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Participatory Methods and Community-Engaged Practices for Collecting, Presenting and Representing Cultural Memory

Margo Shea

Abstract

The socially constructed nature of memory and the well-documented ties between place and memory make collaborative and participatory research methodologies particularly significant to scholarship in memory studies, place attachment and place-making. This chapter explores how participatory research methodologies combined with digital tools, including participatory project design, crowdsourcing, participatory community mapping and community curation can render more visible the individual and social functions of cultural memory to researchers and participants in collaborative projects. Participatory methods contribute to our understanding of memory's role in place-making by making visible performances of memory that simultaneously honor individual representations and narratives, construct intimate publics and make visible community identities through collected and collective memories. Operating at the junctions of inclusivity and selection, of naming and making, scholars and their co-researchers construct meaning and negotiate its broader and deeper significance together using these methods. The widely democratic nature of memory, place-based knowledge and place attachment offers possibilities for understanding them and their intersections in new ways.

Introduction

The scholarship on place, memory and identity and the relationships between them is vast, as widely multidisciplinary as it is interdisciplinary. Ranging from naively celebratory to shrewdly critical of individually and socially constructed pasts, memory studies in relation to place, place attachment and cultural identity covers much of the terrain in between. As scholars initiate and negotiate research projects that are collaborative and participatory from the start, the ethical, logistical and ontological questions about researching community and cultural memory multiply. This chapter draws on a crowdsourced, participatory memory deep-mapping research project to think through the ways participatory and community-engaged research methodologies by scholars of place and memory can pose new questions about memory, yield new insights about the purpose of our work and facilitate processes for unpredictable, engaged remembrance practices and initiatives.

The study of cultural memory, once largely the purview of historians, oral historians and social scientists, has blossomed over the past decade. In psychology, communication, public health and other disciplines, much attention has been paid the relations between practices of remembrance and the socio-political and cultural environments in which these practices are forged, maintained, upheld as significant, or alternately, abandoned. Moving away from the tendency to "fact-check" remembrance, the field has turned its attention broadly to "the forms, media and processes of remembering and forgetting."(Fischer, 2015) For scholars of memory, interdisciplinarity has been fruitful, not least in the areas of place and memory. At the same time, the utility of memory

studies is complicated by the myriad lenses through which scholars engage it, the wide range of contexts, uses and consequences of remembrance and a scale of engagement or analysis that may range from one person to hundreds of millions.

A discussion about emerging methods, therefore, must begin with the question, "Memory research for what purpose?" In a variety of forms, this question has been central to my field of public history for forty years; questions about how historical knowledge is produced and for what purposes has occupied scholars and practitioners. It has also raised important questions about whether public history research and practice should be understood as primarily "public facing" or "public engaging" as its central organizing principle. Put simply, the field negotiates a tension between presenting histories to the public and assisting members of various publics in querying, researching, displaying and mobilizing through historical practice. Still, as Andrew Hurley explains, "while public history's big tent envelops a multitude of agendas, the attempt to leverage historical knowledge on behalf of social change has absorbed a significant segment of the field since the 1970s." (Hurley, 2016) Indeed, in a 1981 article that came to be extremely influential in the field, Ronald Grele identified the public historian's task as working, "to help members of the public do their own history and to aid them in understanding their role in shaping and interpreting events." (1981) Following Grele and Hurley, many public historians are committed to working with and being a part of the public even as we interrogate and challenge the assumptions and motivations that drive the public (including, sometimes uncomfortably, ourselves.)

The field has been defined by collaborative partnerships well before what is sometimes referred to as the recent "public turn." (Miller, Little and High, 2017) Indeed, as Meringolo suggests, public history itself had its roots outside of the academy, in communities, government and various professional fields; practitioners of public history may accurately consider community settings one of their professional homes.(2012) Research methods in this context have long been understood as a set of processes through which public historians share inquiry, authority and recognition with individuals and groups with whom we collaborate to produce, interpret, curate, complicate and mobilize from historical knowledge.

