AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

PHOTOVOICE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL
CHANGE

by
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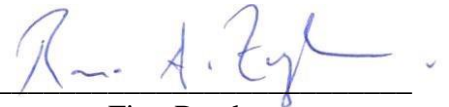at the American University of Beirut

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AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

PHOTOVOICE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

OF THE PROJECT OF

Nagham Mahmoud Khalil   for   Master of Science
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Title: Photovoice for Development and Social Change

Although photography is seen as art, it has a power beyond that and could serve – as a technique – in many disciplines. In this paper, the focus will be around on how photography contributed to development and social change.

Some photographers helped us see the other side of the world; just by exposing some marginalized communities, their photographs succeeded to have an impact on these people. The first step of achieving community development is to reveal communities that need development.

Besides being a researcher in rural community development, I was lucky to be also a professional photographer, which inspired my research work.

Photography can reflect people's real lives and deliver what words or other ways can't. Triggered by literature and some personal observations, I realized that in many cases, photographers are outsiders on the community. Some of them take advantage on some marginalized communities to get popularity and wealth. Using this medium has led some researcher and photographers to exploit these communities – especially marginalized communities – by taking what they can and giving nothing back. Further, an outsider might see/analyze things differently which may not serve the community members, and harm the society instead of helping them.

For this purpose, this paper promotes "photovoice". Photovoice is a methodology that uses photography as a technique, and satisfies the purposes of community development. It empowers community members to be the photographers of their own community, which minimizes the conflict of interests, encourage community members to reflect on their own lives, and decide on what is important and what is not, through photographs. In this way, photography would fit in community development. It can become more than an art, it would become a "message" used under community development work and satisfy its purposes, and most importantly it can lead to social change. However, there is no clear guidance on how to use photovoice, in addition to the lack of books that address solely this methodology.

This paper analyzes some case studies that adopted photovoice as a methodology, within different context. The paper builds on the nine steps of photovoice invented by Wang and Burris (1996), to describe each of the case studies. For every step, and projecting on each case study, I led a discussion based on literature and personal observations and came up with recommendation and suggestions that could serve as a guidance for photovoice.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Photography helps people see". A quote by the American photographer Berenice Abbott.

Although photography is seen as art, it has a power beyond that and could serve – as a technique – in many disciplines. Photography has been used in documentation, journalism, history, health… however, since this paper falls under rural community development, the focus will be around on how photography contributed to development.

Some photographers helped us see the other side of the world. Just by exposing some marginalized communities, their photographs succeeded to have an impact on these people. For example, the American photographer Matt Black was able to expose the American poverty to the whole world, and show the hidden reality behind people's daily lives. As a result, policymakers, organizations and governments might take the step to help these people and contribute to a social change and thus, achieve development. Noting that even if change does not occur on a big scale, photographs make the way towards social change and development, by helping these communities to be seen and heard. The first step of achieving community development is to reveal communities that need development.

Besides being a researcher in rural community development, I was lucky to be also a professional photographer, which inspired my research work. I describe photography as a mirror. It can reflect people's real lives and deliver what words or other ways can't. I am not the only one who thought about photography as a medium that serves community development. However, triggered by literature and some

personal observations, I realized that in many cases, photographers are outsiders on the community. Some of them take advantage on some marginalized communities to get popularity and wealth. Using this medium has led some researcher and photographers to exploit these communities – especially marginalized communities – by taking what they can and giving nothing back. Projecting on the same example of Matt Black, the photographer is popular and "not poor" because of his photographs, what makes him the first beneficiary instead of the community. Further, an outsider might see/analyze things differently which may not serve the community members, and harm the society instead of helping them.

For this purpose, this paper promotes "photovoice". Photovoice is a methodology that uses photography as a technique, and satisfies the purposes of community development. It empowers community members to be the photographers of their own community, which minimizes the conflict of interests, encourage community members to reflect on their own lives, and decide on what is important and what is not, through photographs. In this way, photography would fit in community development. It can become more than an art, it would become a "message" used under community development work and satisfy its purposes, and most importantly it can lead to social change. However, there is no clear guidance on how to use photovoice, in addition to the lack of books that address solely this methodology (Latz & Mulvihill, 2017).

