Territorial Development Series

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Roots and Wings of Action Research for Territorial Development

Connecting local transformation and international collaborative learning

Edited by Miren Larrea

Deusto
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Note for the reader

The contributions in this book have been written in English, Spanish and Portuguese and their contents synthetized 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.

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Chapter 9

Key features of first-person action research for second-person action researchers

Miren Larrea[1]

Laburpena

Lehen pertsonan egindako ikerketa-ekintzaren oinarriak ikerketa-ekintza bigarren pertsonan egiten duten ikerlarientzat

Kapitulu honen helburua ikertzaileoi geure buruaren inguruko gogoeta *lurralde garapenerako ikerketa-ekintzaren* (LGIE) barne sartzea da. Horrela, aurrerantzean ere gure ikerketaren helburua eragileen arazoei irtenbidea ematea izango den arren, eragile horien ongizateari ez ezik, ikertzaileon ongizateari ere jarri nahi diot arreta.

Orain arte, LGIE bigarren pertsonan egindako hurbilketa bat izanik, politikari hautetsien eta administrazio publikoko funtzionarioen eraldaketa prozesuari eman diogu garrantzia. Ikertzaileen eraldaketa prozesuei —hau da, geure eraldaketari— ordea, ia ez diogu arretarik eskaini. Kapitulu honetan, ikerketa-ekintza lehenengo pertsonan erabiltzen dut, neure burua eta —modu sinbolikoan— ekintzara modu kontzientean bideratzen den edozein ikertzailerena, LGIEren eremuan azaleratzeko. Galdera hauxe izan da nire ikerketaren gidari: Zein ezaugarri izan behar ditu geure buruaren inguruko gogoetak eraldatzailea izan dadin?

Neure buruaren inguruko gogoetarekin hasteko gai moduan lurralde garapenerako ikerketa-ekintzako bideratzaile edo fazilitadoreen ikusezintasuna hartu dut (Costamagna eta Larrea, 2018). Bideratzaileak ikusezin bihurtzen dira lurraldeko eragileek, lurralde garapenerako ikerketa-ekintzari esker ahalduntzen diren horiek, prozesua beretzat hartzen dutenean, bideratzaileei (ikertzaileak gehienetan) prozesuaz jabetzea zailtzen dien modu batean.

Kapitulu hau idazteko Hilary Bradburyren laguntza izan dut eta bera izan da kapitulu honen oinarrian dagoen gogoeta prozesuaren bideratzailea. Hilaryren argibideei jarraituz, neure gogoeta genero ikuspegian oinarritu dut, niretzat ikuspegi hori berria bada ere. Lurralde Garapeneko Laborategian —Gipuzkoako Foru Aldundiak 2009az geroztik bultzatzen duen ekimenean— izan dudan ibilbidea hartu dut oinarri. Hasierako esplorazioak lagundu zidan konturatzen espazio honetan lurraldeko eragile moduan parte hartu dutenak gizonak izan direla eta bideratzaile lanetan aritu garen tokiko ikertzaileak, berriz, emakumeak. Literaturak lagundu dit gizon eta emakumeen arteko bereizketa hori gainditzen eta lurralde garapenerako ikerketa-ekintzaren barruan, maskulinoak eta femeninoak diren

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rolak definitzen. Premisa horietatik abiatuta, neure gogoeta prozesuak lagundu dit lurralde garapenerako ikerketa-ekintzan bideratze lana femeninoa dela eta, agian, horrexegatik ikusezin bihurtzen dela ulertzen.

Hortik abiatuta eta gure ikerketa prozesuetan bideratzaileen lana ikusezina izan ez dadin, lan hau egiteko modu berriak bilatu beharra azaleratzen dut. Horretarako estrategietako bat, hain zuzen, lehen pertsonan egindako ikerketa ekintza bultzatzea da eta beronek izan beharreko ezaugarriak bost ardatzen inguruan jasotzen ditut: eraldaketa, ahalduntzea, fazilitazioa, dimentsio politikoa, eta gorputza eta buruaren arteko integrazioa.

