Summer July 15, 2015

Participatory Visual and Digital Research in Action (2015)

Aline C Gubrium, *University of Massachusetts - Amherst*
Krista Harper
Marty Otañez, *University of Colorado, Denver*

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EDITED BY

Aline Gubrium, Krista Harper, and Marty Otañez

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Foreword

Phillip Vannini

I was profoundly surprised when I received the editors' invitation to write a foreword for this book. More than surprised, I admit that I felt like an impostor. My ethnographic work has nearly always been visual and digital. Yet, I never thought of it as sufficiently participatory or action-oriented.

For example, to generate interesting and at times even entertaining public knowledge, my hybrid media ethnographies (e.g., ferryresearch.ca; lifeoffgrid. ca) have used digital sound, photography, and video not so much as illustrations for journal articles, but rather as the narrative basis for publications in popular magazines, the Internet, TV, and newspapers. Knowledge mobilization of this kind, I have always thought, is necessary for raising awareness and molding public opinions, but perhaps it falls short of being action-oriented. Furthermore, even though I have always involved research participants in the editing of their visual representations (who would want their face or home in the national news if their depiction isn't fair or accurate, right?), I have always been cautious about calling that a form of collaboration.

But impostor syndrome or not, because I have always felt a deep antipathy toward traditional ways of doing and especially sharing research (e.g., see publicethnography.net), and a great deal of antagonism toward the structural academic bias for methodological conservativism, I agreed to write a few opening and perhaps apologetic words as I looked forward to catching up with the latest developments in this field.

As I write these words now—after having read this wonderfully thorough book—I realize that I have been conducting visual, digital, *and* action-oriented participatory research for the last few years, much to my ignorance. My feeling is that this volume will have a similar converting effect on many other readers. And indeed I can only hope that it will do so because, in all

honesty, for anyone in the twenty-first century to be convinced of the value of doing inaction-oriented, analog, nonvisual, and uncollaborative research is to be trapped in a time warp of frightening proportions.

From digital storytelling and photovoice to participatory film and collaborative mapping, and from participatory geographic information systems (PGIS) to collaborative digital archive and museum curation (and more), the contributors to *Participatory Visual and Digital Research in Action* share enough inspiring tools to convince anyone—from the already initiated to the skeptics still keen on paper-and-pencil measures—to pick up a few new skills and evaluate the potential of these evolving methodological traditions for the achievement of both old and new research objectives.

As a cynic by birthright and a critical and reflexive mind by trade, I view the immense appeal of action-oriented participatory visual and digital research strategies less in the shiny glitter that makes them new and edgy (i.e., their technological sophistication and their democratic commitment) and more in the way they allow us to take pleasure in the delight of *enchantment*.

In fact, there isn't enough enchantment in the world of research: there isn't enough respect—in other words—for the naiveté, wonder, and curiosity that drives (and should drive) all forms of inquiry in the first place. Enchantment is, regrettably, beaten out of us at every turn. Research professionals caught in the insidious mechanics of the neoliberal state have their enchantment chastised out of them every time they write a grant proposal that asks them to spell out in advance what they are going to find out, much like undergraduate and graduate students are confined to "defending" the impracticalities and romantic visions of their research designs before they embark on thesis or dissertation research. Enchantment, the institution tells us, is unnecessary, childish, biasing, impractical, and even frightening.

Disenchanted in turn by these numbing politics of bean-counting accountability, and by a myopic focus on reliability and validity-obsessed research, participatory, digital, and visual research followers want us to relearn to appreciate *creativity* and *relationality*. Creativity—the ability to envision something unique and original—and relationality—the capacity to be sensitive to others and to be open to their potential to affect us, as much as our potential to affect them—are what truly distinguish the enchanting approaches outlined in this book. Creativity and relationality are the keys to a different role for social scientific research in academia and in society. Enchantment, this book tells us, is possible, desirable, empowering, productive, and contagious. And even a lot of fun.

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Acknowledgments

This project began with a conference panel at the Society for Applied Anthropology meetings in Albuquerque in 2014 and quickly grew into a wider and more interdisciplinary circle of researchers. For us as co-editors, this collection and the accompanying multimedia website has truly been a collaborative effort. We have listed our names alphabetically to reflect this.

We have benefitted from research support that helped us to develop this project. Aline received funding from the Ford Foundation to develop a digital storytelling-based research, training, and strategic communications project focused on sexual and reproductive justice, in concert with young parenting women and in collaboration with her colleague Elizabeth L. (Betsy) Krause and a number of terrific partnering organizations. Thanks to all who have fostered and supported this work. Aline also received National Institutes of Health funding to develop what she calls a "culture-centered, narrative approach" to health promotion, again centered on digital storytelling. Krista received and Instructional Improvement Grant from the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences and a Community Engagement and Service Learning Fellowship from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, both of which provided resources for research and writing. Marty received a grant from the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment, with a focus on viral hepatitis.

We thank Mitch Allen at Left Coast Press for his encouragement, expertise, and incredible patience in guiding us throughout the process of editing this book. Ryan Harris, Jennifer de Garmo, Michelle Treviño, Lisa Devenish, and Stephanie Adams helped us get the book in print and reaching new readers. Jennifer Collier's early feedback broadened our perspective on what we could do with this project.