In this public historical context, participatory and crowdsourced research methodologies must go beyond cozy notions of inclusion that nonetheless locate intellectual control and reflection with scholars. They must necessarily begin at a project's inception and endeavor to create a shared space for the questions, concerns, ideas and creativity of members of various publics in a local community: educators, business owners, health and human service professionals, local historians, local media personalities and more. While these research methodologies are not new, the introduction of digital technologies, the rise of the digital and spatial humanities and increased interest in collaborative and public scholarship from inside the academy has altered them. Transformations in how we produce, circulate and interact with knowledge raise important questions about authorship and authority even as the rise of "alternative facts" and polarization in our spaces of knowledge consumption make these transformations fraught with complexity.

All of this invites scholars of memory to grapple again with intersubjectivity, the constitution of social frameworks and scholars' roles in the production of knowledge. Of course, these processes go beyond discipline specificity; in fact, it is through collaborative and participatory

projects themselves that we may most productively address complex questions about the nature of intellectual authority, the limits and affordances of professional academic status and the ongoing dilemmas surrounding who gets to define the purposes, directions and goals of a collaborative research initiative and who is best suited to evaluate the process and the product. Here, I follow the Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change (CRESC) Encounters Collaborative's assertion that:

> the distinctiveness of collaboration lies less in a deviation from some kind of imagined, non-collaborative research process, than in the way it forces a reflexive acknowledgment of the emergent quality of knowledge in research relationships across time and space. (CRESC, 2017)

Collaborative, participatory research about the past that is community-based and rooted in a particular place must endeavor to move beyond the stale paradigm that has characterized some scholars' engagements with "community." Understanding communities as inherently and profoundly complex and diverse constellations of people, interests, resources and needs is essential to participatory methods for memory studies. As Waterton and Smith suggest, participatory research initiatives have sometimes tended to be framed on unequal and opaque terms rooted in artificial and "unreflexive notions of community...constructing and dividing society into seemingly homogenous collectives defined by ethnicity, class, education or religion and so forth."(Waterton and Smith, 2010) When scholars endeavor to democratize scholarship by engaging communities conditionally and unequally, they purport to enter as equal partners but still "reserve the right to speak for them and interpret them, and sometimes... reject them, especially if they fail to conform to...[the scholar's] nostalgic ideals."(Waterton and Smith, 2010)

In the areas of place identity, place attachment and memory, particularly salient questions arise from this kind of research model. Memory and place are at the same time the purview of all and the specific domain of specialists. They are refracted through individual affective and cognitive functions but can never be separated from broader and deeper collective processes. They are also creative processes: memory and place are fluid and always in the process of construction and destruction. Both memory and place are made, interpreted and represented through complex and often subtle negotiations of power. Power, of course, is not static; memory and place, therefore, are both dynamic and elastic processes, constantly being made, unmade and edited. What's more: they are processes that appear static and unproblematic to many of those who experience, interpret and portray them. Coupled with the accretive power of place and its relationships with the past, and the role of place as a mnemonic tool, braids of place and memory are crucial markers of individual, social and collective identity.

Conceptualizing Memory Research Differently: Crowdsourced, Participatory Deep Maps and Memory

Remembering is a creative act, one of invention as much as one of retrieval. It is also a social process; the knowledge, values and perceptions a community or society considers important and necessary are reiterated and upheld through memory work. Research on individual, social and collective memory is about much more than people's "lived experience of time," as Michael Pickering argues. (Pickering, 2008) In fact, examining how a group remembers is as telling as its

topography, critical events or individual biographies. "Understanding a community or culture does not consist solely in establishing 'neutral' facts and 'objective' details; it means taking seriously their ways of structuring experience, their popular narratives, the distinctive manner in which they frame the social and political realities which affect their lives."(Gibbons, 1996)

