

5

Exploring links between empowerment and community-based arts and cultural practices: perspectives from Barcelona practitioners

10

Ruben David Fernández Carrasco*, Moisés Carmona Monferrer and Andrés Di Masso Tarditi

Department of Social Psychology, University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain

(Received 9 December 2014; accepted 8 April 2015)

15

In this paper, we reflect on the development of community-based arts and cultural (CBAC) practices to promote psychosocial, group/organisational and community changes from the perspective of empowerment. We draw on findings from an initial exploratory phase of an ongoing action-research project in Spain about creative tools that empower artists and communities. The study sought to explore community-based art practitioners' and academic/researchers' understandings and perceptions about empowerment in order to shed light on how people make sense of the benefits of the practice through the empowerment lens. Data were gathered through 20 semi-structured interviews with artists, social educators, cultural workers and researchers/academics. Thematic analysis of the data with reference to the empowerment theory suggests parallels between the discourses used in the theory of empowerment and the CBAC practices described by the interviewees. Three key themes reflect that multilevel empowerment is promoted when site-specific capacities to gain control over resources and the direction of one's life are achieved. Empowerment is promoted when actions to influence the public sphere come from group, organisational or community settings, and when CBAC practices are articulated with broader efforts aimed at social change, thus becoming a vehicle through which other community development and organising can occur.

20

25

30

CE: MJ QA: COLL:

Keywords: empowerment; community-based arts and cultural practices

35

As in many countries, Spain has numerous agencies that use art practices to address forms of social exclusion and marginalisation. We refer to a set of practices that have a collaborative, participatory and community nature and are increasingly used to address social issues. These art practices are referred to in different ways such as art for social inclusion, art for social improvement, collaborative arts practices, contextual art, committed art or, to a lesser extent, community art. Such practices emphasise community strengths and resources to create, nurture and enhance opportunities for civic engagement and empowerment.

AQ2 

40

45

Within the Spanish context, and with increased attention in recent years, there have been attempts to design and implement public policies and cultural practices related to art (Rodrigo 2011). For instance, open calls for art projects promoting social improvement have been launched and in the educational context, offers for arts involving social

*Corresponding author. Email: rubendavidfernandez@ub.edu

inclusion, artistic mediation, community cultural development (CDC) and artistic education have also been developed. These initiatives give a major boost to these art projects and programmes, joining the efforts of these institutions orientated to tackle the challenges that we have as a society. Despite this progress, there is still much to be done if we compare the current status of art practices in Spain with that in other European countries such as the UK and France (Palacios 2009; Úcar 2001). Efforts are still very isolated, even precarious, because they do not respond to a clear strategic determination or interest by the institutions that have a stake in managing culture and the arts. We believe that there is room for further reflection on the development and understanding of these practices and the specific contributions they make to address social issues. With regard to their contributions, many public institutions have increased the use of the concept of empowerment in terms of a quality performance indicator. Concurrently, we also observe a gap between the practice and the critical reflection of these practices. There is neither a great systematisation nor an evaluation of the processes of empowerment in the community-based arts and cultural (CBAC) practices in this context.

The present study seeks to discuss the concepts of art and empowerment, emphasising common aspects, and theoretical and practical links between them. To do so we propose to explore the development of the CBAC practices and its scope with a focus on psychosocial, group/organisational and community-level changes through the lens of empowerment. Within the Spanish context, the concept and theory of empowerment on a theoretical and practical level in relation to CBAC practices have not been widely addressed. Therefore, we explore community-based art practitioners' and academic/researchers' understandings and perceptions about empowerment from a liberation-oriented community psychology perspective, which is committed to developing opportunities for social inclusion and also exposing the working of power in everyday settings (Sonn and Quayle 2013). Our research questions are twofold: How do CBAC practices play a role in the empowerment processes among individuals, groups and communities, and what are the processes and features of CBAC practices that contribute to the enhancement and promotion of empowerment outcomes?

CBAC praxis in the context of Barcelona (Spain)

In Spain art strategies are being developed that aim to promote social inclusion and emancipate people, and emphasise the intervention in relation to the community. Initiatives that are performed in this way have not received much recognition, despite the value that they contribute by equipping participants with technical, relational and emotional skills (Ricard and Saurí 2009). Specifically in Barcelona, a collective of community artists are developing creative community actions to address forms of social exclusion. These artists have founded the project *Xarxa Art i Barri*, which was established in 2003, with the aim to highlight and encourage the development of initiatives focused on CBAC production from civil society, and where creativity is seen as a tool of social and personal transformation. *Xarxa Art i Barri* is a formal network that works as a hub for community-based arts practitioners, researchers and other CBAC practices stakeholders. It delivers yearly training in social change-oriented arts practices and has generated various local and regional publications reporting on CBAC practices.

In this article we include these practices and strategies under the umbrella term of 'CBAC practices'. We use the term 'CBAC practices' to refer to arts practices that relate to specific contexts and that are oriented to effect social change, practices prompting a 'social turn' (Bishop 2006). These practices use creativity as a methodological and

educational tool, and imply the accomplishment of participative proposals that, based on the creativity, encourage relationships between people and contribute to building frameworks of interaction. Creativity has a central role in these practices, but it is not the final objective; educational and social changes are seen as central (Ricard and Saurí 2009).