Introduction

Aline Gubrium, Krista Harper, and Marty Otañez

Taking the "Participatory Turn"

As social researchers, many of us were trained to focus on researcher-generated questions contributing to generalizable knowledge that might or might not be applied in community settings at some later time. Postmodern critics of the late twentieth century drew focus to issues of power in scholarly representation, leading many ethnographers to take what is now known as the "literary turn" or the "reflexive turn" (Behar and Gordon 1995; Clifford and Marcus 1986; de Groof 2013; Foley 2002). Since that time, postcolonial, feminist, and other activist scholars pushed the critique beyond scholarly texts to new forms of participatory action research (Castelden et al. 2008; Hale 2008; Harper 2012; Hemment 2007). We have moved beyond the "literary turn" and reflexivity for reflexivity's sake to a new "participatory turn" of collaborative and community-based research. At the same time, visual and digital media technologies present us with new ways to work alongside communities to produce and communicate our research collaboratively. But what does this "participatory turn" look like in action?

Participatory visual and digital research methods are changing the landscape of our work across disciplines and on the ground in collaboration with communities. Scholars in public health, anthropology, communication, environmental studies, science and technology studies, heritage studies, education and youth development, and museum studies are all taking the "participatory turn." This collection consists of six parts, each featuring contributions by experts in each of the most well-known research methods.

As in our first book (A. Gubrium and Harper 2013), where we presented key figures in the field through their "core stories," contributors recount how they came to be practitioners of emerging participatory visual and digital research and how their use of these methods changed them. Chapter authors present their own version of participation and collaboration as it plays out in action, their use of digital or visual technology, and discuss issues of power and ethics that relate to their project process or outcomes. A companion website to the book (www.pvdraction.org/) allows readers to view the research products presented in each contributor's chapter.

Part I includes two very different projects that use digital storytelling. Digital storytelling is a workshop-based process in which participants create first-person narratives about an important moment in their lives and then use digital editing software to synthesize their narrative with digital images, video, text, and sound/track to create a compelling short video (Lambert 2012). Darcy Alexandra's chapter presents her longitudinal work with asylum seekers in Ireland and reflects upon digital storytelling as a way to foster "political listening," empathy, and action. Marty Otañez and Andrés Guerrero use this method to learn about the lives and challenges of people living with Hepatitis C in Denver. The chapters in Part II highlight different issues in Photovoice. Photovoice is a participatory method in which participants take photos in relation to participant-derived themes, participate in generative conversations around selected photos, and then display and dialogue around the photos in a community forum setting to address key themes for action (Wang 1999). Ciann Wilson and Sarah Flicker use the method to elicit young women's understandings of sexuality and sexual health in an African, Caribbean, and black neighborhood in Toronto, a context marked by racial, gender, and class inequalities. Cynthia Selin and Gretchen Gano harness Photovoice techniques to participatory technology assessment in the Futurescape City Tours project, in which citizens and experts explore neighborhoods as they discuss how new technologies might transform urban life in North American cities.

Part III presents the work of veteran participatory action researchers working in film and video. Charles Menzies offers a retrospective lens of his film projects with the Gitxaała Nation in Canada and his learning process as an Indigenous filmmaker moving into an ever more collaborative approach. Jean Schensul and Campbell Daglish describe their "improvisational video" technique for engaging youth in participatory action research (PAR) and communication campaigns on issues related to health and drug use.

Part IV moves into the intriguing terrain of participatory geographic information systems (PGIS). Researchers are increasingly using the cartographic techniques and sophisticated spatial analysis tools of GIS to study how maps and space matter. In PGIS projects, maps are participant-created and/or created using GIS software. Maps in either form are used as visual elicitations devices for answering four questions: 1) Where is something located? 2) Where is something concentrated? 3) What kinds of things coincide in a specific place? and 4) How is a place changing over time? (A. Gubrium and Harper 2013, 153–154)? In Nick Rattray's chapter, we see people with and without physical disabilities mapping and evaluating accessibility on a university campus and revealing "invisible barriers" in the process. Simona Perry takes a participatory, qualitative GIS approach in her work with rural Pennsylvania residents, representing layers of stories associated with specific landscapes affected by shale gas exploration. Historical archaeologist Edward González-Tennant uses GIS as a starting point for grappling with multimedia research, collaborating with survivors and descendants of a massacre that took place in an African-American town in the early 1920s. His Virtual Rosewood museum uses interactive online features to engage descendant communities and the broader public in coming to terms with "difficult heritage."

Part V brings together several examples of participatory digital archives and museums. In our first book, we noted an opening up of "opportunities for the public to participate in collections and archives, not only as information consumers, but also as contributors and lay curators…. [M]any [social scientists] have come to see the [digital archiving] process…as a new form of participatory action research" (A. Gubrium and Harper 2013, 169). Catherine Besteman gives an autoethnographic account of the development of an online archive of photographs and research materials from her fieldwork. She developed "The Somali Bantu Experience" in consultation with local Bantu refugees who were resettled in Maine after fleeing Somalia's civil war. Madeleine Tudor and Alaka Wali present their use of PAR to develop interactive, community-based exhibitions at Chicago's Field Museum, where "mixed media are the core for representing research to broader publics." Finally, Natalie Underberg-Goode examines the iterative process of developing PeruDigital, a virtual ethnographic museum created by a team of scholars, students, programmers, and artists from the United States and Peru.