Maurice Halbwachs further explains the social context for all remembrance, even the memories that one does not divulge, believing them to belong solely to the one remembering. Our social worlds constitute the context within which we remember. "It is also in society that (people) recall, recognize, and localize their memories." (Halbwachs, 1992) As Edward Casey reminds us, the memories we hold closely as ours alone, are in fact, emerge and remain tenacious in dialogue with the social worlds we inhabit. "Individual memory takes place in an intersubjective nexus that is at once social and collective, cultural and public." (Casey, 1992) Folklorist Henry Glassie further distills the social power of remembrance and telling when he explains that stories about the past do not illuminate the past solely. Rather, they serve to coordinate "multiple responsibilities to time, to the past event, the present situation and the future of the community. (Glassie, 1995)

Memory is social and very much tethered to place. Its claims to truth are fleeting, transient and contingent, where the meanings of memories are valid only for the dialogic moment of remembrance. As time moves, so does memory; it takes on new forms, builds different narratives and makes new connections between past, present and future. Thus, memory resonates differently according to context, purpose and milieu. As such, it negotiates between official and vernacular representations of the past and between visible and hidden or eclipsed histories. Memory facilitates both the construction of and negotiations over the narratives of social and community coherence and cohesiveness as they develop, change, unravel and reknit themselves into new forms. Memory also plays a role in a community's (perceived) need to police boundaries of places, belongings vs. exclusion and permissible vs. prohibited uses of space over time. Finally, memories unveil the values of a community at the time when those memories are articulated, expressed and displayed. In this way, memory facilitates not only the sorting and categorization of events and experience of the past, but also makes possible a reckoning with the anxieties, hopes and preoccupations of the present and for the future.

Participatory research methods make it possible for members of communities and publics to engage in memory work in ways that mirror the active, improvised and social processes and functions of memory itself. Working at the community level with local stakeholders involved from the beginning help to facilitate nonlinear and the dialogic processes of memory work. These embrace multiplicity without diminishing the significance of individual memory processes. These methods enable researchers to engage the social dimensions of memory in ways that are not intrusive or prescriptive.

Deep mapping is one useful approach. As both a method and a product, it recognizes what Keightley refers to this as "the indivisibility of remembering from its social context" while acknowledging the deeply personal and intimate emotional valence of much remembrance. (2008) Deep maps link directly to the spatialization of memory and allow for nonlinear, multi-authored narratives that do not diminish individual memories or experiences with and of place. In these ways, deep maps resist privileging particular memories over others through the process

of ordering or narration. According to religion scholar John Corrigan, one of the scholars who conceptualized deep mapping:

> Deep maps interlace autobiography, art, narrative, folklore, stories, and memory with the physical form of a place. Deep maps are the stories, conversations, and lives lived out in a place which are inseparable from the cultural context in which they exist. Deep maps are place-based and capable of integrating multiple voices and views... (they) resist reductionism, universal truths and grand narratives in favor of discursive collaboratories abounding with multiple voices, contingency, and contested meanings. (Corrigan, 2015)

Deep mapping is not inherently participatory. Researchers may, and indeed often do, conduct work in traditional ways, clearly delineating the space between researcher and that which is being researched. Their focus, in deep mapping, is to explore contingency and relations between time, space and scale, using maps to "interpret the consequences and resonances of events." (Ayres, 2015) While deep maps may have one author or be created by teams of researchers, the methodology lends itself particularly well to multi-authored projects and to pairing with place-based research methods.

Place-based research methodologies and feminist methodologies can contribute to deep mapping, particularly for researchers interested in entering communities of which they are not a member in order to conduct participatory research. From feminist theory, Susan Leigh Starr reminds us that feminism itself is a method. As such, it sets up an approach "for understanding from a marginal or boundary-dwelling perspective, one's own participation in socially-constructed realities, politically and personally, socially and cognitively." (1979) As Bettina Aptheker observes in *Tapestries of Life*, feminist methods invite us to consider the process and goals of participatory deep mapping. "The point...is not to find the lowest common denominator...not so much to unite as to congeal, each element retaining its integrity and value, stuck together for a particular purpose, each of us using our skills to shift and relate, to adjust and integrate...out of the dailiness of our lived experience." (1989)

