From Passive to Active Voice: Using Photography as a Catalyst for Social Action

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Abstract

Researchers often find themselves in a position of "acting for" or "in the name of" individuals and communities whose voices have traditionally been muted or silenced. The passive nature of these muted or silenced voices prevents them from being heard, fully understood or appreciated. As true voices of participants emerge in research, so does a more representative view of individuals' or community's strengths and concerns. Photography can be used in various forms as a catalyst for participatory research especially in partnership with people whose voices have been silenced in contemporary societies. This manuscript explores a variety of photographic methodologies and discusses their use as mechanisms to directly document, investigate, evaluate, uncover, elicit, challenge and empower in collaboration with participants and community members. They have been organized in order of the level of participation and growth of the community member, with documenting involving the least amount of participation and empowering providing a very high level of participation, input and growth of the participant.

Key Words: photography, social action, participatory research

From passive to active voice: Using photography as a catalyst for social action
"*If I could tell the story in words, I wouldn't need to lug a camera*" (Stott 1973)
"*A picture is worth a thousand words*" (Barnard 1921, 1927)
"*Seeing is believing*" (Anonymous, 1639)

Introduction

Researchers are often in a position of "acting for" or "in the name of" individuals and communities whose voices have traditionally been muted. The passive nature of these muted voices prevents them from being heard, fully understood or appreciated. ' In the social sciences, photographs have been traditionally used in a supportive function to supplement or illustrate data and individual stories. Goin (2001) suggests the need for social science researchers to move beyond the use of photos as simply illustrative. Photography can be used in various forms as a catalyst for partnerships with participants of research. Photography can be extremely effective in encouraging storytelling and the interpretation of photographs and involves what Wright (1999) calls both "looking at" and "looking behind" the picture. Participants' photographs invite us to enter stories in another world—their stories challenge us to "step into the complicated maze of experience that renders 'ordinary' folks so extraordinarily multifaceted, diverse, and complicated" (Kelley, 1994).

Photography, with its ability to render details, has an aura of authenticity that gives it a unique power and fascination. A photograph tells us what 'really' happened, or what we 'really' look like, in a way no verbal description can. Photographs allow for creative and universal expression and can tap into a wide range of intangible concepts such as inequality, the construction of reality, power, and conflict. Photographs are ". . . cultural documents offering evidence of historically, culturally and socially specific ways of seeing the world" (Rose, 2001). Contrasting with the "reality" of photography is the interpretative nature of photography. Photographs convey and elicit meaning through the combination of photographers' realities and the viewers' interpretations. A unique communicative link is established between photographers and viewers. The stage is then set for meaningful communication that acknowledges individual reality as well as interpretation as valid shared knowledge. When combined with research focused on social action this co-created knowledge ultimately can lead to practical solutions for issues of concern.

An ultimate goal of some research is to create awareness of a social problem and be a catalyst for action. Social action on a basic level implies an ownership of the issue at hand by those individuals and communities who are participating in the research. As voices emerge in this research, so does a more representative view of individuals' or community's strengths and concerns. Photography is one method that can drive this movement. Photographic methods used in a participatory fashion allow for active reflection and identification of individual and community strengths and challenges. It is through identification of strengths that people can begin to address the challenges that have contributed to the muting of voice. Movement from passive to active voice through photography provides a vehicle for the expression and action of their concerns.

In this manuscript, we review a variety of photographic methodologies and discuss their use as mechanisms to directly document, investigate, evaluate, uncover, elicit, challenge and empower in collaboration with participants and community members. They have been organized in order of the level of participation and growth of the community member, with documenting involving the least amount of participation and empowering providing a very high level of participation, input and growth of the participant (Figure 1). Although many of the photographic techniques we discuss overlap in their functions (e.g., *Photovoice* can empower but also investigate, challenge, and evaluate), we have divided them into sections that describe their major contribution to research. To date, these photographic methodologies have been discussed across a number of disciplines using a variety of names; however, there has been no attempt to compile them in one forum and make their common link to participatory research explicit.
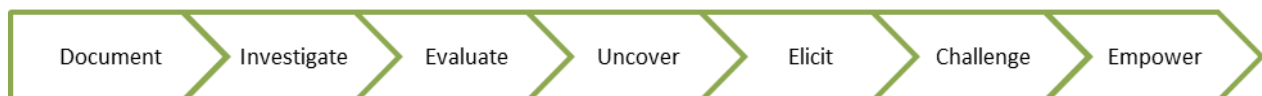

Figure 1: Photographic methods—continuum of participation and growth

Photography to Document

Documentary photography had its beginnings in journalism. The advent of photography gave journalists the power to communicate the realities of our world in a very personal way. "A document, when human, is the opposite of the official kind; it is not objective but thoroughly personal" (Stott, 1973, p.7).

