Innocent Performance?
Ethics and Politics in Theatre-Based Migration Research with Undocumented Children in South Africa

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March 2017

Abstract

Calls for enhanced ethics standards in research with (forced) migrants are expressed in the 'triple imperative' which demands the production of policy relevant knowledge in a truly ethical way. Critics further argue that policy-oriented research is limited in its effects as it overlooks the perspectives of those outside existing categories. This dissertation interrogates these discourses through a South African case study by drawing on (forced) migration, performance and childhood studies. Specifically, it explores a) in how far a theatre-based methodology fulfils the demands of the triple imperative, b) how undocumented migrant children experience their lives in South Africa within the context of increasingly restrictive migration policies and hostile attitudes towards foreigners and c) in which way theatre-based research produces (policy) relevant results. Based on an empirical theatre-based study that consisted of a series of workshops with undocumented migrant children of four different African nationalities, this dissertation illustrates firstly that theatre-based research fulfils enhanced ethics standards by producing reciprocity and honouring participants' ownership. Secondly, it shows that this methodological approach creates in-depth meaning by enabling embodied knowledge to surface. Thirdly, the study demonstrates that theatre produces ethically, aesthetically and policy relevant outcomes through 'affective transactions'. The dissertation offers three main contributions to the social sciences. Theoretically, it advances the debate on social research ethics by arguing that ethical research practice should derive from moral values rather than from guidelines or people's demographic characteristics. Furthermore, it proposes an integrated enhanced ethics approach to research. Methodologically, the dissertation expands the repertoire of (forced) migration studies by demonstrating that theatre-based research is conducive to the triple imperative. Practically, it provides policy relevant knowledge on undocumented migrant children in South Africa by revealing that participants display 'performative agency' to confront and resist their challenges as unaccompanied/separated, foreign and undocumented children.

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Acknowledgements

I feel honoured and humbled by the help of the many people who gave their time, resources and energy to support me in carrying out this project and in bringing it to a successful conclusion.

First of all, I would like to thank the participants of the 'Innocent Voices' group without whom this project would not have happened: Aetez, Freddy, Jasmine, JMV, Maestro, Mekazi, Melody and Rebecca as well as those who were only able to attend sporadically. Thank you for committing yourselves to this project despite many odds such as transport problems and the cold winter weather. I greatly appreciate the fact that you sacrificed other Sunday commitments with your families in favour of attending the workshops. Above all, thank you for your trust in me despite the uncertainty of the purpose of it all. Your dedication and creativity made 'Innocent Voices' a unique experience for all of us. I hope that the positive memories you carried away made up for the disappointment that the project had to come to an end. I tried my best to represent your contributions adequately and assume full responsibility for any inaccuracies or mistakes that may have occurred unintentionally.

I would also like to thank all caregivers for allowing the children to participate in this project and for supporting their workshop attendance for a prolonged period of time, sometimes to the detriment of family activities.

I would further like to express my gratitude to Nelson Musonda for believing in the project and for giving his energy, patience and time to facilitate many workshops. A big thank you also to Thando Doni for jumping in spontaneously and bringing in new energy at a crucial point and to Kathy Streek for her practical and emotional support and advice from both near and far throughout the duration of the project. In addition, I greatly appreciated the professional advice given by Dr. Ananda Breed, Reader at the Centre for Performing Arts Development (CPAD) at the University of East London, in the early stages of the project when I was grappling with the challenges of running a theatre project with teenagers. Thank you very much for your help.

The implementation of the project was only made possible thanks to the generous help of the Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town. In this regard a special thanks goes to director Miranda Madikane for her unwavering support in offering space, equipment and resources as well as the availability of the centre's staff and volunteers. I particularly

appreciated the help given by the Advocacy team, Marilize Ackermann, Charlotte Manikom, Sindisiwe Moyo and Corey Johnson who provided essential contacts in the early stages of the project and kindly kept me updated on legislative and policy developments over the years. I admire their continued dedication to addressing the legal and social injustices faced by undocumented migrant children in South Africa. Thank you also to the guesthouse staff for opening up the hall for us every Sunday. Finally, I would like to extend my gratitude to the volunteers who spontaneously helped out at the final performance and contributed to making the event a success.

Without my supervisors Martin Jones and Professor Paul Gready at the Centre for Applied Human Rights at the University of York this study would not have taken its current shape. I am endlessly grateful that they supported my unconventional idea of using theatre to undertake a Politics PhD. Martin, thank you especially for your valuable feedback, for your trust in my abilities and for easing my concerns and self-doubts from early on in the process.

By covering my PhD fees, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) allowed me to take up the PhD offer at the University of York. An additional ESRC overseas field research grant as well as a Research Mobility Grant from the World University Network enabled me to implement the theatre-based study in the way that I had envisioned. I really appreciate their support of such interdisciplinary arts-based research at a time when measurable research outcomes are often rated more highly than intangible ones. Furthermore, I am grateful for having been awarded a PhD scholarship through the EUSA_ID mobility programme, funded by the European Commission within the framework of the Erasmus Mundus Partnerships programme. This award provided me with the opportunity of spending a prolonged period at the Institute for Social Development at the University of the Western Cape where I finalized the writing up of the dissertation.

Katja Betts and Helen Singer dedicated many hours to reading every word of this dissertation and made some much appreciated comments; Lodi Paul Ingha kindly offered his technical skills to anonymise the photographs. I owe you all my deep gratitude.

Throughout the course of this study, many PhD colleagues, housemates and friends in York and in Cape Town were supportive during my long working hours and at times of stress, they attended my presentations and helped out with practicalities. I cannot list

all of you by name, but I thank every one of you for your support and for making this process enjoyable and fun.

I would further like to thank my brother Lorenz and my sister Freya for always being there for me and remaining close despite the distance. Thank you also to my friends Karin, Katja, Jule, Steffi, Vroni and Feli for your encouragement, care and friendship through the years. Pedzisai reassures me in moments of doubt, makes me laugh in moments of despair and teaches me to worry less. You have given me the strength to continue and the courage to trust in myself from the moment when you stepped into my life. I cannot thank you enough for that.

Finally, I am grateful to my parents without whose trust and support I would not have had the means nor the courage to embark on this doctoral journey. Thank you for your unconditional care and love and for your patience during the past four years in which you continued supporting and believing in me even at times when you were unsure whether I was still heading in the right direction.

To all the undocumented migrant children in South Africa and elsewhere: I greatly admire your strength and endurance and hope that the goal of this dissertation, to turn oppression into respect for dignity and rights, will eventually come true.

Author's declaration

I herewith declare that this work is entirely my own and has not previously been presented for another degree at the University of York or any other institution. Where the work of others is referred to, it is appropriately cited.

Part of this work has previously been presented in the following publication:

Lena Sophia Opfermann (2015): Testing the ‘triple imperative’: A drama-based exploration of migrant children’s views, *Transnational Social Review*, 5 (3), 224–240. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/21931674.2015.1082777

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

> *Social justice is not an instrumental objective of beauty but part of its 'secret power'.*
>
> *Joe Winston 2006, p. 299*

This interdisciplinary study applies a theatre-based methodology to explore the experiences of undocumented migrant children living in Cape Town, South Africa. The aim is to critically explore and further develop the idea that research with (forced) migrants can, and should, follow enhanced ethics standards in order to produce results that are academically sound and (policy) relevant. The study is situated broadly within three fields of social science research, all of which are multidisciplinary themselves: (Forced) migration studies, childhood studies and theatre/performance studies.[1]

This introductory chapter introduces key ideas and concepts as well as background information to the applied methodology that will guide the reader through the dissertation. The chapter consists of four sections. The first section introduces the concept of the 'triple imperative' which provides the rationale for this study. It further defines the three principal research questions. The second section offers an insight into the context of the case study. It outlines inconsistencies in the legislative and policy framework applicable to unaccompanied, separated and undocumented migrant children in South Africa and illustrates the prevailing societal and institutionalised hostility towards black African foreigners in South Africa. The third section introduces the methodology. It describes the implementation of the case study through a workshop series and explains how the data was analysed using a variety of coding methods. The final section lays out the structure of the dissertation and summarizes the main arguments of each chapter.

[1] The parenthetical use of the terms '(forced) migrant' and '(forced) migration' aims to highlight that the distinction between migrants who are forced to leave their home and those who migrate voluntarily is often fluid. I decided to maintain the term 'forced' as the literature used for this study is largely drawn from the so-called field of Forced Migration Studies. Chapter 2.2.1 presents further insight into a debate among (forced) migration scholars concerning the use of these terms.

1.1 Research, ethics and art

This study revolves around two main concerns: A wish to enhance social research ethics and to improve the situation of undocumented migrant children in South Africa. This section lays out the rationale of these two aspects in more detail and explains how the study intends to pursue its aims.

(Forced) migration researchers commonly believe that research conducted with or about (forced) migrants should not only be academically rigorous, but also contribute to improving the lives of the people being researched. This 'dual imperative' (Jacobsen and Landau 2003b) derives from the assumption that (forced) migrants are generally 'worse off' than the researchers and that therefore, researchers have a moral duty to address and ameliorate the plight of 'the researched' (Turton 1996). The dual imperative is generally understood to be achieved by producing policy relevant results. While this approach has been widely accepted, several scholars argue that researchers' intention to achieve change is not enough from a moral point of view. They argue that (forced) migration research, in addition to producing academically sound and policy relevant results, should also be genuinely ethical (e.g. Block et al. 2012; Dona 2007; Hugman, Bartolomei, and Pittaway 2011; Mackenzie, McDowell, and Pittaway 2007; Pittaway, Bartolomei, and Hugman 2010). Building on the dual imperative, these three demands have been named the 'triple imperative' (see Block et al. 2012, p. 84).

The following graph visualises the notion of the triple imperative. The pyramidal shape illustrates the hierarchical perception generally associated with the different demands. According to this understanding, the production of academic knowledge forms the base and thus the most solid aim. The second level represents the demand to produce knowledge that is not only academically valuable but also relevant for policy making. As described above, these two goals of (forced) migration studies are referred to as the 'dual imperative'. The demand for genuinely ethical research is located on top of the pyramid, similar to a decorative and morally desirable yet technically negligible addition to the first two levels.

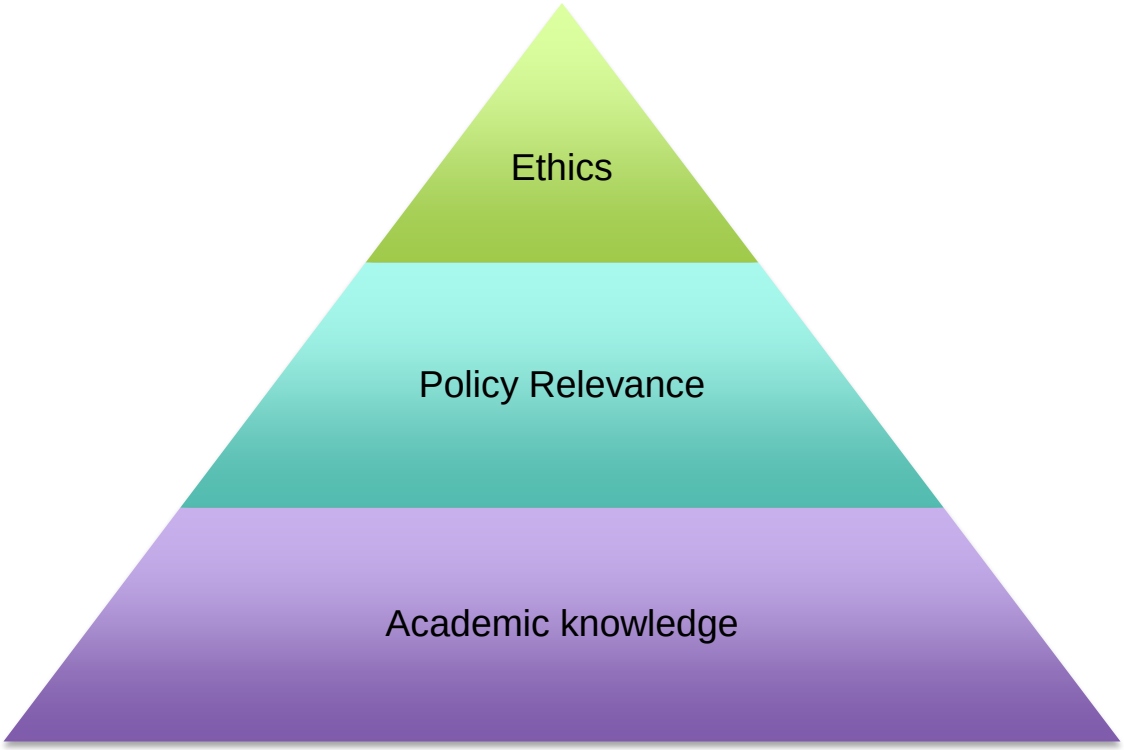

Figure 1 – The triple imperative (graph by Lena S. Opfermann)

The main objective of this study is to further explore the feasibility and legitimacy of meeting the triple imperative in a case study with undocumented migrant children. Considering that the production of policy relevant knowledge has already been widely recognized as a legitimate and desirable approach to (forced) migration research, I am particularly interested in expanding the knowledge of how the third element of the triple imperative, namely striving towards greater ethical integrity, can be interpreted and achieved. To this end, the study draws on the emergent field of arts-based research to explore the suitability of a theatre-based approach to exceed conventional ethics standards.

Arts-based research makes use of various art forms such as performance, visual art, creative writing, music and dance to collect, analyse, interpret, represent and disseminate data. As such, arts-based research

> *takes form in the hyphen between art and social science research. It creates a place where epistemological standpoints of artists and social science workers collide, coalesce, and restructure to originate something new and unique among research practices. (Finley 2008, p. 72f)*

Beyond producing knowledge, arts-based research has a clear political ambition to achieve social justice. Its underlying aim is “to revolutionize institutionalized classist,

racist, and colonializing ways of experiencing and discoursing about human experience" (Finley 2008, p. 72f).

Linking these radical ambitions to the aims of this study, my choice to use theatre as a research methodology was based on the assumption that theatre can meet the demands of the triple imperative to produce (policy) relevant academic knowledge in an ethical way. More specifically, I presumed that this approach would produce reciprocal outcomes and guarantee participants' ownership of the research process. These assumptions were based on the belief that a theatre-based approach allows for the recognition of participants as agents and experts concerning their own lives. I expected that such recognition would minimise power inequalities that exist between participants, facilitators and myself as the principal researcher due to differences in age, legal status, race and language skills among other factors. Furthermore I expected that the embodied way of communicating through theatre would allow participants to express themselves in a way that would lead to a deeper insight into their experiences than a conventional research approach through interviews, for instance, would allow.

The choice to focus my case study on undocumented and unaccompanied migrant children in South Africa derived from a critical need for in-depth knowledge on this population group as well as from my personal interest in this particular topic. While children have long been overlooked in (forced) migration studies, humanitarian agencies and researchers have in recent years paid increasing attention to the issue of children migrating alone. In Southern Africa, research on unaccompanied migrant children has so far largely focused on the dynamics and challenges related to the children's migration process and to the particular situation of children living in a state of transit in the border areas between South Africa and its neighbouring countries Zimbabwe and Mozambique (Chiguvare 2011; Fritsch, Johnson and Juska 2010; Mahati 2012a and 2012b; Save the Children UK 2007a, 2007b and 2009; Van der Burg 2006). Despite this interest in children's cross-border migration in the region, very few studies have so far investigated the situation of migrant children in South Africa's urban areas.[2]

In light of this shortcoming, this study explores how unaccompanied, separated and undocumented migrant children in Cape Town, South Africa's second largest city,

[2] An unpublished MA thesis (Schnell 2014) and Glynis Clacherty's book "The Suitcase Stories: Refugee Children Reclaim Their Identities" (Clacherty 2008) are notable exceptions.

experience and perceive their daily lives. In doing so, it addresses “a critical need (…) for research on unaccompanied children’s life situations based upon exploration of their own perspectives” (Wernesjö, 2012, p. 495). The choice of this case study is underlined by the assumption that a better understanding of migrant children’s views can enhance existing advocacy efforts and policies with the ultimate aim of improving the children’s situation and overall wellbeing.

My own interest in researching migrant children in South Africa developed during three years of working with the Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town, a non governmental organisation (NGO) that supports migrants and refugees through educational, welfare and advocacy programmes. As advocacy officer I provided social and legal assistance and advice to adult migrants and refugees as well as to unaccompanied and separated foreign children. Drawing on a rights discourse, I also lobbied policy makers for improved legislative provisions that would enhance the protection of migrant children in the country. My own engagement was part of a broader civil society effort directed towards this aim.

In this regard, a number of civil society organisations submitted proposals on the Refugee Amendment Bill to the South African parliament in 2010 (Parliamentary Monitoring Group 2010). They recommended that this legislation be amended in a way that would enhance the protection of unaccompanied foreign children in the country. Among other points they criticised that roles and responsibilities of governmental departments were unclear and suggested that one designated institution be made legally responsible for the documentation of such children:

> *It is unclear […] which department or officials are responsible to provide assistance to unaccompanied children. […] Unaccompanied children […] are turned away from Refugee Reception Offices and directed to officials at the Department of Social Development who are unsure of how to assist these children. (Lawyers for Human Rights 2010, p. 8)*

Others pointed out that “there is a gap in legislation to document unaccompanied foreign minors who do not qualify for refugee status in South Africa” (CPLO and SCCT 2010, p. 4). Despite persistent efforts by civil society organisations to address these challenges, unfortunately not much progress has been made since then.

On the contrary, a recent Green Paper on International Migration in South Africa, released by the Department of Home Affairs in June 2016, proposes changes that would severely tighten the immigration and refugee regime, thereby threatening to exacerbate the existing challenges (Department of Home Affairs 2016). In their

response to the Green Paper, several civil society organisations noted with concern that the Paper "fails to recognize and address the current gaps which affect children" (The Centre for Child Law et al. 2016, p. 6). In particular, they point out that the proposed creation of asylum seeker processing centres and administrative detention centres hint at the potential detention of migrant children and the systematic denial of their rights to education and health care (ibid., p. 7f).

Based on my insight into how the described legislative provisions and inconsistencies negatively affect the circumstances and opportunities of migrant children in South Africa, I argue that the treatment of migrant children through the current immigration and child protection system amounts to a form of oppression. While the level of intent by the South African state to systematically oppress migrant children is debatable, I use the term 'oppression' to indicate my understanding that undocumented migrant children are subjected to a range of legal and social constraints that severely inhibit their freedom and rights. This notion of oppression is reflected in the Declaration of Principles of the International Theatre of the Oppressed Organisation:

> *The oppressed are those individuals or groups who are socially, culturally, politically, economically, racially, sexually, or in any other way deprived of their right to Dialogue or in any way impaired to exercise this right. (International Theatre of the Oppressed Organisation, n.d.)*

This understanding of the situation faced by undocumented migrant children has fostered my ambition to advocate for change, both as a practitioner and a researcher. The relationship between advocacy and research in (forced) migration studies, however, is a contentious issue, often implying an 'either/or binary' (Voutira and Dona 2007). Karen Jacobsen and Loren B. Landau for example criticise 'advocacy research' as bad research practice that 'lacks rigor' (Jacobsen and Landau 2003a). At the same time they coined the term of the 'dual imperative' which clearly acknowledges and promotes researchers' aim to achieve change. In line with this, most (forced) migration researchers consider implicit or explicit advocacy as part of their responsibilities (Aidani 2013; Harrell-Bond and Voutira 2007; Mackenzie et al. 2007; Pittaway et al. 2010; Voutira and Doná 2007).

> *As such, forced migration research is 'partisan', rather than neutral, to the plight of the subjects of its investigation: studying the experiences, causes and consequences of displacement is done with the implicit or explicit intent to influence the development of better policies and programmes on the part of governments, non-governmental and inter-governmental agencies and refugee community organizations. (Dona 2007, p. 210)*

This stance is also reflected in Nicholas de Genova's account on militant migration research in which he argues that

> *there is no neutral vantage point. The migration researcher is a part of the field of struggle and a participant therein. A part of the conflict, a party to the dispute, one way or the other, s/he is therefore a partisan, a 'militant'. (De Genova 2013, p. 252)*

In this sense, and motivated by my prior advocacy engagement, I saw it as my personal responsibility and duty towards my research participants to aim at achieving a positive change in their circumstances. During the course of this study, this commitment led me to attend a number of roundtables and conferences concerning the documentation of undocumented foreign children in South Africa, as well as a workshop on ethical issues in researching (forced) migrants. In addition, I spoke to child protection experts and discussed potential legal options to regularise participants' status with a specialist immigration lawyer.

As the above mentioned submissions have shown, civil society in South Africa largely focuses on highlighting legal gaps and administrative failures resulting from inadequate government performance and increasingly restrictive immigration policies (Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town 2016; Schreier 2011; Willie and Mfubu 2016). Children themselves, however, are rarely given the opportunity to express their views in a way that would genuinely shape the solutions proposed on their behalf. As previously mentioned, this situation corresponds to a general shortcoming in (forced) migration studies which often fail to consider children as migrants in their own right. As a consequence, "the lack of research with independent child migrants has led to simplistic and inadequate assumptions about their lives" (Punch 2007b, p. 2; see also Boyden and Hart 2007). With this in mind, I argue that the views of unaccompanied, separated and undocumented migrant children in South Africa warrant more attention than they have received so far.

This study addresses the calls for enhanced ethics standards in (forced) migration research and the need for in-depth knowledge on migrant children's perspectives by investigating three principal research questions.

1.1.1 Research questions

The three principal research questions underlying this study speak directly to the three tiers of the triple imperative, namely to guarantee ethical research (question 1) which produces sound academic knowledge (question 2) that is policy relevant (question 3).

In this regard, the first question seeks to explore the assumption that a theatre-based research approach is conducive to conducting genuinely ethical research.

1) In how far does a theatre-based approach to (forced) migration studies fulfil enhanced ethics standards?

The study pursues two main objectives concerning enhanced research ethics. Firstly, it aims at achieving reciprocal benefits for the participants and the researcher. Secondly, it seeks to ensure participants' ownership of the research process in terms of generating and representing data.

The second research question addresses the need for in-depth knowledge on migrant children's lives within the South African context.

2) How do undocumented migrant children in Cape Town experience and perceive their situation?

This question is addressed through a list of sub-questions that refer to a number of topics relevant to the children's situation in Cape Town such as their daily lives, their awareness of their legal status, perceptions of their rights, experiences of xenophobia and hopes for the future.[3]

The third research question links the concern for research ethics to the (policy) relevance of the methodology applied in this study.

3) In which way are the results of theatre-based research (policy) relevant?

In responding to these research questions this study offers three main contributions to social science theory and practice.

Firstly, it advances debates and thinking about research ethics in the social sciences by combining different ethical aspects and demands into one integrated concept of enhanced ethics. Secondly, the theatre-based approach applied in this study expands the methodological repertoire of (forced) migration studies and other social science disciplines in terms of its particular epistemology, ethics and relevance. Thirdly, this

[3] See the list of sub-questions in appendix 1.

study contributes to knowledge on children in migration. The specific focus on unaccompanied, separated and undocumented migrant children who are outside of the South African asylum system addresses a critical need for further knowledge on migrant children in Southern Africa. From a practical point of view, this insight into the children's perspectives contributes to enhancing policies and advocacy directed towards improving migrant children's rights and wellbeing. While this study is focused on South Africa, the results are also relevant for other countries and contexts with similar groups of 'uncategorized' migrants.

The following section provides a brief overview of the policy and legal framework applicable to unaccompanied and separated migrant children in South Africa. Furthermore, it discusses prevailing societal attitudes towards foreigners more generally.

1.2 Migrant children in South Africa

The arrival of migrant children in South Africa needs to be seen in relation to a general increase in regional migration to the country since the end of the apartheid era in 1994.[4] In the past, migration to South Africa had largely been restricted to white migrants of European descent as well as to temporary migrant workers from South Africa's neighbouring countries (Peberdy 2009). The post-apartheid period has seen growing numbers of African refugees and migrants coming to the country, leading to the description of South Africa as a 'new migratory sub-system' in the region (Massey 2006, p. 57).

Children, like adults, migrate for a variety of reasons. These include economic and educational reasons, human trafficking, fleeing conflict, persecution or abandonment in their home country (Schreier 2011). Unaccompanied foreign children either enter South Africa without their parents or are abandoned once in the country. Separated children live in South Africa without their biological parents but with an adult relative who fulfils the function of the primary caregiver.[5] Since there is no coherent system to

[4] Throughout this dissertation, the terms 'foreigner' and 'migrant' are applied interchangeably in reference to the South African context, except where indicated otherwise. The terms are understood to include all persons with a non-South African nationality who either migrated to South Africa or were born there, including stateless persons.

[5] General Comment No. 6 of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2005): 7. "Unaccompanied children" (also called unaccompanied minors) are children, as defined in article 1 of the Convention, who have been separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so. 8. "Separated children" are children, as defined in article 1 of the Convention, who have been

register unaccompanied and separated migrant children who enter or reside in South Africa, their numbers are unknown. Some examples nevertheless point to the scale of the phenomenon.

The results of an internal review of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) found for example that the organisation assisted close to 8000 unaccompanied migrant children in the border area between Zimbabwe and South Africa between 2006 and 2009 (International Organization for Migration 2011). Out of a total of 20,000 assisted children, this constitutes by far the highest number of children assisted by the IOM in any geographical area around the world. Another example is a survey conducted by the Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town in 2015 which showed that 4% of all children in residential care facilities in the Western Cape Province had a foreign nationality (Sloth-Nielsen and Ackermann 2016). 80% of these foreign children 'had no birth certificate or document which would enable a claim to any particular nationality' (ibid.). While the presented examples are far from providing an adequate and comprehensive picture in terms of numbers, they demonstrate the existence of unaccompanied and undocumented foreign children in South Africa.

1.2.1 Legislative provisions and inconsistencies

The policy and legal landscape concerning international migration in South Africa has been under governmental review for several years. In this regard, existing laws are being amended, regulations and new legislative provisions are drafted and debated on an ongoing and protracted basis. As previously mentioned, the most recent proposal is a Green Paper on International Migration in South Africa, released by the Department of Home Affairs in June 2016. For purposes of practicality, this thesis considers legislative changes and policy developments until 30 September 2016.

Two pieces of national legislation govern the entry, stay and departure of foreign nationals in South Africa, the Refugee Act No. 130 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa 1998) and the Immigration Act No.13 of 2002 (Republic of South Africa 2002). Persons who come to South Africa with the intention to apply for asylum fall under the Refugee Act, all others under the Immigration Act. Unaccompanied foreign children who appear to qualify for refugee status can, assisted by an adult, lodge an asylum application at

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separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver, but not necessarily from other relatives. These may, therefore, include children accompanied by other adult family members.

one of three refugee reception offices currently open to newcomers in the country (Durban, Pretoria and Musina).

Foreign children who do not appear to qualify for refugee status can only be documented according to the immigration status of their biological parents or legally appointed guardian. Migrant children born in South Africa to an undocumented foreign mother and children staying with an adult who is neither their biological parent nor their legal guardian thus have few options to legalise their stay in terms of the Immigration Act (Willie and Mfubu 2016). As a consequence of this legislative gap many migrant children in South Africa remain undocumented. Despite the urgency of this issue, the new Green Paper on International Migration in South Africa neither acknowledges nor addresses these challenges (Department of Home Affairs 2016).

A court judgement from July 2015 deals with the case of migrant children whose caregivers hold a refugee or asylum seeker status (Republic of South Africa 2015). In such cases, the Department of Home Affairs requires a Children's Court inquiry to be conducted through a social worker in order to determine whether the adult 'who claims responsibility over the child is a fit and proper person to do so' (ibid., para 11). As the following excerpt shows, the court judgement confirmed the view held by civil society that this lengthy procedure does not respect the best interest of the concerned children.

> *While I agree that there are inherent risks associated with documenting separated children as 'dependants' of adult refugees or asylum seekers without any preceding investigation, there is a higher risk if that is not done.*
> *Insisting on a prior investigation through the process of Children's Court […] might actually result in the mischief the opposing respondents are concerned about – child abduction and trafficking. This is so because pending that process, the child is undocumented, invisible and untraceable within the database of the Department of Home Affairs. (Republic of South Africa 2015, para 15)*

The court thus declared that separated children are to be recognized as dependants of their primary caregivers (ibid., para 28). While this judgement constitutes a positive development, its practical reach is limited. In many cases, for example, migrant children are unable to prove their family relationship, especially when children do not possess birth certificates attesting their age and their parents' identity. Furthermore, children who are unaccompanied by any adult or whose caregivers do not hold a refugee or asylum seeker status or are undocumented, continue being unable to legalise their stay (Willie and Mfubu 2016).

In such cases, the children remain not only undocumented and unregistered by the state, but the relationship between the children and their caregiver also remains informal.[6] As a result of the informality of the care relationship, caregivers cannot easily be held accountable for their actions even if these are not in line with the children's best interests.[7] The need to formalize care relationships between adults and migrant children has been recognized by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in the General Comment No. 6 (2005) on the Treatment of Unaccompanied and Separated Children Outside their Country of Origin:

> *States should appoint a guardian or adviser as soon as the unaccompanied or separated child is identified and maintain such guardianship arrangements until the child has either reached the age of majority or has permanently left the territory and/or jurisdiction of the State. (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child 2005, para 33)*

The role of the guardian would be to ensure that the child's best interest is considered in all actions taken in relation to the child. While recognizing the 'best interest principle' of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the South African legislation does not provide for any mandatory guardianship for unaccompanied and undocumented migrant children.

The Children's Act No. 38 of 2005 (Republic of South Africa 2005) regulates the protection of children in South Africa through the Department of Social Development. The Children's Act applies to all children in the country without distinguishing between South African and foreign children. As such, children who are found to be 'in need of care and protection' according to the act, shall be placed in alternative care on the basis of a Children's Court placement order. This order is sometimes used by children without other forms of documentation as a proof of identification to access basic rights such as education and health care. However, the court order is not a legal identity document in itself and does not substitute a formal documentation issued by the Department of Home Affairs. A further challenge is that many undocumented children whose families cannot be traced or reunited remain in alternative care until they reach majority age. They then become undocumented adult migrants liable to deportation. In view of this challenge, Ncumisa Willie and Popo Mfubu warn that "South Africa's approach to foreign children provides no durable long term solutions for minors, a

[6] In this context, I understand 'informal care relationship' to mean that the care arrangement is not legally registered or recognized. A foster care arrangement by contrast would be understood as a formal care relationship.
[7] Potential consequences of such situations for migrant children are highlighted in chapter 5.

situation that leaves them in a legal lacuna once they reach the age of majority" (Willie and Mfubu 2016, p. 424).

In 2015, the Department of Social Development issued *Standard Operating Procedures for the tracing, reunification or alternative care placements of unaccompanied and separated children in South Africa (Department of Social Development 2015)*. With regard to the described challenges faced by foreign children, however, the guidelines are unclear and inconsistent. They mention that foreign children who do not possess a birth certificate and are unregistered and undocumented can have their age estimated through the Children's Court in order to determine that they are children. Apart from this, the procedures do not provide any further steps to ensure that the children are assisted in obtaining a legal document. The procedures also state that unaccompanied and separated children are "presumed to be 'in need of care and protection' (…) and should be identified as children in need of intervention" (Department of Social Development 2015, 5.1). Despite this presumption, however, children who live with an informal adult caregiver and have their basic needs such as shelter and nutrition covered, are in practice rarely considered to be 'in need of care and protection', even if they lack legal documentation.

According to the Standard Operating Procedures the preference is for all children to be reunited with their families (Department of Social Development 2015, 5.3). This is said to be particularly important in the case of foreign children as it "will prevent the situation of the child staying in South African alternative care programmes until he/she reaches 18 years and then becoming an 'illegal citizen' without South African identification" (ibid.). In practice, however, family reunification is often difficult as the tracing of family members is a complex and often lengthy process, especially on an international level. Tracing efforts by individual social workers often remain unsuccessful due to a lack of knowledge and resources needed for this task (Sloth-Nielsen and Ackermann 2016).

The legal and policy inconsistencies described in this section place unaccompanied and separated foreign children at a high risk of becoming stateless, especially when family members cannot be traced and no birth certificate or other form of identification exists. In order to address and correct some of those challenges, civil society and scholars have adopted a rights-based approach that focuses above all on the need to correct legislative and policy shortcomings such as the lack of "interdepartmental

strategies, implementation mechanisms, application of Constitutional imperatives and provision of appropriate legal representation for undocumented foreign migrant children in South Africa" (Van der Burg 2006, p. 83). The following statement by a refugee rights lawyer further exemplifies the rights-based narrative and understanding of the issue:

> *The key protection gaps […] include difficulties with or lack of suitable entry by foreign unaccompanied or separated children into South Africa's child care and protection system, the unclear interface between the refugee regime and the child protection regime, inability to access legal documentation, and the poor level of knowledge of the legal and protection frameworks by government and frontline service providers. (Schreier 2011)*

Among others, the author points out that the state violates its obligation to guarantee a child's identity according to Article 8 of the UNCRC, which states:

> *1. States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to* ***preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations*** *as recognized by law without unlawful interference.*
> *2. Where a child is illegally deprived of some or all of the elements of his or her identity, States Parties shall provide* ***appropriate assistance*** *and protection, with a view* ***to re-establishing speedily his or her identity****. (emphasis added)*

Similar to the previously cited submissions on the Refugee Amendment Bill in 2010, the lack of meaningful cooperation between governmental departments was again addressed by various civil society organisations in a joint submission on the Green Paper on International Migration in South Africa in 2016. They pointed out that migrant children often required identification documentation in order to access services from the Departments of Social Development and Education. Unable to obtain identification documents from the Department of Home Affairs, however, migrant children find themselves caught in a perpetual cycle "which exposes them to suffering, exploitation and abuse" (The Centre for Child Law et al. 2016, p. 8).

Situations comparable to those described here can also be found in other countries. As such, "many states fail to provide comprehensive guardianship and effective legal representation to unaccompanied or separated child migrants" (Bhabha 2009, p. 427). Due to this, Jacqueline Bhabha asks in reference to Hannah Arendt whether these children 'have a right to have rights' and argues that the 'unenforceability' of the children's rights makes them 'functionally stateless' (Bhabha 2009). With this in mind, this thesis explores the lived experiences of children affected by such 'functional statelessness'.

1.2.2 Public and institutionalised xenophobia

In addition to challenges rooted in the law, migrant children in South Africa are also affected by societal and institutionalised hostility towards foreigners in the country. This section provides a brief insight into how these attitudes play out.

Much has been written about xenophobia in South Africa. Most narratives and discourses on this topic invoke or imply the standard definition of xenophobia as 'a general fear or dislike of foreigners'. This definition, however, falls short of acknowledging the particularities of the South African case, namely that xenophobia has a strong racial component. In this sense, xenophobic hostility, fear, anger and violence are directed predominantly at black African (forced) migrants (Maedza 2015; Matsinhe 2011; Solomon and Kosaka 2014). White foreigners, in contrast, are generally welcomed positively and treated with respect both by the public and institutions.

Common stereotypes include allegations that black African migrants import diseases and crime, 'steal jobs and women' and drain the health care system (Crush and Tawodzera 2014a and 2014b; Enoch 2016; Kabwe-Segatti and Landau 2008; McDonald et al. 2000; Peberdy 2009). As pointed out by David Mario Matsinhe, targeting often takes place and plays out on the basis of a perceived physical 'otherness':

> *Bodily looks, movements, sounds and smells are legible as evidence of imagined citizenship and foreignness. Deviation from bodily ideals of citizenship or conformity […] warrants strip searches, arrests, detentions, deportations, humiliation, tortures, rapes, muggings, killings, etc. (Matshine 2011, p. 302f)*

Similarly, Human Rights Watch already reported in 1998 that "suspected undocumented migrants are identified by the authorities through unreliable means such as complexion, accent, or inoculation marks" (Human Rights Watch 1998, p. 2).

Sally Peberdy relates these attitudes to the divided society's struggle to construct a national identity and economy:

> *The reinvented post-1994 South African state has […] seen migrants and immigrants, particularly African undocumented migrants, as potential contaminators of the nation. For the post-apartheid state, foreigners threaten the physical national body as carriers of disease; but more fundamentally, they endanger the nation-building project, acting as parasites draining the scarce resources of the nation. (Peberdy, 2009, p. 158)*

The waves of intense violence in May 2008 and early 2015, in which thousands of people were displaced from their homes and dozens brutally murdered by angry mobs, brought these sentiments to public attention. While the South African government has often denied that violence against foreigners is an expression of xenophobia (Davis 2015), others have made the case that the atrocities committed constitute an unacknowledged genocide (Maedza 2013) and amount to crimes against humanity (Gevers 2015). With regard to the government's downplaying of the violence, Christopher Gevers states:

> *There is a danger in reducing the problem to individual acts of violence and ignoring the broader structural causes of xenophobia in our society. We need to go beyond the common (and comforting) senseless acts of violence narrative. (Gevers 2015)*

This statement speaks to the fact that the widespread waves of violence in 2008 and 2015 only presented visible peaks of a constant social and institutionalised xenophobia and discrimination against black African migrants in South Africa (Crush and Tawodzera 2014a and 2014b; Crush, Ramachandran and Pendleton 2013; Maedza 2013; De Wet 2015; Pugh 2014).

Negative perceptions and fear of the consequences of immigration are also reflected in the government's increasingly restrictive immigration policies and practices. As such, new Immigration Regulations released in May 2014 (Republic of South Africa 2014) severely tightened legal immigration options and increased punishments for non-compliance. The new immigration regulations also affect the migration of families and children as they require children to enter the country with an unabridged birth certificate and written consent by both parents or legal guardians (ibid., section 6.12).

Apart from tighter immigration regulations, government forces have in recent years implemented a number of additional operations aimed at intimidating, arresting and deporting unwanted migrants. For example in 2014 the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the Department of Home Affairs conducted regular joint raids across Cape Town targeting undocumented foreigners (Washinyira 2014). Following renewed widespread violence against predominantly African foreigners in early 2015, the South African Defence Force (SADF) launched Operation Fiela under the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Migration in April 2015. While presented as an 'anti crime' operation, the actions targeted areas with high numbers of foreign residents and business people, such as the open market at the taxi rank in Cape Town (Chiguvare 2015).[8]

[8] 'Taxi rank' is a local term that refers to the terminal of a public minibus transport system.

The naming of the operation after the Sotho word ‘fiela’, meaning ‘sweep away’, “allows for an interpretation that the government sees those who are most marginalised in our country – migrants and refugees, sex workers and others – as ‘dirt’ that should be removed from society” (Sonke Gender Justice 2015).

The operation was harshly criticised by civil society for applying disproportionate force and resulting in the arrest and subsequent deportation of thousands of undocumented migrants (Maromo 2015). The above quoted civil society organisation Sonke Gender Justice stated during the early stages of the operation:

> *Operation Fiela, and similar actions by the state, are clear examples of institutionalised xenophobia. […] Operation Fiela is only deepening the stigmatisation of foreign nationals in South Africa, especially those from other African countries, and making it difficult for all foreign migrants to integrate into South African society. (Sonke Gender Justice 2015)*

These hostile attitudes and actions by governmental forces and the broader society are mirrored in the legislative and policy inconsistencies concerning unaccompanied and separated undocumented migrant children in the country presented earlier.

1.2.3 Policy and research context

The South African government’s limited and at times hostile response to the increased arrival of migrants and refugees in the past decade has been strongly affected by political considerations and motivations. In this regard, domestic political actions or inactions concerning immigration challenges need to be seen in relation to the above described climate of hostility against foreigners among state institutions and the South African public. In addition, historically grown personal relationships between South African leaders and their counterparts in neighbouring countries in some cases inhibited a decisive stance concerning immigration and related humanitarian questions. South African presidents Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma, for instance, have found it difficult to criticise Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe for the country’s poor human rights record which in turn also hindered them from adopting a more favourable attitude towards the accommodation of Zimbabwean (forced) migrants (Betts 2013).

In terms of government actors, the previous sections of this chapter already pointed out that the South African government institutions involved and mandated to deal with foreign children are above all the Departments of Home Affairs and Social Development. In addition to these state actors, there are a number of South African

civil society organisations that work tirelessly to ensure and improve the protection and rights of all children in the country through humanitarian and social assistance, advocacy, legal advice and litigation in court on a range of matters such as access to education and legal documentation for undocumented children. These organisations include among others the Legal Resources Centre, Lawyers for Human Rights, the Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town, the Refugee Rights Unit of the University of Cape Town's Law Clinic, the Centre for Child Law and the Consortium for Refugees and Migrants South Africa (Cormsa). The efforts by those and other institutions are complemented by several international humanitarian organisations such as UNICEF, IOM and Save the Children whose mandate it is to improve children's living conditions worldwide.

Some South African civil society organisations conduct research to support their advocacy or litigation efforts. However, their studies are generally small scale and often remain grey literature. There is thus a dearth of academic research on unaccompanied and undocumented migrant children in South Africa. Having said this, a few studies have been published by international organisations, focusing largely on the situation in the border areas between South Africa and its neighbouring countries Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Save the Children, for instance, published several reports specifically advocating for better protection of children travelling alone in Southern Africa (Save the Children 2007a; 2007b; 2009) and more recently a guide book with information for children on how to stay safe while on the move (Save the Children 2015). The first study had the form of a survey that was implemented with 130 unaccompanied children in Johannesburg and in Musina, at the border with Zimbabwe, and in the towns of Malelane and Komatipoort in the border area with Mozambique (Save the Children 2007a). The report emphasises the regular occurrence of arrests and deportation of children, sometimes in contravention of the law. It also found that children in border areas experience more violence and face bigger challenges in accessing basic services and education than unaccompanied children in urban areas with easier access to and support from NGOs. A second report from the same year reached similar conclusions including that many children in Southern Africa migrate due to chronic poverty, death of parents and caregivers as well as due to political instability (Save the Children 2007b). In 2009, Save the Children in collaboration with several other international organisations convened a Regional Seminar on Children Who Cross Borders in Southern Africa. The final seminar report calls for stakeholders to recognize the diversity of situations faced by

children on the move as well as for the need to protect such children and reduce their vulnerability caused by migration (Save the Children 2009).

All mentioned reports stress the need for further research on unaccompanied migrant children in Southern Africa. A UNICEF report (2009) that compares the results of various other reports based on secondary data concerning migrants in South Africa similarly emphasises that reliable data on migrant children is lacking. A number of recent academic articles as well as undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations on migrant children in South Africa complement the reports by humanitarian organisations. Most of this academic research takes a legal view and points out the discrepancy between migrant children's rights in theory and the deficient implementation of these legal protections and rights in practice, as discussed in chapter 1.2 (Sloth-Nielsen and Ackermann 2016; Willie and Mfubu 2016; van Baalen 2012; Chiguvare 2011; Schreier 2011; Fritsch et al. 2010; van der Burg 2006).

Stanford Mahati's research on unaccompanied working migrant male children in Musina stands out as a more in-depth ethnographic research exploring the children's own understandings of their situation and social workers' representations of the children (Mahati 2012a; Mahati 2012b). Beyond describing the humanitarian needs and legal rights of the children, Mahati provides an in-depth insight into the living and working conditions as well as the aims and challenges faced by unaccompanied male working migrant children in the South African border town of Musina. Mahati's research revealed that many migrant children in Musina prefer to work as a means of survival rather than to make use of their right to education in South Africa. The research showed that the children attempt to blend in the local context and culture by learning local languages and dressing like locals. This strategy helps them to be both more successful in making business and in receiving protection from others of the same language group. Children are affected by recurring violent treatment, arrest and persecution by the police. They attempt to avoid these abuses by hiding or by collaborating with the police by providing information about criminals operating in the border area (Mahati 2012b). The author concludes that social work interventions based on Western notions of children as innocent and dependent do not always correspond to the realities, needs and aspirations of unaccompanied migrant children seeking to secure their own livelihoods. As a result, some children deliberately undermine interventions intended to support them, for instance by "manipulating vulnerability indicators used in aid discourse like being under-age, orphanhood status and political persecution" (Mahati 2012b, p. 83).

Similar to Hashim's research in West Africa, Mahati demonstrates that unaccompanied migrant children are not merely passive victims but agents who take part in determining their own fate by migrating and securing their own precarious livelihood (Mahati 2012a). Importantly, he further points out that contrary to the common perception by social workers, children acquire important life skills through work including the importance of working hard and supporting each other, time management and saving money. He concludes that recognizing these positive learning outcomes would allow social work interventions to be designed more adequately.

As mentioned above, Mahati's ethnographic work presents an exception as most other research on unaccompanied children in South Africa predominantly takes a legal perspective. The need for further knowledge pointed out by several institutions therefore concerns above all insights into the children's own perspectives and lived realities. This study is one attempt to contribute to filling this gap.

1.3 Methodology

As already indicated in section 1.1, this study applied a theatre-based methodology. The field research was implemented as a workshop series between June and October 2014. The workshops took place in the hall of the Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town. Based in the city centre within walking distance of the central train station and taxi rank, the venue was conveniently located as all participants could reach it by public transport.

The initial project design consisted of 15 workshops to be implemented within a three-month time frame. As the project evolved, however, it became clear that more time would be useful in order to bring the project to a successful conclusion. In agreement with participants and their caregivers I therefore extended the project for another month and a half so that it ultimately comprised a total of 29 workshops. 20 of these workshops were three-hour sessions held on Sundays from 13.00 – 16.00 and nine were full-day sessions from 10.00 – 16.00. The full-day workshops took place during two weeks of the school holidays, one in July during the early stages of the project and one in October to prepare for the final performance. Each workshop had a break in which snacks and drinks were provided. I also organised one additional activity in

which the group attended a performance of local youth acrobats at the ZipZap Circus.[9] The purpose of this excursion was to strengthen the teambuilding process and to give participants the opportunity of seeing a live performance on stage.

A small amount of technical equipment was needed to implement the project: a sound equipment for warm-up games and the performance, a video camera and a photographic camera to document parts of the activities for research purposes. Two research grants allowed me to cover all project-related costs including salaries for the facilitators, transport money for participants, phone calls, stationery, snacks for the workshops and the post-performance celebration.[10]

During the workshops we implemented a variety of activities including games, acting, miming, role playing, performing, group conversations, writing exercises and drawing.[11] The content of the activities was broadly guided by a list of sub-questions aimed at exploring the bigger research question concerning participants' experiences of their lives in Cape Town.[12] A number of factors such as some participants' irregular attendance, late arrival, issues of respect and discipline as well as varying energy and motivation levels impeded the precise advance planning of workshop activities. As a consequence, we had to adapt the activities according to participants' disposition and cooperation on any given day. As a general pattern, however, most workshop sessions observed the following structure:

1. Opening circle
2. Warm-up game
3. Concentration exercise
4. Content work: written, oral or dramatic group or individual work
5. Stage work or performances with subsequent discussions
6. Closing circle

All workshops took place under my leadership and guidance. In addition, I involved an external drama facilitator to provide professional dramaturgical support at specific stages of the project. At the beginning of the project an external facilitator introduced

[9] The following website provides further information on the circus: www.zip-zap.co.za
[10] My field research was supported by a Research Mobility Grant from the World University Network and an Overseas Field Research Grant from the ESRC.
[11] Chapter 4.1 lays out the different workshop activities in detail and shows photographs of selected activities.
[12] See the list of sub-questions in appendix 1.

different performance techniques, and at the final stage of the project a second facilitator provided his expertise in directing and devising the final public performance.

1.3.1 Data analysis

Due to the variety of techniques and activities implemented during the workshops the research data also consisted of a variety of forms. These included photographs and video recordings of some of the workshop activities such as acting exercises, scene rehearsals, performances and group conversations, hand-written and digital ethnographic notes of the workshop preparation, implementation and subsequent reflections as well as of incidents and occurrences that took place outside the workshops such as personal conversations with participants and their caregivers. The data furthermore included written materials produced by participants such as postcards, letters, diaries and posters, drawings such as family trees and confidential video recordings of messages from individual participants.

In qualitative research and in particular in arts-based research it is common to start analysing the data during the data collection process (Dennis 2009; Neuman 2007). In accordance with this, in this study I undertook a preliminary analysis during the workshop phase. This analysis served the double purpose of verifying my understanding of participants' views and of creating the final performance. To this end I developed a form of analysis that relied on participants' feedback and contributions. After two and a half months of weekly workshops and one intensive week, I reviewed the issues that had come up so far and identified those that I perceived to be most significant. In order to ensure that participants would understand the statements and be able to give their opinions, I summarized general issues into short personalized statements written on cards. For instance, we had previously discussed in general terms whether it was necessary to have a family. On the cards I then transformed the outcome of this discussion into personal statements such as 'I need a family' and 'I miss my family'. The following list represents all statements resulting from this preliminary analysis:

- I am happy to be in South Africa.
- Sometimes I feel that I don't belong here.
- I miss my family and friends at home.
- Here, I am responsible for myself.
- Sometimes I wish I can go home.
- I am scared to get arrested because I have no papers.

- I feel safe in Cape Town.
- I am worried about too many things.
- I like going to school.
- Sometimes I feel lonely.
- I need my family.
- I am a foreigner, but I feel that I belong here.
- In the future, I will be free.
- Sometimes other children make fun of me because I am a foreigner.
- My biggest challenge is that I don't have a paper.
- I have a dream for the future.

In subsequent workshops I gave one postcard with a statement to each participant and asked them to discuss in small groups of three or four whether they agreed with the statements they had been given. As a next step, I asked the groups to create a scene that portrays one of the statements they all agreed with. In following workshops additional statements were discussed and represented dramatically. After the initial improvisations, participants continued elaborating further details regarding the characters and actions of these scenes. In order to stimulate deeper thinking, I prepared a brief written summary for each scene they had developed and added a list of questions about the characters' names, age, nationality, the location of the scene, the content and the ending of the scene. After responding to the questions in groups, participants included these additional details in their next performance.

In line with our general approach, each performance was followed by a group conversation about the content of the respective scene. The final play ultimately included four main acts that had been devised in this participatory process, framed by an opening and a closing scene. Participants named the final performance 'Innocent Voices'.[13] As the data analysis in chapters 4 and 5 will show, this title speaks to the children's acute awareness of their oppression as well as to their strength.

After the performance, one last workshop took place as a form of debriefing and farewell. In order to evaluate participants' impression of the project, I asked them to record individual video messages in a separate room. As a trigger, I gave them cards with the statements 'what I liked about the project', 'what I did not like about the

[13] The transcribed script of 'Innocent Voices' can be found in chapters 4.4.2, 5.1.1 and 5.3.2.

project' and 'anything else I want to say'. Chapter 4.4 analyses participants' recorded responses.

With the end of the workshop series also ended the primary data collection. I subsequently watched the video footage and transcribed the most relevant conversations and performances. Following this I created a chronological table that contained all the data collected about each workshop in one column on the left and then manually coded the data line by line in another column on the right. I applied a two-cycle coding process that was largely based on Johnny Saldaña's Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers (Saldaña 2009).