While feminist research methods have reasserted the validity and importance of information that has been overlooked, ignored and otherwise rendered invisible, place-based research has evolved to prioritize process in the vein of feminist research; as an integrative methodology, it too aims to reknit environmental, historical and social methods. At the same time, place-based research draws on and values local knowledge and cultural memory; in order to do so, researchers engaging in place-based methods must build diverse partnerships that are proactive and responsive to the needs, concerns and goals of partners and their communities. Deep mapping in a place-based research framework demands that multivocality, contingency and fluidity of place and memory are built into a participatory framework instead of being the finding, the "a-ha" experience a scholar presents writing up the project. In this way, participatory deep mapping offers a way for participants themselves to construct memory and place and to witness their fluidities, interconnections and relatedness.

Participatory deep mapping offers ways to create and put into process multivocality, contingency and the fluidity of place and memory because these are attributes embedded in project design and

built into the participatory framework. This approach, in turn, enables us to understand memory in new ways. By combining deep mapping with collaborative and participatory crowdsourcing methodologies anchored within local community networks and institutions, it becomes possible to make visible performances of memory that identify and honor individual and community representations and narratives without privileging particular memories or collapsing and flattening memories. Utilizing digital mapping technologies allows anyone to highlight, sort and categorize places and memories, creating possibilities for users of digital maps to interpret data for themselves and experiment with the affordances and demands of curation. In the process, they grapple with the fluidities of time and memory as well as those of space and place.

Participatory Methods in Memory Research: Around Here: the Places Project

Around Here: the Places Project is a crowdsourced deep map of place and memory along a stretch of the South Cumberland Plateau in rural southeastern Tennessee in an area known to local residents as “The Mountain,” a part of the plateau that includes at its highest elevation, Monteagle Mountain. Part of the Appalachian mountain chain seventy-five miles east of Nashville, Monteagle Mountain has east and west summits, separated by several miles of rolling hills, that climb to an elevation of 1900 feet.

The South Cumberland plateau is geographically, historically and culturally uniquely illegible — certainly to outsiders but also to residents. Its valleys are diverse: some are populated by the same families that reside on the mountain and can be described as “mountain-facing.” Other valleys are integrated economically, politically and socially with the lowlands beyond the mountain and thus residents have little interaction with the mountain even if their ancestors once came to the valleys from the plateau. Outcroppings, bluffs and coves mark a topographically diverse landscape, which has resulted in the development of very small communities with little or no interaction with one another. It is sparsely populated and sits at the junction of three counties. The population of Grundy County is, according to the US Census, 13,000 and the population of the region known as the Mountain is approximately 17,000. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017)

Grundy County comprises most of the physical area of the mountain and is the second poorest county in the state of Tennessee by household income. Grundy is often described in terms of what is wrong with it. It ties Campbell County for the lowest rates of high school graduation, has one of the lowest rates of medically-insured adults and has high rates of infant mortality. Grundy, however, boasts high rates of homeownership and one of the highest rates of women-owned businesses in Tennessee. (Index Mundi, 2017) The first region to be strip-mined in Tennessee and host to missionaries, volunteers and other outsiders with extractive motives, local residents are particularly sensitive to the prospect of outsiders “mining” for their knowledge, wisdom and experience for purposes of which they are not involved and have no influence. While Grundy is the most mountainous of the three counties, Franklin and Marion counties are also situated on the South Cumberland plateau and are part of the Mountain. While Grundy’s valleys are considered to be part of, or at least extensions of the Mountain, Marion’s and Franklin’s valleys are part of political, educational and sociocultural jurisdictions that are not associated with the Mountain.

In Franklin County, the mountain is also the location of the University of the South, which was founded on the eve of the United States Civil War by the Southern dioceses of the Episcopal Church so that young men of Southern stock could get a liberal arts education without leaving the region. The university covers 13,000 acres, provides a liberal arts education and is a major employer. Sewanee, as it is called, represents a place apart from the rest of the mountain because of its history of privilege, exclusiveness and the paucity of local residents in the ranks of faculty, students or administrative staff, as well as its stone entrance gates to sever it from surrounding communities. With its own golf course, a $336 million endowment and plans for a major retirement community targeted for alumni and friends of the university, the university represents a community and culture apart on the plateau itself. Indeed, to those connected to the university, the institution itself is synonymous with the term "The Mountain." At the same time, the university employees hundreds of local residents whose own relationships to the institution are extremely diverse.

