumstances under which it can have broader effects (Greenwood, 2002). If this challenge of scale is not addressed, then AR is limited to making small differences in local situations despite its potential for addressing the wider social problems faced by humanity (Brydon-Miller *et al.*, 2003; Greenwood, 2002).

Reflecting on the attempts within AR to overcome the limits of local intervention, Greenwood (2003) refers to Paolo Freire's work during his term as a State Minister of Education in Brazil and to Björn Gustavsen's program on working life in Scandinavia as among the few attempts to approach larger structural problems through AR. Gustavsen's work (1992; 1996; 2003; 2014) is essentially about how to bring a larger number of workplaces and organizations into a change process based on democratic dialogue. He argues that AR should try to transcend the single case in favor of connected cases applying research resources in a distributive way to support the emergence of social movements (Gustavsen, 2003). Other authors argue (Reason, 2003) that this approach presents a wider vs. deeper dilemma, which may not be necessary if AR is understood as day-to-day collaborative inquiry by individuals, small groups, organizations, and society as a whole (Reason, 2003). Another recognized form of third-person inquiry is Participatory Action Research, which extends inquiry beyond the level of the group to the community (Marshall, 2004). Systems thinking and participatory action research combined, stand behind the proposal by Burns (2007; 2014) of emergent and flexible learning architectures able to involve many people in multiple parallel and interlocking inquiry processes.

Responsible Research Communication in ARTD

ARTD does not have a specific approach to third-person inquiry. Indeed, it is born as second-person action research, focused on how social researchers can act as change agents working at the micro level with other territorial actors. Indeed, Karlsen & Larrea (2014) show how changing communication patterns from linear to dialogical patterns through action research leads to change in territorial development. In my PhD dissertation I argue that changing communication patterns from linear to dialogical ones when communicating the systematized outputs of such research processes may also lead to change. The concept that captures this is Responsible Research Communication (RRC) (Canto-Farachala, 2019).

RRC is inspired in the concept of connectivity (Karlsen & Larrea, 2014). Connectivity refers to researchers' responsibility in the transferability of their research results. It suggests that researchers may extend that responsibility beyond publication and connect in a dialogue with other researchers and practitioners in order to enhance the workability of their new concepts and frameworks in new contexts. However, because it is dialogic, connectivity faces

a challenge of scope and can only complement transferability. RRC specifically addresses this challenge of scope thereby facilitating connectivity. It is defined as follows:

“A process that explores dialogue’s transformation potential in a mezzo space situated between the micro one, in which research outputs are communicated dialogically to a small number of participants in research projects, and the macro one, in which research outputs are distributed through printed and digital copies to a larger number of researchers and practitioners”. (Canto-Farachala, 2019, p. 197)

The mezzo space, which can be built following RRC’s six features (see Table 1) is larger than the micro space where dialogic face-to-face second-person AR processes take place, but smaller than the macro space in which only one-way communication is possible (i.e. distributing printed or digital copies of a book). While in this latter space dialogue, and its potential to transform is no longer present, in the mezzo space dialogue is still feasible. I argue that the mezzo space, is the space to experiment with third-person inquiry in ARTD.

Table 1. The six features of Responsible Research Communication

Change-oriented	A dialogical process is made of reflection and action that lead to change.
Smart	A smart dialogical process overcomes the time-consuming nature of real time face-to-face dialogue through its deferred and asynchronous features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Deferred means that researchers prepare their part of the dialogue beforehand: materials, questions and general answers to help all participants reflect on the new concepts and frameworks. — Asynchronous means that researchers answer comments or reflections after they have been posed by participants.
Facilitative	Dialogue among actors with different types of knowledge needs to be facilitative to reduce the barriers that may hamper understanding among them.
Inclusive	Through dialogue territorial actors become co-researchers and the conditions for conflict to emerge need to be facilitated.
Emergent	Dialogue is dynamic, ongoing and changing. It unfolds step by step and cannot be planned.
Collective	Keeping the dialogue alive is a collective responsibility that in turn depends on what is being made by dialogue collectively.

Source. Adapted from Canto-Farachala (2019).

This section presented the conceptual discussion that connects third-person inquiry in AR and RRC. The first part reviewed the discussion on third-person inquiry in the AR literature, which is mainly about the challenge of bringing AR from the small group to larger systems or beyond the local context. The second part presented RRC, an analytical framework that emerges from within ARTD to address the challenge of scope of connectivity. Connectivity calls for making new knowledge that emerges from AR processes, workable in other contexts. In addressing connectivity’s challenge of scope RRC, like third-person inquiry, is concerned with extending change beyond the group where AR processes develop. RRC could therefore be a form third-person inquiry in ARTD. The following sections present and discuss a case that can help to identify the relevance of RRC to third person inquiry in ARTD.