Resumen

Elementos clave de la investigación acción en primera persona para investigadores que desarrollan la investigación acción en segunda persona

El objetivo de este capítulo es integrar la auto-reflexión de los investigadores como parte de la *investigación acción para el desarrollo territorial* (IADT). De esta manera persigo el bienestar, no sólo de los actores cuyos problemas la investigación pretende resolver, sino también de los investigadores.

La IADT se ha desarrollado hasta el momento como una aproximación en segunda persona y se ha centrado en los procesos de transformación de políticos electos y funcionarios de la administración pública. Hemos puesto poca atención en los procesos de transformación de los investigadores, es decir, en nuestros procesos de transformación. En este capítulo utilizo la investigación acción en primera persona como una manera de incluirme a mí misma y —simbólicamente— cualquier investigador en la acción que tome conciencia de sí mismo, en el marco de la IADT. La pregunta de investigación que me ha guiado es: ¿Cuáles son las características principales de la auto-reflexión que la hacen transformadora dentro de la IADT?

El foco de mi investigación es la invisibilidad de las personas facilitadoras en la IADT (Costamagna y Larrea, 2018). La invisibilidad se produce cuando los actores territoriales, empoderados a través de la IADT, se apropian del proceso de una manera que genera dificultades para las personas facilitadoras, frecuentemente investigadores, para apropiarse también.

Hilary Bradbury, co-investigadora en este proceso y autora del capítulo corto correspondiente, ha facilitado el proceso de auto-reflexión en que se fundamenta este capítulo. Siguiendo las indicaciones de Hilary, he realizado mi proceso de auto-reflexión desde la perspectiva de género, que ha sido nueva para mí. La experiencia en que me he basado es mi trayectoria en el Laboratorio de Desarrollo Territorial, impulsado a partir de 2009 por la Diputación Foral de Gipuzkoa. Mi exploración preliminar me ayudó a tomar conciencia de que en este espacio los actores territoriales que han participado como stakeholders son hombres y las investigadoras locales que han jugado un rol de facilitación, mujeres. La literatura me ha ayudado a superar esta distinción entre hombres y mujeres para pasar a definir dentro de la IADT roles masculinos y femeninos.

Partiendo de las anteriores premisas, mi proceso de auto-reflexión me ayuda a explicitar la necesidad de buscar para la IADT nuevos modos de trabajo que eviten invisibilizar la facilitación, y, por lo tanto, lo femenino. Una de las estrategias para visibilizar lo femenino es precisamente integrar en la IADT la investigación acción en primera persona articulada en torno a cinco elementos: la transformación, el empoderamiento, la facilitación, la dimensión política y la integración del cuerpo y la mente.

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Key features of first-person action research for second-person action researchers

Amari, ahizpari
eta alabei, burruka hortan iraungo duten zuhaitz-ardaska gazteei.
Xabier Leteren hitzetan oinarritua.

To my mother, my sister
and to my daughters, the young tree branches that will endure in that struggle.
Based on lyrics by Xabier Lete.

Introduction

Every chapter in this book further develops Action Research for Territorial Development (ARTD). The goal in this one is to integrate self-inquiry framed in first-person action research as part of ARTD and thus pursue the wellbeing not only of stakeholders but also of action researchers as an aim of action research (AR).

ARTD has evolved as a second-person AR approach inspired by Greenwood & Levin (2007) and their distinction between stakeholders, who are insiders/problem owners, and action researchers, who are outsiders. We revisited this conceptual distinction by defining both stakeholders and action researchers as territorial actors (Karlsen & Larrea, 2014; Costamagna & Larrea, 2018). However, in practice, ARTD focuses mainly on the transformation of policy-makers and little attention is paid to the transformation of action researchers. In this chapter, I use first-person AR as a way to include myself and —symbolically— any self-aware action researcher within the theatre of ARTD.