The Places Project could not claim to lead to the development of immediate, quantifiable benefits or resources for the areas targeted for participation. At the same time, the physical illegibility of the region and its political patchwork of county lines were matched by hyper-local tendencies and cultural disconnects and divides. These are products of fragmentation but also exacerbate fragmentation. Community, business and government leaders had been working to build processes for communicating across communities and for communicating as a distinct region. Utilizing Tuan's idea of "one space, many places," the Places Project was designed as a resource but also a process that would model approaches for bringing historically divided communities into dialogue together in ways that did not highlight or exacerbate differences, and, at the same time, resisted tendencies to collapse or ignore those differences. (2001)

The project was designed as a project space, a process to bring diverse communities from the mountain and mountain-facing valleys together obliquely, without forcing direct communication or confrontation. The Places Project invited residents to share places that they remembered as meaningful, with no further qualification defining what constitutes meaning for participants. The purpose of the project was to build a collectively-authored map of place and memory together The project itself was a shared space and as such, it invited participants to narrate their places and communities on their own terms but put places in relationship to each other through memories and stories. It invited participants to be thoughtful and reflective about their pasts in relation to their attachments to place, self, family and community. In turn, the data collected was also shared and transparent; this leveraged the potential for its interpretation to be crowdsourced, shared and transparent as well.

Methodologies

The project is significant to the study of memory because it employed participatory research methodologies and directly engaged methods to exploration of community and cultural memory. Both the socially constructed nature of memory and the well-documented ties between place and memory made participatory research methodologies apt. Participatory methodologies enable scholars and their co-researchers to construct meaning and negotiate its broader and deeper significance together. The project engaged participative inquiry, crowdsourced qualitative data

collection, participatory mapping and community curation. As such, it contributes to our understanding of place-making by making visible performances of memory that simultaneously honor individual representations and narratives, construct intimate publics and build and make visible community identities through collected and collective memories. Digital maps using Tableau© software and a physical map with pockets and stories physically stitched into it allow for re-curation and creative engagement with place and memory.

1. *Participative inquiry and authority concerning project design*

As Corbett and Miller argue, shared, or participative, inquiry requires that scholars exhibit a model of facilitative leadership different from a traditional scholarly role. Beyond "having to ask everyone's questions, not just our own," participatory community project design must make it possible for a project to incorporate questions that neither scholarly researchers nor community-based participants and co-researchers have even considered yet. (Corbett and Miller, 2006) Researchers must facilitate a process through which stakeholders enter into a project with enough information to grasp its meaning and potential while still leaving critical issues related to purpose, goals, implementation, dissemination and communication open-ended. In processes of shared inquiry, the researcher must understand and be able to articulate the significance of the *idea* while inviting questions, suggestions, guidance and direction from others about the content and direction of the project. In addition, it is necessary to envision a broad process for crowdsourced and community-curated initiative about local places without undertaking specific research design. In the context of the Places Project, the articulation of project goals was processual and social, precisely because memory work itself is processual and social. Participative inquiry took the form of meeting with civic organizations, municipal leaders, business owners, educators and students to explain the idea of a deep map of the locale, propose ideas for where to collect memories, suggest how memories and narratives might be useful locally and solicit questions, ideas, suggestions, criticisms and to problem-solve in public settings.

Local residents questioned, and in some cases, challenged the utility and practical outcomes for the project. The Places Project could not claim to lead to the development of immediate, calculable, quantifiable benefits or resources for the areas targeted for participation. It was challenging to champion the benefits of the collection of data when particular places, time periods, activities, and so forth, were not going to be specified in the collection process itself. This challenge was particularly true in Grundy County, where generations of poverty, clientism and low levels of third level education had instilled a lack of confidence in the skills, competencies and expertise of local residents.