Description of the case

This section presents the case of a book that is being communicated following the RRC framework. It is a virtual mezzo space that has been hosting a written dialogue since October 2017, that is, for almost two years at the time of writing. It is available in open access in the following link: <https://dgroups.org/groups/perfadt>. It is divided into two parts. The first part introduces the case, explaining how the mezzo space was created. The second part analyses the mezzo space in practice specifically looking into RRC's different features and how they are relevant to third-person inquiry.

Introduction to the case

The mezzo space described in this section was created through an AR process that has been described elsewhere (Canto-Farachala, 2019; Canto-Farachala & Larrea, 2020). The mezzo space is presented as a case in this section from the lens of third-person inquiry. It therefore advances new knowledge on the case beyond what has already been published.

However, in order to make the case easier to understand for readers who are not familiar with the above, it is important to bear in mind a few facts. The AR process that created the virtual space involved two action researchers (Pablo Costamagna and Miren Larrea) who played the role of stakeholders or problem-owners. They had just finished the manuscript of their book *Facilitative Actors of Territorial Development* (Costamagna & Larrea, 2018) which conceptualizes on their second-person research and had not yet been published. They agreed to participate in an AR process that I facilitated when I was undertaking my PhD. The AR process had the objective of exploring a dialogical approach to communicating their book. Hereinafter I refer to Costamagna and Larrea as the authors of *the book*.

The AR process had an academic and a practical result. The academic result was the analytical framework on RRC described in the previous section. The practical result was a virtual space in which the authors of *the book* connect in a dialogue with other researchers and practitioners in order to make their concepts and frameworks workable in other contexts. To that aim, participants in the virtual space are faced with questions that help them to reflect on said concepts and frameworks from their own experiences and to share their reflections with the other participants. It therefore enables learning to be taken from the project to a wider audience (Gustavsen 2014) or community level (Marshall, 2004).

As mentioned earlier, the virtual space was made available online in October 2017. It is made of two distinct spaces: an interactive journey and a meeting space, called agora. Each of them hosts a different type of dialogue. The following descriptions of each space are adapted and expanded from Canto-Farachala, Costamagna, Eizagirre, & Larrea (2018).

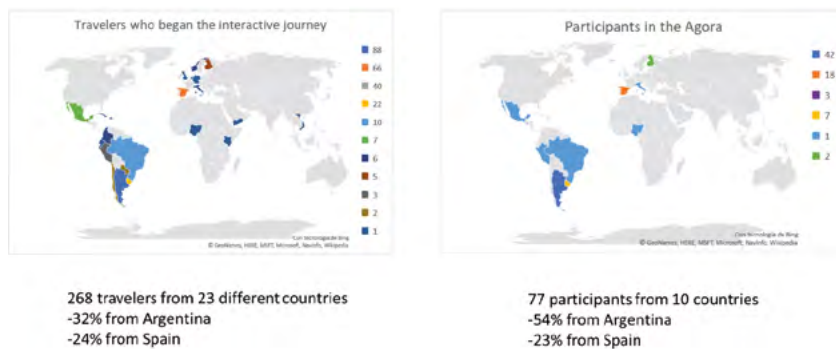
- a) The interactive journey is based on a *deferred dialogue*, the concept found to capture a type of dialogue that is feasible for the authors of *the book* and the researchers and practitioners with whom they connect with (hereinafter referred to as travelers). The journey guides travelers through a tour with different stops that match one or more chapters of *the book*. Each stop is stacked with materials that hold the voice of the authors: the original chapters of *the book*, summaries of the chapters for travelers with less time to read, and videos in which the authors explain and contextualize the concepts and frameworks of the different chapters. Through these materials the authors "speak" to travelers. Before heading to a different stop, travelers are asked to write down the answer to questions posed by the authors of *the book*. They do so in a space in which the answers written by the travelers who have passed before them

can also be read. The questions posed (2 in each stop) are designed to help travelers reflect on the concepts presented in that stop, connecting them to their own experience. Through their written answers they “speak back” to the authors of *the book*, thereby completing the loop of the deferred dialogue.

