Chapter 1

Introduction

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Reality has always been interpreted through the reports given by images
Susan Sontag

As this quote from Susan Sontag (1979, p.153) indicates, images have always accompanied humans as means of interpreting and representing reality. Nevertheless, during approximately the last decade of the twentieth century, new literature addressing images stemmed from various disciplines including history of art and visual studies (Moxey, 2008), approaching images away from their linguistic interpretation to recognise their capacity to convey information that is not always possible to capture with words (Mitchell, 2002). Coined by Goettfried Boehm as the *iconic turn*, and by William Mitchell as the *pictorial turn* (Boehm & Mitchell, 2009), it was then simply referred to as the *visual turn*. Mitchell relates more specifically to art and claims that the pictorial turn is an ability of items to escape the contexts imposed on them by generations of interpreters. Even though images are permanently entangled with language, they ought to be considered independently from it (Mitchell, 2002). Keith Moxey (2008, p. 131) problematised the idea of a “presence” that refers to the ability of images to have their own, independent lives. Images are capable of triggering emotional reactions and carry an emotional charge which is difficult to ignore. They are, therefore, not only transmitters of meanings, but can produce meanings too, independently and sometimes even against the language (Moxey, 2008). Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart (2004; Edwards, 2012) went even further in discussing the ability of images to communicate. They focused on the materiality of photographs, arguing that they convey messages not only because of their visual content, but also as material objects “through an embodied engagement with an affective object world, which is

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both constitutive of and constituted through social relations” (Edwards, 2012, p. 221). In light of this divagation, the visual turn is understood by us as the acknowledgment of communication through images independently, or in a great freedom from language. Images benefit from an equal status to words in the production of meanings, both in relation to their visual content, and as material commodities existing in space and time, meaningful for social relationships. As a first disclaimer we shall add that we are conscious that this turn is grounded in western culture and is not necessarily applicable in other socio-cultural contexts.

Are we then producing a book on visual methodologies right after the visual turn? A significant effort in theorising and conceptualising the visual has been made within various disciplines. To mention only a few, Howard Becker (1974) in visual sociology, Lucien Taylor (1994), Marcus Banks and Howard Morphy (1999) and Jay Ruby (2000) in visual anthropology, Chris Jenk (1995) in cultural studies, Gillian Rose (2001) in geography and Sarah Pink (2001) in visual ethnography, all produced fundamental works focusing on the visual in social sciences. This book, however, without diminishing the disciplinary work within the subject, proposes to approach visual methodologies in the specific context of a field of study, adopting an interdisciplinary approach that brings together geography, sociology, anthropology and communication studies. As Adrian Favell (2007, p. 1988) has suggested: “On the face of it, there could hardly be a topic in the contemporary social sciences more naturally ripe for interdisciplinary thinking than migration studies.” In this piece we will attempt to explain why the adoption of visual methodologies in the field of migration studies is of particular interest.

Following the seminal work of John Berger and Jean Mohr (1975), who associated migration issues with images and poetry, there has been a growing interest in visual methodologies in the field of international migrations. This occurs parallel to increasingly numerous visual representations of migrations in the media, which have proved powerful in reshaping European political scenes (Cambre, 2019; Martiniello, 2017). Yet beyond the consensus on the harm they can do to migrants and refugees, little has been done by migration scholars to reflect on this visual abundance. Hence, there is an emergency for a meta-reflection on the ethical ways of employing visuals in the context of migration, the theoretical implications of visualising issues concerning people on the move, and the new possibilities visual methodologies can bring when researching potentially vulnerable subjects such as migrants and refugees.

Another remark we wish to make in this introduction relates to what we mean by “the visual”. This volume deals with visual data (re)produced by scholars. These visual data are, if we follow Banks and Morphy’s definition (1999), what is visual, visible, observable, and what we can experience (rather than what is “intellectual”). Within this, we focus even more particularly on what Banks and Morphy (1999) have called “visual systems”: the processes that result in humans producing visible objects, reflexively constructing their visual environment and communicating by visual means. Overwhelmingly, this collection reassembles “research-initiated production of visual data and meanings” (Pauwels, 2010, p. 551) consisting in three main media: films, photographs and mental maps. The contributors meant to communicate meanings related to migrations partially or primarily by visual means (MacDougall & Taylor, 1998). Following this premise, we would like to further

advance the argument that communication through visuals encompasses a multisensorial approach similar to the one developed by Pink (2007, 2012a, 2012b).

Sight, usually associated with the production of visuals, is not separated from other senses (Edwards, 2012, p. 299, but also Bal, 2003; Pink, 2007, 2012a, 2012b; Cytowic, 2010; Ferrarini, 2017). The act of seeing, therefore, is not “pure” but it relates to other “sense-based activities” (Bal, 2003, p. 9). While collecting visuals in the field, the researcher activates her¹ hearing, touch, smell, and even taste. According to her positionality and previous experiences, these sensorial experiences further project on the data collection and interpretation. The trend to extend the sight to other senses has already entered museums and art galleries, traditionally associated only with seeing (as illustrated by the prohibition to touch the exhibits, to eat inside the exhibition, the injunction to keep silence and the lack of designed scents to accompany the exhibition). Interactive exhibitions are slowly developing in response to this. The visual turn has therefore clearly extended beyond the visual in research practice that acknowledges smells, tastes, voices (music) and textures as equally capable of meaning production and communication. The projects showcased in this volume support the assumption that the visual turn is therefore accompanied and influenced by a “sensory turn” (Edwards & Bhaumik, 2008; Pink, 2012b).

The following is organised in four parts. In the first part, we will distinguish between artistic production and images produced within the framework of academic research. We argue that the objectives of the process of image-production have implications, ethically obliging scholars to reflect on their position, on the context of image-production, and on the impact of their production amongst a wider range of representations. Secondly, we will expand on our argument that visual methodologies are not reduced to sight but engage other senses. We will develop this argument within the specific field of migration studies. In the third part, we will articulate the four claims that correspond to the four sections of this collective work, namely *visuals enable to ground research in places, and focused on the embodied experiences* of persons who have experienced migration; secondly, *visuals tell stories* and hold the potential of multiplying and complexifying accounts of migration; *visual methodologies increase the possibilities for cooperation*, and therefore the need to recognise the competency of participants in knowledge production; and researchers are responsible for *visual representations of migrations*.

1.1 On the Value of Images in Academic Research

Discussion on the ontological status of still and moving images dates back to the invention of photography and film. Despite the initial struggles of these “new inventions” (Bazin, 1960), today both film and photography are recognised as art. Nevertheless, some branches of photography and film, such as documentary, photojournalism, as well

¹Throughout this introduction, we will use the feminine when referring to a human, rather than the neutrally accepted masculine.

as visual methodologies, have a primary purpose of going beyond aesthetic expression (Becker, 1995, 1998; Ruby, 2000). What is more, not everything these genres produce can be and is accepted as art. What is the difference between images as art and images as a research tool? We address this question in this section.

