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REVIEWS – REPORTS

Rozalia Ligus[1]

Retrieving Lost Knowledge[2]: Researcher, "Native Researchers" and Shifts in Participatory Action Research

ABSTRACT

This paper was inspired by the debate between Hammersley (1999), Atkinson and Delamont (2009) and Denzin and Lincoln (2009 [2008]) on the dynamics of qualitative methods development and by the unsettling reductionism and fragmentation of analyses within qualitative research revealed by Atkinson. Similar critique of superficiality in biographical methods has also been formulated by scholars from the interpretative sociology tradition in Łódź (Czyżewski, 2016; Kaźmierska, 2012; Konecki, 2019; Piotrowski, 2016; Waniek, 2019), whose work is applied in pedagogy. The biographical research I conduct in small local communities reveals shifts in the positioning of research participants, but also alterations in the dynamics of grassroot inquiry initiatives in line with Participatory Inquiry Paradigm as described by Heron and Reason (1997). This article aims to characterize the "new" type of research participants, who organize and are involved in (non-academic) "research/amateur teams" within local communities, becoming collective agents of social action. Does it mean that the new "social/research awareness" (Heron & Reason, 1997) of both local actors and academic scholars who "join forces", along with easy access to the sources, transnational links, and higher level of education trigger grassroot potential of pro-social behavior and a multi-level, polyphonic (Clifford, 1983), conscious and subconscious participation in the life of local communities?

Keywords:
lost knowledge, migrating biographies, native researchers – a biographical perspective

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2   „Lost knowledge" is an expression used by one of the narrators in an interview (13.03.2017). I see it as a „sensitizing category" (Konecki, 2019), which may become meaningful in the analysis of my empirical material.

INTRODUCTION

The need to reflexively interpret lifeworld and to redefine the identity of the cogniz-ing subject (Malewski, 2010) has become part and parcel of the postmodern vision of self-development, while formal, non-formal and informal learning by adults have become complementary within the biographical identity processes (Alheit, 2011), located within contexts of daily life, social networks and citizens' activities (Malewski, 2010). Education has become important for biographical theories, in lifeworlds and life-wide contexts (Alheit, 2011). Learning through roles, forms, places is a structure that crystallized in post-modernity and that exists regardless of the stance the scholar may adopt towards biographical learning (Alheit, 2011).

Since 1990s, some scholars (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Heron & Reason, 1997; Reason & Torbert, 2010; Christians, 2009, Carr, 2010; Kemmis, 2010; Denzin & Lincoln, 2009 [2008]; Erickson, 2019) have been vocal about the necessity to extend the community of researchers engaging in qualitative work, promoting the new ethics that is communitarian, egalitarian, democratic, critical, caring, involved, performative and aiming at social justice. Such community is based on "being with and for" and not "looking at". It represents different approaches within Participatory Action Research, foreseen by Denzin and Lincoln (2009 [2008]), who – even towards the end of the 20th century – wrote about subsequent stages of expansion of qualitative research and about bringing to life a new praxis, owned by those it is meant to serve, the subjects who initiate their own projects on their own terms. At the same time, Heron and Reason published their work on the idea of Participatory Inquiry Paradigm:

> Inquiry methodology within a participative worldview needs to be one that draws on this extended epistemology in such a way that critical subjectivity is enhanced by critical intersubjectivity; hence, a collaborative form of inquiry, in which all involved engage together in democratic dialogue as co-researchers and as co-sub-jects (Heron & Reason, 1997, p. 283).

Their approach is grounded in the rich tradition of action research, already widely known towards the end of the 1990s, due to circa 35 kinds of participatory research methods it had managed to develop by then (Heron & Reason, 1997, p. 284).[3]

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3   Heron and Reason (1997, p. 284) refer to participative inquiry such as action science (Argyris, Putnam, & Smith, 1985; Argyris & Schon, 1974; Schon, 1983), action inquiry (Torbert, 1991), participatory action research (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991), some forms of feminist inquiry (Mies, 1993; Olesen, 1994), emancipatory action research (Carr & Kemmis, 1986), appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987), fourth-generation evaluation (Guba & Lincoln, 1989),

The need to change our way of thinking about field research strikes me whenever I find myself within communities where I come across existing grass-root initiatives involving practices that turn the inhabitants into researcher-cum-participant:

> Cooperative inquiry rests on two participatory principles: epistemic participation and political participation. The first means that any propositional knowledge that is the outcome of the research is grounded by the researchers in their own experiential knowledge. The second means that research subjects have a basic human right to participate fully in designing the research that intends to gather knowledge about them. It follows from the first principle that the researchers are also the subjects; and from the second principle that the subjects are also the researchers. The co-researchers are also the co-subjects. The research is done by people with each other, not by researchers on other people or about them (Heron & Reason, 1997, p. 284).