Also, I realized that the role of photographer is marginalized in projects/researches adopting the photovoice methodology. The photographer usually takes part in the first part of the project (the training). Through my discussion later on, I will demonstrate how involving a photographer all along the project, will 1) intensify the chances of a successful work, 2) reduce time wasting, knowing that a photovoice

project is a long-term work in planning, implementation and also results. In addition to 3) maximize the built capacities among participants what gets the best out of them and increases the chance of making good photographers.

For that, this paper analyzes some case studies that adopted photovoice as a methodology, within different context. I followed the nine steps of photovoice invented by Wang and Burris (1996), to describe each of the case studies. For every step, and projecting on each case study, I led a discussion based on literature and personal observations.

To not confuse between purpose and methodology, and between methodology and tools/methods, this paper considers: photovoice is the **methodology** adopted by researchers, scholars and practitioners to achieve the **purpose** of community development, using photography as a **method or technique**. Also, each method might use different **tools** to implement this methodology. Community development is "achieved" if the project/research satisfy the purpose of development: achieving agency and solidarity (Bhattacharyya, 2004), and therefore, it depends in which context we are implementing the project.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

This chapter is intended to fit my research work in rural community development.

A. Community Development

1. Community Development: Purpose and Challenges

Before introducing the term "community development", it is important to introduce first the term community due to the conflict that has happened around it. Historically, many have referred community to places; so they defined a certain community depending on the place that combines this community together. However, over time, the linking between locality and community has interestingly weakened, especially during the second half of the twentieth century, because of the technological advances including transportation (Brennan et al., 2013), and that's because people became able to be part of a certain community but having a job somewhere else, yet doing activities in a very different location. Although Bradshaw (1993) confirms the fact that community is no longer dependent on localities, but also shed the light on the role of locality in shaping social relations for communities.

As for community development, it was hard to find a theory or a definition for this term, not just because of the history, but also because almost all researchers agree on that community development could not be seen objectively or generally (Westoby and Dowling, 2013). Most of whom who worked in community development or social

workers, theorized community development upon their experiences (Bhattacharyya, 2004).

Furthermore, most of the definitions of community development were vague and explicit. Even after trying to define community alone, they came up with many definitions and statements which also led to the conclusion that community is not definable (Bhattacharyya, 2004).

Practitioners, professionals and researchers diverged on the definition of community development, and they also differentiated between the theoretical community development and the practice of it. However, Bhattacharyya (2004) argued that practice is not separated from theory, and we cannot treat them as independent factors. Peter Westoby (2013) in his book, thought of practice ideally as it is not just what practitioners do in practice, but how they use the theory in a skillful way: "Ideally it is not just what people do but also what thoughtful and empathic people using community development theory reflectively and reflexively do in subtle and skillful ways.", what confirms the fact that theory is not separated from practice in community development.

Starting from an important statement by Bhattacharyya (2004), "the fact that community improvement might not be considered as community development", the author introduced the concept of purpose and methodology, or what I would like to call them, the 2 pillars of community development. As defining community development was a conflict zone, the author focused more on creating a guidance for community development activities that could be applied universally, and falls in the core of community development, instead of wasting time on definitions. Community Development is teleological which means we cannot measure it like economic

development, but we do upon its purpose, or the goal it is going to reach

(Bhattacharyya, 2004). So community development became the natural response to the

historical erosion of these 2 concepts: solidarity and agency. Bhattacharyya (2004)

suggested that to have a complete theory, beside defining the purpose, we must find the

appropriate method to fulfill the purpose, then methods in their turn will be

implemented by means of certain techniques. Then the author proposed 3 principles to

reach in order to achieve solidarity and agency: self-help, felt needs and participation.

Self-help basically erases helpless dependency and to ensure and active agency and not

a passive one, people must not just propose solutions for problems suggested by

outsiders which is legitimized by positivist reasons, they must also act as "agents": they

define the problem by themselves and prioritize it which is the first step to finding

solutions, and therefore regain or reaffirm solidarity and agency, and thus achieving

community development.