1.1.1 Realism of Still and Moving Images: From Art to Research

In his seminal work *The Ontology of the Photographic Image*, film theorist André Bazin (1960) analysed the realism of photography in a manner that made his argument applicable to both still and moving images. He built his claim around the comparison between photography and painting and advocated that while painting assumes the ontological identity of the model and the painting, the photography breaks away from this assumption by making it possible to identify the model as a real human and save her from a spiritual death through the act of remembering. According to Bazin, we ought to believe in the real existence of the subject depicted in photographs. A similar discussion was held about film. Since film was seen as a series of photographic images, the philosophical discussions within film theory picked up the issues relevant primarily for photography and as a result focused on causality of moving images and reproduction (rather than creation) of reality through them (Gaut, 2002, p. 310). Claims on the realism of film (Bazin, 1960) were challenged by the development of digital technologies that put the real existence of depicted subjects in a given time and space in question (Gaut, 2010, p. 49). More than two decades after Bazin, Roland Barthes (1980, p. 9) stated that photography is “the return of the dead”: regardless of the existence (or absence) of the depicted in real life, since the reality displayed by the photograph was caught in a particular moment in time and space, it is now merely non-existent (see also Baudrillard, 1999).

Today the claims on the realism of photography and film are often interpreted twofold. Howard Becker (1979, 1998) suggests that a photograph represents both truth and falsehood. A photograph starts from the exposure of the camera and in this sense it must be true. Yet each picture could have been taken differently, and therefore the photograph is a fabrication. The question to ask, therefore, is not “if the photographs tell the truth”, but “which truth and about what?”. What is more, Becker (1979) states that the truth does not have to be full, and we can never be sure of the proven truth. David MacDougall (2012) refers to similar issues in the context of film production by using the concept of reflexivity. By this he means “contextualizing the content of a film by revealing aspects of its production” (MacDougall, 2012, p. 15) which involves both the context of shooting with the focus on the interactions between the researchers and participants, as well as the context of the depicted situation in the meaning of a “studium” (Barthes, 1980) that makes events “understandable in interpersonal and cultural terms” (MacDougall, 2012, p. 15). Regarding digital film, Lev Manovich (1995, p. 308) stated: “Cinema becomes a

particular branch of painting – painting in time” underlining the constructed character of the reality displayed through films. Similar conclusions were reached by Marcus Banks (1988) in his critical account on the approach to ethnographic films in today’s anthropology. Banks advocated for the non-transparency of ethnographic film and criticised the naivete with which various audiences interpret these productions, taking them as direct reflections of the objective reality. He pointed out that ethnographic films – through the use of common montage techniques – are conventional “constructed texts” (Banks, 1988, p. 2). MacDougall (2012, p. 6) suggested a distinction between anthropological films and “raw anthropological film footage”, with the former relying heavily on cinematic convention and influenced by various shooting and editing techniques and therefore constituting a created rather than “objective” reflection of reality. Indeed, videography (Knoblauch et al., 2014) – gathering raw footage as much as raw pictures collected in photo surveys – differs in the levels of construction from the creative forms of ethnographic movies and photographic exhibitions and collages based on data collected in research. But they, as any visual and traditional method of data collection and presentation, are not fully free from the influences of the researcher-creator either.

The discussion on the realism of film and photography prompted another one – the recognition of photography and film as art. Theorists have attempted to define the unique character of photography within the artistic field by analysing the ontological nuances of the images and trying to establish the relationship between the casual and representational character of photographic images. In his seminal work *Camera Lucida*, Barthes (1980) differentiated between two characteristics of photographs: studium and punctum. Studium refers to the overall context of the image, which makes it valuable as a historical or political evidence. It incorporates interest, inquisitiveness, devotion to a certain thing, and tendency. Punctum in turn “rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me” (Barthes, 1980, p. 26). Barthes here relates to the details of the image that attract attention and touch us. Studium is something we have to reach ourselves – either by reading the caption or by conducting the work of situating the image in its actual context. It is part of the culture within which the image is interpreted. Punctum is “that accident that pricks me” (Barthes, 1980, p. 26), moving, touching the heart. If not, the image is simply deprived of punctum. Studium is therefore the context, the reality, while punctum reveals the artistic characteristics of photography. Some scholars see the punctum as the core of the image, providing it with magic and power, and not requiring contextualisation (Baudrillard, 1999). This stance, while legitimate within the field of art, is difficult to accept in the research context. Here lies, in our view, the core difference between the use of images in these two interconnected, yet non-overlapping fields: art and science. Studium – the context – that scholars such as Baudrillard would willingly omit in their artistic approaches to the images lies at the core of visual methodologies (Becker, 1998).

Similar discussions as the ones accompanying the birth of photography were associated with the development of film. Classical film theory was from the very beginning concerned with whether the film could have been classified as an art. “Its roots in scientific experiments and its mechanical means of recording seemed to rule

out any role for individual expression or for created form, which argued against its artistic status” (Gaut, 2010, p. 3). Rudolf Arnheim was among the first film theorists who recognised and advocated for film as an artistic form (Gaut, 2010, p. 4). The quest for recognition of film as art had an important implication: the need to identify the author behind any artistic creation (Gaut, 2010, p. 4). Western understanding of artistic creation required that out of the different functions in film production, one – the director – should be identified as the creator of the final outcome. The discussion around film as an artistic form is still ongoing today. The main argument against the recognition of film as art is that the film is casual and that it reproduces reality – and for this reason its capacities as art are limited. Jay Ruby (2000) has argued that ethnographic film forms a different category from documentary for instance, because of its very scientific intention. Nevertheless, many current film theorists and philosophers have recognised film as an artistic form (Gaut, 2002, p. 310). The question that is relevant here in light of the goals of this volume is under which circumstances the film can become part of visual methodologies and if there is room for art. Verstappen (this volume) discusses equalising of the roles of film creators in ethnographic film at the cost of single author autonomy, pointing out that this practice, standing clearly against the documentary school, works well for the production of theory through the ethnographic film. Piemontese as well as Trencsényi and Naumescu (this volume) propose ways to co-create moving images with the participants. They show the extent to which the final product differs from the primary expectations of a researcher entering the field. Going beyond hierarchisation and involving research participants into co-creation of films take back the authorship from the director and places it somewhere in between the researchers, participants, and the medium with its transformative potential. This may seem a step back from the path to recognise the film as an artistic expression described by Gaut (2010), but we foresee it as a necessary step towards recognising the film as part of visual methodologies. The creation of film in visual methodologies is supposed to support the research enquiry, with filmmaking being a means to obtain knowledge, rather than a goal in itself.

From the discussion above stems a picture of visual methods as oriented towards obtaining data through images, rather than creating an expression of collected data in the form of a final product (such as a movie or a photo exhibition). What is then the role of aesthetics in the context of research practice? Do still and moving images produced in the research process require to appeal to the audience? Should a visual researcher possess the skills of a professional photographer or a movie maker? The short answer to these questions is no. The images and footage obtained as sources of data do not have to be aesthetically appealing. What is important is their correspondence with the research objectives – namely, they should depict issues meaningful for the goals of investigation, providing the researcher with a possibly wide context in which she can situate obtained findings. Nevertheless, if it comes to the display of still and moving images as a way to convey the findings of the research, appealing aesthetics, as well as the presence of the punctum, may bring benefits in relation to the extent of the research impact. Depending on the purposes of the projects, therefore, researchers hire professionals to accompany them in visual data

collection, and this is a well-established practice (see Ball, 2014). The final outcomes of the research projects, such as movies, photo exhibitions, visual essays etc. come together with the adoption of a visual methodology to the research on the earlier stages of the (co)production, as contributors to this volume successfully presented (Desille; Verstappen, MacQuarie, Chaps. 4, 6 and 16, in this volume). Because of the precautions on each and every stage of their making, these final outcomes do not represent a mere summary or illustration of the findings, but rather reflect the research process in a more broad perspective, conveying empirical and theoretical messages obtained through rigorous academic investigation. Their aesthetic values do not obscure the research message they are attempting to convey, and this is the latter that determines the former. These final stand-alone products may and do possess aesthetics values, incorporating both realistic and artistic characteristics and going beyond the polarised debates positioning art and science as opposed to one another. Sebag and Durand (Chap. 9, in this volume) advocate for a well-thought framing of ethnographic images, while fostering “uncertainty, surprise and, if possible, suspense” so as to “increase the attractiveness of the photo for the readers and lead them to look at it and to deepen its meaning.” As MacDougall (2012, p. 5) eloquently pointed out in relation to the anthropological film: “Art and science therefore need not be opposed if the art is in the service of more accurate description. Each filmmaker must decide at what point the means of expression employed begin to obscure rather than clarify the subject—in short, at what point aesthetic choices begin to undermine the creation of new knowledge”.