The focal inquiry I take as a starting point is the invisibility of facilitation in ARTD processes (Costamagna & Larrea, 2018) when stakeholders make the AR process their own, while action researchers facilitating the process have difficulties in doing so. Hilary Bradbury, my co-inquirer in this chapter and author of the corresponding mini chapter, has helped facilitate the self-inquiry process which is the basis for this writing.

The research question that guided this reflection and writing process is: what appear to be the key features of self-inquiry that can make it transformative within ARTD? My own experience of self-inquiry regarding the invisibility of facilitators is therefore used to develop the final discussion in this chapter, where I specifically reflect on this question.

The chapter starts with a conceptual section which grapples with first-person action research and contextualises it with insights from previous first-person experiences in ARTD. I then pose the dilemma of invisibility of facilitators, which is the starting point for my self-inquiry process. In the following section, I share the results of the self-inquiry process, where I discovered that a gender perspective helps revitalise the challenge of overcoming the invisibility of facilitators. The chapter closes with a final discussion based on my findings in this process, where I discuss the usefulness of first-person AR for second-person action researchers.

First-person action research

There is no unique definition of first-person action research. Reason and Bradbury (2001, p. v-vi) follow Torbert's constructivist adult development approach to "territories of experi-

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ence", in which first-person AR is a necessary "skill and method" that develops the ability of the researcher to foster an inquiring approach to his or her own life, to act with awareness, and to assess effects in the outside world while acting. Marshall (1999, p. 156-7) defines it as a range of "beliefs, strategies and ways of behaving" which encourage the researcher to treat little as fixed, finished, or clear-cut. First-person means that rather than observing ourselves as objects from the outside, we "experience ourselves as subjects with direct awareness of how we act and learn" (Coghlan, 2008, p. 352). In first-person practice, therefore, we are noticing how we think, process data, come to understand, form judgements, make decisions and take action (Coghlan, 2013).

First-person AR is defined against the background of second and third-person AR, which is a distinction originally developed by Torbert (2001). Second-person AR refers to action research undertaken in small groups, in which the participants are both actors and researchers, involved in an inquiry into issues of mutual concern. Third-person AR includes large groups of people who are part of the same community of inquiry but do not actually meet face to face (Torbert, 2001; Chandler & Torbert, 2003; Adams, 2014). Bradbury and Reason (2001, p. 449) synthesise these three approaches, referring to them as "work for oneself", "work for partners" and "work for people in the wider context", and exhort action researchers to integrate these types more.

There remains an argument when referring to first, second and third-person action research that these approaches should be seen as interconnected, with first-person inquiry providing a foundation for second and third-person action research (Torbert, 2001). This chapter aims at building this connection in ARTD.

First-person action research in ARTD

There are different paths that lead to connecting first and second-person action research. Burgess (2006) writes about the expectation that novice researchers will start with self-discovery in order to locate themselves in their inquiry. However, if we observe action researchers in the ARTD environment, Romano (2018) is the only one who entered AR through self-inquiry. The rest of us had been involved in second-person AR for some years before even thinking about first-person approaches.

In addition to discovering first-person action research late, I had a stumbling entrance into it. I received comments from reviewers of our/my papers that nudged me, albeit with different tones of encouragement:

> [There] is an important ongoing debate [on] whether "first-person AR" really can or cannot be categorised as research
>
> There is a lot of autoethnography and other first-person work that is narcissistic, trivial, and to me, quite irritating. […] the authors need to explain how the AR approach gets past narcissism and moves into adding necessary dimensions to competent practice […].
>
> I concur here with one of the peer reviewers in not quite understanding the constraint you put on yourself about first-person (vs second-person) action research. The entire project feels very second-person AR, even third-person.

Clearly, the integration of first-person AR into ARTD needed to address these questions, and in doing so, I crafted an argument in favour of such integration. First-person AR is a good strategy for us (action researchers) to take on our own change process as part of territorial development. After all, in our previous experience of ARTD, territorial actors did not change because we told them to, nor exclusively because we helped them reflect on how to

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change. They changed because we transformed ourselves and because we interacted with them in ways that were new to all of us. I consider that the only way to keep territorial development going is to continue transforming ourselves and unless we integrate first-person AR into ARTD, we will have limited capabilities to do so. If we tackle this issue properly, first-person inquiry could be at the core of the transformational capacity of ARTD, and far from being perceived as a constraint or as narcissistic, trivial and irritating storytelling, it could become a key developmental requirement.