Coding can be defined as "the transitional process between data collection and more extensive data analysis" (Saldaña 2009, p. 4). It "encourages higher-level thinking about the data and moves a researcher toward theoretical generalizations" (Neuman 2007, p. 330). Saldaña defines a code as "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldaña 2009, p. 3).

In reviewing the data I allowed the codes to emerge spontaneously. However, this process was also guided by my two strands of research questions, one methodological and one substantive. For the purpose of clarity I used different colours to differentiate between reflective codes (red); factual codes (black); those referring to methodological issues, workshop aims and activities (blue); and codes that referred to acting, such as monologues, dialogues and the content and titles of performed scenes (green). In view of these two strands and the broad variety of data types I used a range of coding methods.

In the first-cycle coding I applied the following coding methods: *Descriptive Coding* summarized the primary topic of a particular data unit such as an excerpt of ethnographic notes or a performed scene in a word or short sentence. *In Vivo Coding* captured participants' own voices as well as direct quotes from field notes. *Process Coding* described actions in the data through gerunds such as 'miming, dancing, drumming, enjoying, reminding each other'. I also applied *Emotion and Values Codes* to reflect on participants' behaviour, experiences, values and beliefs as well as on my own perception, experience and reflections on the workshops.[14]

[14] See Saldaña (2009) for detailed definitions of the different codes.

After the first round of coding I re-read the data and the codes and subsequently applied a second cycle coding. “Second Cycle coding methods (…) are advanced ways of reorganizing and reanalyzing data coded through First Cycle methods” (Saldaña 2009, p. 149). As second cycle coding methods I primarily used *Focused Coding* to group related codes together into categories such as ‘missing home, feeling lonely, experiencing violence’. These categories or themes then constituted the basis for my further analysis that connected the data with theories and concepts that will be discussed in chapters 2 and 3. The results of the data analysis can be found in chapters 4, 5, and 6.

The following section lays out the structure of the dissertation and the main arguments developed in each chapter.[15]

1.4 Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation comprises six chapters. As an opening, chapter 1 offers an introduction to the research rationale, research questions, background to the case study and methodology. Specifically, section 1.1 introduces the idea that (forced) migration research is linked to notions and ambitions of research ethics and policy relevance. It highlights the three-fold aim of this study to explore 1) in how far a theatre-based approach fulfils the ethical demands set forth by the triple imperative, 2) how undocumented migrant children experience their lives in Cape Town and 3) in which way the results of this study are policy relevant.

Section 1.2 provides a background to the case study, starting with an outline of the legislative framework applicable to unaccompanied, separated and undocumented migrant children in South Africa. Secondly, it describes how societal attitudes towards predominantly African foreigners are characterised by hostility and fear and that these attitudes are reflected in institutionalised xenophobia. It also provides an overview of existing research on migrant children in South Africa. Section 1.3 indicates how the theatre-based workshop series was implemented and explains how the data was analysed through a combination of participatory analysis and coding techniques.

[15] I use the terms ‘thesis’, ‘dissertation’ and ‘account’ in reference to this written document. I use ‘project’ specifically with regard to the workshop series implemented to generate data for this study. The term ‘study’ comprises this research as a whole, including its underlying theoretical framework and analysis, the theatre-based project and the written dissertation.

Chapter 1 is followed by two chapters that provide a critical review of theoretical concepts and discourses applicable to this study (Chapters 2 and 3). Chapter 2 takes a closer look at two aspects of the triple imperative, namely research ethics and policy relevance. Chapter 2.1 firstly examines concerns around the effectiveness and legitimacy of formal ethics procedures and their increasing institutionalisation by universities and funding bodies. It then discusses ethical dilemmas that arise in direct contact between researchers and participants and how relational ethics and reflexivity are ways to address these challenges. Following this, the concept of reciprocity is discussed, with a particular view on how research is said to increase the wellbeing of participants by providing material and educational benefits. Finally, I introduce the concept of enhanced ethics as a holistic approach that guides the implementation of this study.

Chapter 2.2 analyses debates among (forced) migration scholars as to how research can achieve policy relevance. Factors include demanding the use of particular terms and categories in research, applying certain research approaches and communicating research results effectively. The chapter concludes by suggesting that in order to be relevant, research needs to take into consideration all three factors. Section 2.3 outlines conceptualisations of children as agents and recent contestations thereof. It goes on to discuss a number of ethical concerns in research with children and suggests that the concept of 'ethical symmetry' is a useful starting point. Section 2.4 discusses how the notion of 'illegality' in a migration context has been conceptualised and constructed by researchers and policy makers. It concludes by providing a brief overview of existing research on undocumented migrant children worldwide.

Chapter 3 focuses on theatre as an emerging arts-based research method. It starts off by discussing the particular epistemology and aims underlying arts-based research in general and theatre/performance in particular. It furthermore highlights debates deriving from the overlap between research and art which is perceived to produce challenges concerning the evaluation of arts-based research. The second section of the chapter analyses the transformative potential of theatre. Particular focus is placed on Theatre of the Oppressed as a common technique used to reach both individual and societal transformation. The third section raises a number of challenges related to participation in and facilitation of theatre-based projects. The final subsection discusses important ethical questions arising from the performative representation of others. The analysis reaches the conclusion that from a theoretical point of view theatre is capable of fulfilling the demands set forth by the triple imperative.

Chapters 4 and 5 provide responses to the principal research questions of this study by presenting an in-depth analysis of the empirical data collected through the case study. In this regard, chapter 4 analyses the methodological aspect of the study with a focus on the ethics of theatre-based research while chapter 5 is dedicated to the research question concerning migrant children's experiences in Cape Town and its policy relevance.

More specifically, chapter 4 starts by reviewing the ways in which procedural ethics demands affected this study. Particular attention is paid to challenges that arose during the recruitment of participants and the signing of consent forms at the beginning of the project. The following section analyses in how far this study was able to transform participants' consciousness through dialogic exchange as proposed by Paolo Freire and Augusto Boal. The section develops the argument that challenges concerning verbal communication, trust, respect and discipline impeded successful dialogic exchange. Building on this argument, the final section analyses whether this study succeeded in producing reciprocal benefits for participants. Discussing material and educational benefits, the chapter makes the case that participants 'owned' the research process and outcome to a significant extent and that they gained emotional benefits which increased their overall wellbeing. Chapter 4 concludes by arguing that theatre-based research is capable of exceeding conventional ethics standards.

Chapter 5 presents a response to the second research question aimed at exploring undocumented migrant children's experiences in Cape Town. The first section highlights that participants are affected by a sense of loneliness and longing for their absent parents and that they perceive themselves as adults. The following two sections focus on experiences of xenophobia and crime deriving from being 'foreign' in South Africa as well as on practical challenges, harassment and discrimination that participants experienced due to their undocumented legal status.

Finally, chapter 5.4 reflects on the purpose of using theatre. In this regard the first subsection points out how theatre-based research led to in-depth insights concerning undocumented migrant children's experiences as performance allowed participants' hidden transcripts to surface. Furthermore, the argument is developed that participants display 'performative everyday agency' as a manner of coping and actively resisting the oppression they face. The second subsection deliberates on and extends the notion of research relevance. By drawing on deontological ethics and on discourses

around arts-based research, the argument is made that the intangible affective and aesthetic results of research should be recognized as of equal value to conventional outcomes.

Chapter 6 presents the conclusion of the dissertation. As such, it summarizes the findings of the study and discusses their significance. In line with the three principal research questions, the significance of the study is three-fold: it advances the debate on social science research ethics, it expands the methodological repertoire of (forced) migration studies and it enhances existing knowledge on migrant children in South Africa. Each of the three sections conclude by providing recommendations for researchers, policy makers or practitioners.

CHAPTER TWO

2. RESEARCHING FORCED AND UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS AND CHILDREN

> *One ethical challenge for researchers and activists, therefore, is to acknowledge and manage their multiple responsibilities or obligations (to victims, the story, human rights law, their organization or university, donors and others).*
>
> *Paul Gready 2010, p. 187*

As outlined in the previous chapter, the triple imperative demands that research with (forced) migrants should produce knowledge that is not only academically sound, but also genuinely ethical and policy relevant. In order to untangle this imperative further, this chapter examines how questions of research ethics and policy relevance are perceived and debated in the field of (forced) migration studies and in other disciplines where scholars have reflected on similar challenges, such as social work. Since this study's participants are not only categorised as migrants but also as children, the chapter further outlines and engages with current discourses and conceptualisations of children.

The chapter consists of three sections, followed by a conclusion. Section 2.1 raises points of criticism and concerns regarding the increasing institutionalisation of formalized ethics requirements. Building on this, it portrays two other aspects of research ethics that refer to the interaction between researcher and research participants: relational ethics and reflexivity. Finally, the section discusses the concept of reciprocity.

Based on this review I make the case that truly ethical research should follow an 'enhanced ethics approach'. 'Enhanced ethics' assumes a holistic approach that guarantees procedural, relational and reciprocal ethics with the aim of achieving an ethical conduct that satisfies not only institutional obligations but also acknowledges and respects researchers' responsibilities towards participants throughout the

research process. The notion of enhanced ethics will be used as a guiding concept throughout this study.

Section 2.2 is dedicated to debates on how (forced) migration research can best achieve policy relevance. In this regard three points of view are highlighted. Firstly, it is argued that the policy relevance of research depends on applying a certain terminology, secondly, on a certain research approach and thirdly, on effectively communicating results. Given the complexity of the policy making process I conclude from this review that the achievement of policy relevant results is likely to depend on a combination of these three factors.

Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 reflect on academic conceptualisations of children as agents. The review shows that children are frequently considered as demonstrating agency when their circumstances do not correspond to Western notions of an 'ideal' childhood. Following from this I support the argument by Ruth Payne (2012) that children often display 'everyday agency' rather than 'extraordinary agency'. Subsection 2.3.3 considers ethical concerns regarding research with children. It concludes that, rather than treating children differently due to their age, researchers should apply an approach of 'ethical equality'.

Section 2.4 of this chapter examines debates and approaches concerning research with undocumented migrants specifically. It first discusses how the conditions of 'illegality' and precarity are products of politics and law rather than inherent features of individuals. In order to contextualise the case study of this dissertation, section 2.4.2 provides an overview of empirical studies concerning undocumented migrant children in various parts of the world.

The review undertaken in this chapter serves to inform the methodological and substantive analyses of the case study in chapters 4 and 5.

2.1 Conducting ethical research

Research ethics in the social sciences is becoming increasingly institutionalised. One indication of this is that the largest academic funding body in the United Kingdom (UK), the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), now exclusively funds projects that have been approved by respective ethics committees (ESRC 2015). Partly as a result of this requirement, most university internal policies now also oblige their academic staff and students as well as independent researchers associated to the

university to go through formal ethics procedures. Such procedures usually require researchers to submit an application to an ethics committee prior to conducting their research, indicating the purpose and methodology of the study as well as any potential risks and ethical challenges. The ethics committee, largely comprised of university internal academic staff and students, either approves the application at first instance or rejects it. Repeated resubmission of ethics applications often delays the start of research projects for several months.

While many researchers either support or simply follow these procedures, a growing number of 'radicalists' oppose the increasing institutionalisation of research ethics (Ferdinand et al. 2007). In order to analyse their concerns I will firstly provide a brief definition of research ethics and then look at a set of ethics guidelines in more detail by using the University of York as an example. The following two subsections then focus on specific components of research ethics that apply during the data collection and representation.

2.1.1 Ethics guidelines, procedures and committees

Research ethics is informed by moral philosophy. Since a large part of this study is concerned with research ethics, I will start this overview by briefly discussing two of the most prominent schools of moral philosophy: consequentialism and deontology. Generally speaking, consequentialism determines morality according to the effects of our actions. In other words, it defines the right actions according to their effects (Copp 2006). The more beneficial the effects, the higher the moral value of our actions. In contrast to this, deontology is concerned with our moral duties. In this sense it maintains that it can be morally right not to maximise the good if, in doing so, we honour the commitments we hold towards others.

Unlike consequentialism, deontology is agent-relative in the sense that it builds on the understanding that we have special duties towards others with whom we have a particular relationship such as friends or relatives. Agent-relative duties limit our freedom of action as they compel us to fulfil our commitments, "even when we could maximize the good by shirking them" (McNaughton and Rawling 2006, p. 425). Because of these relational duties, deontology claims that "the production of good is not the only fundamental morally relevant consideration: agents may be permitted, and even required, not to maximize the good" (ibid., p. 424). I will reflect back on these details in chapter 5.4.2 with regard to determining the relevance of this study.

In addition to the two schools of thought introduced here, many other moral viewpoints exist. This plurality of understandings indicates that questions concerning research ethics are likely to be controversial or at least contested. Despite or possibly because of this, ethics guidelines generally refrain from specifying the moral principles they are based on. The ESRC Framework for Research Ethics defines research ethics merely as "*the moral principles* guiding research, from its inception through to completion and publication of results and beyond" (ESRC 2015, p. 43, emphasis added). The Code of Practice and Principles for Good Ethical Governance at the University of York similarly "articulates *a set of principles and standards* to help identify and address ethical considerations" (University of York 2014, emphasis added). It further states that 'avoidance of harm' is "the key principle underpinning the ethical standards which apply to academic activities" (University of York 2014).[16] Both documents then provide a list of mandatory guidelines for researchers, without however specifying the moral principles informing these guidelines.

This omission implies the assumption that all UK-based researchers share, or are expected to share, certain underlying yet undefined moral values. A closer look at the University of York's Code of Practice (University of York 2014) illustrates, however, that this lack of clarity can lead to ambiguous ethical positions. Point 2.11 of the Code of Practice states for example that 'the University does not bar academics from working with the defence sector'. Point 2.12 subsequently sets out that 'the University does not work with or accept funding from the tobacco industry'.

Personally, I find it more tolerable to accept funding from the tobacco industry than to collaborate with the defence sector. This is based on my understanding that smoking is largely a voluntary choice whose negative consequences affect, above all, those who take the conscious decision to smoke. The effects of producing, selling and applying arms, however, inevitably results in harm for people who were neither consulted on nor consented to the use of arms. I therefore believe the risks of causing harm by actively collaborating with the defence sector to be greater than those caused by accepting funds from the tobacco industry to carry out research that is unrelated to the production, trade or consumption of tobacco.

[16] The focus on harm avoidance originally derives from biomedical ethics and has subsequently been adopted by other disciplines (Beauchamp and Childress 2001; Guillemin and Gillam 2004).

The discrepancy between the university's stance and my personal perception of what might cause and constitute harm shows that "there is much scope for disagreement about what constitutes serious harm, and about the likelihood of various harmful consequences" (Hammersley 2009, p. 212). The example also shows that moral values can differ between individuals. It is therefore easy to imagine that ethics committee members differ in their personal attitudes and moral values and might therefore reach different conclusions when judging ethics applications (Hammersley 2009; Hugman 2008).

A further point of concern relates to research conducted with target groups whose values and understandings do not correspond to those proposed by universities in the United Kingdom. In this regard, point 2.13 of the University of York's Code of Practice recognizes that "individuals should take account of the ethical standards and processes of the country/countries in question" (University of York 2014). However, the guidelines do not specifically consider the complexities surrounding research with persons holding ethical stances and understandings of research that differ substantially from Western ones. With regard to researching (forced) migrants, Eileen Pittaway and Linda Bartolomei therefore raise the following concern:

> *It cannot be assumed that research participants necessarily share a common understanding of the purpose of research, the role of the academic and the academy, notions of consent, forms of engagement (and recruitment), or communication and perceptions of risks. (Pittaway and Bartolomei 2010, p. 242)*

As a way of dealing with such challenges, the authors suggest that an ethical pluralist approach can effectively communicate ethical considerations across cultural boundaries (ibid.). Ethical pluralists acknowledge that despite differing values it is possible to find common standpoints across cultures (Hugman 2008, p. 120). In contrast to this, ethical relativists argue that ethical values depend entirely on a particular cultural perspective (ibid.). According to the latter it would therefore be impossible to provide ethical advice that is supported by all committee members and researchers.

The controversies described here foster the belief that "the shift from ethical guidelines (…) to mandatory ethical regulation signals a loss of faith in social scientists to undertake their research with integrity" (Melrose 2011, point 9.2). Likewise, ethics committees are said to distrust researchers' 'sensible judgment' with regard to ethical decisions (Hammersley 2010, p. 3). As these examples indicate, doubts concerning ethics guidelines have led to a general lack of trust among researchers concerning

ethics committees. Ethics committees are for instance said to take decisions based on limited knowledge of the research context and of the researcher's skills and experience (Guillemin and Gillam 2004; Hammersley 2009; Melrose 2011). Interestingly, the University of York's Code of Practice confirms this claim to a certain extent by stating that "internal committees might not be qualified to deal with the particular ethical issues of concern to outside bodies" (University of York 2014, 3.3).

As a consequence of their distrust, many researchers tend to focus their efforts more on how to pass the formalities of ethics procedures than on carrying out their research in an ethical way (Ferdinand et al. 2007; Hammersley 2010; Melrose 2011). As such, many scholars regard the filling in of ethics applications as a technical exercise that requires skills "different from those required for ethical reflection" (Hammersley 2009, p. 216). Marilys Guillemin and Lynn Gillam for example admit to "have learned to write (…) in 'ethics-committee speak'" (Guillemin and Gillam 2004, p. 263f):

> *This also involves explaining methodology to a committee who may be unfamiliar with qualitative methods and in some cases, may be antagonistic toward this type of research. Moreover, we have learned to gloss over some issues that we know may cause the committee concern. (Guillemin and Gillam 2004, p. 263f)*

Linked to this point is the argument shared by many, that formal ethics procedures do not actually guarantee ethical research (e.g. Block et al. 2012; Dona 2007; Hammersley 2009; Hugman, Bartolomei and Pittaway 2011; Mackenzie, McDowell and Pittaway 2007; Melrose 2011; Pittaway, Bartolomei and Hugman 2010; Swartz 2011). Social science ethics guidelines are traditionally based on a model of bioethics. As such they require researchers to gain participants' written informed consent and to safeguard participants' confidentiality (e.g. Guillemin and Gillam 2004; Pittaway Bartolomei and Hugman 2010; Swartz 2011; University of York 2014; ESRC 2015).

Opponents of these procedures reject "the normative authority of codes of ethics on the basis that being ethical is not something that can be measured against a checklist of 'rights and wrongs'" (Ferdinand et al. 2007, p. 520). This argument is based on the experience that research sometimes affects participants in a negative way even if procedural ethics standards are met (Guillemin and Gillam 2004).

In situations of distress such as displacement, people tend to believe that researchers have the "power to effect change at both an individual and community level" (Pittaway, Bartolomei and Hugman 2010, p. 232). Individuals may therefore consent to participate in research and willingly share personal accounts of their living conditions

or rights violations they experience. Such collaboration may lead to problematic consequences. In a refugee camp, authorities may for example “punish refugees after the researchers have left for perceived breaches of confidence” (ibid.). Research may also re-traumatize (forced) migrants or affect the mental health of both participants and researchers (Reed 2002). Furthermore, the public distribution of research findings may lead to security risks for individual participants and their communities even a long time after the research was implemented (e.g. Pittaway, Bartolomei and Hugman 2010).

As these examples from research with (forced) migrants show, social research may well cause serious harm even if one-off written or verbal consent was provided by participants. What is more, signing consent forms may even “expose participants to increased risk, arouse mistrust and suspicion of researchers, and undermine the possibilities for negotiating genuine ethical engagement with participants” (Mackenzie, McDowell and Pittaway 2007, p. 306).

> *The potential harms to participants in qualitative social research are often quite subtle and stem from the nature of the interaction between researcher and participant. As such, they are hard to specify, predict, and describe in ways that ethics application forms ask for and likewise, strategies for minimizing risk are hard to spell out. (Guillemin and Gillam 2004, p. 272)*

A number of solutions have been proposed to address these challenges. ‘Iterative consent processes’, for example, may be more appropriate than one-off written consent. Iterative consent builds on the premise that ethical agreements can best be reached in an ongoing negotiation process that “requires the researcher and all other parties involved to refine and re-negotiate the terms of the project, and their respective roles and obligations within it, as the project evolves” (Mackenzie, McDowell and Pittaway 2007, p. 307). Chapter 4.2.2 continues these considerations with a focus on the use of consent forms in this study. Other ethical challenges may be avoided by using secondary data collected by NGOs or other actors (Reed 2002). However, since it is usually unknown whether the primary researchers adhered to appropriate ethics standards, using data collected by others is not necessarily more ethical than collecting new primary data.

The points raised culminate in the concern that ethics procedures threaten the future of social research. This fear derives from the notion that the increased institutionalisation of research ethics is part of a larger political development in which research is perceived and used as a tool of neoliberal state policies (Hammersley

2010; Melrose 2011). Martyn Hammersley argues for example that the kind of accountability demanded through ethics procedures

> *reflects the slow shift from universities being relatively independent of both government and commerce […] towards their being treated as part of the 'national economy', and increasingly run in a managerial fashion that apes the private-for-profit sector. (Hammersley 2010, point 1.7)*

The author submits that the same loss of independence occurs with regard to the ESRC which turned "from an organization that was relatively independent of government to one that is explicitly geared to pursuing national goals" (ibid., point 1.8). Hammersley concludes that if ethics procedures restrict the independence of research, they are ultimately an unethical undertaking in themselves. His point is confirmed by others who argue that the reliance on ethics committees limits the type of research scholars propose to conduct. They submit that out of fear of having their proposals rejected, researchers refrain from proposing certain studies all together. This is the case with regard to studies involving so-called vulnerable population groups or the use of research approaches that ethics committees may perceive as 'risky' or dangerous for the researcher (Melrose 2011; Guillemin and Gillam 2004).

Due to the discussed challenges, an increasing number of scholars maintain that "ethics cannot be limited to fulfilling the formal requirements of sponsoring institutions. Nor can it be confined to notions of 'do no harm'" (Pittaway, Bartolomei and Hugman 2010, p. 241). They demand that researchers adhere to an enhanced ethics framework in which compliance with procedural ethics standards merely constitutes a starting point or a tool rather than an end in itself (e.g. Ferdinand et al. 2007; Pittaway Bartolomei and Hugman 2010; Swartz 2011).

The next section provides an overview of how scholars propose to exceed formal ethics procedures. Specifically, it refers to relational ethics, also termed 'ethics of care' (Ellis 2007) and to the demand to apply reflexivity.

2.1.2 Relational ethics and reflexivity

As indicated in the previous section, despite complying with formal ethics procedures researchers often experience unpredicted ethical challenges during fieldwork. Due to this, some argue that our ethical research responsibility "lies with finding resolutions to the situated dilemmas we encounter throughout the course of research" (Ferdinand et al. 2007, p. 540). These 'situated dilemmas' are also described as 'ethically important moments' which occur unexpectedly during research and compel the researcher to

respond (Guillemin and Gillam 2004). This may be the case when participants indicate a sudden discomfort, reveal a serious concern or vulnerability or disclose sensitive information that goes beyond the research focus. In those situations, "the approach taken or the decision made has important ethical ramifications" (Guillemin and Gillam 2004, p. 265). One of the main demands concerning enhanced research ethics therefore refers to managing the encounters and relationship between researchers and participants.

> *In these interactions lie the possibilities of respecting the autonomy, dignity, and privacy of research participants and also the risks of failing to do so […] It is therefore in these interactions that the integrity of the researcher is really on the line. (Guillemin and Gillam 2004, p. 275)*

Given the relational aspect of these ethical demands placed on researchers, this component of research ethics is referred to as relational ethics or ethics of care/caring and accountability (e.g. Mander 2010; Meloni, Vanthuyne and Rousseau 2015).

In reflecting on their own research experience, scholars provide accounts of how they suggest good ethical decision-making can take place. In this regard, some submit that "in the end how researchers deal with ethical dilemmas ultimately comes down to personal choice, and the responsibility that goes with this" (Ferdinand et al. 2007, p. 540). Others are more specific in attempting to provide responses of how such 'personal choices' can be made. The principal approach advocated for in this regard is reflexivity.

Reflexivity in research can be described as "a continuous process of critical scrutiny and interpretation, not just in relation to the research methods and the data but also to the researcher, participants, and the research context" (Guillemin and Gillam 2004, p. 275). Furthermore, reflexivity in the sense of a 'critical subjectivity' "enables the researcher to begin to uncover dialectic relationships, array and discuss contradictions within the stories (…), and move with research participants toward action" (Lincoln 1995, p. 283).

The connection between reflexivity and research ethics is interpreted in different ways. For some, applying reflexivity as a means of achieving ethical research implies that researchers recognize and respond to 'ethically important moments' in an ethical way (Guillemin and Gillam 2004). For others, reflexivity extends to becoming aware of the relationships, interdependencies and belongings that research participants are embedded in such as their families, friends and communities (Meloni, Vanthuyne and

Rousseau 2015). Understanding and respecting these relational connections is said to lead to more ethical research as it allows researchers to gain trust and access and shape their research in a way that makes it more relevant for participants (ibid.). In this line of thinking, reflexivity also includes a sensitivity towards participants' self-definition in terms of their identity and labelling (Melrose 2011). Following from this Margaret Melrose concludes that "ethical decision-making in social research is contextual, contingent and inherently political" (ibid., p.6).

Current discourses on reflexivity often focus on researchers' positionality. In this sense researchers reflect on the way in which their own social characteristics such as age, gender, race, class or sexual orientation affect their research. As this discussion has shown, reflexivity is generally hailed as both necessary and desirable for ethical social research. Some, however, contest this perception by arguing that an over-emphasis on particular aspects of one's own identity and positionality may negatively affect the research. In his article on ethical challenges concerning the representation of victims through transitional justice entrepreneurs, Tshepo Madlingozi (2010) commented for example in reference to Kopano Ratele that the practice of reflexivity falls short of 'real reflection' since it is still the researcher who looks at him or herself:

> *At the most basic, but not unimportant, level the assumption is in how the researcher looks at the object of study, and how he is never looked at. When he remembers to look at himself, it is called* ***reflexivity****. Even here though, it is the researcher who is looking at himself, it is not those he is studying looking at him. (Ratele 2006, p. 553, emphasis in original)*

This 'reflexive shortcoming' may reinforce existing power inequalities between researcher and 'researched'. A similar point is made by Glynis Cousin:

> *My concern is that some of the reflexive accounts […] offer a kind of 'positional piety' in which either moral authority is claimed through an affinity with subjects (such as working-class woman) or through a confessional declaration of difference and relative privilege (such as white middle-class man). (Cousin 2010, abstract)*

The author fears that too much emphasis on the researcher's personal background "can produce intellectual and emotional laziness rather than invite reflexivity" (Cousin 2010, p. 14). She suggests that this attitude comes to play when researchers perceive their research subjects as victims. This stance is often the case in (forced) migration studies:

> *There appears to be a conceptual difficulty causing people to equate the fact that people's rights are being violated and their living conditions appalling with the perception of these people as helpless individuals. (Lammers 2007, p. 74)*

The notion of ‘helpless victims’ relates to a broader discourse concerning power in social science research. Although ‘power’ has been a recurring theme, it “remains a strongly contested concept” that lacks a clear definition (Tew 2006, p. 34). As a consequence, power is often reduced to a dichotomy between powerless victims on one side and powerful actors on the other side (Lammers 2007). In this sense, perceiving (forced) migrants as powerless victims implies that researchers are the powerful actors on the other end of the scale.

While the concern with power relations stems from an attempt to conduct ethically sound research, the simplified view that the powerless stand against the powerful has been criticised repeatedly. In particular, it has been recognized that power is not a ‘zero-sum commodity’ but rather a complex phenomenon that stems from different sources and can be associated with many variables such as “wealth or status, physical power, the power of personality, intellectual power (…), the powers of creativity” (Lammers 2007, p. 74).[17] Considering this complexity allows researchers to acknowledge that victims are hardly ever only victims (Cousin 2010). Instead, they are themselves part of a complex web of identities. Depending on the viewpoint, they may for example be seen as strategic actors (Gready 2010) fulfilling a range of tasks and negotiating livelihood strategies that researchers may be unaware of due to their own positionality. Cousin therefore cautions researchers “to consider whether they are inviting accounts that are over-determined by a single identity position” such as belonging to a certain social class, gender or age group (Cousin 2010, p. 14).

Since identity consists of many categories, “we are both a social category and not” (Cousin 2010, p. 14). Focusing on only one of our identities automatically excludes others from the analysis. It is therefore likely that the category a researcher chooses to identify him/herself with in relation to the research participants may not be the most relevant one in that particular context. In order to deal with this dilemma, Cousin argues that “reflexive space has to include a concern for our common humanity alongside a concern for inequality and power” (ibid., p. 16). Such a stand allows a critical reflection on the different shades that comprise our identity as well as the power relationships at stake.

[17] In order to make sense of different notions of power, Jerry Tew proposes a power matrix that distinguishes between productive and limiting modes of power on the one hand and ‘power over’ versus ‘power together’ on the other hand (see matrix of power relations in Tew 2006, p. 41).

In a similar manner others argue that positionality is an accepted and 'safe' manner to discuss "how the self impacts upon the data generated" (Punch 2012, p. 87). By referring only to social categories such as class, gender, race and ethnicity positionality ignores other, more controversial factors such as the researcher's emotions and personality (Punch 2012). This approach speaks to the persisting notion that researchers are expected to be impartial and research outcomes objective academic products. To this end, most researchers avoid addressing the role of emotions in their research process. In response to this, several scholars express a need for a stronger recognition of methodological, ethical and emotional concerns as well as of the practical difficulties of fieldwork (e.g. Hubbard, Backett-Milburn and Kemmer 2001; Lammers 2007; Punch 2012).

Samantha Punch suggests, for example, that personal field diaries can serve as "a tool to enhance the process of reflexivity, positionality and the place of emotions in fieldwork" (Punch 2012, p. 87). Unlike field notes that "capture what is happening in the field", field diaries capture the researcher's positive and negative feelings, challenges, fears and uncertainties in the field as well as issues related to the relationship with participants. These accounts are usually deliberately left out of the analysis or forgotten in the time period that passes between the fieldwork and the data analysis (Punch 2012). She therefore suggests using field diaries as an additional source of data by applying the same evaluation methods as used with other ethnographic field notes.

So far, the discussion has highlighted concerns surrounding procedural ethics as well as demands that researchers should pay attention to relational ethics by recognizing 'ethically important moments' and being reflexive without over-emphasising their own positionality. The following section discusses the argument that ethical research involves not only relational sensitivity but also political action and mutual benefits.

2.1.3 Reciprocity

Earlier on in this chapter I observed that ethics guidelines seldom specify which moral philosophical schools they derive from. Those who demand that research ethics should exceed procedural standards are generally similarly unclear as to what moral values their claims are based on. A notable exception in writings about research ethics is a recurring reference to one particular philosopher, Emmanuel Levinas (e.g. Aidani 2013; Conrad 2006; Hugman 2003; Vervliet et al. 2015). In particular scholars working

with so-called disadvantaged or vulnerable populations invoke Levinas as a basis for their arguments that researchers have a moral duty to care. Levinas' principal argument is that we have an unconditional and unquestionable responsibility towards the other.

> *Levinas says that it is in the encounter with the 'face' of the other that we experience infinite and transcendent alterity. He invokes this experience as a way to express the immediacy, the non-negotiable radicality of the ethical encounter with the other, the way that experience in fact actually calls us into existence as subjects. (Burvill 2008, p.235)*

In Levinas' view, our responsibility towards the other also extends to 'the third', the broader society. This notion is often interpreted to mean that ethics is a political undertaking (Aidani 2013; Burvill 2008).

> *For Levinas, speaking out and demanding an ethical relationship with the other, demanding that the government sees justice through the other's eyes is an ethical responsibility that should inform the structure of our research. (Aidani 2013, p. 218)*

Levinas is therefore used as a basis for claims that researchers have a moral responsibility to advocate for change. "From a Levinasian perspective the face-to-face encounter with our research participants demands that we see and respond to their suffering not just with compassion but also through social and political justice" (Aidani 2013, p. 219). By following this demand, research ethics becomes a political undertaking. I suggest that the Levinasian understanding of research ethics corresponds to the concept of reciprocity as advocated by (forced) migration scholars who demand that "ethics should be extended to promoting the interests and well-being of extremely vulnerable research subjects" (Pittaway, Bartolomei and Hugman 2010, p. 241).

As a form of ethical research practice, the main aspect of reciprocal ethics is that participants should benefit from engaging in research. Sharlene Swartz argues that "the purpose of such an ethics of reciprocation is to give back both ownership of knowledge and material benefit to those participating in research" (Swartz 2011, p. 49). According to others, "the principle of reciprocity suggests that the risks and costs associated with participation in research can be offset by the delivery of direct, tangible benefits to those who participate" (Pittaway, Bartolomei and Hugman 2010, p. 234; Zwi et al. 2006, p. 267).

Reciprocity can be achieved by providing material goods to participants, a point that Levinas also raises. For him, "ethical responsibility starts at the level of being

responsible for the material needs of the other" (Aidani 2013, p. 216). Material reciprocity also involves compensating participants for their time and for any monetary expenses incurred due to their participation in the research, such as transport costs. Offering presents as part of the research process, however, can cause ethical dilemmas, especially "in a context defined by power differences, because giving further exacerbates these differences, and (…) may lure people into participating in a project that they may otherwise have preferred to stay away from" (Lammers 2007, p. 75; see also Marmo 2013).

At the same time, the act of giving and receiving can contribute to building a relationship of trust and respect between researcher and participants. Rather than avoiding any type of giving, Ellen Lammers therefore argues that researchers need to reflect critically on the ways of '*how* to give': "Required is a responsible, carefully weighed way of giving, which minimally asks for an awareness (…) that there are multiple sources and manifestations of power and powerfulness" (Lammers 2007, p. 80).

Besides material benefits, reciprocity also occurs when participants gain educational benefits, for example by developing certain skills or knowledge. In this context it is argued that reciprocity "also promotes [participants'] autonomous agency and helps re-build capacity" (Mackenzie, McDowell and Pittaway 2007, p. 301). Pittaway et al. developed a particular research approach in which the researchers provide human rights training for refugees, subsequently encourage them to share stories and finally draft an ethics agreement in which participants decide how they want the data to be used (Pittaway, Bartolomei and Hugman 2010). To avoid any perception that researchers are 'stealing' people's stories, participants maintain complete ownership over all research outcomes. While this approach allows refugees to become advocates in their own right, it may "come at a cost to the researchers' expected outputs", for example if participants do not agree to publish the findings (ibid., p. 238).

Pittaway et al.'s educational approach is based on the assumption that increased knowledge will necessarily lead to action and change. In opposition to this claim, others argue that the path from understanding to learning and eventually claiming rights is not as linear. This point of view derives from the understanding that factual knowledge is but one precondition for action, but that other factors may be just as important. In this regard, Maro Pantazidou contends that

> *the cognitive development of a political consciousness might not always be the most crucial element in transforming displaced people's identity and agency [since] learning processes which focus on affective and emotional dimensions might be of equal importance.* (Pantazidou 2013, p. 287)

The quote hints at an interesting aspect, namely that participants can and should also gain emotional benefits from engaging in research. This idea, however, has not received much attention in the literature so far. With a particular view on this case study, chapter 4.4.3 and 5.4.1 will explore this notion further. The analysis will conclude that affective reciprocity is a crucial yet often discounted aspect of research ethics and relevance.

Largely overlooked in the discourse about research ethics is the relationship between ethics and the relevance of research (Gready 2010). Indicative of this shortcoming is the tendency of (forced) migration researchers to consider policy relevance entirely separately from ethical questions. Exceptional in this regard is the claim by Pittaway et al. that

> *resolving ethical dilemmas has the potential to enhance the work of a range of academic disciplines in the social sciences, health and legal fields, as well as to aid service providers, social policy makers, and social development and other applied and professional disciplines. (Pittaway, Bartolomei and Hugman 2010, p. 241)*

This statement, however, lacks the foundation to prove its claim. In an attempt to fill this gap, chapter 5.4. addresses the link between research ethics and policy relevance in more detail.

With a particular view on (forced) migration studies, this chapter has so far reviewed different understandings concerning research ethics in the social sciences. The different ethical demands described in the three sections of the chapter can be understood and interpreted as following a hierarchical structure. In this sense, procedural ethics requirements build the starting point onto which further ethical demands are placed such as relational ethics and ultimately reciprocity. Each new demand is thereby perceived as morally 'more important' than the previous ones. This hierarchical understanding of research ethics is illustrated in the following pyramid-shaped diagram.

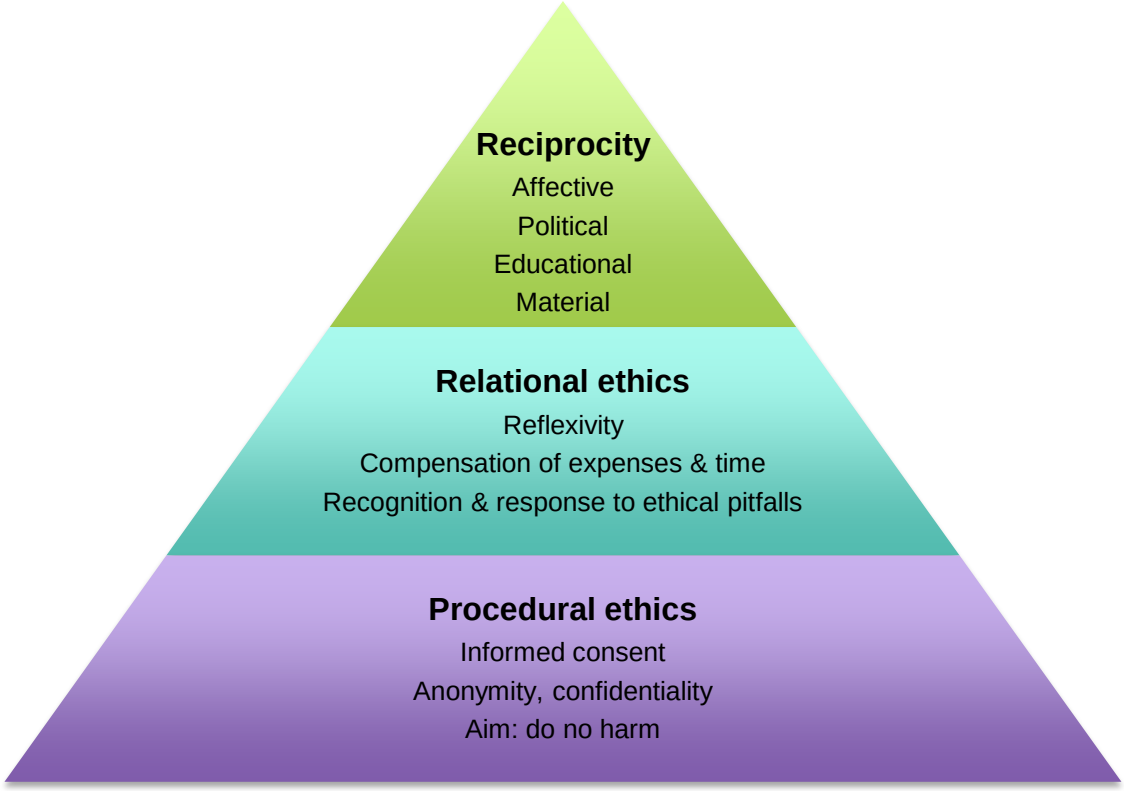

Figure 2 – Pyramid of social research ethics (graph by Lena S. Opfermann)

The following section provides an overview of how researchers envision achieving policy relevance.

2.2 Achieving policy relevance

As outlined in the introductory chapter, (forced) migration researchers generally attempt to produce policy relevant research outcomes that contribute to ameliorating the plight of 'the researched'. This aim corresponds to the Levinasian notion of ethical responsibility towards the 'other' as mentioned in the previous section. For this reason, policy relevance can be considered as a form of reciprocity. As also previously mentioned, however, notwithstanding this overlap between research ethics and policy relevance, both concepts are largely discussed independently of each other in the literature. This section therefore examines the notion of policy relevance separately from the previous one on research ethics.

Despite being a prominent and widely recognized goal, scholars are neither clear nor coherent in the way they conceptualise and propose to achieve policy relevance:

> *To some degree, the protagonists in such debates on the relationship between research and policy often appear to be talking at cross*

> *purposes as they fail to make it clear what they mean by policy and policy relevant. (Bakewell 2008, p. 434)*

This section attempts to shed some light on these debates in order to create a better understanding of how policy relevance is conceptualised and understood in the context of (forced) migration studies.

2.2.1 Considering the terminology

One recurring theme in the discourse on policy relevance is the implication that the use of certain terms and categories determines the scope and subsequently the relevance of migration research. The debate is related to the emergence of the relatively new field of Forced Migration Studies and the discussion around its aims.[18] To begin with, some argue that a narrow scope of study allows for a more rigorous search for solutions to problems related to specific categories of persons, such as refugees (e.g. Hathaway 2007). The most prominent argument in this respect stems from a concern that the broadening of the field from Refugee Studies to Forced Migration Studies shifts the focus from the specific plight of refugees to the study of migration as a phenomenon more generally. This, it is feared, would "contribute to a lack of criticality in relation to policies which subordinate refugee autonomy to the pursuit of the more systemic concerns" (Hathaway 2007, p. 356). This position, referred to as 'fundamentalist', 'traditionalist' (Van Hear 1998) or 'purist' (Bakewell 2008), is based on a conceptualisation of refugees as possessing a certain legal status. In this sense, it considers only those people as refugees who meet the strict criteria of the UN Refugee Convention (United Nations 1951) and have been recognized as such.

This view corresponds to the UNHCR's standpoint that there is a 'fundamental difference' between migrants on the one hand and refugees on the other hand. While the institution has expanded its scope and mandate by including other people to be 'of concern' to the institution, like Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and stateless persons, it nevertheless maintains that a strict division between migrants and those 'of concern' to the UNHCR is necessary and needed (UNHCR 2016). In light of an increasingly blurred use of those terms by the media the UNHCR even launched a poster campaign entitled 'Refugee or Migrant? Word choice matters.' The poster depicts a displaced mother with two children huddling together while sitting on the

[18] See contributions to a lively debate in a special issue of the Journal of Refugee Studies, Vol. 20, No. 2 (2007).

ground in a run-down shelter (UNHCR 2016). Underlying this image and its title is the claim that only refugees have a 'genuine need' for protection while migrants face no security threat and, unlike refugees, may 'choose' to return home at any time. If they do so, it is claimed that "they will continue to receive the protection of their government" (ibid.).

According to the UNHCR, the distinction between migrants and refugees is necessary as it enables the institution and host governments to comply with their international legal obligations to provide protection for the specific plight of refugees. As in the purist position, this view is based on the assumption that a conflation of terms would negatively affect refugees. Despite continuing to dominate the policy discourses, however, this purist view is increasingly being scrutinized and criticised by scholars, practitioners and activists. Some point out, for instance, that the legal status is often "not the only status available to those who are labelled as refugees. It is one among others, as for instance those deriving from their national, tribal, and kinship memberships" (Scalettaris 2007, p. 40). As a coping strategy, persons often place more emphasis on one status over another or shift between different statuses. Comprehending the refugee status as merely a legal category therefore risks overlooking the fact that those same persons also form part of other sociological groups and could be studied as such (Scalettaris 2007; Bakewell 2008). In other words:

> *It would seem that the term refugee has analytical usefulness not as a label for a special, generalizable 'kind' or 'type' of person or situation, but only as a broad legal or descriptive rubric that includes within it a world of different socioeconomic statuses, personal histories, and psychological or spiritual situations.* (Malkki 1995, p. 496)

In line with this David Turton suggests "always to think of forced migrants as 'ordinary people', or 'purposive actors', embedded in particular social, political and historical situations" (Turton 2003, p. 1). This understanding has been termed the 'holist' (Van Hear 1998) or 'integrationist position' (Bakewell 2008, p. 440). In direct contrast to the purist position, the integrationist position argues that refugees "should not be considered in isolation from the rest of the community of which they are part" (Scalettaris 2007, p. 40). Instead, they should be perceived as one group of migrants next to others. Similarly, Jørgen Carling advocates for an inclusive meaning of migrants as persons who migrate, with or without fear of persecution (Carling 2015). He criticizes the UNHCR's position and fears that their divisive rhetoric undermines the right to seek asylum (ibid.).

Returning to the discourse on defining the academic discipline, the metaphor of a Russian doll, *matryoshka*, usefully illustrates how Refugee Studies are situated within the broader field of Forced Migration Studies which in turn is embedded within the even broader field of Migration Studies (Van Hear 2011). Nicolas van Hear maintains that "this way of situating the way we produce knowledge does not in any way diminish or devalue the special circumstances of being a refugee, but usefully helps to set that condition in a broader social context" (ibid., p. 12).

B.S. Chimni distances himself from the previous positions in a radical way by contending that the problem is not the move from Refugee to Forced Migration studies. More specifically, he condemns the entire research field as serving the goal of hegemonic states to contain refugees and migrants in the global South (Chimni 2009).

> *The move from Refugee Studies to Forced Migration Studies takes place within an imperial global order in which hegemonic states seek to use the ideas and practices of humanitarianism to advance parochial goals. (Chimni 2009, p. 24)*

He concludes that "the world of displacement has thus become a site of power to embed selective humanitarian practices that facilitate the exercise of hegemony" (Chimni 2009, p. 24). According to this understanding, then, the outcomes of (forced) migration research are policy relevant not for the benefit of the migrants, refugees or displaced persons themselves but for Western states that fund most of the research.

Chimni's concern is reflected in the perception that migration policies are failing if they do not succeed in curbing migration to the West (e.g. Castles 2003; Castles 2004). Stephen Castles, for instance, states that "migration control is really about regulating North-South relationships and maintaining inequality." (Castles 2004, p. 223) Castles recognizes that migration is caused by global inequalities and that Western migration policies are often racially motivated. The claim that racially motivated migration policies are failing if they do not achieve their stated objectives, however, implies that a success of such policies is desirable. This in turn legitimises racist attitudes and migration policy making. Castles' acknowledgment that "*some* people might say that ineffective migration policies have actually led to more open and inclusive societies" (ibid., p. 207, emphasis added) further emphasises that he does not share this belief in inclusive societies. The racialised dimension of the terminology debate is also evident in the use of the terms 'expats' and 'expatriates'. Attributing these terms exclusively to white migrants who work abroad while labelling all other foreigners as 'immigrants'

reflects and reproduces a racial hierarchy in which some migrants are superior to others (Carling 2015; Koutonin 2015).

The ongoing debate concerning the 'right' use of terms and labelling of refugees and migrants in the media (e.g. Malone 2015; Ruz 2015; Siegfried 2015) also reflects a bigger policy challenge, namely that the UN Refugee Convention (1951) falls short of addressing certain realities of forced displacement. The convention definition for instance excludes people who do not face individual persecution even if they flee generalized violence and systematic human rights violations due to political, economic or environmental upheaval in their countries of origin. In all these cases people may face serious threats to their life if they were to return home, similar to people experiencing individual persecution as defined in the Refugee Convention. It is this reality that prevents a clear distinction between refugees and migrants in practise.

The relatively new concepts of 'mixed migration' and of the 'asylum-migration nexus' (e.g. van Hear et al. 2009; Stewart 2008) attempt to illustrate this overlap of people's experiences and motivations to migrate. Recognizing this overlap and the protection gap concerning migrants who fall outside the refugee definition despite facing serious threats to their life and wellbeing, Alexander Betts introduced yet another term to this discourse, 'survival migrants' (Betts 2010; Betts 2013). He defines 'survival migrants' as "persons who are outside their country of origin because of an existential threat for which they have no access to a domestic remedy or resolution" (Betts 2010, p. 365). 'Existential threat' thereby includes the deprivation of basic rights such as liberty, security and subsistence. Consequently, the concept of 'survival migrants' includes refugees and other migrants who are unable to return home yet who do not fall under the UN convention. This concept applies for instance to Zimbabweans in South Africa, most of whom are not recognized as refugees in South Africa despite having left their country due to a dire humanitarian and human rights situation (Betts 2013). Betts refers to this example as 'an archetypal case of survival migration' where people find themselves between the categories of refugees and voluntary economic migrants (ibid., p. 53). As "refugees are survival migrants, but not all survival migrants are refugees" (Betts 2010, p. 365), the concept of 'survival migrants' corresponds to the integrationist position described above which views refugees as part of a larger group of migrants.

In terms of the policy relevance of this concept, Betts argues that states perform varying degrees of 'regime stretching' to incorporate survival migrants in existing local

protection frameworks. In order to secure the protection of increasing numbers of 'nonrefugee survival migrants' in the long term he suggests the development of a soft law framework that consolidates existing state obligations and a better division of responsibilities between international organisations. While the notion of 'survival migration' may be useful for explicitly recognizing the gap in the current refugee protection regime, Betts' explicit reference to 'nonrefugee survival migrants' as compared to 'refugee survival migrants', however, indicates that the concept does not fully solve the discussed terminological challenges.

As the discussion has shown, the discourse on the use and meaning of terms is largely led by academics, media and humanitarian institutions, thus without participation of the label bearers. 'Labelling' is thus a non-participatory process of stereotyping that defines and changes the identities of those being labelled (Zetter 1991). As such, the distinction between 'genuine refugees' from other refugees, for instance those with subsidiary protection status, as well as the proliferation of new terms such as migrants, asylum seekers and 'survival migrants' illustrates what Zetter refers to as the 'fractioning' of the refugee label in recent times (Zetter 2007). He views this process of fractioning as a reflection of "a political discourse of alienation and resistance to refugee claims" (Zetter 2007, p. 188).

In order to acknowledge the discussed controversies I use the term '(forced) migration' and '(forced) migrants' throughout this dissertation. The parentheses indicate that the boundaries between forced and other migrants are blurred and overlapping as people do not necessarily belong to one category only. The parentheses also illustrate my belief that it is not the researcher's task to determine whether people belong to a certain category. Above all, however, the parentheses are intended to express that in terms of research, policy-making and practice the same ethical principles should apply to all persons, regardless of their background and classification or categorization through others.

Following the discussion of how the use of certain terms affects policy relevance, the next section explores the point of view that the relevance of research is determined by the research approach taken.

2.2.2 Applying a certain research approach

Several scholars argue that the policy relevance of research depends on the approach taken in conducting the research. 'Approach' here refers to both the design and implementation of research through certain methodologies. Two of the most prominent representatives in this debate, Jacobsen and Landau, contend that research results generated through quantitative larger-scale studies with control groups to explore causal relationships are a more valuable basis for policy recommendations (Jacobsen and Landau 2003a). The authors claim that many researchers, in their ambition to influence policy, compromise academic rigour by using imprecise or inflated numbers in order to emphasise the relevance of a particular issue:

> *Refugee studies, and humanitarian studies in general, reveal a great paucity of good social science, rooted in a lack of rigorous conceptualizations and research design, weak methods, and a general failure to address the ethical problems related to researching vulnerable communities. (Jacobsen and Landau 2003a, p. 2)*

They warn that proceeding in this way can have negative consequences for the persons intended to benefit from the research. For instance, it has been the case that reports about supposedly increased numbers of refugees in a given country do not lead governments to provide better humanitarian assistance, but rather to tighten their immigration controls (Jacobsen and Landau 2003a). As faulty academic practices may furthermore harm the reputation of the discipline as a whole, the authors demand greater conceptual clarity regarding definitions and methodological approaches, including increased caution in selecting research samples and local assistants. In sum, they call for a set of general standards that ensure that studies are replicable and research results representative of the concerned population (Landau and Jacobsen 2005).