Peter Westoby (2013) based his analysis of community development practice on

Joseph Dunne, the academic-philosopher's definition of "professional practice";

Westoby, based on Dunne's work, divided the practice of community development into

internal and external goods; the internal goods are in turn divided into goods related to

the practitioners' skills and competencies, and also to the desirable outcome, or what we

expect from this community development work. On the other hand, there are also

external good that influence the practice of community development which could be

described in another word: the institutional structures of community development.

Westoby (2013) reflected on his experience in South Africa where most of community

development work is influenced mostly by the external goods of practice: "government

monitoring regimes, donors' requirements of evidence and results, the motivations of joining the community development profession as a career move".

And here, I can refer to the book Community Development: A critical approach by Margaret Ledwith (2020) that puts community development in a political context. The author made a very interesting point when she said that treating the surface symptoms of community development without digging into the root causes. In other words, asking ourselves the question – why do we need community development? – is as equally important as theorizing community development and its practices

Why do we need community development or what the article called "the reason"? It is simply the unjust system. We have a free market instead of a fair market, profit over people, the rich become richer and the poor stays poor, convincing us that poor people are poor because they don't work enough. "Poverty becomes normalized while it is a political choice" (Ledwith, 2020). Westoby and Dowling (2013) described the current model of community development as "Euro-centric modernist paradigm", and explained how community development is seized by the market-oriented, neocolonial practices like "aid" or "scaled-up programs".

As a response to these dynamics, and in order to avoid such community development model, and to always keep in mind the political context of development, we must find the best approach. Out of many approaches, this paper would consider the community-based approach that will be expanded in the following section.

2. *Participation, Action and Research:*

Out of many, there is a very common approach: Participation Action and Research approach or Community-based Participatory Research. It has been commonly

used in both developed and developing countries like Latin American, Asia, Africa, Brazil, Tanzania, and India, and then it became also widely used in the United State (Minkler et al., 2006). It was considered the most ethical approach as a response to power imbalances in research. In other words, the approach legitimize the knowledge produced by community members and does not deal with knowledge as academic exclusively. By adopting such approach, people are able to cooperate with researchers and practitioners to achieve development and social change. Even though the approach might create other imbalances (e.g. among community members), it would at least give the space for community members to assess their needs and try to find solutions for it.

In response to community development dynamics and conflicts, Participation, Action and Research (PAR) would be one of the best approaches to achieve development. The approach empowers people, who in turn, become capable to control their own lives and take actions to improve them. PAR is a reflective approach, linked to action, and falls in the core of understanding culture, history, and local context and social relationships (Baum et al., 2006). Research in the PAR approach enables action in a reflective way, where participants become researchers, what balances the power dynamics between researcher and participant, so that participants are not treated as objects in research anymore (Baum et al., 2006). The PAR approach is seen as an alternative response to the positivist paradigm (Wadsworth, 2007).

We cannot achieve development for a community without a community; and here a quote from Burris and Wang (1996) is borrowed "nothing-for-us-without-us"; the quote has inspired their work in community development and led them to invent the photovoice method on which the paper will focus later.

As stated in earlier sections, the methodology is the way we adopt to achieve community development's purposes (i.e. solidarity and agency). Adopting the PAR approach, we chose in this paper to expand more on "photovoice" as one of the methodologies falling in the orbit of PAR. The photovoice methodology lies under PAR, participatory or community based approaches that achieve community development and satisfy its purposes and goals by engaging people in research. It is an empowering visual research methodology that relies basically, on engaging marginalized unseen communities – in collaboration with researchers – to project on their experiences and real daily lives with the aim of social change (Wang and Burris, 1997). Photovoice will be defined in details in the following section.

It should be noted, however, that photovoice, as other PAR approaches, would "envisions a self-defined space that would diverge from depictions by outsiders superimposed on a culturally charged background" (Wang & Burris, 1994). As such, photovoice is a methodology that has rich potential for generating new knowledge vis-à-vis stories that deviate from "dominant narratives" (Latz and Mulvihill, 2017).