The invisibility of facilitation: the dilemma at the core of self-inquiry

Self-inquiry starts from a puzzle or dilemma. Invisibility was first referred to as a dilemma in ARTD by Costamagna & Larrea (2018). Territorial actors are those who reflect, decide and act on territorial development. Facilitators are those who, on an individual basis or as part of a team of facilitators, take on the role of creating the conditions that enable actors to reflect, decide and act. They do so in a context of mutual learning, as there is nothing like previous knowledge for making people behave in the "right" way. Both action researchers and stakeholders can play roles as territorial actors and facilitators, and often play both roles simultaneously. In these cases, we speak of facilitative researchers and facilitative stakeholders (usually policymakers). Yet, in the experience of ARTD, stakeholders primarily play territorial actor roles while action researchers take on facilitative roles.

The dilemma is posed after observing our processes and seeing a recurrent pattern. In the initial stages of facing a problem, when actors lacked facilitative capabilities, action researchers had a strong voice when sharing process knowledge in the dialogue among different actors. When the actors internalised the rationale of the process, some decided to lead the process on their own. And indeed this was, following our ARTD principles, a positive achievement for the AR process that signalled that it was a good time for the action researchers to step back. However, probably because the process was deeply rooted in the collaboration between action researchers and policymakers, stakeholders invited action researchers to stay, but with a reformulated role for the next cycle. The policymakers that had had the closest interaction with researchers felt prepared to take formal responsibility to facilitate their own deepening process, although this time, they were supported by action researchers in private. The latter, in order not to "compete" with the actors, accepted that they would not have a public voice in these governance spaces and so stepped into the background. This led them to experience public invisibility.

My experience of the dilemma of invisibility

The phenomenon of feeling invisible was most prevalent in my experience in the Territorial Development Laboratory (TDLab), an action research process ongoing since 2009, where I played the role of research director between 2010 and 2019. One of our main goals in the laboratory was supporting the construction of participatory governance for territorial development in the province of Gipuzkoa, in the Basque Country (Spain), which has 720,000 inhabitants. During the period of 2013-2017, we used AR to construct the spaces and procedures of this governance. The main actors in this governance were the Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa and eleven county development agencies. In 2015, the decision was made to formalise the new spaces and procedures through a signed agreement between them. Action researchers had a relevant role in the learning and negotiation processes that led to the signing of this agreement.

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We facilitated this process by having our own voice in the workshops and meetings. I even wrote the first draft for the agreement, where I introduced action research as part of the participative learning procedures of the new governance. However, policymakers decided that AR would not be mentioned in the agreement, as research and researchers were not formally recognised as a structural part of governance. This made action research and researchers invisible in the main document that described the procedures of the new governance. Moreover, after the agreement was signed, the role of action researchers was redefined in the intercounty table, the main space of the collaborative governance: we would be present but not explicitly facilitate the process, which meant we would be witnesses, but not participants in the dialogue. We, action researchers, agreed with policymakers from the provincial council that they would thereafter facilitate the process in this space, and we would help them prepare for that. We would facilitate the facilitators.

At first, this change did not seem to be problematic. I felt that asking for my own voice in the process would be selfish. My cognitive interpretation was that as a facilitator my role was simply to help the actors that hired us and if they felt we could do that better by working with them in private, while we remained silent in the collaborative governance spaces, then that was the way to proceed. Still, I felt uncomfortable and I conceptualised this discomfort as part of a conflict between policymakers and researchers (Larrea, 2019). In fact, the discrepancy between my rational sense-making and my emotional experience of discomfort slowly drove me into a deeper inquiry. And in this inquiry, I became more aware of a process of feeling emotionally drained and ready to detach from the TDLab. However, the TDLab was very important to the team and to me, and this detachment did not feel productive. Indeed, this is the puzzle at the core of why I have inquired more deeply into the first-person process as a way to better understand my second-person AR.

