Co-researching narrative identity constructions by and with people who use illegal drugs

Reflections on critical participatory action research

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Origins

• Narrative identities, symbolic boundaries and stigma

• What about within-group stigma among PWUDs?

• Reproducing stigmatising discourses through academic practice?

• Re-negotiating stigma?

>> Critical Participatory Action Research with a diverse team of PWUDs
CPAR, what’s in an abbreviation?

**Critical** --- questioning power relations, discourses and practices

**Participatory** --- participants as co-researchers

**Action** --- towards meaningful outcomes and change

**Research** --- through other ways of knowing
Study design

Two foci of reflection with a diverse team of PWUDS:

1) Collective process: group meetings, projects, activities, ...

2) Personal process of each team member: interviews, conversations, personal research/creative strategies, ...
Why become a participant?

- Not systematically included in research (Bell, 2011)
- Ethical point
- Research reflexivity and co-construction
- Paradox of participatory research
- Topic during recruitment and first interviews
Doing something

• New approach – active role in research
• Change something – helping others
• Interest in topic of ‘drugs’
“There are few things that engage me to take action, but drugs have become kind of a passion to me, new laws, regulations, grassroots. They can make a difference and I want to, in my own way, make a small contribution and make myself useful for such things.”
Thinking

• Tackling taboos, stigma and stereotypes
• Challenging personal perspectives
“There’s stigmatisation on two sides and I’m curious what kind of reactions my discourse, or that of other psychedelic users, will bring about with people who don’t have any clue [...] they can be interested but also critical, which is a welcome thing when we can discuss it openly [...] because I hope I can adjust some of my own clichés as well.”
“I’m curious about the evolution of the project, I'm curious what I will hear and see and if there will be something for which I can do more. I’m curious about the evolution of my own perception when, at the end of this project, I will listen again to this first conversation we’re having now, if I will be different as a person, if I will think differently about certain things or if some things in society will have changed”
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References