Pa tothom is an organisation that uses theatre of the oppressed methodologies to produce and perform plays addressing conflict – generating issues in pursuit of liberation and well-being through community engagement. For instance, immigrants' prejudices or gender-based violence topics have been addressed. Another exemplary project in these types of practices that have been studied is *Teleduca*, an organisation that uses participatory documentary production with youngsters to promote critical awareness about health, drug use or romantic relationships. They organise a yearly short film festival where young people present their productions.

For the purpose of our research, we included these diverse practices under the heading of CBAC practices because, unlike in other contexts, Spain still has no consensus on how to refer to these practices. These strategies and practices, as they share many characteristics, can be linked with similar activities described differently in other contexts, including community arts, community animation, cultural work, cultural action and CDC. Namely, they all look for an impact beyond aesthetic achievements that benefit social conditions and favour community collaboration and participation in the accomplishment of this work (Palacios 2009). These practices imply a review of the modernist concepts of artists and artwork. For example, the artists delegate part of their traditional functions to those who participate, and the artwork must also fit into long-term development thinking underpinning the nature of its social intervention. According to Palacios (2009), the collaborative, contextual and social character of these practices encourages connections with contextual art (Ardenne 2002), dialogic art (Kester 2004) or relational art (Bourriaud 2007) and certainly, new genre public art (Lacy 1995). Other authors use terms such as CDC and community arts (Adams and Goldbard 2001; Sonn and Quayle 2014).

Genealogy of CBAC practices

In order to draw a genealogy of CBAC practices, we first need to consider the movement of popular education, a movement that in the case of Barcelona dates back to the nineteenth century where educational experiences of promoting culture were developed by the working class in *ateneus*, village houses and popular universities (Ricard and Saurí 2009). But in the current literature, discussions about popular education bring us to the Latin American context and work of Brazilian humanitarian and pedagogue Freire (1972, 1973). The aim of popular education was to help build a more just and democratic society, where the ability to intervene and participate in the decision-making process and orientations of social changes are a substantive element of the people. The second consideration regards the shaping influence of social and political art in the arts field. These art forms emerged in the 1960s and developed throughout the 1970s, mainly within a current of thought in expressionist art as well as the *performances*, *happenings* and the political or art critique that brought new challenges and new dynamics. These practices questioned the role of the artist and his relation to the context. Thirdly, and particularly in the case of Barcelona and the Catalonia region, the CBAC practices have been influenced by the French school of socio-cultural animation and social education, above all, seeking how to understand community work

and facilitation. The socio-cultural animation in Barcelona, and Catalonia, had a very important role in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. In general, it can be said that socio-cultural animation had a strong presence in the lives of people living in communities in two ways. Firstly, it was a strategy to combat the negative social and political effects of the lack of freedom within communities. Secondly, the brand-new democratic local councils considered it as a social and educational intervention tool for creating and animating the social fabric within neighbourhoods (Úcar 2001). The socio-cultural animation encompasses the realisation of different educational actions developed from the community scope (Ricard and Saurí 2009).

Finally, we want to stress that these practices arise in opposition to other forms of art, such as the case of erudite art and mass art. Both of these are based on a Western way of thinking about art (Colombres 2005), in which much of the arts practices that are tied to cultures that do not correspond to Western parameters are excluded. CBAC practices can be understood as a form of popular art because certain historical situations are expressed through aesthetic means through the lens of a particular community that has reflected and acted upon their experiences. Thus, popular art is intimately related to the notion of community and the particular socio-historical and cultural context it is located within. We agree with Escobar (2004) who asserts that it is not possible to speak of popular art without considering community (Escobar 2004). Popular art favours not only the aesthetic function of arts, but also the social function of its practices, and actions that tend to modify the situations represented symbolically by them (Bang and Wajnerman 2010). With this conceptualisation of popular art, the intersection of 'community', empowerment and aesthetics is essential to the processes and products that bring about the desired social change.

Theoretical underpinnings: the concept of empowerment

The origin of empowerment as a theory in community practice can be traced back to Freire (1973), when he suggested a plan for liberating the oppressed people through popular education (Hur 2006). The roots of thinking on empowerment lie also in women's studies and other liberation struggles promoted by activists like Alinsky (1971). The term empowerment started to be used in the middle of the 1980s in the fields of social work, politics and sociology by authors such as Solomon (1976), Berger and Neuhaus (1977), and Laue and Cormick (1978). The term has become widely used in the social sciences across a broad variety of disciplines and has become a defining principle for community psychology, in which the word *empowerment* is most frequently used (Hur 2006).

The concept of empowerment is tied up with the idea of power, that is, empowerment is closely related to changing power: gaining, expending, diminishing, and losing (Page and Czuba 1999). Thus, empowerment includes the perspective that many social problems exist due to unequal distribution of, and access to, social and material resources. Traditionally, power has been understood as an isolated entity, as an object, as a possession that can be used to control or influence individuals or groups (Fisher, Sonn, and Evans 2007). Also as a zero sum, as it is usually possessed at the expense of others (Weber 1946), a power over' relation, following Rowlands' (1997) categorisation of types of relations, namely the ability to influence and coerce others. However, many have argued that power is more complex than this; power is not something fixed with an individual, instead is constituted within relations between people within broader historical, social, cultural, economic and political contexts (Foucault 1980; Serrano García 1994). Power can be understood as a social relationship; power is reflected in the relations

between people, and these relations are mediated by peoples' positions within hierarchical social systems (Fisher, Sonn, and Evans 2007). Thus, power can actually strengthen while being shared with others (Kreisberg 1992). Shared power is: A process that occurs in relationships, that gives us the possibility of empowerment (...) a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their lives. It is a process that fosters power in people for use in their own lives, their communities and in their society, by acting on issues they define as important. (Page and Czuba 1999, 25)

