2.4 SEEING LIKE A CITIZEN: PARTICIPATORY VIDEO AND ACTION RESEARCH FOR CITIZEN ACTION

by

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ESSAY

In the *favelas* (slums) of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, it is people who hold the guns that call the shots. Drug-trafficking gangs, heavily armed militias and military police vie for the doubtful honour of who kills the most people in a year. Within the *favela*, these groups control much of everyday life—down to when residents can come and go; who gets connected to the internet, water, electricity and other urban services; and, how people can mobilise. From 2006 to 2009, I worked with community activists and community researchers in *favelas* (slums) in Rio de Janeiro on an action-research project, focusing on how citizens can participate and learn in order to reduce violence and build peace. As part of this process of learning and action, we made a series of participatory videos about people's experiences of violence in the *favela* and their perceptions about what could be done about the situation. We agreed from the outset that these videos would be shown to people in the local, state and national government in order to start a dialogue over how the Brazilian government treats the issue of security in the *favelas*. In the process of making these films, many different people from all walks of life and parts of the community, were involved.

This link between digital technologies and resolution of crises has emerged as a point of discussion with participants from all the three continents. In Taiwan, Eric Ilya Lee introduced us to the Frontier Foundation that works exclusively with natural disasters and crises ridden geographies, harnessing the power of peer 2 peer networks and helps people emerge as actors of change rather than mere victims of change. In a similar vein, Pichate Yingkiakittun from Thailand works with digital storytelling as a way of recording human rights violation and leading to peace resolutions in times of political crisis in his own country. Brendon O'Brian from Trinidad and Tobago, works actively to introduce digital technologies and ideas to sexually discriminated communities, helping them cope with everyday violence and participate in building peaceful structures of survival.

While Marlone Parker, who joined us as a facilitator for the African workshop, actually looked at similar contexts of drugs, violence and racism, and how digital technologies helped him in his work with violence-riddled communities, Nonkululeko Godana (Book 3, *To Act)* and Kerryn Mckay (Book 1, *To Be*) both propose and analyse the use of digital technologies towards resolution of different crises, in their own experiences in South Africa.

"When you are using a survey tool, you are getting one answer to a question but there might be so many angles and dimensions to a question that you are asking about. The video can bring out all the dimensions and angles" – Lopita Huq, Bangladesh

This form of research, also adopted by Esther Weltervede in her essay (Book 2, *To Think*), is increasingly becoming the need of the day. The notion of collaborative knowledge production, embodied in online platforms like Wikipedia, which depend upon discussions, consensus building, and the co-existence of contradictory knowledge is slowly trickling into academic research and practice. It builds a new way of relating to research participants, not as subjects of knowledge or objects of study, but as peers who engage with the researchers in a 2 Way

They had, at times, very different ideas about what the videos should address and how. And yet, none of the films mentioned at any point which groups they believed were responsible for the violence. Despite the overwhelming presence and control of drug-trafficking gangs and militias in people's daily lives, the films were completely silent about them, choosing instead to focus on how children start down 'the wrong path' and what parents can do to bring them back; and on grassroots initiatives that they had to try and knit together a more cohesive, fair and peaceful community. At a public screening and debate with policy makers, a journalist from a national newspaper focused on this silence in his article about the project. To those outside the *favelas*, it seemed a striking and strange silence. To those inside the community making the films, it was a reflection of a choice about how to navigate relationships of power and risk.

Participatory video (PV), as a digital and visual medium, acts as a lens through which the power relationships, identities, and perspectives of the people involved are projected, reshaped and made legible to others. This piece will explore the dimensions of participatory video, in terms of its characteristics as a visual and digital medium, in order to understand how participatory video can amplify and reflect processes of social mobilisation and people's identities as citizens within that. This article will draw on the experiences of the Development Research Centre for Citizenship, Participation and Accountability (Citizenship DRC)[1] where these participatory video was used as part of action research within a global collaborative knowledge network. The work was carried out by researcher-activists working with local activists, community groups and citizens in Brazil, Jamaica, Mexico, Nigeria, Angola and Bangladesh (see Appendix 1 for more details).