The psychological link between the human experience and personal compassion provided a motive for many to practice the documentary approach. Another appeal of documentary photographs was that the journalist did not rely on words alone but rather on the image of reality itself. Documentary photographs more closely mimicked reality making them a persuasive medium to detail everyday phenomena. Today *Photojournalism*, and *Documentary Photography* are photographic methods that have been used to document the past, present, and future.

Photojournalism

Photojournalism is a form of "visual storytelling" (Newton, 2009, p.233) that allows photographers to "illuminate human activity" in a moment of time (Finklestein, 2009, p. 108). Almost from the beginning, photojournalists showed the resilience of people in the face of social injustice and "used clandestine photographs to reveal uncomfortable truths or to raise awareness of social inequalities" (Photojournalism Exhibition, 2008). Dorothea Lange used photography to draw attention to the plight of the disadvantaged and dispossessed. Her most famous photographs are of migrant workers and tenant farmers in rural areas of the United States during the Depression. Her photograph, *Migrant Mother* is the most famous example of this work (Hare, 2008). Another early photographer that engaged in social photographic documentaries was John Thomson who portrayed London's poor in photographs that laid the foundations for photojournalism (Thomson and Smith, 1994). Jacob Riis produced photographic essays on immigrants and included interiors of dilapidated schools (Yochelson, Riis, & Czitrom, 2007) in order to educate the public about the urban conditions of immigrants.

Documentary Photography

Participatory approaches to *Documentary Photography* developed by Ewald (1985), Hubbard (1994), Spence (1995), and other activist photographers suggest a grassroots approach to representation in which marginalized populations voices are expressed. Lewis Hine was among the earliest to practice *Documentary Photography* in a social advocacy manner (Trachtenberg, 1989). He photographed a nation preoccupied with production and wealth at the expense of child labor, immigration, and rapid urbanization. Hine believed in using his camera to affect social change. Committed to progressive ideals of social reform, Hine photographed to document the "panorama of social facts" (Jussim, 1984) in a scientific, rational, and systematic fashion. For Hine, *Documentary Photography* was a scientific method as well as a social act. Picture-taking involved more than merely recording factual content, or social events—it was an interactive process where "the social act lay in the communication" (Jussim, 1984, p. 203). Curtis (1989) supports this perspective and goes on to suggest that "a photograph has no inherent or intrinsic meaning—only an assigned meaning" (p. ix).

However, this literality of what actually occurred in photographs is for Roland Barthes (1977) the paradox of photography; that photographs can be messages both with and without a code (p. 19) -- photographs can be an 'art' and reflect a reality at the same time. For example, if we take the photograph of emaciated war prisoners, it can both connote memories of war, of suffering, of conflict, but can also denote the physical effects of starvation and the injury caused by nuclear weapons. This literal component is a part of a "photograph's continuing power to move its audience and its centrality in the politics of memory" (Twomey, 2007). The advent of photography introduced a new way of seeing the social world (Berger, 1972). However, this societal influence of photography has been largely overlooked. Photographic documentation literature focuses on the chronological history of the documentary rather than the influence of photography on public opinion (Jussim, 1984).

Photojournalism and *Documentary Photography* are forms of research, whether intended to be so or not. Taking photographs of news items and displaying them for the masses through various forms of print and electronic media can bring social change and shift communities from passively absorbing information to actively pursuing and becoming involved with issues of concern.