Recognition and understanding of the emic perspective of research participants is just the tip of an iceberg of the analytical and interpretative work. As researchers, we are bound to go beyond this perspective and render the collected empirical data analytical (Schütze, 2012a; Kaźmierska, 2012, 2016; Piotrowski, 2016; Waniek, 2019). But this begs the question whether it is only the researcher, with his or her academic standing, who can accomplish the analysis and the interpretative procedure? Participants of the project *Migrating Biographies – Identity Reconstruction by the Descendants of Re-emigrants from Bosnia: Educational Action Research Biographical Study*[4] made me realize that my presence during the research process is only valuable if I become part of the activities that they initiate, and not when I am an external, authoritative figure just "visiting" their active social life. By

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intervention research (Fryer & Feather, 1994), action research as democratic dialogue (Toulmin & Gustavsen, 1996), and others.

4   *Migrating Biographies – Identity Reconstruction by the Descendants of Re-emigrants from Bosnia: Educational Action Research Biographical Study* is a work-in-progress project running since 2017 in the city of Bolesławiec and its surrounding area (Lower Silesia). This study was inspired by identity choices of the region's inhabitants, who in 2018 called themselves "We, Poles from Yugoslavia", even though many of them have never set foot in Yugoslavia, a country that disappeared from the world maps in 1995. Since 2007, the group started efforts to become present in the public space, setting as their point of reference the 19th-century migration of their families from Galicia, the Austrian-part of partitioned Poland, to Bosnia, and their subsequent re-settlement into the western territories of Poland in 1946 (Drljača, 1997; Strauchold & Nowosielska-Sobel, 2007; Strauchold, 2016; Lis, 2016; Ligus, 2019). In the descendants' narratives both these turning points are presented as a double exodus experienced by the same members of their families twice over 50 years, which prompts the descendants to start biographical inquiries into their own, ambiguous identity (Ligus, 2019).

taking part in the discussion, they also proved that they have interpretative and theorizing skills required in research.[5]

The aim of the *Migrating Biographies…* project is to analyze and categorize meanings included in the autobiographical narratives of the second, third and fourth generation of "re-emigrants"[6] from Bosnia. The aim of this article, however, is to present the part of the research material documenting both biographical work of a narrator[7] initiating her identity-oriented self-inquiry and contextualizing the cycle of her participatory action research, where she, just like other descendants of re-emigrants, collected different kinds of knowledge, in a process of inquiry that did not depend on the presence of a scholar (Heron & Reason, 1997). Further on in the article I will elaborate on the topic of active participation of research participants in shaping and modifying the pre-designed research project.

TOWARDS PARTICIPATORY INQUIRY PARADIGM AND PARTNER "NATIVE SCHOLARS"

Qualitative field research was subject to severe criticism because of the long-standing tradition of putting academic scholars in a position of authority, i.e., as experts, and research participants as subordinate "objects" of observation. Tuhiwai Smith commented that the word "research" has become indecent, infuriating, silencing, bringing mistrust and connoting the worst legacy of colonialism, reminding us of the asymmetry, in the classic field research approach, between the researcher and the those that are the objects of research (in Denzin & Lincoln, 2009 [2008]). Within critical ethnography, which since the 1960s has been supplementing its epistemology with new philosophical approaches (Foley

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5   On May 30, 2019, I presented my research results at a meeting held by the Association of the Re-emigrants from Bosnia and their Descendants and Friends. On the occasion, I also asked for feedback on the analytical categories I proposed to apply in the analysis. The participants made interpretative and theorizing comments, which I will describe in detail in a separate publication.

6   The term 're-emigrants' is one of the identity-related dilemmas the narrators mention in their stories (see: Ligus, 2019).

7   I refer to A. Strauss' concept of "biographical work" but, in this article, I follow F. Schütze's (2012a) explanation, i.e., that it is a hard task performed by a person/group, covering a few dimensions: work to understand positive attitudes stemming from the uniqueness of self-identity under permanent construction; work to discover the strongest self-potentials through recalling own life-history; work to discover past "dead ends" and false understanding of self; discovering any other possible modes to act, if present; work to achieve more in-depth understanding of the developing self-identity and determine ways to asses such options; work to become self-directed and supportive for oneself, in a way that the unique identity deserves (Schütze, 2012a, pp. 148–150).