In strong disagreement with this view, others argue that there are alternative forms of knowledge that cannot be discovered in large-scale studies by apparently neutral researchers (e.g. Rodgers 2004). In this regard Graeme Rodgers also criticises the way in which researchers traditionally position themselves:

> *The role of the 'researcher as expert' is not only increasingly inefficient but also arguably deeply offensive and even threatening. This issue cannot be addressed by stepping back, by making our sample larger, more representative or more reliable.* (Rodgers 2004, p. 49)

To address this shortcoming, he suggests that more local-level studies are necessary, conducted over longer periods of time by interacting informally with the target

population. This view is supported by the IOM that advocates a similar approach to researching migrants:

> *Instead of being the passive subject of enquiry, migrants should be given the opportunity to tell their stories. […] This emphasis on the experiential dimension, as opposed to the usual focus on disembodied socioeconomic dynamics, could open the door to policy making that is more attuned to human needs. (International Organization for Migration 2013, p. 175f)*

The requirement to pay attention to and listen to migrants relates to another position in the debate on how to achieve policy relevance, one that is less concerned with methodological rigidity than with the lens that guides the research design and process. This position criticises the frequent use of existing policy categories in designing research projects:

> *Research on human displacement is less likely to be 'relevant' to policy, the more closely it follows policy-related categories and concepts in defining its subject matter and in setting its research priorities. (Turton 2006, p.14)*

This view is confirmed by Bakewell who asserts that migration research is too often guided by existing policy categories and programmes that are focused on particular groups of migrants and implemented by particular actors such as governments, the UNHCR and other international agencies (Bakewell 2008). He suggests that this approach derives from the two-fold notion that a) policy makers and practitioners are the main actors in charge of improving migrants' lives and b) that these actors are more likely to change their policies or programmes if they understand the language that is being used in conveying research results and recommendations (ibid.). Due to this understanding researchers commonly assume that studies designed around existing categories are necessarily more relevant. Bakewell warns, however, that this approach is problematic as it prevents researchers from looking at persons, issues and viewpoints that do not correspond to existing categories:

> *By steering our studies by the light of states, UN bodies, donors, advocates, NGOs and other institutional actors, we immediately cast into the shadows the agency of the individuals and households who have no easily observable institutional form. (Bakewell 2008, p. 441)*

To address this problem, Bakewell suggests pursuing an alternative research approach that is independent from both policy and practice: "By putting aside policy relevance and stepping outside the categories, we may be able to get a sideways look at policy and practice from a new angle" (Bakewell 2008, p. 449). This approach requires researchers to adopt a different research design and perspective in which research questions, methodology and data analysis are guided by the conditions on

the ground. In other words, any categorizations needed to usefully analyse a particular phenomenon "must arise from the data rather than framing the data collection" (ibid., p. 447). To implement this, researchers will need to change their perspective – away from a policy-centred view to

> *an alternative analysis which starts from the perspective of the forced migrants (or some other population group) or from the perspective of other academic fields outside the forced migration field (Bakewell 2008, p. 442).*

Bakewell believes that this approach will lead to results that "help build new knowledge with tremendous practical relevance that can bring change to people's lives and cast light on the invisible situation of those living in the shadow of bright policy lights" (ibid., p. 450). While the production of 'new knowledge with practical relevance' corresponds to the dual imperative, shedding light on so-called 'invisible' persons also has a number of ethical implications. Chapter 3.3.1 discusses these implications in more detail.

This section has outlined how different scholars argue that research approach and methodology are crucial elements in determining the relevance of migration research. While contradicting each other with regard to the 'right' approach, all positions presented so far resemble each other in one significant point. They build on the assumption that new knowledge, acquired through research and made available to policy makers and practitioners, will lead to policy change. In other words, they presume that "the process of policy learning is a fairly linear one that functions mainly by increasing input or information" (Schmidt 2007, p. 88). Despite its prevalence, this view has been criticised for underestimating the complexities surrounding the policy-making process (Schmidt 2007) which has been described as "a techno-political process of defining and matching goals and means among constrained social actors" (Howlett, Ramesh and Perl 2009, p. 4).

The following section analyses how (forced) migration researchers propose to engage with the complex policy-making process.

2.2.3 Communicating effectively

The previous section showed that much debate is concerned with choosing the right approach and methodology in order to produce policy relevant research results. In contrast to this, others emphasise the importance of influencing the policy-making process itself in order to achieve relevance (e.g. Boswell 2008; Geddes 2014; Schmidt

2007). In this respect, the availability and use of knowledge are considered key aspects in explaining the causalities surrounding the policy-making process.

Anna Schmidt outlines two ways to influence policy through research: The 'Weberian' approach and 'action research'. The Weberian approach conceptualizes the researcher as neutral and detached from any policy: "the task of the research is that of scientific counsel that does not get involved in the politics of policy. The underlying belief is that even the soundest research cannot show us the 'right path'" (Schmidt 2007, p. 90). In contrast to this, the action research approach attributes a clearly political role to the researcher who "becomes an active consultant and lobbyist" who "carries open judgement over what should be done" (ibid., p. 91). Given the aim of influencing policy through research results and recommendations, many (forced) migration researchers seem to fall into this second category of researchers as lobbyists. As already indicated in chapter 1, however, others argue that the mixing of research with advocacy constitutes a threat to 'good social science' (e.g. Jacobsen and Landau 2003a). Their concern is that advocacy-oriented researchers already know what issues they want to advocate for and hence conduct research with the intention to 'prove' their point.

Another point related to the effective communication of research results concerns the availability and dissemination of information. In this regard Jeff Crisp, then head of UNHCR's Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit, once raised the point that UNHCR "knows less and less about the refugees it is mandated to protect" (Crisp 2003, p. 55). He attributed this situation to a number of factors related to a changing working environment: increased security concerns restrict the number of UNHCR staff in the field; new accountability mechanisms and reporting requirements increase the office hours and reduce the time staff have available to spend in direct contact with beneficiaries and the data collected in the field is "often weak and not used to inform policy making and programme design" (ibid.). While Crisp argues that a lack of information has limited UNHCR's capacity to improve its programmes, he simultaneously suggests that available information is not being used in an effective way.

This last point corresponds to the argument that it is not a lack, but an overload of information that constitutes the major challenge. For example, it has been criticized that too much grey literature is produced on refugee-related issues (Black 2001, p. 68). Often repetitive and of poor analytical quality, this literature is not publishable and

as a consequence not easily available to others. Richard Black further raises the point that even if made accessible through new online databases, humanitarian agencies and policy makers may not have the capacity to read and use research reports (Black 2001). This point is in line with the argument that the particular 'packaging' of research reports inhibits their efficiency. Specifically, this refers to the claim that research reports are often too long and written in an academic language that is difficult to understand (Geddes 2014, p. 9).

With regard to the relationship between migration research and policy, 'boundary organisations' such as think tanks and international organisations can act as bridge-makers that mediate the relationship between research and policy by producing shorter reports with more accessible language (Geddes 2014). In addition, networking and regular interaction between different actors constitute an important part of the policy-making process: "While soft governance is relatively weak it can create space for relations between knowledge producers and the users of this knowledge" (ibid., p. 10). Within these relationships Andrew Geddes found that policy makers often rely on 'key experts' that guide them through the large amount of available information.

While this recognition contributes to understanding the policy-making process, it falls short of explaining the causal relationship between research and actual policy changes. Influencing policy through research has been recognized as a difficult task (e.g. Black 2001). Yet a number of (forced) migration scholars contend that research does contribute to shaping policy, in both positive and negative ways (e.g. Boswell, Geddes and Scholten 2011; Polzer and Hammond 2008; Van Hear 2011). Van Hear, for example, portrays the relationship between policy, research and public discourse as a triangular one in which each sphere influences the others (Van Hear 2011). Christina Boswell et al. find a link between migration research and policy in the need for policy makers to substantiate their narratives with 'expert knowledge' in order to sound convincing to the voters: "knowledge claims become key in strategies of political argumentation and policy deliberation" (Boswell, Geddes and Scholten 2011, p. 3). Whilst these authors acknowledge that migration policy is often more determined by societal pressures than by research-based evidence, they nevertheless argue that "there is a strong expectation that policy-makers have expertise or research available to inform their choices and justify their decisions" (ibid., p. 7).

Given the complexity of the policy-making process I conclude from this review that the achievement of policy relevant results is likely to depend on a combination of the

discussed factors; choosing an appropriate terminology, applying a certain research approach and communicating results efficiently.

The following section provides an overview of how children are conceptualised academically and how this affects research with children.

2.3 Conceptualising children

Children have long been seen as passive subjects who depend on and are shaped by the social structures around them. This perception has slowly changed during the 20th century when children have come to be regarded as meaning-producing beings who are actively involved in the construction of their own social lives and the societies they live in. Since the 1990s, the idea that children have agency has become broadly accepted among social science scholars (e.g. James and Prout 1990). The high prevalence of 'children's agency' in recent research has led some to describe the concept as a 'mantra within social science' (Bordonaro 2012, p. 414; Jeffrey 2012, p. 245)[19] or a 'dogma' (Lancy 2012, p. 3/20). This section reviews the concept of children's agency and current contestations thereof. It draws primarily on literature from the relatively new discipline of Childhood Studies.

2.3.1 Children as 'extraordinary agents'

Despite an abundance of empirical studies 'proving' that children have agency, the notion of agency is hardly ever defined from a theoretical perspective (Punch 2016; Tisdall and Punch 2012). Nevertheless, scholars seem to conceptualise agency according to several distinct understandings. I will portray some of them in this section.

Firstly, agency is often attributed to children interacting and negotiating with adults or engaging in political activities such as demonstrations, political networks or provocative actions in the public sphere (e.g. Abebe, 2007; Jeffrey, 2012; Smith, 2009). In studies on migration, children are often depicted as exercising agency with regards to their decision to migrate (Hashim 2006; Kovats-Bernat 2006; Panelli, Punch and Robson 2007; Punch 2007a and 2007b). Most prominently, however, agency is highlighted with regard to children whose living situations appear to the researcher to be particularly challenging, adverse or unjust. This is the case with so-called

[19] In stating that 'agency' has become a social science 'mantra' Lorenzo Bordonaro (2012) refers to certain authors (Ahearn 2001, Vanderbeck 2008, Jeffrey 2012), Craig Jeffrey (2012) to others (Durham 2008 and Katz 2004).

marginalized, excluded and disadvantaged children[20] or those deemed 'at risk' such as street children (e.g. Kovats-Bernat 2006; Panter-Brick 2002), children in rural areas (e.g. Panelli, Punch and Robson 2007), children heading households (e.g. Payne 2012), children affected by war (e.g. Hart 2008) and migrant and refugee children (e.g. Chase 2009). In these contexts, agency is usually portrayed as a form of resistance to oppression or as the ability to cope with and endure hardship through resilience and resourcefulness in creating survival strategies. Children who manage to cope with their challenging situation are therefore perceived as 'extraordinary survivors' (Payne 2012).

Some argue that children in disadvantaged circumstances are restricted in exercising their agency. Different terms and concepts have been introduced to delineate and measure the way in which agency is understood to be limited. Natascha Klocker, for instance, suggests that "structures, contexts, and relationships can act as 'thinners' or 'thickeners' of individuals' agency, by constraining or expanding their range of viable choices" (Klocker 2007, p. 85). With regard to her own case study on child domestic workers in Tanzania she argues that factors such as age, gender, 'tribe' and poverty can have a 'thinning' effect on the agency of children.

Furthermore, the 'continuum of agency' classifies young rural people's agency in four different degrees from '(almost) no agency' to 'little agency', 'secret agency' and 'public agency' (Robson et al. 2007). The authors of this concept understand the degree of agency to be an indication of the level of power or control that children have in their daily lives. They argue that children who are "forced to do things out of necessity to improve their lives and futures (…) appear to have very little agency" (Robson, Bell and Klocker 2007, p. 144). In this context, child workers are perceived to have little agency. This understanding therefore represents the opposite view to the above mentioned notion of agency as an extraordinary resistance to hardship.

According to Deborah Durham, the fascination with and popularity of the agency concept derives from a desire to support and 'uplift' seemingly powerless people:

> *In recognizing the agency of youth (or children, or women, or the poor and oppressed), anthropologists are engaged in an act of liberation, of restoring to those who seem powerless their individual rights to act effectively upon the world. (Durham 2008, p. 151)*

[20] I use the term 'so-called' to acknowledge that notions of vulnerability and disadvantage are often one-sided and based on normative Western ideas that overlook other realities and perceptions.

This statement suggests that agency is attributed to individuals or groups of persons in the belief that it will 'liberate' and 'empower' them. This notion is reflected in discourses that use children's agency as a basis for lobbying for children's rights (Tisdall and Punch 2012).

Despite its continued prevalence, however, the notion of agency as described here has also received considerable criticism in recent years. The following section takes a closer look at these opposing views.

2.3.2 Children as 'everyday agents'

Researchers who attribute agency to children in seemingly 'abnormal' situations simultaneously tend to consider such children to be particularly vulnerable, prone to abuse and exploitation and therefore in need of care and protection (Payne 2012). This perception often applies to unaccompanied refugee and migrant children. Despite scattered references to migrant children's agency as mentioned above, academic as well as humanitarian discourses construct unaccompanied migrant children predominantly as vulnerable beings who are victims by virtue of being (forced) migrants. As such, the UNHCR Guidelines on the Protection and Care of refugee children state that "among refugee children, the most vulnerable are those who are not accompanied by an adult" (UNHCR 1994, point 14). Undocumented migrant children in particular are considered to be in a position of double (Meloni, Vanthuyne and Rousseau 2014, p. 112) or even triple vulnerability: as children, as migrants and as undocumented migrants (PICUM 2008; Sigona 2010). Vulnerability discourses often emphasize that migrant children are likely to be traumatized and affected by psychosocial health problems and that they are at risk of being exploited and becoming victims of child trafficking (e.g. Derluyn and Broekaert 2008; Townsend 2016; UNHCR 1994; Wouk et al. 2006).

With regard to irregular migrants, Franck Duvell et al. define vulnerability as being "at risk from various sources" (Duvell, Triandafyllidou and Vollmer 2008, p. 11). Apart from this, the concept of vulnerability is rarely defined despite its prevalence among academics and practitioners. As several scholars point out, however, children are often perceived as needy and vulnerable if their lives do not correspond to normative Western childhood ideals (Bordonaro, 2012; Durham, 2008; Kovats-Bernat, 2006; Payne 2012; Vanderbeck, 2008). According to these ideals, childhood exists in a

depoliticized space of carefree innocence (Boyden 1997), detached and sheltered from politics:

> *Children are to be protected, in an a-political arena of thought and practice. […] The kindergarten – where children grow and where they are grown – is emblematic of that attractive vision. Gardens present an image of a natural – and a-political – environment where plants and people flourish. (Mayall 2000, p. 246)*

The interpretation of children's lives in different cultural contexts on the basis of these ethnocentric ideals can lead to inadequate conclusions and responses by researchers, practitioners and policy makers. In this regard the discussion on victimhood and power in chapter 2.1.2 already highlighted the fact that people belong to different social categories at the same time (Cousin 2010). Attributing vulnerability solely on the basis of particular demographic characteristics such as people's age or migration status is therefore problematic.

Firstly, it creates objectified 'needy subjects' without individual strengths and needs (Clark 2007; Timmer 2010). Secondly, it implies a fixed state of being and tends to overlook existing support structures and possibilities for change (ibid.). Finally, it can lead to inadequate interpretations of children's realities. As such, perceptions of children's lives as disadvantaged, challenging, underprivileged or difficult often do not correspond to the children's own views and experiences (Payne 2012; Pells 2012; Seymour 2012). If child protection programmes are based on generalized notions of victimhood that do not take into account children's real needs and strengths, they risk being inefficient (e.g. Carpi and Diana 2016; Payne 2012).

The following example concerning children heading households in Zambia shows how a closer look at children's own perceptions led to insights that were relevant for further child protection measures. In contrast to the common perception that children heading households are victims who apply extraordinary agency in order to cope, Ruth Payne's research demonstrates that the children "perceived their adult responsibilities as part of everyday life rather than an unusual or extraordinary expression of agency" (Payne 2012, p. 405). Based on this recognition she developed the concept of 'everyday agency':

> *'Everyday agency' […] refers to the expressions of agency perceived by children and young people to be part of their everyday life, even though these actions frequently go against the grain of what is considered socially and culturally appropriate. (Payne 2012, p. 400)*

The author emphasizes that such an approach does not deny the fact that children's situations may be precarious and characterised by serious challenges, but that these notions of 'crisis' are not the only applicable interpretations of children's realities (Payne 2012).

Taking everyday agency seriously has significant implications for the design of policies and programmes aimed at supporting children. Above all it requires policy makers, practitioners and researchers to abandon the idea that children living in situations that do not correspond to their own preconceived childhood ideals constitute social problems that need to be 'fixed'. It further means 'taking children seriously' by recognizing their circumstances as a legitimate reality that needs to be supported and strengthened rather than 'corrected' or abolished altogether. In the case of children heading households such a shift in perspective implies, for example, listening closely to the children in order to base interventions on local knowledge *from* the children rather than *about* them. Instead of aiming to reconstitute 'normal' household situations and "attempting to correct their deviant agency", policymakers and practitioners should "capitalise on 'everyday agency' by harnessing the skills and abilities of young people and using them to support their own lives" (Payne 2012, p. 407). Recognizing child headed households as legitimate would mean, for example, including them in community meetings where decisions about resource allocation or infrastructural improvements are taken so that they can voice their opinions on their households' needs.

The different perceptions of children and childhood discussed in this section also affect the understanding of how social science research with children should be conducted. Given this study's focus on research ethics, the next section provides some insight into different viewpoints regarding ethical research with children.

2.3.3 Ethics in research with children

Accounts concerning ethics in research with children derive largely from the personal experiences of scholars who found that existing ethics guidelines are not appropriate or useful in addressing the ethical challenges they encountered in conducting research with children. As a consequence, the arguments put forward speak to very specific situations or 'categories' of children such as migrant and refugee children (Block et al. 2012; Zeitlyn and Mand 2012), unaccompanied refugee and asylum seeking children (e.g. Hopkins 2008; Vervliet et al. 2015); children in care (e.g. Kendrick, Steckley and

Lerpiniere 2008) or children in particular cultural contexts like Ghana (Twum-Danso 2009), Ethiopia (Abebe 2009), Pakistan (Jabeen 2009) or Southern Africa (Clacherty and Donald 2007). As scholars reflect predominantly on their own experiences, few of the discourses relate to and inform each other in ways that would stimulate a debate or contribute to the development of ethical guidelines applicable to research with children. Nevertheless, a few overarching and recurring themes can be identified, some of which I will briefly present here.

Firstly, in line with criticism concerning the notion of agency, scholars conducting research with children often condemn the fact that research ethics norms defined by Western universities and funders are not applicable to non-Western contexts. Based on their research in Ethiopia, Indonesia and Fiji, Tatek Abebe and Sharon Bessell for example argue that research with children in the 'Global South' requires researchers not only to fulfil formal ethics requirements and 'ethics in practice', but also to recognize 'local ethos' that respects local values and practices (Abebe and Bessell 2014, p. 130). Similarly, Afua Twum-Danso asks "questions about the extent to which ethical guidelines developed primarily in the Global North are appropriate in diverse social and cultural contexts where adults and children relate to each other differently" (Twum-Danso 2009, p. 388). As such she found that that the cultural significance of children's obedience towards adults in Ghana affects and to some extent inhibits children's active participation in adult-led projects conceptualised by Western scholars.

Secondly, many scholars argue that research with children demands particular ethical reflexivity on the part of the researcher (Block et al. 2012; Meloni, Vanthuyne and Rousseau 2015; Phelan and Kinsella 2013; Punch 2002). In this regard, particular emphasis is placed on the need to recognize and acknowledge the social relationship in which children's lives are embedded. Francesca Meloni et al. for example highlight the fact that the perception of children as agents can be restrictive as it leads researchers to overlook the relational aspects of children's lives:

> *The preoccupation with children's individual agency and voice […] often looks at the child in abstraction: an autonomous and intentional* ***individual*** *child. Yet, this gesture forgets that children's voices do not emerge in a vacuum, but from the interactional context in which they are so deeply entangled: family stories, social landscapes, and relationships of trust. (Meloni, Vanthuyne and Rousseau 2015, p. 107, emphasis in original)*

The recognition that children are part of extensive social networks has significant implications for research. It means, for example, that even children who are perceived

as ‘marginalized’, are likely to be embedded in relationships and networks of adults such as their parents, relatives and ‘authority figures’ such as teachers, social workers, NGO workers or lawyers. In order to make sense of children’s experiences, ideas and views of the world, researchers therefore need to “imagine youth’s stories, and ourselves, within different communities of belonging and interdependence” (Meloni, Vanthuyne and Rousseau 2015, p. 118). Acknowledging these relationships also means that researchers should not overestimate the impact of their own role in the children’s lives. In this regard researchers should be aware that “ultimately, children’s relationships with family, friends and community remain of greater value and influence in their lives than research-based relationships” (Abebe and Bessell 2014, p. 130).

The existence of social networks not only affects the data collection and interpretation, but also the impact that research can have on these relationships. For example, if research raises participants’ consciousness in a way that they begin to question power structures or conditions of injustice and oppression of their daily lives, it may cause tensions within their existing social networks and relationships. Abebe and Bessell therefore ask researchers to consider which potential effects their research might have on the children’s relationships (Abebe and Bessell 2014). Similarly, Marianne Vervliet et al. argue that research ethics involving unaccompanied refugee children needs to be multi-layered. In this respect, researchers need to not only consider their personal ‘micro-level’ relationship and duties towards participants but also react to ‘macro-level’ issues such as structural injustices and shortcomings in the service provision that affects participants (Vervliet et al. 2015). This view corresponds to the demand made in chapter 2.1.3 that researchers have a responsibility to advocate on behalf of participants.

This section has so far raised arguments that local ideas, value systems, practices and social relationships need to be considered when conducting research with children. The scholars referenced link the need for ethical research to participants’ status as children. The triple imperative, by contrast, derives from the notion that research with (forced) migrants requires a particular ethical conduct. Given these two distinct demands I propose that the idea of ‘ethical symmetry’ is useful here. It suggests that the same ethical principles should apply to all research and that these principles be guided by participants’ experiences, interests and contexts (Christensen and Prout 2002). According to this understanding the need for particular methods may arise from the specific context “rather than being assumed in advance” (ibid., p. 482). In this

instance I agree with Pia Christensen who sees children "primarily as fellow human beings":

> *This approach does not assume that particular methods are needed for research with children just because they are children, that a different set of ethical standards is required or that the problems faced during the research process are unique to working with children (cf. van der Geest, 1996). (Christensen 2004, p. 165)*

Christensen and Alan Prout argue that the responsibility of treating children ethically equally to adults should be complemented by particular ethics guidelines and a set of values applicable to research with children (Christensen and Prout 2002). The demand for separate child-specific ethics guidelines, however, seems to contradict the call for equal ethical treatment.

Based on this discussion I propose that ethical equality is a useful point from which to conduct research with participants who are both migrants and children.

2.4 Researching 'Illegality'

This dissertation is concerned with undocumented migrants who live in a state of 'illegality'. This section builds on the discussion in section 2.2.1 around terminology by focusing specifically on the term 'illegality'. I use the term 'illegality' with quotation marks in order to problematize its usage in the context of migration where it implies and attributes an element of criminal activity to those it is imposed on. In this regard, the quotation marks aim to indicate my disagreement with the literal meaning of the term and its imposition on people (de Genova 2002). Section 2.4.1 explores the notion of 'illegality' in a migration context further and outlines how 'illegality' is understood as a three-dimensional phenomenon. It also raises some legal and ethical challenges and concerns related to researching 'illegality'. As this dissertation focuses on children specifically, section 2.4.2 then provides a brief overview of existing research concerning undocumented migrant children in different parts of the world.

2.4.1 The politics of 'illegality'

Recent trends in global migration and mobility have increased the availability of different types of legal migration statuses as well as people's migration 'between statuses'. The latter phenomenon has led to the emergence of the concepts 'status mobility' and 'status fluidity' (Bloch et al. 2014). In this regard, Bloch, Sigona and Zetter argue that "mobility between categories over time and space is a prevalent feature of the new migration" (Bloch et al. 2014, p. 26). The following discussion of the

concept of ‘illegality’ therefore needs to be seen within this context of status mobility which also indicates that categories are not fixed but rather constitute a process that can change over time (ibid.).

With regard to migration, the notion of ‘illegality’ is understood as comprising three aspects: it constitutes a legal category or concept, a socio-political condition and a mode of being in and experiencing the world (Bloch et al. 2014; de Genova 2002; Menjívar and Kanstroom 2014; Willen 2007). In recent years, scholars have emphasised the need to distinguish between ‘illegality’ as a theoretical concept and ‘illegality’ as an inherent feature of individuals who find themselves in a situation of ‘irregular’ immigration status. From a theoretical point of view, ‘illegality’ is above all described as a legal category or status, constructed by policy and law makers (Bloch et al. 2014; de Genova 2002; Menjívar and Kanstroom 2014; Willen 2007). Understanding ‘illegality’ as a legal construct is significant as it entails that the meaning and interpretation of ‘illegality’ can be changed and does change over time and space. Cecilia Menjívar and Daniel Kanstroom illustrate this poignantly in their review of the history of the US immigration law-making in the course of the 20th century. There, it becomes apparent how the US state, by constantly tightening immigration laws, “systematically creates and sustains ‘illegality’” (Menjívar and Kanstroom 2014, p. 43). Similarly, Sarah Willen shows how the Israeli state, through a deliberate tightening of immigration enforcement through mass arrests and deportations, turned undocumented migrants who were formerly “benign and excluded ‘Others’ into ‘wanted criminals’” (Willen 2007, p. 9).

The detailed insight provided by those studies also demonstrates how the construction of ‘illegality’ allows states to pursue particular interests. States rely on undocumented migrants to provide the cheap and exploitable labour without which their economies would not be able to produce and sell their goods at marketable prices. From an economic point of view, states therefore have an interest in creating, tolerating and maintaining ‘illegality’. Interestingly, the need for cheap labour perpetuates the need to continuously construct undocumented migration as a problem that needs to be fought and eradicated. Undocumented migration is constructed “as an invasive and incorrigibly ‘foreign’ menace to national sovereignty, a racialized contagion that undermines the presumed national ‘culture,’ and a recalcitrant ‘criminal’ affront to national security” (Menjivar and Kanstroom 2013, p. 58). For only those that are deemed ‘illegal’ can be readily exploited without recourse to the state justice system or social protection. Similarly, the housing sector also benefits from the existence of

migration ‘illegality’ as it can charge undocumented migrants higher rental prices (Cvajner and Sciortino 2010). This is again motivated by the knowledge that undocumented persons are unlikely to seek legal recourse for unfair treatment.

This leads to the second dimension of ‘illegality’ as a socio-political condition. In this regard, ‘illegality’ is understood as a political identity that puts individuals in a particular relationship to the state, similar to citizenship (de Genova 2002). The difference is, however, that citizenship is linked closely to international and national human rights and protection frameworks. Citizenship enables people to claim their rights while those without citizenship are left in limbo (Bloch 2010). This does not mean that undocumented persons have no rights. In theory, they too are protected by a number of international human rights frameworks intended to guarantee the protection of everyone. These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Refugee Convention, the UN Convention on the Protection of Migrant Workers and their Families, the UN Convention on the Prevention of Statelessness, the UN Child Rights Convention, to name but a few. In practice, however, it is often unfeasible for undocumented persons to claim and access these rights.

In order to address this discrepancy between people’s immigration status and their socio-economic status Alice Bloch suggests that a new model of rights and protection is needed that separates immigration status from labour rights (Bloch 2010). In South Africa, some steps are being taken towards this goal. A recent court case ruled for instance that asylum seekers are entitled to claim benefits from the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) if they have contributed to it while employed (Karim 2017). This ruling, however, only refers to asylum seekers and will not benefit undocumented migrants.

The third dimension of ‘illegality’ is its ‘experiential, embodied and sensory’ impact on people (Willen 2007). Empirical studies explore this notion further and provide insights into how the condition of ‘illegality’ is experienced by undocumented persons. Several studies have shown that undocumented adults, as previously mentioned, are vulnerable to labour exploitation and struggle to access rights (e.g. Bloch 2010; Bloch et al. 2014; Cvajner and Sciortino 2010). In addition, Bloch points out that undocumented migrants in South Africa are unable to access bank accounts and consequently face challenges in transferring remittances to their families back home (Bloch 2010). Other studies emphasise how undocumented migrants’ lives are dominated by fear and anxiety as they try to avoid being identified by state authorities

and institutions. In Israel, brutal strategies of mass arrests and deportations created an atmosphere of criminalization that affected undocumented migrants' experiences of time and space (Willen 2007). This led some of them to develop and employ strategies to survive in conditions of insecurity and threat. These strategies include for instance the frequentation of provisional safe spaces like churches to momentarily escape the dangers they experience in their everyday life (Willen 2007).

Bloch et al. also emphasise that "the lack of documents pervades all aspects of a migrants' life and decision-making" (Bloch et al. 2014, p. 32). As a consequence, undocumented migrants often limit their social relationships to a narrow circle of family, friends and trusted organisations Many live in fear of deportation, experience insecure housing and work situations and are likely to experience poverty (ibid.). Overall, it is important to note that the condition of 'illegality' is experienced in highly diverse forms that affect migrants' lives, their identity and integration in various ways (Bloch et al. 2014). In some instances, the status of 'illegality' affects undocumented persons only marginally. It can thus be said that undocumented migrants' experiences are similarly diverse to those of refugees whose plurality of experiences and agency is often overlooked by researchers, media, humanitarian actors and policy makers in favour of one-dimensional portrayals of victimhood and vulnerability (Sigona 2014).

Demands that more research into experiences of 'illegality' is needed (e.g. Willen 2007) stand in contrast to ethically problematic aspects and consequences of research into 'illegality'. Some point out, for instance, that "qualitative fieldwork on irregular migrants involves individuals who are violating the law" (Duvell, Triandafyllidou and Vollmer 2008, p. 8). From a legal perspective, research with undocumented migrants can therefore be interpreted as an illegal act. According to South African law, for example, it is a punishable offence to engage with 'illegal' persons in any way (Immigration Act No. 13 of 2002). Due to the severity of the matter, I will provide an excerpt from the respective Immigration Act here.

With regard to 'aiding and abetting illegal foreigners', section 42 (1) of the Immigration Act of 2002 states that

> *save for necessary humanitarian assistance,* ***no person shall aid, abet, assist, enable or in any manner help (a) an illegal foreigner'*** *[…] including but not limited to […] (iii)* ***entering into an agreement*** *with him or her for the conduct of any business […]; (iv) conducting any business or* ***carrying on any profession*** *or occupation* ***in cooperation*** *with him or her (emphasis added)*

This is followed by section 42 (2) stating that

> *In any criminal proceeding arising out of this section,* ***it is no defence to aver that the status of the foreigner concerned****, or whether he or she was an illegal foreigner,* ***was unknown*** *to the accused if it is proved that the accused ought reasonably to have known the status of the foreigner, or whether he or she was an illegal foreigner (emphasis added)*

Following this, section 49 specifies the offences committed in this regard, including among others:

> *(6) Anyone failing to comply with one of the duties or obligations set out under section 42 to 46 of this Act shall be guilty of an offence and* ***liable on conviction to a fine or to imprisonment not exceeding 18 months*** *(emphasis added)*

In addition to these practical aspects concerning potential legal ramifications for researchers and researched, 'illegality research' in the field of migration has further implications. By accepting that migration 'illegality' is constructed by nation states in their pursuit to control borders, researchers ultimately contribute to reproducing and legitimizing the existence of nation states and the problematic categories it produces (de Genova 2013). De Genova compares this situation with the role of anthropologists in legitimizing colonial regimes and thinking.

> *The familiar pitfalls by which ethnographic objectification becomes a kind of anthropological pornography - showing it just to show it, as it were - become infinitely more complicated here by the danger that ethnographic disclosure can quite literally become a kind of surveillance, effectively complicit with if not altogether in the service of the state. (de Genova 2002, p. 422)*

This warning indicates that migration research, despite potentially intending to critique the construction of 'illegality', perpetuates and promotes the continued existence of a systematic 'methodological nationalism' and 'fetishization of the nation state'. This concern is based on the understanding that "borders […] re-regiment the cruel inequalities that are the global heritage of centuries of colonialism" (de Genova 2013, p. 255). De Genova concludes that, "if there were no borders, there would indeed be no migrants - only mobility" (ibid.). In order to address this uncomfortable connection, he demands that as critical or 'militant' researchers we "must attend to a self-reflexive critique of our own complicities with the ongoing nationalization of 'society'" (de Genova 2013, p. 252). Without such critical reflexion, we "contribute to the production of a knowledge that is distorted, contorted, perverted, compromised by its own collusion or unwitting complicity" (ibid.).

2.4.2 Global research on undocumented migrant children

High numbers of undocumented migrants combined with the 'fluidity of categories and statuses' (Bloch et al. 2014) in contemporary migration have in recent years led to an upsurge in literature on 'precarious migrants' in practically all parts of the world.[21] Overall, these studies explore and illustrate how across the world migrants' lives are affected and characterised by precarity. The notion of 'precarity' or 'precariousness' and the related concept of 'precariat' thereby comprises not only an irregular or undocumented migration status, but also the prevalence of informal and insecure labour, temporariness, social risk and fragmented life situations that lack security, protection and predictability (Schierup et al. 2015). The 'migrant precariat' includes among others seasonal farm workers, temporary contract workers, rejected asylum seekers, migrant domestic and sex workers. The 'migrant precariat' thereby forms part of a larger 'emerging global precariat' (Goldring and Landholt 2011; Schierup et al. 2015). Despite the multitude of studies concerning 'precarious migrants' and experiences of 'illegality' among adults, globally speaking empirical research on undocumented children under the age of 18 remains scarce. This gap derives from a long-standing perception of children as dependents of adults who did not deserve attention on their own. However, for a number of reasons children are affected by and experience the condition of 'illegality' slightly differently to adults, especially when they are unaccompanied or separated from their parents. This section provides a brief overview of some empirical studies concerning migrant children in precarious situations worldwide.

To begin with, Jason Hart (2014) argues that the study of children in migration can be divided in three different approaches: the first one starts from the point of view of social work and psychology. This approach traditionally portrayed migrant children as traumatised victims. In recent years this view has started being replaced with a focus on resilience and on a perception of children as agents. The second approach is legal. It focuses above all on children's rights and ascribes individual migrant children to different categories such as 'trafficked', 'unaccompanied' or 'refugee' children. Studies

[21] For literature on 'precarious migrants' see for instance: Europe (for example UK: Anderson 2010; Bloch et al. 2011 and 2014; Sigona and Hughes 2010; Belgium: Vandenhole et al. 2011; Germany: Laubenthal 2011; Israel: Kemp 2007; Willen 2007; Spain: Porthe et al. 2009), North America (US: Chavez 2013; Gonzales 2009, 2010 and 2011; Gonzales and Chavez 2012; Gonzales et al. 2015; Negrón-Gonzales 2013; Canada: Goldring and Landolt 2011 and 2013; Young 2013), South America (Crivello 2015; Punch 2007), Asia (Piper et al. 2017; Piper and Lee 2016; Rajaram and Grundy-Warr 2004; China: Haugen 2012; Hongkong: Lee 2007), Australia (Boese et al. 2013; Velayutham 2013) and Africa (for example Maghreb: Fargues 2009; West Africa: Adepoju 2003; East Africa: Campbell 2006; Southern Africa: Landau 2006 and 2018; Smit and Rugunanan 2014).

following the legal approach are often commissioned by humanitarian and child rights organizations. The third approach is ethnographic. It perceives displacement not as a cause for children's experience but as a context for it. Hart claims that unlike the psychological and legal approaches the ethnographic approach is not geared towards policy or practical relevance. However, this dissertation as well as other studies (e.g. Mahati 2012a and b) show that studies can be both ethnographic and policy oriented.

Studies in Europe fall largely under Hart's first two approaches. They concentrate principally on the vulnerabilities of unaccompanied and separated refugee or asylum-seeking children in different European countries such as for example Italy and the UK (Furia 2012; Kohli 2006), Scotland (Hopkins and Hill 2008), Ireland (Raghallaigh 2014), Belgium (Derluyn and Broekaert 2008) and Sweden (Lundberg and Dahlquist 2012). In Australia and Canada, the focus of research has similarly been on the legal framework and the vulnerabilities of unaccompanied and separated refugee and asylum-seeking children (e.g. Australia: Crock and Kenny 2012, Zwi and Mares 2015; Canada: Ali 2006; Wouk et al. 2006). In the Asian context, several studies focus on child trafficking (e.g. Heissler 2013; Yea 2016) and in South America on the aspirations and livelihood strategies of children who migrate alone (Crivello 2015; Punch 2007).

In the United States of America (US), many studies explore the legal frameworks and experiences of Latino/a immigrants (e.g. Gonzales 2011; Gonzales et al. 2015; Martinez 2014). One focus of that research has been on access to education and how changing legal provisions affect undocumented children. In the 1980s the US Supreme Court opened the public primary and secondary education system to all children, regardless of their immigration status. This decision effectively allowed undocumented children to attend school. The underlying idea was that access to education would foster the socio-economic integration of undocumented children in the US society. Access to schools was thought to provide undocumented children the possibility of living the American Dream "that they can succeed, that they are part of the nation" (Gonzales et al. 2015). However, research showed that the law "does not unmake students' illegality" and that consequently schools are limited in their ability to promote social integration (ibid.). Other structural inequalities like legal challenges in accessing work or financial aid as well as the inability to vote further prevent social mobility as envisaged by the Supreme Court ruling (ibid.).

Research on children and migration in Africa often pays attention to specific factors causing children to migrate, such as HIV/Aids (Ansell and van Blerk 2004; Van Blerk and Ansell 2006; Young and Ansell 2003) or socio-economic needs (Boyden and Howard 2013; Hashim 2005). Hashim's work in Ghana usefully illustrates how North-South migration within Ghana follows a long tradition in which children migrate in order to assist members of the extended families with household and farm labour (Hashim 2005). A number of other studies look at challenges faced by refugee children and youth in different African countries. One study for example contrasts the use of the 'vulnerable' category by external actors with the self-identification of Congolese refugee youth in Uganda (Clark 2007). Another study explores the experiences and livelihood strategies of undocumented Congolese refugee children in Tanzania (Mann 2010 and 2012).

As indicated in chapter 1.2.3, studies conducted on unaccompanied migrant children in South Africa focus largely on the border areas. Most of these studies fall under Hart's category of social work research as they are conducted by international humanitarian organisations or other actors who pursue an interest in improving the humanitarian situation of the children, such as Save the Children (e.g. Save the Children 2007a; 2007b; 2009; 2015), UNICEF (2009), local NGOs and service providers. Since most of the existing academic studies on migrant children have adopted a legal perspective (e.g. van Baalen 2012; van der Burg 2006; Chiguvare 2011; Fritsch et al. 2010; Schreier 2011; Sloth-Nielsen and Ackermann 2016; Willie and Mfubu 2016), more in-depth research on the children's own perspectives is needed in order to gain a better understanding of their situation.

As this brief overview has shown, existing studies demonstrate that the particular situations and challenges faced by undocumented and unaccompanied migrant children vary according to their specific geographic, political and cultural context. It can therefore be said that, similar to the production of 'illegality' discussed in 2.4.1, migrant children's vulnerability is also determined by political, legal and social factors and conditions.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter analysed two aspects of the triple imperative, namely research ethics and policy relevance, from a theoretical point of view. The section on research ethics first discussed the increased institutionalisation of formalized ethics procedures through UK universities and funding bodies. Specifically, I highlighted the fact that ethics

guidelines generally omit clarification of which school of ethics they refer to and argued that this omission is indicative of other shortcomings, such as the lack of legitimacy and expertise of university ethics committees. I continued by referring to arguments that ethics procedures do not prevent researchers from causing harm and thus ultimately do not guarantee ethical research. As a consequence, ethics procedures remain superficial undertakings serving the interests and obligations of researchers and their respective academic or funding institutions. The final point resulting from these criticisms was a concern that formalized ethics procedures threaten social research as a whole as they discourage researchers from undertaking research that ethics committees might consider to be 'risky' or ethically challenging.

Sections 2.1.2 and 2.1.3 portrayed demands that research ethics need to exceed procedural ethics standards. The underlying claim is that researchers have responsibilities towards participants that can be addressed through guaranteeing relational ethics, critical reflexivity and reciprocity. I proposed a pyramid to visually represent the hierarchical perception of the different ethics demands presented in the literature. An enhanced ethics approach to research comprises all aspects of the pyramid.

The second section of the chapter explored how (forced) migration scholars understand and pursue policy relevance. It outlined a fierce debate among researchers concerning the purpose of using particular terms such as refugees, forced migrants and migrants. Building on this I discussed the importance of applying certain research approaches. In this regard I highlighted Bakewell's argument that research is likely to be more relevant if it starts from the perspective of 'the researched' rather than from existing policy categories. Finally, I considered the argument that policy relevance depends on the way in which research results are communicated to policy makers. Due to the complexity of the policy-making process I concluded this section by suggesting that research is only likely to be policy relevant if all three factors are taken into consideration.

The third section portrayed recent conceptualisations of children and childhood. It demonstrated that children's agency is often attributed to children whose lives do not correspond to Western childhood ideals. The notion of 'everyday agency' (Payne 2012) was introduced as an alternative concept that may better correspond to children's own views. Perceiving children as 'everyday agents' affects policy, practice and research as it compels actors to take children's own perspectives into account.

With regard to ethics in researching children I proposed the adoption of an approach of ethical equality concerning participants. The fourth section discussed the construction of ‘illegality’ in a migration context and outlined existing research on undocumented migrant children.

CHAPTER THREE

3. THEATRE-BASED RESEARCH: EPISTEMOLOGY, POLITICS AND ETHICS

> *We finally understand that the ethnographic, the artistic, the epistemological, the aesthetic, and the political can never be neatly separated.*
>
> *Norman K. Denzin 2000, p. 261*

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, this study was based on the assumption that theatre-based research has the potential to meet the demands set out by (forced) migration researchers in the 'triple imperative'. This chapter explores the validity of this premise from a theoretical point of view. Specifically, it analyses what kind of knowledge theatre can produce, in which way it can fulfil enhanced ethics standards and how theatre is said to achieve policy relevance. The literature-based analysis leads me to conclude that, despite certain challenges, theatre is a suitable way to fulfil the demands of the triple imperative. In chapter 4 this conclusion then allows for a systematic and in-depth analysis of the methodology applied in this case study.

A variety of terms exist with reference to theatre as a means to generate knowledge. Common terms include performance studies (e.g. Conquergood 2002; Leavy 2009), performative inquiry (e.g. Pelias 2008), practice as research (e.g. Nelson 2006; Nelson 2013), performance as research (e.g. Fleishman 2012), popular theatre (Conrad 2008), playbuilding (Norris 2009) and performance ethnography (e.g. Conrad 2006; Conquergood 1985 and 2002; Foster 2013). While the meaning of the terms may vary slightly according to disciplinary differences, for the purpose of this interdisciplinary study I believe that there is more value in overlapping than in maintaining disciplinary boundaries. Rather than positioning myself within one particular field I therefore draw on discourses from a number of disciplines including performance studies, applied theatre, educational research, drama education as well as on arts-based research more generally. I apply the term *theatre-based research* with reference to the use of theatre for research purposes as applied in this study. Furthermore, I use the terms performance, theatre and drama interchangeably.

The chapter consists of three sections, followed by a conclusion. The first section describes the epistemology of theatre-based research which, in contrast to conventional research methods, recognizes and relies on embodied forms of knowledge rather than exclusively on the spoken or written word. This section goes on to highlight how the blurring of boundaries between research and art is considered to be a political act that disturbs hierarchies and power structures inherent in conventional approaches to social research. The second section analyses how applied theatre techniques aim to transform the consciousness of individuals and to create change on a societal level. In this regard I submit that an increased awareness constitutes a form of reciprocity. The third part of the chapter raises a number of ethical challenges and controversies with regards to facilitating participation and representing people's stories through performance.

The analysis shows that theatre has the potential to fulfil enhanced ethics standards, yet that researchers need to be aware of a number of ethical pitfalls. In conclusion I submit that the policy relevance of theatre and other arts-based research methods lies in its capacity to inform policy-making in a way that allows those affected by policy decisions to make their voices heard.

3.1 Embodied knowledge

> *From art, literature, music and dance, I have learnt that there is a sensory experience of our lives that encompasses innumerable unnamed and unnameable shapes, hues and textures that 'objective knowledge' has failed to capture.*
>
> *Achille Mbembe 2015*

In terms of the broader philosophical and epistemological understandings of what constitutes knowledge, theatre-based research stands in stark contrast to established Western approaches to research which, in brief, solely rely on reason, rationality and writing and devaluate any embodied knowledge such as emotions and feelings (e.g. Fleishman 2009 and 2012; George 1996; Leavy 2009).

The divide between rational and embodied knowledge derives from a hierarchy created by the Greek philosopher Plato who "installed knowledge above reasoning, belief and illusion respectively (…) [and] located the animal drives, passions, emotions and desires in the lowest part of the soul and intellect in the highest part" (Nelson 2006, p. 105). This hierarchy triggered a division between theory and practice, mind and body and of the tangible 'lasting' written word and intangible 'ephemeral' action.

These dichotomies were further exacerbated by the European enlightenment which recognized and understood rationality and reason as the only legitimate way to claim knowledge.

The production of knowledge in Western academia has since been dominated by the understanding that 'a truth' exists, that it can be discovered, quantitatively measured, analysed and then presented as fact by an objective researcher (Conquergood 2002; Nelson 2006; Neuman 2007). Positivism is the dominating epistemological paradigm that corresponds to this way of thinking and seeing the world.

> *Positivism sees social science research as fundamentally the same as natural science research; it assumes that social reality is made up of objective facts that value-free researchers can precisely measure and use statistics to test causal theories. [...] A positivist approach […] emphasizes getting objective measures of 'hard facts' in the form of numbers. (Neuman 2007, p. 42)*

Deriving from this perception of research, positivist scholars traditionally adopt a seemingly technical language by using the passive voice in order to transmit a sense of neutrality and objectivity in their writing. This practice has in recent years become the focus of criticism due to the acknowledgment that "language cannot be treated as a technical means by which we articulate our findings. Language itself is value laden (…) the use of the passive is a rhetorical move that functions to suggest rather than to demonstrate rigour" (Cousin 2010, p. 10). Language is furthermore perceived as being limited in its scope as it "is best seen as paradoxically capable of both enabling and inhibiting understanding" (ibid.).

Proponents of arts-based research question and condemn the positivist understanding of research as one-sided and limited. Above all, they question the existence of one truth and instead believe in the existence of multiple meanings which can be uncovered by listening to viewpoints that may be hidden from a positivist view by being less visible, tangible or countable (e.g. Eisner 1981; Leavy 2009; Mander 2010). In this regard Dwight Conquergood, a pioneer and advocate of ethnographic performance, argues that the understanding of knowledge "under the banner of science and reason (…) has disqualified and repressed other ways of knowing that are rooted in embodied experience, orality, and local contingencies" (Conquergood 2002, p. 146):

> *What gets squeezed out by this epistemic violence is the whole realm of complex, finely nuanced meaning that is embodied, tacit, intoned, gestured, improvised, coexperienced, covert – and all the more deeply meaningful because of its refusal to be spelled out. (Conquergood 2002, p. 146)*

What Conquergood describes as ‘epistemic violence’ refers to the overlooking or denial of viewpoints and meanings that are more difficult to grasp and leave room for interpretive doubt. This point also speaks to the fact that knowledge and meaning have traditionally been transmitted and recognized through writing only while alternative forms of representing meaning such as performance or dance have been excluded and undervalued (e.g. Conquergood 2002; Nelson 2006; Schneider 2001).

The notion that only that which is physically visible and ‘solidified’ in writing as document, object or record is considered valuable derives from Western thinking according to which “we understand ourselves relative to the remains we accumulate, the tracks we house, mark, and cite, the material traces we acknowledge” (Schneider 2001, p. 100). The understanding that only tangible ‘remains’ constitute value perceives theatre and performance as ephemeral and vanishable and hence of no value. As Rebecca Schneider points out, this dichotomy is problematic, not only because it overlooks viewpoints transmitted through oral and performative practices but also because it easily leads to the classification of such practices as ‘mythic rituals’ and to the association of people who do not rely on writing as ‘primitive’ (Schneider 2001). With reference to Michel de Certeau, Conquergood hence refers to the “class-based arrogance of scriptocentrism” as constituting a “hallmark of Western imperialism” (Conquergood 2002, p. 147).

The dominance of the written word is also demonstrated by the institutional separation of disciplines that are perceived as artistic from those that are perceived as ‘intellectual’. Consequently, those who ‘work with their hands’ are valued less than those who ‘work with their minds’. Conquergood denounces this system as an ‘academic apartheid’ in which “students are cheated and disciplines diminished” (Conquergood 2002, p. 153).

Rather than considering the ephemerality of performance a methodological challenge for theatre-based researchers, Robin Nelson argues that it is a logistical challenge which can be solved by capturing performances through video recordings (Nelson 2006). This suggestion, however, seems to ignore the epistemological understanding that performance gains meaning precisely through its ephemerality. In this regard Schneider asks whether, “in privileging an understanding of performance as a refusal to remain, do we ignore other ways of knowing, other modes of remembering, that might be situated precisely in the ways in which performance remains, but remains differently?” (Schneider 2001, p. 101) She suggests that performance does remain,

“though its remains are immaterial” and encourages us to embrace embodied ways of knowing (ibid., p. 104).

> *When we approach performance not as that which disappears (as the archive expects), but as both the act of remaining and a means of reappearance (though not a metaphysics of presence) we almost immediately are forced to admit that remains do not have to be isolated to the document, to the object, to bone versus flesh. Here the body […] becomes a kind of archive and host to a collective memory. (Schneider 2001, p. 103)*

Her argument is significant as it enables us to perceive theatre as embodied knowledge that ‘remains’ and which can hence function as a research method capable of discovering meanings that conventional methods deliberately or accidentally overlook.