- b) The meeting space or agora is based on an *asynchronous dialogue*, the concept found to capture a dialogue that does not develop simultaneously but is emergent in the sense that any participant can pose new questions and discussion threads at any given moment with the expectation that a discussion will follow. The agora is therefore an emergent space with no material prepared beforehand. What participants have in common is having had completed the interactive journey before joining. Indeed, when travelers finish their journey, they are asked to answer a survey. One of the questions posed is if they would like to continue engaged in an ongoing discussion on the role of facilitative actors in territorial development. Those who agree, (hereinafter referred to as participants) are granted access to the agora. In the agora responsibility for keeping the dialogue alive is a collective responsibility.

As mentioned earlier, dialogue in the virtual space, both during the interactive journey and in the agora is written, so participants do not have face-to-face interaction. This does not mean that they don’t know each other. Many don’t, this being more the case in the interactive journey. Many of those who do know each other work together because they are part of the research teams of the authors of *the book*, who are based in Argentina and Spain. Both teams also interact in joint projects. As can be seen in Figure 2 the largest share of participants in both the interactive journey and in the agora come from both countries. Moreover, almost 80% of participants in the agora are based in Argentina and Spain.

Figure 1. A geographically dispersed virtual space



Source. Author’s own elaboration from <https://dgroups.org/groups/peradt>
 Note: Data retrieved in August 2019.

As explained in section 1, the virtual space was built following the features of the RRC framework. In the following section I examine each one of those features in practice in order to determine their relevance for third-person inquiry. My data sources are both from the virtual space and the survey that travelers are asked to complete at the end of the interactive journey. I have permission from participants to use the data for research purposes. I shared the manuscript of this Chapter with those whose data is reproduced to ensure they agree with how their quotes are presented.

RRC in practice

The RRC framework helps to build spaces (mezzo spaces) in which dialogue is present when communicating academic outputs from second-person processes. I argue that in so doing it brings inquiry from second-person to third-person processes through the dialogical communication of research outputs. In the case presented in this chapter the mezzo space is a virtual space built to communicate *the book*.

In what follows I analyze the virtual space by looking into how each one of the features of the RRC framework has played out in practice over the two-year period since it was made available online in order to determine their relevance for third-person inquiry.

CHANGE-ORIENTED

Dialogue, as conceived in ARTD, is made of reflection and action, inextricably linked to change. That is why RRC's first feature is "change-oriented". The authors of *the book* identified two change objectives: (i) to help participants to discover themselves as facilitative actors in territorial development and (ii) to continue writing *the book*. The first change objective is addressed in the interactive journey and the second one in the agora. While in the interactive journey, travelers are faced with fixed questions that relate to the contents of *the book*, in the agora, participants are free to share reflections and questions beyond the contents of the book, on their own role as facilitative actors of territorial development.

Data to determine if the change objective for the interactive journey has been met is found in the survey that travelers are asked to answer when they finish the journey. The survey is not compulsory. At the time of writing 67 out of a total of 268 travelers had answered the survey, that is 25 % of participants. One question asks travelers what they have learned. Out of the 67 answers at the time of writing 67 % said that they had learned new concepts to help them in their practice; 55 % that they had learned new ways of interacting with other actors and 44 % that they had learned a new name for a role they had already been performing².

Evidence of change was also found in the data from the discussion threads in the agora. A researcher shared having used the interactive journey in a second-person AR process that had the objective of helping a group of policymakers to develop their role as facilitative actors. The researcher facilitated the policymakers' journey and combined the journey with face-to-face workshops. In the words of the researcher:

"Using the journey with a group of policymakers [...] has led us to define new actions in our practice". Entry in the agora, June 3, 2019.

Regarding the objective set for the agora as to continue writing *the book*, participants have conceptualized new features for particular concepts of *the book*, like: "facilitation in the shadow", "pride in invisibility" and "negotiated invisibility" (Canto & Larrea, forthcoming).

Change-oriented is one of the most important features of the RRC framework and the one most relevant for third-person research. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, third-person action research aims to bring change beyond the small group to as broad a front as possible. Through RRC, learning processes from second-person research (i.e. *the book*) can connect with third-person inquiry to bring change beyond the small group in which second-person research took place.

² Participants can tick as many answers as they wish from several options offered, so the figures do not add up to 100.

SMART

The RRC framework helps to build mezzo spaces made up of a group of participants that is larger than the number of participants in micro, second-person processes but still smaller than the macro space that can be only be reached through linear forms of communication. The main characteristic of mezzo spaces is that dialogue—and its transformation potential—is still feasible.