& Valenzuela, 2009), scholars started to recognize the asymmetry in power relations between those who have power (researchers) and those who are being stripped of power (research participants). The subsequent stage of the critical debate over qualitative approaches in social sciences, which took place in the 1980s (Kruszelnicki, 2010, pp. 140–155), brought about nothing short of mutiny against positivist approach, and with it – alternative interpretative, hermeneutic and constructivist solutions, heralding dynamic development of qualitative methodologies (Schwandt, 2000, after: Foley & Valenzuela, 2009). Anthropologists and scholars from other fields have been referring to an influential text by Clifford *On Ethnographic Authority* (1983). Apart from the critique of knowledge making through "armchair" construction of texts, Clifford also proposed giving voice to the "amateur scholars" from the field, practitioners, "native researchers" – native experts, who had not been given interpretative opportunities due to their lack of formal academic training. I see Clifford's description as very relevant in my research projects. Whenever I go to the field, i.e., among the local communities, local and emic knowledge of the "natives" clearly positions them as "those who know", while I, i.e., a researcher-outsider, am only a passing, fleeting presence, a guest (Ligus, 2009, 2013a, 2013b, 2019). An attempt to create knowledge through grass-root social practices, a practical kind of knowledge, one that is both applicable and theoretically grounded, while also being universal, was made by Tax (2010), who separated those who created knowledge from those who merely managed it (Foley, 2010). Conceptual sources of participatory research are rooted in Paul Freire's (2000) description of the process of raising awareness, defining the character of the oppression one is affected with, as well as the ways to break free from it (Tyson McCrea, 2014), while methodological foundations were laid by Kurt Lewin (2010 [1946]). Defining the research problem, collecting data and writing reports with no or little involvement of research participants amounts to excluding research subjects from the process of research. A range of critical scholars deeply involved in progressive social movements and environmental reforms is becoming wider, promoting the paradigm of participatory research in action, with extended epistemology and different kind of locally generated knowledge (Heron & Reason, 1997; Park & Williams, 1999; McTaggart, 2009; Červinková & Gołębniak, 2010; Kemmis, 2010; Červinková, 2019; Gulczyńska & Granosik, 2014; Tyson McCrea, 2014; Erickson, 2019).

F. Erickson (2019) designed the following continuum of participatory research models (Fig. 1):
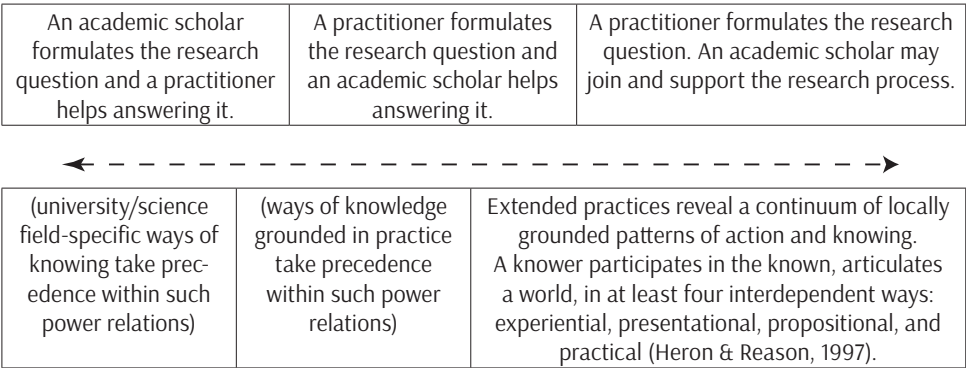
Fig. 1. A Continuum of Participatory Research Models

An academic scholar formulates the research question and a practitioner helps answering it.	A practitioner formulates the research question and an academic scholar helps answering it.

← – →

(university/science field-specific ways of knowing take precedence within such power relations)	(ways of knowledge grounded in practice take precedence within such power relations)
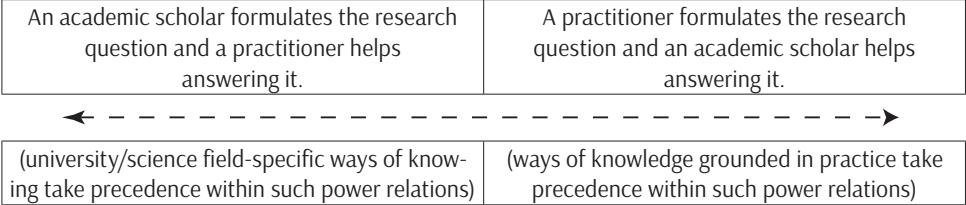
Source: Erickson, 2019, pp. 213–237.

If we include those projects that are initiated as grass-root actions by the research participants and where the researcher is 'co-opted' after prior consultation with the authors of the research process, i.e., she or he becomes part of intersubjective, polyphonic activities, the third case scenario would radically alter the roles of both research participants and the researcher, turning them into subjects co-creating common knowledge within the participatory action research paradigm, just as Heron and Reason suggested (1997).[8]

Fig. 2. Modified Version of F. Erickson's Classification: A Continuum of Participatory Research Models

An academic scholar formulates the research question and a practitioner helps answering it.	A practitioner formulates the research question and an academic scholar helps answering it.	A practitioner formulates the research question. An academic scholar may join and support the research process.