Because of this interest in participatory forms of learning and creating knowledge, and their potential for amplifying the effects and results of research, the network decided to experiment with participatory video as a research and communication method for social change . Many of the researchers and activists involved had long histories of using other participatory methods (including theatre, participatory learning and action approaches, etc.), while some came from more traditional research backgrounds. In Nigeria, in 2006, we held a training for researchers interested in integrating participatory video into their work. Following this training, each of the researchers returned to their respective countries and carried out their research projects with communities and villages, and each used participatory video in distinctive ways depending on their contexts.

These are researchers who are deeply engaged in contexts, and are already working for social change through a range of alliances, networks and identities. For them, participatory video was about new alliances that they could build and how they could work with different actors through these processes. As a result, each researcher approached their use of participatory video in a different way. In each case, researchers agreed with the participants how to use the videos at the outset of the process.

In Mexico, they used the films to instigate discussions at the community level about violence; in Nigeria, they used the films as digital letters sent between estranged Muslim and Christian communities and at a national policy forum to make the case for political reform; in Brazil, they used the films to lead off debates hosted in *favelas* by community activists with municipal and national policy makers on the topic of security; in Bangladesh, they used the films so that village-level members of large NGOs could hold those NGOs to account for their work; in Angola, they used the films for community-level discussions about how to mobilise more effectively and how to pressurise the government for greater decentralisation and services.

Similarly, in each case the expectations and perspectives of those involved from communities also shaped how the process evolved—sometimes taking the project in unexpected directions.

In 2008, we met in South Africa to reflect on our experiences of using participatory video. Since then, these projects have continued in different ways. This paper draws on the documentation of this entire process for the insights provided.

The process of participatory video facilitated and juxtaposed different perspectives, and articulated these perspectives into a range of spaces, from policy debates to cross-community dialogues. In a sense, participatory video helped to facilitate dialogue across a series of divides throughout the research. The aesthetics of participatory video—the kinds of stories that are told, the visual nature of these stories, and the visual mode of communication are important to understanding how this happens. Participatory video also establishes a different set of relationships of consumption and production of knowledge, in how research is produced but also in how knowledge is shared and communicated, and which identities come into play in the process. Through experimenting with different ways of sharing knowledge, participatory video was a means of shifting the traditional power relationship between the researchers and the researched.

What emerged from all of this is the role of participatory video in reflecting back to participants' versions of their own realities, addressing in some cases a lack of recognition and alienation from political, social and economic systems and potentially accentuating that alienation in others. This in turn, relates to how people's identities shift through the process of participatory video.

Location: Nigeria   Photo: Alison Dunn

learning process. It allows for different vocabularies, perspectives and frameworks to come together in kaleidoscopic patterns so that multiple knowledge structures can interact with each other in dialogues of change. This was also a lesson that we learned at the Thinkathon where different stakeholders – digital natives, practitioners, development agencies, corporate representatives, policy makers, researchers and academics – came together in a dialogue with each other, only to realise that there is more synergy in their ambitions and aims than they had imagined. But the difference in location, perspective, legacy and vocabulary did not allow for an easy interaction. It is a challenge for researchers working within such a multi-stakeholder research environments to capture not only the coherence, but also the confusions (or as Wheeler points out – the silences) from which creative and experimental models of knowledge and learning can be produced.

"Self-empowerment is not easily measured but I can see that poor people's self empowerment increased when they used the video." - Idaci Ferreira, Angola

The alienation of people from political, social and economic systems is not always disempowering, though. In our workshops, the younger participants often espoused an apolitical stance while engaging with extremely politicised communities and spaces, negotiating with power both in its abstract and quotidian forms. Ritika Arya from India, looks at inequities of power and money in the city of Mumbai, as she works towards providing education, vocational skills, and creative channels of technology-mediated communication and expression, to socially and economically disadvantaged children in slums. Along with a team of volunteers, she raises funds, organises events and also creates participatory structures where the 'beneficiaries' actually get to define what they want to learn. And yet, when we met Ritika, she did not see herself as either politically motivated or socially engaged. As she said in her own introduction, "I just do what I think needs to be done!"
This disavowal of the political was reflected in the stories of many other participants who constantly

Participatory video provid a vehicle for people to see themselves as citizens in new ways and for them to learn a new mode of citizenship . But at the same time, the process is overlaid onto existing patterns of authority, social mobilisation, and social roles. The results of this process can only be understood in relation to how the two interact. If citizenship is about the establishment of boundaries of exclusion and inclusion, about who can be a citizen and how and who cannot, then technology (in particular visual and participatory forms of technology) can make these boundaries more acute in some ways and dismantle them in others. And so these cases of participatory video, as they relate to on-going mobilisation, can shed some light on how issues and identities become framed and reframed through digital and visual communication. This piece will draw on example from the cases above to illustrate how this unfolds in practice.