Part VI marks the robust emergence of participatory design ethnography as a mode that crisscrosses social science, art, and user-focused technology. Nancy Fried Foster offers case studies of participatory design in higher-education

libraries that bring together students, staff, and faculty to produce better spaces and services. She argues for the urgency of participatory design and critical design studies as harnessing research to produce "shared value." This concern runs through the chapter by Elizabeth Chin and colleagues, which follows the path of design students and homeless youth in Los Angeles as they work together to develop a multimedia installation inviting the public to "take a walk in someone else's shoes." In the final chapter, Matthew Durington and Samuel Collins take inspiration from Chin's provocative question: "Why can't design itself be a form of ethnography?" They present their team's iterative process of designing fieldwork apps as a way to analyze and reflect on the community-based multimedia materials collected over the past several years by the Anthropology by the Wire project.

Taken together, these cases present an exciting array of possibilities for engaged research, but also new tensions for scholars to navigate. Crosscutting themes emerge across the chapters in relation to theoretical and ethical issues, the research process and methods, and the products, outcomes, and "broader impacts" of participatory visual and digital research.

Theoretical and Ethical Issues

A dialectics of collaboration undergirds our contributors' research practice. Participatory work is not merely a way to gain entrée into difficult-to-access communities. Rather, the projects described here are rooted in an egalitarian ethic where the research participants and communities are first and foremost prioritized. Lying at the heart of much of this work are process questions: What good is it? Who is it good for? And who determines what good it is for?

In each contributor's core story, there comes a moment where ethical and theoretical dilemmas drive them to take the participatory turn. One turning point in many of our scholarly trajectories came when we first read the works of Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire, cited by several contributors as an inspiration behind their collaborative and social justice commitments. The methods discussed in this book all draw upon Freire's (2000) process of conscientization: a "cycle of dialogue, reflection and action [with participants in which they are] empowered via collective questioning of dominant narratives and explanations to develop critical consciousness," as Schensul and Daglish write in their chapter. In Freire's model, inquiry is wedded to civic engagement and a vision of transforming unjust structures.

Scholars often take the participatory turn out of a commitment to "upending the political structure" of research as usual (Chalfen and Rich 2007, 63). Yet, our contributors do not romanticize the collaborative research process: they explore issues of power, particularly when working with multiple stakeholders in a project. Feminist scholar Donna Haraway's (1988) notion of "situated knowledge" is instructive as it applies to structures of power and serves as a theoretical cue for many of us going participatory. Situated knowledge, rooted in local cultural, historical, and embodied specificity, may be especially trustworthy from the vantage point of the subjugated. "Situated knowledges require that the object of knowledge be pictured as an actor and agent, not as a screen or a resource, never finally as a slave to the master that closes off the dialectic in his unique agency and his authorship of 'objective' knowledge" (Haraway 1988, 592). Rattray uses a participatory mapping process with students, some disabled and some able-bodied, to gain their "embodied expertise" on geographical barriers to ease of movement on campus. Here, participatory research serves as a "countermapping" of the usual campus map depictions, which figure as authoritative/technocratic evidence of accommodation. Participant-produced maps evoke situated knowledges and more dynamic bodies of evidence. Or, as Haraway writes: "Only partial perspectives promise objective vision" (1988, 582–583).

A number of our contributors cite the work of French filmmaker and anthropologist Jean Rouch as an intellectual inspiration. Rouch proposes a "shared anthropology," in which knowledge produced with or on a community or culture is accessible to its members (Ginsburg 1995). Similar to a Freirian championing of the dialogical process as critical to emancipatory research, Rouch places the collaborative process of filmmaking on equal footing with the outcome: the finished film. Collaboration serves as a "site for reflexivity and social engagement among those involved in the process" (A. Gubrium and Harper 2013, 97). A shared anthropology upgrades research participants to the position of co-researchers who are quite capable of interpreting their own experiences (Pink 2011; Rouch 1975; Rouch and Taylor 2003; Stoller 1992).

Broadening Our Spectrum of Engagement

Along with a shared research and media production process comes the idea that engagement and collaboration encompass a wide variety of roles, strategies, purposes, and outcomes. Many of our contributors position their work within the realms of PAR: some call it collaborative research, and yet

others situate their work as community-based participatory research (CBPR). Some of this has to do with our theoretical influences and disciplinary conventions, as well as funding possibilities (see Peterson and A. Gubrium 2011). We do not make strong distinctions between these approaches here, but point to the common thread of scholars broadening their spectrum of engagement. Tudor and Wali present building a museum collection as an act of community-based organizing and networking with multiple local organizations. They engage community members in the task of gathering archival material, curating assemblages of artifacts, and communicating submerged histories to the public. Besteman also frames her ethnographic work as one of "collaboration" rather than "participation," entailing the design of a digital photo archive to house her past work in Somalia and present work in Maine with resettled Somalis. The work, she notes, has promulgated a variety of encounters of engagement among multiple parties, including research (in this case photography) "subjects," students and faculty at her university, local community members in Maine where the photo archive is housed, and outside audiences viewing the photos from afar through the digital archive.

Other contributors move around within the spectrum of engagement. The specific form of participant engagement depends on the context and purpose of the particular project at hand. Flexibility in participatory strategy is exemplified by Menzies's filmmaking work. In his full-length feature film, *Bax Laansk—Pulling Together* (2011), community members provided feedback on the rough cut of the film only after Menzies has edited the film to this stage. In another film, *Gathering Strength* (2014), the entire process evolved through ongoing consultation with a community organizing team. With *In My Grandmother's Garden* (2009), he cuts a longer film into shorter pieces that he calls "video vignettes." Video vignettes are produced to serve a variety of constituencies, including outside viewing audiences and local community members, for purposes of documentation and knowledge transfer. Menzies leaves open the possibility that others may splice and repurpose his films into smaller cuts to fit their needs, which is yet another way of engaging participation.