← – →

(university/science field-specific ways of knowing take precedence within such power relations)	(ways of knowledge grounded in practice take precedence within such power relations)	Extended practices reveal a continuum of locally grounded patterns of action and knowing. A knower participates in the known, articulates a world, in at least four interdependent ways: experiential, presentational, propositional, and practical (Heron & Reason, 1997).

An original presentation based on the model suggested by Erickson (2019), Heron & Reason (1997).

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8   **Experiential knowing** – i.e., direct encounter: feeling and imaging the presence of some energy, entity, person, place, process or thing; knowing through participative, empathic resonance with a being; creative shaping of a world through the transaction of imaging it, perceptually and in other ways. **Presentational knowing** emerges from and is grounded in experiential knowing; evident in an intuitive grasp of our resonance with our world, symbolized in graphic, musical, vocal and verbal art-forms. **Propositional knowing** – knowing in conceptual terms that something is the case; knowledge by description of some energy, entity, person, place, process or thing; expressed in statements and theories. Propositions themselves are carried by presentational forms – the sounds or visual shapes; ultimately grounded in our experiential articulation of a world. **Practical knowing** – knowing how to do something, demonstrated in a skill or competence; presupposes a conceptual grasp of principles and standards of practice, presentational elegance and experiential grounding in the situation (Heron & Reason, 1997, p. 281).

Tyson McCrea (2014) points out to the differences in the research subjects' experience, in cases when knowledge and processes are managed by researchers, and the shifts that occur when these two respective (researchers and research participants) positions are democratized and involve partnership. Within the classic approach to social research, research subjects are often victims of social stigmatization. Besides, the culturally conditioned position of scholars makes research subjects eager to satisfy them and provide them with information the participants think scholars expect. Frequently, participating in research gives rise to personal/group expectations that the scholar is unable to satisfy, which disappoints research participants. Participants often clearly express that they imagine their life conditions to improve due to research (Tyson McCrea, 2014). Participatory action research changes the focus and builds self-awareness of all partners in a polyphonic interaction, which leads to identity changes (Erikson, 2004; Freire, 2000; Goffman, 1963). Interactive (co)construction of research participants' identity in action occurs on at least two levels. The first relates to the way in which people perceive and treat each other and when their self-esteem and authenticity are strengthened, and their creativity has ample space to manifest. The second level consists in polyphonic generation and exchange of knowledge within joint negotiation of meanings by the interacting partners (research participants and academics), which is important because social and behavioral research impacts academic and public knowledge, as well as social policy (Tyson McCrea, 2014).

"NATIVE RESEARCHERS"

In the Polish language there is no term for "native researchers". As Appadurai (1999) stated, no scholar hailing from the West thinks of herself or himself as a native, because in their mind, the tradition puts this term firmly within the realm of exotic groups, who in the past were also called "primitive", which, by the way, is a source of embarrassment to contemporary anthropologists. However, the term "native" has evolved over time, from a positivist, "natural" understanding of the term towards its instrumental, categorizing and discrediting meaning, reserved for professional anthropologists. Nowadays, the "disenchanted" native denotes a person who was born in a given place and is part of the place that is being observed and described by the researcher. When ascribing the status of a "native", the most significant factor is the belief that enslavement can also manifest in intellectual and moral dimensions. The idea that natives are prisoners of their ways of thinking and that there are limits to what they can know, feel and believe, prevents

scholars from breaking free of the prevalent research patterns that continuously promote positivist research agenda (Appadurai, 1999).

My usage of the term "native" is meant to encourage its positive meaning, relating to the authenticity of its referent, knowing their own tradition – a person who, through diverse cultural tools, has access to diverse kinds of knowledge, understands the unique character of the place where they live, with which she or he is connected, and due to which she or he can decode local knowledge (Geertz, 2005 [1983]). The indigeneity of natives makes them into "experts" of the locally generated scripts, without which the academic scholar is unable to reach her own interpretations (Heron & Reason, 1997).

REFLECTIONS ON RESEARCH AND EXTENDING THE THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK TO ACCOUNT FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The theoretical basis of the *Migrating Biographies* project was grounded in the interpretive and critical paradigm, but the dynamics of the research process extended these foundations to include the participatory paradigm, where qualitative research strategy reinforces the inductive process of generating empirical material and extends epistemology, so as to include new kinds of knowledge (Heron & Reason, 1997). The intended method of data collection was autobiographical narrative interview based on Schütze (2012a, 2012b, [1981, 1983]) focusing on life histories that contain information about biographical learning processes, based on individual, reflexive organization of experience, knowledge and skills, including biographically grounded social ties and processes, and collective knowledge and practices. Such processes may be understood in terms of "institutionalization", i.e., building social networks, within which cultural practices crystallize (Berger & Luckmann, 2010; Alheit, 2011). Since the method developed by Schütze is not merely a technique, but also a coherent theoretical and analytical framework, working on the empirical material requires the scholar to attend simultaneously to the questions "what?" (is the narrator talking about) and "how?" (is the narrator telling their life story) and to follow subsequent analytical "steps", by which "new knowledge" is being generated and theorized (Schütze, 2012a; Kaźmierska, 2012; Piotrowski, 2016; Czyżewski, 2016, Waniek, 2019). Schütze's method is applied from the very beginning of fieldwork, starting with the selection of research participants. I selected the narrators based on their biographical, unique characteristics of being witnesses of events that happened before 1946 or being the "medium" through which the inter-generational experience of double migration