Participatory video implies several changes to the knowledge processes involved in the research and the power dynamics within them. First, as with other participatory approaches, it inverts the relationship between the researcher and the researched (Chambers, 1995), while recognising that power imbalances still pervade this relationship. It shifts the perspective of who is the 'expert' away from the researcher and towards the researched as those who hold the most knowledge about their own realities. In that sense participatory video is about opening the spaces for that knowledge to be given greater weight, as opposed to the weight of the knowledge of the external researcher. In inverting the relationship between the researcher and the researched, the process of participatory video also opens new possibilities for how that knowledge is perceived by policy makers.

In many cases, policy makers are not disposed towards listening to or acknowledging the realities of people living in exclusion or outside of dominant groups. The mode of listening to and seeing visual material in the shape of films encouraged seeing *favelas* residents as citizens in a way that does not often happen.

Children in Rio de Janeiro's slums watched footage they filmed of participatory research
Photo: Joanna Wheeler

What exactly is participatory video?

Participatory video has been used since the 1970s as one in a range of participatory approaches to development work and more recently in combination with participatory action research. Snowden (1983) who pioneered its use in 1967 describes the process:

The ability to view immediately one's self speaking on videotape assists individuals to see themselves as others see them. This self-image conveys the impression immediately that one's own knowledge is important and that it can be effectively communicated. These video techniques create a new way of learning, which not only build confidence, but show people that they can say and do things that they thought were not possible before.

Since the 1970s, advances in technology mean that participatory video is now digital—with a whole series of implications for how it is edited, its replicability, its cost, and its integration with other internet-based technologies .

The process of making participatory video involves training community members in basic video skills: Filming with a digital video camera, recording sound through different microphones, and digital editing. The approach combines technical skills with a participatory process of generating content.

Location: Bangladesh
Photo: Lopita Huq

This can involve documentary type filming and/or drama and re-enactment. The process of deciding what will be filmed is as central to participatory video as the question of who and how it will be filmed. Many of the groups in the Citizenship DRC used participatory story boards to construct the outline for the films, where participants decide on key elements of a story and map these visually into frames which provide the basis for organising the filming. Crucially, these films were created as part of larger processes of participatory research, and so were situated in relation to a wider conversation about the research questions and themes on citizenship, democracy and violence. Another important element of participatory video is that the participants receive copies of the footage and films (or keep the originals, if there is more institutional support) and they choose what to do with this material.

What did we learn?

Given some distance from this process, it is now possible to look back and ask some wider questions about participatory video: How does the format of participatory digital video, with its own aesthetics, mechanics, and relationships between power and knowledge relate to possible citizen action? How does participatory video map onto and subvert existing power relationships, roles and identities (including those of the researched and the researcher)? What can participatory video show us about the politics of inclusion and exclusion and how it feeds into people's understandings of their citizenship or the lack thereof? What influence does participatory video have on people's identity and their ability to mobilise around, reframe and engage different issues?

battle the traditional articulations of what it means to be a political actor because their non-institutionalised, collaborative methods of working do not fit the expectations or imaginations of what it means to be political in their own contexts. While they might have a political consciousness, they might not always reflect a vocabulary to articulate it. Many of their political actions are often also located in the realm of the cultural. This leads to traditional actors not finding easy synergy with their activities, thus leading to an apparent widening between the analogue and digital activists.

'PV leaves something concrete behind for the researched. The video stays behind, the community can play it back. It's not like writing an article which they never get to see." - Jenks Okwori, Nigeria

'PV can be a comprehensive tool to allow us and other people to understand a problem better, what they want to express and how. PV moves from individual personal representation to a more collective participation. It is also good to use as a way of finding alternatives, to find solutions to a problem." - Carlos Cortez Ruíz, Mexico

Namita Aavriti Malhotra's essay (Book 3, *To Act*) also adds another dimension to this – the formats and aesthetics that determine the virality, mobility, transferability and shareability of these videos. Malhotra draws from her own experiences to show how formats and technologies often determine the share, remix, reuse cultures and environments that make the videos visible. It is necessary, when talking about technology-mediated objects, to look at the nuts and bolts of the technology as much as the content. Tied to these are also questions that Free and Libre Open Source Software movements have been posing about ownership and intellectual property around these videos.