This methodology minimizes the risks of falling in a political trap under the title of "community development", and gives the space for communities to reflect on their own lives in order to reach policy makers. However, this paper does not assume that adopting photovoice approach does not work in a political context and is not also at a risk of corruption and failure.

In other words, and projecting on this paper, photovoice would be just the **methodology** that fulfills the **purpose** of development of marginalized communities, using photography as a **technique**.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE

A. Why Photography?

As stated before in my paper, photography is a mirror. It is supposed to reveal reality, and what is invisible; projecting on Benjamin's (2015) 'optical unconscious': 'it is another nature that speaks to the camera rather than to the eye: "other" above all in the sense that a space informed by human consciousness gives way to a space informed by the unconscious' (Benjamin, 2015).

However, if it not used within an appropriate methodology, it would not be able to make any change. On the contrary, it would harm the community by exploiting its members. For this purpose, photovoice would be the most ethical and appropriate methodology that uses this technique and therefore, contribute to development and change. Before digging in photovoice methodology, I would like to first shed light on the importance of photography – if well-used – as a powerful technique.

To introduce this section, I borrowed some questions from Latz & Mulvihill's (2017), book "Photovoice Research in Education and Beyond", where the authors developed a practical guide to photovoice from theory to exhibition. In their book, the authors focused solely on photovoice methodology, motivated by the lack of books that address this methodology in particular. In the part where they discussed the importance of photography, they used the following questions as an introduction to approach what is photography in our lives:

> "What is your orientation to photographs and photography? Do you have photographs on your wall, on your desk, inside your wallet, tucked away safely? A shoebox filled with old photographs? What about photo albums?

Digital spaces filled with photographs? Do you take photographs? Often? Of what? Why? How? Are your photographs online? What about social media? Share aspects of your life with photographs and photography? Has this changed over time?"

Historically, photography has been used for archival and evidentiary purposes (i.e. reporting, documenting and illustrating socio-cultural, personal and familial history) (Latz & Mulvihill, 2017). Recently, photographs became a form of art (Heisley & Levy, 1991). However, categorizing all photography under the "art" title is not fair. It is important to consider how art photography could be "socially engaged"; Latz and Mulvihill (2017) proved this point by shedding light on the work of the photographer James Mollison. Mollison released a book in 2010 called Where Children Sleep, where she wrote in her introduction:

> "I hope the pictures and the stories in this book speak to children. Yes, so that lucky children (like I was) may better appreciate what they have. But more than that, I hope this book will help children think about inequality, within and between societies around the world, and perhaps start to figure out how, in their own lives, they may respond."

Figure 1: Where Children Sleep
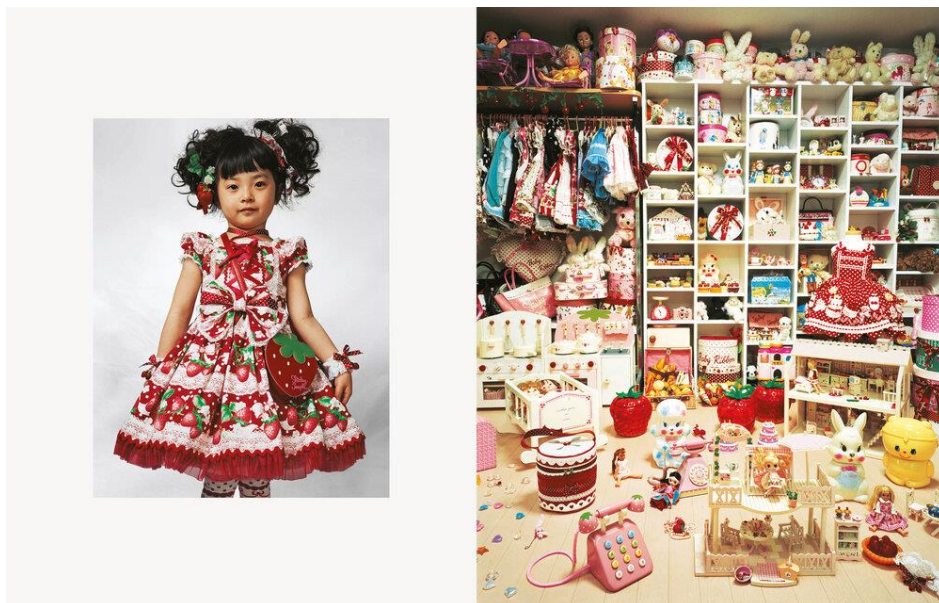
Mollison (2010).