(Galicia – Bosnia, Bosnia – Poland) was communicated. The next step involved interviews and their detailed transcription (including the interaction markers and non-verbal and silenced messages), which constituted key material to be used with the tools developed by Schütze (see footnote 9).

EMPIRICAL MATERIAL, RESEARCHER'S FLEXIBILITY AND MODIFIED INTERVIEW SITUATION

The empirical material consists of narrative interviews collected from 25 project participants. The interviews were conducted between March 2017 and November 2018 in the local communities located 60 km from Wrocław. All narrators (aged 20–82) belong to the families that in 1946 were resettled from the former Yugoslavia to the western lands which were incorporated into Poland. Some methodological obstacles manifested while the author was arranging and conducting the interviews, and eventually only 10 interviews can be classified according to the methodological approach of Schütze.[9] Other participants gave narrative interviews, but their analysis and interpretation can only be supported by some of Schütze's theoretical classifications and instruments (Prawda, 1989; Włodarek & Ziółkowski, 1990; Kaźmierska 1996, 1999, 2008, 2012, 2013, 2014b, 2018; Czyżewski, 1997, 2016; Schütze, 1997, 2012a, 2012b, 2016; Rokuszewska-Pawełek, 2002; Gałęziowski, 2019; Waniek, 2019). Among the collected empirical material there are 8 interviews conducted in pairs (with 16 participants). Such kind of encounters, a conversation within a triad, was arranged *ad hoc* by the narrators themselves. My interlocutors would surprise me by coming to arranged meetings with family members (granddaughter, daughter, brother, spouse, or cousin) and, being aware of their advanced age and the effort they had to make to arrive at our meeting,[10] I accepted the situation, knowing that even though I still would be able to selectively use the analytical toolbox developed by Schütze, basic premises of

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9 Transcribing an interview marks the beginning of a reconstructive work on the biographical processual structures: types of text, communication patterns, their representational and communicative functions, sequential description, transformation markers, interpretative patterns (preamble, coda, background structures, silences), cognitive structures, linguistic markers, parts evidencing biographical effort, argumentative commentaries, dominant processual structures (biographical patterns, actions, institutional patterns, trajectories, metamorphoses); the level of detail in description, interactive scenes, quotes from others; reconstructive passages, justifications and self-identity theories, the quality and kind of assessment of own life, distinguishing declarative and actual actions (Schütze, 2012a, pp. 141–278, 2012b, pp. 415–458).

10 Four interviews took place in a cultural centre, the venue chosen by my interlocutors. Other interviews, on the requests of the interviewees, were held in private apartments.

the interview methodology would not be satisfied. Due to such changes, I divided collected research material into two parts, which I decided to analyze separately, using two distinct analytical and interpretative methods. One consists of the methodology put forward by Schütze (2012a, 2012b), while the second involves elements of conversation analysis by Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson (1974) and the documentary method by Bohnsack (2004). Such "team" presence at the interview is itself analyzed and interpreted, since I understand it to constitute social practice that is meaningful for research participants. This grassroot, spontaneous modification of the interview setting by the research participants forced me to change my analytical toolbox, but also enriched the research with the perspective of "reading" of the social situation by the research subjects, putting them in a position of research process moderators. According to Atkinson and Delamont (2009 [2008]), it is more vital to recognize the significance of co-existing cultural facts, than apply such research and analytical strategy that would only selectively illustrate chosen social action. The form of collected data and analysis should, therefore, reflect the existing forms used within a specific social group, since they are the forms of local social action/life. Cataloguing their diversity and meaning held by the local community should be in line with the "functions" of these forms in a specific social and cultural environment. Researchers emphasize the need to be aware and to return to the systemic relations between interactive order, conversational order, presentation orders and the ordered characteristics of material culture, recognizing that qualitative research strives to render the autochthonous (native) way of organizing and "understanding" of the reality (Atkinson & Delamont, 2009, pp. 258–277).