Photography to Investigate

Photographs provide strikingly descriptive data and the potential for this data is well beyond the visual content of the photograph (Collier and Collier, 1986). Photos can be used to help the researcher gain understandings beyond the objective content and allows researchers to understand and study aspects of life that cannot be researched through other approaches (Asch and Asch, 2003). *Photo Ethnography* and *Photo Production* are two methods that provide images more telling than words and can help researchers to 'push their analysis' when the data do not fit the theoretical constructs that the researcher is forming.

Photo Ethnography

Photographs can be used to investigate phenomenon in a number of ways. Most commonly, photography is used alongside participant observation in order to remember and capture detail that may be missed (Collier, 2003). Photos used in ethnographic research are frequently analyzed with participant input, acting as a visual stimulus for interviews. Researchers also use found photographs—historical society collections, antique photographs, archives, yearbooks, class pictures, amateur photos, etc. which offer a historical rendering of the setting and its participants. Traditionally researchers used field notes for data collection, however, in *Photo Ethnography*, photographs are taken along with field notes, genealogies, and collections of cultural artifacts. Although some bias will still exist because researchers must pick and choose the foci of photographs, using photography to record data generally provides more objectivity in ethnographic research (Asch & Asch, 2003). Visual data may also be useful for triangulation when researchers seek to strengthen a study by using multiple sources of data (Patton, 2002). Visual data can provide an authenticity and richness to an otherwise descriptive dimension. No single method of data collection can adequately record and explain phenomena from the field. Adding a visual means of data collection, such as photography, allows the researcher to take the photos back to the participants and review them with the group or individuals to get feedback, explanation, and interpretation. Not only does this strengthen the study but it gives the participants a voice as well as input in the findings and analysis.

Photographs used in conjunction with in-depth interviews encourage descriptive narrative that highlights aspects of the persons' human experience, and enriches the information provided through interviews (Hagedorn, 1996). Researchers use photos in interviews with participants to probe how they define their world, reveal what participants may take for granted or what they assume is unquestionable. Photographs can be used in research as a trigger during interviews to encourage discussion of experiences and abstract concepts. Photographs can function as an extension of memory and in this way, can aid research by reminding participants of past events and help them to retrieve additional information which may not be discovered using traditional interview methods (Beloff, 1984). In a study of the immigration experiences of ten newly-arrived Latino adolescents living in rural North Carolina, photographs were utilized as a basis for interview discussions (Streng et al., 2004). Similarly, Pink (2001) has paired photos and ethnographic research to investigate women and bullfighting in Spain.

Researchers have also used archival photography such as those found in yearbooks, family photo albums and historical society collections as data. The activities associated with people or places in these photos provide nonverbal, historical data. Change and contrast between the past and present time can be viewed through historical photos. Although the research can mine a considerable amount of data from the photograph alone, combining archival photos with interviews can enlighten the researcher of the complexity of the events found in the photos as well as the identification of individuals (Collier and Collier, 1986). When using the interviewing process along with archival photos, researchers are also able to access the feelings that are connected with the moment in time. Photos viewed in an interview weeks, months or years after the photos were taken can invoke the same feelings and emotions as those of the moment the photos were taken (Akeret, 2000). This adds an enormous value to the photos themselves as well as the information garnered from the interviews (Collier and Collier, 1986).

Photo Production

Photo Production moves from well-intentioned ethnography which can perpetuate marginalized people as the 'other' and instead offers participants a camera so they can act upon their environment and provide a first-hand account of their world. Kruse (2004) describes the use of photographs taken by elderly women to illustrate their perceptions of letting go of a recently deceased loved one. Gaskins and Forté (1995) used photos and interviews in an attempt to improve the depth and quality of data. Four participants in this study were provided with a single-use, automatic camera with built-in flash and were asked to take images that they felt were in some way suggestive of hope. In this way, each participant produced a photographic 'exhibition' of hope. The resulting photographs were then used to guide the in-depth interview with the participant in which the experience and meaning of the phenomenon was explored. In another study using photo production, Radley and colleagues (2005) worked with homeless people so that they could show the researchers their world and interpret it as well. In this study, homeless participants were asked to say what each photograph showed, the focus of the photograph, and their response to the person, place or object depicted. All photographs were then spread out and the person asked to identify the ones that best captured their experience of homelessness.

They were also asked to comment on the act of taking the photographs, and to express their feelings about the pictures that they had taken.