Others have similarly emphasised the suitability of the arts to “address the qualitative nuances of situations” (Eisner 2008, p. 10f) and their “capacity to convey ambiguity and incoherence” (Gunaratnam 2007, p. 283).

> *[A]rtistic representation can convey meanings that are independent of linguistic systems and rationalist, sequential ordering […]. Moreover, art in its ambiguities, discontinuities and reversals, can be more open than linguistic representation to holding the threatening dynamic between ‘knowing’ and ‘not knowing’ that can involve denial, avoidance and detachment from difficult or painful realities. (Gunaratnam 2007, p. 282)*

The facility of the arts to express the ambiguity of feelings and perceptions derives from its ability to combine sensual and cognitive interpretations: “arts-based research makes use of emotive, affective experiences, senses, and bodies, and imagination and emotion as well as intellect, as ways of knowing and responding to the world” (Finley 2008, p. 72).

The notion that affective and rational ways of knowing and producing meaning are not mutually exclusive has also been emphasized by Nelson who, with reference to David Pears, points out the difference between factual knowledge and the knowledge of how to do things. According to the former, we might know how to ride a bicycle in theory, yet according to the latter, we might not be able to implement this knowledge in practice (Nelson 2006, p. 107). From this it follows that the “embodied knowledge of the practice is both prior to, and distinct from, the written (symbolic) account after the event” (ibid.). While the type of embodied knowledge expressed through theatre is neither exclusively factual nor one of ‘how to do things’, this example usefully demonstrates how embodied, in the sense of experiential, knowledge may be necessary to gain a holistic understanding of a phenomenon.

This section has shown that theatre-based research is linked to understandings of knowledge and knowledge production which, rather than searching for one particular truth, aim to create a holistic perspective of people's experiences and perceptions while also leaving room for uncertainty and doubt. In so doing, "the products of this research are closer in function to deep conversation and insightful dialogue than they are to error-free conclusions" (Eisner 2008, p. 7). Given the importance of ethics in this study, the capacity of the arts to transmit nuances of human experiences suggests that theatre may be a more ethical way to represent people's stories than a written text. The creation of comprehensive insights through theatre further corresponds to Bakewell's proposal discussed in chapter 2.2.2 that research which starts from perspectives or disciplines outside the (forced) migration field can lead to policy relevant results (Bakewell 2008).

The following section points out some controversies and challenges with which arts-based research is confronted in its struggle to become fully recognized as a social science method.

3.1.1 Blurring the boundaries between research and art

Despite growing acceptance and popularity since the 1990s, theatre and other arts-based research methodologies are still highly contested within the academic realm.[22] One of the main controversies revolves around the fact that this type of research blurs the boundaries between research and art. This connection is perceived as problematic mainly because the question of how art can or should be evaluated remains deeply contested. Even among arts-based researchers there is thus an ongoing debate about how to evaluate the quality and the impact of arts-based research and of theatre in particular.

Some proponents of arts-based research argue that the distinction between art and research is meaningless and counterproductive (e.g. Conquergood 2002; Finley 2003).

> *Is it research? Is it art? Both become meaningless questions for such open, performative works. They exist outside the frameworks of either*

[22] Exceptions are a number of mainly North American scholars who have increasingly been using and advocating arts-based research predominantly in the fields of educational and health care sciences (E.g. Finley and Knowles 1995; Finley 2003; Mienczakowski 1995; Mienczakowski 1997; Denzin 1997; Eisner 1997; Saldaña 1999; Norris 2000; Lincoln and Denzin 2003; Sinner et al. 2006; Saldaña 2008; Knowles and Cole 2008; Norris 2009).

> *research or art but are transformed into political acts, subversive in their very nature. (Finley 2003, p. 288)*

Some argue that due to its distinct aims and underlying values arts-based research can and should not be measured using the same criteria as positivist research (e.g. Denzin 2000; Finley 2003; Leavy 2009; Lincoln 1995). Instead, they propose moving "beyond criteriology and the search for uniform criteria" (Lincoln 1995, p. 286). Nevertheless, a number of scholars argue in favour of establishing and adhering to a standardized evaluation in the form of 'emerging criteria' (Lincoln 1995), 'a set of commitments' to be followed to by researchers (Finley 2003, p. 293) or a list of 'strategies' to guide arts-based researchers (Leavy 2009). Patricia Leavy's strategies for example include interdisciplinary collaboration, reflection through dialogue with the audience, personal research diaries, explicit use of theory, cycles of analysis and triangulation and full disclosure of methodological choices to enhance the audience's understanding and to contribute to the legitimacy of knowledge (Leavy 2009, p. 16ff).

The need to be open and clear about the choice of methodology has also been reinforced by others who argue that "interpretivist inquiry requires as serious a consideration of systematic, thorough, conscious method as does empiricist inquiry" (Lincoln 1995, p. 276). Given that arts-based research is intended to reach a broader and more diverse audience than conventional research, Yvonna Lincoln further points out that anyone intending to define criteria also needs to consider who will evaluate such research and for which purpose (ibid., p. 286).

This point relates to the aim of arts-based research to create some kind of meaningful impact or change for the participants and communities it affects. In this regard several theatre scholars and practitioners concede that the ability of applied theatre to achieve 'real' social change is limited. The perception is that theatre "alone is unlikely to bring about transformation" (Prentki 2003, p. 52) and that it "cannot claim a great deal of glory in 'transformative social intervention'" (Ahmed 2002, p. 99). Others submit that "in the final analysis attributing social change to specific interventions relies on a subjective interpretation of causality" (Dalrymple 2006, p. 215). Dani Snyder-Young challenges the discourse on achieving social change through theatre altogether. She suggests that, rather than aiming to achieve actual change, theatre should be used as a safe way of expressing opinions and encourage others to act:

> *When we say we want **change**, how radical a change do theatre artists want? […] It can be easier and safer to do things that **feel** like interventions, mobilization, and action, but, in reality provide more*

> *catharsis for those participating in* ***actual change in the real world****. (Snyder-Young 2013, p. 135, emphasis in original)*

By blurring the boundaries between research and art and challenging conventional understandings of knowledge, arts-based research unsettles the ivory tower in which academic researchers were traditionally housed. For this reason Susan Finley submits that "[t]o claim art and aesthetic ways of knowing as research is an act of rebellion against the monolithic 'truth' that science is supposed to entail" (Finley 2008, p. 73). In order to realize its full potential, arts-based research therefore still needs to overcome challenges in the wider academic context:

> *Clearly, arts-based research is an expression of the need for diversity and a tendency to push towards a de-standardization of method. What is not clear is how much de-standardization those in the research community will tolerate and, at the same time, accept as being legitimate. (Eisner 2006, p. 16)*

Finley concludes similarly that the future of arts-based research "depends upon how effectively its defenders stand against aggressive assaults to its purpose" (Finley 2008, p. 74). She argues that arts-based researchers can only be considered equal to other researchers when they can refer to themselves as 'artists who do research' rather than merely as researchers 'who do art' (Finley 2003).

Building on this introduction of how theatre can produce academic knowledge, the following section analyses the premise that theatre-based research fulfils enhanced ethics standards by creating reciprocal benefits for participants as well as by contributing to the policy-making process.

3.2 Transformation

> *Popular Theatre […] extrapolates from the individual to the group and then to the larger society on the assumption that individuals' experiences of oppression are shaped by larger social forces.*
>
> *Diane Conrad 2006, p. 450*

By recognizing alternative expressive forms and allowing multiple meanings to surface, theatre-based research as described above not only intends to produce new knowledge. It also aims to contribute to greater social justice by raising the consciousness of individuals and triggering a transformation in the broader society that liberates the oppressed, underprivileged and marginalized (e.g. Denzin 2000; Finley 2003; Leavy 2009; Prentki and Preston 2009). This idea is probably taken furthest in Norman K. Denzin's vision of a 'radical ethical aesthetic' in which he pictures

> *[a] new generation of scholars [that] is committed not just to describing the world but also to changing it. Their texts are performance based. They inscribe and perform utopian dreams, […] dreams of a world in which all are free to be who they choose to be, free of gender, class, race, religious, or ethnic prejudice or discrimination. (Denzin 2000, p. 261)*

Many theatre scholars and practitioners are striving to reach this 'utopian dream' of a just world. Their ideas are often intertwined with the philosophies and techniques of so-called applied theatre practices. This section provides an insight into the most prominent applied theatre practices whose techniques are said to reach these transformative goals.

3.2.1 Theatre of the Oppressed

Applied theatre can be described as

> *a broad set of theatrical practices and creative processes that take participants and audiences beyond the scope of conventional, mainstream theatre into the realm of a theatre that is responsive to ordinary people and their stories, local settings and priorities. (Prentki and Preston 2009, p. 9)*

The responsiveness to 'ordinary people' is expressed by engaging otherwise marginalized or disadvantaged individuals through participation in the theatre-making process: "Applied theatre is participatory theatre created by people who would not usually make theatre. It is, I would hope, a practice by, with and for the excluded and marginalised" (Thompson 2006a, p. 15). To ensure a connection with the people and communities it intends to serve, applied theatre often takes place in unconventional settings such as public spaces, classrooms or community halls.

The origins of applied theatre can be traced back to the work of two individual theatre practitioners. The first is German playwright and theorist Bertolt Brecht, who developed the use of theatre as a means of achieving political change in the early 20th century. In contrast to the dominant theatre practice of the time, Brecht saw a theatre performance on stage as a mirror of the current social realities. Influenced by Karl Marx, Brecht's 'epic theatre' abolished the distinction between actor and audience. By engaging the audience in the play, he hoped to trigger a critical consciousness among the spectators who would then transfer their insights to social action. Brecht's approach shaped the development of subsequent theatre practices, including the use of theatre for research purposes (e.g. Conrad 2008; Kazubowski-Houston 2011).

The second influential person was Brazilian theatre practitioner Augusto Boal. His work derived from Paolo Freire's 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' that proclaims a 'liberating education' in which students do not learn through information transfer, but by developing a consciousness that enables them to reflect critically (Freire 1970):

> *In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically* ***the way they exist*** *in the world* ***with which*** *and* ***in which*** *they find themselves. (Freire 1970, p. 83, emphasis in original)*

Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed is based on the concept of 'dialogical teaching' which aims to establish "a genuine dialogue between student and teacher in which both parties undertake the roles of both learner and teacher" (Prentki and Preston 2009, p. 13) For Freire, genuine dialogue depends on a number of preconditions. These include love for the world and its people, humility and acceptance of the other, faith in humankind, hope and critical thinking (Freire 1970). Furthermore, a website dedicated to his philosophy and work states:

> *To enter into dialogue presupposes equality amongst participants. Each must trust the others; there must be mutual respect and love (care and commitment). Each one must question what he or she knows and realize that through dialogue existing thoughts will change and new knowledge will be created. (Freire Institute, n.d.)*

If these conditions are fulfilled, dialogue will establish trust among opposing parties. Based on Freire's educational theory and influenced by Brecht, Boal developed a revolutionary theatrical practice in the 1970s that he named Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal 1979). Theatre of the Oppressed typically addresses issues related to social injustice and oppression. Similar to the Pedagogy of the Oppressed, it relies on dialogic exchange as a methodological tool to create awareness (Boal 1979; Freire 2000). 'Dialogue' is hereby understood as an interaction between spectators/audience and actors.

In blurring the lines between actors and audience, Boal aimed to transform spectators from passive beings into active participants that form part of the dramatic action. In order to stimulate this exchange, actors do not perform written pieces of fiction, but open-ended improvisations that raise problems related to people's lives. While watching the performance, audience members are invited to interrupt the actors if they do not agree with the actions they see. They then explain their opinion and suggest a modification of the scene by changing individual characters' behaviour or adding new characters to the story. By re-enacting the same scene several times, actors and spectators are said to become conscious of oppressive circumstances that surround them in their real lives as well as of their own potential to change these circumstances.

This process of ‘conscientização’ (‘conscientization’) is considered to be a ‘liberation of the self’.

Building on Freire’s preconditions mentioned above, Boal emphasises that despite the focus on ‘play’, successful dialogue through theatre requires discipline:

> *Theatre of the Oppressed is the Game of Dialogue: we play and learn together. All kinds of Games must have Discipline - clear rules that we must follow. At the same time, Games have absolute need of creativity and Freedom. TO [Theatre of the Oppressed] is the perfect synthesis between the antithetic Discipline and Freedom. Without Discipline, there is no Social Life; without Freedom, there is no Life. (International Theatre of the Oppressed Organisation, n.d.)*

Imagining and rehearsing behavioural changes on stage is said to subsequently lead participants to change their behaviour outside the context of the theatre space. In this sense, Boal saw participants’ engagement in constructing the play as a ‘rehearsal for revolution’:

> *The truth of the matter is that the spectator-actor practices a real act even though he does it in a fictional manner. While he* ***rehearses*** *throwing a bomb on stage, he is concretely rehearsing the way a bomb is thrown; acting out this attempt to organize a strike, he is concretely organizing a strike. (Boal 1979, p. 141, emphasis in original)*

According to Boal, this practical engagement in fictional action sparks participants’ courage and motivation to perform the same actions in real life: “The practice of these theatrical forms creates a sort of uneasy sense of incompleteness that seeks fulfilment through real action” (Boal 1979, p. 142). Theatre of the Oppressed is thus said to cause a double effect. Firstly, it ‘liberates’ actors and spectators individually by creating a consciousness regarding the oppression they experience and their own capacities in overcoming it. Secondly, participants’ increased consciousness is said to lead to action that will trigger a transformation in society as a whole.

The notion of the transformative potential of theatre has influenced the establishment of many other theatre practices in the past decades.[23] Theatre-based scholars, in their commitment to achieving social justice through research, also build on the ideas and techniques of Theatre of the Oppressed. Reflecting on her theatre-based research project with Latino/a youth in the United States, Christina Marín claims, for example, that “through praxis, a symbiotic relationship between theory and action, the young

[23] Action theatre, community theatre, grassroots theatre, living theatre, theatre for development, theatre in education and others are all largely based on Theatre of the Oppressed. See Snyder-Young (2013, p. 4), Johnny Saldaña (2005, p. 8f) and Tim Prentki and Sheila Preston (2009, p. 9f) for more comprehensive lists of applied theatre forms.

people (…) *have awakened in themselves* a critical consciousness, described by educational theorist Paulo Freire as essential for social change" (Marín 2007, p. 84, emphasis added). The following quotation equally shows how the knowledge-building process is perceived as a development that occurs automatically as a consequence of dialogically discussing issues in the group: "Conflicting perspectives are examined. Individual testimonies are absorbed. (…) *The group is educating itself* by pooling resources. Thus knowledge is treated as a group asset (Moclair 2009, p. 159, emphasis added).

The idea that increased consciousness, acquired through participating in the theatre process, leads people to confront their oppression corresponds to the argument made by Pittaway and others with regard to a human rights based approach to (forced) migration research. As discussed in chapter 2.1.3, a number of scholars suggest that educating participants through capacity building or awareness raising workshops on human rights or health issues is an effective way to achieve reciprocity (Mackenzie, McDowell and Pittaway 2007; Pittaway, Bartolomei and Hugman 2010). Similar to the argument raised by theatre practitioners, they argue that the provision of human rights training leads people to actively claim their rights:

> *The human rights framework does indeed turn beggars into claimants. […] It empowers people to claim their rights, provides a framework for analysis and for the identification and implementation of strategies to address some of the worst abuses endured by refugee communities. (Pittaway, Bartolomei and Hugman 2010, p. 245)*

As also highlighted in chapter 2, however, increased knowledge does not necessarily lead to action as there are other factors such as emotions that influence people's choices.

Late in his career Boal recognized that some situations may not be changeable through people's actions. This may be the case when injustices are caused by inadequate laws or policies.

> *Sometimes the solution to the spect-actors' problems depends on themselves, on their own individual desire, their own efforts – but, equally, sometimes the oppression is actually rooted within the law. In the latter case, to bring about the desired change would require a transformation or redrafting of the law: legislation. How could that be done? There ends the power of the theatre. (Boal 1998, p. 9)*

In search of a solution, Boal invented another form of Theatre of the Oppressed which he called 'Legislative Theatre' (Boal 1998). Similar to Theatre of the Oppressed, this theatre form also relies on dialogue to achieve change. However, whilst in Theatre of

the Oppressed the ‘spectator is transformed into actor’, in Legislative Theatre ‘citizen is transformed into legislator’ (Boal 1998). Through the theatre process, spectators develop specific suggestions and proposals to create or modify particular laws or policies. Considered as a form of ‘bottom-up law-making procedure’, these proposals are then submitted to policy makers in the form of a report (Saeed 2015, p. 6).

According to Boal, Legislative Theatre has led to the drafting and passing of a number of laws which improved the living conditions for particular groups of marginalized persons in Brazil, such as the blind. More recently, Legislative Theatre has also been used in working with women in Afghanistan, where it constituted “an important platform to create opportunities for women to speak out and have their opinions heard” (Saeed 2015, p. 1).

Despite its acclaimed success and popularity, however, a number of issues are said to hinder the ‘liberating’ effect of theatre described above. Some have argued, for example, that Theatre of the Oppressed practices are inadequate in addressing today’s challenges as they “still maintain the logic of the strict division between wrong and right - between those ‘fighting’ for freedom from oppression and those doing the oppressing” (Thompson 2002, p. 112). Whilst the dichotomy of ‘good versus bad’ was effective in the context of the Brazilian military regime where the technique was initially developed, some argue that it is not suitable for dealing with the complex political and social conditions faced by many marginalized people today (Snyder-Young 2011).

Related to this, Boal’s ‘revolutionary’ terminology has been criticised for being too violent: “It is very hard to be creating a theatre for peace, when the language of this form of community theatre is strewn with words that imply violent resistance - struggle, fight, oppressed, liberate, resist” (Thompson 2002, p. 112). The concern therefore is that both Boal’s terminology and the ‘good versus bad’ logic of his approach may reinforce rather than change people’s existing attitudes. Instead of leading to a positive social change, theatre may then produce unintended negative consequences such as fuelling chaos or conflict:

> *However much we might want our theatre to be about revealing complexities, asking questions or starting dialogues, its origins both in form and in the discourse that surrounds it, as a ‘theatre of liberation’, means that it can easily slip into a theatre that sustains armed struggle and promotes violent resistance. (Thompson 2002, p. 112)*

Similarly, others have raised the point that participants may voice sexist, racist or otherwise discriminatory views (Conrad 2006). In such cases, participants’ input can

lead the discussion and the play into a direction that is contrary to that which the facilitator envisions as liberating. Therefore, "[t]he work participants initiate and the choices they make do not automatically orient towards social justice" (Snyder-Young 2011, p. 30). As these concerns show, reaching the aspired for individual and social transformation through theatre may not necessarily occur as straight forwardly in practise as assumed in theory.

This section introduced the idea that applied theatre can raise the consciousness of participants and lead to increased social justice, both of which constitute a form of reciprocity. In order to further explore the assumption that theatre can guarantee enhanced ethics standards, the following section analyses challenges concerning the participatory aspect of arts-based research as well as the representation of people's stories through performance.

3.3 Participation and representation

In their quest for greater social justice arts-based researchers attempt to transfer and share power with those affected by the production of knowledge about them. Instead of perceiving participants as mere objects of study, researchers are therefore committed to creating "new relations with respondents" (Lincoln 1995). As such they acknowledge participants' capacity to be meaning-producing beings and perceive them as active agents in the research process. The roles between researcher and participants overlap as it is assumed that "there is no division between the researcher and informant roles as each participant sees him or herself as both" (Norris 2000, p. 46). This also means that participants should be aware of the research topic and engage in a process of open and conscious dialogue, reflection and renegotiation of meaning.

Besides theatre and arts-based methods more generally, a number of other qualitative approaches put particular emphasis on participants' involvement in social research. These include participatory, collaborative and co-produced research as well as participatory action research. In educational arts-based research, for instance, the term 'a/r/tographer' emerged to make apparent the triple role of participants as artists/researchers/teachers (Norris 2009, p. 22). The valorisation of participation in qualitative research was influenced and triggered by the social justice movements of the 1960s and 70s such as the civil rights and women's rights movements (Leavy 2009). At the time, researchers began to question power structures and the perpetuation of oppression of particular social groups within conventional approaches

to knowledge production. Aiming to address these power inequalities and social injustices, participatory research attempts to create knowledge jointly (Bergold and Thomas 2012) by turning prior subject-object relations into equal subject-subject relations (O'Neill 2011). The respect for participants' own knowledge, values and sensitivities also extends to the dissemination of the co-created knowledge. Specifically, the distribution of research results should reflect participants' 'multi-perspectivity and multi-vocality' (Bergold and Thomas 2012, p. 20).

Bergold and Thomas argue that a number of preconditions are necessary for genuine participatory research to take place. These include the existence of a democratic social and political context in which a space can be created that allows participants to communicate freely and discuss diverging views (Bergold and Thomas 2012, p. 8). Such an uninhibited space of trust is important as communication is the basis for the participatory creation of knowledge. Genuine participation also requires participants' involvement in decision-making processes throughout the research process. If participants are not involved in making decisions, 'pseudo participation' takes place (ibid.).

As a particular form of participatory research practice, participatory action research (PAR) aims to ensure not only participation in research, but also the production of knowledge that is useful for its participants. In this context, usefulness is generally understood as improving participants' living conditions or unequal structures affecting their lives (O'Neill 2011; Reason and Bradbury 2008). According to its advocates, PAR produces deep insights into people's lived experiences, it can produce counter narratives to dominant societal and media discourses and stimulate dialogue around issues of social justice (O'Neill 2011). These qualities are particularly valuable in working with marginalized people including (forced) migrants. In her participatory and arts-based research with refugee women, Maggie O'Neill observed for instance how their collaborative research gave participants the possibility to speak and represent themselves, thereby challenging common negative stereotypes about (forced) migrants.

The positive and transformative potential of collaborative research, however, also faces a number of challenges and risks. Three particular points have been raised in this regard. The first one refers to the overlap between research and art and to the collaboration between researchers and artists. As already discussed in chapter 3.1.1, the blurring of research and art in arts-based research gave rise to criticism and

doubts concerning the evaluation of arts-based research. This is at least partly due to the challenge of defining what is art (Pearce and O'Neill 2011). In the absence of clear quality criteria, participatory researchers tend to use 'justificatory arguments' to prove the quality of their research. These arguments emphasise the usefulness, authenticity, credibility, reflexivity and sustainability or the 'therapeutic value' of participatory research projects (Bergold and Thomas 2012; Pearce and O'Neill 2011).

With regard to the participatory aspect of the overlap between research and art, O'Neill points out how labelling and attributing categories such as 'researcher', 'artist' or 'refugee artist' to collaborating artists/researchers can cause tensions and harm (O'Neill 2011). This happens, for instance, when a participant wants to pursue a career as an artist in its own right and not be referred to as a 'refugee artist' as this category may create a valorisation of their work on the basis of their refugee status and not on the basis of the aesthetic qualities of their art work. A second major challenge is the risk for researchers to 'over-identify' with participants (Bergold and Thomas 2012; O'Neill 2011). This can lead either to an objectification of participants and a speaking 'for' them or to a reduction of 'them to ourselves' that collapses 'the I or Other into a totalizing We" (O'Neill 2011, p. 31). As a lesson learnt the author cautions researchers to be aware of those tensions and to find ways to deal with and move beyond them without causing harm.

The third challenge refers to sources and types of funding needed to implement PAR. Participatory research projects often take longer than conventional research approaches (Bergold and Thomas 2012; Pearce and O'Neill 2011). Short-term funding can therefore jeopardize participatory projects or prevent them from becoming sustainable. In addition, funding provided by the government can be ethically ambiguous (O'Neill 2011). This is the case when a government funds participatory arts-based research aimed at enhancing the integration of (forced) migrants on the local level while simultaneously tightening its immigration regime and deportation practices on the national level. While researchers' options to accept or reject funding from ambiguous sources may be limited, they should at least be aware of those tensions and attempt to make governments and public funders listen to the outcomes of their research. Pearce and O'Neill refer to this as the challenge to create 'political listening' (Pearce and O'Neill 2011).

In addition to these three points, different participatory research approaches are characterised by additional practical and ethical challenges. Photovoice, for instance,

is a participatory arts-based method that ‘facilitates contextualised understanding’ and is ‘oriented toward the liberation of oppressed groups” (Green and Kloos 2009, p. 462). In practice, researchers who conducted a photovoice project with displaced youth in Uganda have found, however, that participants’ images were little diverse and provocative and that participants avoided speaking about potentially controversial aspects appearing in their photographs, such as issues related to social injustice or community challenges (ibid.). Furthermore, photovoice has been criticised for downplaying ‘photography’s dual potential for social control and surveillance’ and for overlooking the cultural sensitivities around photography (Prins 2010).

Theatre-based research can also be considered a form of participatory action research (Kaptani et al. 2008). As such, theatre faces the above discussed challenges as well as others related to its participatory and performative nature. Often, the production and representation of knowledge about people’s experiences starts with the collection of stories. In this regard, Joe Norris’ begins his ‘playbuilding’ process by encouraging participants to share personal experiences and opinions that they would like to explore further with the group. He describes the sharing of stories as an organic process in which “stories beget stories as one idea triggers forgotten stories by other cast members” (Norris 2000, p. 46). In contrast to this, others have pointed out that the telling of stories is not necessarily as natural and easy a process as Norris claims.

Speaking about personal experiences may for example evoke painful memories of past incidents or current circumstances: “[T]here is the danger of encountering difficult, emotionally charged, risky, or even traumatic issues, sometimes leading to moments of crisis” (Conrad 2006, p. 449). In Theatre of the Oppressed such situations of crisis or chaos are considered necessary as they challenge participants and encourage them to respond, thereby rehearsing to fight against oppression in real life (Boal 1979). For facilitators, however, such situations are challenging as it forces them to decide “how far one is willing to push students beyond their comfort zone and how prepared one is to manage the outcomes” (Conrad 2006, p. 450f).

The previous section raised the possibility that participants may hold discriminatory views and values that do not correspond to the researcher’s idea of justice. In such cases facilitation becomes particularly challenging as researchers are confronted with the dilemma of weighing participants’ contributions against their own aims and beliefs:

> *Do I critique student assumptions, intervening in representations of stereotype and embedded discourse as a teacher in the classroom,*

> *imposing my own values and my own sense of what is 'problematic?' Do I keep my mouth shut, watch what I see unfold around me, and write about it? (Snyder-Young 2011, p. 42)*

Some perceive it to be the facilitator's role to steer the reflection process into a certain direction. With regard to theatre-based research with children, Paul Moclair argues for instance that it is "our goal (…) to challenge cultural perceptions which are harmful to children" (Moclair 2009, p. 158). In order to achieve this, he claims that "we must (…) help children redefine their own perceptions of childhood before they can begin selling that vision to adults" (ibid.).

Challenging cultural perceptions, however, is a problematic undertaking as it assumes that some cultural values and practices are more or less legitimate than others. In this regard, the practice of Theatre for Development has been particularly criticised for imposing and reproducing ideologies and power relations it intends to replace (Ahmed 2002 and 2004; Prentki 2003). Tim Prentki, for example, describes Theatre for Development as "a tool in the NGO worker's kit-bag in the service of the dominant discourse of development practice" (Prentki 2003, p. 39). Despite a move towards involving communities through participatory practices in the 1990s, "in most cases this participatory approach constituted a change of tactic rather than a change of agenda on the part of these [development] agencies" who continued setting their own goals and conditions (Prentki 2003, p. 40). He further submits that "by these means the objects of the development process are able to participate in the colonisation of their own minds" (ibid.). In line with these concerns, Ahmed argues that Theatre for Development implemented by international NGOs in Bangladesh merely serves "globalisation in the name of poverty alleviation" (Ahmed 2002, p. 207). As an alternative he suggests that local theatre makers should be given the opportunity to apply Theatre of the Oppressed on their own terms and "with a decolonised mind" (ibid.).

As these considerations show, participatory theatre approaches diminish neither researchers' ethical challenges nor their influence and power. This conclusion was also reached by Elsbeth Robson et al. in their child-led research project in Malawi following which they concluded that "a participatory approach does not necessarily transcend power relations" (Robson et al. 2009, p. 470). Similarly, Diane Conrad acknowledges that "as a (…) facilitator and teacher, I had a measure of control over what happened day to day, regardless of how much I tried to give control to the group" (Conrad 2006, p. 442). In reflecting on her own study she admits her subsequent

realization that two participants had felt overlooked in the playbuilding process. She therefore wonders how far she managed to balance the pursuit of her own research aims with recognizing participants' contributions:

> *Did my interpretation distort students' voices, slanting what they said to conform to what I wanted to hear? Was I listening particularly for issues/incidents that addressed my thesis topic? Did my topic take precedence, perhaps at the expense of other important issues that remained unheard? (Conrad 2006, p. 442)*

As this brief discussion showed, facilitating participatory theatre-based research bears a number of ethical challenges that researchers need to be aware of and respond to. The data analysis in chapters 4 and 5 will demonstrate how some of these concerns also arose in this case study. The following section continues these considerations with regard to disseminating research outcomes through performative representations of people's stories.

3.3.1 The ethics of representing 'others'

> *The problem with speaking for others exists in the very structure of discursive practice, no matter its content, and therefore it is this structure itself that needs alteration.*
>
> *Linda Alcoff 1991, p. 23*

There is a notion in (forced) migration research that shedding light on 'invisible' circumstances or persons is a desired research outcome. As mentioned in chapter 2.2.2, this is expressed for example in Bakewell's call for research approaches that "cast light on the invisible situation of those living in the shadow of bright policy lights" (Bakewell 2008, p. 450). His argument implies that exposing people will bring about desirable improvements in their previously 'invisible' lives. Since performances can reach audiences that might not usually read or be able to access academic publications, theatre seems to provide precisely the kind of exposure needed to 'cast light' on these 'invisible situations'. Yet can it be assumed that the consequences of such exposure are necessarily beneficial?

The following example provides some insight into this question. In 2008, the Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor established in a large-scale global study that some individuals deliberately chose not to legally register themselves with their state. Their decision was due either to a general distrust of state authorities or to an informed decision that formal registration would expose them to taxation or other

forms of exploitation or control by the state that would result in a deterioration of their living conditions (Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor and United Nations Development Programme 2008). The example shows that public exposure may in some cases have detrimental consequences and that for this reason some persons choose to remain 'invisible' as a matter of survival. Such a scenario can easily be applied to the situation of undocumented migrants who, if exposed, might be at risk of being arrested and deported.

Related to this, Tara Polzer and Laura Hammond point out that researchers have an ethical duty to consider the 'invisibility effects' of their research (Polzer and Hammond 2008, p. 428). This duty involves being conscious about the power relationships at stake in a research context as well as considering potential consequences of making persons visible in one way or another. It also involves acknowledging that some people choose to be 'invisible'. Yet the dissemination of qualitative research results often involves the representation and hence the 'exposure' of others. As several scholars have pointed out in this regard, speaking on behalf of others is ethically challenging as it can perpetuate existing inequalities at the expense of already disadvantaged people (e.g. Alcoff 1991; Madlingozi 2010).

> *[T]he practice of speaking for others is often born of a desire for mastery, to privilege oneself as the one who more correctly understands the truth about another's situation or as one who can champion a just cause and thus achieve glory and praise. And the effect of the practice of speaking for others is often, though not always, erasure and a reinscription of sexual, national, and other kinds of hierarchies. (Alcoff 1991, p. 29)*

In order to avoid such harmful consequences, researchers need to "extend [their] ethical codes beyond the moment when the story is first told, to the subsequent moments when it is retold" (Gready 2010, p. 186). This ethical duty seems particularly pertinent with regard to research situations in which people feel encouraged to share their personal opinions in a way that allows their 'hidden transcripts' to surface. The notion of 'hidden transcripts' refers to "discourse that takes place 'offstage,' beyond direct observation by powerholders" (Scott 1990, p. 4). In other words, a 'hidden transcript' "represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant" (Scott 1990, preface xii).

By sharing 'hidden transcripts' with a researcher, the ownership of people's opinions and stories becomes a grey area with serious ethical pitfalls. For what happens if participants do not agree to have their stories represented in the way the researcher or

theatre-maker intends to? What if people change their opinion after they have spoken? What if they regret having expressed their 'hidden transcripts' to an external researcher? These are important ethical questions that researchers need to be aware of and consider since "the lack of control over representation (…) can mark a return to powerlessness" (Gready 2010, p. 186).

Linked to this, Madlingozi points out how a well-intended transitional justice activist "sought the victim out, categorized her, defined her, theorized her, packaged her, and disseminated her on the world stage (Madlingozi 2010, p. 210f). His description illustrates compellingly how the loss of ownership over someone's story occurs as 'the story' becomes a product to be marketed. I suggest that this metaphorical reference to stories as products that are 'processed' and 'disseminated' on the 'world stage' directly corresponds to the performative representation of others on a theatrical stage. This concern is also expressed by Pedzisai Maedza who argues that theatre based on people's testimonies "is constructed on the commodification of 'otherness'" (Maedza 2013, p. 107).

Such theatrical commodification is particularly problematic if it relies on stereotypical and simplified notions of otherness. Performative representations of refugees, for example, often derive from particular narratives constructed and promoted by contemporary migration systems. In this regard Alison Jeffers points out that the authenticity of asylum claims is usually determined on the basis of narratives of persecution that construct refugees as vulnerable yet 'heroic' persons who have suffered and survived (Jeffers 2012). In order to correspond to these stereotypical notions, asylum seekers are compelled "to *play the role* of 'Convention refugees'" by simplifying their often complex stories (Jeffers 2012, p. 17, emphasis in original). Testifying to authorities thus turns into a performative act:

> *The story alone is not enough and it must be rehearsed to create a credible* ***performance****, convincing in the telling as well as in the construction. A weak 'performance' can lead to failure no matter how strong the story/script […]. (Jeffers 2012, p. 30, emphasis in original)*

The author further contends that "subsequent performances of refugeeness" follow the same logic as the one described above (ibid., p. 30). This means that theatre, in order to 'convince' the audience, privileges the portrayal of traumatic experiences while leaving out other narratives (ibid.). This point corresponds to another argument put forward by Maedza who argues in his study on the representation of asylum seekers in Cape Town through theatre of testimony that "representations of asylum seekers seem

to assume and suggest that only tales of suffering have enough gravitas to warrant theatrical representation" (Maedza 2013, p. 115f).

Emphasising pain, trauma and suffering while rejecting other, possibly more positive aspects of people's lived experiences for dramatic purposes is problematic as it reinforces misguided stereotypes and denies the dignity and agency of the persons whose stories are portrayed. According to Veronica Baxter, the foregrounding of suffering in South African applied theatre derives from the fact that the "tragic mode is more compelling, alluring, makes for better drama, wins more awards, sells more newspapers, makes better headlines. It is what passes, nowadays, for the truth" (Baxter 2013, p. 258). Several other theatre scholars have similarly pointed out that the increasing popularity of documentary and testimonial theatre in recent years indicates that simplified representations of complex realities are not only based on directors' choices but also relate to audiences' and funder's expectations and comprehension (Jeffers 2012; Maedza 2013; Phillips 2010). In this regard, Brian Phillips claims that "[f]act-based human rights narratives embedded in a play can almost always be relied upon to capture the imagination and elicit the empathy of theatre-goers" (Phillips 2010, p. 274). Others argue that in order to be effective, "[t]he performance must balance between affirming the audience's ideological framework and challenging it" (Fitzpatrick 2011, p. 65).

What, however, is the purpose of such performances? In other words, "to what end are the voices of victims and the chronicles of [people's] suffering being dramatized in this way" (Phillips 2010, p. 274)? While performative portrayals of 'simple truths' may attract audiences, they may not necessarily compel the audience to reflect more deeply on the portrayed phenomenon. In this respect Julie Salverson asks: "If we write a play that presents an uncomplicated portrayal of victims, villains, and heroes, what choices do we give an audience about how to relate" (Salverson 2001, p. 124)? The response to this question ties into the debate concerning the authenticity of research-based theatre.[24]

[24] A variety of terms exist with reference to theatre as a means of representing knowledge. In educational and health sciences terms commonly used include ethnotheatre or ethnodrama (e.g. Mienczakowski 1995 and 1997; Saldaña 2008), performance ethnography (e.g. Denzin 1997; Saldaña 2005a) or readers theatre (e.g. Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer 1995). Other terms such as documentary drama (e.g. Bottoms 2006; Young 2009), verbatim theatre (e.g. Fisher 2011) and testimonial theatre (e.g. Maedza 2013; Phillips 2010; Salverson 2001) are applied predominantly in reference to theatre portraying human rights related issues and testimonies. Maggie O'Neill uses the term 'ethno-mimesis' in reference to the performative or otherwise artistic re-presentation of ethnographic biographical research (O'Neill 2002; O'Neill 2013).

In verbatim theatre, for example, “a text is composed wholly, or almost entirely, from interviews recorded, transcribed, edited, and then re-presented in performance” (Young 2009, p. 73). This form of representation is perceived by some as the most honest, ‘truthful’ and ‘authentic’ portrayal of particular experiences and occurrences (Young 2009). Others argue that literal representations of testimonies are limited in their capacity to portray issues that are incommunicable through words, such as experiences of trauma (Bottoms 2006; Fisher 2011). Due to these limitations Stephen J. Bottoms warns that performed testimonies should not be equated with ‘authenticity’: “It is as if, in the theatre, we can be given unmediated access to the words of the originary speaker, and by extension to that speaker’s authentic, uncensored thoughts and feelings” (Bottoms 2006, p. 59). In cautioning against the interpretation of verbatim performances as the portrayal of ‘reality’, he urges us to recognize that any theatrical performance is mediated, guided and directed by someone, hence making it a product that subjectively interprets rather than objectively portrays reality: “Stage realism purports to present a transparent representation of ‘lifelike’ behavior, while in fact providing a constructed authorial perspective on the real” (Bottoms 2006, p. 59).

I suggest that the question of authenticity concerning performances resembles the controversy discussed in the first part of this chapter regarding the aim of research to discover ‘truth’ in contrast to the creation of meaning. More specifically, the verbatim representation of testimonies is assumed to correspond to the presentation of ‘factual truth’ whereas more fictional theatre seems to correspond to the creation of multiple meanings as envisioned by arts-based researchers. In this sense, Agnes Woolley discusses in her book on ‘Contemporary Asylum Narratives’ how fictional representations can offer alternative narratives that transmit the complexity of conditions such as statelessness or ‘refugeehood’ (Woolley 2014, foreword).

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter provided an insight into current discourses around arts-based research. It discussed how theatre-based research is founded on an understanding of knowledge and knowledge production that is geared towards greater social justice. ‘Social justice’ is understood here as the idea of creating a society that is free of inequality,

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While each term intends to transmit nuances in the way that ethnographic, documentary or testimonial material is used and turned into a performance, no clear-cut definitions exist and terms are often used interchangeably (Maedza 2013). For the purpose of this study I decided to use ‘research-based theatre’ as an overarching term comprising all forms of theatre that represent data in the broadest sense.

oppression or domination by one group over others and in which all people are treated with dignity. Arts-based research aims to reach this goal by various means. Epistemologically, knowledge is understood to comprise multiple meanings that correspond to the variety and ambiguity of people's experiences and perceptions. These meanings are expressed and can be uncovered by acknowledging and valorising embodied forms of knowledge.

Another way to attain social justice lies in the aim of raising participants' consciousness. To this end, applied theatre practices deriving from Theatre of the Oppressed apply the technique of dialogic exchange. Transformation on an individual level is said to ultimately lead to a change of oppressive structures on a socio-political level. Justice is further sought by minimising power imbalances between researchers and participants. Arts-based research therefore values participants as knowledgeable agents who contribute to the production of meaning. The discussion showed, however, that the practical implementation and facilitation of a participatory approach as well as the performative representation of others are not free from ethical challenges concerning power relationships and the ownership of knowledge.

Despite these challenges, this theoretical analysis showed that theatre has the capacity to produce knowledge while exceeding conventional ethics standards. The chapter showed that theatre-based research is reciprocal in the sense that it valorises participants and raises their consciousness which in turn is said to result in greater social justice on a societal level. Furthermore, performance is policy relevant in the sense that it makes the viewpoints of persons affected by policies accessible in a way that expresses nuances of people's experiences, facilitates dialogue and encourages deeper thinking. Based on these insights from the literature I conclude this chapter by confirming the assumption that theatre has the capacity to produce policy relevant academic knowledge in an ethical way.

The previous three chapters presented an overview of academic debates and concepts that are relevant for researching (forced) migrants and children through theatre with the aim of meeting the triple imperative. Specifically, I looked at different understandings of research ethics and policy relevance among (forced) migration scholars, laid out how children and childhood are conceptualised and how theatre can function as a research tool. The points raised in these chapters will inform the analysis of my own case study in the following two chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. CASE STUDY 'INNOCENT VOICES' – REFLECTIONS ON THE ETHICS OF A THEATRE-BASED RESEARCH PROJECT

> *Should art educate, inform, organise, influence, incite to action, or should it simply be an object of pleasure?*
>
> *Augusto Boal 1979, p. 2*

Following calls for a 'triple imperative' in (forced) migration research, this study aimed to produce knowledge in a truly ethical way. The principal goal in terms of research ethics was to apply an enhanced ethics approach as discussed in chapter 2.1. In this sense, the study aimed not only to fulfil conventional standards of procedural ethics but also to produce reciprocal benefits and to ensure that participants maintained ownership of the research process. The study was guided by the assumption that a theatre-based approach is suitable and capable of achieving these aims. Based on a review of the epistemology and underlying values and aims of arts-based research, chapter 3 confirmed this assumption from a theoretical point of view. This chapter now seeks to respond to the first principal research question as outlined in chapter 1.1.1.

To reiterate, the first research question asks how far a theatre-based research approach to (forced) migration studies fulfils enhanced ethics standards. In search of a response to this question I conducted a case study with undocumented migrant children in Cape Town between June and October 2014. The analysis of the data generated in this study leads me to conclude that theatre-based research guarantees enhanced ethics standards albeit with particular challenges that occurred with this diverse group of migrant children who did not know each other in advance.

The chapter consists of four sections, followed by a conclusion. The chapter opens with a portrayal of the theatre-based activities implemented during the course of the case study. This is followed by an analysis of the procedural ethics requirements

applicable to this study chapter 2. This analysis pays particular attention to ethical concerns surrounding informed consent in research with children and undocumented migrants. Based on the analysis I argue that it is unethical to demand undocumented migrants to provide written informed consent. Furthermore, I suggest that consent for visual data should follow a two-stage process that refers to data collection and data dissemination respectively. The third section assesses the notion that theatre increases the consciousness of individuals through dialogic exchange as described in the previous chapter. The analysis shows that theatre-based research with undocumented migrant children of diverse backgrounds is characterised by specific challenges such as unequal language skills, issues of trust and discipline. These challenges hinder effective verbal communication and thus impede 'genuine dialogic exchange' as envisioned by Freire and Boal. Nevertheless, the analysis also illustrates that a theatre-based process provides alternative means to communicate successfully. The fourth section discusses how far this study achieved reciprocity. A closer look at participants' feedback shows that the study produced material, educational and affective benefits for participants and guaranteed their ownership over the research process. The chapter closes with a conclusion summarizing the main findings.

All direct quotes and dialogues by participants presented in this chapter derive from their oral, written and performative contributions to the workshops as recorded through video, ethnographic notes, participants' project diaries, postcards and other materials generated in the course of the project. In order to guarantee participants' anonymity, I use their self-selected stage names throughout the analysis. Furthermore, I use the terms 'participants' and 'actors' interchangeably. The term 'audience' generally refers to participants watching fellow participants perform during the workshops, except with regard to the final performance where participants performed for a public audience.

4.1 Workshop activities

This section presents a reflective overview of the theatre-based activities and techniques applied in the workshops. The outline serves to help the reader follow the in-depth analysis of the methodology in the remaining chapter as well as the analysis of the children's experiences in chapter 5. I use the plural form 'we' when referring to actions or instructions given by the facilitator(s) and myself.

4.1.1 Acting and performing

Due to the labelling of the workshop series as a drama project when recruiting participants and due to my particular research interest in exploring the ethics and functionality of theatre as a research methodology, acting constituted the main focus of the workshops. Early on in the project, we asked participants to choose a *stage name* for themselves. The idea was to use stage names in order to distinguish between on and off-stage situations, between acting and not acting. In terms of research ethics, the stage names were meant to anonymise participants' real names. However, a clear division between stage names and real names proved to be difficult to maintain as participants constantly switched between acting and not acting. In their performances, they also started representing characters with third names which further complicated the situation. While everyone knew each other's stage names and participants were free to refer to themselves by their stage names, everyone mainly used their real names. Only one participant always insisted on being called by her stage name, even when she was not acting. Notably, in the final performance participants presented themselves to the public audience with their real names. The significance of this step in terms of participants' ownership of the project is discussed in chapter 4.4.2.

In order to familiarize participants with the feeling of physically being on stage, we used the technique of *still images*. A still image can be portrayed as an individual or as a group portrait and can represent a situation, an action or an emotion. It was a useful exercise that encouraged participants to be on stage without the need to physically move or use their voice. Similarly, we also used *mime* as a technique to show emotions and actions on stage without the need for speech. To practise these techniques, we wrote a list of verbs on a whiteboard. One by one participants came on stage and represented one of the verbs through mime while the audience had to guess which actions were portrayed. The image below portrays an example of a still image in which participants were asked to express an element of a fictitious story they had been told by the facilitator.

Figure 3 – Still image (photograph by Lena S. Opfermann)

We also focused on the use of the *voice* by asking participants to introduce themselves to the group by using a voice different to their normal one. The purpose of this exercise was to show that different voices portray different characters. We then asked a second participant to join the one on stage and have a short conversation by maintaining their 'new' voice. In order to mitigate the hurdle of using English we encouraged participants to speak in French or any other language they wanted to. For this purpose we also introduced *Gibberish* as an invented language that can be spoken by anyone by making up words and sounds at the moment of speaking.

Other key techniques were c*haracterisations & role-plays*. We practised those by asking participants to portray characters that appeared in a story told by the facilitator. In some exercises, participants were asked to act out the story while it was being told. This was the case in the image below where they adopted the role of imaginary creatures. Alternatively, participants listened first to the occurrences of the story up to a certain point and then improvised the continuation of the story through acting. In some instances we did not provide an actual story, but instead described a context in which a certain situation would take place. For example, we asked participants to imagine the area of Cape Town where they currently live. One participant was then asked to adopt the role of a foreign person who arrives in this area for the first time.

Another participant would portray a local South African residing in this area. Both characters were then asked to act out an encounter between the foreigner and the South African.

Figure 4 – Characterisations and role-play (photograph by Lena S. Opfermann)

At a later stage in the project we moved to *improvising scenes based on real occurrences or experiences.* In the improvised performances actors agreed on the characters they were going to use and the content they wanted to portray. Words and actions on stage were then acted out spontaneously. Since the portrayal of real occurrences was more sensitive than portraying imagined scenes, I used a multi-stage approach in order to ensure that participants only exposed and represented what they felt comfortable to share with the group. As a first step, participants were asked to respond to a question or discuss a statement individually or in small groups and write down their response. In the second step, participants compared their responses in small groups and decided which story or aspect of their response they wanted to act out. They were then given ten to fifteen minutes' time to prepare their scenes before presenting them in an improvised way to the rest of the group. The next image shows one such scene being performed to the other group members.

Figure 5 – Scene ‘Discrimination against foreigners’ (photograph by Lena S. Opfermann)

In addition to being on stage, being part of the *audience* constituted another relevant part of the process. In order to watch others perform, participants needed to be respectful, quiet and attentive. At the end of each performed scene we usually had a short reflection and feedback phase in which the audience was asked what they had understood, how they interpreted the scene and whether they agreed with its content or message. The actors could respond to the comments, explain unclear situations and express anything else they wanted to say about the content of the performance. The following image illustrates the audience watching others perform.

Figure 6 – Participants watching others perform (photograph by Lena S. Opfermann)

Group conversations

In addition to the acting, guided group conversations constituted a principal element of the project. In order to facilitate these conversations, we started and ended each workshop session with a circle of chairs. In the opening circle, we usually asked how everyone was feeling and whether anyone had anything to share regarding any particular events during the past week. We also explained relevant information about the upcoming workshop or the overall project plan. The final circle represented a kind of closing ritual, a moment that would mark the end of each workshop and provided participants with the opportunity to share any thoughts and comments about the day. We usually asked how everyone thought the day had been and whether there was anything in particular they had liked or not liked. These group conversations were often affected by participants' lack of respect for each other as well as by varying language skills. Chapter 4.3 presents an in-depth analysis of the reasons and implications of these challenges.

4.1.2 Writing exercises

The most common writing activity was the writing of 'postcards'. For this purpose, everyone received a postcard-size colourful card and a pen. Participants were then asked to respond to a particular question in writing. Responses could be written in

English or French and I offered help to anyone who requested it. The postcards had the purpose of allowing participants to share personal information with me without having to share it with the other members of the group. To encourage participants to write, I emphasised that they were free to write anything, that there were no right or wrong answers and that spelling mistakes were irrelevant. Upon completion, they put their cards into a 'post box'. I explained that, comparable to normal post, any written material they put inside that box would be kept confidential and would only be seen by myself. Due to participants' varying levels of English and literacy skills I avoided asking complex questions and described the tasks in simple words.

Figure 7 – Confidential writing exercise (photograph by Lena S. Opfermann)

I also distributed 'diaries' as a further opportunity for participants to share thoughts and information about themselves in writing. The idea was that participants would do a weekly written 'homework' that would allow them to reflect on some of the issues that had come up in the workshops, to develop some further thoughts or respond to particular questions. The diaries were also intended as a means of keeping participants connected to the project during the week. Initially, participants responded positively and came each Sunday with their homework done. However, the diaries soon lost momentum and participants became unreliable in completing their tasks, some lost their diaries or kept leaving them at home. At the end of the project only two

participants returned their diaries to me. I consider this to be a missed opportunity and a loss of relevant data. In reflecting upon the diaries, I acknowledge that part of the reason for this failure was my own uncertainty concerning the use and purpose of the diaries, which prevented me from giving clear instructions throughout the project. This uncertainty derived from an ethical concern. Unlike postcards, which can be directed to someone and are usually written with the intention of sharing its content with someone else, diaries are by definition very personal objects. I therefore did not feel comfortable insisting on participants sharing their homework with the group or returning their diaries to me. However, one participant perceived the diary as an opportunity to share personal thoughts. At the end of the project he not only returned his diary but also gave me a book of lyrics he had written.