1.1.2 Context, Manipulation, and Positionality – Towards the “Objectivity” of Visual Research

Omitting the context of images depicting sensitive issues – such as the ones produced on migration – and thereby leaving the audience to its own interpretation may prove harmful for research participants (Becker, 1995, 1998; MacDougall, 2012). In the case of international migrations, it may even trigger anti-immigration attitudes (Desille, Buhr, & Nikielska-Sekula, 2019). Aligned with MacDougall’s (2012, p. 15) idea of reflexivity, we argue that the context is crucial if we are to convey any trustworthy research findings through images. Ways to contextualise may differ depending on the use of images (data collection or data dissemination), and across various media (sometimes requiring verbal or written addition to the images).

We appeal for the support of desk research and more traditional methods, in order to cross visual methods with other methods. As a matter of fact, the validation of research data is inherent to fieldwork (see Olivier de Sardan (1995) on the politics of fieldwork). In this volume, visual projects presented are usually embedded in a broader research project. Additionally, this is a reason why we have argued for a visual “methodology” rather than “method”. As Pauwels (2010) suggests, several theoretical frameworks can support visual analysis, including semiotics, several

sociological paradigms, psychoanalysis, cultural studies, postcolonial theory or feminist theory. We call for carefully structured research, from data collection planning to theoretical support and dissemination – and by structured, we by no means mean successful, and embrace failures and experiments. Evidently, as we reminded earlier, art and science do not have to exclude one another (MacDougall, 2012). Without positioning the context in opposition to the aesthetic values of research outcomes, we trust that stories told with visuals should have the same degree of scientificity as publications. For instance, Verstappen (Chap. 6, in this volume) advocates for writing parallel to editing. But their film *Living like a Common Man* works as a standalone project because of the long-term research on which its making was conditioned.

This exercise of contextualisation is, in our opinion, crucial because each scientific production entails (or at least wishes for) a reception by an audience. These audiences bring their own cultural resources (Rose, 2007) and experience particular scopic regimes (Metz, 1977), both defining their visual experiences (Ball & Gilligan, 2010). Context then can be prone to manipulation. It can be formulated in order to support interest of the subjects employing images to convey a particular message. The context is therefore not transparent either and cannot provide for the transparency of visuals. This was evident in the narrations of the so-called 2015 migration crisis. Traditional and social media both circulated pictures and short documentary-like movies showcasing (usually male) migrants in boats heading towards European shores. These images supported the argument that they were predators invading Europe, instead of victims of broken social, political, and economic systems in their countries of origin. On a different tone, humanitarian narratives have provided pictures of migrant and refugee children and women in misery, stripped of agency, often as a way to attract potential donations. Even documentaries, supposedly against mainstream media, have constructed a “generic migrant figure” (Trencsényi & Naumescu, Chap. 7, in this volume). In all mentioned cases, the urge to believe in the real existence of the subjects depicted by the images, along with the commentaries suggesting the way to interpret them, made for the great power of images. Therefore, visual messages, especially in the era of visual communication, in which information compacted in photographs, short movies, and infographics are received quickly, should be carefully structured to avoid misinterpretations leading to the harm of the concerned. It is equally important in both everyday life and in research practice. Within a visual landscape which is dominated by images of immigration that are either miserabilist, or criminalising, scholars might be careful of what new elements they bring to the existing knowledge of the audience.

When we collect and produce visuals, comes the question of what to display. We propose to set the highest standards by choosing what to display (Nikielska-Sekula, Chap. 2, in this volume), according to the best interests of the participants to the research, researched community, and the whole (social, professional, ethnic, etc.) group the participants are identified with. Within this context, visual methodologies raise questions not only about the mode of representation, but about representation itself. Against their initial aim, images can sometimes reinforce vulnerability, for instance by portraying poverty (MacQuarie, Chap. 16, in this volume). How one

makes sure not to participate in that? Trencsényi and Naumescu (Chap. 7, in this volume) propose taking images that, from the beginning, would not participate in the reproduction of “the generic migrant”. But the collection of chapters in this volume shows the heterogeneity of ethical choices, an issue Frers (Chap. 5, in this volume) proposes to frame as “ethics in motion”.

Following from the previously introduced statements of Becker (1979, 1995, 1998) on the truth and the falsehood as simultaneously immanent to photography, Banks’s (1988) non-transparency of ethnographic films, MacDougall’s (2012) reflexivity and Manovich’s (1995) constructed character of films, we draw the conclusion that still and moving images are dependent on the positionality of the researcher. Jenks (1995) reminds us that for a long time, “the idea of observation within the tradition of social theory implied a studied passivity and disengagement”. The “gaze of the voyeur” or the metaphor of the “fly on the wall” were commonplace. However, with the cultural, humanistic and critical turns in the 1980s, there is a broader consensus that “we transform what we see” (ibid), and a call for scholars to reflect on their position. As Jenks (1995, p. 11) argues, “it is possible to forge a conscious recognition of the constructive relation between our visual practices and our visual culture”. This, he says, does not necessarily mean that we need to go down to the singular: “Semiotics cannot proceed on the basis that signs mean different things to different people; on the contrary it depends on a cultural network that establishes the uniformity of responses to/readings of the sign”. Yet, it seems that indeed, “ethics are negotiated relationally in all of the different stages of a research process and this is certainly also true for visual approaches” (Frers, Chap. 5, in this volume).

It is fair to assume that, for Jenks and others, this cultural network is understood by as Western, white, male scholars studying migration. Even though many migration scholars have themselves experienced migrations (see Prieto-Blanco, Chap. 18, in this volume), issues of power imbalance, mobility privileges, preconceptions that we project on fieldwork and findings are crosscutting. As we have argued earlier, the adoption of a visual methodology, even if it holds the same pitfalls as traditional methodologies, can push us to reestablish some balance in the relationships (without being too naive!). To counter the “male gaze”, the “colonial gaze” (Edwards, 1992, 1997) and other forms of social control, we present visual methodologies as a tool to restore agency and power for participants, notably for immigrants, for women (Pereira, Maiztegui-Oñate, & Mata-Codesal, 2016; Weber, 2019), and for youth (Allen, 2008; Buckingham & De Block, 2007). Visual methods are often portrayed as ways to democratize research. Participants to the research regain power on issues that concern them, and the way they are portrayed. Nevertheless, this is not an automatic result of the mobilisation of visual methods. When collecting data, the mere presence and positionality of the researcher are sources of unbalance of power. Research on youth (such as Piemontese in this volume), whereas it highlights the importance of looking at children as social actors in their own right, must acknowledge that data collection occurs in adult-regulated spaces of encounters (Allen, 2008).