In this conversation about participatory knowledge production, we want to emphasise that digital technologies and online platforms are not mere tools of production – they are significantly altering the

Relationships to the consumption and production of knowledge

Participatory video does not fall into the classic dichotomy of the relationship between the consumption and production of knowledge. In effect, it positions people in such a way that unravels each of these. In terms of consumption, participatory video forces an answer to a prior question: Who should consume the knowledge? Participatoryvideo, as a process, gives control over the response to this question, at least to a certain extent, to the participants, who have copies of the videos to use as they decide best. As such, it is creating a different kind of relationship between the researcher and the researched in terms of how knowledge is produced and consumed. Participatory video is primarily about the creation of knowledge by and for the participants (the researched).

As the projects unfolded, there were divergences between the agendas of the researcher and the people involved in the community. The researchers had assumptions about how the participatory video would be used and the community members brought their own perspectives to this. Researchers, in part, had their agenda set through their involvement with an international network (although that network was also collaborative), and so they had a sense of the subject they want to address. These issues played out differently in each context, so the participatory video process was also about the researchers negotiating the agenda for the video work so that it contextualised this prior research agenda in the way that these issues played out in each place.

In terms of the production of knowledge, again it operates at a prior level which is around the creation and articulation of a message, rather than just its replication. Participatory video, like any participatory learning and action process, does not assume there is a set message to convey, but rather that the process is constitutive of the message (Gaventa and Cornwall, 2008).
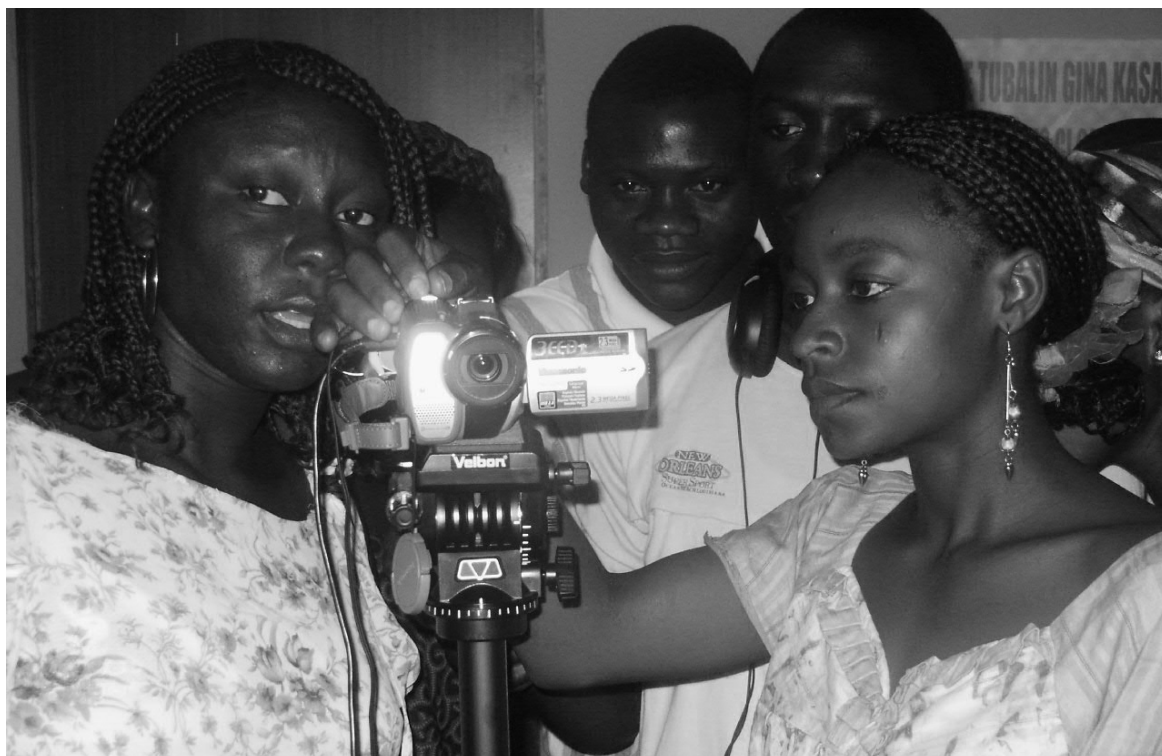
Young people in Kaduna used participatory video to create video messages to build dialogue between Christian and Muslim communities separated by violence   Photo: Laura Cornish