For investigative purposes, photography encourages participant engagement and involvement in the research process and therefore makes it a valuable addition to research methodology. The use of photographs may enhance the extent to which the participant becomes engaged in the research process with a level of reciprocity and equality not often experienced when researchers interview strangers. In many studies, participants have expressed positive feelings toward their participation in research when photography was involved. Reactions ranged from commenting on the simple fun of taking photos to the greater reflection that photos elicit (Radley, Hodgetts, & Cullen, 2005). Participants can genuinely participate in the data collection and exploration phase, to a far greater level than tends to be the case with traditional interview and survey methods. Photography used as an ethnographic research method gives participants an added voice, allowing them to express ideas, thoughts and emotions that may not surface otherwise. The use of photography creates less bias in the researchers' interpretation, allows for social change when shared with an audience, permits documentation of a group's cultural history, offers opportunities for comparison of interpretation between researchers and participants, and can minimize the inequity that often exists in researcher/subject relationships, all of which make photographic methods highly compatible with participatory research for the purpose of social action.

Photography to Evaluate

Using photography for evaluation moves beyond reflective knowledge created by outside experts to an active data collection and inquiry process that is driven by the 'study subjects.' Through methods such as *Photolanguage* and *Photovoice* people become more connected to the evaluation of the program in which they have participated, beyond filling out surveys or participating in traditional focus groups after the program ends.

Photolanguage

While *Photolanguage* has been in use in psychology since 1965, using *Photolanguage* in evaluation is very recent, where it was first systematically used by the Education Evaluation Team at University of Miami (Bessell, 2004). Since 1999, *Photolanguage* has been used to evaluate training by enabling participants to express their goals, identify problems or needs, and provide evidence of their progress. Using *Photolanguage* for evaluation appears to work well when employed before the training to gauge perceptions as well as after the training to document changes in attitude and knowledge. Briefly, the steps of *Photolanguage* include 1. selection of meaningful photographs with relevance to the program being evaluated, 2. photograph and room arrangement 3. group discussion, questions and reflection, and 4. choice of photographs 5. cxchange reflections and 6. interpretation and analysis (Bessell, Deese & Medina, 2007). The facilitator allows for volunteers to express their answers to the question(s) and not force them to answer by going person by around the room. This also allows for multiple people to express their feelings about the same photograph at the same time. It is hoped that after free exchange has begun, all participants will feel comfortable to volunteer and express themselves through the photographs.

The desired result is "a group of people with renewed self-awareness and a new sense of dignity; people who can initiate change and help themselves transform their own world" (CML, 2002; Bessell, Deese, and Medina, 2007) documented the number of words participants used to describe themselves pre- and post-training in traditional focus groups as compared to *Photolanguage* groups, providing ample evidence that respondents are more likely to discuss more when expressing themselves through photography. The authors also state that in comparison with formally-led focus groups, the *Photolanguage* sessions produced richer, more meaningful discussions. This produces better data for evaluating programs.

Photography can also be used to evaluate programs without the *Photolanguage* methodology. Landerholm (1999) used photos for evaluating the Even Start family literacy program in Illinois. In the first year, photographs were taken of the children and parents engaged in program activities. These photographs were given back to the parents, who asked their children to describe the photographs and document these conversations in journals. Participants made scrapbooks, portfolios, and wrote stories from the photos, and later, photography classes were offered to parents and children in the program to increase the number of people using photography and increase their skills. The photographs and journal entries were used in the program evaluation and were an excellent way to document progress and learning.

Landerholm states "teachers were much better at taking pictures than they were at writing documentation of everything that happened" (Landerholm, 1999). The author also states that the photography was not originally planned to be used for evaluation, but it proved to be an insightful and reliable way to document the progress of the learners. Photographic methods of evaluation are an appropriate way to evaluate interventions and initiatives to determine if the programs are achieving the desired, permanent change. Photographs produced from an evaluation are an effective way to bring attention to a project by policy makers and officials who can enact change. Additionally, photographic evaluation lends itself well to participatory research because it is a more flexible methodology. Many evaluation strategies employ linear logic models or specific objectives that are measured rigidly, while photographic methods allow for continuous evaluation of the program as it is being implemented, leaving time to adjust and make changes voiced by participants to the program along the way (Landerholm, 1999).