Some researchers point out that the degree of participation in research is contextual (see Nikielska-Sekula, Chap. 2, in this volume), and recruiting volunteers (especially in over-researched contexts) may prove challenging. If this is a case, the

researchers often benefit from the help of “privileged” participants”. These “access providers”, however, influence the data collection with their own unique positionality too. This presents risks to research, including clique effects or manipulation (Jérôme, 2008; Olivier de Sardan, 1995). In this context, the collection of chapters in this volume particularly emphasises the positionality of the researcher, as she involves persons who have experienced migration, and are often seen as vulnerable. The ethics committees put in place in many research institutions are far from being invincible safeguards. Ethics committee reviews can become constraints for researchers involved with populations considered at risk (Allen, 2008). They raise the question of who is protected: The funding institution? Or the participants? As Fox (2013, p. 987) claims when it comes to youth: “Ethical guidelines do not always reflect theoretical understandings of young people as competent expert social actors”. And this can be extended to many other groups in society.

The last question prompted here regards objectivity. Because of the interdependence of researcher’s positionality, are visual methods “less objective” than any other methods employed in social research? Do traditional methods give us better chances to reduce researchers’ influence on the data? The positionality of the researcher as actively influencing the field has been widely acknowledged by researchers in the last decades. Some of them have proposed problematising the way the unique positionality of the researcher might have affected the research in a structured manner and as an immanent part of the research process (Clarke, 2005). Many visual productions also problematise it by involving the filmmaker into the footage and introducing with this her own subjectivity. We, therefore, lean towards the claim that visual data are neither better, nor worse than traditional data in this regard. The costs of the proximity to the field, that allows uncovering the deep meanings, regardless of the methods, refer to the influence of the researcher on the field by her mere presence, appearance, the way of talking, moving and interacting. Visual data, therefore, poses no less value in relation to traditional methods with regard to “objectivity”, and their use should suit the research goals, and can be supplemented by other methods, as proposed by the concept of triangulation of methods.

1.2 Conveying Sensorial Experiences in the Field of International Migrations

In this section, we advance three arguments: the field of international migrations is, in itself, a visual culture shaped by relations of power; this visual culture is not solely “visual” but invokes other senses; the researcher is not the only one who experience through her senses, but participants and the audiences do too. Pink has related the premise stating that “ethnography is a reflexive and experiential process through which understanding, knowing and (academic) knowledge are produced” (2009, p. 8) with a visual methodology. She argues that the ethnographer’s sensing

body is placed in the multisensoriality of any social encounter or interaction. Not only that the ethnographer senses (and not only sees), but by recognising her embodied knowing, she will have to engage in a process of reflexivity. While Edwards (2012) argues that feminist visual anthropology is a critique of male domination, Ferrarini (2017) argues that the sensory turn's starting point is a critique of the emphasis of Western culture on vision as a privileged modality for knowing. He therefore claims to "paying attention to modes of experience that are less linguistic, symbolic and semiotic than they are sensory, embodied or "beyond text" (2017, p.3). This is even more crucial when participants to the research (often including the ethnographer herself, as Macquarie and Prieto-Blanco (this volume) reflect on) experienced migration. Unsettling common definitions of integration through the senses is a necessary provocation.

1.2.1 *International Migrations as a Visual Culture*

This publication project stemmed from a specific field of study, that of international migrations. We argued before that the adoption of a visual methodology within this field has implications. As a matter of fact, we associate certain images with migrations. As Rose (2001) reminds us, the term "visual culture" was first used by Svetlana Alpers (1983) regarding the importance of visual images to seventeenth century Dutch society. We entitled our first workshop – out of three workshops that eventually led to this volume – "What images of the world in a world of images?". Isn't the field of international migration a "visual culture": the study of variegated, complex, fragmented ways of life that has been the last decades eminently visual? A visual culture is a "cultural network that establishes the uniformity of responses to/readings the sign" (Jenks, 1995, p. 15). This leads us to acknowledge that we now produce a book embedded in a Euro-centred representational system (affecting how we know, how we interpret) (Banks & Morphy, 1999; Rose, 2001).

Second of all, by acknowledging that international migrations constitute a visual culture, we have to unpack its relation to power, to a specific "gaze" and to social control. In his volume *Society of Spectacle* (1967), Guy Debord defines spectacle as a social relation between people, mediated by images. It's an economic ideology that legitimates one unique vision of life, which is imposed upon us via audio-visual, bureaucratic, political and economic manifestations, so as to ensure the reproduction of power and alienation. Debord's spectacle has been recuperated within the field of international migrations. The most well-known is Nicholas De Genova account of the "Border Spectacle" which "fashions the border as a veritable mise-en-scène of the larger dramaturgy of migration as a site of transgression and the reaction formations of law enforcement" (2013, p. 1185).

Contributions included in this collection address a wide range of issues related to international migrations. Image culture is an arena of diverse and often conflicting ideologies (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001). Oftentimes, scholars attempt to produce visuals that defy the dominant mainstream ideology. The case studies brought

forward by Magazzini (Chap. 15, in this volume) show possible breakaways designed by minorities themselves, with the cooperation of scholars. Similarly, MacQuarie (Chap. 16, in this volume) proposes a “nightworkshop methodology” to counter narratives of invisibilisation of night workers with a migration experience.

1.2.2 *Beyond the Visual*

After we started bringing together the different contributions that now form this volume, we realised that it was crucial to go beyond the visual and overcome “visual essentialism” (Bal, 2003). As a matter of fact, we were taught that sight is objective, while what is tactile, acoustic is considered subjective. Kelvin Low (2012) reminds us that visual sense has been at the top of the hierarchy of senses since Aristotle (at least in the Western world). However, he suggests that “A related and equally pertinent point concerns how isolating one sense for analysis may lead to a neglect of how the senses work together, hence exhibiting sensory bias and muting multi-sensory experiences” (2012, p. 273). As Taylor has argued in *Visualising Theory* (1994), visual anthropology is linked to experience and cognition. He refers to MacDougall for whom ethnographic films “provoke new knowledge through the circumstances of their making” (1994, p. XIII); and to Annette Weiner for whom “ethnographic films should themselves “embody”—enact, so to speak, rather than simply report on—cultural encounters, by urging anthropologists to transcend the hoary old binarism between us and them, and its corollary of an unidirectional oppositional gaze” (Taylor, 1994, p. XIII).