From the perspective of community psychology, empowerment is a multidimensional, multilevel and multi-component construct consisting of practical approaches and applications, and social action processes – because it occurs with others, and can be understood in terms of individual and collective outcomes. In the broadest sense, empowerment is the expansion of freedom of choice and action. It refers to individuals, groups, organisations and communities gaining control and mastery, within the social, economic, political and cultural dimensions of their lives, in order to improve equity and quality of life (Rappaport 1984, 1987; Zimmerman 2000). Community psychology, by definition, is interested in the power differentials inherent in societies and the impacts that these have on the mental and physical health of individuals (Fisher, Sonn, and Evans 2007).

Empowerment is context and population specific (Serrano-García 1984); it takes different forms for different people in different sociocultural and political contexts. It does not translate easily into all languages. For example, the Spanish translation of empowerment has two different meanings: (1) *empoderamiento* – ‘give power or enable’, which means power is something provided by a benefactor to a beneficiary, and (2) *apoderamiento*, which implies ‘take power’ from others to challenge existing hierarchies (Sánchez-Vidal 2007). Critically, and according to some Latin American community psychologists, empowerment should be translated as *fortalecimiento* (strengthening), where power is an achievement arising from critical awareness and collective action from people concerned, and not a gift or donation provided by another power (Montero 2003). Throughout this article, a meaning of empowerment drawing on *fortalecimiento* is embraced, and bearing in mind that community-based artists can be facilitators or catalysers of empowerment processes, not providers of power. Empowerment involves the right of individuals and communities to become agents of change for situations they deem as negative, claiming for the agency of participants.

According to Hur (2006), empowerment has two interrelated aspects: personal empowerment and collective empowerment. Each aspect has its own components. Meaning, critical awareness, competence, self-determination, and impact are personal and psychological empowerment components. Collective belonging, involvement in the community, control over organizations in the community, and community building are collective empowerment components. A theory of empowerment should include both processes and outcomes (Swift and Levine 1987). The theory suggests that actions, activities, or structures may be empowering, and that the outcome of such processes result in a level of being empowered. In this article, drawing on Zimmerman's theory (2000) we consider a multilevel empowerment approach, linking psychological dynamics and system change efforts. This involves three inherently connected levels of empowerment analysis: psychological, group-organizational, and community. We distinguish between individual and psychological empowerment. Individual empowerment alone has a limited impact on addressing issues (Christens 2013), thus empowerment theorists have distinguished between psychological and individual empowerment. Zimmerman (1990) writes: We need to distinguish between individually oriented conceptions of empowerment and psychological empowerment. The former neglects contextual considerations, is limited to a single paradigm, and treats empowerment as a personality variable. Psychological

empowerment refers to the individual level of analysis, but does not ignore ecological and cultural influences. (173)

In summary, although there is no universally accepted definition of empowerment and it can mean different things to different people, countries and cultures, we can say that the concept does share a common core. It includes the following: (1) it applies to the individual, the organisation and the community; (2) it addresses the issue of power and control over resources and the direction of one's own life; (3) it addresses issues of psychological sense of empowerment, capacity and confidence-building of individuals, organisations and communities and (4) it sees active participation as necessary but not sufficient (Rifkin 2003).

Paths towards empowerment

In the field of education, Freire (1973) presented three progressive steps of empowerment: conscientising, inspiring and liberating. According to Freire, the oppressed or the disadvantaged can become empowered by learning about social inequality (i.e. conscientising), encouraging others by making them feel confident about achieving social equality (i.e. inspiring) and finally liberating them. Parpart, Rai, and Staudt (2003) argue that empowerment must be understood as including both individual conscientisation (*power within*) and the ability to work collectively which can lead to politicised *power with* others, which provides the *power to* bring about change (4).

Empowerment has been a critical issue in social welfare and social work (Hur 2006). Friedmann (1992) argues that poverty should be seen not merely in material terms, but as social, political and psychological powerlessness. He described the path of empowerment in terms of two steps: mobilising the poor, or disadvantaged, and the transformation of their social power to political power (Friedmann 1992). The literature on empowerment is most frequently reported in the field of community psychology; some authors describe the path to empowerment as involving two steps; namely, relationship building and community building (Rossing and Glowacki-Dudka 2001). Other authors describe the path as involving three steps (Banyard and LaPlant, 2002; Zimmerman 2000). The first step is to promote a psychological sense of empowerment: encouraging participation, and sense of control. The second step builds on organisational empowerment (OE): opportunities to develop skills, shared leadership, expansion, diversity integration and effective community influence. The final step promotes social action for community building, organisational coalitions or fostering involvement in the community. According to Christens (2013), 'psychological empowerment develops as people participate and collectively build power and capacity in community and organizational settings' (2). An effort to generate an overarching framework to grasp the process and components of empowerment in a comprehensive manner has been undertaken by Hur (2006). Hur synthesises the path towards empowerment into five progressive steps: existence of oppression, 'conscientising', mobilising, maximising and creating a new social order.