Figure 2: Where the Children Sleep

Mollison (2010)

The authors projected on this book of photographs designed for kids, which might be seen as a form of art, however, it could encourage kids to think about other kids, it creates a sense of sympathy among them. Even though kids might do nothing about it, they have now an idea on the other part of the world outside their home and their comfort zone.

Further, photography is a powerful tool in the representation of identity. Photographs gives an identity for people, and opportunity to reflect on their real lives.

Moreover, "Photography helps people to see." a quote said by the American photographer Berenice Abbott. Photography can open the eyes of the person who is taking the photographs on details that cannot be seen without a lens. When you are holding the camera, you start naturally looking through the lens differently. Photographer is able to see special unique things that could either deliver a message/story or not. Wang and Burris (1997) who invented the photovoice methodology, inserted visuals in research for its ability to transmit messages that might

not be easy to deliver. Noting that not all photographers aim to deliver a message through their photographs. Some photographers use photography as an art. However, a set of photographs would definitely a message. For example, if a photographer takes a blurry picture, it might mean nothing; but if a photographer takes a set of blurry pictures, we can assume that he is trying to tell us something through these photographs.

For example, when people visit a new community, they might pay attention to their outfits, language, accent, lifestyle and so on. However, when the photographer first visits a community, he starts seeing details that could – in a way – reflect the truth of their living. Matt Black, an American photographer – his work is going to be displayed later – noticed while documenting America's poverty that poor people share a specific kind of gloves, silverware (spoons, forks…), liquor bottles, the hangers…

Figure 3: Silverware, Liquor Bottles, Gloves
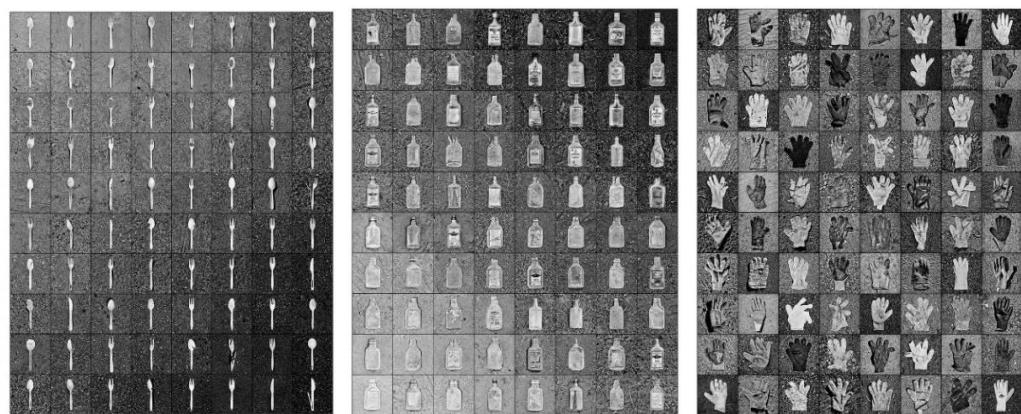
Matt Black (2020)

It is not a typical picture of a poor person's smile that takes a million of likes, it is actually a photographer vision on the real lives of many marginalized people.

Here are some examples of photographers who contributed in a way or another, to social change and development. Dorothea Lange is the influential figure in the historical progression and the history of social documentary photography as a medium.