How then can we transcend the visual? We follow claims by scholars who have suggested that while seeing, reading, listening, touching, smelling we invoke all senses, not just the one traditionally associated with the activity. They have used a diverse lexicon, including: Howe’s (1991) sensory experience, and intersensoriality (Howes, 2005); Tuan’s (1993) multisensoriality; Taylor’s (1994) “visual-sensual”; Rodaway’s (1994) sensuous geographies; Ingold’s (2000) anthropology of the senses; and Pink’s (2009) sensory ethnography. It is argued that a sensuous scholarship starts with Stoller’s work on the Songhay of Niger (Bonfanti, Massa, & Miranda Nieto, 2019). It gains importance with several seminal works, including Merleau-Ponty’s *Eye and Mind* (1961). Merleau-Ponty develops his concept of perception and argues: “It is, rather, a space reckoned starting from me as the zero point or degree zero of spatiality. I do not see it according to its exterior envelope; I live in it from the inside; I am immersed in it” (Merleau-Ponty, 1961, p. 178). Merleau-Ponty has in common with Gibson’s *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (1979) the links between subject and object, seeing and seen. This is developed further by ethnographic filmmakers such as Steven Feld and Jean Rouch, whose “specific technologies and recording techniques [...] evoke embodied and sensory experience” (Ferrari, 2017). Similarly, in *The Corporeal Image*, MacDougall’s “recordings preserve important deictic characteristics, for they are testimonies of moments of the author’s seeing and listening – they carry the mark of the author’s body in

their own being” (2005, p. 54). Based on these various accounts, Pink (2009) suggests that the ethnographer’s sensing body is a source of knowledge. Reflexivity enables embodied knowing (Pink, 2009). Why? Because of the corporeality and multisensoriality of any social encounter or interaction (ibid). In a later article (Pink, 2010), she reasserts that sensory anthropology is interdisciplinary; anchored in perception (Merleau-Ponty, 1961) and experience; and requires embodied practice and movement (Ingold, 2000).

Hence, vision does not dominate the way we experience. We must recognise the relationship between vision and other senses. Bal (2003, p. 9) considers that all senses are permeable: “The act of looking is profoundly “impure”. [...] looking is inherently framed, framing, interpreting, affect-laden, cognitive and intellectual. Second, this impure quality is also likely to be applicable to other sense-based activities: listening, reading, tasting, smelling. This impurity makes such activities mutually permeable, so that listening and reading can also have visuality to them”. For her, visuality is impure, immaterial, eventful. Similarly, Ferrarini proposes to “paying attention to modes of experience that are less linguistic, symbolic and semiotic than they are sensory, embodied or “beyond text” (Cox, Irving, & Wright, 2016)” (2017, p. 3). Pink (2009) refers to “Ingold [who] has proposed a refocusing of research in the anthropology of the senses, away from “the collective sensory consciousness of society” and towards the “creative interweaving of experience in discourse and to the ways in which the resulting discursive constructions in turn affect people’s perceptions of the world around them” (2000, p. 285)”.

Chapters included in this collection extensively address the relation between the sensory body, experience and the adoption of a visual methodology (see Nikielsa-Sekula, Desille; Krase and Shortell; Gnes, Chaps. 2, 4, 8 and 14, in this volume). Why is it particularly important in the field of international migrations? As we argue repetitively in this introduction, researchers involved with participants who have experienced migrations must be conscious of their position, including what they know and recognise as familiar and foreign. For instance, Low (2012) advocates for sensorial transnationalism. In fact “transnational sensescapes (Low & Kalekin-Fishman, 2010) implies an acknowledgement of the importance of sensory memory; how one responds to sensory use in a different cultural context resulting from short/long-term migration is contingent upon one’s situated sensory paradigm at “home” (2012, p. 279). Smell in a context of international migration, for instance has evocative qualities that associate them with past and present experiences in meaningful ways but can also lead to forms of discrimination, xenophobia and racism (Bonfanti et al., 2019).

1.2.3 *Reaching Out*

Invoking the senses happens at different times of the image production process. Through embodiment, it occurs during data collection. But the senses are also invoked when showcasing a visual research output. As Rose (2001) argues, there are different “sites”: the production, the image itself, and the audience.

If we were to base our analysis on secondary research uses and respondent-generated material (Pauwels, 2010), an intermediate step is needed in the research project. In fact, it means that we are sensing through the others' senses. Participatory schemes can change the point of view. It may fulfill the ambition of a "study of people's own visual worlds" (Banks & Morphy, 1999, p. 13). Mostly, it enables feedback (Pauwels, 2010) through visual inter-viewing and photo-elicitation. As we have stated in the introduction, the content of the image is not the sole dimension. Edwards (2012) presents an "idea of a sensory photograph, entangled with orality, tactility, and haptic engagement. [...] photographs cannot be understood through visual content alone but through an embodied engagement with an affective object world, which is both constitutive of and constituted through social relations" (2012, p. 221). She concludes: "All these processes render photographs profoundly social objects of agency that cannot be understood outside the social conditions of the material existence of their social function—the work that they do."

Researcher-initiated production of visual data or respondent-generated material can also be exposed to a larger audience. The time of screening, showing, exhibiting, and the new choices we have through digital media are both crucial in reception. Scenography plays a big role in the reception. But even if the images are just transmitted without scenography and order, Bal says that images get "scars" with time (2003). Edwards and Hart (2004) look at photographs as objects which material and physical value holds meaning. People will experience the images differently if on screen, printed, in an album, an exhibition. Similarly, when it comes to films, MacDougall and Taylor (1998) proposes to explore possibilities for viewers to "experience" too.

What about not showing? Verstoppen (this volume) has argued that scene selection is a crucial moment: a final product does not necessarily need to include all the footage and can in fact leave aside elements to strengthen the narrative clarity of a film. Nikielska-Sekula (this volume) has herself argued that, if the participants are at risk, it is better to abstain from publishing any data. Researchers ought to reflect on the potential harm of their visual outcomes and negotiate their position. If textual accounts make it easier to respect the anonymity of participants, visuals make people visible, sometimes against their protection (Gnes, Chap. 14, in this volume). A possible strategy is to avoid faces, but then, how can one tell a story without people (Nikielska-Sekula, Chap. 2, in this volume)? What do places mean when the shot was taken once the space is vacated? In this context, many argue for the use of visual methods, not as a standalone, but in a more encompassing methodology. As we have just said, the role of photo elicitation, but also of the montage and editing process are crucial. Aside from a visual production, written accounts on ethical choices can be enlightening for further projects, as well as for other researchers engaged in visual methodologies in migration studies. Battaglia argues "the absence of something (its invisibility) can be as crucial to processes of interpretation as the presence of something" (cited in Banks & Morphy, 1999). Visual representations affect the unseen, the unseeable, emotions, feelings of identity and separation (ibid).

During the workshops we had organised before the edition of this volume, Prieto-Blanco (Chap. 18, in this volume) coined the notion of “right to disappear”, to inform the duration of consent given by a participant to the study or in other words her right to withdraw this consent after the data were published. The “right to disappear” is even more at risk when visuals are involved. Having this concept in mind, let us now come back to the difference between art and research-related visuals, as made in the initial section of this introduction. As a matter of fact, visual art would provide that the meaning of the picture might change over time, while its value as art remains.

1.3 Places and Bodies, Storytelling, Participation, and Representation

To which extent does the adoption of a visual methodology in migration studies provide scholars with a new way to access and produce knowledge? First and foremost, we argue that visuals have an epistemological value. In other terms, the production of visuals, may it be by researchers or by participants to a project, enables accessing and then producing knowledge. In the words of Ball and Gilligan, a visual methodology encompasses “the theories and concepts, methods and technologies utilised in researching “the visual”” (Ball & Gilligan, 2010). We argued in the previous section that the visuals in research were of comparative value as words, reflecting a range of individual and collective experiences, practices and discourses. We also argued that the contextualisation of these texts, including the subjectivity introduced by the ones capturing the still or moving images, was essential. Based on this assumption, the visual methodology we propose to follow is critical, and acknowledge the superposition of multiple truths, understood through a variety of “ways of seeing”, defined by Berger to refer to the fact that “we never look just at one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves (1972, p. 9)”.

In what follows, we elaborate on the four dimensions which support the epistemological value of visuals, namely: places and bodies, storytelling, participation, and representation. These dimensions correspond to the four sections of the volume.