CBAC practices and empowerment

In some countries, it is widely claimed that community arts and cultural development is an empowering process that enables people and groups to voice their own stories, learn new skills, express identity and diversity, establish relationships and communicate their

295 concerns and aspirations for the future, thus building community capacity and well-being (Mills and Brown 2004; Sonn, Drew, and Kasat 2002). In the Catalonian context, the empowerment construct – or theory – has been less widely addressed at both theoretical and practice levels with regard to CBAC practices, but with some exceptions (e.g. Ricard and Saurí 2009).

300 Ricard and Saurí (2009) declare that CBAC practices are empowering when they promote a change in attitudes among people in which they shift from knowing certain facts to being activists, and move from a passive role as spectators to become actors expressing opinions and diverse points of view. Change happens because people and groups, besides becoming aware of the situation in which they live, also develop an active and vindicatory role, that is, people behave as a community. Community behaviour is about solidarity, celebration, vindication, collective affirmation and community building (Rueda 1991). Thus, the process of empowerment entails a break with certain directives and non-reflective dynamics towards building horizontal processes of work in collaboration. The empowerment practices are based on generating processes of change that start from social relations.

310 In forums, projects and calls to subsidise arts to contribute to social improvement, there is reference to the need to set aims of empowerment. However, the meaning of empowerment in the context of the CBAC practices is often not clear. Therefore, there is a need to explore how to connect theoretical developments and practices to generate praxis.

Methodology

320 How do CBAC practices play a role in empowerment processes among individuals, groups and communities? And what are the processes and features of CBAC practices that contribute to the enhancement and promotion empowerment outcomes? In this article we share findings from an initial exploratory phase of an ongoing European action-research initiative about creative tools to empower artists and communities.¹ The initial findings draw on this research and focus on exploring links between CBAC practices and empowerment in the context of Barcelona. We explore community-based art practitioners' and academic/researchers' understandings and perceptions about empowerment to shed light on how people make sense of the benefits of the practice through the empowerment lens.

330 These research questions will evolve and become refined as the study progresses as it is the case in qualitative research designs (Braun and Clarke 2013). More specifically, the study design aims to explore perceptions and understandings about the forms and experiences of empowerment that are related to CBAC practices (inductive analysis) and analyse these perceptions and understandings through the lens of the empowerment theory (deductive or theory-led analysis).

335 This qualitative research assumes a 'critical realist' approach, at the ontological level (Stainton Rogers and Stainton Rogers 1997), and 'contextualist' perspective, at the epistemological level (Henwood and Pidgeon 1994). A critical realistic ontological position holds that we need to claim that some authentic 'reality' exists to produce knowledge that might make a difference; it also underpins a number of different qualitative approaches like some forms of discourse analysis, grounded theory and thematic analysis. The latter method has guided our research data analysis. At the epistemological level, contextualism does not assume a single reality and sees knowledge as emerging from context and reflecting the researcher's positions. This knowledge is local,

AQ4

AQ5

situated and always provisional but does retain an interest in understating truth – knowledge will be true in certain contexts. This research aims to develop contextualised knowledge about the experiences of empowerment through CBAC practices.

Participants

The sample of participants included in the study was selected with the aim of gathering diverse perspectives on the topic. Participants were selected from a formal CBAC practice network in Barcelona (*Xarxa Art i Barri*). The project *Xarxa Art i Barri* is a hub for community-based artists and other stakeholders interested in CBAC practices; it is the first and only ‘community arts’ network in the region. A saturation criterion was applied to determine when to stop data gathering (Bowen 2008). Saturation typically refers to the point when additional data fail to generate new information in the light of the research question. Interviewees were recruited according to two relevant categories, leaving a third for future research. The two categories of interviewees correspond to ‘critical cases’ (Flick 2006), that is, participants with key information on the topic. The first category included expert/academic non-practitioners, mainly researchers who have had a long-term collaboration with *Xarxa Art i Barri*. The interviewees in this category represent disciplines within the fine arts, pedagogy, anthropology, social education and social psychology. The second category included privileged testimonies collected from community-based artists and culture practitioners, who were all members of the *Xarxa Art i Barri network*. The interviewees in this category were selected taking into account a varied range of arts disciplines from theatre, visual arts, music and public arts. It is necessary to bear in mind that the second category of interviewees tends to magnify or justify the impacts of their practices, as they are the protagonists (Braun and Clarke 2013).

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used because the participants had a personal or professional stake in the topic (Flick 2006). The authors of the article conducted the interviews. A total of 20 semi-structured interviews were conducted with researchers/academics (6 interviews), artists/practitioners (10 interviews), social educators and cultural workers (4 interviews). These interviews were exploratory. Participants were given the opportunity to freely express their views and to also explore topics that were identified in the review of literature including empowerment.

Data management and analysis

An inductive analysis and a deductive (theory-led) analysis were developed.

Interview transcripts were transcribed verbatim. The data were then analysed thematically. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes data set in (rich) detail (Braun and Clarke 2006). A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research questions. The ‘keyness’ of a theme is not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures – but in terms of whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question (Braun and Clarke 2006). Themes identified draw on interviewees’ perceptions and understanding of empowerment-oriented CBAC practices. We provide a detailed and nuanced account of

empowerment as a theme within the data. Following this thematic analysis, we used Zimmerman's (2000) theory to categorise what participants viewed as the benefits of the practice.