Power Asymmetries Do Not Go Away

One may enter research collaborations intent on disrupting uneven dynamics on the research playing field. Yet, it is important to enter the game with eyes wide open to the ways that positionality continues to affects

power and agency. Funders, researchers, facilitators, and participants are all involved in this negotiation. Tudor and Wali raise important questions about power dynamics:

> Research can illuminate tensions and divides between social sectors and organizations, but can it help to address these conflicts? …Does awareness of exclusionary tendencies lead to action for inclusiveness? Do visual media provide more convincing evidence of areas of common ground between divided sectors than other ways of representing research findings?

Like Tudor and Wali, we want to see how we can push participatory research further, to take these questions into deep consideration in the research process and produce richer stories of the local communities we work with and for.

Contributors also highlight the ways experience informs practice in participatory research. Newbies may come into a project with the idea in mind that power dynamics will be balanced and easily maintained. It takes experience (and/or a good bit of guidance from a practiced mentor) to realize that the imagined ideal of participation and actual practice on the ground often manifest quite differently from one another. Hierarchies and power arrangements inform the ways projects are carried out. Constraints are real. Fried Foster's chapter presents her work using participatory design to shape plans for a user-designed revamping of a university library space. While notions of the common good and benefits to wider publics undergirded the original intentions of her project, the design process sometimes strayed from this ideal due to the budgetary, structural, and technological constraints often found in a public university system. Alexandra also notes the impact of these constraints in her chapter. Writing about her longitudinal digital storytelling study, Alexandra similarly describes the impact that funders and community organizations and staff can have on the course of a collaborative project. Indeed, our interlocutors are often better attuned to these dynamics than we are, so much so that they may shape their media productions to fit the agenda of the sponsoring organization. Researchers must take these power relationships into account, too.

Logistical, ethical, and political challenges are always present in the research process, participatory or otherwise. Yet these are particularly accentuated by digital and visual methods that call for the active participation of community members to visually document their experiences. Perry's

chapter evokes ways that politics complicate participation. She writes about using a participatory mapping approach to document conceptualizations of environmental justice around the controversial topic of fracking. Oppressive gender expectations (and sexism as a power dynamic in the field) are especially visible here, in terms of who participates in the work. Legal intricacies also arise, which preclude some key players (namely landowners) from participating. Furthermore, noble intentions of justice may be circumscribed by community suspicion, especially in communities that were previously exploited by or disenfranchised from the system. Perry notes that one way to disrupt the usurpation of participation by those in power is to "give back" to the community, here in the form of providing useful knowledge on policies and regulations that would help shape decision-making on fracking. While participation and power dynamics are indeed complicated matters, one can still *strive* for an ethic of equity in knowledge production.

Limits of Listening and Critique of "Giving Voice"

Haraway cautions the reader that in proposing to do emancipatory work, a danger lies in "romanticizing and/or appropriating the vision of the less powerful while claiming to see from their positions…. The standpoints of the subjugated are not 'innocent' positions" (1988, 584). Gubrium and colleagues "complicate voice," as they describe the co-created, co-mediated, and strategically authentic voicing of participants as they strive to *do something* with their digital stories (2014, 345). The stories produced are hardly value free, with language (voice) not only the speaker's, but also "ever populated with the intentions of others" (see Bakhtin 1981; A. Gubrium et al. 2014, 345). Similarly, Alexandra critiques the notion of "giving voice" to underscore the politics of listening and being heard. Rather than "digital storytelling," which might connote the idea that a person individually tells her "one truest story" to convey a most authentic voice, Alexandra reframes her process as "co-creative" and "documentary."

Audience/ing is also important. Contributors like Alexandra recognize the stage-y quality of all research and keep in mind that research materials are produced with intentionality, which keys in on the idea of the "good-enough" story (J. Gubrium 2003; J. Gubrium and Holstein 2009) that is worth a listen. Several contributors explore the strategic use of emotion in stories and research. Do participants produce uplifting or tragic stories? How does this relate to one's political position and situation, as well as to that of the

listening audience (Jackson 2002; Loseke 2009)? As Alexandra reminds us, it is important that we take our interlocutors seriously, as they may very well understand that by producing a certain type of story—whether it be hopeful or critical—they may increase narrative rapport with viewing audiences.

The idea of authenticity also provokes another tension: how to "authentically" represent a community and culturally centered understandings without reifying stereotypes and negative representations of the community. Might there be some value for "inauthenticity" in this regard? Sociologist Dennis Waskul (2009) takes on this challenge himself through a daylong experiment of self-imposed sincerity meant to explore "why honesty is not always the best policy." His realization: sometimes it pays to represent oneself (and others) as a "more or less" person rather than attempting to formulate an "authentic self." We see a similar approach in our own work and that of chapter contributors in terms of presentation of self and others in visual and digital media making. Schensul and Dalglish highlight this tension as they reflect on their work in a participatory action filmmaking project with urban youth in Hartford, Connecticut. Authenticity is gained through the embodied and experientially rich understanding of participants who actually have lived and researched structural constraints that shape the film script in terms of narrative arc and character motivation. Community participants are crucial in helping to define the issues, discursive strategies, and the shape of the film. Yet, the input of filmmakers and outside researchers is critical for heightening awareness among participating community members about the potential for perpetuating stereotypes that they seek to challenge. In this sense, we liken the participatory digital and visual process best thought of as one constituted through "strategic voicing" (see A. Gubrium et al. 2014), spoken when we witness, honor, and advocate on behalf of those who are not usually listened to or heard.