1.3.1 Places and Bodies

Perhaps because of their crucial contribution to the reinvigoration of the visual, humanistic and cultural, scholars have given a prominent positions to places, identities and everyday lives in visual data collection. These considerations have lived on, and many recognise that the world is built on human decisions, and these shape social processes, which in turn transform the places humans live in. With this in mind, contrarily to audio recordings, visual methods enable a “sensorial” ethnography, revealing embodied experiences, gestures, emotions and other non-oral data on the one

hand; and material data on specific places² on the other hand. The use of visual methods supports the unique character of a place, by emphasising the particularity of its physical appearance, its rhythm and colours, its ambience in general. As Krase (2012) has argued, a visual approach to the study of ordinary streetscapes enables the researcher to document and then analyse how the built environment reflects the changing cultural and class identities of a neighbourhood's residents. Evidently, one same place can be viewed, and hence shown, distinctively depending on the individual. The mental maps of many different versions of Lisbon, as collected by Buhr (in this volume), are a case in point. Similarly, Nikielska-Sekula (Chap. 2, in this volume) argues that what draws our eye depends on our familiarity with the place.

An additional focus we make here, is the ability to show the triviality of the everyday. The adoption of a visual methodology sustains the objective of portraying places and material experiences located outside of "spectacular" events, of official discourses, or of romanticised narratives (Raulin et al., 2016; Weber, 2019). Desille (Chap. 4, in this volume) takes advantage of this to portray a local politician in northern Israel. As Rose (2001) argues, there are other ways of visualising the world, that are not tied to militarism, capitalism, colonialism, and male supremacy. As such, the camera or the pen can lead the participants to reveal the intimacy of the places they inhabit and use. Moreover, capturing images outside of public and decent places (Allen, 2008) enables us to counter submissive discourses. The contrary may be true too: visual methods might provide ways to restore everyday experiences, and increase visibility in the public space (Pereira et al., 2016). Gnes's work (Chap. 14, in this volume), done in parallel with a militant NGO in the USA, amplifies the visibility of daily workers playing music.

Beyond the visual recording of places, is that of bodies. Moving images more acutely permit to show not only words, but also movements, emotions, silence and more. Research participants can show what they do, where they walk and more, instead of describing their activities with words. But they can also choose to avoid leading the camera to certain places, divert and make the choice of not showing. This "absence" is hence as important to the scholar as the presence. As de Hasque has argued, visual methods can prove useful and necessary to collect field data, for instance, to record non-oral discourses of officials, when one distances himself from power-based conventional discourse, or in general, to grasp what is not expressed by words (de Hasque, 2014). Additionally, the relations between participants' bodies and the objects and constructions that surround them, can be recorded, and analysed later on (by researchers but also by the participants).

²The definition we retain of place follows revised accounts of Agnew's "sense of place" (1987), adapted to contemporary social changes. Agnew's three dimensions of place – a location, or a site in space; a series of locales where everyday life activities take place; and a "sense of place", i.e. the feeling of belonging to a unique community and a unique landscape – is extended as follows: "[...] we understand by place the experience of a particular location with some measure of groundedness (however, unstable), sense of boundaries (however, permeable), and connection to everyday life, even if its identity is constructed, traversed by power, and never fixed" (Escobar, 2001, p. 140). Hence, a "progressive sense of place" (Massey, 1991) takes into account the uniqueness of place, as well as its relation to the outside.

Finally, the bodies of the researchers themselves are to be included in the theories that relate individuals with the time-space they inhabit. Both filmmakers Rouch (1978) and MacDougall (1995) have contributed to the conceptualisation of the relation between the one filming, the camera and the ones filmed. For Rouch, this relation leads to an incarnated, involved and participating experience (de Hasque, 2014). Without words needed, accepting the presence of a camera implies a relation of trust and reciprocity between the filming body and the filmed body (ibid). The mediation of the researcher's body and the camera is still contemporary. To this first time-space, created at the moment of filming, one can add the time-space of the projection (Rebollo, Ardévol, Orobítz Canal, & Vila Guevara, 2008), where another set of social interactions and reinterpretations occur with the audience.

The visual is mutually constitutive of what it captures: visuals permit showing places and bodies that inhabit them; but bodies and their movements, as well as the materialities of the place surrounding the scene captured inform the framing of the images (and, further, the materiality of the films and photographs themselves). As such, emphasising places and bodies when producing visuals on migration-related matters is far from trivial: it holds the potential to transform some views on migrants, that have reduced them to dislocated, almost floating bodies, neither here nor there. Visuals channel the multiple embodied experiences of migrants in places.

Contributors to the section present case studies from the three following cities: Drammen (Nikielska-Sekula), Lisbon (Buhr), and Kiryat Shmona (Desille). Nikielska-Sekula (Chap. 2, in this volume) addresses the implication of the use of photography for multi-sited ethnography in the context of Norwegian Turkish communities. She discusses the value of photography as triggering social relation, the sensory experience of the field, the positionality of the researcher, as well as the ethics, problematising the question of "what to display?". Buhr (Chap. 3, in this volume) analyses the use of mental maps during data collection, in a project aiming at unpacking spatial integration of immigrants in Lisbon. He shows that mental maps expose migrants' practical skills for navigating urban space and argues for an interactive approach to mental maps, in which drawings are to be understood within the researcher-participant engagement. The author uses the "hologram" metaphor to make his point – showing how looking only at mental maps' face-value falls short of the method's potentialities. Desille (Chap. 4, in this volume) provides a meta reflection grounded in empirical evidence on the process of documentary filming within the context of researching migrants. As the main character of the film discussed by her is associated with a nationalist and populist political party, the piece offers a reflection on the positionality of the researcher/filmmaker filming her character attempting to answer the questions of how to produce a film with a degree of fairness in this politically-loaded context? She also problematises the issues of distance and proximity created through the camera. The section is concluded by Frers (Chap. 5, in this volume), who coins the notion of "ethics in motion" to highlight the relations between ethical choices, relationality between researcher and participants, and places.

In line with the claim that visuals enable to ground research in places, and focus on the embodied experiences of persons who have experienced migration, is another related one, which aims at presenting the complexities of the persons that have

experienced migration. The following part thus focuses on the narratives researchers and participants elaborate on migrations, through visuals.

1.3.2 *Storytelling*

Data collection is only part of the research process. For it to be part of the production of knowledge, it needs to be translated in the form of presentations, classes, papers or books, and visuals – as we argue here –, that can be disseminated to a wider audience. Turning observations, maps, interviews, photographs or videos and more into a shareable text – may it be written or visual – is a labourious process, which implies crosscutting one's findings with existing theories and concepts. It also implies that the researcher will tell a story, and build their argument using a certain degree of dramatisation. Even the most accepted format of a scientific article follows this dramatisation pattern: it usually starts with the contributions made previously in one's field, then introduces a sense of rupture and the idea that an innovation has to be made, followed by a series of arguments, which apparent conflictuality with the opening section is solved in the conclusion.