Findings

Here, we report on interviewees' views about empowerment-oriented CBAC practices. We stress three core ideas underlying interviewees' reports about empowerment-oriented CBAC practice features that we viewed as key. Firstly, these practices enable empowerment at psychological, group/organisational and community levels when site-specific capacities to gain control over resources and the direction of one's life are achieved. Secondly, CBAC practices enable empowerment when actions to influence the public sphere are generated in group, organisational or community settings. Thirdly, CBAC practices are the vehicle through which other community development and organising can occur when articulated with broader systematic efforts aimed at social change. The findings are presented in Table 1.

Psychological empowerment

According to the interviewees' reports, CBAC practices can play an important role in psychological empowerment processes when three inherently connected processes are developed. Firstly, psychological empowerment outcomes are achieved when participants move into new positions and roles, establishing new social relations. Some interviewees understand these 'swings' as participants' opportunities to 'move' into situations that enable (1) new social positions, (2) changes in the way they look at self and others and (3) changes in the way they experience social relations.

Arts and cultural practice can be linked with empowerment outcomes when it generates new spaces or situations allowing participants form a new perspective on things. This positioning movement cause personal and collective changes and insights. Here insights are understood as self-perception changes, new ways of seeing and experiencing the environment and social structures. To allow this movement time is required. (Arts practitioner)

Secondly, psychological empowerment outcomes are achieved when new ways to express identity, represent realities and communicate concerns and aspirations are opened up; thus, new and diverse ways of experiencing life are achieved.

(...) Arts, as an expressive language, is much more valuable to communicate life than verbal language (...) Art practices enhance the communication process using other languages, languages that allow to meet oneself and later to meet others, languages that allow to interpret reality in different ways that commonly is interpreted. (Academic)

Finally, a process of capacity and confidence building is achieved.

Art practices empower individuals when an experience of being capable is achieved. This experience is promoted through value-based actions, the values underpinning these activities are endeavour, self esteem, and liberation efforts. (...) Also a real transference of symbolic language and its representation methods, beyond artefacts producing, is reached. (Arts practitioner)

445
450
455
460
465
470
475
480
485
490

Table 1. Features of empowerment-oriented CBAC practices.

Levels of analysis	Interviewees' themes selected about features of empowerment-oriented CBAC practices				
Psychological level	People swing into new positions, roles and social relations	New ways to express, represent, communicate and experience life and self are generated	Critical self and context awareness is enhanced	An experience of being capable and self-efficiency is achieved.	Site-specific capacities which influence the public sphere are created and proposed to influence its outcome
Group/organisational level	Self-organisation and participation in the creative process are fostered	Traditional decision-making is challenged	Critical collective awareness is enhanced	More affective and reproductive social relations are nurtured	
Community level	Collective-based knowledge and artefacts arise	Communities of learning are generated or strengthened	Critical awareness among community stakeholders is fostered	New institutional frameworks and organisation form less hierarchical come out	

These three interconnected processes engage people in the construction of critical meaning about their personal situation, social relations and context. Thus, features of CBAC practices that play an important role empowering individuals should nurture new roles and social relations among participants; promote critical self and context awareness among participants; use arts as a platform for new ways of communicating identity, concerns and aspirations; and build capacities and confidence.

Group and OE

Drawing on Zimmerman's framework (Zimmerman 2000), CBAC practices can also play an important role in the empowerment process for groups and organizations. At this level, some interviewees suggested that self-organization and participation in the creative process had to be fostered and nursed. This empowering process should rely more on affective and reproductive relations, instead of traditional decision-making. This is illustrated in the quotation: Participation alongside the arts and cultural actions must be ensured. Civic engagement promotion is necessary but not enough itself to achieve empowerment outputs, higher degrees of commitment are required and some invisible and reproductive strategies to strengthen social ties among participants must be undertaken, both art practitioners' and participants have a stake in this strategies. (Academic)

Moreover, other core capacities to undertake group empowerment that were reported by participants are social support capacities and cooperation among participants and art practitioners. As a result of these processes, traditional decision-making is challenged, critical collective awareness is raised and affective and reproductive-based social relations are strengthened.

In the first stage, empowerment-oriented art practices allow participants to express and select concerns or issues they want to address; the second stage promotes a critical analysis about how these topics have repercussions on the group. Finally, an empowerment output on this level would be when the group finds out what bounds the individuals in relation with the issue selected; a group identity starts to be nurtured (Academic). CBAC practices enable new ways of representing causes that are underlying social problems (i.e. problems do not come alone) to empower groups and organisations; critical collective awareness must be raised and CBAC practices can channel these efforts.

Community empowerment

Finally, some interviewees reflected on the role CBAC practices can play in community empowerment processes. Although some community empowerment outputs are informed, some interviewees report the need to articulate CBAC practices with broader systematic efforts to combat social issues, avoiding well-intentioned practices that may result in art workshops or similar 'low-profile' empowerment initiatives.

Art does not add something exceptionally better to empowerment than other disciplines. What allow empowerment outcomes through arts is how are arts practices structurally connected with broader interventions, programs and policies in the specific community settings. (Academic)

Focusing on this level of analysis, community empowerment outcomes are achieved when collective-based knowledge and artefacts are produced. In the same vein,

540 community empowerment outcomes are achieved when a community of learning is generated or strengthened, fostering a critical awareness among community stakeholders. As a result new institutional frameworks, political agencies and community-based networks are created and/or articulated.