Photography to Uncover/Elicit

Photographs can provide an opportunity for individuals to develop a new awareness of their own social existence. The photographs become not only catalysts that spark dialogue but open the door to a form of communicative space -- a space designed to emphasize the inclusive, collective and transformative nature of participatory research (Kemmis & Niemi, 2008). *Photo Elicitation*, *Therapeutic Photography*, and *Photolanguage* offer three ways by which people can access inner feelings and emotions and share those with others which may inspire critical reflection and ultimately social action.

Photo Elicitation

Photo Elicitation is a method in which photographs are used to open a deeper level of communication between individuals that would not necessarily have occurred through verbal cues or conversation alone. Feelings, thoughts, and emotions are intentionally evoked via the rush of memory that comes when we view a photograph (Berger, 1992). Harper (2002) discusses photo elicitation as a research methodology used primarily in anthropology and sociology as a means to explore social class, community history, individual and community identity, and cultural studies. Intimate dimensions of the social world of individuals, families and communities can be revealed and connected to the larger society, culture and history through symbolic meanings assigned to photographs. A single photograph may elicit a wide range of meanings from individuals that connect them to their own histories as well as the histories of their communities (Harper, 2002). Photographs may also elicit visions of what is possible for the future. It is this vision of the future and identification of action necessary to move people and communities forward through reflection, identification and social action that has the potential to move people from passive to active voice.

Photo Elicitation de-centers traditional authority and power in research by placing the power of discovery in the hands of the participants. The power lies in the interpretation and symbolic meanings assigned to the photograph by the participant. Used in research, *photo elicitation* strives to uncover and identify strengths and challenges within participants and communities themselves. The perspective then becomes not one of the researcher but one of the participant and community. The "uncovering" that occurs is critical to begin the process of shifting the expectations of those (outsiders) seeking to understand the relevant issues of communities as well as individuals (insiders) living in communities. The movement from passive to active voice occurs as space is created that encourages self-reflection on the part of participants from within themselves.

Therapeutic Photography

Therapeutically, photographs have been used in reminiscence therapy with the elderly (Butler, 1963), in life books for fostered and adopted young people (O'Malley, 2004), and in family therapy to explore dynamics and interactional patterns within the family system (Akeret, 1973; Bodin & Ferber, 1972; Gosciewski, 1975; Kaslow & Friedman, 1980; Sedgwick, 1979). Referred to under many names including phototherapy, photostudy, photoanalysis (Akere, 1973; Sedgwick, 1979), photocounseling (Gosciewski, 1975) and *Therapeutic Photography*, these photographic techniques have been used to uncover troubling past events and elicit feelings. Sedgwick (1979) suggested that photographs in therapy can be used for analysis to investigate familial resources, to identify conflict, and to reveal the personality and relationships.

Compared to other therapeutic techniques, photography can offer a direct channel to the subjective and subconscious of the photographer allowing for beliefs about self and the other, and allow relationships between self and others to be explored and uncovered (English, 1988; Ziller, 1990).

Photolanguage

Photolanguage is another process that has been used predominantly in therapy and counseling to elicit discussion from people who have difficulty expressing themselves. *Photolanguage* methodology calls for the use of aesthetically pleasing black-and-white photos that will promote thoughtful reflection of the viewer. Simply put, *Photolanguage* is "a means of communication designed to facilitate personal expression and interaction in small groups" (Burton and Cooney,1986). This method appears to work best among groups who would not choose to reveal personal information about themselves, but find it easier to express their thoughts and feelings through the conduit of describing a photograph. The point of this method is for the viewer to be moved by the photographs due to their ability to convey people's inner thoughts (Comin & De Maria, 2005).

Photolanguage requires that black-and-white photographs be chosen by the researcher to have suggestive power, capacity of projection, and aesthetic and symbolic value. The Center for Media Literacy suggests this be done with a large set of photographs that are tested with various focus groups to retain only those photos that meet the researcher's criteria. A number of manuals have been published to outline the steps of practicing this methodology (Akeret, 2000; Burton & Cooney, 1986; Center for Media Literacy (CML, 2002; Rogers, 2003; Vachere, 2005).