Very similarly, most scholars who disseminate the visuals they or their participants have produced will adopt techniques of dramatisation to tell a story. As previously stated, Banks argues “that ethnographic films are also constructed texts, not direct representations of reality. Some filmmakers realise this and their films reflect it. Others do not and their films reflect their naivety” (1988, p. 2). However, Jean Pierre Olivier de Sardan has differentiated ethnographic films from other forms of documentary, arguing that ethnographers who produce films agree upon an “ethnographic pact” with their viewers. With the ethnographic pact, the viewer accepts the manipulations caused through montage and editing because she knows that the scientist will try to stick to the reality as much as possible. Additionally, the ethnographer will make realisation choices in a way that points towards science rather than fiction. Nevertheless, we believe that visuals can provide researchers with the necessary material to fulfill the ambition of adding complexities, layers and dimensions to the people who participate in the research. This has at least two limitations: firstly, that this would be planned beforehand – it is not an automatic result of the mobilisation of visual methods; secondly, one can never completely restore the historical person.

The process of storytelling involves the creation of a “character”. Even though our ambition should be to make these characters as complex as possible, it can never come close to the *real* person. Though distorted and fragmented, the portrayal of subjective experience is a core concern for social scientists mobilising visual methods. As MacDougall affirms, “Testimony is what gives us the subjective voice of the historical person, yet we are implicated in the destiny of others through narrative; and the mythic potential of social actors is heightened through the distancing created by exposition” (MacDougall & Taylor, 1998, p. 122). Following this quote, we

acknowledge that many possible truths can be collected. Collaboration with participants is a possible way to solve the distortions in the narratives that will circulate after the research project is completed. Piemontese (Chap. 10, in this volume) has directly handed the camera to his participants. Otherwise, collaborations with other professionals and researchers can help “control” for the coherence and depth of the story (see Desille, Chap. 4, in this volume; Verstappen, Chap. 6, in this volume). We will address this more in depth in what follows.

In sum, three levels of interpretation are involved from the production of images, the editing of a narrative, to the screening: that of the participants (what they want to tell), of the researcher (mediating knowledge), and of the audience. As we have already elaborated, after the researcher collects shots, footage, maps or more, the process of montage and editing is a process of storytelling which affects the reality. Here again, the involvement of the participants, although rarer, can provide a safeguard to ensure that various subjectivities are included. And at the time of exposition, multiple interpretations are possible. The same picture can be interpreted differently by different persons. Moreover, it can be interpreted differently by the same participant, depending on the audience. Finally, a sequence of similar images will affect the audience differently, from another sequence of the same images (in a different order for example).

Although this might seem like an ambitious claim, with only limited results, we argue that we must at least start to find solutions against the reduction of migration experiences to one generic migrant figure. As such, a visual methodology holds the potential to multiply and complexify accounts of migration.

The three empirical cases included in this section focus on genres such as film, photography, and visual essay as tools for storytelling. Verstappen (Chap. 6, in this volume) advocates for “theorizing-through-film”. Based on a film which she has co-filmed, her chapter shows the extent to which filming, montage, and editing can give access to a transnational social field from the perspective of people who move within it. She also discusses the benefits of collaborative filmmaking as an alternative way of theory formation. Trencsényi and Naumescu (Chap. 7, in this volume) analyse existing documentaries, shedding light on the process of making migrants into a one-dimensional “collective protagonist.” What is more, building on a course for migrants on filmmaking and the results of this course, they show how migrants present themselves through films, even if the filmmaker is involved and mediates the encounter between the migrant and medium and the emergence of a “third voice” from this participatory process. Finally, Krase and Shortell (Chap. 8, in this volume) explore the possibilities of storytelling through photographs presenting and discussing two examples of visual essays featuring neighbourhoods in New York and London. They argue that migrants exercise agency through changing the local places they occupy, and that photography helps to grasp visible markers of this change. Sebag and Durand (Chap 9, in this volume) conclude the section with a meta reflection on mediating stories through the visuals. They critically challenge the contributors to this section asking if seeing alone can provide a researcher insight into the life words of migrants.

1.3.3 *Participation*

By participation, we take the militant stance of scholars, who acknowledge that all can participate in producing knowledge. The participatory character of visual methods emphasises the agency of participants in a performative way: taking pictures, acting in front of the camera, drawing and sketching; but also during the analysis of collected materials, through interviews or focus groups where visuals produced are discussed and analysed. Participatory visual methodology implies that the researcher is not the only person analyzing the data.

Conferring researched individuals with choices over the object of research, participatory visual research methods can permit a more humanist representation of the participants' situations, as well as minimise harm. In fact, when working with refugees or IDPs for instance, researchers run the ethical risks of using participants as research data. By letting participants choose what they wish to talk about, they can decide if to reenact the type of experiences they have encountered – including trauma, poverty or insecurity – and how (Weber, 2019). As already mentioned, Piemontese (Chap. 10, in this volume) has given the camera to the youth he worked with. Trencsényi and Naumescu (Chap. 7, in this volume) have run a workshop with asylum seekers who participated in a collective filming exercise to depict their lives away from mainstream discourses in Hungary. But the simple fact of “following” a character (Desille, Gnes, Chaps. 4 and 14, in this volume) rather than imposing specific scenes is, as much as pose in photography (Ball, 2014), a way to confer agency.

In the particular field of international migration, this type of participatory processes has the potential to allow individuals to build an active relationship to citizenship, to confer agency upon them, and to allow them to overcome their post-political condition (Salzbrunn, Dellwo, & Besençon, 2018). This active participation is a form of “citizenship from below” (Pereira et al., 2016). Some accounts of visual methods emphasise the empowering character of this type of research. The lexicon of “pride” is recurrent in empirical research results. Le Houerou (2012) discusses the reactions of the participants to her research and affirms that they find themselves beautiful and proud to be on camera. Similarly, Weber speaks of the IDP women that took photographs during her research and says: “They seemed proud of the photos they took, showing them to interested family members and neighbours” (2019, p.11). The empowerment can stem from the recognition of the competency of participants in knowledge production.

Critical research such as feminist research reaffirms the need to produce knowledge useful for oppressed groups and seek the transformations of different forms of oppression (Weber, 2019). When thought of in the context of visual methodologies in international migration, common examples are those of transformative learning processes embedded in a “citizenship as practice” approach (Pereira et al., 2016; Weber, 2019). In that sense, researchers should not see themselves as “giving a voice” to their participants, but rather as facilitators (on the paternalistic problematic issue of voice giving to the voiceless, see Taylor (1994, p. XIV)). By creating

venues may they be events (Bacon, Desille & Pate, Chap. 12, in this volume) or museums (Magazzini, Chap. 15, in this volume), they can positively participate in *amplifying* a voice, that obviously, already exists. A question that remains is: Why would the researcher commit to this position of facilitator? In the following paragraphs, we assert that researchers have a role to play in the representations that circulate on international migration. Hence, the impact of their work is real and should be evaluated (see also Trencsényi & Naumescu, Chap. 7, in this volume).