Which Stories to Tell and How to Tell Them?

As much as we may seek to amplify previously silenced voices, we must also critically examine who participates in participatory visual and digital projects and who does not. What sorts of ethical issues are raised in the process of inclusion and disclusion? Besteman homes in on ethical issues around collaboration and inclusion, as when the resettled Somalis depicted in a photo exhibition were seen as "getting all the attention" by others groups in rural Maine that perceived themselves as equally marginalized.

Not everyone wants to participate in a participatory visual and digital project. What does the absence or silence on behalf of some people signify? Wilson and Flicker write about a Photovoice/digital storytelling project focused on young black women's understandings of and experiences with transactional sex in a Toronto neighborhood. Project participants notably do not position themselves as participants in this economy, except speaking to common expectations by others (i.e., men) that they might do so. Participants instead focus on "other" young women, speaking for other women who participate in transactional sex by taking photos and producing digital stories that socially distance themselves from the practice.

Otañez and Guerrero also illustrate a complexity in voicing and representation through a case study of a digital story produced by one participant, Eric, as part of their viral hepatitis digital storytelling workshop. Strategic voicing does not just emanate from the storyteller, but is also mediated by secondary characters. The authors key in on the voice of digital storyteller Eric's father, who, though not positioned as a key actor in Eric's story, is heard throughout in the ways his voice casts shadows on his son's take of the U.S. biomedical system and its affect on his (Eric's) health-seeking practices. Other voices are also heard in the story. Eric speaks to his own small, immigrant African community members' perceptions of hepatitis as a diagnosis to be ashamed of and kept quiet. These voices mediate the narrative aesthetics, including Eric's decision not to appear in the digital story and to change the tone of voice through anonymizing software.

Our contributors wrestle with decisions about how to tell stories and which images to present. Besteman used images from her photo archiving project in an English Language Learner (ELL) book, hoping that these would resonate with the younger Somali students. Several students felt ashamed by the inclusion of old, pre–civil war photos, however, and some Somali community members expressed concern that photo subjects were depicted as looking "poor." They feared that these images might negatively affect public perceptions of this refugee community down the line. Besteman had to consider how images spoke to a range of potential audiences.

Ethics of Circulation

Ethical tensions arise around the circulation of media produced in collaborative research projects, especially around the repurposing, sharing, and dissemination of produced materials. Exhilaration lies in the possibility

that people find the media produced in our projects *relevant enough* to repurpose and recirculate. "Wired" anthropologists Collings and Durington also signal this impulse as they note that social media is replete around us. The authors take a "networked anthropology" approach, aiming for multipurposed research products that are simultaneously media to be appropriated and used by the communities with whom we work, to connect to others (i.e., other communities, potential grantors, friends, and family), and are also research data generated in the space of an ongoing commitment to communities to assist with networking efforts to a wide breadth of audiences (Collins and Durington 2014).

The risk of breaching "internal confidentiality" was present long before the Web, but the ubiquity of social media across the world makes it difficult to guarantee confidentiality (Ellis 1995; Scheper-Hughes 2000). Even in traditional qualitative research products, knowledgeable insiders are now able crack a pseudonym with a quick Google search. Sociologist Katja Guenther writes:

> The decision to name or not to name raises several interrelated issues, which necessitate balancing the protection of internal and external confidentiality, research goals, strategies in the field and in the presentation of data, and personal comfort. Yet conversations about these issues rarely arise (Guenther 2009, 240).

Because participatory visual research often includes identifying images or popular dissemination campaigns, scholars who use these methods are the harbingers (or alternatively, the canaries in the coal mine) of transformations in protocols for ethical research.

When one of the goals of a project is "broader impacts," dissemination, and reuse, traditional guarantees of confidentiality may need to be renegotiated. We have asked before, and ask here again: what is to be gained from protecting participants' confidentiality, and what is lost when their voices are kept hidden and they are not able to lay claim to knowledge production (A. Gubrium and Harper 2013)? Given the commitments of many of us to academic institutional requirements, including human subjects boards, we may need to navigate representational politics in a variety of ways, depending on the venues through which we distribute our texts. Gubrium and colleagues (2014) note this tension in their ethnographic digital storytelling work. One component of this work focused on strategic communication of new media materials from a youth sexuality project through mass and social

media networks, a requirement of the foundation sponsoring the project. Yet another component centered on research output, including dissemination of research findings in peer-reviewed journals. They note the uncanny effect of meeting university human subjects board requirements to shield the identity of a research participant in a journal article, with the participant positioned as a "vulnerable research subject," while also screening the participant's digital story "full frontal" in public presentations, on the project website, and through social media after the participant provided consent for release in each of these venues. Herein lies a major strength—yet also the Achilles heel—of participatory visual and digital research. We are drawn to these methods precisely because they allow for multipurposed applications, with data collection and research interwoven with real-world activism and advocacy in the pursuit of social justice. It is often hard to harmonize formal institutional protocols with these research goals, which are also rooted in ethical practice.