Participatory methods led to major innovations project design. The initial design proposal for story collection was interview-based, but residents and stakeholders in diverse settings pushed for a more social, and a more informal, setting for collection. From a research perspective, this posed challenges and required new approaches to demographic data collection, informed consent and recording or transcription of stories. Residents suggested places that would be welcoming and amenable for collecting stories and in many cases, made introductions with gatekeepers for the research team. They stressed the appeal of a model similar to the one developed by Storycorps, Inc., in which two interlocutors who are well known to each other discuss places and

memories. (Storycorps, 2003-2018) Residents suggested that informal, social settings where people are often with friends and family would lend itself towards social remembering and place-making and it, in fact, did.

In many instances, the process of inquiry reflected and underscored issues that made the deep map a productive methodology for rendering more visible residents' understandings of place and memory. For example, most gatherings suggested were hyper-local; gatherings of citizens very often were limited to residents of one town or village. Extremely interested in the prospect of the Places Project for their discrete communities, people struggled to see the relevance or import of collecting data about neighboring towns as close as two miles away. This potential limitation led to a focus on crowdsourcing at individual town and village-specific festivals and events. At the same time, there was an equal emphasis on crowdsourcing at the few broadly inclusive events that pulled attendees from across the plateau and valleys -- namely, county fairs and festivals.

2. *Crowdsourced qualitative data collection in multiple venues*

Crowdsourcing, a term developed by Jeff Howe in 2006 to discuss tech industry testing methods, it is defined as a method for recruiting and organizing ideas and input by requesting and soliciting voluntary participation. (2006) Crowdsourcing as a concept was "born digital;" it has emerged out of the context of Web 2.0 and the plethora of problems and possibilities posed by interactive social media.

Crowdsourcing often takes places through the creation of opportunities for participants to contribute information digitally from their home computers or via apps on phones and tablets. Google Forms, Survey Monkey, History Pin and Clio are all examples of platforms through which researchers collect information and contributions. Tagging, commenting, annotating and beta-testing are some specific ways in which scholars and industry professionals engage in crowd-sourcing.

In the context of the Places Project, digital crowdsourcing opportunities existed alongside their analog counterparts. It was possible to contribute places and memories via a project website, a project Facebook page and a telephone hotline. It was also possible to acquire a paper form and to submit handwritten or typed memories of places deemed significant by the contributor. Fewer than forty of the seven hundred contributions to the project were contributed online, however. Mirroring the social processes of memory and place-making, residents suggested and were overwhelmingly more receptive to physically approaching a map of the region, finding "their" place and writing a memory on a card or sharing the memory orally for researchers to transcribe.

By collecting stories at fairs, festivals and heritage events, a large cross-section of residents were able to participate by sharing places and memories and by listening to others' memories and locating places on large maps. People gathered around the booth, looked at maps, listened to each other, found their memories triggered or challenged, and continued the process of sharing stories and memories. Physical collection took place in eight of the thirteen towns about which memories and places were collected as well as at county-wide events that drew residents from across "The Mountain." Collection took place over eighteen months, providing numerous opportunities for participation. Residents could choose whether or not to contribute, opting out

at one event and then choosing to share a place and memory at a later date. There were no restrictions on contributions and thirteen residents shared more than one place and memory on the map.

When local residents and leaders suggested that the collection format was too “business-like,” researchers undertook this to mean that it appeared to potential participants as transactional, leading them to query how and to what ends their information would be used. The project director invited high-school students to take an active role in collecting stories and places and increased communication with prospective participants about where the information gathered would be stored and how it would displayed and utilized locally. Clearly-defined explanations of the ways the information gathered would be used and displayed was challenging when the data being collected was open-ended and therefore unpredictable.