Figure 4: The Migrant Mother
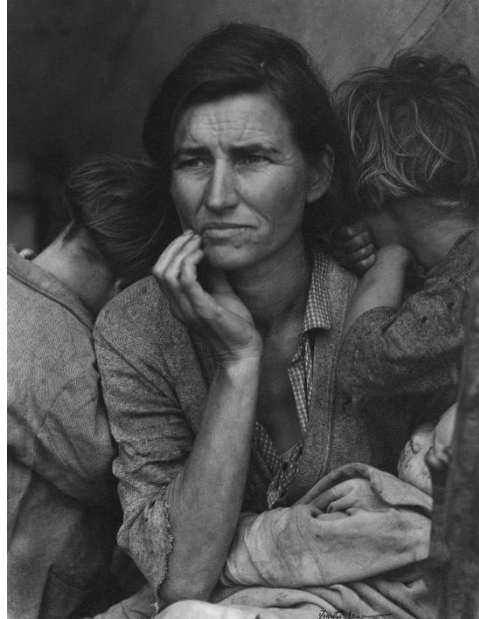
Lange (1936)

The "Migrant Mother" photograph above, is the iconic picture that visualizes the "American Depression". It represented the heavy migration of Americans to California from the Midwestern states as a result to the disastrous economic collapse. The photographer used an interdisciplinary method; she used texts with every photograph she took – or what we call storyboards –. She exposed political injustice to the world through her images and her field notes as well. Although she reflected the reality of the situation back then, she was not an objective social documentarian; she framed her photographs using her own humanist philosophy, and her own words.

Figure 5: Afghan Girl

(McCurry, 1985)

"Afghan Girl" is the first photograph that reflected the popularity of the photographer Steve McCurry. This image had a huge impact on the whole world. Because of this photograph, many people had volunteered to work back then, in the same refugee camp where this girl belongs. National Geographic – they chose this picture as their cover – set up a fund for Afghan Children prior to what McCurry has exposed through his photographs.

Jacob Riis documented in the 1880s, the neglected living conditions in New York City which was anticipated as a tool for social change, as well as Dorothea Lange (1936) who documented the depression in America. Sebastiao Salgado (1994) reflected on the real lives of Rwandan refugees as well as their resilience. Moreover, in 2000, a photographer took pictures of Afghan girls and women going secretly to school which

was prohibited by Taliban; the photographs reflected the reality hidden by media which also caused her kidnap in Libya in 2001.

Overall, although photography could serve as an important tool for social change and development, it has been criticized for its "aestheticization" of the world, as it gives privilege for image over 'real things' (Sontag, 1997). Some doubted the truthfulness of a photograph and its objectivity. Further, these photographers might gain popularity, money at the expense of these marginalized people, even though they made an "impact" by exposing the reality to the whole world. Most of the photographers who do documentary photography on marginalized communities are foreign – mainly western American – what could also question their agendas or the way they analyze photographs, especially if they are photojournalists. For example, we all know the famous photograph of the "teary-eyed African child, dressed in rags, smothered in flies, with a look of desperation that the caption all too readily points out" (New York Post, 2013); this might be the truth but of course it is not the whole truth. "Edward" who looks poor in the photograph is actually a successful tobacco grower and an area mechanic, working also for a basket weaving business. The Daily Nation (2010) quoted Edward: "NGOs come to the village here to take pictures of people. At church, at the market, on the road, at meetings. Only people who are dressed poorly." There is an article by Katharine Hansen (2009) who described the photographs of poor people, skeleton, starving as "poverty porn" because of the unrealistic image aid might publish in order to make a humanitarian storytelling and make profit out of it. Poverty Porn "exploits the poor's condition in order to generate the necessary sympathy for selling newspapers or increasing charitable donations or support for a given cause." (Collin,

2009). Ibid accused poverty porn as detrimental since it steals people's dignity and honor, disrespect and disregard them degrading.

However, assuming that photography is an important medium for social change and development, the best photographer would be a person from these communities. And here comes the importance of the photovoice methodology. This methodology is empowering, first for its use of photography as a powerful technique as demonstrated earlier, but second, and more importantly, for choosing the photographer to be one of the community members. If photography is that powerful tool for social change and development, imagine what impact it would have if the photographs are taken by someone who is asking for this social change and aiming for this development. And here I would like to introduce my section 3 on photovoice.