REGAINING IDENTITY AND LOST KNOWLEDGE THROUGH PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH: A BIOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE OF A "NATIVE RESEARCHER"

Anna was the first narrator who agreed to be interviewed for the *Migrating Biographies* project. At the time of our conversation she was 55 and owned a small restaurant. For the last ten years she had been spending a month of her annual holiday in Bosnia, therefore, she was undergoing a long-term process of regaining unknown parts of her personal identity (Goffman, 1963) and reconstructing her family history. When I arranged a meeting with Anna I hoped that she would tell me her life history, but she surprised me with the narrative that reflected an individual cycle of action research that she had initiated on various occasions,

which she documented, reflected upon many times and in-depth, and that she had verified through her local social environment. Heron and Reason (1997) provided the following description of such a process:

> Cooperative inquiry – when people collaborate to define the questions they wish to explore and the methodology for that exploration (propositional knowing). Together or separately they apply this methodology in the world of their practice (practical knowing), which leads to new forms of encounter with their world (experiential knowing); and they find ways to represent this experience in significant patterns (presentational knowing), which feeds into a revised propositional understanding of the originating questions. Thus, co-researchers engage together in cycling several times through the four forms of knowing to enrich their congruence; that is, to refine the way they elevate and consummate each other, and to deepen the complementary way they are grounded in each other (p. 283).

For the purposes of this publication, I focus on the narrative ways used to reconstruct identity by the narrator, even though in the background of her story we see actions typical of participatory inquiry paradigm.[11]

Selected excerpts from the interview are illustrative of both "what?" and "how?", i.e., communicative patterns emerging from the narrative (argumentative and theorizing commentaries),[12] with which the narrator illustrates her identity-related identifications and reconstructs her family's history. At the same time, she reveals her action plan and the ways in which she collects and verifies knowledge.

In Anna's narrative structure there are dominant descriptions and argumentative comments, where the narrator focuses on her own activities over the last ten years, with references to previous life stages, cataloguing the "evidence" of the lost part of her identity. This narrative strategy may mean that the narrator is doing biographical work.[13] Collecting "evidence" is done in a very "soft" way. It is not only about documents, but also sensations, conversations, (self)observations, childhood memories, sounds, fragrances, chance encounters, and even a descrip-

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11   Research cycling is itself a fundamental discipline that leads toward critical subjectivity and a primary way of enhancing the validity of inquirers' claims to articulate a subjective-objective reality. There is also a range of further procedures that develop this effect. These include managing divergence and convergence within and between cycles, balancing reflection and action, challenging uncritical subjectivity and intersubjectivity, managing unaware projections and displaced anxiety, attending to the dynamic interplay of chaos and order, and securing authentic collaboration (for a full discussion of these, together with a set of radical skills of being and doing required during the action phases of the inquiry, see: Heron & Reason, 1997, p. 284).

12   The procedure of pragmatic refraction means recognizing communicative patterns such as: narrative, description, argumentative commentary, theoretical commentary (Piotrowski, 2016; Waniek, 2019).

13   See footnote 7.

tion of the location where her grandparents' house used to be. The narrative illustrates the ways in which she collects knowledge through expanded epistemology as propositional knowing, practical knowing, experiential knowing, and presentational knowing.

> So, when I went where my parents lived, Dragan showed us more or less where **our parents' house** used to be. We went there where you could expect the house once had been, because there were fruit trees there, old apple trees **were** there, grapevines, a **pear tree** just like mommy had told me. To tell the truth, I was **moved**, even though I had never been […], like […] I had never been emotionally involved, but it did move me. […] actually, we went to visit Dragan for three years […]. Later he passed away, **but we did make it in time**. (Unpublished transcripts collected by the author on March 13, 2017, lines 383–387)

Finding witnesses, people who accompanied their grandparents and parents, is for Anna a "living bridge" between the events that happened before 1946 and the present:

> […] I thought that my mother's neighbor is still alive. I learned this since **other** friends of my mom used to visit him, they also had lived in the same place before. So we knew that Dragan J., that was this neighbor's name, that he was still alive, is 80 something and that he is a person […] that you can come and visit and learn something, ask where your grandparents house used to be, and to tell some of the **histories** that happened there. (lines 162–166)

In Bosnia, Dragan told her the story about her grandfather, Jakob M., who was well respected for his unusual skills and assisting both Poles and Serbs. Emphasizing her grandfather's extraordinary characteristics constituted a "background structure" – an analytical element aiming to make the account credible, coherent, but also to reveal a hierarchy of recounted experiences (Piotrowski, 2016, p. 46). It turned out that social recognition saved the family from losing their house during the war, as it was about to be burned down by the Chetniks, but the Serbs persuaded them otherwise.

> Grandfather was a […] kind of a special person […], they called him the **majstor**. It is a person who can do many things. […] Starting with various veterinary tasks, through woodworking, repairs, […] grandfather also had an artistic flair, he liked to make things that people found beautiful and that please them. […] (lines 168–172)
>
> […] he made a wooden *kuglana*. *Kuglana* is something like *a bowling alley*, but here the main ball was attached with a string and hang from a tree, and with this ball you had to strike down other pins. […] It was a game that Serbs and Poles loved to play […]. (lines 187–190)

Anna is gathering knowledge about the place where her grandparents used to live in many different ways. She collects publications, mostly memoirs, diaries and original accounts of the inhabitants of Bolesławiec, Nowogrodziec, Ocice.[14] She collects family documents, photographs, talks to her mother (who is now 83, and who moved to the Lower Silesia at the age of 11). Anna wants to develop a more detailed knowledge about the birthplace of three generations of her ancestors, who moved from Galicia to Bosnia at the turn of the 19th and 20th century.