545 Community empowerment outputs are achieved when other types of institutions come out, when organizational forms and collective forms of knowledge production are shaped under less hierarchical approaches, in opposition to institutions like some museums and other top-down managed cultural and art institutions (Arts practitioner). CBAC practices can be considered as collective participatory research. It can be a mix of participatory – action – research with symbolic and creative methods and tools and processes, where communities of learning form and even new political agencies for social change, namely, groups within community settings capable to play an influential role in the public sphere. Public sphere here is understood as physical, social or cultural contexts. Finally, artefact production is also important. Art products can be considered as ‘presents’ for the community setting.

555 Artefacts can be given away to the community setting, provoking changes that may lead to perception changes among both direct participants about the community setting and community setting ‘spectators’. ~~We have observed new social relations coming out~~ after given away this ‘presents’ (Arts practitioner). In this sense, a new and common cultural capital is generated and articulated with other existing economic, social and cultural capitals within the community.

AQ6
▲

Power and arts practitioners

565 Another form of power that appears in these types of practices is expressed in the relationship between the artist and the participants. The following quotation further articulates this: Power in a sense of structure that can oppress must be minimized through art practitioners’ actions. A sense of power non – oppressive but liberating has to be promoted. Power is not inherently bad, it depends how we exercise it in the relationships we build at the community settings. Artists can exercise power long as they are aware of how exercise it, how is communicated and how is shared with other powers. (Arts practitioner)

The artists are the first ones to learn to manage their own power, mobilising that power with and within those who are disadvantaged. The art serves to give representations about oneself and of the world, and to build a series of rituals that also position individuals within the social field in a number of hierarchies; art also works as an instrument of distinction and hierarchy of people. If a person has arts training and occupies a position in the arts field, he or she has a capacity-building potential that can be directed to either side; it can be directed to people who have less power (aiming to change the structural reality) or to those who are higher in the social order (maintaining the structural reality).

580 The position that the artist occupies implies necessarily an effort for the transfer of skills, ~~like an agreement, which is established between the artist and the community setting. That agreement is bidirectional and considers that some receive knowledge but also in turn should be recognised as existing knowledge,~~ establishing a relationship between equals or a mutual recognition.

AQ7
▲

585 An empowerment approach redefines the professional’s role and relationship with the target population. Hence, he or she becomes a collaborator or facilitator rather than an expert and counsellor; he or she *works with* instead of advocating for them.

AQ8
▲

590 Professionals need to learn about the participants through their cultures, their world-views and their life struggles (Zimmerman 2000).

Discussion

595 There are great parallels that we have found in our application of the theory of empowerment to explore interviewees' understandings and perceptions about how CBAC practices play a role in empowerment processes among individuals, groups and communities, as reported in Table 1. Some of the dimensions and indicators of empowerment at the theoretical level are easily identifiable from interviewees' reports, although it is surprising that in some cases the interviewees had not heard of the concept of empowerment previously nor were aware of the existence of the theory. This finding supports the need to connect academic research and writing with the work of practitioners, establishing real synergies between both types of knowledge and a two-pronged approach (praxis).

600 Our findings in this study show how participants spoke about CBAC practices and its effects can be conceptualised using the empowerment theory as it has been developed in the community psychology literature. Through our analysis we were able to identify several dimensions of empowerment that are in line with psychological empowerment (Christens 2012; Zimmerman 1995) as well as relational empowerment (Christens 2012), which includes collaborative competence, bridging social divisions and network mobilisation. Importantly, the findings also demonstrate that participants understand empowerment as something that operates at multiple levels including the group/organisational and community levels. Again, these understandings echo the writing of Zimmerman (2000) and Peterson and Zimmerman (2004). Zimmerman's (2000) theoretical framework includes OE, which refers to organisational efforts that generate psychological empowerment among members and organisational effectiveness.

605 CABAC practices seek to effect collective-level change. This goal is in line with the notion of community empowerment, which includes community organising and other forms of social organising and action aimed at addressing threats to community well-being, improving quality of life and facilitating citizen participation (Peterson and Zimmerman 2004). The findings show that participants' understandings point to domains of empowerment (Laverack 2001). 'Domains' are areas of influence that allow individuals and groups to better organise and mobilise themselves towards social and political changes (Laverack 2006).

610 Importantly, while the term empowerment is often invoked in reference to CABAC practices to advocate for it or defend it, it is often done without a clearly articulated theoretical and conceptual framework. Our findings show that the language that different stakeholders use in reference to CABAC practices resonates with the academic writing on empowerment. We argue that the empowerment theory may be a valuable addition to documenting, examining and assessing the impacts of CABAC practices and in so doing, contributes to the evidence base of the power of arts-based practice for social change.

615 CBAC practices, by and of itself, may not do the change, but it is an important mobiliser of empowerment processes. CBAC practices should be articulated with broader systematic efforts aimed at social change like community development programmes, community actions and other participation-based public policies and programmes in the context. Empowerment-oriented CBAC practices should adopt an

‘empowerment agenda’ that is concerned with the development of individual, group and collective capacities and awareness about social and cultural spaces in which they are situated, and that shape everyday interactions and community relations. Here, empowerment is not reduced to individual psychological dynamics, and also includes contextual or setting-level variables as well as social and political processes (Rappaport 1994), assuming a focus on second-order change or transformative change, that are changing the systems and their assumptions (Nelson and Prilleltensky 2010).