B. Photovoice:

1. Definition:

The photovoice methodology lies under PAR, participatory or community based approaches that achieve community development and satisfy its purposes and goals by engaging people in research. It is an empowering visual research methodology that relies basically, on engaging marginalized unseen communities – in collaboration with researchers – to project on their experiences and real daily lives with the aim of social change (Wang and Burris, 1997).

Photovoice was initially invented by Caroline C. Wang and Mary Ann Burris in 1990s. The method was inspired by their work with Yunan community in China where they were assessing the health and the socioeconomic status of rural women, they also asked them to document intangibles using their cameras; for example, documenting

Love or Worry. It was first called "photo (picture) novella (story)". The method is based on giving cameras to selected people from communities so they can reflect on their lives, document, and communicate through the photographs they take, which in turn can encourage social change and development (Wang and Burris, 1997). The methodology is art-based and qualitative.

Photovoice developed by Wang and Burris aims to reach 3 ending goals: "1) to enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns, 2) to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important issues through small group discussions of photographs, and 3) to reach policy makers" (Burris and Wang, 1997).

Photovoice was built up by Wang and Burris on the strengths of three theories:

1) The philosophical theory by Paulo Freire or what he calls "the critical pedagogy" (Freire, 2015) that consists on empowering education through observations and acquired knowledge from communities' reflections, Freire believes that the critical consciousness is not easy to achieve without experts to facilitate that change and break the power dynamics that they usually don't give communities voices. So now, through photovoice, they have the right to decide since the very first beginning of each project, from the planning to the process, access to data, analysis.

2) The feminism theory Feminist theory is grounded in the assumption that knowledge is experiential, and seeks to develop a political consciousness in the face of unequal gendered relationships (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002). The feminist theory was a response to the dominant male participation in research, and the fact that men are the ones representing women in studies. As photography can be used by both genders, photovoice gives voices for women to

represent women. The rural women of Yunan confirmed the ability of women in research.

3) The photography technique gives voice for people who have no voices. However, photovoice differs from the orthodox documentary photography by giving cameras to participants so they can take photographs by themselves, instead of being a "passive subject" to outsiders on community (Wang and Burris, 1996).

The three theories, combined together, introduce for us Photovoice. What differentiates photovoice from other photo-elicitation methods, is that the methodology has an "explicit political agenda" which is the commitment to social action (Sutton-Brown, 2014).

2. *Advantages:*

As photovoice is a method that satisfies the purpose of community development, it could be used in different contexts. The methodology targets, basically, marginalized communities – as their voices are not heard – and provides them the opportunity to reflect on their daily lives issues, and communicate them – whether with other community members, researchers and policy makers – using their own voices. Originally, photovoice has been used in public health arena, but it has been broadly adopted in different fields like education, disability studies, and refugees, due to its immense applicability (Sutton-brown, 2014). Recently, photovoice has been adopted also by criminologists for a better understanding of art crime (Smith, 2021). Also, it has been implemented by archeologists for example, aiming to engage communities in cultural heritage preservation projects. Archeologists adopted photovoice to consider

communities' perspectives on their own cultural heritage, so they can communicate – through photographs – the stories that matter for them and their culture, aiming by the end, with the help of researchers, to address the issues they face, and to reach policymakers on the long run, which could contribute to social change (Dedrick, 2018).

Wang and Burris (1997) presented 10 advantages for photovoice in their work: First, unlike other traditional methods (e.g. surveys, focus group), photovoice offers an opportunity for participants to picture their daily lives issues from their own perspectives instead of those who are usually in control, and thus it gives legitimacy for the knowledge produced by people far from the traditional "scientific knowledge". Photovoice "envisions a self-defined space that would diverge from depictions by outsiders superimposed on a culturally charged background" (Wang & Burris, 1994). Per se, photovoice is a methodology that has rich potential for generating new knowledge vis-à-vis counter stories, stories that deviate from dominant narratives (Latz and Mulvihill, 2017). Second, the knowledge produced by communities is transferred through visual image. Knowing that most vulnerable communities might not be educated so they cannot write or read, photovoice introduces another form of communication that could be used by everyone. Further, participants, by using cameras, are able to record sociocultural settings that professional may not be able to reach. For example, projecting on the work of Wang and Burris, the women of Yunnan brought cameras to markets, funerals, election hall and also to the neighborhood. So the project/research could picture the complex social life of a certain society. The methodology has also a sustainable impact from the assessment to the implementation. Usually, participants might be involved just in the first phase of the project/research, however, in photovoice, participants are involved all over the project and they can also