The relationship of *Photo Elicitation, Theraputic Photography* and *Photolanguage* to the emancipatory aims of critical participatory action research can be seen as an avenue by which individuals as members of a community seek to release themselves from social structures and practices that had previously constrained them (Kemmis & Niemi, 2008). Uncovering and eliciting inner feelings through photographs and engaging in dialogue about those feelings with others, can contribute to critical reflection and shared understanding about social phenomena.
Because "the same photographic image may have a variety of (perhaps conflicting) meanings … as it is viewed by different eyes and audiences in diverse temporal historical, spatial, and cultural contexts" (Pink, 2001, p. 51), there emerges the possibility of collective inspiration to action.

Photography to Challenge

In order for change to occur, there must be some impetus or catalyst which causes people to question the current state of things. *Social Documentary Photography* and *Visual Sociology* provide the means for individuals and communities to examine, or re-examine phenomenon. For the purposes of this discussion, we loosely apply Mateju's definition for *Sociological Photography* to all three: "it can be considered as a social diagnosis, a document, a photographic genre resulting in a visual sociological statement" (Mateju, 1989, p. 188).

What sets these methods apart from some other photographic methodologies is that the photographer most often will not be a member of the community or participant in the environment being portrayed, yet the photographer has an intention of "speaking" for the people in the photos, and of challenging the notions of those who will view them. As is so eloquently stated by Milton Rogovin, renowned photographer of laborers and civil rights activists: "The rich have their own photographers... I photograph the forgotten ones" ("Milton Rogovin", 2009) in other words, photography gives voice to those who are typically marginalized. The photographer chooses the message to be conveyed, and presents his perspective on a situation. However, when the photographer has first-hand knowledge and experience of the community or topic, as Rogovin did, the boundaries between the photographer's stance and the participant's perspective become blurred.

Social Documentary Photography

Social Documentary Photography is a form of artistic photography which the artist uses to direct attention to social issues. As previously mentioned, Jacob Riis was a pioneer in *Social Documentary Photography*, and his work exemplifies the power of photographs in challenging the status quo, and of stimulating change. His photos depicting the environment of the slums revealed the plight of those who lived in there, shocking those who viewed them, prompting serious reforms in the state of housing in New York (Yochelson, Riis, & Czitrom 2007).

Since Riis' time, there have been many sociological or social photographers who document people, events and environments, sparking debate and provoking social, ecological and political change. In addition to Milton Rogovin, Stephen Shames, work addresses social advocacy for children ("Stephen Shames", 2009) John Ranard, emphasizes curbing the drug-related HIV epidemic ("John Ranard", 2002) and Ken Light, whose chronicles immigrant farm workers, rural Black poverty in the south, death row inmates in Texas and coal miners in West Virginia ("Ken Light", 2005). These men are dedicated professional photographers, whose work is displayed in museums, galleries and even on the internet, such that we can readily access their images and see "How the Other Half Lives" (Riis, 1890). We can see disparity and inequity, and feel the power in the photographic image that evokes emotive responses, challenging our comfort zone and, hopefully, inciting action.

Visual Sociology/Anthropology

Beyond the professional photographer, there are others who can employ photographs to challenge and "problematize" (Freire,1973) issues and ways of doing and living that embody the cultural norm. For example, those in academia, research and health care delivery provide photographic images to increase awareness and promote change. From teachers, to social workers, to nurses, doctors and health educators, and anthropologists the use of visual images supports their work with their students, clients and patients, in disseminating information and in advocating for policy and social change (Henny, 1986; Huff, 1998; Parker, 2002; Sember, 2003). The use of visual images for *Visual Sociology* and *Visual Anthropology* can be used to support social and cultural reform and advocacy. Photographs evoke emotion and "Feelings are … essential to the understanding of social problems" (Huff, 1998, p.582).