This is a change in the dominant approach to the relationship between the researcher and the researched, where the researcher has expert knowledge which is used to generate and ask questions, and the researched gives answers which are interpretedand used by the researchers. In terms of how this relates to questions of digital integration, the process of production is not necessarily linked to structures of the internet or mass media. But participants can connect to these during the process or with the final films, if they choose too.So participatory video is facilitative

There are many levels of iteration in the participatory video: Between consumption and production; between the self and the group; between the community and policy spheres; between the verbal and non-verbaland between the generation of images and their reflection and amplification. As a result, participatory video can facilitate continually expanding boundaries of knowledge, from the self to the group to the community, to beyond; between different perspectives expressed, reconciled or shed through the process; and also in terms of the diversity of uses as reflection of identity but also as its projection and amplification.

At the same time, this facilitative potential faces physical and symbolic limits as addressed in the section below on power relations: Who controls the camera, and how decisions are made about what is filmed. Participatory video relies on access to the appropriate technical equipment, and that technological layer inevitably creates a barrier to access.

The aesthetics of participation in digital video

This section will look more closely at the aesthetics and mechanics of participatory digital videoand digital storytelling. There is a duality to the aesthetics of participatory video. On one hand, film, when controlled by the participants (rather than a professional filmmaker or a researcher) visibilises the hidden in that it makes legible specific local

paradigms of knowledge production and co-creation and these need to be understood as the new default positions within which digital natives operate.

"In Brazil, we held a showing of the participatory videos in a cinema to launch a debate with public officials. Here was a video made by people from the favela and we were showing it in a movie theatre to an audience of people from the government. This was a really important moment for them and for them to see that these policymakers were really listening. It created a different kind of voice, even if we can't say for sure that policy changed." - Joanna Wheeler, Brazil

"People were very possessive of the camera. After some time the community attempted to work together to buy their own camera." - Lopita Huq, Bangladesh

"…before we let people open the discussion. Now we are focusing too much on the story we are presenting. If we focus on violence, people say, no it doesn't happen. They focus on the story not on the violence and the problem." - Carlos Cortez Ruíz, Mexico

Leandra (Cole) Flor, in her photoessay (Book 1, To Be), brings out the nuances of the visible and the invisible from her own experience as a travel blogger and photographer, who uses these platforms to look at peoples' reactions to larger political ideas on an everyday basis. Flor constructs 'mirror-exercises' to see how reality gets constructed with digital representations and how they often follow predicted paths. Flor looks at the camera and what it produces, as a structure of irony rather than reality, to see what it shows and also hides simultaneously.

"There is an element of validation, but in the moment of filming, the camera can confirm or undermine the previously held or expect views and content." - Idaci Ferreira, Angola

knowledge not easily accessed from an outside perspective. In acting like a mirror, it reflects back certain aspects of reality. This can be a very strong reinforcement of people's identity and views. But it is a much more complete image of reality than many other research methods offer.

Yet at the same time that it visibilises things that may have been hidden or missed, it also effaces certain truths, evades certain aspects of reality, and edits out certain things—it is not a perfect mirror .

This dual aesthetic of both illuminating and hiding simultaneously is evidence of the power of visual stories: to both communicate powerfully and obfuscate. This can occur at the moment of filming, but also at subsequent moments when the film is shown.

Another important element of the aesthetics of participatory video is that it is based on images. As such, it imitates many of the features of one-to-one communication but with the possibilities of one-to-many modes. Like theatre, it relies on extended non-verbal communication as much as verbal forms. Participatory video offers a way to include 'extended language' in the research process by recording people's emotions, expressions and gestures and allowing them to use this extended language to communicate about the research topic (Ramella and Olmos, 2005). This more encompassing aesthetic of the visual, combined with the easy replicability of digital video, represents a qualitative departure from written and text-based forms of research .

This is an important difference with some text-based internet communication, which is faceless and increasingly abbreviated, and disconnected from people and places. Theanonymisation (or at least the slipperiness of the identities created via the internet) of certain internet-based forms of communication is precisely what is fixed with digital video. There is a groundedness to it—to the context, a place, to people and to the faces. Digital video is about constructing and reinforcing identities through their reflection.