> I thought that it is something like <u>a bond with a place, some kind of intergenerational [bond]</u> […] because three generations lived there […]. (lines 421–423)

Following Anna's narrative, we can discern a "checklist", where the most basic question asked by the narrator is: "What is more substantial in me, Poland or Bosnia?"

> There is more sun there, and light and… it is difficult for me to say, how to describe it, but **I am also like this**, that I like sunshine, and hot weather, I think many people do, but… I don't drink strong alcohol, I have never learned to do that, but I like wine, <u>and Croatian wine tastes really good</u>. (lines 393–397)

On the other hand, Anna does not question her Polish roots, but on the symbolic level, she identifies with the culture represented by her grandmother, hailing from Bosnia, and her aunt, from Sarajevo. Biographical work that consists in Anna's (re)constructing and (de)constructing her identity, is a process of putting together the familiar and the unfamiliar pieces of family life, and of multiple attempts at verifying their sameness with a "pattern" based on biographical, social and collective memory (Kaźmierska, 2008). Anna's goal is to retrieve "lost knowledge" about her family, with which she identifies strongly. She recounts that the moment she formulated a wish to follow in her ancestors' footsteps, she started "re-calling" pieces of memories, but also representations of spaces that she had not known in person, but which she linked with the magical world of her aunts:

> I also am so very **sentimental** about Sarajevo, exactly because […] it makes me think about my **grandmother** and my aunts from Sarajevo, and this **Sarajevo** was always somehow present in my childhood, since […] these aunts from Sarajevo sometimes visited us, brought me chewing gum shaped like a cigarette, brought some **figs** ☺, which for me were […] such good **fruit**, that […] I remember – even

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14 In the second part of the bibliography section I include a list of publications resulting from grassroot initiatives, research and local studies pursued by people from families that came from former Yugoslavia.

now – what kind of **treat** it was […]. I remember that the aunts brought **coffee**. It was <u>this coffee from Sarajevo</u>. Grandmother also asked for this special kind of coffee pot, the so-called **cezve**. (lines 412–427)

Anna recalls the Sunday wake-up routine her father used to have, when he set the radio to the station that played Yugoslavian folk songs, "[…] and together with [her] sister, they used to cover their head with their blankets, pretending it had nothing to do with them…" (lines 90–100). The narrator is critical of herself, as if she felt guilty of not being interested in her family's history before. The language she uses in that part of the interview, repetitions and interruptions, point out to a trajectory experience (Schütze):[15]

In fact, […] it was very late, I can say so. In fact, earlier I was <u>not very</u> interested, in fact <u>I missed the family moment</u> […] on my father's side. In fact, I know **very little**, about my father's family, my father died in 1993, […] so […] I only realized all this a bit too late. (lines 34–40)

Anna does not yet clearly say what made her, ten years ago, focus so intensely on exploring her family's history, but there are – in the narrative structure itself – the "vignettes", images frozen in, mostly sensory, memory (Modrak, 2016), which serve Anna as a justification for her personal process of collecting "evidence of" and "growing old enough to" start questioning her own identity and imbuing it with knowledge about her family members, which was, according to Anna, "lost forever". A significant part of the family identity turns out to be the language used by Anna's parents and grandparents. When she was a child, Anna's parents spoke a language that sounded strange (with off-sounding words such as *tamo, trajno, majstor, zdrawo*) and only when she confronted it with the real image of Bosnia, it acquired a meaning, just like the previously imperceptible intergenerational communication of the Serbian and Croatian language, which in "post-Yugoslav" families took the form of singing and music encounters of people who came from former Yugoslavia.

The description of scene-like features of events ("scenes from the past") constitute an introduction to the narrator's sharing the experience of an inner ethical imperative (Tischner, 2000), which made the history of her life and her identity dilemmas become meaningful only when linked, and in the light of, memories of people who were close to her, the local community, recurrent visits to Bosnia and work done jointly with the Association of Re-emigrants from Bosnia and their Descendants and Friends (established in 2011):

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15 *Trajectory of suffering* is one of the processual structures identified by Schütze, recognizable through specific linguistic markers (see more in: Schütze, 2012a, 2012b).