The contributors to the section present issues on different levels, starting from a case study involving Roma youths (Piemontese, Chap. 10, in this volume), through a case study on undocumented migrants in Serbia (Augustová, Chap. 11, in this volume), to discussing a co-created artistic event (Bacon, Desille, and Pate, Chap. 12, in this volume). Based on his fieldwork among Roma youths in Spain and Romania, Piemontese offers a meta-reflection on the intersection of participatory and audiovisual methods in researching unprivileged youths. With a close reference to the fieldwork, the chapter describes the three phases of participatory research (training – participation – professionalisation), tackling among other things the issues of the competency of research participants to produce knowledge, relationship between the researcher and the participant and the consequences of employed technology for the findings. Piemontese advocates for a superiority of participatory methods over traditional ones in the research involving unprivileged youths. Augustová discusses the use of respondent generated visuals presenting a case study of migrants in Serbia in formal and informal camps attempting to cross to Croatia. She discusses the dilemmas around using researcher generated photography in the middle of a so-called migration crisis, where the trust given to visual researchers is severely limited by negative experiences of the actors with journalists. Finally, she presents the visualisation of the “game” – illegal border crossing –, as captured by the respondents. She presents a photovoice method which allowed respondents to choose what kind of information associated with traumas, and on which level of depth they wanted to share. Bacon, Pate, and Desille, by providing a meta reflection on a scientific event, discuss the encounter between art and migration scholarship. They attempt to answer the question: how the meeting with migration studies and art is conceived as a political act, where citizenship is experimented. They ultimately show the dilemma between visibility, and actual presence and participation of migrants in these events. The section is concluded by Cantat (Chap. 13, in this volume). She suggests that participation is the result of a “politics of encounters”, which in turn leads to different “products” for dissemination. However, participation’s ultimate goal is indeed to redistribute (more equally) the roles between scholars, artists, participants etc.

With participation, can researchers hold the promise of transformation? With new regulations in funding, many researchers are obliged to provide an answer to how the research will transform people’s lives. We must check the box of “measuring social impact” (see Magazzini, Chap. 15, in this volume). If researchers are entitled to be optimistic, this cannot be limited to an exercise of “checking the boxes” to get access to funding. A reflection on what is realistic is crucial. For instance, if visual methods can provide new means for participants to advocate,

professionalise and participate, it is essential that the research project includes time to highlight key findings and recommendations, and accompaniment of participants in a longer term process (Weber, 2019).

1.3.4 Representations

Visual methods hold yet another key feature, important in critical studies: scientific production can be restituted to a larger audience than the restricted scientific community. Through exhibitions, online photo galleries, projection, streaming, publication in open access media or web-based documentaries and much more, the possibilities for exposure are endless – maybe so much that they require the deep ethical reflections which we address in this volume. Because they are more accessible than textual scientific productions, they can be used as a tool for elicitation, through focus groups, or when visuals are brought to third parties, as a tool to transform, when shared with stakeholders and policymakers.

The wider accessibility of visuals leads us to the question of representation. Representation can be broadly defined as “the use of language and images to create meaning about the world around us” (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001). Representation occurs through systems of representation such as language and visual media (and the rules and convention organising them) (ibid). We all construct meaning of the material world through these systems (ibid). Visual systems can include the processes that result in humans producing visible objects, reflexively constructing their visual environment and communicating by visual means (Banks & Morphy, 1999). Visual methodology itself is embedded in representational systems, including political interests, particular systems of knowledge, affecting what is known and how it is interpreted (ibid). Although Mead and Bateson worked restlessly to make visual anthropology a legitimate mode of representation, Banks and Morphy (1999) argue that they have failed to make visual anthropology a study of people’s own visual worlds, including the role of representations within cultural processes. As Pink (2001) suggests, the purpose of visual ethnography is to explore the relationship between the visual and other knowledge, in order to make meaningful links between different research experiences and materials; and to uncover sets of different representations. Banks and Morphy (1999) affirm that the bases of representational systems vary cross-culturally both in terms of what is selected out for representation and how those features are represented or encoded (Coote & Shelton, 1992). The objective of a visual methodology is to reveal these different “ways of seeing” (Berger, 1972, p. 9) within and between societies.

When it comes to international migrations, the visual has been a crucial political instrument. As we have presented earlier, De Genova (2013) relied on Debord’s spectacle when coining the “Border Spectacle”, which visually translates into the “iconic border” between the USA and Mexico, “increasing prominence of images of the patrols of the high seas or rugged landscapes”, and a “choreography of images” to produce the “illegality” of migrants. He argues: “In this respect, we may

infer from Debord (1967, p. 19, original emphasis) that state power itself has come to rely, both intensively and extensively, on the instantaneous propagation of mass-mediated public discourse and images, which is “essentially one-way” (2013, p. 1189).

As we have argued at the beginning of this introduction, most notably through the work of Barthes (1980), photographic truth is a myth, and that the only acts of selection, framing and personalisation reflect subjective choice. Those choices should therefore be informed. Scholars have a responsibility to counter discourses on migration that are harmful to persons who have experienced migration. Processes of dehumanisation, criminalisation and securitisation observed in Europe and beyond today have heavily relied on spectacular images. In this context, we should be careful not to produce visuals that can be instrumentalised for these ends. Relying on archival works can prove useful to document historical migrations (such as the work of Morena La Barba (2014), or that of Erika Thomas described in Bacon, Desille & Pate this volume), produce comparative works, and in general, take a step back.

In this final section, the authors present case studies of undocumented migrants in Los Angeles (Gnes), institutions focusing on the representation of migrants and minorities (Magazzini) and a cinematic depiction of migration (MacQuarie). Gnes (Chap. 14, in this volume) looks at the work of an immigrant organisation based in Los Angeles County. Through music performances, the organisation reaches out to day labourers who immigrated from central and south America; organises protests in symbolic places; and raises awareness to a wider public (including with the collaboration of well-known artists). The author provides a step by step analysis of the research process involving interviews, participant observations and film to obtain the data, along with a critical reflection on accompanying ethical questions. Both researcher-, and respondent-generated images and sounds are involved into the data repository. The chapter is an account on the function of music to gather people around specific issues and mobilise them towards political action. Magazzini (Chap. 15, in this volume) looks at three case studies: EAC (The Expatriate Archive Centre), the ERIAC (The European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture) and “Bunkers”, a documentary by Anne-Claire Adet, to present ways of challenging popular representations of migrants and minorities in a broadly understood cultural discourse. She discusses the premises of representation focusing on what is represented, by whom, and for which audience, proving that the representations modes are not causal in the chosen case studies, but selected on purpose to counter current common discourses on minorities, and to evoke empathy. MacQuarie’s chapter (Chap. 16, in this volume) features the film trilogy (*invisible lives*, *nocturnal lives* and *nightshift spitalfields*) as bringing front three methods of cooperation: with a filmmaker; researcher-generated footage (and film-to-theory); and cooperation with a participant to the research. He also discusses the phenomenon of an embodied knowledge as means of representation of migrant bodily experiences that is possible to be reached (and described) by the anthropologist through a longitudinal immersion in the field, in his case the nocturnal migrant workers working place, within the framework of a participant observation. The section

concludes with Şanlıer Yüksel and Çam's chapter (Chap. 17, in this volume) on representation, position of the researcher and ethics.

1.4 Before We Move onto the Next Parts

Before we move onto the next parts, we want to reiterate the four claims that we have made so far. Firstly, visuals enable researchers to ground research in places, and focus on the embodied experiences of persons who have experienced migration. In that sense, it counters the preconception that migrants are neither here nor there. Secondly, visuals tell stories. Against the reduction of migration experiences to one generic migrant figure, they hold the potential of multiplying and complexifying accounts of migration. Thirdly, the adoption of a visual methodology increases the possibilities for cooperation and co-authorship, and therefore the need to recognise the competency of participants in knowledge production. Finally, these three claims all feed in the transformation of representations of people who have experienced migration. Researchers are responsible for these representations as much as other media they often criticise. As such, and this has been made clear in the second section of this introduction, they have to regularly question: the power imbalance between them and the participants to the research; their positionality and the subjective character of their interpretations; and matters of ethics when carrying out research on migration.

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