How does PV relate to existing power relations, roles, and identities?

Throughout the research, there were a series of examples of how the process of participatory video interacted with existing power relations, roles and identities . These examples are not universal, in that there may be others and the particular issues that arise are specific to the contexts involved.

One possibility is that participatory video leads to an inversion or disruption of existing power relations, as in the relatively powerless using video to hold more powerful actors to account. For example, in the Bangladesh case, village members of an NGO used the videos to hold the corporate level of the NGO to account. They showed, through the films, how the policies of the NGOs were not necessarily delivering what was promised and how they diverged from the realities in their context. For example, one NGO opposed shrimp cultivation because of environmental and labour rights issues, but local NGO members saw shrimp farming as an important livelihood strategy and were more interested in how the NGO could support reforms to land-holding patterns and farming techniques to address the environmental and labour issues. When more senior figures in the NGO watched the film, they were forced to engage with these views that they may have ignored had they been presented in other ways.

Another possibility is that participatory video leads to a reproduction or reinforcement of existing power relations, as in reinforcing the voices which are already dominant within a specific community. This can arise particularly if there are weaknesses in the facilitation that do not adequately take into account who has access to the camera and how it is used. During participatory video work in northern Nigeria, power issues around gender emerged strongly. In this case, the young Muslim Hausa men (who are often more heard than young women in the Northern Nigerian Muslim Hausa community) made a concerted and transparent effort to exclude the young women from the process of the video. As facilitators, we chose to

Community researchers in Rio de Janeiro's slums made films about violence that were shown to policy makers
Photo: Joanna Wheeler

then work with the young men and women separately to produce films with gender-specific groups rather than a gender-integrated group. This decision was taken because of the risks to the young women of being involved in a project that was seen as a threat by the young men. However, the young men's film was made in the streets and public spaces and did not include any women or girls. And the young women's film was filmed exclusively indoors, with other women and girls. Although this was a necessary facilitation approach, it did reinforce the existing dynamic in the community that silences the views of girls and women, especially in public. This example demonstrates how existing power dynamics can be reinforced through the process of creating a participatory video.

A third possibility is that rather than simply reinforcing existing power relations, participatory video might submerse them: It might ignore or evade particular structural issues and address these in a tangential way in order to escape censure. For example, in the example in the introduction, *favelas* residents produced three films about violence in their communities, in which violence was treated as a disembodied problem and the focus was on the effects of this violence (particularly on young people and children) and the community's response. Residents felt it was too risky to name those responsible for the violence, whereas addressing the effects and the response at the community level was safe.

"When someone is talking and you are writing, the amount of processing you do, what you write is usually what you have heard and what you think it means. But it might not be exactly what this person is saying. The filtering and processing does not happen with video—it is raw. You are allowed to see and hear so much…video has a permanency which you can keep referring to, hearing and seeing new and different aspects every time." - Steve Abah, Nigeria

The interview with Adam Haupt (Book 4, To Connect) suggests that these renegotiations of power are not limited to participatory videos. From his experiences in South Africa, Haupt examines how the introduction of digital technologies to the world of music in Cape Town and Johannesburg led to a recalibration of power relationships between the different actors involved in music production, which was often located firmly in cultures of gang violence and racism.

However, participatory nature of knowledge production doesn't automatically lead to a re-articulation of the contexts. As YiPing (Zona) Tsou's essay (Book 2, To Think) demonstrates, it can also lead to a 'Witch-hunt 2.0' that reinforces the existing power relationships and perpetuates violence endorsed by the authorities. Technologies in themselves are not liberating and can be used as effectively to exercise regressive ideologies and structures as they are deployed towards progressive change.

At the heart of collaborative knowledge production is indeed the possibility of reformulating identities and roles, leading to a dramatic rendering of existing power relations. However, these can be witnessed only when located in what Anat Ben David calls a 'granularity of practice' (Book 1, To Be) so that the context is not merely a backdrop against which knowledge gets measured but also becomes an actor that shapes the processes of collaboration.

"If we are using video, if we ask about violence

Location: Angola   Photo: Idaci Ferreira

In this sense, there is a risk of video being too superficial—a story deepens understanding about certain aspects of a situation, but it also provides a mechanism for avoiding talking about things.