In order to diversify the type of activities, I introduced painting and drawing on two occasions. In the first case I handed out sheets of white paper with a circle in the middle. I provided oil pastels and oil crayons and simply asked participants to draw and paint anything they liked. Aware that drawing exercises can have a powerful effect and trigger memories and emotions, I deliberately avoided any tasks that would relate to participants' personal lives. Furthermore, conscious that I am not an art therapist, I avoided interpreting participants' drawings. Instead, I invited everyone to explain their own drawing if they wanted to. In the second session, I handed out bigger sheets of white paper and asked participants to draw a line in the middle to divide the page in two parts. I explained that one side of the paper referred to their home country and the other one to their current living situation. I then asked them to draw or write down all members of their nuclear and extended families that they considered relevant in both places. At the end, participants explained their drawings to me, but like the postcard exercises the family drawings remained confidential and were not presented or shared with the rest of the group.

4.2 Procedural ethics

As a student of the University of York I was obliged to comply with the university ethics regulations concerning social research with human subjects. Prior to conducting my field research I therefore had to gain formal ethics approval through the University of York ELMPS Ethics Committee.[25] As indicated in chapter 2, the university's ethics guidelines resemble those of most other universities in the UK in that their main goal is

[25] The ELMPS Ethics Committee is responsible for assessing ethics applications from staff and students at the Economics, Law, Management, Politics and Sociology Departments of the University of York.

to avoid inflicting harm through research. As part of this process I designed information sheets and consent forms for adult caregivers and for children, all written in a language that was accessible for persons with limited English skills.[26]

Despite proposing to work with a sensitive target group of so-called 'vulnerable children', I passed the ethics clearance process after clarifying a few minor questions to the committee. I believe that my application was approved because I had applied the 'ethics committee speak' successfully enough to convince the committee members that my research would be conducted in an ethical way (Guillemin and Gillam 2004; Hammersley 2009). Based on this experience I agree with Guillemin and Gillam that the significance of procedural ethics lies in "forcing qualitative researchers to reflect and think about the potential harms of their research, even though the questions may not be answerable at this level" (Guillemin and Gillam 2004, p. 273).

I further argue, however, that the benefits of formalized ethics procedures are limited precisely to this preliminary reflection. In this respect I support the criticism raised by others that procedural ethics are merely a technical undertaking that by no means guarantees ethical conduct 'in the field' (e.g. Block et al. 2012; Dona 2007; Hammersley 2009; Hugman, Bartolomei and Pittaway 2011; Mackenzie et al. 2007; Melrose 2011; Swartz 2011).

The following subsection reflects on the ethical challenges I encountered in the process of recruiting participants and how I dealt with them.

4.2.1 Participant recruitment

International institutions and researchers have recognized the categorization of migrant children as a challenge. As such the IOM stated, for example, that "an unaccompanied migrant child can often belong to two different categories at the same time (e.g. an orphan who was internally displaced and subsequently trafficked abroad)" (International Organization for Migration 2011, p. 14). Similarly, others pointed out that children, "like their adult counterparts, (…) migrate for a variety of reasons that often defy typologies and discrete categorizations" (Ensor and Goździak 2010, p. 275). As outlined in the introductory chapter of the dissertation, such categorization challenges caused legislative inconsistencies that prevent

[26] The information sheets for children and adults can be found in appendices 2 and 3, the consent forms in appendices 4 and 5.

unaccompanied and separated foreign children in South Africa from legalizing their stay. Chapter 2.2 further argued that research conducted on the basis of existing categories is problematic as it limits researchers' views and risks overlooking persons and viewpoints outside of those categories (e.g. Bakewell 2008).

This study was concerned specifically with children who find themselves outside of existing legal and policy categories. For this reason I attempted to refrain from using any categories, yet in order to select participants I had to apply a number of criteria. These included the children's exclusively foreign nationality or statelessness, their undocumented legal status and their age between 12 and 18 years. As participants were required to use public transport in order to attend the workshops, the age category was determined primarily on the basis of safety and security considerations. Participants were furthermore expected to be either unaccompanied or separated from their biological parents.

The recruitment of participants was kindly facilitated by the Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town. During my time as advocacy officer from 2009 to 2011 I had created a database of cases of foreign children with protection, welfare or educational needs. When I returned in 2014 with the aim of conducting my doctoral study, the current advocacy team provided me with a list containing the names of close to seventy migrant children contained in their current database. Apart from the names, the list also indicated the children's nationality, age, documentation status and whether they were separated or unaccompanied. The current caregivers' names and contact numbers were also provided.

In order to invite children to participate in the project, I called the caregivers and set up individual meetings with them and the respective children. These meetings were held at the Scalabrini Centre. Meeting potential participants and their caregivers in the space of an organisation that they knew was very useful as it provided an immediate basis of trust towards me. However, in this context it proved to be challenging to transmit that I was conducting this project as an independent researcher of a UK-based university and not as a staff member of the organisation.

In my initial introduction to the project I emphasised that participation was completely voluntary and dependent on the children's choice. I also explained that I would cover all transport costs associated with attending the project. I then provided the information sheets for children and adults and asked if they had any additional questions or

concerns. As most caregivers were themselves foreigners with limited English skills, it was challenging to transmit the exact scope and purpose of the project. While I was able to provide explanations in French, I did not speak any of the other required languages. I felt that the written information sheets were useful in the sense that they lent the project a certain degree of formality and accountability that further helped me to establish a relationship of trust. Caregivers and children then took the information sheets home and had a few days to consider whether they would like to join the project.

During the recruitment process, some instances confirmed the concern that adult gatekeepers can prevent children from participating in research (Morrow 2008; Skelton 2008). As such, several times caregivers and children did not attend pre-arranged appointments at the Scalabrini Centre. After missing their appointments, caregivers were usually unable to be reached by phone. It was therefore difficult to establish the reasons for their refusal to come. It may have been due to a lack of trust towards me as an unknown foreign researcher, or because, based on the initial information they had received in our first phone conversation, they did not see the value of a theatre-based research project for the children. As part of my recruiting efforts I also contacted a number of Child and Youth Care Centres across Cape Town to inquire whether they were hosting any undocumented foreign children who might be interested in participating in the project. In several such cases, social workers or directors ruled out the children's participation without even establishing whether the children were interested.

Despite these drawbacks, the overall recruitment process was very successful as most caregivers were supportive and the contacted children keen to participate. Nevertheless, some dilemmas occurred, two of which I will describe here. In one case, two siblings attended the initial meeting with their biological mother. This was unexpected as I had contacted the family in the belief that the children's names were in the database because they were not only undocumented but also unaccompanied or separated from their biological parents. In this particular case it turned out that both parents had previously been absent for an extended period of time. During that period, an uncle who had been taking care of the children had approached the Scalabrini Centre for support and advice. Since nobody had informed the organisation of the mother's return, the children were still part of the database. Both children were highly motivated to participate in the project. Since the research was intended to explore the experiences of children who were unable to legalise their stay due to the absence of

their biological parents, the decision whether to include these siblings therefore constituted a dilemma.

In order to make a decision I drew again on Bakewell's suggestion to 'step outside the categories' and allow the research to be guided by the conditions on the ground. This, he argues, allows us "to get a new sideways look at policy and practice from a new angle" (Bakewell 2008, p. 449). With this in mind I was able to look beyond my preconceived notion that participants necessarily needed to be unaccompanied or separated from their biological parents. It allowed me to recognize that migrant children who are undocumented despite living with their biological parents find themselves equally outside existing categories. Based on this advice I decided to include the two siblings in the group.

Another dilemma arose later on in the project when a cousin of the siblings started attending the workshops. The girl initially stated that she had come as a one-off visitor. As a visitor she was invited to participate. She enjoyed the activities and subsequently continued coming back the following weeks. Since there was no formal agreement that she was part of the group, after three weeks I asked her for an individual meeting. On that occasion I found out that she was born in South Africa and had a foreign nationality, that she was 21 years old, undocumented and unable to legalise her stay. Being over the age of 18, she was technically not a child. However, born in South Africa to foreign parents and subsequently abandoned, she was affected by the same legislative gap with which this research is concerned. For this reason, and due to her genuine interest in the project, I decided to include her as a full participant.

After slightly fluctuating numbers in the first few weeks, this case study comprised a core group of ten participants of four different nationalities. Five participants were Congolese from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), three were Angolans, one was Rwandan and one Zimbabwean. Six participants were male and four female. At the beginning of the project participants' reported ages were: 13, 14 (2x), 15 (3x), 16 (3x) and 21. All participants lived in stable accommodation with an adult caregiver. Seven participants were separated from both their biological parents and lived with an adult relative such as an older sibling, aunt or uncle; two participants lived with their biological mother. One participant was unaccompanied by any relatives and lived in a registered Child and Youth Care Centre. Three participants were Muslim and seven were Christian, though one of the Christians lived in a Muslim household. Religious

affiliation had not been a criterion for inclusion in the project, yet participants' different belief systems subsequently contributed to some of the challenges faced by the group.

Participants were residing in different areas across the greater Cape Town metropolitan area, namely Athlone, Parrow, Khayelitsha, Retreat, Maitland, Blackheath, Kensington and Green Point. The only two features that all participants had in common were their foreign nationality and their undocumented legal status.

The reasons for participants' stay in South Africa was not relevant for the purpose of this study and therefore participants were not asked to provide specific details concerning that matter. Nevertheless, the following information emerged from conversations and activities throughout the project. None of the members of the core group of participants appeared to qualify for refugee status.[27] One participant reported that he had left his home country based on his independent decision in order to escape abuse and neglect by family members. Two participants were born in South Africa to foreign parents and had never been documented. All other participants said that they had not chosen to leave their home countries on their own account, but had left due to particular circumstances or other people's decisions. Some indicated that they had left because their parents had passed away and there were no other adults willing or able to look after them. Others stated that their parents or respective caregivers had simply told them to leave and had made arrangements for their trip, without asking the children's opinion or explaining the reasons why they should leave. Several participants expressed that they did not know why they had been told to leave their home.

In several instances participants shared contradicting pieces of information concerning their migration and family background. I suggest that this imprecision can be attributed to a variety of factors. Firstly, it is likely that functional distrust prevented participants from telling me the true circumstances and reasons for their migration. As most participants highlighted for example the importance of finishing their education before returning home, it is likely that some of them were sent to South Africa for educational purposes. Secondly, contradicting and unclear information may be a sign that participants were not aware of certain details themselves, for example concerning the whereabouts of one or both of their biological parents or their parents' reasons for sending them away. Some participants are likely to have followed orders to leave their

[27] Two participants who attended the first few workshops and then dropped out due to other commitments were unaccompanied refugee children attempting to lodge an asylum application.

home, either due to a sense of respect for their elders who had asked them to leave or due to a lack of alternatives.

Whichever the case, participants' reasons for migrating do not seem to correspond to youth migration patterns identified in other parts of Africa such as Ghana, where child migration is predominantly motivated by the aim of finding work opportunities further away (Hashim 2007). In terms of their migration destination, regardless of participants' reasons to leave their home, most seemed to have moved to South Africa because they had an adult relative there.

The following section discusses ethical challenges regarding the formal requirement to obtain informed consent from undocumented migrant children.

4.2.2 Informed consent

In order to comply with the University of York's formal ethics requirements, I obtained written informed consent from both participants and their adult caregivers.[28] A subsequent critical reflection on this formality gave rise to a number of ethical and legal considerations and concerns regarding research with children on the one hand and with undocumented persons on the other hand. The reflection leads me to argue that it is both inappropriate and unethical to require undocumented migrants to sign formal documents with their names. The following three subsections on children's informed consent, researching undocumented persons and iterative consent discuss this point in more detail.

Children's informed consent

Some scholars consider children as immature and lacking agency to provide their own consent (McLaughlin and Alfaro-Velcamp 2015). This notion, however, contradicts the concept of children as agents also discussed in chapter 2.3. Building on the latter, I started this research from the premise that children are agents capable of determining their own good. In line with this I followed the concept of 'ethical symmetry' as also raised in chapter 2.3 (Christensen and Prout 2002). As such, I applied the same ethical principles to my research participants as I would have applied had they been adults. This meant, for example, that I asked the children to provide written consent concerning their participation in the project.

[28] The consent forms for children and adults can be found in appendices 4 and 5.

In addition to obtaining the children's consent, I considered it as my duty to also ask for their caregivers' consent. This sense of duty was based on the recognition discussed in chapter 2.3.3 that researchers need to appreciate and respect existing social relationships in which children's lives are embedded (e.g. Abebe and Bessell 2014; Meloni, Vanthuyne and Rousseau 2015). Seeking consent 'from a responsible adult in addition to the child' is also described as 'good practice' by the ESRC framework for research ethics (ESRC, n.d.). In this regard I felt that asking caregivers for their consent indicated a form of respect towards their role in the children's lives. Furthermore, the consent forms aimed to establish trust by lending the project a certain formality. This was particularly pertinent since neither the caregivers nor the children knew me before the project and in all likelihood did not have a complete understanding of the purpose and type of research I was proposing to conduct.

At the beginning of the first workshop, participants and caregivers were therefore asked to read, fill in and sign the consent forms.[29] If anyone had difficulties reading, I read the form out loud to them. The consent forms clarified above all the voluntary character of the project and guaranteed confidential use of the data. Specifically, the forms stated that participation in the project is entirely the child's choice. This meant that an adult's consent could not have forced a child to participate against his or her will. This principle applied in one case where a caregiver was keen for the child to participate, yet the child showed no interest and even refused to attend the first introductory meeting. Given that both parties needed to consent in order for a child to participate, both sides were apparently given equal weight in the decision.

Nevertheless, it can be argued that this 'consent equality' was unfair towards the children. This is because a child's participation could be jeopardized by an adult's refusal to consent. If a caregiver had denied or withdrawn their consent against a child's will, participation would have been difficult to negotiate. This means effectively that the caregivers' consent served as a precondition for the children's participation. As discussed in the previous section, this dilemma also occurred during the initial participant recruitment process, reflecting the general power inequality between adults and children.

[29] Most caregivers accompanied the participating children to the first workshop. If caregivers did not come, I asked the children to take home the form for the caregivers to sign and return it the following week.

Researching undocumented persons

In this study, none of the caregivers or children expressed any concerns when signing the consent forms. Considering their relative power inequality in relation to me, however, I suggest that their lack of complaint or contestation does not necessarily reflect their true attitude towards the signing of the forms. Rather, they may have signed the forms because they perceive researchers "as having power to effect change" (Pittaway, Bartolomei and Hugman 2010, p. 232). I therefore argue that caregivers' and participants' compliance with the bureaucratic formality required from them in that moment constitutes a form of 'public transcript'. Scott describes public transcripts as "the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate" (Scott 1990, p. 2). As such, "the public performance of the subordinate will, out of prudence, fear, and the desire to curry favor, be shaped to appeal to the expectations of the powerful" (ibid.).

Caregivers' and participants' status as migrants as well as other factors such as their race, age, educational level, language or literacy skills created a perceived 'subordination' that influenced their interaction with me. My expectation and implied demand that the consent forms be signed as a precondition for the children's participation demonstrated my relative position of power concerning this project. In order to comply with my expectations, they therefore signed the consent forms without raising any concerns. While the act of signing the consent forms did not have any significant implications beyond the immediate project, the example illustrates how migrants are compelled to 'perform' in their daily lives. This notion is discussed in more detail in chapter 5.4.

The possibility that participants signed the consent forms as a result of their subordination towards me raises further ethical questions regarding research with undocumented migrants more generally. As chapter 2.4.1 already pointed out and discussed, researching undocumented persons can be considered an illegal activity according to South African law (Immigration Act No. 13 of 2002).[30] More specifically, consent forms can be interpreted as an 'agreement' or 'cooperation' between researcher and 'illegal foreigner' as specified in section 42 (1). In this particular study, the requirement indicated on the information sheet that participants need to be

[30] With regard to legal proceedings in the United Kingdom, Duvell et al. furthermore point out that "social science researchers have no right to refuse witness statements as for instance medical personnel have" (Duvell, Triandafyllidou and Vollmer 2008, p. 14). This implies that researchers cannot 'protect' their participants, should the matter go to court.

undocumented, provides a clear proof according to section 42 (2) that the researcher was aware of the legal status of the persons involved in the 'cooperation'. These legislative provisions therefore have a number of serious implications.

From a practical point of view the provisions imply that consent forms constitute a security risk for both researcher and participants as they provide written proof of the 'agreed cooperation' that is taking place between the two parties. Besides the physical consent forms, it could not be ruled out that the actual theatre workshops, taking place at a centrally located non-governmental institution that is known for assisting migrants, could have come under scrutiny by law enforcement agencies. This possibility derives from frequently conducted police and army raids targeting 'illegal foreigners' in Cape Town, as outlined in chapter 1.2.

Based on this predicament the argument could be made that this study exposed participants to an unnecessary security risk. Furthermore, it can be argued on the basis of the Immigration Act that any research with undocumented migrants in South Africa is prohibited. In response to these potential allegations I submit firstly that such a reading stands in contradiction to the South African Children's Act (Children's Act No. 38 of 2005) and secondly, that it would be unethical to refrain from conducting research with undocumented migrants. As described in chapter 1.2, the South African Children's Act does not discriminate between South African and foreign children in the country. According to section 9 of the act,

> *In all matters concerning the care, protection and well-being of a child the standard that* ***the child's best interest is of paramount importance****, must be applied (emphasis added)*

Section 10 furthermore rules that

> ***Every child*** *that is of such an age, maturity and stage of development as to be able to participate in any matter concerning that child* ***has the right to participate*** *in an appropriate way and* ***views expressed by the child must be given due consideration****. (emphasis added)*

Chapter 1.2 laid out that policy and legal inconsistencies force unaccompanied and separated foreign children in South Africa to remain undocumented. The analysis in chapter 5 will illustrate that the children's legal status affects their wellbeing, protection, integration and personal development as they experience constant discrimination and fear, risks of abandonment and violations of their right to education, among others. Based on this I argue that it is imperative from an ethical point of view to improve the children's situation and that research constitutes one way towards this aim. I go on to suggest that this research, aimed at improving the situation of a largely

‘overlooked’ population group, ultimately constitutes an act of humanitarian assistance. As such, it cannot be considered an offence under section 42 of the Immigration Act as outlined above. Finally, participating in such research is both the children’s right and in their best interest.

Returning to the question of consent forms, I conclude from this discussion that it is unethical to require undocumented migrants to sign consent forms with their real names. Better ethical practice may be to seek informed consent anonymously or by using pseudonyms, either in writing or orally, which could be done through voice recording. However, in his study with asylum seekers Maedza points out that signatures based on pseudonyms are problematic as they put the legitimacy of the documents into question (Maedza 2013, p. 107). In addition, it may prove difficult for the researcher to keep a clear record of those participants who have consented either with pseudonyms or orally. In order to keep track of the names, separate lists that attribute the pseudonyms or recorded voices to participants’ real names would need to be kept. Since these lists can equally be found by law enforcement officers, this practice would defeat the purpose of using pseudonyms. Considering these limitations as well as the lack of alternatives, I suggest that it would be best to offer participants the choice of how they prefer to give consent.

The ESRC framework for research ethics also recognizes that consent may be difficult to obtain and concludes that, “where consent is not to be recorded or explicitly secured, a full statement justifying this approach should be submitted as part of the ethics review” (ESRC, n.d.). Avoiding written consent forms would mitigate some of the above mentioned risks to some extent. As initially highlighted, however, in this study the forms also had a positive effect as they constituted a trust-building element and contributed to the formalization of the project towards caregivers and participants.

Iterative consent

So far, the discussion on consent has referred to social science research in general. With a specific view to theatre-based research, I now submit that this methodology poses additional consent-related challenges. In this study, for example, I did not know at the time of obtaining written consent how I would subsequently use the materials collected through the project. In this regard Maedza argues with a view to testimonial theatre that it is ethically problematic to ask for participants’ permission to use their testimonies in ways which, at the time of signing the consent forms, are yet to be defined:

> *Testimonial playwriting in a manner of speaking, asks for people who agree to participate in the research to sign 'blank confessional' pieces of paper, and trust the playwright to fill in the blanks in their absence. (Maedza 2013, p. 106)*

In order to mitigate this dilemma I applied an 'iterative consent process' (Mackenzie et al. 2007) with regard to taking pictures and recording videos. This meant that during the project I repeatedly asked whether participants agreed to be filmed or photographed and that I respected individual participants' refusal to be filmed or photographed during particular activities or conversations. Nevertheless, this process proved to have its limitations.

Firstly, the iterative consent only applied to participants and not to their caregivers. This meant that while participants had a choice to refuse to be filmed or photographed at certain moments, their caregivers were obliged to grant 'unlimited' consent that the children in their care could be filmed and photographed at all times. This limitation calls into question the utility of the caregivers' one-off consent in the beginning of the project.

Secondly, the effect of iterative consent regarding visual data is limited if only applied during the data collection phase. Individuals may agree to be filmed or photographed because they feel comfortable at the particular moment when they are being asked to consent. This moment-specific consent, however, does not automatically imply that they also agree with the researcher's subsequent use of those images for as yet unspecified purposes, such as exposing the images publicly through exhibitions or publications.

Similar arguments can be made with regards to non-visual data such as ethnographic notes and participants' written contributions. I argue, however, that visual data is more sensitive as it lacks any form of confidentiality, thus enabling the identification of individual participants by others. While photographic and film images can be modified so that individuals' faces are no longer recognizable, this modification takes away the added value of visual data, namely to see and interpret specific facial and body expressions.

These challenges reflect how questions of ethics extend beyond the data collection to the representation of data. In this regard I pointed out in chapter 3.3 that researchers have an ethical duty to be aware of and sensitive towards the potential effects of

representing ‘others’, even if they have previously consented to participating in the research. This duty is particularly pertinent with regard to theatrical and other artistic forms of representation. The high visibility and exposure on stage stands in stark contrast to the wanted or unwanted ‘invisibility’ that many forced and undocumented migrants experience in their daily lives. The artistic public exposure therefore constitutes both an opportunity and a threat that migrants themselves are likely to find difficult to negotiate:

> *Oscillating between invisibility and overexposure in the public sphere, forced migrants have an ambivalent relationship to the aesthetic forms that seek to represent them, one which touches on questions of communicability, visibility and ethics. (Woolley 2014, p. 3)*

I suggest that a two-stage iterative consent process can address some of the difficulties raised so far. A two-stage process distinguishes between firstly consent to collect a certain type of data at a particular moment, for example by taking a picture or filming an activity, and secondly, consent to use this data for subsequent purposes. Stage one thereby involves consenting to have a picture taken and kept anonymously by the researcher for the mere purpose of analysing the data. Stage two then extends the consent to further use of the visual data, including through public display.

I acknowledge that it may be difficult to determine the right moment for stage two consent. Should it be directly after taking the picture, at the end of the workshop or at the end of the whole project? Moreover, it might be unfeasible to look through hundreds of pictures or hours of video footage in order to allow participants to decide which pictures or videos they consent to be used in public. Furthermore, it is questionable how long a stage two consent is valid for. At the time of the project or immediately thereafter participants may be proud to display their images, but it cannot be assumed that they would still share the same opinion five years later.

This section analysed the fulfilment of formal ethics requirements in theatre-based research with undocumented migrant children. It highlighted challenges I encountered in selecting participants that did not match my predefined criteria, and how I responded to these. The analysis furthermore revealed how ethical questions intertwine with legal provisions concerning research with undocumented migrants more generally. In this regard I argued that research with undocumented migrant children ultimately constitutes a moral duty and thereby a humanitarian act. As a way of enhancing ethical research conduct I finally suggested introducing anonymous

consent for undocumented migrants and a two-stage iterative consent process for visual data.

The following section analyses how the notion of dialogic exchange introduced in the previous chapter took shape in this case study.

4.3 Dialogic exchange

Chapter 3 suggested that applied theatre, through a process of dialogic exchange, is capable of raising the consciousness of individuals who experience oppression or social injustice. According to Freire and Boal, successful dialogue depends on a number of preconditions that include love, care, respect, humility, hope, equality, trust and discipline amongst participants. If these preconditions are fulfilled, "existing thoughts will change and new knowledge will be created" (Freire Institute, n.d.). This section analyses how far this project enabled dialogic exchange concerning participants' oppression in South Africa. The analysis is divided in three subsections referring to verbal communication, trust and care, respect and discipline.

4.3.1 Verbal communication

As mentioned in chapter 3.2, Boal understands 'dialogue' as a conscious exchange of thoughts and opinions between actors and spectators in their quest for alternative solutions to issues of oppression. A closer look at the dialogic process shows that verbal communication is crucial in all stages of this process. I hereby refer to 'verbal communication' as an umbrella term that comprises various types of spoken interaction, including story-telling, group conversations and dialogue. Interestingly, the significance of spoken language for theatre-based projects does not feature in the literature. One minor yet notable exception is an article about a Theatre of the Oppressed project with school children in which the author highlights that language had an effect on the success of the project:

> *Forum Theatre[31], […] was considered more successful with fifth graders than with fourth. Verbal improvisation ability (i.e., oral language skills) of older children was attributed as the primary factor for their enhanced work. (Saldaña 2005b, p. 127)*

One precondition for successful dialogue according to Freire and Boal is the equality of all those involved. I submit that this requirement was not fulfilled in this project as participants were unequal in a linguistic sense. Following from this I argue that

[31] Forum Theatre is one of the most popular forms of Theatre of the Oppressed.

participants' linguistic inequality impeded an effective dialogic exchange. I understand linguistic inequality as a situation when dialogue and communication more broadly are inhibited due to differing oral language skills. Due to the impact that participants' linguistic inequality had on the way this project took shape, I will now take a closer look at the role of verbal communication in applied theatre practices. All words written in italics thereby point to verbal communication.

Firstly, in order to learn more about the topic of the workshop and identify 'real life' examples, facilitators often *conduct interviews* with external persons before the start of the workshop (Dennis 2009; Saldaña 2005b). At the beginning of the workshop, facilitators then *explain* to participants how the process works and which rules participants need to adhere to (Boal 1979; Dennis 2009). Following this, excerpts from the previously conducted interviews are *read* to the group to stimulate participants to improvise the enactment of scenes concerning the topic at stake. Only then the *dialogic exchange* between actors and spectators as explained above takes place, again *guided and stimulated* by the facilitator's *comments*.

It is implied that all these forms of verbal communication take place in a language that all participants are able to both understand and articulate. In this study, however, there was no single language shared by all participants. While one recruitment criterion had been that participants had to have basic English skills, I had not applied this criterion very strictly. This was because it seemed inappropriate to test children's language skills during our first meeting when my main aim was to trigger an interest in the project. Counting on embodied ways of communicating through theatre, I had also not expected spoken language to be a major challenge. Contrary to my expectations, however, participants' differing levels of English skills affected the project in various ways. This was because several participants were either unable to understand and/or uncomfortable in expressing themselves in English.

Firstly, this situation inhibited the transmission of complex questions or instructions. I therefore had to adjust the workshop activities in a way that all participants were able to understand and engage in. I found that basic instructions about contrasting issues such as portraying 'a good and a bad experience' or 'a happy and a sad moment', worked well. Also very specific and carefully worded instructions such as 'present a situation in which a South African and a foreigner meet on the street' worked.

Secondly, some participants needed translations from English into French or Lingala and vice versa. Without any official translator present, we relied on participants to translate for each other as well as on my own limited French skills. However, participants who spoke both English and Lingala were often hesitant to translate, either because their English skills were also limited or because they did not want to admit that they spoke Lingala. This was because they considered Lingala as a rural language they did not want to be associated with. As a result of this it usually took some effort to convince and encourage participants to translate to or from Lingala. This challenge made constant translating of instructions, group discussions and reflective conversations unfeasible. In order to minimise language hurdles we continuously encouraged participants to speak in their preferred language, including Gibberish.[32] While this proved to be useful for performances, language still constituted a challenge during group conversations.

Due to language barriers it was also difficult to clearly transmit to participants the research aspect of the project. Despite my efforts to explain the purpose of the project beyond a mere drama project, participants struggled to understand the research component. This became apparent in a discussion in workshop 13 when a participant unexpectedly asked “why are we here”? Responses by others to her question included “because Lena is doing this project” and “to get papers”. This indicated that some participants were hoping that their participation would result in them obtaining a legal document. I do not suggest that these misunderstandings and false hopes exclusively derive from the difficulty of communicating in English. Language did, however, inhibit the transmission of particular details.

The analysis leads me to conclude that verbal communication constitutes a particular challenge in theatre-based research when applied to groups with differing language skills. In this sense, participants’ linguistic inequality hindered a successful dialogic exchange in this project. From this it follows that more attention needs to be paid to the capacity of theatre to communicate through non-verbal means. The following section elaborates on this idea as part of the analysis into how ‘trust’ and ‘care’ as further preconditions for successful dialogue played out in this study.

[32] Gibberish is an invented language that anyone can speak by making up words and sounds at the moment of speaking.

4.3.2 Trust and care

This discussion is divided into four subsections dedicated to the following interrelated topics: establishing trust, interpreting silence, silence as a reflective space and alternative forms of communication.

Establishing trust

In order to work together comfortably and share personal views, participants need to trust each other. As mentioned in chapter 3.3, theatre practitioners tend to describe the sharing of stories as a natural process, implying that their participants simply trust each other (e.g. Dennis 2009; Norris 2009) A closer look at other theatre-based projects reveals that most projects referred to in the literature were implemented in school settings or with existing youth or drama groups in which classmates or group members already knew each other. This realization is highly relevant as it shows that these projects started off from an existing level of trust. As described in the first section of this chapter, this project was different as participants were brought together specifically for the purpose of this study. Trust and mutual respect therefore had to be established as part of the group building process.

To this end we repeatedly included trust-building exercises in the workshop activities. In one such activity, participants were asked to stand in a narrow circle surrounding one person in the middle. With closed eyes the person in the middle had to let themselves fall in any direction and be caught by the surrounding participants. Initially, hardly anyone felt comfortable in the middle as they did not trust the others to catch them. Also some of those standing in the outer circle did not trust their own strength to catch the person in the middle and opted to leave the game altogether. As we repeated the exercise over the weeks, more participants volunteered to stand in the middle, indicating an increased level of trust towards the others. This development was seen alongside participants becoming friends, spending time with each other even outside the workshop times and expressing concern if anyone arrived late or not at all. The following incident is indicative of this emerging attitude of participants' care towards each other.

One day a participant told another one that she should stop talking and concentrate better. As a reaction the participant who had been told off left the workshop half-way through. In a group conversation following this incident the remaining participants agreed that the girl who had left had over-reacted and that she should not have taken the comment personally. In this context I emphasised once again that participation

was voluntary and that everyone was free to leave if they did not want to participate in the project any longer. The following day, a participant expressed in a phone conversation his concern about the safety of the girl who had run away from the workshop the previous day. As he reflected on the incident he specifically questioned my statement that everyone was free to leave at any time:

> *What we spoke yesterday in the workshop, that someone who wants to leave can just leave, it's not nice. Because they can just rob him or kill him on the way and then what happens? What are you gonna tell the parents? If someone just leaves, we don't know what happens, so it's not nice.*

While the girl who had left unexpectedly was probably not exposed to any greater security risks by leaving the workshop earlier, his level of concern was striking. In my response I explained that I had meant that if somebody did not want to come to the workshop, it was fine because nobody was forced to come. I suggested that in addition to this we could agree that if anyone attended a particular workshop, they must stay until the end of that day so that everybody could leave at the same time. He agreed and this suggestion was later taken up in a subsequent written agreement that participants drafted. Section 4.3.3 provides a further discussion on this agreement.

Some participants also began using the project as a space to receive support and compassion from their fellow participants, the facilitators and me, both in personal and in group conversations. Some participants, for example, mentioned in group conversations that they were struggling at school. One participant openly shared the news about her cousin's recent death and on another day she told the group how she had been assaulted on her way home from church.

However, despite these examples of participants' trust, care and affection for each other, an element of distrust remained. This was demonstrated by several participants' continued refusal to be in the middle of the trust circle as well as by their persistent caution with regard to sharing personal information and opinions with the group.

Interpreting silence

It is not a new phenomenon that (forced) migrants remain silent, especially when interacting with state authorities, psychologists, social workers and researchers (e.g. Chase 2009; Ghorashi 2008; Kohli 2006). In one study (Kohli 2006), social workers identified several reasons for unaccompanied refugee children's reluctance to talk about their past: Firstly, children may be silent due to trauma and grief. Secondly, children may be silent because they have been told by others to keep to themselves

certain personal information believed to jeopardize the children's asylum claim or put their families at risk. Thirdly, children may remain silent about their past if they are too concerned about their present or future (Kohli 2006, p. 714).

With regard to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in the United Kingdom, Elaine Chase argues that children's 'selective disclosure' derives from "a desire to retain a degree of agency" in the face of constant scrutiny and surveillance by immigration officials, social workers and other actors (Chase 2009, p. 3). This point resembles the argument that silence can be an expression of functional distrust, used as a means of maintaining integrity "in a potentially hostile encounter" (Kohli 2006, p. 712).

The overlap between silence and functional distrust as a precautionary measure as suggested by Ravi K. S. Kohli becomes apparent in the following situation: One day several participants stated in a group conversation that they would prefer being in their home country than in South Africa. When questioned why he came to South Africa and stayed there if he would rather be at home, one participant responded that he was there 'for school'. Apparently alerted by this response, another participant subsequently asked: "This stuff we talk here, you gonna go and tell South Africans?" His concern that we, the facilitators, might tell South Africans that participants are here for a particular reason, such as education, shows that he was not completely sure how much he could trust us or the other group members. His reaction also indicates that he perceived the other participant's response as inappropriate and possibly dangerous if passed on to South Africans. This in turn suggests that he had been advised that education is not recognized as a reason to be in South Africa and that he should therefore avoid mentioning it.

This incident was significant as it allowed for the conclusion that there may be other issues that participants preferred to keep to themselves for 'functional' reasons. While Kohli referred to refugees remaining silent concerning their past, participants in this project also hesitated to share personal thoughts and information about their present situation. One participant, for example, avoided telling the others that she was not attending school. This functional distrust towards each other stood in contrast to the caring attitude and friendships that had developed between participants.

In addition to the reasons mentioned above, I suggest that in some cases participants' silence derived from an attempt to portray a particular image towards their new friends, an image that was free of weaknesses, failures and vulnerabilities. Linked to this,

some participants' silence probably derived from the challenge of expressing themselves in English. As mentioned in the previous section, language was a challenge. Since translations were often complicated, English remained the principal language of communication in the project. This brought the group's linguistic inequality to the forefront and ultimately impeded the type of verbal dialogue and exchange proposed by Boal. Nevertheless, theatre-based research offers alternative means to communicate effectively, as the following discussion demonstrates.

Silence as a reflective space

Moving beyond the perception of silence as an impediment of research, I suggest that a different, more positive view of participants' silence can bring new insights into the opportunities and effects of drama. In order to do this I will draw on the use of theatre as a form of therapy. Without training or knowledge in psychology, I have been careful to refrain from conceptualizing this project as therapeutic. Nevertheless, I believe it is pertinent to draw a brief comparison between Theatre of the Oppressed and drama therapy here since both techniques aim at 'liberating' individuals. One perceives liberation in the sense of raising consciousness about issues of oppression, the other perceives liberation in the sense of healing from past trauma.

While both techniques rely on dialogue and story-telling, drama therapy seems to attribute a particular value to silence as a necessary reflective space that complements explicit verbal communication. In reference to the *Children of War* project in which five young refugees in the United States created a play about their experiences, Yuko Kurahashi explains:

> *The central method used in this project – telling stories – is the very core strategy that is used in narrative therapy. […] Silence is also a vital component. Traumatized children cannot be pushed to verbalize; they must be given the space and safety to do so, and until they are ready, their silence has to be respected. (Kurahashi 2013, p. 255)*

Chapter 3.3 raised a similar point about the need to respect silences. Specifically, it discussed that the recounting of stories can lead to emotionally charged 'situations of crisis'. While Boal suggests that such situations are necessary, others argue that it is the researcher's responsibility to avoid provoking such crises (Boal 1979; Conrad 2006). Drawing on Michel Foucault's argument that silence and secrecy "provide for (…) areas of tolerance" (Foucault 1978, p. 101), Kurahashi submits that silence constitutes a space that allows people to "suspend their immediate reactions to others, and where they can reflect on their positions and power relations" (Kurahashi 2013, p. 256). According to this understanding, allowing silence to take place can prevent

emotional upheaval. Following from this, I submit that respecting participants' silences in theatre-based research is a duty of relational ethics as discussed in chapter 2.1.2. According to this notion, I encouraged participants to speak and engage and simultaneously honoured their silences by respecting their choice not to respond or participate.

So far, the discussion has explicitly referred to 'verbal silence'. The notion of 'verbal silence' infers that people hesitate to express themselves through speaking, but that they may be vocal in expressing themselves through other means such as writing, dancing, singing or acting. The following section elaborates on this point.

Alternative forms of communication

Due to the realization that participants' silences were 'verbal silences' I consciously created opportunities that enabled participants to express themselves in alternative ways. These alternatives included confidential writing exercises, drama improvisations, drawings and confidential video recordings. While video recordings also rely on verbal communication, the difference to direct personal conversation is that recordings can be made confidentially, only involving the participant and the camera.

These additional techniques allowed participants to use language in a way they felt most comfortable in or to communicate altogether through non-verbal means. The following three examples demonstrate how these techniques enabled participants to both reflect and express their thoughts and feelings without the need to verbally tell their stories to the whole group. All three examples are also expressions of the way in which theatre-based research allows embodied knowledge to surface.

The first example refers to one participant who was always very reluctant to speak in group conversations. He never shared his personal opinion about anything and usually only responded to questions directed at the group with 'yes' and 'no'. One day participants were asked to write down a dream they had had the previous night. When he did not want to write down anything on paper, we suggested that he could record his dream on video. The result was a strikingly personal account of a dream he had had about his parents. On camera he explained that his parents had passed away when he was small and that he misses them a lot, that he feels lonely and dreams of having a good girlfriend with whom to have a family. The fact that he decided to record this highly sensitive personal message on video shows the importance of offering such alternative and confidential spaces for expression. The result furthermore indicates

that a video camera can at times function as a mediating tool that takes away the immediacy of a personal conversation while nevertheless allowing for direct and confidential communication.

The described incident had further implications for the concerned participant. In the opening scene of the final performance, all participants made a one-line statement that expressed a dream they had for their future. While most participants made statements concerning their future profession such as “I want to be a model” or “I want to be a professor”, this participant said “I want a big family”. The example shows that he used the different opportunities provided by the project to express his pain and his hopes in a way he felt comfortable. Considering that he had previously never spoken about his personal thoughts and feelings in front of the group, the fact that he shared his dream of having a big family in public is significant.

The second example refers to participants’ feelings towards their families at home. In drama improvisations and confidential writing exercises participants had repeatedly mentioned their absent families. In conversations with the whole group, however, most participants never explicitly expressed any feelings concerning their families. One day, a participant who usually did not speak in joint group conversations, mentioned in a small group discussion that he missed his family. The other group members shared his sentiment and the group decided to portray this feeling through a scene in which a boy wakes up at night crying for his mother. This scene was eventually included in the final performance.[33]

The third example also refers to the significance participants attributed to their families and how the research process allowed this sentiment to surface. After the end of the project a social worker spoke to me about a child in her care who had participated in the project. She said that the child had for years been reluctant to speak about his family, but that he had recently for the first time told her that he missed them and that he would like to get in touch with them. Due to the child’s wish, family tracing efforts in his home country were then started and resulted in the reinitiating of contact with his family after more than six years of separation. The social worker attributed the boy’s ability to both acknowledge and express these feelings concerning his family directly to his participation in this project.

[33] See Act 2 of the final performance entitled ‘Missing home’ and corresponding photographs of the scene in chapter 5.1.

The three examples illustrate how theatre-based research creates spaces in which participants feel comfortable in sharing personal thoughts and feelings. They also show that the different opportunities of communicating through non-verbal means allow embodied knowledge to surface. Despite the language and trust-related challenges discussed above I therefore conclude that theatre is conducive to conducting research with (forced) migrant children.

The following section examines how issues of respect and discipline affected the project. Following Punch's advice introduced in chapter 2.1.2, I will draw on my field diaries to analyse how my role as facilitator and researcher affected my perception and handling of disciplinary challenges.

4.3.3 Respect and discipline

According to Boal, games and dialogue must be governed by discipline and clear rules (Boal 1979; International Theatre of the Oppressed Organisation, n.d.). In this project, however, I avoided setting up rules as this would have reinforced my position of power. In order to honour participants' ownership of the process I applied a facilitation approach that maintained a relatively flat hierarchy. While the facilitators gave instructions for exercises and activities and usually guided the group conversations, this approach implied, for example, that we did not 'punish' participants if they did not comply with our instructions. Instead, it was up to them to comply or to refuse to participate or even to disturb the process.

Since disruption was common in the first two workshops, we asked participants to determine rules that would establish an environment in which everyone would be able to work well together. In the third workshop, participants therefore came up with the following list of rules:

1. Everyone must be on time
2. Respect each other
3. No fighting
4. Talk when it's your turn
5. No disruption
6. No swearing
7. Do not pick up phones during workshop periods
8. Facilitators must be here before us

9. No eating during workshops

Despite these rules, however, certain behaviour patterns impeded the group from working in a way that I felt was necessary in order to achieve the results I was aiming for. As such, participants often had side conversations while someone else was talking, they made jokes and rude comments about others, interrupted others by commenting, laughing or giggling, they spontaneously retreated from a group conversation or refused to participate in activities. The following extract from my ethnographic notes gives an idea of the dynamics in the fourth workshop:

> *(Participant 1) was particularly difficult as she ran outside several times shouting that her father had arrived in a car.*[34] *This distracted the group immensely, annoyed some and didn't allow for a proper work process. (…) (The same participant) kept misbehaving, she didn't want to participate in certain games, particularly the trust-circle game (…). She left the circle saying that she wasn't strong enough to hold anyone, then sat on stage with her back to the hall and put her earplugs in. I called her after a few moments and encouraged her to trust her own strength.*
> *Later on we did an energy and warming up game: standing in a circle we shook hands and arms and then had to jump in the air. (Participants 1 and 2) refused to do it. (Participant 1) said she was cold and couldn't jump. Then we played a catch and run game and (participant 2) started making a scene after one minute, went to the side and said someone had pushed her, that she didn't want to continue, so the game was stopped. On other occasions she often started laughing and nobody really knew why (sometimes because of a language issue, because someone didn't understand or because she is too shy and embarrassed), it was uncomfortable and very distracting for everyone.*
> *(Participant 3) was also a problem. (…) in the first hour (he) had sworn a lot (which upset participant 4) and even said "all Muslims are evil" which then caused a scene between several children, himself and some others denying that he had said it and others accusing him of having said it. (author's notes, 6 July 2014)*

Some participants who enjoyed engaging in serious conversations and were interested in sharing and discussing their thoughts in the group became increasingly frustrated when activities and conversations were interrupted by disruptive behaviour and a lack of respect by others. At one point I therefore considered whether it would be beneficial for the group to exclude certain particularly disruptive participants. The following extract from my notes speaks to this dilemma:

[34] The same participant had told me on previous occasions that her father is not alive and on other occasions that he lives in another country. It was therefore highly unlikely that she was waiting for his arrival. Considering this, her behaviour of repeatedly running outside to look for her father seemed merely aimed at calling for attention and/or at disturbing the workshop activities.

> *It is a very tricky situation and I don't know how to handle it yet. Would it be ethical to exclude them? Is it on the other hand ethical to let them impact the project negatively and contribute to the silence of other children who would otherwise like to share more personal thoughts with the group? (author's notes, 13 August 2014)*

I finally decided that it would be both unethical towards individuals and damaging for the group to exclude participants. However, since the general frustration among participants concerning the lack of respect increased, I suggested to build on the initially drafted rules by adding new points of concern. As a result, participants came up with the following additional agreement:

1. Everyone must participate
2. If you want to come you can come and if you don't want to come it is your decision to stop
3. If you are here you must stay and participate and leave when done
4. Facilitators should be more strict
5. Don't take anything personal

Given that the agreement was meant as a means for participants to discipline themselves, their demand made under point 4, that the facilitators should be stricter, seems contradictory. Participants' perception and expectation that discipline should be enforced by someone in a position of power may derive from an educational approach prevalent across Africa (Twum-Danso 2009). According to this, children "are not expected to challenge adults and certainly, not expected to question what they are told to do. (…) For those children who disobey and disrespect their parents, severe consequences await" (ibid., p. 420f).

This understanding of discipline was also confirmed by participants' recurring reference to the need to respect and listen to elders. In various improvised role plays, for example, they portrayed grandparents giving their opinion and advice about their grandchildren's choice of profession. In these scenes the elders usually fulfilled the role of absent or deceased parents and often emphasised the importance of education over the pursuit of certain dreams like becoming a singer or dancer. Participants' belief in the respect for elders, however, did not lead them to consistently follow my own or the facilitators' instructions.

Participants' continued disrespect towards their fellow participants and the facilitators during group activities and conversations leads me to suggest that their behaviour may

have been a strategy to avoid being questioned themselves. If this was the case, disrespect can be interpreted as a symptom of their functional distrust towards the group. Furthermore, participants may have simply enjoyed the liberty of behaving freely in the presence of adults without being disciplined or punished. As mentioned above, the workshops provided a unique space in which participants' own rules were almost the only restrictions imposed on them. This situation stood in stark contrast to their daily lives which were framed by rules that restricted their movements, their sense of freedom and expression. The following chapter will show that undocumented migrant children not only need to comply with a number of rules at home and at school, but also, in order to ensure their own safety, in public spaces.

My interpretation of participants' behaviour patterns as challenging within the context of a theatre-based project corresponds to Saldaña's experience that "competitive playground politics and gender socialization" impede the success of Theatre of the Oppressed techniques when applied with children (Saldaña 2005b, p. 131f). The above mentioned scenarios of workshop activities being interrupted by participants often left me feeling drained, frustrated and concerned about the development of the project. As the following excerpt shows, this derived from the pressure to succeed in collecting enough relevant data within the limited time frame of the project:

> *In addition to the challenging group dynamics, I think that my sense of frustration is linked to the pressure of being successful, finding responses to my research questions about the children's experiences etc. and of getting the group to a stage in which they openly discuss and reflect on their experiences. I realized that my list of questions may be too ambitious, certainly in the time frame of three months. I realize that weekly meetings over three months is not enough to get to a stage in which the group will feel comfortable and able to reflect consciously on these questions, and to raise issues they want to discuss. In fact I even realize that this idea, this plan, of them raising issues of concern to them, then analysing them and collectively turning them into a play, probably won't work. It won't work because of the short time frame, because of the language barrier (though I don't think this is the main hindrance), because they are not ready to dig into nor to share personal experiences, feelings, concerns related to their present, past or future. (author's notes, 17 July 2014)*

This excerpt shows that my perception of group dynamics and participants' behaviour as challenging and draining derived from the pressure I felt in succeeding in achieving my own research aims within a limited time frame. It is possible that a stricter facilitation approach geared towards enforcing discipline would have reduced the amount of frustration and exhaustion I felt after the workshop sessions. At the same

time, however, it would have defeated an important aim of the project, namely to assure participants' ownership of the process. Reflecting on my own pressures also led me to understand that participants had different motivations for engagement in this project. Building on these insights, the following section demonstrates how the self-discipline required from participants to build trust and overcome challenges contributed to their sense of ownership over the project.

The previous sections have shown that a number of challenges such as differing language skills and issues of trust and respect impeded a dialogic exchange as envisioned by Freire and Boal. In a linear logic, this would mean that participants' consciousness was not raised. However, participants' performances as well as their written and oral contributions showed that they were already highly conscious of the various forms of oppression they face. According to Theatre of the Oppressed, individuals, once conscious of their oppression, can adopt actions that will trigger political change. In this study, however, participants' oppression was rooted in the law and in societal attitudes, making behavioural change or community action unlikely to trigger the necessary socio-political transformation.

With regard to such situations that require legislative change in order to improve, chapter 3.2 introduced the technique of Legislative Theatre (Boal 1988). Boal invented Legislative Theatre in a situation of unique circumstances, when he was holding a position of political power as a legislator of the Rio de Janeiro city council (Boal 1988). Having been elected to this position meant that he enjoyed a broad base of support both inside and outside the local government at the time. Furthermore, his theatre work involved citizens who were represented by the city council and who were potential voters in the next election. In contrast to that situation, participants of this project were non-citizens without any voting power in South Africa. Due to anti-immigrant attitudes across the society, policy-makers are also not willing to act in favour of migrant children. For these reasons Legislative Theatre was not a feasible option to engage in as part of this project.

Given that successful dialogic exchange was impeded and legislative theatre unfeasible, I conclude from this analysis that this study did not reach the kind of liberation proposed by Theatre of the Oppressed and applied theatre more generally. As the next section will illustrate, however, the study was nevertheless reciprocal in various ways.

4.4 Reciprocity

This study was based on the assumption that a theatre-based research approach is capable of meeting the demands put forward in the 'triple imperative': Apart from producing academic knowledge, (forced) migration research should comply with enhanced ethics standards and produce policy relevant results. Building on the previous two sections, this section takes the analysis of the ethical achievements of this project further. By reviewing the arguments raised in chapter 2 with regard to reciprocity and applying them to this case study, the analysis leads to the conclusion that participation in this study resulted in material, educational and affective benefits for participants.

4.4.1 Material and educational reciprocity

In discussing the concept of reciprocity, chapter 2.1.3 argued that ethical research involves being conscious of participants' material needs (Aidani 2013). Related to this it referred to arguments that reciprocity includes providing material benefits to participants (e.g. Swartz 2011) and that 'giving' needs to take place in a responsible way by being aware of the power imbalances at stake (Lammers 2007). This section demonstrates how this project met these responsibilities.

To begin with, I compensated participants for their monetary expenses by covering their transport costs related to attending the workshops. As a further way of compensating participants' time, I provided snacks and drinks at all workshops and lunch at the full-day workshops. At the end of the project participants were awarded individualised attendance certificates which specified the number of hours they had spent attending the workshops and the skills they had acquired.[35] Participants also received a CD with selected photographs of the workshops and a video recording of the final performance. Rather than constituting actual reciprocal benefits, however, these were merely small gestures to express my appreciation and gratitude for participants' engagement.

As also pointed out in chapter 2.1.3, a number of scholars argue that (forced) migration research should produce educational benefits (Mackenzie, McDowell and Pittaway 2007; Pittaway, Bartolomei and Hugman 2010). In this study, I had not aimed at educating participants. On the contrary, I considered them to be the experts who

[35] See the attendance certificate on p.153.

could teach me about their experiences. Nevertheless, the data analysis shows that the project resulted in a number of educational benefits.

First of all, frequent group and informal conversations as well as the various theatre activities such as improvisation and role play led several participants to improve their English skills. This was particularly noticeable with regard to some participants who initially struggled to express themselves in English and requested translations, but were able to hold fluent conversations later on in the project. In some cases, this change was probably related to participants being shy at the beginning and gaining more confidence to speak as the project progressed. However, even if this was the case, it is legitimate to conclude that their increased confidence ultimately contributed to improving their English skills. For one participant the project furthermore led to an opportunity to improve her basic literacy skills. Whilst her spoken English was fluent, she struggled significantly in reading and writing. For this reason I facilitated her attendance of individual literacy classes outside of the project. At the end of the project she gave me a handwritten card expressing her gratitude.