Reflecting on Process and Methods

We are often asked what we have come to call the "participatory chicken and egg question": "Which comes first? The visual or digital production process, or getting to know the community context as a participatory researcher?" Our contributors offer different perspectives on how to embark on the participatory visual and digital research process. Menzies begins with participant observation, with video production coming later and serving as a complementary tool. Others, like Wilson and Flicker, argue for the visual production process as a way of gaining entrée into a community because it provides a service and engages collaborators in a common, practical mission. Later on, the process of designing digital multimedia sites and software apps can create "recursive moments" for group reflection and discussion, as Durington and Collins and Underberg-Goode argue. All contributors agree upon one thing, however: participatory visual and digital methods are not a panacea, but are best combined with engaged ethnography and a focus on process.

The Means Are as Important as the Ends

A key principle in participatory visual and digital research is that "the means are as important as the ends." Two things must happen simultaneously to build successful partnerships. Research partners develop a common understanding

of the research agenda and then take the process and practical work seriously. Alexandra presents the field site in participatory visual and digital research as a "community of practice" (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998): having a shared task to complete (such as a digital story) places the researcher alongside participants, rather than head-to-head. As Diane Austin writes: "[P]rojects are the vehicles through which we identify our strengths and weaknesses and develop trust, confidence, and direction" (Austin 2004, 422).

Paying attention to process offers insights into our partners' affective and intellectual framing of collaborative research. In Perry's chapter on PGIS, ethnography becomes a kind of "therapeutic praxis" for members of a rural community affected by shale gas exploration. Valuable knowledge emerges as participants explain their motivations and thought processes on the collaborative work in progress, as we see in diverse projects from Schensul and Dalglish's critical performance ethnography to Chin et al.'s participatory design workshops and Underberg-Goode's iterative design of the PeruDigital website.

The need for improvisation and flexibility runs through many chapter authors' discussion of the research process. Participatory action research demands constant consideration of participants' everyday exigencies, group dynamics, anticipated audiences, and funders' constraints. Just because a project is stated as collaborative and social-justice oriented does not necessarily mean that community members will be interested in participating at all points. Participatory action researchers must pay attention to the burdens placed on individuals even as we seek to maximize the benefits to the community. Otañez and Guerrero modified their original workshop-based approach to digital storytelling to accommodate participants' work schedules by meeting one-on-one to record voiceovers between back-to-back work shifts. Flexibility meant literally meeting participants where they were at, and reflections on the research process highlighted the structural vulnerabilities faced by storytelling participants.

Many contributors discuss how the "participatory turn" has made them take the process of training novice researchers more seriously. Researchers need to prepare participants for fieldwork and media production by presenting research design, data collection methods, and ethical issues in accessible, jargon-free language. Participatory visual and digital research often involves community participants and students in the research process, potentially retooling long-standing "town-and-gown" divisions. When the research is integrated into a university course, insensitive or disengaged students may behave in a way that undermines carefully cultivated relationships with

community partners. Even so, Chin and colleagues, Rattray, and Durington and Collins all note the transformative "situated/side-by-side" learning that occurs in the participatory research process (Lave and Wenger 1991).

The Role of Technology

Participatory visual and digital research can be technology-intensive relative to traditional qualitative methods, prompting new questions: What do digital technologies and environments bring to our scholarship? How do technologies relate to the theoretical insights we develop in the course of using them? We take these questions seriously. As Selin and Gano state in their chapter, "new styles of technology not only equal novel conveniences, features, and economic arrangements; they also prompt the evolution of new social forms and political arrangements."

Social and symbolic meanings infuse technology. Menzies points out that the technology we use communicates indexically to participants. The presence of technology signals that research is taking place and sends messages about the care and professionalism of documentation. For this reason, Menzies prefers larger, high-quality cameras to small, consumer electronics that may raise suspicions of covert research or look unprofessional. Other authors, such as Durington and Collins, revel in the democratization of mobile technologies. They prefer devices such as smartphones because these communicate that research can be "user-friendly," accessible, and integrated into everyday life.

How do we address structural issues surrounding technology without turning back to a researcher-as-expert framework? Some technologies seem ubiquitous, but several contributors faced challenges in working with people with slow Internet service and limited computer access and skills. These were obstacles for Perry's PGIS research in rural Pennsylvania. Perry readjusted her project to meet participants where they were. She asked participants to mark up laminated paper maps during focus group sessions. She then took these annotated maps back to the lab to enter the data into GIS software.

Functionally, digital platforms afford new ways to tell stories about research. Underberg-Goode suggests "understanding and exploiting characteristics of new media that can be brought to bear on narrative ethnography: interactivity, a sense of navigable space, nonlinearity, and a blurring of author/audience boundaries." Social scientists can leverage these qualities to reach new audiences and to break down barriers between experts and the public.

Mixing It Up and Engaging with Design

Since we wrote our first book, we have seen more and more practitioners "mixing it up" by combining different methodological techniques, disciplinary approaches, and modalities. We see Wilson and Flicker pairing Photovoice with digital storytelling and González-Tennant combining GIS, digital storytelling, and game environments. In their "Anthropology by the Wire" project, Durington and Collins began with participatory video and then added social media such as Twitter and Tumblr to foster a "networked anthropology." Now they are developing apps to "gamify" fieldwork training and create virtual tours. Rattray and Perry both mix GIS with interviews, Photovoice, and other techniques to produce maps that convey a rich, qualitative sense of place and participants' experience.