These examples show the variety of possible ways that participatory video can interact with structures of power and identity within the community, and emphasises how participatory video can replicate, evade or unsettle relationships of power.

Seeing like a citizen, learning modes of citizenship through participatory video

Reflecting on these cases in terms of the way that knowledge is consumed and produced, the aesthetics of participatory video, and its interfaces with power relationships throughout offer some insights into the wider question of how participatory video can create possibilities for seeing like a citizen or learning new modes of citizenship. In this case, our research questions were about what leads to greater citizenship, and our methodology provided a way to test the answer to the question through the process of the research itself (see McGee and Pearce 2009).

What emerges from the process about modes of citizenship is that a sense of citizenship is not like a switch that is either permanently on or off. It is not about becoming a citizen where someone feels at all times and in all places like a citizen or never like a citizen. Rather, a sense of agency or empowerment can be transitory: We have moments as citizens and moments as subjects, and sometimes we can experience these in rapid succession. This is consistent with the way that digital technology through participatory video can lead to a strong sense of seeing like a citizen—seeing yourself and your ideas reflected through film and acknowledged by the wider community or even representatives of the state. At the same time digital video technology can lead to a sense of alienation and seeing like a subject—when your ideas are erased or omitted from the film or the

results you hope for fail to materialise.

Another dimension of how participatory video is about learning a mode of citizenship is the way that the reflections in video can be linked to increasing a sense of belonging and recognition. People seeing themselves on camera has a powerful effect—it becomes irrefutable evidence that they exist and that their views matter.

Seeing yourself as a citizen is not only about a sense of recognition and belonging, but also about a sense that citizens should be heard by their governments and more broadly by other groups in the societies where they live. Entering into a participatory video project that has the objective of influencing policies and bringing about positive social change implies that participants see themselves as citizens who have a right to be 'seen' by their government and society. So participatory video can help citizens amplify their voices beyond themselves to others in their community, village, city, country and world .

Participatory video can not only amplify voice, but can be used to create pathways for accountability, as in the example of the NGOs in Bangladesh or the policy debates on security in Brazil.

Yet this mode of learning citizenship can also lead to disillusionment when the results of the process do not match expectations. This shows how learning a mode of citizenship through digital technology can lead to moments of enchantment as a citizen and moments of alienation as a subject. As Jenks Okwori, a researcher and activists from Nigeria describes:

"People think that the views and opinions they express will affect change, though this may not happen, and what will be the consequence of this?"

A final aspect of the mode of citizenship that emerges through participatory video is about the interaction between the technological dimension of the process and existing trajectories of social mobilisation, activism, and citizen action.In order to understand how participatory video engendered new modes and identities of citizenship it is important to

directly, when we administered the questionnaire many people refused to answer the questions on violence. If there is a camera on them, they were even less likely to talk about violence, especially if they themselves were violent. People are excited to see themselves on the screen, this is a great medium, but it has its drawbacks." - Steve Abah, Nigeria

"One woman saw herself on TV and she said that, 'We were hidden all this time, and now we have been exposed to the world.'" — Lopita Huq, Bangladesh

"We have the possibility to use the video to present [citizens'] own views in their own voices. The video is closer to people's voice than text. But when it is orientated to action, it leads to another problem. Here is a problem, now what should we do about it? How do we use it as a further tool for mobilization or action?" - Carlos Cortez Ruíz, Mexico

"Who are the people participating in PV? In our case, we selected people who have some kind of active initiative in the community. We approached people who have some position of action or leadership. This probably aided the process, as they quickly recognized the possibilities of the format. This is in contrast to people who have never been involved in a social action process." - Carlos Cortez Ruíz, Mexico

understand the complex interaction between existing trajectories of action and the technological process .

In some cases, involving people who already engage in activism and citizen action can reinforce and deepen their roles. These people can be quick to see the possibilities that the technology can offer and they have the mobilising capacity at the local level to leverage these possibilities .

By contrast, in Brazilwe involved young people and others with no history of activism, but who had chosen to become involved in an action research project. We combined this with the participation of some well-established community activists. In this case, the engagement in the participatory video process was less about sustaining and enhancing existing activists, but more about building awareness and capacity for new ones.