3. Project spaces: participatory mapping

Participatory crowdsourced projects have the potential to facilitate the creation of a set of narratives about place, memory and identity that themselves reflect their social, contingent and processual aspects. The participatory method creates a “project space,” defined by feminist scholar of planning and architecture Elizabeth Cahn as an “intersubjective material projection,” a site of action and reflection that temporarily bridges incommensurable entities, attitudes or institutions. (2016) In project space, researchers are dedicated to and reflective about the process itself but there is no predetermined outcome. Participants become experts and their memories and experiences, rather than fitting into a preexisting research framework, constitute the project framework itself and their contributions thus constitute the project. At once a broad and collaborative process in terms of collection, mapping itself is intimate and lends itself to the creation of intimate publics, both during the mapping process itself and in the process of curation, which is discussed later.

Augmenting Cahn’s notion, Lauren Berlant explains that intimate publics are experimental project spaces where we might endeavor towards alternative versions of the past, present or future. Their multivocality and de--centeredness of individual memories, along with the experience of physically being in a shared virtual or physical space of shared cultural production around the past, drew important connections between ordinary affects and formal and intimate publics. (Berlant and Prosser, 2011)

Participatory methods require facilitative leadership from scholars. Developing the knowledge to ask informed questions, to listen effectively and to guide participants as they contribute to maps are the primary methods for participatory mapping. In this project, participatory deep mapping required the project team to learn local history, make connections between communities and families and to understand the ways place memory and place attachment correspond with broader themes relevant to community and cultural identity. Detailed knowledge of topography itself was important in rural areas, while knowledge of families and family history mattered most in the towns. Being able to converse about local events, controversies and tragedies gained the research team trust required to build the confidence of participants so that they would participate in the mapping project.

Mapping was participatory and collaborative. Participants shared their first names, age, and town or subsection of a town they identified most with. Their surnames were not revealed. Many participants engaged in mapping with family members or friends, but others contributed alone. The freedom to divulge memories of place and to convey the significance of place to the research team without having one's full name printed anywhere allowed participants to share a perspective, or emphasize a memory that others in their network might have viewed differently.

Researchers associated with the University of the South, with a visible profile and active presence in the local community, spent six months introducing the project and engaging residents before beginning the crowdsourced mapping process at fairs, festivals and other community spaces. The insider-outsider status of the research team allowed for the negotiation between *emic* and *etic*, or positionality inside and outside social groups that constituted the local population. This was an ongoing process; researchers, to be sure, were not always aware of our own ignorance or blind spots as outsiders -- a methodological flaw that certainly shaped the project. At the same time, insider/outsider status allowed for communication about sensitive personal information that might not have been shared with a local person whose ties in the communities would have necessarily contributed to their interpretation of memories and places. Having members of the research team with deep local ties undoubtedly helped to make prospective participants feel comfortable contributing to the map. Having outsiders with few local relationships in the communities where they were collecting allowed contributors to be inhabit an experts' role and to inform and educate through the mapping process itself. Here, acknowledging that different kinds of expertise is required for a participatory project and bringing people with different ties to local communities was an important research strategy.

The Places Project had a robust community presence, which simultaneously reflected and increased visibility and legitimacy. It maintained a Facebook page, a project website and was discussed broadly on local television and in local newspapers. It became a topic of conversation and a window into possibilities for local residents to think about and reflect on their stories, their histories and what they want for the future. The eighteen month long process of collecting places and stories meant that community members could consider their willingness to participate; many contributors noted that they had seen the mapping booth before but had not approached at that time; the extended period of collection made it possible for people to make informed choices about sharing their places and stories on the map.

4. *Collaborative interpretation and community curation*

Project curation was designed to bring a diverse community's knowledge, inheritances and values in relation to place and memory to itself in a way that prioritized coherence and cohesion without simplifying, paraphrasing or interpreting for a community or on behalf of it. The research team geocoded all of the places, input all stories into a database and created a series of digital maps that are freely accessible to anyone who wants to explore them. Places were sorted places by latitude-longitude coordinates, town, generalized age of contributor and one's relationship to the region. A series of maps were created through a process of tagging data according to themes that arose consistently within the data set, including: history, race, family, community, physical activity, natural beauty, religion/faith and work.(Maps can be viewed here: https://theplacesproject.org/explore-the-maps/) The themes emerged out of the data; there were

no preconceived categories. In the same way, places around which the most stories and memories accreted were highlighted in a map. There were no preconceived ideas about which places might be most significant. In this way, narrative really did become data in a meaningful sense. Places stood out because they were revisited by many people for many different reasons. Instead of identifying "likely" places of significance, the project allowed residents to reveal meaningful sites through their own narrated memories.