☺ generally speaking, the whole history of our journey […] was so […] well so **interesting**, because there was a moment when I really wanted to go there. It was for me such a **strange** feeling, because earlier I had no wish to go. It seemed to me […] that it did not matter, whether I went there or to some other place. However, there came a moment when I really wanted to go there, just like that. (lines 142–145)

CONCLUSIONS

Anna's narrative is an example of patters of activities that the descendants from families who came from Yugoslavia undertake, either individually or collectively. Those who actively document their family history mention feeling a strong ethical impulse (Tischner, 2000). They do not act alone, but support each other through formal institutions, such as the Association, or they initiate "private" forms of research, where they also support each other. Selected forms of their activities, which definitely possess the potential of knowledge/learning, include documenting family histories for their own benefit, which gained momentum and became particularly visible since 2000 (Strauchold & Nowosielska-Sobel, 2007).

Local communities that reconstruct migration experience of the turn of the 19th and 20th century and during post-war period, are not the only examples of pro-citizen grassroot activities. Such examples are plentiful, not to mention different types of national programs, such as "Thematic Villages" or "Intentional Villages",[16] which make references to social and cultural heritage. There are also other, original grassroot initiatives involving informal groups pursuing their social needs (for example, the community using the website www.andreovia.pl). However, when I think about research participants from small local communities prior to 2004 (the year when borders controls were lifted and Poland joined the EU), I see how people have changed over time, especially those who were shy to agree (or not) to be interviewed – their self-esteem used to be low, and, frequently, they had considered their life stories to be of no significance. They were not very keen on me recording the interviews. Today, they freely express their opinions, are interested in sharing, and if their local social standing is high, they have already been asked multiple times to recount their biographies, both by academics and by the local organizations or school students. They also may have initiated many of such local activities, once they had experienced their empowered identities. I would even risk claiming that within a small local community in the Western

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16   Thematic Villages and Intentional Villages are Polish small local community programs launched in 2000 (see: www.wioskizpomyslem.pl; www.wioskitematyczne.pl).

Territories it is increasingly difficult to find a narrator who could, in line with the method designed by Schütze, tell the story of her or his life spontaneously and for the first time. I do realize that my remarks related to the figure of an assertive local community member have not been supported by in-depth research, but based on my field notes, although exactly this process of developing social participation, with an emphasis on researcher-cum-participant in the area of andragogy, seems to play an important role in existing social practices.

Concluding questions:

• Are we witnessing the emergence of a socially involved, pro-citizen "new narrator", who has already shared her or his life story on multiple occasions and who has made grassroot, individual attempts at "describing" local history by intuitively adopting the Participatory Inquiry Paradigm?
• Can we use the term "native researcher" to denote a person having an in-depth knowledge of local cultural practices, who due to the emic perspective can recognize and understand local scripts and non-verbal messages, organizes/participates in research carried out in a given locality?
• Do we see new "social/research awareness" developing within small local communities? Is it something more than amateurs, collectors, chroniclers, aficionados?

I put forward a hypothesis that contemporary social and cultural transformations, which started along with the political transformation over the last thirty years, have generated and provided space for voices of new type of narrators – active, assertive, courageous in taking action, having an emic perspective on local contexts – someone who can, therefore, become a "native researcher", bound to a place, but not enslaved by it (Appadurai, 1999; Lincoln & Denzin, 2009, p. 667). "Native researchers" can be creative originators of new forms of research on daily life of communities and (research) problems initiated by participants/actors/researchers. "Native researchers" are not exclusively local leaders, but also "activists"/aficionados/inspiring figures deeply rooted within their local public space, initiating collective inquiries. Their competences and educational potential, as well as the way in which they may accept an invitation to join research projects, and thus get involved in the process of "academic" inquiry, transform/facilitate/impact the quality and manner in which empirical material is collected, setting new challenges for the researcher:

So, within the participative worldview the primary purpose of human inquiry is practical: our inquiry is our action in the service of human flourishing. Our knowing of the world is consummated as our action in the world, and participatory research is thus essentially transformative. Although some inquiry projects may be primarily information and result in propositional knowing, transformational projects are primary […] suggested that a significant purpose of inquiry in our times is to heal the split that characterizes modern existence, and suggests that such healing practice will have a sacred dimension: To heal means to make whole: we can only understand our world as a whole if we are part of it; as soon as we attempt to stand outside, we divide and separate. In contrast, making whole necessarily implies participation: one characteristic of a participative worldview is that the individual person is restored to the circle of community and the human community to the context of the wider natural world. To make whole also means to make holy: another characteristic of a participatory worldview is that meaning and mystery are restored to human experience, so that the world is once again experienced as a sacred place.

(Heron & Reason, 1997, p. 288).

In terms of pedagogical and andragogic theory and practice, this seems to be significant, especially if we take into account the scarcity of research exploring regional connections between constitution of individual and collective identity, and generating models of adult-oriented education that can support local development based on heritage and/or (lack) of cultural continuity, as is the case of areas located along the Polish western border.

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Appendix
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