The feature of the RRC framework directly involved with creating mezzo spaces is the “smart” feature. As described in Table 10.1, it addresses the time-consuming nature of real time face-to-face dialogue, making dialogue actionable beyond the small group. Smart is made of the two types of actionable dialogues described in the previous section: deferred and asynchronous.

Data on how each has developed in practice is found in the interactive journey, in the survey and in the discussion threads in the agora. At the time of writing a deferred dialogue had developed in the interactive journey between the authors of *the book* and 268 travelers from 23 different countries. Likewise, the asynchronous dialogue developing in the agora had hosted 24 discussion threads related to the frameworks and concepts of *the book*.

For some travelers the deferred dialogue limited their potential to interact with other travelers. This was expressed as follows by one of them:

“I think travelers should be encouraged to create new questions, to interact with other travelers”. Excerpt from a survey completed on January 11, 2018.

However, contradictory as it might seem, in the agora where participants are encouraged to pose their own questions and interact among them, participants sometimes found it difficult to engage. This is illustrated in the following quote:

“It is sometimes difficult to participate in the discussions because it takes me a while to reflect and when I finally think I have something to contribute, the discussion has evolved to something else...sometimes it is impossible to take half an hour off a week to sit down and elaborate a written answer”. Entry in the Agora, April 3, 20183.

The deferred dialogue that develops during the interactive journey and the asynchronous dialogue that develops in the agora, both of which conform RRC’s smart feature, may seem of a lesser quality than the face-to-face dialogues that develop in second-person processes. However, they are feasible dialogues when it comes to communicating research outputs, which is a part of the research cycle normally not funded in academia.

Those seemingly lesser quality but feasible dialogues are critical for third-person inquiry because they are the way to overcome the challenge of scope faced by dialogical processes. In the virtual space, the authors of *the book* have engaged dialogically with 268 travelers from 23 different countries. These numbers clearly overpass the small groups in which their face-to-face second-person processes took place.

FACILITATIVE

The facilitative feature in RRC calls for being aware that dialogue among researchers or practitioners with different types of knowledge is not automatic and needs to be facilitative in terms of reducing the barriers that may hamper understanding between them.

³ All quotes are my own translations from Spanish. When this is not the case it is noted.

In the virtual space data shows that travelers who did not have previous experience as facilitative actors had difficulty understanding the concepts. This was especially the case for masters' students who did not have previous experience and completed the journey on their own (without face-to-face interaction with their tutor) during class:

"I felt it difficult to answer some of the questions because of my lack of experience". Excerpt from a survey completed on February 15, 2018.

"The questions were targeted at professionals only, so that I as a masters' student was not able to answer them". Excerpt from a survey completed on February 15, 2018.

This contrasts with answers from another set of students who completed the journey sharing the process in face-to-face sessions with their tutors and fellow students in class:

"Thank you for this tool that facilitates learning both for people with more experience and for students who are new to the field". Excerpt from a survey completed on October 10, 2018.

Second-person processes are context-based. Therefore, as Karlsen and Larrea (2014) suggest, when looking to enhance the workability of their results in different contexts dialogue is important. As I argued in the previous section, RRC's smart feature makes dialogue actionable when communicating research outputs in an academic environment in which there are normally no resources available for communicating research results, let alone dialogically.

However, because smart dialogues are not face-to-face dialogues, they need a careful design that can make understanding easier among people from different backgrounds, disciplines, cultures etc. An extra effort is needed in terms of language, visual design and other tools. This is illustrated in the entries above that show what happened when a facilitator was present (the master's students tutor) during the interactive journey and when a facilitator was not present.

Facilitative therefore means that deferred dialogues need to be facilitated *ex-ante*. This is done through the careful design and planning of the mezzo space. However, analyzing this in practice shows that while *ex-ante* facilitation was enough for experienced travelers, complementary face-to-face facilitation was required by non-experienced travelers, such as masters' students.

This reflection is relevant for third-person inquiry because while *ex-ante* facilitation is inextricably linked to deferred dialogues, sometimes complementary *in situ* facilitation may be necessary, depending on the profiles of the participating researchers and practitioners.

INCLUSIVE

In RRC inclusion means that through dialogue territorial actors become co-researchers and new knowledge is co-generated. However, cogeneration requires handling conflicting perspectives on the issues discussed and handling conflict requires *in-situ*, not *ex-ante* facilitation. *In-situ* facilitation requires time and resources that are rarely available when communicating research outputs and would run contrary to the "smart" feature. Inclusive was therefore defined as a tribute to the diversity of views, reflections, approaches, knowledge and perspectives originally excluded from *the book*.