From this study, we know more widely and more deeply the empowering dimension of the CBAC practices from the understandings and perceptions of those who impel or analysed them in the context of Barcelona. However, there remains a need for future research to compare, or verify, some of the results of empowerment in the participants themselves, which is the task for a later phase of this research.

Note

1. Residency, developing a model of arts residency applied to civic engagement. Lifelong Learning Programme, European Union.

Notes on contributors

References

- Adams, D., and A. Goldbard. 2001. *Creative Community: The Art of Cultural Development*. New York: Rockefeller Foundation.
- Alinsky, S. 1971. *Rules for Radicals: A Pragmatic Primer for Realistic Radicals*. New York: Random House.
- Ardenne, P. 2002. *Un art contextual: Création artistique en milieu urbain, en situation, d'intervention, de participation*. Paris: Flammarion.
- Bang, C., and C. Wajnerman. 2010. “Arte y transformación social: la importancia de la creación colectiva en intervenciones comunitarias [Art and Social Change: The Importance of Collective Creation in Community Interventions].” *Revista Argentina de Psicología* 48: 89–103.
- Banyard, V. L., and L. E. LaPlant. 2002. “Exploring Links Between Children Maltreatment and Empowerment.” *Journal of Community Psychology* 30 (6): 687–707.
- Berger, P., and R. J. Neuhaus. 1977. *To Empower People*. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.
- Bishop, C. 2006. “The Social Turn: Collaborations and its Discontents.” *Artforum International* 2: 178–185.
- Bourriaud, N. 2007. *Estética Relacional* [Relational Aesthetics]. Buenos Aires: Adriana Hidalgo Editora.
- Bowen, G. A. 2008. “Naturalistic Inquiry and the Saturation Concept: A Research Note.” *Qualitative Research* 8: 137–152.
- Braun, V., and V. Clarke. 2006. “Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology.” *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3: 77–101.
- Braun, V., and V. Clarke. 2013. *Successful Qualitative Research. A Practical Guide for Beginners*. London: Sage.
- Christens, B. D. 2012. “Toward a Relational Empowerment.” *American Journal of Community Psychology* 50 (1/2): 114–128.
- Christens, B. D. 2013. “In Search of Powerful Empowerment.” *Health Education Research* 28 (3): 371–374.
- Colombres, A. 2005. *Teoría transcultural del arte: hacia un pensamiento visual independiente* [Transcultural Theory of Art: Towards an Independent Visual Thought]. Buenos Aires: Del Sol.

AQ9

AQ1

AQ10

- Escobar, T. 2004. "El mito del arte y el mito del pueblo [The Myth of Art and the Myth of the People]." In *Hacia una teoría americana del arte* [Towards an American Art Theory], edited by J. Acha, A. Colombes, and T. Escobar, 85–106. Buenos Aires: Del Sol.
- 690 Fisher, A. T., C. C. Sonn, and S. D. Evans. 2007. "The Place and Function of Power in Community Psychology: Philosophical and Practical Issues." *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 17: 258–267.
- Flick, U. 2006. *Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.
- Foucault, F. 1980. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*. The Harvester Press Limited. 
- 695 Freire, P. 1972. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Seabury Press.
- Freire, P. 1973. *Education for Critical Consciousness*. New York: Continuum Publishing Company.
- Friedmann, J. 1992. *Empowerment: Politics of Alternative Development*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Garrido, A. P. 2009. "El arte comunitario: origen y evolución de las prácticas artísticas colaborativas. [Community Art: Origin and Development of Collaborative Artistic Practices]." ~~*Arteterapia, Papeles de Arteterapia Y Educación Artística Para La Inclusión Social* 4: 197–211.~~ 
- 700 Henwood, K., and N. F. Pidgeon. 1994. "Beyond the Qualitative Paradigm: A Framework for Introducing Diversity within Qualitative Psychology." *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 4: 225–238.
- 705 Hur, M. H. 2006. "Empowerment in Terms of Theoretical Perspectives: Exploring a Typology of the Process and Components Across Disciplines." *Journal of Community Psychology* 34 (5): 523–540.
- Kester, G. 2004. *Conversation Pieces. Community and Communication in Modern Art*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kreisburg, S. 1992. *Transforming Power: Domination, Empowerment, and Education*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- 710 Lacy, S. ed. 1995. *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*. Seattle: Bay Press.
- Laue, J. H., and G. W. Cormick. 1978. "The Ethics of Intervention in Community Disputes." In *The Ethics of Social Intervention*, edited by G. Bermant, H. C. Kelman and D. P. Warwick. New York: Wiley. 
- Laverack, G. 2001. "An Identification and Interpretation of the Organizational Aspects of Community Empowerment." *Community Development Journal* 36 (2): 134–145.
- 715 Laverack, G. 2006. "Using a 'Domains' Approach to Build Community Empowerment." *Community Development Journal* 41 (1): 4–12.
- Mills, D., and P. Brown. 2004. *Art and Wellbeing*. Sydney: Australian Council for the Arts.
- Montero, M. 2003. *Teoría y práctica de la psicología comunitaria* [Theory and Practice of Community Psychology]. Buenos Aires: Paidós Social.
- 720 Nelson, G., and I. Prilleltensky. 2010. *Community Psychology. In Pursuit of Liberation and Well-being*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Page, N., and C. E. Czuba. 1999. "Empowerment: What is it?" *Journal of Extension* 37 (5): 24–32.
- Palacios, A. 2009. "El arte comunitario: origen y evolución de las prácticas artísticas colaborativas. [Community Art: Origin and Development of Collaborative Artistic Practices]." *Arteterapia – Papeles de arteterapia y educación artística para la inclusión social* 4: 197–211.
- 725 Parpart, J. L., S. M. Rai, and K. Staudt. 2003. *Rethinking Empowerment: Gender and Development in a Global/Local World*. New York: Routledge.
- Peterson, N. A., and M. A. Zimmerman. 2004. "Beyond the Individual: Toward a Nomological Network of Organizational Empowerment." *American Journal of Community Psychology* 34 (1/2): 129–145.
- 730 Rappaport, J. 1984. "Studies in Empowerment: Introduction to the Issue." *Prevention in Human Services* 3: 1–7.
- Rappaport, J. 1987. "Terms of Empowerment/Exemplars of Prevention: Toward a Theory for Community Psychology." *American Journal of Community Psychology* 15 (2): 121–148.
- Ricard, M., and E. Saurí. 2009. *Processos creatius transformadors. Els projectes artístics d'intervenció comunitària protagonitzats per joves a Catalunya*. [Creative Processes
- 735