The discussion on invisibility in the ARTD community

I shared this dilemma with colleagues from different countries in an experimental interactive platform where we discussed facilitation. Here are two quotes that represent the two main positions that emerged:

> I think that the facilitative role is not valued in territorial development processes because often we, the facilitators, have thought that it was important to remain invisible in that role. Today I think the opposite is true.
>
> I have doubts about when a facilitator should be visible because there must be a balance regarding the centrality and/or leadership of actors.

I came to share my new thoughts about it more directly:

> I see two positions in the discussion. One relates visibility to centrality and considers that it is risky for a facilitator to be too visible because it prevents actors from being the protagonists. I identify myself more with another perspective, […] visibility of facilitators and actors are not mutually excluding.

In my new sense-making, I reformulated visibility as a requirement of my work and distinguished it from being a protagonist. In the next section, I share my new interpretation of the dilemma constructed through a self-inquiry process facilitated by Hilary Bradbury.

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Gender as the thread to revisit facilitation

Initial awareness through partnership coaching

The self-inquiry process materialised as four inquiry-meetings we called "partnership coaching". These regular meetings, with some reflective work in between, were built on work already underway and were set in a larger context of seeking to accomplish more together, given our different approaches and geographical settings. In our preliminary informal conversations, I realised that when reflecting on what I was sharing about ARTD, Hilary mentioned gender issues. Feminism as part of my action research was a new perspective to me, and because I did not immediately consider it especially significant to the inquiry process unfolding, I questioned its relevance. However, after two or three conversations in which gender continued to pop up, I decided to explore it further.

My first step was to revisit the Territorial Development Laboratory (TDLab), this time consciously looking through a gender lens. AR has been part of the laboratory since its inception in 2009 when we were two women undertaking facilitation in the day-to-day interaction with policymakers. Today this team is composed of eight members, five of whom directly facilitate the policymakers' processes. All five are women. Since 2009, the leading stakeholders in the AR processes with the Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa have been thirteen policymakers from the general deputy's cabinet and economic development department. All of them are men. I could summarise all this by stating that the TDLab is an environment where ARTD has taken place as a dialogical process between male policymakers and female facilitative action researchers. I realised that maybe gender did have a role to play after all.

This situation resonated with something I had read about facilitation: "women in particular are attracted to the art of facilitation" (Groot, 2002, p. i). This meant that, although there were facilitative men in our territorial development processes, women were more prone to becoming invisible. Numbers in the TDLab supported Groot's assertion, but I remembered two male colleagues complaining when I had shared this idea. I was worried that I was being unfair to facilitative men. However, all things considered, the situation unveiled through self-inquiry was so poignantly unfair to women that I needed to express it to be true to myself.

Approaching gender literature

Some aspects of participatory action research have been described as androcentric (Maguire, 1987) since early AR traditions have been associated with men (Anderson, Herr and Nihlen, 1994; Brydon-Miller, Maguire & McIntyre, 2004).

In this context, my next step in the self-inquiry process was to look into the gender literature where I read about the commonly accepted stereotypes of women's thinking as emotional, intuitive and personalised. These stereotypes are said to devalue women's minds and contributions, particularly in western technologically oriented cultures, which value rationalism and objectivity. We have been educated to assume that "intuitive knowledge is more primitive, therefore less valuable, than so-called objective modes of knowing" (Sampson 1978, Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986, p. 6).

Furthermore, women have been described as operating within a morality of responsibility and care more often than men do (Belenky *et al.*, 1986). The feminine personality is presumed to define itself in relation and connection to other people more than the masculine personality does, something that is seen as a deficit and not as something positive. Additionally, girls experience the needs or feelings of another as their own more often than boys

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do (Chodorow, 1974; Gilligan, 1982), and again this value is not celebrated in a context in which rationality and distance are considered to be important.