The difficulties inherent in creating truly inclusive spaces are reinforced by the following quotes:

“Reading the first debates that took place in the agora I felt that there was nothing more that I could contribute from my first- person experience working as a communicator in action research projects”. Entry in the Agora, June 4, 2019.

“I did not feel capable of responding to the debates taking place in the agora [...] my lack of experience as a facilitator made me feel insecure about the validity of my contributions when compared to the contributions made by more experienced facilitators”. Entry in the Agora, June 4, 2019.

Participants also highlighted that dialogue in the agora was taking place mainly between two research teams that held previous ties, some of whom knew each other personally:

“...dialogue in the agora takes place mainly between the two communities that already existed before the creation of the virtual space...”. Entry in the Agora, May 30, 2019.

Inclusive, for third-person inquiry is relevant as a high goal that needs to be approximated on a case by case basis, like in the virtual space. Making it actionable will always be a challenge. In any case, participants in third person inquiry seem to need experience with understanding and acting together in the near environment, as pointed out by Gustavsen (2014).

EMERGENT AND COLLECTIVE

These two features are analyzed jointly because they both refer specifically to the asynchronous dialogue that develops in the agora. An asynchronous dialogue is a fully-fledged dialogue, but participants do not need to engage simultaneously (see Table 10.1). It is emergent because it is spontaneous, ongoing and cannot be planned. It is collective because keeping the dialogue alive (to keep writing *the book*) is a collective responsibility. At the time of writing there were a total of 228 entries distributed among 40 active participants and 24 discussion threads in an ongoing, spontaneous dialogue.

Data found in the discussion threads shows that the collective responsibility for keeping the dialogue alive was experienced negatively by some participants. As is shown in the following entries the lack of facilitation in the agora was described as hampering the further development of dialogue within it:

“[...] we all share the responsibility for keeping dialogue alive, but as happens in territories, processes are more dynamic when they are facilitated”. Entry in the Agora, June 3, 2019.

“In the AR processes in which I have participated...the process is always systematized and shared with those participating, thus strengthening the feeling of having built something together. If this does not happen, that which has been built is not visible”. Entry in the Agora, May 30, 2019.

“I think this space needs to be facilitated...it can help to keep the process alive [...] I sometimes sense that there is a feeling that facilitating a space like this would make it less authentic or something”. Entry in the Agora, April 8, 2018.

This was followed by an explanation by one of the authors of *the book* as to why a decision had been made early on to not facilitate the space (the need to be “smart”), adding the following:

“All of us here are facilitators, so we understand that the potential of this space will be reinforced if each of us in different moments and for specific discussions facilitates dialogues, handing the relay from one to another”. Entry in the Agora, April 9, 2018.

The main conclusion from the above is that participants seemed to have the expectation that someone would have the specific role of facilitating the discussions in the agora although the space was built based on an idea of a collective facilitation. I argue that this is again closely related to the time and resources available for undertaking this role and on the perceived value for participants of engaging with other researchers and practitioners in an emergent space.

The lesson for third-person inquiry is that the responsibility for doing the *in situ* facilitation is likely to fall on the researchers doing the communication of their work (in the case analyzed in this chapter, the authors of *the book*) or on the researcher or practitioner bringing the concepts and frameworks to their own practice (AR processes with policymakers and/or master courses in the case analyzed in this Chapter). Moreover, participation in emergent spaces may be expected to be stronger for a short period after the deferred dialogue has ended and will remain alive for as long as the discussion remains interesting and useful for participants.

Discussion: RRC as third-person inquiry is smart

In section 1 I argued that the RRC framework could help to create experimental spaces for third-person inquiry in ARTD. In order to explore this argument, I analyzed each one of the features of the RRC framework to see how they have played out in practice over the two-year period since a mezzo space built to communicate a book was built. The mezzo space is a virtual space in which two action researchers connect with other researchers and practitioners to communicate a book, that systematized their second-person research, dialogically.

The case shows that RRC’s smart feature (through its deferred and emergent dialogues) is critical because it directly addresses the challenge of scope faced by dialogical processes, on which third-person inquiry is based. An important finding from the case is that the *ex ante* dimension inherent in the facilitative feature may need to be complemented by *in situ* facilitation. The emergent dialogue is the space to develop said *in situ* facilitation, where facilitation is likely to fall on the researchers communicating their research outputs in order to make them workable in other contexts or on the researchers or practitioners bringing them to their own practice.