Conclusion

This piece explored how participatory video is a process that can unsettle patterns in the consumption and production of knowledge in research, and in terms of other existing hierarchies. People can also use it as a mode of seeing themselves as citizens and of shifting how the state and others see them as citizens. As such, it operates as an idiom for the existing power relationships, identities and trajectories of social mobilisation while holding the potential for this to be reconfigured. Participatory video connects a technology to social processes, rather than just producing a video about a particular topic.

This work has some important implications for research. Much research is text-based and relatively single dimensional in how it captures knowledge. This example shows the importance of multi-dimensional views of knowledge in terms of the expanded aesthetics of participatory video and how these help to broker the formation of new identities. Participatory video can be understood as a melding between technology and a process of participation so that it facilitates iteration between different kinds of knowledge and ways of

knowing—this includes the way that the visual can make legible different registers of communication and experience. At the same time, the stories and images that make participatory video a powerful mode of communication can also serve to obscure certain truths and reinforce certain hierarchies.

The process of participatory video also implies important changes in the relationship between the researcher and the researched; in how knowledge is produced and consumed. As with other participatory research approaches, participatory video moves away from a model where the researcher controls what knowledge is generated and how it is used.

The case of participatory video has other implications for digital activism and notions of citizenship that are linked to this. The mode of citizenship learned through participatory video can be transitory: There are moments when we see and are seen like citizens, but also moments when we see and are seen like subjects. Making a film that is directed at government officials or other groups in society reinforces the idea that as a citizen you should be seen and heard—recognised and involved in decisions that affect you; but it can also lead to moments of seeing and being seen like a subject when the good intentions behind this process fail to deliver to the extent of people's expectations. Central to this mode of citizenship is the aesthetic of film that grounds it in a place, and hyper-identifies with the personal—with certain people, their faces, their expressions, and their views that they chose to express through the film.

Participatory video is an example of how digital technologies and social processes interact and what happens as a result. It raises important questions about how digital technical dimensions map onto existing practices and trajectories of activism, participation and citizen action. This work has shown that there are a range of possibilities for what may emerge and the ways that participatory video can reinforce or submerse issues of domination and exclusion, and also reverse them.

Appendix 1

Lead Researcher (s)	Country	Organisation	Use of participatory video in research process	Approach to participatory video
Steve Abah and Jenks Okwori	Nigeria	TFDC/ Ahmadu Bello University	As part of research on violence and democracy, and in the national campaign for electoral reform	Used theatre for development in combination with participatory video with community-based groups in Northern Nigeria to create dialogue between Christian and Muslim communities
Idaci Ferreira	Angola	ADRA	As part of research on mobilisation and citizenship in a post-conflict context	Used theatre, participatory learning and action methods and participatory video to continue NGO's work with local level civic associations formed through the humanitarian response to build the capacity for participation in local governance
Carlos Cortez	Mexico	UAM-X	As part of on-going work on violence in indigenous communities and how this relates to wider questions about participation, democracy and human development	As part of a community-university development programme with promotores in rural Chiapas and Guerrero, where participatory video was used in the process of 'social diplomas' for community activists
Joanna Wheeler	Brazil	Community-based activists in favelast	As part of research on citizenship and violence in favelas,	Working with young people and other segments of the community to voice their experiences of violence and insecurity in order to influence government security policy through a series of debates and screenings hosted by favela-based activists
Lopita Huq	Bangladesh	BRAC University	As part of research on the rights of garment workers and shrimp farmers	Working through partnership with five national Bangladeshi NGOs on the effects of their programmes (in micro finance and awareness raising) in creating a sense of citizen agency
Joy Moncrieffe	Jamaica	Community-based activists and children in schools	As part of research on how children perceive and experience violence and how this affects their sense of citizenship	Working with activists in garrison communities and groups of school children to build a dialogue around how children experience violence, linking to radio programmes in Kingston

[1] The Citizenship DRC was a global collaborative research and knowledge network that ran from 2000 to 2011. In that time, it brought together more than 60 researchers working in seven7 core countries with additional work in 12 more, to produce more than 450 research outputs and over 100 in-depth case studies (www.drc-citizenship.org). The central focus of the Centre was how citizens, themselves, can help to make citizenship and democracy more real for marginaliszed and excluded groups. At the heart of the Citizenship DRC's approach has been an understanding of the complexity of the relationship between research and action—and that the creation of critical forms of knowledge is central to how things change (Reason and Bradbury. 2001).

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