The "'Framing Safety Project' was a collaborative, community action/education research with battered women about the meaning of safety in their lives…(with a) goal…to empower participants and act as a tool for social change" (Frohmann, 2005). Similarly, Nimmon (2007) employed photography as a vehicle to address health literacy with immigrant women, enabling the women to "determine ways to take action to change their realities" (p. 340). Adolescents have historically been a group of interest relegated to 'subject'" status via anonymous surveys (which were supposed to allow for 'honest' and 'objective' understanding of the adolescent experience). In giving adolescent males cameras, Blackbeard and Lindegger (2007) pre-empted the notion of anonymity by letting the boys tell their story through photography. The participants and researchers challenged the meanings of masculinity and exclusionary practices of misogyny, racism, and homophobia in schools and communities. They advocated for peer education and improved critical awareness and gender sensitivity in all activities of the local schools. At the college-level, Rutgers University Health Services' Department of Health Education recruited students to take photos depicting health-related issues on campus. These pictures became the focal point for student-led suggestions for policy changes (Goodhart et al., 2006).

In addition to their provocative influence, photo methodologies are useful educational tools, providing a catalyst for teacher-student discourse about underlying assumptions, promoting empathy and understanding, and challenging students to engage with material and topics in a personal and meaningful way (Kroeger et al., 2004; Meyer and Kroeger, 2005; Ramstetter (Walsh) and Raider-Roth, 2008).

Photography to Empower

Photovoice, *Autophotography*, and *Community Photography* are participant photography techniques which can be used to empower people. Through participant forms of photography, people can explore and articulate their lived experience, which in itself can be empowering. Simultaneously, the photographs become a vivid portrayal of their insight and knowledge. These forms of photography allow participants freedom to depict their actual surroundings, to choose the people and places which are important to their self-knowing, to "record and reflect on their beliefs and priorities" (Jurkowski and Paul-Ward, 2007), and to decide what issues and artifacts are most salient to their construction and meaning of self.

Photovoice

Photovoice is a participatory research methodology where people are given cameras to document their lives and communities. Participants then share and engage in a critical dialogue about the photos in order to capture information about personal and community/group issues. Since participants choose what to photograph, *Photovoice* allows for their voices to truly be heard.

Participants themselves provide a deeper understanding of how they make meaning in their lives rather than people in power collecting and analyzing information about a community. *Photovoice* has been used with numerous culturally diverse populations including rural Chinese women, neighborhood groups, people with mental illness in New Haven, CT, homeless men and women in Michigan, youth peer educators in South Africa, American Latina girls, and many more (Vaughn, Rojas-Guyler & Howell, 2008; Wang, 1998; Wang, Anderson, & Stern 2004; Wang et al., 1999; Wang, Cash & Powers, 2000).

Using *Photovoice* with youth allows for authentic voices from a population which typically lacks money, power, and status (Strack, Magill, & McDonagh, 2004). With youth in particular, there is often increased credibility of the findings and validity of the process from *Photovoice* versus other types of research methodologies because *Photovoice* provides opportunities for young participants to build social competency, confirm their personal and social identities, and recognize their role as activists within their communities (Strack, Magill, & McDonagh, 2004; Youniss and Yates, 1997).

Carolyn Wang and her colleagues have published a 13-step process for conducting a *Photovoice* research study (Wang et al,. 1999). These steps can be summed into five guiding categories, all of which are conducted in collaboration with the study participants: 1) identify the topic/issue to be photographed; 2) train the participants and they take photos; 3) discuss selected pictures critically and reflectively with participants; 4) create shared stories and experiences, and; 5) share these stories and experiences with policy makers using the photos as the presentation vehicle. The participants are part of this entire process.They identify the initial problem to be captured.

Typically during the critical reflection and dialogue step, facilitators use some type of structured questioning technique in order to contextualize the meaning of participants' photographs. Two common approaches are *SHOWED* (Wallerstein, 1994; Wang et al. 1999) and *PHOTO* (Pies and Parthasarathy, 2008) The *SHOWED* questions include: 1) What do you *See* in this photograph? 2) What is really *Happening* in this photograph? 3) How does this relate to *Our* lives? 4) *Why* do these issues exist? 5) How can we become *Empowered* by our new social understanding? and 6) What can we *Do* to address these issues? The *PHOTO* questions include: 1) Describe your *Picture*, 2) What is *Happening* in your picture? 3) Why did you take a picture *Of* this? 4) What does this picture *Tell* us about your life? 5) How can this picture provide *Opportunities* for us to improve life with regard to the group in question? The procedural steps, with either of the questioning techniques illustrate the collaborative and participatory nature of *Photovoice*.