"To let people realize their own experience is valid, and has a literary character, is deeply empowering," says Maurice Manning. (2017) This occurs pronouncedly when projects "let people…. hear their stories in their own words." The maps create a story that is shared but allows for separateness and difference, for multivocality without the loss of individual voices. They enable residents to define places literally in their own terms. As such, they create a broad and diverse understanding of how people of the region conceptualize place generally and places of significance specifically but also reflect the ways memory operates within our social worlds. The Places Project thus expanded localized memories and created recognition of both a wider communal experience on the Plateau and some of the differences in perceptions, place attachments and relationship to the past among different communities and populations.

Curation has taken the form of exploration of the data itself. Already, the project has led to interesting and productive community discussions. One example relates to cultural divides and outdoor activities. Since local residents do not patronize the state parks, there had been a long-standing assumption that local people do not care about the outdoors unless they are hunting.[1] Data from the Places Project, when interpreted for the Friends of the South Cumberland State Parks showed a very different picture. There is deep appreciation of and engagement with the outdoors. Local people, however, have a different "map" of the outdoors and tend to pursue activities on private land rather than go to the state parks. Places Project data clearly illustrates deep connections and investments with natural landscapes that happen to be outside the realm of the park system. The existence of a data set that engages qualitative issues encouraged the Friends of South Cumberland State Parks to develop a different approach to local residents, to ask different questions, eschewing assumptions that are based on a different cultural vocabulary and lens.

The Places Project map is proudly displayed at the Grundy County Historical Society's local history museum, described by staff, volunteers and visitors as a "gift." (Russell, pers. comm., 2018) According to museum staff, many participants and those who view the map have made affective investments in what they have seen, read and heard, entering into one another's stories and thus co--creating a broader and deeper narrative of place than the one that existed before the project. Local spin off projects, including a social media campaign to explore the idea of "home" on the mountain, an oral history project detailing Sewanee's local history and a local place-making photo installation in local storefronts have allowed residents to examine and express place attachment on their own terms and in their own micro-local contexts. The Places Project was a model for placemaking, but not a prescriptive one.

Conclusion

As this chapter demonstrates, participatory methods create memory processes that perform the very functions and forms memory takes within community life ---- establishing connections, developing usable pasts, negotiating multidimensional relationships between the individual and the group, and producing coherent, if complex and oblique, narratives of community values, worries and aspirations.

At the same time, this chapter demonstrates that scholars committed to engaged community and participatory processes must develop methodologies that enable them to build trust, work collaboratively and improvise. Open-ended projects have the potential to claim and make visible diverse kinds of knowledge, expertise and goals. Participatory, collaborative research methodologies in the areas of place and memory require a renegotiation of roles between researchers and non-researchers, scholars and publics, universities and communities.

Memory, place-based knowledge and place attachment do not require specialized expertise beyond connection to a place, which, paradoxically, is something many scholars have forsaken in order to pursue academic and career goals. When scholars envision, create and implement the foundations for participatory research -- the expertise required to do so is often rendered invisible and the scholarly contributions are unheralded. The very practices that minimize the visibility and voice of the scholar are precisely the things that render community-based participatory research initiative productive and successful. The methods scholars utilize also allow us to reconsider the epistemological processes and objectives of place-based research in and with local communities. Participatory, collaborative and crowdsourced research methodologies in the areas of place and memory, I argue, can interrupt the ways scholarship tends to reproduce unequal relationships between researchers and non-researchers, scholars and publics, universities and communities. They offer new possibilities for understanding both memory and place in new ways and invite us to reconsider and reframe how and to what ends scholars work in and with local communities.

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