So, the answer to the research question posed in this chapter What features of RRC are relevant for third-person inquiry in ARTD? is summarized in Table 10.2.

Table 10.2. RRC as third-person inquiry in ARTD is smart

Change-oriented	Engaging in a dialogic process to communicate research outputs is driven by an explicit change objective
Smart	Deferred: A deferred dialogue is a written dialogue that takes place delayed in time between action researchers sharing a specific research output and other action researchers or practitioners interested in said research output. A deferred dialogue needs ex-ante facilitation, designed with a heightened awareness of the need to reduce barriers that may emerge from participants' different profiles, backgrounds, disciplines...
	Emergent: An emergent dialogue is dynamic, ongoing and changing, unfolding step by step, facilitated in situ by the researchers communicating their research outputs or by participating researchers or practitioners. It may take different forms (virtual, face-to-face...)
Inclusive	It is open and inclusive of the views, reflections, approaches, knowledge and perspectives originally excluded from the research output that is being communicated.

Source: Author's own elaboration.

In sum, the reformulated RRC framework can enhance ARTD's transformation potential by complementing its first and second-person approaches with an experimental third-person approach. In contrast to other third-person approaches (Gustavsen, Burns...) the approach that I propose connects second-person with third-person research specifically through the dialogical dissemination of academic outputs.

Writing this Chapter left me with a sense of excitement because I envisage a path where much research still needs to be done. We need more cases and we need to show how connections are being created between first, second- and third-person research (Reason & McArdel, 2004), or how they are being combined (Trullen & Torbert, 2016) in the benefit of territorial development. My contribution to ARTD is therefore more of an invitation to the ARTD community to walk that path and experiment third-person inquiry through the dialogical communication of their research outputs.

References

- Brydon-Miller, M., Greenwood, D., & Maguire, P. (2003). Why action research? *Action Research*, 1(1), 9-28.
- Burns, D. (2007). *Systemic action research: A strategy for whole system change* Policy Press.
- Burns, D. (2014). Systemic action research: Changing system dynamics to support sustainable change. *Action Research*, 12(1), 3-18.
- Canto-Farachala, P., Larrea, M. (2020). Rethinking the communication of action research: Can we make it dialogic? *Action Research* Advance online publication: doi: 10.1177/1476750320905896
- Canto-Farachala, P. (2019). *Research institutes as change agents in territorial development. An analytical framework on responsible research communication* (doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from: <https://cutt.ly/Grr2pWL>
- Canto-Farachala, P., Costamagna, P., Eizagirre, A., & Larrea, M. (2018). Social impact of the university: A case of the construction of a dialogic space through action research. *European Public & Social Innovation Review*, 3(3), 57-67.
- Costamagna, P., & Larrea, M. (2018). *Facilitative actors of territorial development. A social construction-based approach*. Bilbao: Deusto University Press.

- Greenwood, D. J. (2002). Action research: Unfulfilled promises and unmet challenges. *Concepts and Transformation*, 7(2), 117-139.
- Gustavsen, B. (1992). *Dialogue and development: Theory of communication, action research and the restructuring of working life* Thesis Publishers.
- Gustavsen, B. (1996). Action research, democratic dialogue, and the issue of "critical mass" in change. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2(1), 90-103.
- Gustavsen, B. (2014). Third person action research. *The SAGE encyclopedia of action research* (pp. 782-784). London: SAGE.
- Gustavsen, B. (2003). Action research and the problem of the single case *Concepts and Transformation* 8:1 (2003), 93-99.
- Karlsen, J., & Larrea, M. (2014). *Territorial Development and Action Research. Innovation through Dialogue*. Farnham: Gower:
- Marshall, J. (2004). Living systemic thinking: Exploring quality in first-person action research. *Action Research*, 2(3), 305-325.
- Reason, P. (2001). Learning and change through action research. *Creative Management*, 2, 182-194.
- Reason, P. (2003). Action research and the single case. A response to Bjørn Gustavsen and Davydd Greenwood *Concepts and Transformation* 8:3 (2003), 281-294.
- Reason, P., & McArdle, K. (2004). Brief notes on the theory and practice of action research. In S. Becker, & A. Bryman (Eds.), *Understanding research methods for social policy and practice* (pp. 114-122). London: The Polity Press.
- Romano, S. A. (2019). Slaying my own ghosts: My process into action research. *Action Research*, 17(3), 344-356.
- Trullen, J., & Torbert, B. (2016). First-, second-, and third-person research in practice. *Systems Thinker*
Retrieved from: <https://cutt.ly/2rr2zz1>