Autophotography

Autophotography is a methodology that involves issuing participants cameras and asking them to select and photograph aspects from their social, cultural, and physical environment (Noland, 2006). Here the focus is more on self and personal experience rather than community. Similar to Photovoice, *Autophotography* is typically accompanied by an interview which involves using photographs in an open-ended way to prompt interview responses, with the participant taking the role of an "expert guide", leading the interviewer through the content of the pictures (Noland, 2006) Benefits of *Autophotography* include easing tensions of participants when being interviewed about particularly sensitive issues, providing a focus for the interview and relieving stress that participants may otherwise feel by being part of a research project (Noland 2006).

Autophotography was originated by Worth and Adair (Ziller and Rorer 1985) who gave movie cameras to Navajo Indians in order that the Navajo could depict who they were from their own perspective. Ziller and colleagues extended this approach to instamatic cameras and asked various groups to take pictures within their environment which best described themselves. They believed that taking photos allowed for the illumination of the true construction of the self (Combs and Ziller, 1977; Ziller and Lewis, 1981). Notably, *Autophotography* has been instrumental in work with homeless children (Hubbard, 1996); children living in the Guatemala City garbage dump (Franklin and McGirr, 1995); children of Appalachia and India (Ewald, 1985; Ewald, Chermayeff, & Richardson 1996); children of poverty and affluence in Mexico (Ziller, Vern, & de Santoya, 1988); women in rural China (Wang and Burris, 1994); and the Kayapo in Brazil (Ruby, 1991)

Community Photography

Like Photovoice and Autophotography*, Community Photography* is a methodology that asks people to record aspects of their daily lives from their lived experience, increasing knowledge about issues in a community, and giving community members a way to inform policymakers, and other people who control resources, about "community issues that are of greatest concern and pride" (Wang, 1995). Photography has been implemented as a methodology for studying social issues and for understanding people's lives in various communities so as to facilitate social change. By putting cameras in the hands of community members themselves, the participants are given permission to tell their own story, in their own way, as they see it. Thus, our understanding, as the 'outsider looking in' is enriched and enhanced in a powerful way, and we better hear their voices. Importantly, these pictures and the stories behind them, provide a focal point for discussions of change and include, as agents, the people who will be affected by this change.

Participant forms of photography "empower participants to explore and ameliorate their present reality" (Graziano, 2004). "I've never thought about it before because no one has ever asked me what I think about [the topic]," remarked one participant in Graziano's *Photovoice* study on the South African gay and lesbian community (2004). In Graziano's *Photovoice* project, a participant concluded that this process "unmasked hidden things in me and brought them out into the open. I realized that I no longer have to conform. . . . I am grateful for that." (2004). Other participants explained that projects made them feel important and respected. Participants become heroes and protagonists of their own lives (Ada and Beutel, 1993), aware of their community's strengths and weaknesses and aware of their own knowledge and identity.

People are empowered when they have ownership of the camera and can make their own decisions and take control of how the photographs are used for social change. The photo exhibits that often occur at the end of a project provide a venue for participants to take action and speak out against social injustices and empowers participants to share their perspectives further. The use of *Photovoice* empowered one participant to write several poems about his experiences during the study. Additionally, another participant was asked by a former high school teacher if she could use his photographs to teach a course.

While participant photographic methodologies cannot produce full-blown social change movements alone, they can inspire "participants to become community advocates and participants in public dialogue on issues that plague their community" (Graziano, 2004). Along the way, as the reflection and dialogue occurs, there is both intended and reflexive action occurring affecting the themes, issues, and policies. It is the collaborative and participatory nature, facilitating ongoing reflection often with the intention to invoke action through participant created image.

Conclusion

The photographic methods outlined here provide multiple opportunities to include photography in data collection. Many of these can be *participatory* and *democratic* embracing action and reflection with the possibility of moving individuals and communities from passive to active voice and hopefully toward positive change and ultimately social action. Knowledge can be created through participatory processes in the context of human relationships (Maguire, 1987). With the breadth and scope of the photographic methodologies mentioned here, there are endless possibilities of social action all of which can incite critical dialogue and provoke a journey of participation and empowerment.

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