- Transformers: Artistic Projects of Community Intervention Led by Youth in Catalonia]. Barcelona: Ediciones Serbal.
- Rifkin, S. B. 2003. "A Framework Linking Community Empowerment and Health Equity: It is a Matter of CHOICE." *Journal of Population, Health, Nutrition* 21 (3): 168–180.
- 740 Rodrigo Montero, J. 2011. "Políticas de colaboración y prácticas culturales: redimensionar el trabajo del arte colaborativo y las pedagogías [Policy Cooperation and Cultural Practices: Resize the Collaborative Work of Art and Pedagogies]." *Inmersiones 2010*. Proyecto Amarika y Diputación Floral de Álava Vitoria – Gazteiz (pp. 230–249). Accessed February 18, 2015. Available at: <https://app.box.com/s/zpg13euxvvgle7xe05gt>
- 745 Rossing, B., and M. Glowacki-Dudka. 2001. "Inclusive Community in a Diverse World: Pursuing an Elusive Goal Through Narrative-based Dialogue." *Journal of Community Psychology* 29 (6): 729–743.
- Rowlands, J. 1997. *Questioning Empowerment. Working with Women in Honduras*. Confam.
- Rueda, J. M. 1991. "Modalidades de trabajo comunitario [Methods of Community Work]." *Quaderns de Serveis Socials* 1: 379–390.
- Sánchez-Vidal, A. 2007. *Manual de Psicología Comunitaria* [Handbook of Community Psychology]. Barcelona: Ediciones Pirámide.
- 750 Serrano-García, I. 1984. "The Illusion of Empowerment. Community Development within a Colonial Context." *Journal of Prevention in Human Services* 3 (2–3): 173–200.
- Solomon, B. 1976. *Black Empowerment: Social Work in Oppressed Communities*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Sonn, C. C., N. M. Drew, and P. Kasat. 2002. *Conceptualising Community Cultural Development: The Role of Cultural Planning in Community Change*. Perth, WA: Community Arts Network WA.
- 755 Sonn, C. C., and A. F. Quayle. 2013. "Praxis Developing Praxis?: Mobilising Critical Race Theory in Community Cultural Development." *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 44: 435–448.
- Sonn, C. C., and A. F. Quayle. 2014. "Community Cultural Development for Social Change: Developing Critical Praxis." *Journal of Social Action in Counselling and Psychology* 6 (1): 16–35.
- 760 Stainton Rogers, W., and R. Stainton Rogers. 1997. "Does Critical Psychology Mean the End of the World?" In *Critical Social Psychology*, edited by T. Ibáñez and L. Íñiguez, 67–82. London: Sage.
- Swift, C., and G. Levine. 1987. "Empowerment an Emerging Mental Health Technology." *Journal of Primary Prevention* 8 (issue number): 71–94.
- 765 Úcar, X. 2001. "L'animació sociocultural." In *Repensar la pedagogia, avui*, edited by J. Mallart., M. Teixidó, and C. Vilanou, 129–137. Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans.
- Weber, M. 1946. *From Max Weber*. Edited and translated by H. H. Gerth and C. C. Mill. New York: Oxford University Press.
- ~~World Bank. 2002. *Empowerment and Poverty: A Sources Book (Draft)*. Washington, DC: World Bank.~~
- 770 Zimmerman, M. A. 1990. "Taking Aim on Empowerment Research: On the Distinction Between Individual and Psychological Conceptions." *American Journal of Community Psychology* 18 (1): 169–177.
- Zimmerman, M. A. 1995. "Psychological Empowerment: Issues and Illustrations." *American Journal of Community Psychology* 23 (5): 581–599.
- 775 Zimmerman, M. A. 2000. "Empowerment Theory: Psychological, Organizational, and Community Levels of Analysis." In *Handbook of Community Psychology*, edited by J. R. E. Seidmann, 43–63. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum.

AQ14

AQ15