Belenky *et al.* (1986) say that when masculine values prevail, which happens quite often in institutional and social life, women, lacking role models, question the normality of their feelings and alter their judgments in deference to the conventional male-coded opinions of others, be they male or female. In a situation where masculine frameworks are therefore taken for granted, the argument that the "masculine and feminine views of morality are complementary (rather than sequential or opposed)" is difficult to understand (Belenky *et al.*, 1986, p. 6-7).

Through these readings, I grew aware that I could easily connect the feminine with facilitation in ARTD and the masculine with the role of territorial actors participating as stakeholders. This could not be simplified into connecting women exclusively to facilitation and men exclusively to actor's roles. I was aware that I had worked with men who were facilitators and women who were actors in ARTD. However, the numbers in our project supported the idea that, generally, women enacted the feminine role and, generally, men enacted the masculine one.

It was the contribution by Fletcher (2001, p. ix) that provided the framework to articulate the need to transform our interpretation of facilitation in ARTD. In the first paragraph of her preface, she states: "this is a book about relational work and the disappearing acts that render it invisible in today's workplace. It is written for the many people who find that the off-line, backstage, or collaborative work they do, and the relational skills this kind of work requires, are not recognised or rewarded at work". There I had invisibility described as social phenomena, and I felt I was one of the "many people" she had written the book for. Fletcher also argues that "that is only part of the story because, at its heart, this is a book about why this kind of work […] is "women's work" and why that makes the story of this disappearance so much more interesting". Her words encourage me to leave my comfort zone and argue that what I have experienced and described as invisibility is probably part of the experience of many other women.

Fletcher (2001) defines the feminine as a belief system about how growth and effectiveness occur. In this belief system, growth does not happen through a process of separation and individuation, but in mutuality and connection. This model of growth does not presume to speak for all women, but there are strong forces operating to encourage women to enact it. The connection with the dilemma posed in this chapter emerged with her argument that because of these forces, women are shouldered with the responsibility of creating relational conditions for growth *invisibly*, without acknowledging either the support or the need for it. This allows the belief in independence and individual achievement to go unchallenged. Additionally, it creates a double workload for women leaders, tasked with conventional male performance, and also with the expectation that they perform relational work, without it being acknowledged. My dilemma of invisibility had now transformed itself into the awareness that I needed to help facilitators in ARTD, among other things, to release themselves from the double workload of responding to both conventional and relational work.

Rethinking facilitation in ARTD

The inquiry meetings with Hilary, and the readings in between, helped me revisit my perspective on the dilemma of invisibility in ARTD. Facilitation in ARTD is related to interdependence, nurturance and contextual thought, the principles most enacted and honoured by women. Actors, on the other hand, are defined by the power they have to make decisions and act. They do so in a context where their decisions, actions and enactments are visible.

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I gained awareness that in our taken for granted masculine interpretation of territorial development, we had accepted that the visibility of facilitators meant a threat to actors who, also from a masculine interpretation of territorial development, might have seen us as competitors and not allies in the cooperative processes.

My emotional response became clearest to me when confronted with a thought that made me feel especially restless: our definition of facilitation in a highly feminine tone might reinforce the idea that action researchers in ARTD "should devote themselves to the care and empowerment of others while remaining 'self-less'" (Belenky *et al.*, 1986, p. 46). Care and empowerment are, in my frameworks, positive features, but remaining self-less requires imbalance, which is a disturbing thought. By defining facilitation as subordinated to action, we had subordinated the feminine to the masculine and, given the statistics in our project, women to men. I felt the urge to reformulate this.

Paying attention to my own emotional response also helped me realise that, by defining action researchers as facilitative actors and not exclusively as facilitators, I was trying to gain visibility. I was doing this by enhancing my masculine dimension, my role as an actor. This role was mainly enacted through academic writing, where I could decide, act and be visible. I realised that in the last few years, I had felt the need to write and publish on my own, something I had never done since I finished my PhD two decades ago. I interpreted this as a process of growing through individuation. I realised I also had (and enjoyed) this masculine dimension. However, I felt that by enacting my masculine dimension in order to be visible, while keeping facilitation invisible, was a kind of betrayal to my principles. I thus claim that visibility of facilitators and actors does not need to be mutually excluding and that the feminine must be made visible in ARTD.