Participants also gained social and communication skills that enabled them to express their opinion, work in a team and manage conflicts in the group. The variety of theatre-based activities also allowed participants to acquire a number of drama skills such as speaking in front of an audience, miming and improvising. When we introduced mime and voice exercises early on in the project, many participants felt shy and uncomfortable. To mitigate their discomfort, we kept the time individual actors spent on stage very short. Usually even the shortest exposure on stage presented a moment of success when the audience applauded the performed task. A comparison of video records of earlier to later workshops clearly demonstrated the development of participants' confidence and performance skills. The following feedback from one participant illustrates her appreciation that the drama activities increased her self-confidence:

> *What I also liked about the project was […] I'm a very shy person, so basically I built a little bit of confidence, you know, when we were acting on stage, because usually I just do poetry, but like silent poetry, I just write, I don't say it on stage and I think this helped me a lot. […] improvising, being able to speak loud enough so that people can hear you.*

Attending the workshops, however, also involved a number of challenges. Many participants, for example, had to travel long distances to the centre of Cape Town.

Since public transport is scarce on Sundays some participants had to get up very early to make it to the workshop on time. Despite the long trip, some used to arrive one or two hours ahead of the scheduled start of the workshop. Their enthusiasm illustrates the significance they attributed to the project.

Apart from the time and distance, the trip also constituted a security risk as trains and minibus taxis as well as public spaces and streets are not very frequented at weekends, making those who are out easy targets of petty crime and gangsterism. One day, for example, one participant arrived late because his bus had been stoned and stopped by vandals on its way to Cape Town.

In addition, many participants sacrificed other Sunday activities and commitments in favour of attending the workshops. Several participants mentioned on occasions that their caregivers had wanted them to stay at home in order to help or to join particular family activities planned for that day. The following quote illustrates one such situation:

> *This morning they woke me up because everyone went to the beach and they would have locked me in. So I left even without breakfast to come here while everyone else went to the beach.*

In another case, a participant's caregiver had suggested that he use the transport money I had given him for the project to play in a soccer match the previous day. Only having transport money for one day, he chose to prioritize the workshop on Sunday over his responsibilities towards his soccer team, thereby missing out on the match on Saturday.

The hurdles and sacrifices related to attending the workshops as well as the aforementioned challenges concerning verbal communication, trust, respect and discipline trigger the question as to what motivated participants' dedication and commitment to this project. As argued above, the material and educational benefits that resulted from the project were hardly comprehensive enough to have warranted the degree of commitment and dedication displayed by the participants. Furthermore, the project did not generate a socio-political transformation that would have changed oppressive structures or alleviated participants' daily struggles in a significant way. In search of a response to this question, the next two subsections take a closer look at the way in which participants experienced their participation in the project.

4.4.2 Ownership

One of the aims in terms of research ethics had been to acknowledge participants' agency by ensuring that they maintained ownership of their participation. As mentioned in section 4.3.2, a lack of mutual respect and discipline sometimes impeded the productive working that I had envisioned. Participants' reflections at the end of the project, recorded in individual video messages, reveal their awareness that the group building process had constituted an effort:

> *When we started off […], some people would be talking when they were not spoken to […]. We lacked respect as a group, you know, we lacked discipline at the same time as well. But that's not the point because at the end we became tighter and we felt comfortable around each other and the discipline, everything was on point, even though it was not on on [sic] point, but like, we were focused.*

Participants' statements also reveal, however, that mastering these efforts ultimately resulted in a sense of ownership, achievement and pride:

> *What I liked about this project was that we reached the end. We reached what we wanted to do, we finished what we wanted to do and we got through the challenge of getting to know each other and all those other things. What I did not like about the project was that some people did not cooperate and some kept misbehaving and […] some of us thought that we could not get [to] the end of this project, but some people kept their hopes up and at the end people started cooperating and the project became a success.*

Another participant, who had at times been frustrated with the group dynamics, expressed at the end: "what I liked about this project, we did all work together as a team (…) we did work, we did perform, we did participate, we did achieve. I'm [feeling] great we finished with no mistakes."

The quotes illustrate that participants' sense of achievement and pride was closely linked to the final performance. Due to the significance they attributed to that performance in terms of their overall valorisation of the project, I will briefly reflect on the meaning of the performance in more detail. A public performance is a relevant component of theatre-based research. Data can be represented in a performative way and audience responses can give further insight into how a particular phenomenon is perceived. In this project, however, I had considered the performance more as a side product to the actual process than a goal that needed to be achieved. This was because the principal aim of the study was to explore participants' perspectives, not the audience's, and because I did not want the project to be affected by participants' fears or ambitions regarding an upcoming public performance. As the time passed,

however, it became clear that the majority of participants were keen to perform in front of a bigger audience.

As mentioned in chapter 1.3, in accordance with the participatory project approach, the group eventually devised a play. The play represented themes that had come up during the project and were of significance for participants, such as discrimination, fear and the meaning of family. In the days leading up to the performance, the two facilitators and myself acted as directors, yet participants also continued suggesting how the scenes could be improved or modified. Participants also chose the title for the performance: *Innocent Voices*. This title speaks to participants' perception that they are being criminalized and discriminated against for something they are not guilty of. It also emphasises that the performance represents their own voices.

'Innocent Voices' – The Play

Based on the participatory data analysis described in Chapter I, the final performance presented a summary of the themes that had come up during the course of the project. The play consisted of four main acts that were framed by an opening and a closing scene. The play portrayed a group of school-aged children who arrive in a foreign place at the end of a long journey. There, their paths separate. Each of them goes their own way and encounters different challenges. At the end of the play the children meet again.

All scenes portrayed characters of a foreign nationality who experience a particular situation that ends with a setback for the characters, leaving them in a state of victimhood and without a solution to their situation. The sadness and desperation of the performance scenes were reinforced by dramatic music. The performance relied principally on physical movement, facial expressions and body language. It also included some short monologues and dialogues, recited by the actors from memory or improvised. While the stories originated from personal experiences, the portrayed scenes were not attributed to any particular person or specific incident. Since the play was devised in a participatory way and relied on participants' improvisations, the following script was put into writing after the performance. The indicated 'messages' refer to the original starting point from which participants had devised the scene. The statements derived from the participatory data analysis referred to in chapter 1.

Opening scene

Part 1. Sad music. All actors enter one by one and disperse themselves on stage. One by one they say a sentence each:

Last night I had a beautiful dream – I was the best scientist – I was a good father – I was professor – I was a singer – I was a model - I had a big family – place of no return – superstar (…) – comedian – billionaire – actress.

All actors go to the back of the stage. They start singing a song in French. One by one they say something: *I need to be loved – My heart is not here - I want to belong*. As they continue repeating these sentences all actors come to the front line of the stage and say their names one by one.

They disperse again and stand in a formation that indicates that they are passengers in a train. One character starts telling his story: *I was walking. I met the police on my way. They asked me about my papers and I told them that I don't have papers.* He starts coughing heavily but continues talking. *I remember they took me to the police station and I didn't have…*The character eventually collapses due to exhaustion and pain. Two persons carry him away.

Part 2. Sad music. Five actors enter the stage. They slowly walk round in a circle, each carrying something. They all look exhausted. As they reach the end of their journey they hug each other to wish each other good luck for what will come next as this is the end of their joint journey and their paths now separate. All but one exit the stage.

Act 1 – Mekasi's story

Message: "I am scared to get arrested because I don't have a document" & "My biggest challenge is that I don't have papers"

A boy, Mekasi, has arrived in a foreign place after a long journey. He looks physically exhausted. As he looks around he is stopped and searched by the police. He doesn't have papers and gets taken to the police office. The police boss searches him and insults him verbally. He eventually lets Mekasi go, giving him five days to return with his papers in order. As the boy leaves the police office a gangster approaches him.

They have a brief verbal interaction in which the gangster demands money. The scene ends as the gangster stabs the boy so that he falls to the ground.

Figure 8 – Scene ‘Mekasi’s Story’ (final performance) (photograph by Lena S. Opfermann)

Acts 2 ‘Missing home’ and Act 3 ‘Model Agency’ are presented and discussed in detail in chapters 5.1.1 and 5.3.1 respectively.

Act 4 – On the train

Message: “Sometimes I feel that I don’t belong here”

Several persons are waiting on a platform for the train to arrive. Three of them communicate in Gibberish language about the delay of the train, one girl seems shy and says nothing. The train arrives and they get on the train. Two passengers start commenting on the girl’s appearance. She is confused and says in English that she does not understand what the others are saying. When they realize that the girl does

not understand them they get angry. One man approaches the girl and starts intimidating her. When the train stops he grabs her bag and throws it out of the train. The girl gets up angrily and leaves the train. The other passengers laugh at her.

Figure 9 – Scene ‘On the train’ (photograph by Lena S. Opfermann)

Closing scene

Sad music. After going through their different experiences all characters meet again on stage. They are happy to see each other. Mekasi is so weak that he almost collapses and needs to be supported by two others. All actors approach the front of the stage in one line. They bow to indicate the end of the performance and happy music starts to play.

The final event took place on Saturday the 11th of October 2014 in the hall of the Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town. In order to create a more festive atmosphere that would distinguish the space from the normal workshops, I had decorated the hall with the help of some volunteers. I had also put up an exhibition of selected photographs and significant quotes from the workshops and the play.

Figure 10 – Photo exhibition accompanying the final performance (photograph by Lena S. Opfermann)

The event was well attended by an audience of around 60 people, consisting of participants' relatives and friends as well as staff, volunteers and friends of the Scalabrini Centre. Unfortunately not all participants' caregivers attended the show; some were unable to come due to work commitments, others were probably not interested and one participant had explicitly told her sister not to come, a decision she later regretted. The event closed with a celebration for which I provided snacks and drinks and where the audience had a chance to talk to each other as well as to the actors.

Figure 11 – The audience during the final performance (photograph by Lena S. Opfermann)

Although, or perhaps because, the performance developed organically due to participants' explicit interest in performing in public, its meaning both for participants and for the project as a whole turned out to be significant. First of all, the performance gave the project a purpose that was shared and supported by the participants. As mentioned previously, many participants did not fully comprehend the research component of the project. By creating a specific goal to work towards, the performance took away some of this uncertainty and gave the project a new meaning.

Furthermore, the performance and the event surrounding it symbolised the closure of the project. Others have highlighted that it can be ethically challenging to end qualitative research projects in which researchers and participants have developed friendship-like relationships (Abebe and Bessell 2014, p. 130). Stopping or breaking contact after months of intense work can be a disappointing and trust-breaking experience for participants who may feel left alone or abandoned by a person they have begun to trust. As Abebe and Bessell point out, this is particularly relevant with regard to children who have previously experienced abandonment or parental loss (Abebe and Bessell 2014). In this regard the authors suggest that "an ethic of care requires (…) ensuring children have a sense of when the researcher will leave and whether he or she will return or stay in contact" (ibid., p. 130).

In this project, the final performance constituted a clear end point that everyone was aware of and worked towards by rehearsing the scenes. While participants were regretful at the end that the project was over and expressed their wish to continue, the final performance and the event surrounding it mitigated the mentioned ‘separation challenges’ at least to a certain extent. Above all, however, the performance significantly contributed to creating participants’ feeling of ownership, pride and achievement. As previously mentioned, participants devised the scenes themselves and chose a title for the performance. They could therefore call the play ‘their own’. Mastering unexpected challenges in preparing for the performance, such as substituting actors who did not show up for the final rehearsals, further contributed to the sense of achievement.

Other important assertions of participants’ ownership came to light during the performance: Instead of maintaining anonymity by using their stage names or their characters’ names as previously rehearsed, all actors chose to present themselves to the audience with their real names. In addition, participants disobeyed the directors’ instructions concerning the performance dress code at a crucial point when they exposed themselves to the public. By appearing on stage with additional pieces of clothing such as sunglasses and caps, participants showed that they were in charge of the performance and thereby of the end product of this project.

Following the performance, all actors agreed to sit on stage and respond to a question and answer session moderated by one of the actors. In so doing, they presented themselves unmistakably as the ‘experts’ of their own lives, and as ‘the authority that owned the stage’ (see Thompson 2009, p. 183 on a similar situation). In a further act of public recognition, they were then awarded their attendance certificates. Beyond the meaning of the certificates as small tokens of material reciprocity, this public award ‘ceremony’ contributed to participants’ sense of accomplishment and pride on that day.

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE
in the DRAMA-BASED RESEARCH PROJECT

Using drama to explore migrant children's views

Attending a total of 105 hours of workshop activities has allowed

_____

to acquire improvisation, miming, characterisation, acting and creative writing skills.
His/Her participation was invaluable for the success of this project.

June - October 2014, Cape Town

Lena Sophia Opfermann
Project manager/PhD researcher,
University of York (UK)

Figure 12 – Attendance certificate for participants

The performance additionally gained particular relevance with regard to participants' legal status. As the following chapter will elaborate, participants' legal status usually compels them to 'hide' and to 'blend in' in public in order to avoid being identified as undocumented migrants. By exposing themselves as actors on stage and responding to questions from a public audience, participants 'broke' these restrictions and fears that surround them in their daily lives.

The question of costumes

Leading up to the performance, the question of costumes was highly contentious. Many participants had been displaying a high level of self-consciousness concerning their appearance throughout the course of the project, coming to the workshops dressed in elegant and fashionable clothes. While in some cases this may have been due to participants attending Sunday church services prior to the workshop, others are likely to have dressed up specifically for the occasion of the workshop. Several of the female participants had also previously worked as fashion models and aimed at entering the fashion or entertainment industry. The question of what clothes and makeup they were going to wear for the final performance had therefore been a recurring conversation topic. Both female and male participants were furthermore keen

to have their hair done before the performance and were hoping that I would cover the costs for that.

The project budget, however, did not allow me to pay for doing their hair or to purchase or rent individual costumes for each character. To deal with this dilemma, the facilitator and I decided to use conventional school uniforms as costumes. The rationale was that the uniforms would create an equality between actors and thereby avoid a competitive situation. The uniforms were furthermore supposed to represent the fact that the performed stories were told and experienced by children. From a logistical point of view, the uniforms were easy to organise as most of the participants had their own and some missing pieces could easily be borrowed through personal contacts.

One participant, who had not been attending school since her arrival in South Africa the previous year, was initially excited at the prospect of wearing a uniform on stage. Most other participants, however, were not happy with that choice. It reminded them of school and represented nothing special, some said they would feel embarrassed to appear on stage in a school uniform. As a consequence of their frustration, some participants refused to continue rehearsing two days before the final performance. Since it was not feasible to reverse the costume decision at that point, however, participants eventually had no choice but to wear the uniforms.

In hindsight I admit that the question of costumes was possibly the only time we deliberately and consciously used our power as facilitators to impose a decision on the participants against their will. Considering their unhappiness concerning this decision, I admit that this situation constituted a failure in terms of the participatory facilitation approach used throughout the rest of the project. Having said that, participants managed to 'reverse' our imposed decision to a certain extent by appearing on stage with additional pieces of clothing and accessories such as sunglasses and hats. Chapter 4.3.2 and 4.4.2 refer to these spontaneous actions against the directors' instructions as an example that demonstrated participants' ownership over the process.

4.4.3 Affective reciprocity

In addition to the sense of purpose, achievement and ownership that the final performance generated, participants enjoyed the project because they were happy to

see their friends whom they started considering as family. The following messages, recorded individually and confidentially by participants in our last meeting, illustrate this:

> *Ok, the first time they [the others] were talking and laughing too much and I was like 'agh, I don't like people who laugh too much', but then, you know, I got used to them and wow, we became so close that you could say we are family because it felt as if we were family.*

Similarly, the following participant appreciated the support and advice he received by his new friends:

> *We became a family. All of us together we became a family. We became interested in each other, respecting each other, anything like that. Like this other time I like tried to get a girlfriend that came here and then these other two, […], they were like pressuring me 'go get the girl, go get the girl' […], they are just like big brothers, they tell me I should go get her and that I mustn't be scared. So at the end of the day, I got the girl.*

The sense of family was also fostered and expressed by some participants who started calling the facilitators 'mama' and 'papa' at some point during the project. The association and perception of the group as a 'family' is remarkable, especially since participants did not know much about each other's backgrounds. As most participants were separated from their own parents, I suggest that the notion of family speaks to a longing for their own family and a place of belonging. Importantly, it also indicates that the project provided a space where participants were able to develop such friendships. For many, this project was probably the first and only space where all participants shared having a foreign nationality and the same undocumented legal status and were not discriminated or singled out because of it. I suggest that these commonalities created the sense of family and belonging that participants referred to.

In addition to this, participants' feedback clearly indicates that they enjoyed the project because they had fun engaging in the different activities, joking around and simply spending time together. These positive experiences are illustrated in participants' repeated referral to laughter in relation to the project. One day, for example, one participant commented in a group conversation: 'Sometimes when I'm at home I think about the workshop and then I just start laughing.' In response to this, several other participants confirmed that they also started laughing at any given time during the week when they thought about the workshops and the fun they had there. Similarly, after the project, one participant said to me that 'now there won't be any more laughter on Sundays'.

The association of the project with laughter and the meaning thereof is worth exploring a little further. Educational scientists Joris Vlieghe et al., for example, describe communal laughter as a shared experience of 'ultimate self-loss' (Vlieghe, Simons and Masschelein 2010). Specifically, they argue that in communal laughter "we passively succumb to a corporeal experience that makes any position or identity meaningless" (ibid., p. 734). In other words, "in communal laughter the only thing that matters is that *we are flesh*" (ibid., p. 729, emphasis in original). This, they argue further, "is an equalizing experience that implies that everything could start anew" (ibid.). I suggest that this interpretation of laughter as an experience of 'equality' that allows for a new imagination of the future is particularly meaningful in the context of this project. Since participants are exposed to constant oppression and inequality due to their identity, the ability to experience a space in which they can laugh with others 'as equals' in both a literal and figurative sense is significant.

The following message similarly represents another participant's feeling of being at ease in the workshops:

> *I liked the different sectors, the different things we touched on about acting and drama and since I love drama so much it was really fun learning new things like improvisation, characterisation, voice and all of those, to speak loud […]. I liked the fact that I could show off my talent, my acting talent to some people here […]. And yeah, I liked it a lot coz* ***around them I don't feel shy at all, I just feel myself and it was really nice****. […] I really really enjoyed being in this workshop, I wish it could last longer, I really do, I had fun. (emphasis added)*

These reflections and expressions of appreciation as well as the association of the project with laughter, fun and joy indicate that the project provided a space where participants felt free and safe to express themselves and to be and behave the way they wanted to. Related to this I recall the argument made in in section 4.3.2 that the theatre-based process allowed participants to reflect and process personal thoughts and experiences. This was demonstrated in examples of participants who opened up about intimate feelings and one participant who decided to re-establish contact with his family after several years of separation.

Returning to the question of reciprocity, I therefore argue that even without the prospect of finding a solution that would have 'liberated' participants from the exclusion and discrimination they experience in South Africa, their participation in this theatre-based project improved their wellbeing in an immediate sense. This idea is reflected well in the following meaningful video message by one participant that I quote here at length:

> *What I liked about the project was interacting with foreign kids […]. Knowing their struggles are my struggles as well and sometimes I think when we are in a situation like this a lot of people don't understand, especially if they don't know about such situations. […] I would just like to thank [the facilitators] for their time and their effort and their hours they put in helping us to become confident, break the ice, helping some of us just discuss issues like Home Affairs, refugee status and passports and birth certificates, you know birth rights and you know, things that really affect us, that not all South Africans […] understand. […] I hope that we can have another opportunity, maybe some time we can do it across the borders, overseas, and just show them that foreign kids, we have feelings, we understand, some of us were born here, some of us came here, some of us escaped, some of us came here alone, no parents, nothing, but we try our best to make it work for us. And that's all we have, innocent voices.*

Born in South Africa to foreign parents, this participant is fully aware that changing her legal status is and will remain a challenge. Yet she expresses clearly the many ways in which she benefitted from participating in this project. She gained self-confidence, met persons with similar challenges, had the opportunity to discuss issues that mattered to her with people who listened and tried to understand her situation. And lastly, she points out her belief that drama can draw attention to her own plight and that of other migrant children.

As these reactions show, despite the seemingly sad and hopeless stories represented on stage, participants described the performance and the project as a whole as 'nice' and as something they enjoyed and were proud to have achieved. This apparent contradiction ties in with the argument that in performance "pain and beauty interrelate in complex ways" with the potential to either "stimulate further injury" or to become "an impetus in a search for justice" (Thompson 2006b, p. 56). While participants' performance of their 'pain' could therefore have resulted in 'further injury' for them, their experience of the performance proved to be entirely positive.

Following from this I argue that performing their own 'hopeless' situation ultimately translated into a form of hope that allowed for the imagination of a different reality and a better future. This point further confirms the argument that the real transformation in drama takes place through a series of 'affective transactions' like gestures, sounds and relationships rather than by providing solutions and raising consciousness through direct communication (Thompson 2009, p. 131). 'Affect' is thereby understood as "the bodily sensation that is sustained and provoked particularly by aesthetic experiences. It is the force that emerges from attention to pleasure, astonishment, joy, and beauty"

(ibid., p. 132). As such, affect can be triggered by engaging in or watching a performance, observing a situation or recalling a memory.

This section showed that the challenges experienced throughout the project ultimately produced an immense sense of achievement, pride and ownership. It also showed that participants loved the project because they were part of a team, they enjoyed acting and improvising, they laughed a lot, had fun participating in the activities, meeting friends, chatting, playing and simply 'hanging out' in a safe space. Based on this analysis I argue that the theatre process created an affective form of reciprocity which increased participants' immediate wellbeing.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the methodology of this case study in terms of ethical challenges and achievements. The principal aim of the analysis was to identify a response to the question in how far a theatre-based research approach to exploring migrant children's perspectives fulfils the demands for enhanced ethics standards in (forced) migration studies. After an analytical presentation of the activities implemented in the workshops in section 1 of the chapter, section 2 showed that research with undocumented migrants poses particular ethical challenges concerning written consent procedures. This is because from a legal perspective research with this population group could be considered as violating the law. In contrast to this I argued that research with undocumented migrant children constitutes an ethical duty and can therefore ultimately be considered a humanitarian act. I further suggested offering undocumented migrants the opportunity of signing consent forms anonymously or providing oral consent. The section also highlighted that the ethical responsibilities concerning visual data are more complex than generally acknowledged in conventional consent procedures. In order to address these challenges, I proposed applying a two-stage iterative consent process that differentiates between consent to collect and consent to represent data.

The third section analysed how far the preconditions for successful dialogic exchange were fulfilled in this study. The analysis showed firstly that verbal communication in the group was difficult due to linguistic inequalities. Secondly, it illustrated that storytelling in a group is not always as 'organic' a process as suggested by Norris and others. In this project, for example, many participants remained hesitant to share and discuss personal stories with the group despite caring for each others' wellbeing as friends. I suggested that participants' verbal silences derive from a variety of interrelated factors

such as trauma, functional distrust, language skills, as a means to maintain integrity or create a reflective space. I submitted that respecting participants' silences in theatre-based research is a duty of relational ethics as discussed in chapter 2.1.2. Due to the described circumstances, the preconditions for dialogic exchange as proclaimed by Freire and Boal were not met. The analysis also showed, however, that theatre offers various non-verbal means such as acting, confidential writing and video recording to communicate, express, reflect and process experiences. Following from this I argued that theatre is a suitable methodology for research with migrant children.

The fourth section of the chapter revealed that this study was reciprocal in several ways. In addition to a number of material and educational benefits, the study resulted above all in intangible affective benefits such as joy, pleasure, laughter, excitement and contemplation. Furthermore, it guaranteed participants' ownership throughout the research process.

The discussion undertaken in this chapter leads me to a two-fold conclusion. Firstly, theatre-based research poses particular challenges when applied with a diverse group of undocumented migrant children who do not know each other in advance. Secondly, I argue that despite these challenges, theatre fulfils enhanced ethics standards as it produces reciprocity and respects participants' ownership.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANT CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES IN SOUTH AFRICA

> *It turned out that the moment human beings lacked their own government and had to fall back upon their minimum rights, no authority was left to protect them and no institution was willing to guarantee them. […] [What was] supposedly inalienable, proved to be unenforceable.*
>
> *Hannah Arendt 1966, p. 291ff*

This study was conducted on the basis of the assumption that a better knowledge of undocumented migrant children's experiences and perceptions of their lives in South Africa can enhance advocacy and policy making. The ultimate aim in this regard was to contribute to reducing some of the challenges faced by undocumented migrant children in South Africa today. With this in mind, this chapter provides a response to the second and third principal research questions of this study: 2) How do undocumented migrant children in Cape Town experience their situation? 3) In which way are the results of theatre-based research (policy) relevant? In responding to these two questions this chapter shows that the study fulfils the two remaining demands of the triple imperative, namely to produce data that is academically sound and policy relevant.

The chapter comprises four sections, followed by a conclusion. Sections 5.1 – 5.3 provide a response to the second research question concerning participants' experiences. The analysis lays out in which way migrant children's lives are affected by the legal and policy inconsistencies and hostile societal attitudes discussed in chapter 1.2. Section 5.4 responds to the third research question by discussing the policy and ethical relevance of this study and of theatre-based research in general. A closer look at the data reveals that theatre enabled the production of in-depth insights that exceed existing knowledge on undocumented migrant children's experiences. Since these insights contribute to enhancing responses to the children's needs, I conclude that the results are policy relevant. Drawing on deontological thought and arts-based discourses I then argue in section 5.4.2 that the fundamental ethical and

aesthetic values of theatre-based research should not be considered as ‘decorative side effects’ but be recognized as equally relevant as its policy relevant results.

As in the previous chapter, all direct quotes and dialogues by participants derive from their oral, written and performative contributions to the workshops. For purposes of anonymity, participants’ stage names are used in all direct references.

5.1 Being unaccompanied – “I am responsible for myself”

In writing exercises, role plays, improvisations and group discussions participants expressed a feeling of loneliness and longing for their absent parents. At the same time, they transmitted a sense of adulthood and an acute awareness that they are in charge of their own lives. This section takes a closer look at these experiences while also considering the role of informal caregivers in guaranteeing unaccompanied and separated migrant children’s wellbeing.

5.1.1 Missing family

During the time of the study, most participants were living with an older sibling, uncle or aunt who, at the time of the children’s arrival in the country, already had their lives and families established in South Africa. As indicated in chapter 4.2.1, it is likely that these relatives constituted the reason why the children were sent to or decided to travel to South Africa as compared to any other country. Recognizing that participants have those family ties confirms the point raised in chapter 2.3.3 that children’s lives are always embedded in ‘communities of belonging and interdependencies’ (Meloni, Vanthuyne and Rousseau 2015), even when they are categorized as ‘separated children’ that appear to be ‘on their own’. Kinship care, a common concept in African societies (Assim 2013), can be described as creating such a ‘community of belonging’.

Nevertheless, the children’s integration into existing family networks poses practical and emotional challenges for both the families and the newly arrived children. One such challenge is access to education. As discussed in chapter 1, due to institutionalised xenophobia, South African schools are frequently unwilling to accommodate foreign children. In some cases, schools argue that they are full or do not accept children with insufficient English skills. For caregivers who may not be familiar with the legal provisions and the children’s right to basic education, negotiating the bureaucracies of school enrolment for an undocumented child with limited English skills thus presents a time-consuming and challenging process. As a consequence,

several participants were not attending school for extended periods of time. Education also involves costs for school fees, uniforms, transport and stationery, adding to other expenses such as the provision of food and clothing for the children that caregivers need to cover.

In addition to these material implications, the children's integration into their new families is characterised by emotional challenges. In some cases, participants did not know their new caregivers before their arrival or had not seen them for many years. While most participants described the relationship with their caregivers as good, many also repeatedly reported having arguments and disagreements. Some said that their caregivers or other family members treated them disrespectfully or shouted at them without any obvious reason. In some cases, such tensions may be an expression of generally difficult teenage-adult relationships. In other cases, they may have been rooted in bigger issues related to the children's stay in South Africa. The following two examples illustrate the fragility of the informal care arrangements participants find themselves in. The first example points out how a participant was threatened by her caregiver to be 'sent back' to her home country.

Rebecca was born in the DRC and raised there by her grandmother whom she called 'mum'. After the grandmother's death Rebecca's biological mother became her primary caregiver. When Rebecca was 14, her mother sent her to South Africa to live with an uncle whom she had never met before. The mother promised to follow soon. Rebecca currently lives with her uncle and his family in Cape Town. Since her arrival she has learnt to speak English, but has not been enrolled in any formal school. After one year, Rebecca's mother stated that she would no longer be joining her in South Africa. Rebecca's uncle subsequently decided to send the girl back to the DRC. He asked for her passport and made arrangements with someone to give her a lift. Rebecca, however, did not want to leave South Africa.

In the following conversation I attempted to find out the reasons for her reluctance to return home:

Lena: *But you don't have any problem with your mum?*
Rebecca: *No.*
Lena: *Did you want her to come here?*
Rebecca: *Yes. I was waiting for her to come.*
Lena: *Do you still trust her?*

Rebecca: *I don't know, because she lied that she would come and then she never came. And she didn't tell me she was pregnant and then she had a baby. So she was lying.*

As the conversational excerpt shows, waiting for her mother to join her in South Africa had maintained Rebecca's trust relationship despite the geographical distance. Rebecca's response to my question as to whether she still trusted her mother demonstrates that the mother's revelation that she would no longer come caused a sense of betrayal. Rebecca also indicated that she could not go back to her old school as her class mates would now be more than one year ahead as compared to when she left and it would embarrass her to return without any achievements. Despite a difficult relationship with her uncle, she therefore preferred to stay with him than to return home, as the following excerpt from the same conversation demonstrates:

Lena: *So why do you want to stay here?*
Rebecca: *I don't know. Because it's better here than in Congo. In Congo there's nothing. Here, you can get education and everything. Then, once I'm done with my studies, I can go back.*
Lena: *And if you stay, where are you going to stay?*
Rebecca: *With my uncle.*
Lena: *But you said you don't have a very good and close relationship with him?*
Rebecca: *Yes, but he's my uncle. He has to take care of me.*

It is worth noting that Rebecca mentions educational opportunities as a reason for staying in South Africa despite not having been enrolled in any formal school since her arrival.

The second example demonstrates how another participant risked being abandoned and 'left behind' by her caregiver despite having a close relationship with her.

Jasmine lives with her older sister, the sister's husband and their two children. Like Rebecca, Jasmine has been in the country for over a year and is not attending school. A while ago the family made arrangements to move to the United States of America in order to join a relative of the sister's husband. Due to her lack of a legal ID document, Jasmine would not have been able to travel with the family. The family's move was cancelled at the last moment, yet the mere possibility of being left behind alone had

caused an emotional upheaval for Jasmine. During the course of the project Jasmine furthermore suffered the death of two Cape Town-based cousins within a short time frame; one five-year-old cousin was run over by a car and an 18-year-old one collapsed while playing soccer and passed away shortly after. Jasmine had had a close relationship to both cousins and was therefore affected by their sudden death. As Jasmine's sister temporarily moved to the cousins' family's house to support them, Jasmine was left alone with her grief and did not receive emotional support to cope with the loss. The fact that Jasmine is a Christian and her sister's family Muslim further adds to the complexity of her situation in South Africa.

As the two examples show, many caregivers cover the children's basic material needs, yet do not necessarily provide the emotional care and stability needed to guarantee the children's wellbeing. Situations such as those of Rebecca who was almost sent back to the DRC by her uncle and that of Jasmine who was almost abandoned by her sister, compellingly illustrate the fragility of informal care arrangements and the risks they entail for the children.

Because of these risks and uncertainties as well as the other aforementioned challenges, many migrant children have an ambiguous relationship with their caregivers, characterised by a dependency on the one hand and a lack of trust on the other hand. Based on these insights I argue that participants' sense of loneliness speaks to their awareness that they have no legal or social system to draw on regarding their rights and needs, including the handling of emotional and physical challenges such as the threat of being abandoned. As such, the children's circumstances resemble what Hannah Arendt famously described as a situation in which rights that were "supposedly inalienable, proved to be unenforceable" (Arendt 1966, p. 291f).

In addition to participants' sense of loneliness and uncertainty concerning their current caregivers, they miss their families at home. As mentioned in chapter 4.3, throughout the project participants expressed a strong longing for a sense of family. In a postcard exercise in the second workshop, for example, participants were asked to write down what makes them feel happy and what makes them feel bad or sad. Responses included 'it makes me happy when I speak to my friend from Congo and to my mum', 'it makes me feel bad that I have no mother or anyone to support me' and 'I miss my friends at home'. Also participants who had been separated from their parents for a long time repeatedly referred to them. One participant, whose father had been absent

for several years, mentioned that he used to accompany his father to the mosque during Ramadan, another participant was reminded of her father through a USB-stick that he had given her. One participant sometimes asked for permission to use her phone during the workshop as she was anxiously waiting to receive a phone call from her mother from the DRC. The examples mentioned in chapter 4 of the participant speaking about his deceased parents in a video recording and participants' choice to include a scene about a boy crying for his mother in the final performance are further expressions of the significance participants attribute to their absent families. The following two images portray rehearsals of the scene 'Missing home' which intended to express the messages "I miss my family" & "Sometimes I wish I could go home".

Figure 13 – Scene 'Missing home' (1) (rehearsal) (photograph by Lena S. Opfermann)

Figure 14 – Scene ‘Missing home’ (2) (rehearsal) (photograph by Lena S. Opfermann)

The body language of the sleeping boy visibly portrays his feeling of loneliness and fear. His sister bending over him illustrates how she comforts him and tries to reassure him. In response to his wish to go home, the sister’s words “you know we can’t go home”, however, destroy any hope for the possibility that his longing for home will become reality. In the final performance, the scene was portrayed in the following way:

Act 2 - Missing home

Sad music. Two siblings, a boy and girl, enter the stage, both physically weak and tired. They stop and the girl uses her scarf to prepare a bed for the boy. They fall asleep, the boy lying on the bed and the girl sitting on the side.

Scary music. Both sleep restlessly. The boy turns around in his sleep and eventually wakes up with a scream. The girl comforts him.

Girl: What happened?

Boy: I had a bad dream.

Girl: What did you dream?

Boy: Mummy died. I want to go home.

Girl: You know that we can’t go home.

Sad music. The scene ends as the two wrap up their belongings and exit the stage.

The following image from the final performance transmits the children's pain and loneliness in a foreign place as they try to comfort each other.

Figure 15 – Scene 'Missing home' (final performance) (photograph by Lena S. Opfermann)

Chapter 4 argued that participants' longing for their families led them to appreciate the relationships created through this project and to attribute a sense of family to the 'Innocent Voices' group. From this it can be concluded that unaccompanied and separated migrant children would benefit from alternative spaces in which they can meet and build trust relationships to others facing similar situations and challenges. As the previous chapter demonstrated and as I have argued elsewhere, "drama and other forms of art can provide such spaces as they allow participants to be recognized as they are and to express themselves creatively beyond the written or spoken way that dominates their daily lives in a foreign place" (Opfermann 2015, p. 238).

The following section explores how participants' notions of being alone tie in with their perception of being in charge of their own lives.

5.1.2 Feeling old

All participants considered it as their primary responsibility to look after themselves. Several male participants also stated that they were responsible for their families in South Africa, including those family members who were older than themselves. This section explores this notion of responsibility and adulthood further. To start with, the following quote from one participants' project diary expresses his ambiguous feelings towards his family and friends and how this ambiguity relates to his perception of being grown up:

> *To live with your family is no use to someone who knows what it means to be old.*
> *Sometimes it is hard to live with them, especially when you have one parent left. Only you know how it feels like to be alone, because it's pain inside your heart, beside your friend, your brothers or sisters when you have them.*
> *You try your best to cry inside in you because it's only one way you can live, you look at other people's future, happiness, you loose your hope some times.*
> *Not even a single friend can hold you back when you are gone because they don't care, they don't know how you feel.*
> *Struggle with everything you do […], because many things you think don't let you forget your memory, your past. That's what you will know when you are grown up.*

In the diary entry he explicitly admits feeling lonely and alone with his sorrows, implying that he misses his family and friends and wishes their support. At the same time he states that there is 'no use' in living with them and that even his friends from home do not care about him any more since he has left. His account furthermore shows that he perceives himself as being grown up. This notion is also reflected in the following conversation when I noticed with surprise that he had bought himself an adult train ticket:

Lena: *You have an adult ticket!*

JMV: *Yes. Why? Do you think I'm a child?*

Lena: *Well, I don't know. I know you are grown up.*

JMV: *Yes, I'm an adult!*

On another occasion, JMV and Mekasi arrived very early. Mekasi asked whether the group could go on a joint excursion one day. Considering possible options, I asked

whether they had been to the mountains in Cape Town. JMV responded that he had "many other more important things to do than going to the mountain." His perception that such an activity would be a waste of time as there are "more important things to do" indicates that his perceived responsibilities even lead him to restrict himself from participating in activities that other children of his age are likely to enjoy.

The sense of 'being old' as expressed by JMV was shared by other participants. The following conversation reflects how Mekasi expressed his frustration over other participants' unruly behaviour in the workshop and how he felt that their age should translate into a more responsible behaviour:

Mekasi: *Even in break time the people in this building are chasing each other around like small kids. But you are already old. You understand that? Whatever you are doing, it's got no sense. […] You should act like big people. At the age you are already.*

Aetzs: *No. We still got to live. Chill bro, chill. We still got a lot of time. […]*

Mekasi: *Ach. Even though you are still growing and your mind is developing, ne, you should understand yourself.*

Maestro: *I have nothing to say.*

Melody: *You HAVE something to say.*

Maestro: *We must focus.*

The conversation shows how participants' sense of responsibility sometimes led them to discipline each other during the workshops. As chapter 4 highlighted, these moments of self-discipline were significant as they contributed to participants' ownership of the process and created a sense of achievement.

Despite missing their families and their home, most participants displayed an ambiguous attitude towards the idea of returning home. JMV, for example, repeatedly expressed the view that he was not happy in a big city like Cape Town and that he wanted to return to his rural home in another African country. Taking this wish seriously, I explained to him one day that there may be ways of organising his return:

Lena: *You know that if you really want to go home, there are options to do that. There is an organisation, the International Organisation for Migration, that can organise the trip for you.*

JMV: *No, no, no. I don't want that. I don't want to go now.*

Lena: *Oh, I thought you wanted to go now.*

JMV: *No, I need to go back as a man. To make business. I can't just go like this now.*

Lena: *Anyway, I just want you to know that if you really want to go, there's this organisation that can organise the trip.*

JMV: *I will go when I decide to go. And I will go alone.*

Lena: *But you know that you still need to go to school. […] You could go back to your old school.*

JMV: *No, I can't go back like this. I'm grown up now, I need to go back to do business.*

By stating that he will only go home when he decides to go, JMV shows that he perceives himself as being in charge of his own life. Expressing moreover that he does not need anyone's support as he is able to go on his own further emphasises this point. Yet, while he refers to himself as being 'grown up', his affirmation that he can only go back 'as a man' also implies that he does not see himself as a man yet.

His reaction highlights a dilemma that several participants seem to experience. While they miss their family and environment at home and wish they could go back, they are not prepared to go immediately, even if they were offered the means. They feel that they can only return home once they have a clear purpose and can prove to those at home that they have grown up, moved on and achieved something meaningful while being away.

Several participants expressed the view that they would embarrass themselves if they returned without any obvious achievement, such as having finished school or knowing how to do business. When asked whether she preferred to return home rather than to stay in South Africa, one participant responded: "I will go back, but not now. (…) I must finish my school first and then go back." In some cases, participants' hesitation to return home may also represent an avoidance of returning to a situation in which they would fall back into old dependencies on people who had in some cases betrayed them, for instance by sending them away. Considering this, the aim of returning home as independent 'adults' able to sustain themselves can then be interpreted as a way of mitigating that risk.

Finally, the self-perception and portrayal as grown-ups may constitute the children's attempt to gain recognition in an adult-dominated society. Understood in this sense,

the notion of being responsible and ‘old’ would also speak to the children’s recognition that they find themselves in a situation where they have no legal or social system to fall back on in order to receive support. Showing their maturity then becomes an affirmation of their ability to cope and be in charge of their own lives.

The following section explores how being ‘foreign’ in South Africa causes migrant children to experience xenophobia and crime.

5.2 Being foreign – “I just stay quiet and cry inside”

Participants repeatedly mentioned violence and crime in group conversations and writing exercises and, most prominently, they portrayed verbal and physical violence in their performances on stage. By taking a closer look at the performances, two interrelated notions can be identified. One, participants perceive South Africans to dislike foreigners for unfounded and unspecified reasons. Two, participants feel that they get targeted by general crime because they transmit a sense of insecurity and not necessarily because they are foreign. Since their insecurity derives at least partly from being foreign, however, the two points cannot be neatly separated.

5.2.1 Xenophobia

Participants often raised the issue of xenophobia in performances developed on their own without instruction concerning the actions or characters they should include. One scene showed an incident in which pupils disrespected their teacher at school. In the subsequent discussion one of the actors explained:

> *The teacher liked going to that school because he likes the children, you understand. But the children didn’t like him because he was a foreigner, you see, that’s why they were taking advantage.*

The school children in this scene dislike their teacher for the mere fact that he is a foreigner and not because of any other issues, such as being too strict or unfair. On the contrary, the teacher is portrayed as a nice person who enjoys his work and likes his students. The scene demonstrates how participants perceive xenophobic sentiments as absurd and unfounded. Interestingly, they chose to depict a teacher rather than a pupil in the role of the foreign victim. Given that the actors are school children themselves, portraying a foreign teacher created a distance between themselves and the incident. This approach allowed participants to raise the issue and transmit their experience without the need to expose their own personal stories.

Several other scenes portrayed South Africans mistreating foreigners. The following excerpt is taken from a scene that participants developed to convey the message 'I am worried about too many things'.

Patrol Scene:

Two police officers sit in their office.

Police: *Hey, you know what, I don't like the foreigners in this country. I hate them, man. You see, our country now is corrupted just because of the foreigners. You know what, I'm going to patrol.*

He leaves the office and meets a man on the street whom he identifies as a foreigner. The police man offers to buy food at KFC for the man and his family. They leave together, but instead of driving to KFC the police officer takes the man to his office where he presents him to his boss.

Police: *You know what, sir, this guy has come from Zimbabwe. And I don't know what he wants here.*

The foreign man gets up nervously and admits that he is from Zimbabwe. The police officers also get up and start hitting the man and shout at him.

Police: *Sit down, have respect. Where's your passport?*

Foreigner: *Passport? I don't know what is passport.*

The police officers continue hitting him.

Police: *Where's your passport?*

Foreigner: *I don't have it, I don't have it.*

Police: *Do you smoke?*

They beat him until he falls on the ground, but they continue hitting and kicking him.

Foreigner: *I need my family, I need to go to my family.*

Police: *Why are you worried about your family?*

The following image of this scene taken during a workshop performance vividly shows the police officers' violence and anger as they hit the foreigner even after he falls on the ground.

Figure 16 – Scene ‘Police patrol’ (1) (photograph by Lena S. Opfermann)

The following post-performance conversation with the participant who acted as a police officer provides further insight into his perception of the content of this performance.

Police: *We were sitting there in the office discussing about foreigners, how they corrupt the country and those things, you understand. So I had to patrol just to insult the foreigners, you understand. […] So when I patrolled, I was about to bump one of the foreigners. And then I saw that he was actually a foreigner. So I ask him, and while I ask him I also ask him the other things, ‘do you like food? Do you like KFC?’*

Lena: *So you pretended to be nice.*

Police: *Yes, […] but just because I wanted to bully him because he is a foreigner.*

Lena: *But did he see that you were a police man?*

Police: *Yes, that’s why he started to say ‘sorry sir, sorry sir’, because he was afraid of me.*

As demonstrated in the performance excerpt and the actor’s explanation, the scene depicts a police man who decides to patrol the streets with the explicit aim of insulting foreigners. His assumption that foreigners ‘corrupt the country’ speaks to the common

prejudice that migrants are dishonest and commit crime (Crush and Tawodzera 2014a; McDonald et al. 2000; Peberdy 2009).

The scene furthermore points to the issue of immigration control and the criminalization of foreigners. The policemen's suspicion that the detained man may be contravening the law is confirmed when the man admits that he does not have a passport. As a consequence of this 'offence', the man's vulnerability increases as the police officers hit him even harder, as if his lack of a passport legitimized their use of force. The fact that the police start hitting the man even before they identify him as being undocumented, however, indicates that his legal status is not the cause of their anger, but merely serves to reinforce their preconceptions and violence.

The following scene of an improvised spontaneous encounter between a South African woman and a foreign man raises the same complexities within a civil context:

Flippin' foreigners:
A foreign man is offering drums for sale. A local woman comes and chases him away.
Foreigner: *You can come here and buy your drum sticks, five rand, five rand!*
Local: *Eh eh, sorry, this is not your country … You are a refugee and you are busy making noise here! My children need to sleep, you know that!*
Foreigner: *I'm just trying to make a living by selling this. […]*
Local: *You want me to call my gangsters? You better just get out of this area!*
He packs his stuff and starts leaving.
Local: *Flippin' foreigners!*
Foreigner: *I don't like how South Africans treat us people coming from other countries.*
Local: *Can you show me that you have a paper, an ID? No, you don't!*
Foreigner: *But …*
Local: *But what?*
Foreigner: *At least I'm trying to make a living, but you, you always go and kill people.*
Local: *We don't kill people, it's called survival of the fittest.*

As in the previous scene, the foreign person here is initially being accused and harassed for being in a country that is not his. According to the local woman, this situation denies him the right to sell his products. By asking the man to show her his papers in order to 'control' his immigration status she emphasises that she is in a

position of power. This is further reinforced when she threatens to call on gangsters to support her in chasing the man away. As the man emphasises that he is 'at least trying to make a living' instead of 'killing people', the scene furthermore speaks to the common perceptions that foreigners are hard working whereas South Africans are said to be lazy and violent. The local woman defends her position by referring to the harsh socio-economic competition in which only 'the fittest' survive.

The school scene, the patrol scene and the 'flippin' foreigners' scene share a number of commonalities. All three scenes show a striking contrast between the South African characters' power and violence on the one hand and the foreign characters' innocence and vulnerability on the other hand. In the school scene, the well-intended and polite teacher gets disturbed by his students while he merely wants to do his job. In the patrol scene, the foreigner's innocence is shown by the fact that he is stopped by the police while walking on the street without doing any harm. The fact that he trusts the policeman's offer to buy him food further emphasises the man's innocence. As soon as he realizes, however, that he is in the hand of brutal police men, he becomes scared and submissive. In light of the police officers' disproportionate use of physical violence, the foreign man's fear appears justified. As the foreigner in the third scene packs his goods and leaves when the local woman chases him away, he is once again portrayed as the weaker one 'losing' against the more powerful South African. Section 5.4.2 will provide an in-depth interpretation of these performed representations of victimhood.

The following subsection discusses participants' frequent experiences of crime.

5.2.2 Crime

In order to explore participants' attitudes towards South Africans further and to see how they perceive South Africans' view of foreigners, we conducted a particular improvisation exercise. Participants were asked to imagine the area of Cape Town they currently live in. One by one they then acted out a foreign character arriving in that area for the first time. In subsequent exercises another person portraying a South African residing in this area joined the scene. Both characters then acted out a spontaneous encounter.

In one of these improvisations, a foreigner is lost in a new place. He looks around, carefully approaches people and asks them the name of the place and the time, but

they do not respond. In the subsequent conversation the facilitator asked the foreign character how he feels. He responded that he was nervous and insecure as he only sees 'careless' people who refuse to help him. The awareness that he has no one to protect him in case of an emergency makes him afraid:

> *What if someone comes and attacks me? Where am I gonna sleep? What am I gonna eat, you know? And what am I gonna wear? The only thing I got is just what I'm wearing.*

In another scene, a musician arrives in Mannenberg, a suburb of Cape Town with a notoriously high crime rate. He asks for help, but nobody responds. At the end of the scene the man gets shot by gangsters. Similar to the previous performances, the foreign character's behaviour and body language reveal his insecurity and fear of being attacked and left alone in a new place. The locals are unwilling to help and instead end up robbing, kicking, stabbing and shooting the foreign person. While the previous performances portrayed violence committed for xenophobic reasons, the foreign characters here are identified and targeted because of their apparent insecurity of being in a new place rather than because of their nationality.

Post-performance conversations confirmed that participants identify with the characters' feelings of fear and vulnerability. Participants also shared the notion that foreigners are generally unwelcomed and targeted by gangsterism and violence. These feelings derive from incidents participants heard as well as from their own experiences of crime. Chapter 4.4.1 raised the example of a participant who arrived very late at the workshop one day because his bus was assaulted by people throwing stones. On another occasion, the same participant shared the following story:

> *Yesterday […] we saw a dead person on the beach. The police was still there, covering his face and trying to find out what happened. He was stabbed and blood was coming out […]. Maybe the guy who had killed him had put the dead body in the water and then someone had found him and dragged him out. We went swimming, but not for long because then we got scared. Everybody got scared to swim there and to be there, so we went home. It's not safe around there. There are many bushes on the way to the beach and people can even stab and kill you there. […] Another day some skollies[36] came into the house. […] They were coming from [another section] because some people from [their section] had been killed and they thought it was us, but we didn't know about anything. So they came in and wanted to kill us, so we all ran. One boy even ran to another woman's house and went inside and locked the*

[36] 'Skollie' is an Afrikaans term referring to a gangster.

> *door [he laughs]. When she saw him she thought he wanted to rob him, but when she saw that there were skollies outside, she went back inside.*

While this participant lives in an area of Cape Town with particularly high levels of crime, others also reported experiences of criminality. Several participants, for example, had their cell phones stolen, one witnessed how someone else was attacked and beaten on the street and another participant was assaulted and mugged on her way home from church. One participant recounted that recently a man next to him on the bus loaded a gun with a bullet. When asked what he did when this happened, he responded: “There is nothing you can do, you just have to be quiet and cry inside.” His response reflects the previously mentioned sense of distrust towards others as well as a sense of helplessness. In a different conversation the same participant explained that he feels unable to ask South Africans for help:

> *You know, here, you don’t even know where to run when you get attacked. At home at least you can ask someone for help, but here you can’t even knock on someone’s door because they will be scared of you and think you are bad. So you just run and don’t know where to hide.*

His statement illustrates that he feels unprotected and more vulnerable in South Africa than in his home country. Apart from his own distrust towards South Africans, he perceives them to be distrustful of him and of others, as perceiving everyone else as a source of violence.