Practitioners are combining disciplinary approaches to solve problems, with the idea that the people most affected by policies and design should take part in planning. Fried Foster shows how multidisciplinary teams of ethnographers, librarians, and architects work with users to design better academic libraries that respond to student and faculty needs. Chin's team brought together design, music, ethnography, and PAR to understand and amplify the concerns of homeless youth. Underberg-Goode describes the interactions between anthropologists, Latin American studies specialists, and computer programmers to develop a bilingual, culturally appropriate digital humanities website.

Participatory visual and digital research is going ever more "multimodal": integrating visual materials and text with materials drawing upon other senses (Dicks 2014). Tudor and Wali, working in a museum setting, mix together media that participants can view and read with material culture that they can touch and manipulate. González-Tennant created a virtual environment for his Rosewood Heritage Project, allowing site visitors to wander and explore an African-American town that was destroyed by racist violence almost a century ago. Selin and Gano's Futurescape City Tours use multiple modalities to engage citizens in a discussion about how nanotechnologies and other innovations can shape and change cities. They combine urban "wayfinding" walks; conversations with a variety of citizens, stakeholders and experts; and image-based (akin to Photovoice) "deliberative" sessions. These diverse projects embrace different sensory modes to elicit participants' understandings and to engage with the broader public.

Outcomes and Audiences

Scholars are turning to participatory visual and digital methods to share their research beyond the academy and engage with multiple publics. A desire to serve the public, influence policy, and present diverse views in programming motivates them. The participatory approach reorients a sense of "broader impacts" in our research by transforming the relationship between experts and the public.

Making a Public Impact

Contributors in this volume present several cases where research outcomes directly serve the public through public institutions and programming. Tudor and Wali describe their community-based work at Chicago's Field Museum as facilitating community members as they share stories about a deindustrializing region and resist gentrification. Collaborative documentation and exhibitions support local efforts to establish the proposed Calumet Natural Heritage Area. Materials from Besteman's digital photographic archive have been integrated into teacher's guides for working with Somali refugee students in Maine. Fried Foster's "design ethnography for the public good" marshals research findings to improve libraries' layout and service provision models, enhancing work and study conditions for students, faculty, and librarians. Chin's research team stresses the importance of ethnographic listening in "design for the public good," especially when working with stereotyped groups like homeless youth.

   Scholars are also making policy interventions with participatory research. Menzies, González-Tennant, and Perry used video, photography, and GIS to assist research communities in claiming land and property rights. Here, research helps to amplify the voices of less powerful groups, such as indigenous people, African-American descendant communities, and rural residents. Rattray's team used PGIS to present the situated and embodied knowledge of students with physical disabilities. Maps made a compelling case for the university to adopt a more accessible, "universal design" for campus.

Breaking Down the Fourth Wall

Participatory visual research breaks down the "fourth wall" of research, to borrow a metaphor from the performing arts. Traditionally, actors onstage perform a play as if an invisible "fourth wall" separates them from the

audience. Playwright Bertholdt Brecht famously broke down the fourth wall in plays where the actors directly addressed the audience. Later, Augusto Boal developed participatory theatre, directly encouraging audience members to help solve the problems enacted on stage (Boal 1979; Quinlan and Duggleby 2009). Like actors pretending that they do not see the audience through the fourth wall, social scientists have traditionally conducted and written about their research as if it were separable from our research participants and publics. Schensul and Dalglish position their filmmaking as a form of critical performance ethnography that "engages actors in the performance of ethnographic interpretation to illustrate cultural processes or disseminate the results of research to broader audiences." In participatory visual and digital research, we move away from a model of expertise that holds up the "sage on the stage": the lecturer on the podium. Research participants are invited to go "behind the scenes" of visual research. They sometimes join us or take the lead "onstage" in presenting findings to different audiences, who in turn offer new interpretations of the issues portrayed.

Breaking down the fourth wall of research opens up the question of who is positioned as the expert, a theme running through many chapters. Fried Foster writes about participatory design as a partnership among multiple experts—including engineers and designers (in the context of this chapter), workers, and social scientists—directed at the common good. Selin and Gano attempt to upend the lay/expert hierarchy by retooling "technology assessment" as a walking tour in which citizens, policymakers, scientists, and engineers mingle and deliberate together. Yet they also caution that participants and traditional experts may still maintain the "expert/lay divide" in their interactions. Perry and Rattray's GIS projects respectively highlight participants' embodied expertise through participatory mapping. While policymakers use official maps as a static, authoritative form of evidence, participant-produced maps show barriers hidden in plain sight, "groundtruthing" more dynamic bodies of evidence (see also Maida 2013).

Material Deliberation and Materializing Knowledge

Participatory visual research uses visual and material culture to trigger public deliberation, akin to Touraine's model of a "sociology of intervention" (Touraine 1983) or Freire's "conscientization" (Freire 2000). Selin and Gano describe their work as a form of "material deliberation," with the goal of "facilitating 'reflexivity' that allows for self, community, or cultural evaluation in an iterative way." Material deliberation moves away from the two-dimensional, linear

text forms common in academia to the use of artifacts as prompts for public engagement. Tudor and Wali present how their community-based museum projects use artifacts to stimulate conversations about the transformation of life in the Calumet region. Seemingly insignificant material details—such as labor union and Earth Day stickers on a steelworker's helmet—lay open more complex stories and dispel stereotypes.