I argue that the visibility of facilitation is an effective strategy for territories which, in the face of the current societal challenges, require explicit feminine strategies and capabilities. We need to overcome the false separation between masculine/public/achievement activities and feminine/private/support activities (Fletcher, 2001) towards a framework that is balanced, reflective, inclusive of the exiled feminine qualities that give our work its heart and its success (Bradbury, 2015).

In the relationship between men and women in professional environments, men generally come invested with more unilateral status and power than women, and it is to their advantage not to draw attention to power issues, while women's exercise of power may initially be concentrated in the mode of critique (Bradbury & Torbert, 2016). This chapter is my way of drawing attention to power issues in ARTD.

Conclusion: first-person action research for second-person action researchers

I conclude this chapter by returning to the research question: what appear to be the key features of self-inquiry that can make it transformative within ARTD? At the time of writing these conclusions, I have left the TDLab and I am part of a new ARTD process. In one of the initial meetings, I shared with policymakers my thoughts that facilitation, and thus ARTD, had been rendered invisible in the TDLab and I would like to work on its visibility in the new project. The answer from one of the policymakers was that ARTD would be visible, though we had to negotiate how. By integrating my claim for visibility as part of my facilitation, self-inquiry was transformative for me. In the next paragraphs, I share what I think were the features that made it so.

Inspired by Coghlan (2008), I define *self-inquiry in ARTD* as a first-person AR process conducted by second-person action researchers in order to experience themselves as subjects in second-person AR processes with direct awareness of how they act and learn. I propose

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five features that can be regarded as discrete building blocks of self-inquiry in ARTD which overlap with the new articulation of Action-oriented Research for Transformations, ART as expressed by Bradbury *et al.* (2019):

a) ***Action in** self-inquiry in ARTD **is the transformation of the researcher in the context of second-person AR processes***

There is no action research without action. However, there are multiple interpretations of what action is. My reflections on gender, the invisibility of the exiled feminine, along with my own role in AR processes, have been directly funnelled into our ARTD dialogue with policymakers. The result has been an explicit claim on my part to keep facilitation visible and to own its impact. And this change in my behaviour is a new action which comes from reflecting on the difficulty of feeling invisible.

It is through this transformation process —reflection on action, making difficult things discussable— that we generate the conditions for policymakers and policy to also transform. By us creating space for such inquiry, there is space for our partners to engage more deeply in more transformative ways. Hopefully, the claim to make facilitation visible will initiate a process to co-generate policies that are innovative in their treatment of gender and do not lead to "disappearing acts" of the feminine. The action expected after self-inquiry in ARTD is thus the transformation of how action researchers interact with stakeholders in second-person AR processes.

b) *Self-inquiry empowers researchers and problematises power in second-person ARTD*

The inclusion of self-inquiry as a feature of ARTD changes the process from being exclusively focused on the transformation process of stakeholders to also focusing on the action researchers' own personal transformation. Action researchers are empowered in the process, which affects the interpretation of power between action researchers and stakeholders.

In my case, I spoke to Hilary about how self-inquiry was changing me and how I was experimenting with discussing issues of power with one of the policymakers in our second-person AR processes:

> I shared with him that I'm also strong in a way and I'm trying to help him see where that strength is, so that the relationship we design now —if we decide to work together— is more balanced.

Hilary pushed me to go deeper into this aspect:

> [You are] conceiving power at a later developmental stage in which power is more mutual. What does that mutuality mean for you? You talk about it, you write about it, but what does it really, really mean? You might have to look inside yourself.

My insights about power, gender and informing the next stage of ARTD grew out of the very processes I am reflecting on, which were made possible by seeking a partner to facilitate my own inquiry.

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c) *Self-inquiry in ARTD benefits from co-inquiry with a facilitator*

Co-inquiry is one, but not the only approach proposed for self-inquiry in first-person AR (Marshall, 2016). Considering that quite often it is experienced second-person AR facilitators who conduct ARTD, we might feel tempted to try to facilitate our own inquiry processes.