When asked how it felt to live in a place with such high levels of violence and crime, most participants responded that they felt scared, bad and unsafe. One participant considered gangsterism a normal part of his daily life:

> *So like this you are always meeting different faces and different challenges. You meet those different kind of challenges of the boys that you live with and the people outside and the staff that works there and the gangsters where you walk when you go to school. […] sometimes if I see a group of gangsters I have to make sure that I take another way because last time they took something from me. So actually, I don’t like it. I don’t like it at all.*

Despite the crime, however, he emphasised that he liked living in that area as he had many friends there, too. One participant suggested that crime can be avoided by pretending to be a gangster: “Dress like them, act like them, speak like them.” - “If you can’t beat them, be them!”

Participants’ feeling of insecurity is enhanced by their perception of the police as being inefficient. This became particularly apparent in one performed scene in which a South African female police officer invited police officers from the DRC and Zambia to tell her

about the situation in their countries and how they deal with it. In addressing her guests, she speaks about her own situation:

Police Officer: *Ok, guys, I need to explain you about South Africa. I'm a police from South Africa. South Africa is a strange country. In South Africa they can kill a person in front of you and in South Africa they can rob you and people passing [they] can't help you. That's why I really need help about South Africa.*

By requesting help from police officers of two other countries, the police officer admits that she is unable to cope with the situation in South Africa. The perception of the police as inefficient clearly speaks to the children's notion that the police are unable to protect them.

Building on these experiences of crime and violence, the following section analyses how participants' status as undocumented migrants affects their lives.

5.3 Being undocumented – "I'm not free because I don't have a paper"

As discussed in chapter 1.2, the concept of care and protection as stated in the South African Children's Act does not entail the provision of a legal status as a form of protection. This omission implies that the South African state does not recognize that children's legal status affects their wellbeing in a significant way. Based on this premise, one of the aims of this study was to explore in how far participants are aware of their undocumented status and in which ways it affects them. The data shows that participants are both highly aware of their legal status and that it affects their daily lives in multiple ways. This section analyses their challenges in detail.

5.3.1 Practical challenges and uncertainty about immigration laws

Significantly, all participants described the lack of a legal document as the biggest challenge in their lives. They felt that the lack of a document limited their personal freedom and prevented them from pursuing their goals, whether short-term goals such as joining the soccer club, or longer-term goals such as graduating from school or continuing higher education. All participants recounted situations in which their legal status led to practical obstacles such as preventing them from participating in certain school or extra-curricular activities. The following example describes one such case:

JMV used to play soccer in his home country and has also been training with a local soccer team in Cape Town for a while. Since he is a good player, he has been offered the opportunity to play in a number of regional matches. For such occasions, the soccer club provides a free transport service for the team. Without an ID document or birth certificate, however, JMV is unable to officially join the club and obtain a membership card. He is therefore not allowed to use the club's free transport service and hence misses out on playing in certain matches.

JMV chose to describe this situation in an exercise in which participants were asked to write down something that had happened during the last week:

> *What happened in the last two days ago is I did ask my coach if I can go to play soccer tournament knock-out. He says you can't play without no card, no transport to take you to soccer field. I will wait until my card comes out, it makes me feel bad if the Under 17 team wants me to be their goal keeper and I can't with no card.*

JMV's choice to write about this incident shows that the issue is important to him. His statement demonstrates that he feels bad at disappointing the team and to know that there is nothing he can do to obtain that membership card except to wait and hope for it to be issued eventually. Several other participants reported similar difficulties in joining local soccer clubs. Participants also faced other practical challenges, such as the inability to obtain a library card or to participate in school projects and excursions. One participant, whose goal is to become a professional actress, described not having documents as a hurdle that prevents her from pursuing her dreams:

> *Before you do certain things you need a paper, you know, to apply for certain things, yeah, mm, and I don't have one, so it's like … I call that 'an enemy of progress'.*

Most participants have never been informed about the South African immigration laws or the procedures for obtaining a legal document. In order to make sense of their situation, they therefore rely on other people's knowledge and rumours as well as on their own interpretations of what they hear and see happening to other foreign persons. As a consequence of this, participants who had at some point been in contact with a social worker thought that it was the social worker's role to solve their documentation problems. According to the children's understanding, the social worker needed to contact the Department of Home Affairs which would then issue them a legal document. As discussed in the introductory chapter, however, this is not the case. Rather, there is no legal provision that would allow unaccompanied or separated migrant children to legalise their stay at all, even if they are being assisted by a social

worker. Since participants had been waiting for a long time and saw no progress in the legalization of their stay, they felt betrayed by the social workers and lost faith in what they believed was the official procedure.

The following quote refers to a school project that Freddy wanted to participate in, but was unable to do so due to his legal status. His comment demonstrates participants' awareness concerning the common practice of bribing immigration officials in order to obtain legal documents:

> *Me, I need papers for my project, for my school … I need that money, otherwise I'm not gonna have a paper. But I want it for free, to get it for free. You see that thing, it is important to get it.*

It seems that Freddy perceives money as the only way to obtain a document, although he does not think that he should have to pay for it. Participants also raised the issue of corruption in several improvised performances. In one scene the characters were asked to pay bribes in order to enter a village and to obtain a passport. In another scene, a character from Ghana married a South African woman in order to legalize his stay in South Africa. In the discussion following this scene, one participant explained her perception of this issue:

> *Perhaps foreign men might have his (sic) 'foreign wife', but then they might just plan to get another wife, a South African wife, just so that they can get papers and so he leaves his wife because it's a whole plan. So he gets his paper and then dumps her and goes back to his wife.*

Participants agreed that such situations occur, but rejected the notion that the majority of foreign persons act this way. Despite expressing their discomfort with the practice of corruption for the purpose of obtaining documents, however, participants also acknowledged that their situation sometimes forces them to lie. The following conversation demonstrates this:

Facilitator: *[…] which other solution do you see is there apart from lying?*

Melody: *There is no other solution for me. […]*

Lena: *Do you think lying will get you where you want to go?*

Melody: *Mm, yes, it will.*

Fred: *If you don't lie, they are gonna send you back. […]*

Melody: *Sometimes it's unnecessary for us to lie. But then sometimes when we are in need of help we need to lie to get somewhere.*

Some participants had already been informed by state authorities or NGO workers that there were no legal options to authorise their stay. This meant in essence that they

needed to leave the country. This knowledge, however, competes with other sources of information and rumours that feed into the children's hopeful belief that other solutions exist to legalise their stay. For example, despite my clear explanations at the beginning of the project that their participation would not lead to them obtaining legal documents, the majority of participants continued to hope that the project would help them in that regard. In the meantime, they continue living in South Africa undocumented. Despite their constant efforts to integrate and 'fit in', however, participants regularly experience discrimination and harassment based on their undocumented status. The following section lays out these experiences in more detail.

5.3.2 Discrimination and harassment

Even without entirely understanding the immigration laws and processes, participants were acutely aware that their undocumented legal status not only posed practical challenges but also exposed them to discrimination, harassment and security risks. As mentioned earlier, Jasmine loves modelling as it gives her a sense of pride and belonging. These positive feelings, however, are suddenly disturbed when her legal status is exposed. In the following quote she recalls her colleagues' reactions when they find out that she is undocumented:

> *When I go and do acting [i.e. modelling] some others see that I don't have a paper and then they start calling me makwerekwere*[37] *and foreigner. That's when I feel like I'm a foreigner. I'm not happy, Mama.*

During the workshops, participants translated this experience into a scene that aimed to transmit the messages: "My biggest challenge is that I don't have papers" & "I have a dream for the future". A workshop rehearsal of the scene is depicted in the following image.

[37] 'Makwerekwere' is commonly used as a derogatory term for foreigners in South Africa.

Figure 17 – Scene ‘Model agency’ (rehearsal) (photograph by Lena S. Opfermann)

In the final performance, the scene ‘Model agency’ was presented in the following way:

Act 3 - Model Agency

Two girls enter the stage. They see the sign for a modelling agency and decide to enter. They introduce themselves to the agent who tells them to wait. He leaves the office and makes a phone call in which he tells the person on the other end of the line that he found two beautiful girls. Happy music. The agent performs a dance to express his excitement for having the two girls for his model business. He returns to the office.

Agent to both girls:	*Let’s get down to the business.*
Agent to girl 1:	*What’s your name?*
Girl 1:	Says her name and surname.
Agent to girl 2:	*What’s your name?*
Girl 2:	Says her name and surname.
Agent to girl 1:	*Your ID number?*
Girl 1:	*I don’t have an ID number.*
Agent to girl 2:	*What’s your ID number?*
Girl 2:	*I don’t have an ID or an ID number.*
Agent to both:	*You don’t have an ID number?*

The girls shake their head. The agent looks up in slow motion, takes off his sunglasses, shakes his head.

Agent to both: Then I can't help you. Please leave my office.

The scene ends as both girls leave the stage.

The following image shows an excerpt from the scene as presented in the final performance.

Figure 18 – Scene 'Model agency' (final performance) (photograph by Lena S. Opfermann)

The image shows the two school girls sitting nervously at the desk of the model agency. While they wait for the agent to return to them and take their details they excitedly speak about their dream of becoming models. As the agent returns, he too is excited about the prospect of having found two new models. The girls' dream gets shattered when they are being asked for their ID numbers. Without further discussion they are immediately asked to leave the office.

In a different context, JMV recounted a similarly negative experience when his legal status was revealed by his teacher in class:

> *When the teacher asks for birth certificates in class I don't know what to say, I just say nothing because I have nothing to say. Then after class*

> *another boy asks me 'why are you here, why do you come here without birth certificate …?'*

The teacher's request to see the students' birth certificates put JMV in a position in which he was expected to justify not only his legal status but also his presence in the country. Reflecting the xenophobic rhetoric applied by adults, JMV's classmate suddenly questioned his reasons to be in South Africa as well as the fact that he does not have a birth certificate. Knowing about his legal status, JMV's classmates could technically report him to the police or other authorities. His statement "I don't know what to say" indicates his uncertainty of how he should react and what he should or should not say in front of the class. It hints at a sense of helplessness as well as an inability to make sense of the immigration laws. Yet his conscious decision not to respond to the teacher's inquiry about his birth certificate also shows that even in a situation of apparent weakness such as this one, he maintains control over what he says and does not say. His explanation that he did not say anything because he had "nothing to say" further demonstrates his reluctance to share any personal information in class.

As the two examples show, undocumented migrant children are at constant risk of having their legal status exposed. In addition to verbal insults, such exposure is distressing as it destroys the image the children have built of themselves as a means of integrating and gaining recognition among their peers and colleagues. The functional distrust that participants displayed throughout the project in their reluctance to share personal stories, shows that they are aware of their legally precarious and hence vulnerable position, in which any personal information they share can potentially be used against them.

In group and personal conversations as well as in their performances participants furthermore expressed their fears of becoming the victim of police actions targeting undocumented foreigners. As mentioned in chapter 1, the South African Police Service and National Defence Force regularly conduct operations with the aim of identifying, detaining and subsequently deporting undocumented foreign persons. The following quote illustrates how Jasmine fears being caught in such a raid:

> *I'm not free because I don't have my paper … I can remember like last week they are (sic) catching those people who don't have papers. Everywhere in Cape Town, in Parrow, everywhere … and I'm not so happy, I'm not free.*

In line with the previous quote, the following reflection demonstrates how another participant struggles to comprehend the state's actions:

> *If they can arrest people and put them in jail and send them back to their country just because they don't have a paper, I mean, then they should just give everybody papers for free, coz why are you catching people in the first place?*

By refusing to accept the rationale of criminalizing people on the basis of their undocumented legal status, this participant also rejects the idea that she is being criminalized herself. The following excerpt and the image from a scene rehearsal further exemplifies participants' fear of xenophobically motivated police violence.

Patrol scene rehearsal:

Two police officers interrogate a foreign man. While talking to him, they hit him.

Police: *Where's this guy from?*

Foreigner: *He's from Tanzania.*

Police: *I don't like this kind of people in my country! This is South Africa! Do you hear me? Did you hear the new rules of South Africa? We don't take foreigners.*

The foreign man tries to defend himself, but the police only hit him harder.

Police: *Let's take him to the aeroplane.*

They push him out.

Police: *We take you back to your country with broken bones!*

Similar to the previous image of this scene presented in 5.2.1, the following image of the rehearsal also clearly transmits the power difference between the policy officers and the foreign man as well as the violence applied by the police towards him.

Figure 19 – Scene ‘Police patrol’ (2) (photograph by Lena S. Opfermann)

The police officers in this scene do not provide reasons for their dislike of foreigners. To justify their aggression, they refer to the ‘new rules’. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the new South African immigration regulations, which came into force in May 2014, severely tightened immigration controls. When I asked the group in this context whether they thought it was risky to use public transport in order to attend the workshops, they responded that they were safe as “on Sundays the police take a break”. This response reinforces the argument that participants act and move around according to strategies that are based on their own perception of risks and dangers rather than on reliable information.

I conclude this section with a reference to an interesting observation regarding participants’ portrayal of South Africans. In several scenes participants who acted as South Africans depicted an uncertainty of how to react to the foreign character they encountered. Specifically, they seemed to be torn between showing compassion with the seemingly poorer and more vulnerable person on the one hand and demonstrating rudeness, anger and physical violence on the other hand. In the ‘Patrol scene’ mentioned in section 5.2.1, for example, the police officer initially pretended to be nice to the foreign person by offering to buy food, but eventually ended up beating him. In another scene a stranger approached a local person and asked him for a place to stay. The local person responded by asking the foreigner for money, making rude

comments and pushing him around. Then, however he suddenly changed his behaviour and passed the stranger his phone so that he could call his parents. The following post-performance conversation after this particular scene confirms this ambiguity:

Audience member:	*I don't get it. You beat him, but you gave him your phone.*
Foreigner:	*You wanted to help me and to beat me at the same time.*
Local person:	*Yes.*

In another scene a stranger approaches a South African. The South African kicks the stranger so that he falls to the ground, then helps him up and beats him up again. In the subsequent discussion the actor representing the South African character admits that he enjoyed this behaviour:

Lena:	*Why did you pretend to help him and then kick him again?*
Local person:	*Because I pretended to be nice, but then I was rude again.*
Lena:	*Did you enjoy that?*
Local person:	*Yes, showing my true colours…*

The local characters' ambiguous behaviour indicates that participants are torn between showing the compassion they feel is appropriate in relating to the seemingly weaker foreign persons and the rudeness and rejection they experience and perceive in reality. In order to portray their experience, they are therefore compelled to act out unfriendly and rude behaviour towards the foreign characters. The expressed ambiguity may also mean that participants believe that there are helpful and friendly South Africans as well. These signs of uncertainty on the part of the actors show that their experiences, perceptions and feelings towards South Africans are, similarly to their other experiences, not clear-cut but diverse. These ambiguities make it difficult for participants to interpret the characters and motives of people they encounter, providing a further explanation for their functional distrust towards others.

The following section reflects on the (policy) relevance of the insights gained through participants' performative (self-) representations as discussed in the previous three sections.

5.4 Reflections on the relevance of theatre-based research

Chapter 2.2 laid out three main factors that are commonly believed to make (forced) migration research policy relevant: designing research according to certain policy terms and categories, applying a particular research approach and communicating results in a particular way. I concluded that the achievement of policy relevant results is likely to depend on a combination of these three factors. With regard to the first point I was therefore conscious and careful in my choice of terminology and in the use of policy categories when selecting participants. This section focuses on the second point, the aim of achieving policy relevance by applying a particular research approach. In this regard I argue that theatre-based research creates insights into participants' lived experiences that make a valuable contribution to the rights-based arguments and notions of vulnerability that dominate existing discourses on undocumented migrant children. As such, the results enrich child protection policy making, advocacy and practice. With regard to the third point, the effective communication of research results, the discussion in section 5.4.2 furthermore leads me to argue that the affective and aesthetic functions of theatre-based research should be recognized as equally valuable as its policy relevance in a conventional sense.

5.4.1 Policy relevance of theatre-based research

In order to determine the policy relevance of theatre-based research, this subsection takes a closer look at the findings discussed in the previous sections of this chapter and compares them with existing discourses on unaccompanied and separated migrant children and on 'illegality' more broadly. The analysis of participants' performances illustrates that theatre-based research creates policy relevant meaning by uncovering 'hidden transcripts'.

Earlier chapters indicated that the discourse on migrant children in South Africa is dominated by two narratives, focusing on the children's rights and on their vulnerability respectively. With regard to the first, the background section on migrant children in South Africa in chapter 1.2 pointed out that civil society is applying a rights-based approach that highlights the policy and legal inconsistencies which prevent unaccompanied and separated migrant children in South Africa from legalising their stay (e.g. CPLO and SCCT 2010; Lawyers for Human Rights 2010; Schreier 2011; Willie and Mfubu 2016). Linked to this, the second narrative emphasises the 'particular vulnerabilities' of migrant children due to their status as migrants, as children and as

undocumented persons (e.g. van Baalen 2012; van der Burg 2006; PICUM 2008; Schreier 2011; Sigona 2010; UNICEF 2009).

As illustrated in the previous three sections of this chapter, the findings of this study largely confirm these two narratives. Specifically, participants' performative (self-) representations and other contributions showed that they are affected by the prevalence of anti-foreigner sentiments, violence, crime, societal and institutionalised xenophobia. The children's assumed vulnerability becomes almost 'sense-able' through their performances which convey an explicit notion of victimhood and suffering, leaving the audience with a sense of desperation regarding the children's apparently hopeless situations.

In reflecting on the duality of pain and beauty in performance, chapter 4.4.3 argued that the performance of 'hopelessness' ultimately constituted an experience of hope for participants. Building on this, I furthermore submit that it would be too narrow an interpretation to assume that participants, due to the oppression they face, are merely 'passive victims' or 'needy subjects' waiting to be 'saved' by others. Instead, I will now make the case that the performances as well as participants' everyday conduct constitute an explicit affirmation of their agency and resistance. This argument is based on the acknowledgment that participants' performative (self-) representations were influenced by a variety of factors.

Uncovering hidden transcripts

In order to determine what influenced participants' performances, I will first reflect on my own role as researcher, facilitator and theatre director. For this purpose I refer back to the critique raised in chapter 3 that documentary theatre that is based on the testimonies of (forced) migrants tends to 'commodify otherness' and emphasise the characters' pain and vulnerabilities (Jeffers 2012; Maedza 2013). Reflecting on my own role in this study I therefore asked myself whether I steered the content of the performances in any particular way. Did I attribute more value to scenes reflecting participants' suffering and vulnerabilities than to those that highlight their positive experiences? Did I possibly seek "some kind of moral self-affirmation", as Brian Phillips critically observes with regard to some directors of documentary performances (Phillips 2010, p. 275)?

One response to these questions can be found in the study's research questions. As mentioned in chapter 1, my research interest derived from my understanding that

undocumented migrant children are negatively affected by inconsistencies and gaps in the legal and policy framework applicable to them. Assuming that a deeper understanding of how the children experience these injustices would contribute to enhancing advocacy and policy, my research questions focused explicitly on participants' challenges deriving from their legal status and foreign nationality rather than on the positive aspects of their life in South Africa. Since the performances presented responses to these questions, they largely portrayed participants' challenges and struggles rather than their joys and successes in South Africa. As repeatedly pointed out in the previous chapters, I furthermore conducted this research based on the premise that children are agents and experts in their own lives. Due to this starting point I did not have an educational or artistic agenda and attempted to maintain a flat hierarchy in which activities followed participants' own motivation and inspiration. In response to the questions raised above I therefore submit that the performances were, while guided by my questions, developed and shaped predominantly by participants' own ideas, creativity and ownership.

Secondly, it is possible that participants used the performances as an opportunity to highlight or exaggerate their needs and grief on stage. This may have occurred due to underlying hopes and expectations that a portrayal of themselves as victims would be beneficial for them. This phenomenon, referred to as 'victimcy', is frequently invoked by displaced persons (Boyden and Hart 2007; Utas 2005). In that particular context it is likely that I, as a white European with connections to strategic resources such as the Scalabrini Centre, led participants to develop expectations that I would be able to help them obtain documents or other benefits such as connections abroad. Participants may therefore have intentionally or subconsciously 'victimised' themselves in the hope that their performances might evoke sentiments of pity that would subsequently lead me or the broader audience to take actions in their favour.

Thirdly, it is likely that some participants 'dramatized' their performances to impress their spectators aesthetically. The enthusiastic way in which mainly male participants repeatedly rehearsed and performed verbal insults and physical violence such as beating, kicking and stabbing each other, speaks to this idea. Fourthly, it is possible that participants' performances were a direct representation of their lived experiences, influenced by the three previously mentioned factors.

The question then arises as to whether it is necessary to distinguish participants' 'real' experiences from their perceptions, imaginations, hopes and aesthetic dramatizations.

This uncertainty reflects a common dilemma in the interpretation of performance-based data. In this regard Barbara Dennis points out that theatre as ethnography disrupts the conventional distinctions between data collection and analysis, between reality and fiction, between the real and the imagined:

> *To treat these role-playing activities as ethnographic data blurs the line between real and imagined. It welcomes into research something that is not exactly real in terms of a history of happenings. The acting is clearly an imagined play off the real, particularly and specifically not real but realistic! (Dennis 2009, p. 79)*

Related to this I want to recall a point raised in chapter 3.3 that performances are never authentic representations of 'reality', but mediated interpretations thereof (Bottoms 2005). While Dennis acknowledges that in performance fact and fiction are blurred, she claims that "the distinction is needed for the overlap to make sense" (Dennis 2009, p. 87). However, since experiences involve bodily understandings that may be difficult or even impossible to translate into spoken words, I argue in contrast to Dennis that it is neither necessary nor possible to distinguish between the two spheres. This is because we may not have physically experienced a particular situation ourselves, yet the knowledge thereof may impact our wellbeing and the way we perceive our surroundings. For instance, the perception that the police use disproportionate force against foreigners affects migrant children's sense of safety and wellbeing even if they have not been victims of police violence themselves. For this reason, perceptions and experiences cannot and need not be neatly separated. Rather, as raised in chapter 3.1, it is useful to appreciate the capacity of theatre "to convey ambiguity and incoherence" (Gunaratnam 2007, p. 283) in order to create a meaningful picture of our lived experiences.

Given that open displays of injustice and oppression can potentially cause security risks for undocumented migrants, it seems surprising that participants were keen to expose themselves to a public audience. Their conduct, however, corresponds to Scott's claim that such public disclosure is common in "authorized ritual occasions when it is possible to break the rules" (Scott 1985, p. 287). Similar to carnivals, theatre constitutes such an 'authorized occasion' where the powerless "insinuate a critique of power while hiding behind anonymity or behind innocuous understandings of their conduct" (Scott 1990, preface xiii). On the basis of this I argue that the children's deliberate exposure and concealment of information corresponds to the use of public and hidden transcripts as understood by Scott (1985 and 1990). As discussed in chapter 3.3.1, Scott describes the use of hidden transcripts as a form of critique of the oppressed against the power holders and public transcripts as the open interaction

between the two (Scott 1990). In chapter 4.2.2 I submitted that caregivers' and participants' informed consent can be interpreted as a form of public transcript.

The theatre-based approach of this study enabled participants' 'hidden transcripts' to surface and become public. Moreover, by using their bodies, voices, facial and written expressions, participants were able to transmit a more nuanced, affective and comprehensive representation of their experiences than a linear spoken account would have allowed. This confirms the point raised in chapter 3 that arts-based research 'creates meaning' (Eisner 1981; Gunaratnam 2007). By blurring fact and fiction in their theatrical performances, participants did not only (re-)present their experiences, but they were also able to portray and denounce oppressive 'facts' in a safe way. Safe, because the fictitious elements prevented the audience from holding individuals accountable for the exposed injustices and offences. Furthermore, the performance was safe in the sense that the displayed suffering and pain could not be attributed to individual actors, thereby allowing them to maintain their integrity and pride as confident young people.

Performative everyday agency

I will now turn to participants' public transcripts. In this regard, I suggest that their public transcripts are exposed through 'real life performances'. Unlike participants' theatrical performances which exposed their vulnerabilities, weaknesses and pains, the children's public transcripts emphasise positive aspects such as their physical beauty, their knowledge of local habits and languages or their confidence in knowing their way around. Since the children's transmission of their public transcripts has a performative character, I propose to view their lives as a stage on which they appear as actors who display and apply 'performative everyday agency'.

As discussed in chapter 2.3.2, 'everyday agency' refers to an implicit portrayal of agency that children themselves do not perceive as extraordinary, but as a normal part of their everyday lives (Payne 2012). The way in which the undocumented migrant children who participated in this study handle and perceive the complexity of their daily challenges constitutes an expression of everyday agency in this sense. Significantly, I furthermore propose that the children's agency is performative. 'Performative agency' can be understood as the deliberate use and display of fact and fiction in public conduct and communication with others. 'Performative everyday agency' allows the children to navigate through their daily lives in a way that emphasises their achievements and strengths while their challenges, weaknesses and vulnerabilities

remain largely hidden from the general public. I will present three examples to illustrate this notion in more detail.

The first example shows how one participant applies performative agency in order to be recognized and admired by others. As mentioned earlier, Jasmine loves modelling and dressing up. Her conduct as a model, however, combines elements of fact and fiction. When she acts as a model or appears anywhere else in fashionable clothes, she is recognized, respected and admired by others as a good-looking, confident and eloquent young lady. Her model image is based on her physical appearance and demeanour only, rendering any personal information about her background, nationality, education and legal status irrelevant. The 'fact' that she is a beautiful and successful girl, however, is performative in the sense that it conceals other aspects of her reality such as her precarious legal status, her limited literacy skills and the fact that she does not attend school. The performative nature of the model image becomes apparent as soon as her legal status is exposed. In this regard section 5.3.2 mentioned, for example, that Jasmine has faced situations where her colleagues, upon finding out that she has no 'papers', showed that they despised her by calling her 'makwerekwere'.

The second example illustrates an incident in which Jasmine applied performative agency in order to appear integrated within the South African society. One day, a South African guest facilitator who did not know the participants, asked Jasmine to sing a song. Claiming to have forgotten her home languages Lingala and French, she responded to the request by singing the South African national anthem. Given that she is fluent in both her home languages, her claim to only speak English constitutes an expression of performative agency, consciously applied in the presence of the South African facilitator. This 'real life performance', coupled with the 'fact' that she was able to sing the South African national anthem, illustrates her aim to be recognized by a South African as belonging to this country. The incident is highly significant as it was the first time that a South African person was present at any of the workshops. Considering that all other participants knew that Jasmine was fluent in her own languages, it is furthermore interesting to observe that no-one exposed the performative nature of her conduct in relation to the South African facilitator. By 'covering her back', the other participants illustrated their comprehension of the purpose of her conduct.

In order to further demonstrate the performative nature of participants' everyday lives, the third example focuses on participants' conduct in public. By walking around and using public transport, undocumented migrant children appear to navigate their way through Cape Town in the same way as their South African peers. As previously discussed, however, participants are highly alert to the risks of moving around in public without 'papers'. As a precautionary measure, they therefore limit their movements based on their own understanding and interpretation of safety threats. As such, they avoid direct contact with the police or even stay at home if they perceive the threat of policy raids or controls to be high on particular days. Since their anxieties and self-imposed restrictions on their movements remain unseen and unknown to others, their actual movements, though displayed as normal everyday tasks, become performative.

In discussing the effects of 'illegality' on people's everyday lives, chapter 2.4.1 pointed out how undocumented migrants deploy particular strategies to protect themselves in situations of insecurity and threat (e.g. Bloch et al. 2014; Gonzales 2011; Negrón-Gonzales 2013; Willen 2007). They may for instance limit their social interactions and relationships to particular groups of trusted persons and community or faith-based organisations and restrict their movements to particular areas where they feel safe. Undocumented migrant children's contestations of their 'deportability' has been referred to as the 'duality of [their] political agency' (Lind 2016). Building on the notions of survival strategy and the duality of political agency, performative agency can be seen as another mechanism deployed by undocumented children to enhance their survival and integration in a hostile and insecure environment. Based on the results presented above I further argue that participants' conscious display of hidden and public transcripts also constitutes a form of active resistance against the oppression they face in their lives. This understanding of their conduct adds to countering the perception that undocumented migrant children are helpless victims of their 'triple vulnerability'.

This discussion has shown that theatre enabled insights into migrant children's lives that expand the prevailing rights and vulnerability discourses by a) providing a more nuanced picture of the children's lived experiences of their 'illegality' and by b) adding to the notion of vulnerability and victimhood the understanding that the children are performative everyday agents who consciously critique and resist their challenges. Consequently, this study contributes to discourses on the third dimension of 'illegality' which refers to the way in which it is 'sensually' experienced and contested. Following from this, I conclude in response to the third principal research question that the policy

relevance of theatre-based research lies in its potential to uncover meaning that conventional research methods are unlikely to reveal. Having said this, I acknowledge that the practical effect of these new insights on policy making may be limited unless they are packaged and communicated appropriately. As the following section will show, theatre can play a role in this endeavour. Furthermore, chapter 6.3 provides some practical recommendations for policy makers and practitioners towards that aim.

5.4.2 Ethical and aesthetic relevance

In addition to creating insights into children's experiences, this study has demonstrated that theatre-based research can provoke an immense variety of emotions including pleasure, fun, hope, sorrow, sadness and anger. The physical face to face encounter between the audience and the actors enables a transfer of these sensations. Thompson argues that this physical encounter provokes a feeling of ethical duty towards the other as described by Levinas (Thompson 2009). He contends that the 'beauty of performance' is particularly suitable to stimulate further action as the pleasure of watching lessens the overwhelming threat we might perceive if confronted with the harsh reality of oppression:

> *Attention to beauty – to aspects of play, dance, or joy – could be the act of creating an intense 'meta-political' moment that prepares people for recognising the face of the other as an appeal that they cannot refuse. Beauty creates both the capacity for being affected (it 'aesthetises') and an openness to a call from beyond one's body, but it does so within an [sic] framework of pleasure and therefore the feeling of responsibility is less likely to overwhelm. (Thompson 2009, p. 170f)*

This 'affective' way in which performance reaches people can contribute to achieving greater social justice, for "no change is possible without enthusiasm, commitment and a passionate sense of the possibility of a better life" (Thompson 2009, p. 128). By causing actors and audience to feel, to reflect and to share their views and impressions with others, performance can thus contribute to influencing societal attitudes and ultimately policy-making. In this sense, theatre also speaks to the third point raised in chapter 2.2, namely that policy relevance can be achieved through the right communication. The particular strength of this performative communication lies in the embodied encounter as well as in its ephemerality that creates effects which remain in an affective, 'immaterial' way (Schneider 2001).

The intangible, affective and aesthetic qualities of art and arts-based research are, however, often overlooked and undervalued. This is because they are generally only "seen either as means to an end, by-product, wonderful extra or hook to the *real work*"

(Thompson 2009, p. 118, emphasis in original). As a consequence, theatre-based projects frequently only receive funding and recognition if they can 'prove' the social and political 'utility' of their project through certain indicators that resemble those of other social projects. The terminology applied to evaluate arts projects is indicative of this prevailing attitude: "People become clients, theatre workshops inputs and performances are outcomes" (Thompson 2009, p. 118). Arts-based researchers fear that this approach limits the way in which arts projects are conceptualised and perceived:

> *Impact, benchmarks, mechanisms, measurement. The language, typical as it is of the economic, positivist and managerial jargon […], is more than a technical means of communication; it constructs the moral boundaries within which the arts are today being discussed, conceptualised and evaluated. (Winston 2006, p. 292f)*

The notion that art needs an additional 'measurable' outcome in order to be recognized as valuable resembles the notion that research is only truly valuable if it is policy relevant. Due to this perception, (forced) migration scholars and others usually perceive the ethics of research as secondary to its policy relevance. This belief is illustrated in the claim that "there is no point in being worthy but ineffectual", submitted by Paul Gready in his conclusion of an article that highlights researchers' responsibilities to represent people's stories in an ethical way (Gready 2010, p. 189). According to this understanding, the ethical 'worthiness' of a study, while morally necessary, is 'pointless' unless it offers an additional relevance or 'effectiveness'.

I suggest that this stance resembles current neoliberal developments within UK academia. Parallel to the increased institutionalisation of research ethics, universities and funding bodies are also becoming more and more concerned with the impact and effectiveness of the research carried out in their name. As part of this development, mandatory questionnaires and software tools are designed to evaluate and rank the impact of research based on tangible outcomes and results such as the number of publications and citations. Future funds are then allocated on the basis of these surveys. One example for this is the Researchfish tool that requires all researchers funded by Research Councils UK to provide details concerning their research outputs and outcomes within a limited time frame each year. 'Outcomes' are thereby defined as publications, conference presentations, awards, patents and other 'tangible' results.

I submit that such surveys and impact evaluation tools are highly problematic as they overlook other non-written and intangible results. In my experience, for instance, the

Researchfish software is unsuitable for qualitative social science research and for arts-based research in particular. As such, none of the categories provided by the tool under 'methods' and 'outcomes' are applicable to a theatre-based methodology. This shows that in this line of thinking both art and ethics are considered as mere by-products that are either perceived as 'worthy but ineffective' or not recognized at all.

I suggest that this neoliberal view represents a consequentialist school of thought. As mentioned in chapter 2.1, consequentialists believe that the right actions are those that produce the most good (Copp 2006; McNaughton and Rawling 2006). Conducting ethical research is thus perceived as the 'right action' only if it serves as a means to achieving 'more good'. Measurable research results are thereby considered as 'more good' than intangible ones. Deontology, by contrast, maintains that we have agent-relative duties towards others with whom we have a special relationship. The duty to honour these responsibilities may exceed our duty to maximise the overall good (McNaughton and Rawling 2006). I argue that researchers have a particular relationship with and thus duty towards their research participants. This duty is particularly relevant in qualitative studies where the relationship between researcher and participants is likely to become personal, for example when both sides develop a friendship-like caring attitude towards each other.

In deontological terms, our commitment towards research participants thus compels us to treat them ethically, even if doing so does not maximise the overall good. Consequentialists, by contrast, may compromise their ethical responsibilities towards individuals if doing so increases the overall good. A practical example can be found in the use of data for advocacy purposes. Assuming that the tragedy of individual stories captures the attention of policy makers, consequentialists may decide to expose participants' stories in order to increase the chances of producing what they consider to be 'more good'. Deontologists, by contrast, would be reluctant to expose individuals' stories as this may constitute an infringement of participants' confidentiality.[38]

[38] Another example of a deontological stance is Tshepo Madlingozi's analysis of the achievements of the Khulumani Support Group, a support group of victims and survivors of apartheid atrocities that fights for a victim-centred approach to transitional justice in South Africa. With regard to this group, he writes: *"Assessing the success of a social movement should thus go beyond just looking at whether the movement has been able to make an impact at the policy-making level. This especially applies to identity-based movements campaigning for the rights of marginalized groups like sexual minorities, immigrants, 'the poor', and of course victims of past human rights abuses. For these movements, evaluating 'success' must go beyond an evaluation that begins and stops at the 'instrumental' level, and must seek to see how far the organization has been able to afford members the dignity and sense of worth in belonging to a group and being able to express their moral outrage"* (Madlingozi 2010, p. 218).

As this discussion shows, depending on the philosophical stance taken, ethical research can be seen as a means to an end or as an end in itself. From this follows that neither approach should be considered more valuable than the other. This conclusion leads back to the notion of the triple imperative which demands that research with (forced) migrants should produce policy relevant academic results in an ethical way. In chapter 1 I described the conventional understanding of the triple imperative as a hierarchy in which policy relevance is perceived as an addition to the production of knowledge with ethics as a third addition on top, illustrating the common perception of ethics as a 'side effect' or 'hook to the real work' (Thompson 2009). This understanding corresponds to what I have here called the neoliberal or consequentialist notion of the triple imperative.

Building on the discussion concerning the relationship between research ethics and relevance in this and the previous chapter, I propose to modify the hierarchical conceptualisation of the triple imperative to one which integrates the three dimensions as equal components of the concept. As the following figure shows, this new concept is illustrated best through a Venn diagram.

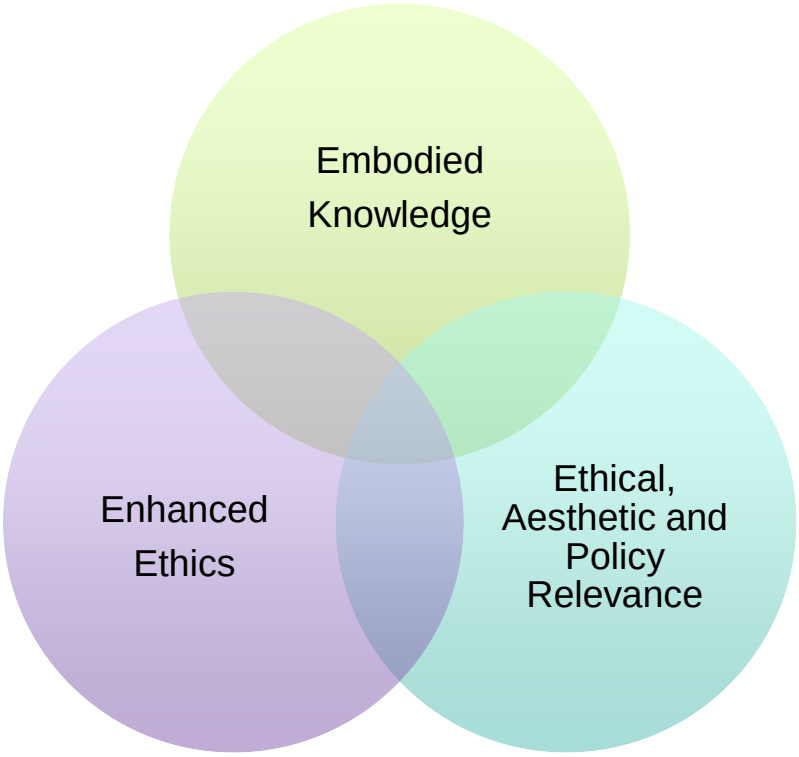

Figure 20 – The integrated triple imperative (graph by Lena S. Opfermann)

This integrated notion of the triple imperative not only illustrates the equality of the three components in terms of their importance, but also indicates that each component depends on and influences the other two. According to this view, theatre-based research is valued equally for producing academically sound results as it is for its ethical, aesthetic and policy relevance.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided a response to the second and third principal research questions. In this regard, sections 1 to 3 explored undocumented migrant children's experiences and perceptions of their lives in Cape Town. An in-depth analysis of participants' performances, individual and group conversations, writing and drawing exercises as well as my own ethnographic notes produced a wealth of insights into participants' experiences as unaccompanied or separated children, as foreigners and as undocumented persons in South Africa.

The first section of the chapter pointed out that participants' lives are affected by challenges deriving from the informality of the care arrangements they live in. The section furthermore revealed that many unaccompanied and separated migrant children feel lonely, grown-up and in charge of their own lives. These sentiments notwithstanding, participants felt that they could not return home until and unless they had 'achieved' something meaningful in their lives, such as acquiring certain skills or education. I suggested a number of possible explanations for these notions of adulthood, such as being expressions of participants' awareness of their factually 'right- and stateless' situation as well as attempts to gain recognition in an adult-dominated world.

The second section highlighted that participants are acutely aware of and affected by the prevalence of anti-foreigner sentiments in the South African society. Their performances furthermore transmit a perception that foreigners are targeted by crime because of the insecurity they display. Building on this, the third section revealed that the lack of 'papers' negatively affects undocumented migrant children's lives in practical and emotional terms as it forces them to live in a state of constant uncertainty and fear. Above all, participants perceive their undocumented legal status as inhibiting their freedom and their social integration as well as their educational and professional dreams and goals. Their legal status furthermore exposes them to additional harassment and discrimination by their peers, work colleagues and the general public.

The fourth section of the chapter discussed the relevance of theatre-based research for policy-making and ethics, thus providing a response to the third principal research question. I argued that the policy relevance of theatre-based research lies in its uncovering of meaning that conventional research methods are unlikely to reveal. A closer reflection on the interpretation of performance-based data demonstrated that participants' portrayals of victimhood were influenced and motivated by a variety of factors such as the research questions, victimcy, participants' 'real' experiences, hopes and aesthetic ambitions. Following from this I made the case that, in order to make sense of participants' experiences, it is neither possible nor necessary to distinguish between reality and fiction in terms of their performances as it is precisely the overlap between both that enables the creation of a meaningful picture.

I furthermore submitted that the theatre-based approach enabled participants' hidden transcripts to become public, revealing a detailed insight into their vulnerabilities and pain. A further analysis showed that participants consciously display fact and fiction through performative everyday agency in their 'real lives' and on stage. This interpretation allows for an understanding of participants' conduct not only as a strategy to negotiate their daily challenges, but also as a form of conscious resistance against the everyday oppression they face. These conclusions are policy relevant in the sense that they add valuable nuances to the existing rights-based and vulnerability discourse on migrant children in South Africa. The practical implications thereof for policy makers and practitioners are discussed in chapter 6.

The last subsection of the chapter reflected on the interpretation of relevance with regard to arts-based research. In this context I emphasized the ability of theatre to communicate embodied knowledge through 'affective transactions' that transmit nuances of people's experiences, perceptions and feelings. Based on deontological and arts-based considerations I argued that these ethical and aesthetic outcomes should receive the same recognition as the policy-relevant results described above. In conclusion, I proposed a new conceptualisation of the triple imperative which integrates its three demands as equal components that affect each other.

The following final chapter of the dissertation presents concluding remarks to this study, highlighting its contribution to social science theory and practice.

CHAPTER SIX

6. CONCLUSION

> *Aesthetics, art, performance, history, culture, and politics thus are intertwined.*
>
> *Norman K. Denzin 2000, p. 260*

This study has produced interesting insights that contribute to advancing social science theory, methodology and practice. In line with the interdisciplinarity of the study, these contributions speak above all, but not exclusively, to the academic disciplines of (forced) migration studies, performance studies and childhood studies. Specifically, this study

1) advances the debate on research ethics in the social sciences,
2) expands the methodological repertoire of (forced) migration studies and other social science fields through a theatre-based approach and
3) enhances the knowledge on undocumented migrant children in South Africa.

This chapter outlines the significance of these contributions in more detail by revising and connecting overarching themes pertaining to and deriving from this study. The chapter consists of three sections, followed by a conclusion. Specifically, the three sections reflect on and highlight the contributions of this study to academic discourse in terms of theory, methodology and practice respectively. Each section furthermore highlights the need and potential for future research and concludes by providing recommendations on the discussed topics. The decision to provide recommendations derives from the aim of this study to produce results that are relevant for further research, policy making and practice. Since theatre as a research methodology is still emerging, there is much scope to further explore and develop this and other arts-based approaches so that they will one day be fully recognized and valorised as legitimate social science methodologies. In this context, practical recommendations, deriving from the results and contributions of this study as discussed in previous chapters, constitute a useful support for theatre-based (forced) migration researchers.

Similarly, the perspectives and experiences of migrant children in general and of undocumented children in particular are explored very little both globally and in Southern Africa. It is my hope that the insights into migrant children's experiences in South Africa gained through this study will be used by policy makers and practitioners to enhance these children's circumstances and wellbeing. As previously argued, new information needs to be packaged appropriately in order to be accessible. The recommendations provided here are thus intended as a way to 'package' these insights in a way that makes them more accessible to specific target groups.

The next section reflects on the contribution of this study in terms of research ethics.

6.1 Advancing social science research ethics

One aim of this study was to contribute to enhancing research ethics standards. Throughout the dissertation, various theoretical and practical aspects of research ethics have thus played a role in setting the framework, determining the scope and analysing the achievement of the study. The contribution of this study in terms of research ethics lies in combining different ethical aspects and demands into one integrated approach. In order to outline this approach, I will firstly review the three main lines of thinking underlying the request for ethical research conduct as raised in the course of the study.

According to the first line of thinking, research ethics consist predominantly of guidelines and standards prescribed by universities and funding bodies. With the presumed aim of guaranteeing ethical research, such guidelines compel researchers to fulfil a number of formal requirements. However, as extensively discussed in chapter 2.1 and further analysed in chapter 4, such guidelines and requirements are often vague and incoherent as they lack a clear reference to their underlying moral values. With a narrow focus on the avoidance of harm, formal ethics guidelines assume shared ethical values and rarely justify their demand for ethical research conduct. This omission leads to contradictory and morally ambiguous standards, illustrated in the University of York's generalised refusal to accept funding from the tobacco industry while simultaneously allowing research cooperation with the defence sector. In addition to these shortcomings, it has been shown repeatedly that procedural ethics are no guarantee for ethical research practice. As argued in chapter 5, for instance, some formal ethics requirements are even problematic, such as demanding undocumented migrants to provide written consent.

While ethics guidelines, procedures and committees have experienced an upsurge in recent years, scholars affected by the growing formalisation and institutionalisation of research ethics are becoming increasingly unsatisfied with these developments. Due to doubts regarding the effectiveness of procedural ethics to guarantee genuine ethical research, calls for enhanced ethics standards are gaining prominence.

These calls by (forced) migration, childhood and other social science scholars comprise the second line of thinking concerning research ethics ((forced) migration scholars: e.g. Block et al. 2012; Mackenzie, McDowell and Pittaway 2007; Pittaway, Bartolomei and Hugman 2010; childhood scholars: e.g. Kendrick, Steckley and Lerpiniere 2008). The rationale underlying these demands links the need for ethical research to the vulnerability of the participants. Among (forced) migration scholars, for instance, the perceived moral duty to conduct ethical research generally derives from the assumption that 'the researched', due to the mere fact of being displaced, are suffering and thus deserve to be 'handled with care'.

Without denying that many (forced) migrants face enormous challenges, hardships and risks, I argue that this position is both limited and morally problematic as it overlooks a number of factors discussed in previous chapters. Above all, it presumes and ascribes a generalised vulnerability to people based on their migration status and justifies the need for ethical conduct on the basis of this vulnerability. In so doing, this notion presupposes a shared experience that undermines the complexity of (forced) migrants' lives. As such, it overlooks the fact that the migration category is often merely one among several held by the respective persons. A refugee can, for instance, simultaneously belong to other categories such as that of a student, professional, mother or father. Depending on the time, place and context, individuals identify more with one category than another and might prefer to be recognized and 'researched' under one category rather than another. For example, a student who happens to also be a refugee might agree to participate in research concerning the lack of housing for students, but might refuse to participate in a study concerning the challenges faced by refugees in accessing the local housing market.

As also pointed out previously, the notion of vulnerability furthermore overlooks individuals' capacities and possibilities for change (Clark 2007; Timmer 2010). As such, a (forced) migrant may be struggling at one point, but may later become a successful academic or entrepreneur. Finally, this line of thinking about (forced) migrants as vulnerable derives from a perception which presumes settled life as the

desired norm and (forced) migration as an unwanted abnormality. In this regard, de Genova states that

> *human mobility only appears as a 'problem' once it comes to be subordinated within the global purview of this sort of colonial regime of mobility control and large-scale immobilization, accumulating populations within the confines of the vast de facto prison-labour camps known as colonies. (de Genova 2013, p. 253, emphasis in original)*

This reflection on the notion of vulnerability serves as a warning against simplistic and uniform presumptions about (forced) migrants' lives.

A very similar point can be made with regard to researching children. Chapter 2.3 pointed out that children are often perceived as vulnerable if their circumstances deviate from those which predominantly Western researchers consider to be appropriate or ideal for children. These assumptions are problematic, especially when applied in research contexts where children's cultural backgrounds differ from those of the researchers. With regard to this case study, I therefore argue that unaccompanied, separated and undocumented migrant children cannot be assumed to be generally more vulnerable than other South African children, many of whom live in poverty and without access to appropriate housing, schooling and other basic rights and needs. As this study has shown, migrant children can face many difficulties, some of which may lead to devastating effects if not addressed. However, similarly to the point raised above with regard to (forced) migrants, I caution against the generalised notion that all migrant children are necessarily and inherently vulnerable.

From this I proceed to argue that the mere fact of researching persons who are (forced) migrants or children is not sufficient to justify the need to be ethical. This does not imply that research with (forced) migrants and children should not be ethical, but that it is not participants' state of displacement, migration or age as such that demands ethical conduct.

This leads me to the third line of thinking which highlights my argument raised in previous chapters that ethical conduct should be based on solid ethical grounds rather than on the demographic criteria of the target group. Adopting a deontological stance, I propose that the right actions are determined by our agent-relative moral duties. This implies that we owe particular duties to persons with whom we have a special relationship, such as relatives and friends. I have argued in chapter 5 that these duties also extend to research participants. Consequently, researchers' ethical duties then extend beyond harm avoidance to also comprise relational ethics and the need for

research to be reciprocal. Importantly, these duties do not derive from participants' demographic characteristics, but from our relationship to them as other human beings. In other words, our duty to conduct research in an ethical way is not based on participants' status as forced, undocumented or unaccompanied migrants or children, but on our moral duty towards them as our research participants.

This point of view corresponds to Levinas' notion of our unconditional responsibility towards the other. Reiterating the point raised in chapters 2.3.3 and 4.2.2, this stance requires researchers to adopt a position of ethical equality concerning all research participants, regardless of their particular nationality, age, migration, family, health or other status. Such an approach also obliges researchers to be aware of their participants' particular needs and sensitivities. In the case of undocumented migrants, for example, this implies the need to be aware of security issues they may face as a consequence of participating in research. This understanding of research ethics thus entails more than 'resolving ethical dilemmas' (Aidani 2013).

As proposed in chapter 2.1 and confirmed through this study, this way of interpreting enhanced research ethics can be viewed as a holistic concept which comprises different aspects: procedural ethics, relational ethics, material, educational, political and affective reciprocity. Unlike the conventional understanding of research ethics as a hierarchy as outlined in chapter 2, I hereby propose to conceptualise the notion of enhanced ethics as an integrated concept consisting of various equally important components. Similar to the integrated notion of the triple imperative presented in chapter 5.4.2, the different components of the integrated enhanced research ethics approach also depend on and influence each other. If, for instance, relational ethics are not guaranteed, reciprocity is difficult to achieve.