In several case studies presented in this book, participants document their observations while navigating a physical space, inspired by urbanist Kevin Lynch's concept of "wayfinding" (Lynch 1960; see also the concept of "wayfaring" in Hall and Smith 2011). Selin and Gano used a walking tour to elicit people's reflections on technological change in the city. Rattray's team navigated a university campus to provide a "countermap" of physical accessibility. In Perry's work, participants took pictures of their own special places in the landscape, then came together to view the photos and discuss the transforming rural environment. Visual methods give insights into participants' routines and everyday paths and open up space for place-based stories.

Along with material deliberation, scholars in this volume describe their process of "materializing knowledge" in new formats that respond more dynamically to audience interests. Underberg-Goode's multimedia, 3D virtual museum gives users a sense of navigable space and allows them to follow multiple paths to explore interests. By "choosing their own adventure" through a body of knowledge, audiences assemble a social scientific narrative, "a kind of story world in which insights about how such complex topics as history, economics, and gender and ethnic identity play out in the context of a festival." González-Tennant and Durington and Collins also point to exciting possibilities for merging game formats with social scientific research and communication. Participatory design ethnography offers yet another way of "materializing knowledge." In these projects, research not only produces texts describing social practices and analyzing users' perceptions and values, it also informs the design of specific spaces, objects, and technologies.

Recontextualization and Creative Repurposing

Recontextualized documents, photos, and artifacts take on new meanings as participants and audiences encounter them in new ways (Fabian 2008). Digital storytellers gain new insights from screening their stories in a different

landscape, or alongside other participants' stories, as Alexandra notes in her chapter. This allows digital storytellers to shift from participant as objectified (by experience) to material/product as object with meaning-making constituted by the participant (A. Gubrium 2009). Community-based museum research transforms exhibitions from static displays to sites where participants curate and reinterpret their significance of artifacts, as Tudor and Wali demonstrate in their chapter.

We also see a lot of creative repurposing: visual materials gain a second life when research partners reuse them. Digital technologies make it easy and inexpensive to cut, copy, and remix visual materials for multiple purposes and audiences, compared with traditional film and photography. Besteman's open access Web-based archive of photos makes it possible for the community to repurpose photos for museum exhibitions and as visual material in a textbook published for English language learners from Somalia. Otañez and Guerrero's project also allows for a multipurposed approach: digital stories are used as part of a grassroots communication campaign to promote disease testing and to inform the public about viral hepatitis as a health issue, as well as a source of research data (from the production process, digital stories, and screenings) to analyze dominant discourses about the disease.

"Remixing" research inevitably transforms the modern ideal of the scholar as *auteur* of a master narrative into a more postmodern mode of the scholar as *bricoleur* (tinkerer) assembling vignettes. Menzies's core story reflects this shift. For Menzies, digital media means "having your cake and eating it too": one can use short-format videos to make "directorial" documentary productions for one kind of audience while also retaining a collection of "video vignettes" that can be repurposed and reassembled as a video "playlist" for other audiences. Menzies writes, "[the] productive lifespan and interpretations [of these video vignettes] extend beyond the limitations of the filmmakers' specific initial intentions."

The PAR approach focuses strongly on outcomes, and participatory visual and digital researchers are developing new ways to evaluate the reach and reception of their projects. Durington and Collins are developing apps to track the "ripple effects" of participatory media production. They write: "As a community-based participatory project, our goal was never to go viral, simply to create a networked anthropology which participants could not only access but also creatively repurpose." Other scholars are taking advantage of website analytics tools to go beyond scholarly citation metrics to understand how research products are being consumed by the public.

Conclusion: Research and Action with a Human Face

Many of the forces motivating scholars to use participatory visual and digital methods are reflected in the chapters that make up this volume. Participants' narratives and media can be used to amplify previously silenced voices and perspectives; challenge dominant discourses on health, wellbeing, and society; and facilitate dialogue. The research process itself often creates a sense of solidarity among participants, bolsters and broadens social networks, and, more individually speaking, builds self-respect and confidence for resilience and coping. Research products encourage audience engagement, evoke emotional and collective responses, and can be used as materials for organizing, advocacy, and to promote change. Public screenings or exhibitions of visual and digital media provoke moments of encounter and purposeful "political listening."

Across the chapters, we sense a tension between the traditional expectation that social research be conducted in a naturalistic context and the more negotiated reality of collaborative research. Increasingly, qualitative researchers acknowledge our own role in delineating "the field" (Gupta and Ferguson 1992) and see field research as a new kind of "lab" in which more staged interactions like workshops take place alongside naturalistic participant observation. Both approaches serve as platforms for conducting meaningful research with specific publics.

All the same, while the authors acknowledge that their work is not always based on an organic approach of heading into the field and "seeing what happens," they emphasize a tactic of "letting go," in terms of relinquishing (or at least ceding) control to community member/participants. Our contributors highlight the need for improvisation and acknowledge that many of us are "learning as we go" in this work. As with the first volume, we note that many of us were not formally trained in the visual methods we have taken on, instead learning by doing. For some, this happened out of pure necessity, whether it was due to funding challenges, strategies and intended outcomes, or the realization that the method they had planned to use was not particularly collaborative or appropriate and instead served to further subjugate the voices and perspectives of participants at the expense of scholarly/authoritative knowledge.

Whether our contributors position their intellectual shifts as a lightning strike or a gradual realization in their core stories, for most of us this work has deeply transformed our methodological practice and our professional identity as researchers. This collection is a first step in creating a "community

of practice" of researchers, giving our diverse practices a common name, developing a shared vocabulary for our work, and building theory and method as a joint enterprise.

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