My insight is that facilitation of our own self-inquiry process is radically different from facilitation of second-person AR, because in self-reflection we have to "experience ourselves as subjects" (Coghlan, 2008, p. 352), which second-person AR cannot train us to do. Facilitating our own self-reflection means that the facilitator and the facilitated have the same taken-for-granted assumptions, and thus, the same blind spots. This makes it extremely difficult to become aware of unaddressed dimensions. For instance, I would probably not have embraced the reflection on gender unless Hilary had helped me see that dimension in my experience.

In addition, paying attention to stakeholders is so ingrained in the habits of second-person action researchers that it is difficult to keep attention focused on ourselves. Again, I think that Hilary's guidance was important to set the focus on me. I share an example of how she recurrently brought me back into self-inquiry:

> But I'm saying something slightly different. I'm saying: rather than focusing on him [the stakeholder in AR], focus on you. […] Maybe you're too focused externally. What do you see if you bring the focus back to the intelligence of you, your intuitions, your behaviours, your intentions?

d) *Facilitation of self-inquiry in ARTD is political*

There is no neutral facilitation, and facilitators influence self-inquiry in directions that coincide with their values and principles. This needs a pre-inquiry stage where the facilitator and the self-inquirer can connect and learn to what extent their values and principles influence the facilitation process.

Before we agreed on working together in this chapter, Hilary invited me to read *Eros/Power: Love in the Spirit of Inquiry,* the book she had written with Bill Torbert. For me, it was like a declaration of Hilary's principles and values on self-inquiry. It created favourable conditions for the later co-inquiry process.

Another relevant moment when I understood the political dimension of the process was my decision to openly address gender for the first time in my action research experience. Hilary introduced the issue: "My sense is that [there are] issues of female identity. […] you're bringing a relational orientation mind. But that orientation —of women's leadership— is suspect. It's not often validated. Right?"

And I accepted the challenge: "I sense the risk, but I don't feel frightened, I see that this reflection can have an impact".

External facilitation of self-inquiry can thus be interpreted as a subtle process of negotiation and agreement, where the political positions of the facilitator and the self-inquirer speak to each other. This is consistent with the treatment of political views in ARTD (Karlsen and Larrea, 2018).

e) *Self-inquiry brings the whole body into ARTD*

This is one of the most shocking features I have discovered in first-person AR. ARTD has developed with a very rationalistic approach where, apparently, only our rational

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cognition was in the foreground with little interference from the wisdom of our bodies, for example, our emotions, our intuitions. My previous attempts to develop self-inquiry had this rationalistic feature and as a consequence privileged only thinking, talking and writing.

Working with Hilary, I learnt to integrate my body's reactions (wisdom of emotional response) into the process. Reading the transcripts of our conversations in retrospect, I realise how insistent she had to be to take me from my rational mode of thinking into a process that involved mind and body. These are some of her words encouraging me to do so:

> I suggest we just sit in silence for a moment because otherwise, your mind's going to jump in there and tell you what to do [having named a specific problem], and it probably won't be very creative.
>
> For homework, don't work your mind around this issue. Just notice your thoughts, which may change, of course, and see which feelings come up from earlier life.
>
> What might be some of the experiments you can do in everyday life? I would like to recommend that one of them includes […] a little bit of meditation. Like we just did, checking in with "What does my body want me to know?" Do I feel constricted or lighter when I contemplate a new action?
>
> Try drawing your response as a cartoon figure rather than writing it out.

Some of my answers show my struggle with this unfamiliar dimension of self-inquiry: "you said that insight comes when we are not thinking and […] I realise I think a lot!" and "I feel what you are saying makes sense, but I'm not sure I know how to do it".

These five features of self-inquiry in ARTD are our first attempt to introduce first-person AR as one more dimension of ARTD. I hope they resonate with other second-person action researchers who consider that self-inquiry can help them improve how they work with stakeholders.

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