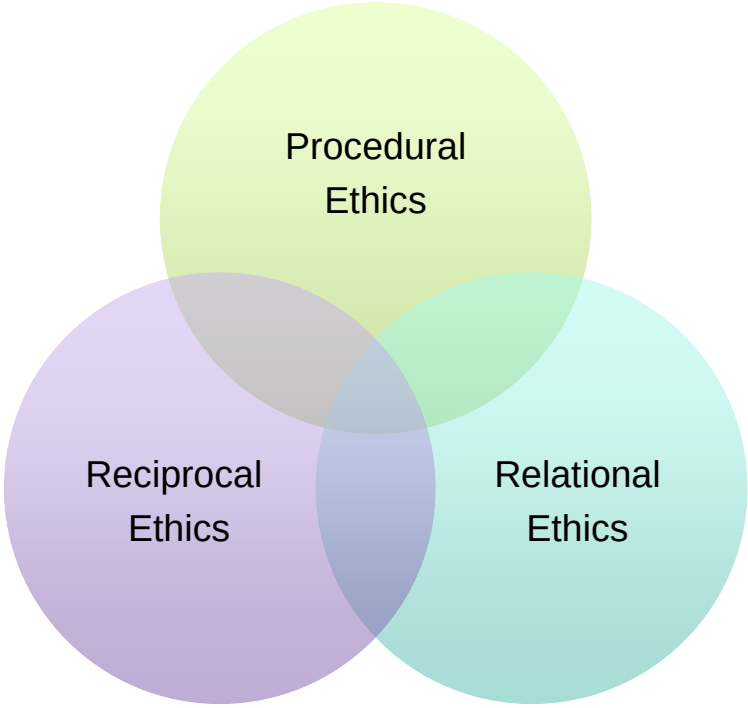

Figure 21 – Integrated enhanced research ethics (graph by Lena S. Opfermann)

Combining the enhanced ethics concept with the integrated imperative concept then leads to a complex understanding of research in which various forms of knowledge are produced and intertwined with various aspects of ethics and relevance. This way of conceptualising research is not only applicable to (forced) migration studies, but also to other fields of social inquiry with a political and moral ambition.

The following subsection proposes three recommendations as to how universities, funders and researchers can enhance research ethics guidelines and practice.

6.1.1 Recommendations for enhanced research ethics

This study revealed that formal ethics procedures and guidelines are often insufficient and inconsistent. Above all, it showed that the requirements often lack justification and a clear indication concerning the moral values they are based on. As a consequence of these and other shortcomings, many researchers perceive university ethics procedures as a mere formality that they neither support nor trust. Consequently, they aim to gain ethics clearance by adopting a particular language and including certain information that ethics committees are likely to approve whilst omitting ethically controversial details. In order to make university guidelines and procedures more appropriate and effective so that they ultimately enhance ethical research conduct, I recommend the following:

1. *Universities need to be specific in their demands for ethical research*

Universities and funders need to be more specific in setting out their underlying reasons for the need to be ethical as well as their exact understanding of what they perceive to be ethical research. Above all, this requires them to take a clear stance concerning the moral foundation their guidelines are based on, even if this entails an acknowledgment of the complexity surrounding ethical viewpoints and understandings of morality.

2. *Individual researchers should be clear about their own ethical stance*

With regard to individual researchers I wish to reiterate my argument made in section 6.1 concerning research ethics. Rather than justifying the need for ethical research practice on the basis of demographic characteristics of research participants such as age, gender, health or legal status, the need for ethical research should be based on solid ethical grounds. These can for example be an understanding that the right actions are determined by our moral duties (deontological view) or by the effects of our actions (consequentialist view). Regardless of which ethical school researchers decide to follow, it is important to be clear about their own ethical stance.

The question of our moral duties and right actions also links to the challenge of combining research and advocacy. As mentioned in chapter 1, research about injustice and oppression often aims to achieve change, yet advocacy oriented research is often perceived as a dichotomy that should be avoided. I therefore recommend that a clear ethical stance helps researchers to position themselves and to frame their research questions, data collection and analysis. In this study, for example, my ethical stance allowed me to recognize the intangible effects of this research as equally relevant as its other outcomes.

3. *The integrated enhanced ethics approach should be explored further*

With regard to future research in this field, I suggest that the integrated enhanced ethics approach developed in this study should be explored further. Empirical studies applying and confirming the strength of this approach, also with regard to other target groups, will contribute to developing the approach further so that it can become a widely accepted and utilised tool that ensures ethical research across different academic disciplines.

6.2 Expanding the methodological repertoire of (forced) migration studies

This study introduces theatre-based research to the methodological repertoire of (forced) migration studies and similar fields concerned with issues of social inequality and oppression. I argue that theatre-based research is a useful methodology for such disciplines as it fulfils the demands of the triple imperative. In this sense, theatre-based research produces sound academic knowledge that is relevant for individuals and the broader society and it is capable of fulfilling enhanced ethics standards. This section elaborates on this argument in more detail by reviewing the epistemology, enhanced ethics and relevance of theatre-based research as discussed and examined throughout this study.

Epistemology

In terms of knowledge production, theatre-based research makes an epistemological contribution to (forced) migration studies. As discussed in chapter 3.1, knowledge production in the social sciences has traditionally been understood and perceived as the discovery of 'truth' about a particular phenomenon or question of social concern. In this positivist line of thinking only research results that are quantifiable, verifiable and replicable are recognized as valuable knowledge. While this narrow definition of knowledge has been questioned and expanded by the emergence of qualitative research methods in the 20th century, positivism still continues to dominate the social sciences, including (forced) migration research (Mander 2010). Arts-based and other participatory research questions the described epistemology in several ways, arguing above all that knowledge is more complex and less tangible than traditionally believed.

By recognizing "other ways of knowing that are rooted in embodied experience, orality, and local contingencies" (Conquergood 2002, p. 146), theatre-based research is capable of uncovering meaning that is covert, ambiguous, embodied and often inexpressible in verbal terms. It does so by applying a variety of verbal and non-verbal techniques such as acting in role-plays, improvisation or mime, group discussions, writing exercises and video recordings. These techniques allow embodied knowledge and people's hidden transcripts to surface. A physical face-to-face encounter between actors and audience then creates an 'affective transaction' of this knowledge to others. It is therefore the way in which theatre expresses, transfers and represents experience that creates a meaningful picture. Due to this particular epistemology and its capacity

to uncover otherwise hidden meanings, a theatre-based methodology enriches and advances (forced) migration research.

Enhanced ethics

In addition to creating in-depth meaning, theatre-based research has the capacity to fulfil enhanced ethics standards. This capacity derives from the commitment and aim towards social justice that underlies all arts-based research and reveals itself in the way that knowledge is created and disseminated. On an individual level, theatre-based research enhances social justice by addressing power inequalities inherent in the research process. As such, it enables researchers to honour participants' ownership and agency throughout the research process. The possibility of expressing embodied knowledge by communicating through verbal and non-verbal means enables participants to share stories in a way that is respectful to their individual preferences, needs, sensitivities and fears.

In this study, theatre led participants to share feelings of loneliness, longing for their parents, fear of police violence and experiences of discrimination. The process furthermore stimulated individuals to engage with previously 'locked up' personal experiences, triggering deeper processing and reflection. In one case, for example, one participant's involvement in this project led him to admit to his social worker that he missed his mother. As a consequence, the social worker started a tracing process which resulted in the successful re-initiation of the participant's contact with his family after many years of separation. The particular ethical value of this research approach is moreover linked to the capacity of theatre to produce material, educational and above all affective benefits for participants. In a deontological sense, it is through these forms of reciprocity that theatre enables researchers to fulfil their agent-relative duties towards their participants.

Theatre and other forms of arts-based research also address and unsettle oppressive structures inherent in the academic system. The valorisation of alternative forms of knowledge is part of this endeavour. As previously mentioned, embodied, non-verbal, non-written, 'intangible' and 'ambiguous' forms of knowledge stand in radical contrast to traditional forms of knowledge and knowledge production. Also the type of questions theatre-based research addresses often speak to issues of social concern and pursue the aim of exploring and raising 'subjugated perspectives' of persons who might otherwise be unable to speak up.

The dissemination of theatre-based research furthermore addresses challenges inherent in the representation of others. As such, research results can be represented by performing participants' testimonies or participants can even perform these themselves, as was the case in this study. The theatrical representation of (forced) migrants, however, is challenging from an ethical point of view as migrants' lives and fates are characterised and often determined by stereotypes. In this regard, the question as to whether verbatim, documentary or testimonial theatre is more 'authentic' and hence more ethical than fictional theatre, remains contested.

Challenges

This study also showed that certain challenges can occur when applying theatre-based research with migrant children. Firstly, it became clear that spoken language is more important in theatre-based projects than indicated in the literature. Secondly, the study showed that story-telling in a group is not necessarily an organic process.

These challenges are closely related to the group's constitution. Most theatre projects involving children are implemented with existing groups such as youth theatre groups or school classes. Projects furthermore commonly focus on children of one particular nationality or ethnic background such as Latino/a youth in the US (Marín 2007) or Aboriginal youth in Canada (Conrad 2006; Conrad 2008). Existing groups already have established codes of conduct and ways of communicating with each other, generally through a common language that facilitates and ensures successful oral communication within the group. By the time a theatre project starts, the members of existing groups have already developed a certain level of trust. I suggest that it is because of these established modes of communication and levels of trust that the sharing of stories in theatre projects is often described and perceived as an organic process.

This study is novel in the sense that it was implemented with children who did not know each other in advance, had different nationalities and mother tongues as well as highly diverse English and general literacy skills. Chapter 4.2.1 highlighted how these linguistic inequalities affected the type of activities and instructions participants were able to respond to. It could have been assumed that participants' foreign nationality and undocumented legal status would have created an immediate level of trust. As also mentioned in chapter 4, however, unaccompanied migrant children often display high levels of distrust towards others, illustrated by maintaining silence in contact with authority figures such as social workers, immigration officers and researchers (Chase

2009; Kohli 2006). In this study, functional distrust, amongst other factors, prevented participants from sharing details about their family members and current living conditions as well as about their pre-migration background.

A further challenge from a research point of view was the lack of respect and discipline in the group. As discussed in chapter 4.2.3, these behaviour patterns can be interpreted in various ways: they may have been participants' response to the pressure I felt in order to succeed with my own academic goals which most participants neither shared nor comprehended. The perceived lack of discipline can also be interpreted as an expression of participants' sense of freedom which allowed them to act and behave the way they wanted to, even if this meant distracting the workshop. It is likely that theatre-based research conducted in school contexts or with existing youth groups does not share these challenges to the same extent as they will have a certain discipline established through set rules and the presence of an authoritative figure such as a teacher.

Whilst I have argued that distrust and language differences derive at least partly from participants' status as migrants, I suggest that the questions of respect and discipline may also be linked to participants' age. Throughout this account I have been careful to avoid applying standards or criteria based on participants' age or status as children. However, I do suggest here that adult migrant participants are likely to be more respectful with each other than the teenage participants in this study. The fact that none of the studies referred to in the literature and conducted with adults raise the issue of respect and discipline as a challenge speaks to this point.

In this project, dealing with and overcoming issues of language, trust, respect and discipline as a group led participants to develop a sense of achievement and pride. Based on these positive results I conclude that the project would not have had the same effect if discipline had been imposed. For Boal, trust, care and discipline are preconditions for dialogic exchange with the aim of transforming individuals' consciousness (Boal 1979). This study has shown that those preconditions are necessary even if neither the aim nor the result is a transformation in Boal's sense.

Relevance

Having shown that theatre-based research produces academically sound knowledge in an ethical way, the question remains as to whether we can "make the case that an ethical approach is not just morally necessary, but also produces a higher quality of

research or advocacy" (Gready 2010, p. 189). In light of this concern I will now turn to the third component of the triple imperative which relates to the relevance of research.

In this regard, the study has demonstrated that theatre-based research produces results that are relevant for policy making. More specifically, the in-depth analysis of the research results in chapter 5.4 showed that the policy relevance of theatre-based research lies in its potential to uncover meanings that conventional research methods are unlikely to reveal. As discussed previously with regard to the epistemology of theatre-based research, this methodology creates meaning by allowing embodied knowledge to surface. The surfacing of embodied knowledge in turn is enabled through an enhanced ethical approach which applies a variety of non-verbal communication techniques, builds trust, respects participants' ownership and produces affective reciprocity.

The in-depth insights gained through this study enhance existing discourse and knowledge on migrant children's lived experiences and can thus strengthen the rights-based advocacy undertaken by practitioners on the children's behalf. Based on this I respond to Gready's question that in arts-based research, enhanced ethics does indeed produce 'a higher quality of research and advocacy'. This assertion furthermore confirms Bakewell's argument raised in chapter 2.2.2 that research starting "from the perspective of the forced migrants (…) or from the perspective of other academic fields outside the forced migration field" (Bakewell 2008, p. 442) can "help build new knowledge with tremendous practical relevance" (ibid., p. 450). The summary and recommendations in section 6.3 will discuss further how the results of this study are useful for policy makers and practitioners.

With regard to the relevance of research for individuals, this study has further shown that theatre-based research affects participants in many ways. It produces emotions such as joy and happiness, sadness and contemplation. The face to face encounter inherent in any performance facilitates a transmission of these emotions from actors to audience. These 'affective transactions' can trigger a change in attitudes, raise awareness and even encourage people to act. Since these results are intangible and hard to measure, however, arts-based researchers are often compelled to instrumentalise the ethical and aesthetic functions of their research by applying the same categories used to describe and measure conventional research outcomes.

In contrast to this, I argue that the ethical and aesthetic qualities of arts-based research should be recognized as equally valuable as its policy relevance in a conventional sense. This argument is based on a deontological school of thought according to which it is more important that researchers honour their commitment towards their individual participants than produce research outcomes that are presumed policy relevant but are unlikely to ever affect participants directly. In this respect, research is considered relevant if it is ethical towards its participants as well as to their stories. Unlike the above mentioned conventional notion of relevance, this way of looking at research relevance is not separate from, but interrelated to, both ethics and art.

The following subsection provides recommendations for (forced) migration and other researchers wishing to conduct theatre-based research.

6.2.1 Recommendations for theatre-based (forced) migration research

This study has shown that theatre-based research is a useful addition to the field of (forced) migration studies. The previous sections and chapters have set out at length its methodological advantages in terms of knowledge production, ethics and relevance. The analysis has also identified a number of shortcomings pertaining to this methodological approach when applied with a newly established group of undocumented migrant children. Future researchers aiming to conduct theatre-based research with migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers or otherwise displaced persons should therefore keep a number of limitations and considerations in mind.

1. *Sufficient time needs to be allocated for trust building*

Firstly, it is important to consider whether the research will be carried out with an existing or with a newly established group of persons. Research with existing groups is likely to start from a position where participants know each other and have a certain level of trust as well as a common language of communication established. This study has shown that research with newly established groups needs to allocate sufficient time and attention to build trust among the group members as well as between participants and the researcher/facilitator. Depending on participants' background, trust building is likely to take a considerable amount of time. In this project, it was for example necessary to extend the duration of the project from three to four months and to include additional full-day workshops. This extra time helped the trust building and relieved some of the pressure initially felt by the participants and the researcher.

Once trust is established, it is equally important to acknowledge that migrant children and adults may prefer to keep certain aspects concerning their lives to themselves or only share them in a confidential way. Furthermore, it is not advisable to discuss and explore all research questions and topics within a group context. In order to be mindful of participants' sensitivities, is useful to include confidential activities such as postcards, diaries, drawings, individual video recordings and personal conversations as part of the activities.

2. *The significance of a common language needs to be considered and non-verbal means of communication should be fostered*

Another challenge to be considered in working with migrants is language. As this project has shown, despite the capacity of theatre to communicate embodied knowledge through non-verbal means, the ability and need to communicate verbally with the group is more important than generally acknowledged. As such, differing language and literacy skills within the group can inhibit successful dialogue and require researchers to adapt their activities accordingly. In this project, for example, we largely had to refrain from using written materials such as theatre scripts, newspaper articles or written instructions. We also had to give very clear and straight forward instructions and avoid any complex questions.

In order to deal with language differences and inequalities I therefore recommend fostering non-verbal means of communication, which constitute a strength of theatre-based research. Mime, voice exercises, role-play and improvisation are useful techniques that not only allow participants to communicate non-verbally, but also permit them to get used to being on stage and expressing themselves in front of an audience. In order to honour participants' ownership, theatre-based researchers need to be perceptive, mindful and open to the particular sensitivities and needs of their participants. As previously mentioned, this entails respecting participants' silences as well as potentially adjusting the planned activities accordingly or extending the duration of the project.

3. *A workshop format has advantages and disadvantages*

The workshop format of this study had both practical limitations and advantages. Firstly, the workshop location in the centre of Cape Town presented a challenge as participants were required to travel to our meeting point on Sundays when public transport was limited and insecure. Some caregivers' safety concerns even prevented

some children from participating in the project. Secondly, the workshop format spatially confined the data capture and generation to one fixed location. This limited my understanding of participants' lives to their participation and contributions in the workshops as well as to some informal conversations and interactions outside the workshops. More traditional approaches to ethnography in which the researcher 'hangs out' with participants in their own spaces would have allowed me to gain insight into participants' homes, schools and other relevant spaces. Such hanging out, however, can also be perceived as an invasion of participants' and their families' privacy. In this regard, the clear location of the workshops ensured that participants' privacy was respected.

Thirdly, the workshop series made the data collection a relatively clear-cut and contained exercise with a beginning and an end point. The overall time period of four months and a total of 29 workshops proved to be quite short. In hindsight I therefore submit that a longer time frame would have allowed for a deeper level of trust to develop between participants, the facilitators and myself, which in turn would have allowed for deeper conversations and insights. The time frame of this study was based primarily on logistical considerations such as funding, the availability of the hall and the time frame of my PhD. As discussed in chapter 4.2.3, the limited time frame of the project put immense pressure on me which consequently also affected the participants to some extent.

At the same time, the focus on the workshop series also presented a considerable advantage in terms of the research design and implementation. As such, the workshops could easily be planned around certain fixed dates, implemented and subsequently analysed. As discussed in chapter 4.4.2, the specific time frame also served as a form of 'exit strategy' that helped avoid disappointment and a sense of abandonment at the end of the project (Abebe and Bessell 2014, p. 130). Finally and most importantly, the workshop format provided the basis for the theatre-based activities which led participants to develop a sense of family, create friendships, have fun and overcome challenges which ultimately resulted in a sense of pride, achievement, confidence and hope.

4. Theatre-based research should be explored with other target groups

As an emerging methodology, theatre-based research is being developed further with each study. In order to expand its scope and relevance for (forced) migration studies and other disciplines, I suggest that it would be useful to broaden the target groups.

Specifically, I propose that the methodology should be explored in research with undocumented adult migrants and refugees. This would serve to establish whether some of the challenges experienced in this study such as a lack of discipline were in fact related to participants' age. In addition, it would be insightful to conduct research with migrants with similar language skills or pertaining to the same language group as this would provide more insight into the aspect of verbal communication in theatre-based research. Similarly, it is worth exploring how the particular group constitution influences participants' engagement. In this regard, it could be useful to work with groups constituted of one nationality and/or gender only as well as with groups that include both foreign and South African participants.

Concerning the policy relevance of theatre-based research, I finally suggest that future research could explore the impact of research-based performances on audiences as well as their 'response-ability' to what they see on stage.

6.3 Enhancing knowledge on migrant children in South Africa

Chapters 1.2 and 2.4 highlighted a lack of knowledge concerning unaccompanied and undocumented migrant children in Southern Africa. Since most research on migrant children in Southern Africa falls into Hart's categories of legal and 'social work research' (Hart 2014) there is an urgent need for further research especially concerning migrant children's lived experiences. This study contributes to filling this gap in four main ways, namely in terms of its particular target group, its geographical focus, the type of insight it provides concerning the children's experiences of 'illegality' and the relevance thereof for the South African policy context.

So far, studies on migrant children in Southern Africa have focused largely on children who are still on the move or find themselves in an unstable migration situation in the border regions between South Africa, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. This research is original as it constitutes one of the first comprehensive studies focusing on undocumented migrant children who are no longer on the move as they have established their lives within South Africa. Beyond immediate humanitarian needs, their situation is therefore characterised by more longer-term challenges concerning their social integration, access to education, future plans as well as protection against abandonment, discrimination, deportation and abuse by various actors.

In the absence of a regulated social system that registers all children and ensures that all their needs are met, many separated and unaccompanied migrant children depend

on adult relatives or strangers to guarantee their physical wellbeing and safety. On the one hand, these care arrangements are essential as they cover the children's basic needs by providing shelter, food and clothing. On the other hand, this study also identified challenges concerning the informality of such care arrangements. Several examples pointed to shortcomings concerning the children's access to education, emotional needs and long-term stability. As such, several participants did not attend school and two had faced the risk of abandonment at some point during their stay in South Africa. Furthermore, the research clearly showed that participants are affected by the pervasive anti-foreigner sentiments among South African society and institutions. They fear abuse and discrimination by the police and other law enforcement agencies known to target foreigners. Aware of their own sense of insecurity, participants furthermore indicated feeling targeted by gangsters and criminals.

The geographical focus of this study on an urban area far from the country's borders constitutes another important contribution to the literature. Unaccompanied children in border towns usually come from the neighbouring countries Zimbabwe or Mozambique. Residing close to the border gives them a certain liberty of movement as the proximity to their home country allows them to cross the border and return home if they need or want to (Mahati 2012a and b). Participants of this study, by contrast, were not only living far from South Africa's borders but most also came from far away countries such as Angola, Rwanda and the DRC. Unlike unaccompanied migrant children in West Africa and those living in South Africa's border regions, participants of this study did not seem to have migrated primarily for the purpose of finding work, but for educational or humanitarian purposes. Most seemed to have chosen South Africa as a destination because they already had adult relatives living there, others were born in South Africa to foreign parents and find themselves undocumented as their parents' unclear legal status prevents them from obtaining a legal document or even from registering their birth.

The research showed that participants' notion of 'home' is mostly associated with a faraway place they miss but are currently unable to return to. Participants also expressed strong feelings of loneliness and longing for their absent parents. These feelings result in a sense of adulthood which in turn triggers the children to take responsibility for their own lives. At the same time, it also prevents them from returning to their home countries before having achieved something meaningful, such as acquiring an education or profession. The inability to return was therefore only partly

due to the physical distance. Several participants indicated that, while they missed their home, they would only be able to go home once they had achieved something in terms of their education or professional skills. This insight shows that participants, despite living in a situation of legal limbo, for the time being nevertheless consider South Africa their temporary, and in some cases their permanent and future home. The significance thereof in terms of policy making is discussed below.

As pointed out in chapters 1 and 2, there is an extreme lack of research exploring the condition of 'illegality' among youth in the Southern African context. The third major contribution of this study therefore refers to its particular focus on the children's undocumented legal status and how it affects their daily lives. Participants of this study found themselves outside existing legal or policy categories as none of them was eligible to apply for refugee status or any other legal immigration status in South Africa. This absence of possibilities to legalize their stay derives from a gap in the South African immigration law that only accommodates foreign children in the presence of their legally documented parents.

The results of this study confirmed the assumption that participants' undocumented legal status affects their lives in emotional and practical ways. What is more, the research showed that participants' legal status represents the greatest practical challenge in their lives. Similar to experiences of undocumented persons in Israel and the UK (e.g. Bloch et al. 2009; Willen 2007), participants' 'illegality' limits their physical freedom of movement and compromises their safety as it exposes them to a constant risk of being identified as undocumented migrants. For participants, the regular anti-foreigner raids conducted by the South African Police Service in collaboration with the Department of Home Affairs and the military as described in chapter 1.2 constitute a real risk and cause the children to live with a constant fear of arrest and deportation. Their undocumented status also prevents them from joining local soccer clubs and extracurricular school activities as well as from taking up part-time jobs. If exposed in front of a group, their status furthermore makes them the target of discrimination and harassment among their peers and colleagues. It is therefore pertinent to say that the children's 'illegality' effectively hinders their social integration and personal development, prevents them from pursuing higher education and future planning. Gonzales, Heredia and Negrón-Gonzales' (2015) finding that the right to basic education does not 'unmake' undocumented children's 'illegality' is thus also pertinent in the South African case.

As discussed in chapter 5.4, the data analysis further revealed that participants' seemingly hopeless circumstances do not turn them into 'needy subjects' waiting to be saved by others. A reading of participants' performances as hidden transcripts instead allowed for an interpretation thereof as a conscious display and accusation of their oppression. Similarly, participants display performative everyday agency as a means of dealing with, resisting and circumventing their challenges. In this sense, the children's everyday conduct and interaction with others contain elements of both fact and fiction. The performative elements constitute public transcripts that display the children's strengths whereas the concealed elements constitute hidden transcripts that hide their weaknesses. For example, participants tend to emphasise their knowledge of the local language, culture and fashion while avoiding disclosure of details that risk compromising their integration such as their foreign nationality, mother tongue and precarious legal status.

6.3.1 Policy recommendations

The insights gained through this research offer an important contribution to improving policy making and advocacy on behalf of undocumented migrant children in South Africa. Chapter 1 stated that this research was based on my ambition and commitment to contribute to changing the legal and social injustices faced by undocumented migrant children in South Africa. To honour this commitment, the following points are framed as recommendations for policy makers, in particular at the Departments of Home Affairs and Social Development, as well as other actors concerned with migrant children's wellbeing such as social workers, lawyers, advocacy officers and researchers. In formulating these recommendations I am aware of the tense political and economic context South Africa finds itself in with a struggling economy, high rates of unemployment and a wide spread lack of trust in the political leadership of the country. Given these circumstances, migration-related challenges and needs are unlikely to receive any favourable political attention in the coming years. Despite, or perhaps because of this situation, the following recommendations are to be seen as a contribution to advocacy efforts by civil society and humanitarian actors who are working towards improving migrants' lives in South Africa.

Provide legal documentation

This study confirmed the assumption that migrant children's lives in South Africa are strongly affected by the lack of a legal status. Participants described the lack of 'papers' as their biggest challenge that limits their freedoms and opportunities in many ways. Due to their legal status they experience discrimination, struggle to access local

soccer clubs, libraries, extracurricular school activities and part-time jobs. Furthermore, they live with a constant fear of being arrested. These challenges and risks demonstrate the significance of the legal status in the children's lives. This is particularly pertinent with regard to those children who are likely to stay in South Africa in the long term as they have nowhere else to return to. For these reasons it is paramount for policy makers to address the legislative gaps and inconsistencies concerning migrant children in current South African immigration law and social policy. I propose three practical steps in this direction.

Firstly, the presence of unaccompanied and separated migrant children should be registered in a coherent and reliable nation-wide system, administered and monitored by the Department of Social Development. Secondly, a particular legal status for children who fall outside existing immigration categories needs to be created and issued independently of the children's parents' status or presence in the country. This special status needs to include undocumented children who were born in South Africa as well as those who live with their biological parents. Thirdly, I propose to recognize children's legal status as a 'need' that social workers must take into account when assessing a child's situation as required by the Children's Act No. 38 of 2005 (Republic of South Africa 2005). I have argued elsewhere that the provision of a legal identity document to all migrant children, regardless of their status or category, is essential for reasons that go beyond the purpose of legalizing the children's stay (Opfermann 2015). In addition to decriminalizing the children, legal documents provide a form of stability in the children's otherwise unstable lives. Importantly, legal documentation also enhances migrant children's educational opportunities and personal development as it enables them to graduate from secondary schooling and to pursue tertiary education. In addition to reducing the element of fear and discrimination that the children experience on a daily basis, legal documentation fosters their social integration and wellbeing. Above all, however, a recognized legal status constitutes a crucial step towards recognizing migrant children's dignity as persons (ibid.).

Uncover hidden transcripts

As discussed in chapter 5.4, this study found that the undocumented migrant children participating in this study display 'performative everyday agency' in their conduct and interaction with others. As such, they emphasise certain strengths that foster their integration or lead to other benefits while they hide aspects that may be interpreted as weaknesses. In order to identify the children's actual needs and strengths and to offer effective protection and solutions, practitioners therefore need to recognize

undocumented children's performative agency and uncover and distinguish between the children's hidden and public transcripts.

Due to some migrant children's functional distrust, it is unlikely that a one-off interview would reveal the necessary insights. While this study has shown that theatre is a useful tool to uncover hidden transcripts, it may not be feasible for social workers or immigration officials to implement theatre-based activities as part of their daily work. Nevertheless, some lessons from this approach are useful for practitioners as well. One such lesson is that the establishment of trust is a crucial precondition for sharing stories. In this sense, the more migrant children trust someone the more likely they are to share their hidden transcripts with them. In order to identify the children's 'real' needs, it is therefore paramount to act in a trustworthy way. Participants of this study had been served by social workers who did not keep their actual or perceived promises towards the children. Consequently, the children lost trust not only in the social workers but in the social system as a whole. This is to be avoided by a system mandated to ensure the protection, care and wellbeing of all children in the country.

As pointed out in chapter 2.3.2, recognizing children's everyday agency compels policy makers and practitioners to acknowledge children's roles and responsibilities as well as their views and the changes they propose (Payne 2012, p. 400). With regard to undocumented migrant children in South Africa, I suggest that actors need to pay close attention to the 'adult' responsibilities the children fulfil in their attempt to ensure their own and their families' safety and wellbeing. This also means recognizing that the children's actions and strategies, while successfully allowing them to live in South Africa within the parameters of their restricted freedoms, are limited in their overall success. The feeling of 'not being free' expressed by the children, essentially means that they feel 'trapped' or 'imprisoned', restricted not only in fulfilling their daily tasks and obligations but also in pursuing their goals and dreams. Understanding the children's needs thus also requires adults to focus on the limitations of the children's freedoms.

Formalize and monitor informal care arrangements

The data analysis in chapter 5 identified a number of shortcomings related to the informality of the care arrangements many separated migrant children find themselves in. These shortcomings include children missing out on education, experiencing the threat of abandonment and lack of emotional care and support. Partly due to these challenges, the children developed an enormous sense of responsibility to take care of

their own lives. As Boyden and Hart point out, the solution to the mentioned issues may therefore not necessarily be “the provision of substitute families but rather the ability of authorities to offer a responsive system of service provision that can support refugee children to live in the manner that best ensures their well-being” (Boyden and Hart 2007, p. 244). In order to ensure the wellbeing of all migrant children in South Africa, I suggest that informal care arrangements are monitored in the same way that formal guardianship arrangements such as foster care are being monitored by the state. The lack of formality in terms of care arrangements contributes to creating and shaping the legal vacuum migrant children find themselves in, thereby reinforcing the precariousness of their situation in a foreign state. In this regard I support the argument that foreign children without formal caregiver or guardian are ‘functionally stateless’:

> *The absence of a person who acts ‘in loco parentis’ and of an advocate who is charged with unlocking the protective promises contained in statutes essentially fixes Arendt's children in their radical otherness. It guarantees functional statelessness across key dimensions of social and economic need. (Bhabha 2009, p. 423)*

Jacqueline Bhabha uses the term ‘Arendt’s children’ in reference to “a subset of child migrants who lack their own government” and who are therefore ‘de facto or functionally stateless’ (Bhabha 2009, p. 411f). In this sense, “Arendt's children all share three defining characteristics: they are minors; they are, or they risk being, separated from their parents or customary guardians; and they do not in fact (regardless of whether they do in law) have a country to call their own because they are either noncitizens or children of noncitizens” (ibid., p. 413). A possible solution to this problem is to formalize care relationships by turning them into legal guardianships similar to foster care arrangements. This formality would make it easier to hold caregivers accountable for their actions.

Address xenophobia and discrimination

This study showed that a legal status alone does not necessarily guarantee migrant children’s protection, wellbeing and dignity. In addition to enhancing the legal provisions applicable to migrant children, it is therefore equally important to recognize and address widespread anti-foreigner sentiments, harassment, violence and discrimination. A major long-term challenge in this regard lies in transforming the prevailing notion that foreigners are “a threat to insiders’ economic and physical wellbeing and national (…) achievement” (Landau 2011, p. 5). In this regard, Landau further stated in 2013:

> *It is time to ask ourselves uncomfortable questions. At stake are the ethics of living with diversity, the nature of social membership, the value of rights and law, and the means of building unity in a country still characterised by division, inequality and fragmented institutions. (Landau 2013)*

Raised five years after the 2008 episode of violence and one year ahead of renewed outbreaks of xenophobic violence in 2014, this statement gained new meaning in light of the student movements that took place across South Africa in 2015 and 2016, including #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall. Aimed at transforming and decolonizing the higher education system, these movements are yet another illustration that 'uncomfortable questions' need to be asked in order to overcome deep-rooted division, inequality, racism and xenophobia.

Create alternative spaces and information materials

In order to improve the immediate wellbeing of migrant children I have proposed elsewhere the need to create alternative spaces where foreign children can meet and build trust relationships to others facing similar challenges without being judged on their nationality, language skills or legal status (Opfermann 2015). Drama and other arts-based activities are useful in this regard as they allow children to have fun, express themselves creatively and to disconnect from their daily lives. As this study has demonstrated, providing children with the opportunity to express embodied knowledge through non-verbal means can have very positive effects. Furthermore, this study led participants to develop friendships that continued to last even after the project.

Another important way of acknowledging migrant children as the caretakers of their own lives and to support them in this task is to inform them adequately about their rights as well as about the immigration laws and procedures applicable to their particular situation. For this purpose, I suggest that the Departments of Social Development and Home Affairs develop child-friendly information materials that are mindful of migrant children's varying levels of English and literacy skills. The materials should be available in the form of cartoons, freely accessible in printed and digital form, for example as apps that can be downloaded onto mobile phones. With greater clarity and knowledge about their rights, children will be able to take better informed decisions concerning their current and future lives which in turn will enhance their safety and wellbeing. One example of a child-friendly information material is the brochure 'Get help and stay safe in South Africa – A guide for children on the move'

developed by Save the Children South Africa (2015). However, this brochure is very word based, thus requiring users to have a certain degree of English literacy.

Further research needs and potential

This study was one of the first to focus explicitly on undocumented migrant children in South Africa. Being limited in its scope, further research is needed to enhance and deepen our understanding of the way in which legal and policy inconsistencies affect migrant children. In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the issue I recommend that research be conducted on the experiences and challenges encountered by the following target groups and actors:

- (Informal) caregivers looking after undocumented children
- Social workers dealing with undocumented children
- Undocumented children accompanied by their own parents
- Second generation undocumented children who were born in South Africa
- Undocumented children who have reached majority age

While the specific focus of this study was on foreign children, many South African children, especially in remote rural areas, also lack and struggle to obtain legal identity documents. The suggested recommendations and areas for future research can therefore be extended to include South African children as well.

6.4 Conclusion

This study took place at the intersection of (forced) migration, arts-based and childhood research. This interdisciplinary overlap was triggered by the notion of the triple imperative which requires researchers to combine the production of knowledge with ethical research practice and (policy) relevance. Seeking to fulfil and further develop these three demands, the study pursued three principal aims, reflected in the research questions. On the basis of a case study that investigated the lived experiences of undocumented migrant children in Cape Town, South Africa, the study explored in how far a theatre-based approach to (forced) migration research fulfils enhanced ethics standards and produces policy relevant results. The results of this study contribute to academic discourses on research ethics, arts-based research and migrant children.

In terms of research ethics, the study developed an integrated enhanced ethics approach that takes into account procedural, relational and reciprocal aspects of research ethics as equal and interrelated components. Methodologically, the study

showed that a theatre-based approach is conducive to fulfilling the triple imperative. More specifically, it illustrated how theatre enriches the epistemology, ethics and relevance of research concerned with issues of injustice and oppression. As such, theatre constitutes a valuable addition to the methodological repertoire of (forced) migration studies. Furthermore, the case study revealed that unaccompanied and separated migrant children in South Africa who find themselves outside existing policy and legal categories face serious challenges that hamper their integration, education, personal development and wellbeing. The results also showed that undocumented migrant children apply 'performative everyday agency' as a way of negotiating and resisting their everyday challenges. These insights produced several practical recommendations as to how policy makers and practitioners can address some of the challenges faced by undocumented migrant children today.

Former South African president Nelson Mandela once said that "there can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children" (Mandela 1995). With this in mind, I conclude this account by underlining that a more humane and 'ethical' approach and attitude towards migrant children is not only in the interest of the concerned children and their advocates, but of the South African society as a whole.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – List of sub-questions guiding the workshops

Being a foreign/migrant/refugee child in South Africa:

How do the children define themselves? How do they describe themselves? What does it mean for them to be a migrant/refugee? How do they perceive the South African society to perceive them? How do they think others see them?

Daily life in Cape Town:

How do they experience their daily lives here? What responsibilities do they have? Are they looking after anyone else? Is anyone looking after them? How is that relationship? What are their main challenges? What problems, difficulties do they face in their daily lives? What things, moments, activities, etc. do they enjoy?

Documentation/legal status:

Are the children aware of their (unclear) legal status? How do they describe their legal status? Do they attribute any importance to possessing a legal document? Do they feel affected by their lack of a legal document? How? Where? What experiences have they had regarding the documentation issue? Did they have any contact with immigration authorities/Home Affairs/police/other officials?

Human rights, children's rights, migrants' and refugee rights:

Are the children aware of their rights? Do they attribute any meaning to their rights? Do they care about having rights? What do they consider important in their daily lives? How important do they find education? Do they work? If yes, what kind of work and why?

Discrimination and xenophobia:

Do they have any fears of being discriminated? Do they know anyone who has been discriminated/attacked? Did they experience any discrimination or violence themselves? Before coming here? On the way? In South Africa? What do they think about South Africans? Do they have any prejudices?

The future:

How do they see their future? What dreams do they have? What concerns do they have? What plans and ambitions do they have?

Home, here and there:

What do they consider 'home'? Where do they come from? How long have they been in South Africa? How did they come? Did they spend time in other places (countries or cities) on the way before coming to CT? Do they miss anything about 'home'? How do they see themselves here as compared to their homeland? What do they think was or would be different for them there? In terms of possibilities, opportunities, problems.

Appendix 2 – Information sheet for children

Using theatre to explore undocumented migrant children's views

Project Information for Migrant Children

What is my research about?

Hi, my name is Lena and I am a student at the University of York in England. I am doing a PhD research project about unaccompanied and undocumented migrant children in South Africa. "Migrant children" are young people who came from other countries to South Africa. "Unaccompanied" means that they live here without their parents or other adults who are officially responsible for them. "Undocumented" means that they do not have a legal document such as a passport or ID.

What do I want to find out?

I am interested to learn what you think about your own situation. In particular, I want to know what you think about your rights, what good and bad experiences you have had. I also want to find out what you think should change in South Africa regarding migrant children.

What will happen in the research project?

You can imagine the project like a drama workshop. It will take place from June to August 2014. In this time, a group of young people will meet one day every week together with myself and one other facilitator. In the workshops, we will do different games, talk, act and write or draw. Everyone will share thoughts and comments and discuss different things about life as migrant children. In the end, we will produce some drama scenes or

even a whole theatre play that will be performed on stage. When the project is over, I will write a research report (thesis) for my university.

Is this project beneficial for you?

Participating in the project will give you the chance to

- be creative and become an actor for a while
- meet other young people who are in a similar situation
- share your experience with others
- discuss what you think and suggest changes

And in addition to this, the results of this project may be useful for others. Once I know what your views are, I can explain this to other people who work with children and refugees, such as social workers, lawyers and politicians. Like this, the project may even help to make some changes and improve the situation for other migrant children.

Who can participate?

Children and young people

- who are between 12 and 18 years of age AND
- who came from another country to South Africa AND
- who live in South Africa without their parents/official guardian AND
- who do **not** have a document from Home Affairs, such as an asylum permit or refugee status.
- Participating children also need to be able to speak and understand English well.

Who cannot participate?

- Children whose parents live in South Africa
- Children who do not speak and understand English well
- South African children
- Children who have a refugee status in South Africa
- Children under 12 years of age

How long will the project be?

The project will take three months, from June – August 2014.

Where will it take place?

The workshops will take place in the building of the Scalabrini Centre in the city centre of Cape Town, not far from the train station. The address is 47 Commercial Street, Cape Town.

How can you participate?

If you decide to participate, you need to sign a document to confirm that you want to participate. You also need to agree that you will come to all workshop sessions every week for three months. However, your participation in this project is completely voluntary. This means that if you decide to participate and later change your mind, you can drop out at any time without any consequences.

What else should you know?

During the workshops I will take notes, photographs and sometimes film our activities. I will use these materials later to understand exactly what you said. I may also use some of it for another project in the future in which you do not participate actively. This could be an exhibition of the photographs or another performance by students in England. I will only use the material in this way if you agree with it. We will also discuss this issue in the workshop and you will be able to tell me your opinion later.

Contact Details:

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

My contact details are:

Name: Lena Opfermann

Email: lso501@york.ac.uk

Phone: 0613693973

And this is the university where I study:

University of York, Centre for Applied Human Rights, England

Supervisor: Martin Jones

Email: martin.jones@york.ac.uk

Appendix 3 – Information sheet for adults

Using theatre to explore undocumented migrant children's views

Project Information for Adult Caregivers

What is the research about?

My name is Lena Opfermann, I am a PhD candidate at the University of York in England. My research project is about unaccompanied and undocumented migrant children in South Africa. "Migrant children" are young people who came from other countries to South Africa. "Unaccompanied" means that they live here without their parents or other adults who are officially responsible for them. It also includes children who live in a residential childcare centre or children's home. "Undocumented" means that the children do not have a legal document (such as passport or ID) that permits them to stay in South Africa.

What do I want to find out?

I am interested to learn what migrant children think about their own situation. In particular, I want to know what they think about their rights, what good and bad experiences they have had. I also want to find out what they think should change in South Africa regarding migrant children.

What will happen in the research project?

The research will have the form of a drama workshop. A group of young people will meet one day every week together with myself and one other facilitator. In the workshops, we will do different games, talk, write and act. Everyone will share thoughts and comments and discuss different topics. In the end, we will produce some drama scenes that will be performed on stage at the end. During the workshops I will take notes and record some discussions by audio or video. When the project is over, I will write a PhD thesis for my university.

Who can participate?

Children

- who are between 12 and 18 years of age AND
- who came from another country to South Africa AND
- who live in South Africa without their parents/official guardian AND
- who do **not** have a document from Home Affairs, such as an asylum permit or refugee status.
- Participating children need to be able to speak and understand English well.

Who cannot participate?

- Children whose parents live in South Africa
- Children who do not speak and understand English well
- South African children
- Children who have a refugee status in South Africa
- Children under 12 years of age

How long will the project be?

The project will take three months, from June – August 2014. There will be one workshop session per week and a few full-day workshops.

Where will it take place?

The workshops will take place in the building of the Scalabrini Centre in the city centre of Cape Town, not far from the train station.

What does it mean if a child decides to participate?

If a child in your care decides to participate, you need to sign a consent form to confirm that you as the (informal) caregiver agree with it. You also need to agree that the child will attend all workshop sessions every week for three months. However, any participation in this project is completely voluntary. This means that if the child decides to participate and later changes his/her mind, he/she can drop out at any stage without any consequences.

Is this project beneficial for participating children?

Participating in the project will give children the chance to

- be creative and become an actor for a while
- meet other young people who are in a similar situation

- share their experience with others
- discuss what they think and suggest changes

In addition to this, the results of this project may be useful for others. Once I know what the children's views are, I can pass this information on to other people who work with children and refugees, such as social workers, lawyers and politicians. Like this, the project may even help to make some changes and improve the situation for other migrant children.

Will participation cause any distress or inconvenience?

Part of the research aim is to give the young people the opportunity to express their views, talk about their experiences and to be listened to. Since the issues that will be discussed in the workshops are related to the children's rights and rights violations they may have experienced, some topics may potentially revoke memories that may be upsetting for some participants.

In order to minimise potential distress, the following precautions will be taken:

- The workshop will take place in a safe space in which participants feel protected and comfortable.
- Both the artistic facilitator and myself are skilled in working with vulnerable persons in a professional way. We will approach potentially upsetting topics in a sensitive way and make it clear to participants that the sharing of personal information, experiences and thoughts is voluntary and will be kept confidential by all participants and the researcher (with the exception of life-threatening issues or urgent needs).
- The workshop series will be planned well so that it allows participants to get to know each other first before addressing sensitive topics.
- Artistic methods such as drawings, creative writing and acting furthermore allow participants to express feelings and thoughts in an indirect way. Everyone is free to share what they want and in a way they feel comfortable with.

Please also note that the Ethics Committee of the University of York has approved the project to ensure a responsible research approach.

Will there be any financial benefits?

No. Participating children will not receive any financial benefits. However, costs for transport will be covered. Participants will also receive snacks and drinks during the workshop sessions.

Confidentiality

The content of discussions and other workshop activities will be kept confidential. However, should a participant reveal information that needs urgent attention (e.g. immediate threats to his/her own or other children's safety or urgent basic needs such as food or accommodation), the matter will be discussed with him/her on a personal basis first and if he/she agrees, it will be referred to a social worker/NGO that can address the issue in a professional way.

Use of visual material

During the workshops I will take notes, photographs and sometimes film activities. I will use this material later to evaluate the data. I may also use some of it for another project in the future in which the child does not participate actively. This could be an exhibition of the photographs or a performance by students at the University of York. The possible ways in which the data can be used will be discussed with all children in the workshops so that they can decide with which form of data representation they agree.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me:

My contact details: Lena Opfermann, lso501@york.ac.uk,
Phone in South Africa: 0613693973
My university: University of York, Centre for Applied Human Rights, United Kingdom;
Supervisor: Martin Jones, martin.jones@york.ac.uk

Appendix 4 – Consent form for children

Using art to explore unaccompanied migrant children's views

Informed Consent Form for Children

Hi, my name is Lena. I am a PhD student at the University of York (UK) and I want to conduct a research project about unaccompanied migrant children in South Africa. The name of the study is "An exploration of unaccompanied migrant children's views".

If you are interested in the project and want to participate, please read this consent form and tick the boxes on the right. After this, please write your name and signature below.

Did you read the information sheet?	Yes ❒ No ❒
Did Lena answer all of your questions?	Yes ❒ No ❒
Do you understand what this research project is about?	Yes ❒ No ❒
Do you also understand that:	
- Your participation is voluntary and depends only on your own choice?	Yes ❒ No ❒

- You are free to drop out at any time even before the end of the research project?	Yes ❒ No ❒
- You can refuse to answer any questions that you don't want to answer during the workshops?	Yes ❒ No ❒
Do you agree that:	
- I will not tell your family, social worker or anyone else what you say in the workshops?	Yes ❒ No ❒
- If you say things in the workshop that make me concerned about your or other children's safety, I may have to report this to a responsible person?	Yes ❒ No ❒
- I will take notes during and after the workshops about what you say?	Yes ❒ No ❒
- Some parts of the workshop will be recorded by audio or video so that I can listen to it again later and write down what you said?	Yes ❒ No ❒
Do you agree that:	
- I will take some pictures and film during the workshop?	Yes ❒ No ❒
- I may use some words and ideas that you say in the workshop in my final thesis, presentations and in articles that I write about this project?	Yes ❒ No ❒
- If I use any of your words and ideas in my final report, presentations and articles, I will protect your anonymity and not use your name so that nobody will know who you are?	Yes ❒ No ❒
- I may use some material from the workshops (photographs, videos, written pieces) in a future project in which you do not participate, like an exhibition or a performance by other people?	Yes ❒ No ❒

- I will only use visual material of yourself if you agree with it?	Yes ❒ No ❒
- Any pieces of writing or art that you produce during the workshops will be kept in a safe place and if you agree it may be used later for another project in which you do not participate actively, like for example an exhibition somewhere else?	Yes ❒ No ❒
Do you agree to participate in this research project?	Yes ❒ No ❒
Do you agree to attend all workshop sessions and that you are free to drop out of the project at any time if you change your mind?	Yes ❒ No ❒
Do you understand that there will be a final drama/theatre performance at the end in which you can participate?	Yes ❒ No ❒
Do you understand that you are free to decide later if you want to participate in the final performance?	Yes ❒ No ❒

Name of the participant: _____

Nationality of the participant:_____

Current age:_____

Contact number:_____

Place: _____

Date:_____

Signature of the participant:_____

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. If you have any questions, please ask me or my supervisor in York!

My contact details: lso501@york.ac.uk , Phone number in Cape Town: 0613693973.

My supervisor: martin.jones@york.ac.uk , Phone number: +44 (0)1904 325830.

Appendix 5 – Consent form for adult caregivers

Using art to explore unaccompanied migrant children's views

Informed Consent Form for Adult Caregivers

My name is Lena Opfermann. I am a PhD student at the University of York (UK). I am conducting a research project about unaccompanied migrant children in South Africa. The name of the study is "An exploration of unaccompanied migrant children's views".

If a child in your care is interested in the project and wants to participate, I ask you to please read this consent form and tick the boxes on the right. After this, please write the child's name, your own name and signature below.

Did you read the information sheet?	Yes ❒ No ❒
Did Lena answer all of your questions?	Yes ❒ No ❒
Do you understand what this research project is about?	Yes ❒ No ❒
Do you also understand that:	
- Participation is voluntary and entirely the child's choice?	Yes ❒ No ❒
- The child is free to drop out at any time prior to the completion of the PhD or other research outputs?	Yes ❒ No ❒

- The child can refuse to answer any questions that he/she doesn't want to answer during the workshops?	Yes ❐ No ❐
Do you agree that:	
- I will not tell you, the social worker or anyone else what the child says in the workshops?	Yes ❐ No ❐
- If the child says things in the workshop that make me concerned about his/her or other children's safety, I may have to report this to a responsible person?	Yes ❐ No ❐
- I will take notes about what the child says?	Yes ❐ No ❐
- Some parts of the workshop will be recorded by audio or video so that I can listen to it again later and write down what was said?	Yes ❐ No ❐
- I will take some pictures and film during the workshop?	Yes ❐ No ❐
- I may use some words and ideas that the child says in the workshop in my final thesis and future publications that I write about this project?	Yes ❐ No ❐
- If I use any of the child's words and ideas in my thesis and future publications, I will protect the child's anonymity and not use his/her name?	Yes ❐ No ❐
Do you agree that:	
- The issue of anonymity will be discussed in the workshops and that any future use of the visual data will depend on the child's choice?	Yes ❐ No ❐

- Any pieces of writing or art that the child produces during the workshops will be kept in a safe place and may be used later for another project in which the child does not participate actively, e.g. an exhibition? In that case, I will also ensure the child's anonymity.	Yes ❒ No ❒
Do you agree that the child in your care participates in this research project?	Yes ❒ No ❒
Do you agree that the child attends all workshop sessions and do you understand that he/she is free to drop out of the project at any time if he/she changes his/her mind?	Yes ❒ No ❒
Do you understand that there will be a final drama/theatre performance at the end in which the child can participate if he/she wants to?	Yes ❒ No ❒
Do you understand that the child is free to decide later if he/she wants to participate in the final performance?	Yes ❒ No ❒

Name of the child: _____

Nationality of the child:_____

Name of the caregiver:_____

Role/Relationship of the caregiver towards the child:_____

Nationality of the caregiver (voluntary information):_____

Contact number:_____

Place: _____

Date:_____

Signature of the caregiver:_____

Thank you for agreeing to let the child in your care participate in this research project.
If you have any questions, please ask me or my supervisor in York.
My contact details: lso501@york.ac.uk , Phone number in Cape Town: 0613693973.
My supervisor: martin.jones@york.ac.uk , Phone number: +44 (0)1904 325830.

Glossary

CPLO	Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office
DHA	Department of Home Affairs
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DSD	Department of Social Development
ELMPS	Economics, Law, Management, Politics and Sociology Ethics Committee
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PAR	Participatory Action Research
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAPS	South African Police Service
SCCT	Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town
TO	Theatre of the Oppressed
UIF	Unemployment Insurance Fund
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
US	United States of America

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