ensure its goals and purposes, in addition to the opportunity participants get to also transfer the project's goals to other member of the community, using their own words. By taking pictures of others, they are also able to ask them questions, communicate with them, and then bring back stories and explanations accompanied with the pictures they captured. They can also build deep social networks with other community members. Unlike surveys or other traditional methods that might bring a sense of "impotence, inferiority and resentment", photovoice provides a sense of ownership for participants as well as pride and responsibility. Finally, as a result to all of these, photovoice can stimulate social change, by giving people capacity to become "advocates" and experts of their own community's well-being. Also, it is important to note that photovoice could be used beyond needs assessment, so it can also cover evaluation process of the project/research.

The advantages of photovoice presented by Wang and Burris (1997) and other scholars, are also confirmed from a participant perspective. Although many have discussed the change or the potential of photovoice on individuals, few authors have talked about photovoice projects from the perspective of participants: what it means for them and what they think about it. For that purpose, Budig, Diez, Conde et al. (2018), conducted a study to assess and describe photovoice from the perspective of women who have already participated in such project, believing that this study could be an important step to understand what empowerment means, but also to improve photovoice method which is supposed to be a "place-based social change project". The researchers found positive changes in their study. Measuring empowerment is hard, so the researchers assessed the empowerment of participants on 3 different dimensions; first, the knowledge and the critical awareness they have acquired through the project.

Second, the self-perception of participants has been transformed due to the social recognition they gained among the other society members. And finally, the ability of building new social networks, not just on the community level, but also with other actors like researchers, decision makers and others (Budig, Diez, Conde et al., 2018).

Placing photovoice in a community development context, photovoice is the methodology that ensures both solidarity and agency of marginalized people by building capacities and giving voice for unheard communities, which in turn, satisfies the purpose of community development and make social change.

3. *Critics:*

Although photovoice is the most participatory visual methodology adopted by social scientists, as stated by Higgins (2014), the method has its critics. Photovoice gives participants the sense of censorship and the ability to decide what matters and what does not, what is appropriate for photographs and what is not, as well as the ability to prioritize social issues and problems. Consequently, participants are forced to make political decisions and acts (Wang and Burris, 1997), as well as the political agenda that the funder might have.

However, a question could be raised here: how much is it likely to generate bias by community members, comparing to the bias that could be generated by outsiders on the community? In other words, a personal judgment that comes from a member of this community could be relevant (if a woman is projecting on her own life for example), however, a personal judgment that comes from an outsider might affect the study in a complete and probably harmful way.

Further, and quoting from Prosser (1996), "[m]any commentators on research methodology perceive image-making as being inappropriate to research", as a result of the explosion of social media sites that depends on narration through image-based, mentioning the personal nature of photographs, and life narration has become increasingly visual considering the proliferation of myriad image-based social media sites, as well as the subjective nature of a photograph and the assumption that a researcher is a photographer. Prosser (1996) explained that "[t]here is a general belief that images are unacceptable as a way of objectively 'knowing' because they distort that which they claim to illuminate". Although this could be the case, photovoice dislocates this kind of thinking because "the photograph is meant to symbolize a participants' response to a prompt" (Latz, 2017).

Furthermore, as stated by Strack et al. (2004), "engagement in a photovoice program will not lead to a complete state of empowerment". It might be a disappointing medium for participants if it fails to inform policy or gets the attention of public (Purcell, 2009). For that, it is important to pay attention to avoid any negative impact, especially on participants.

4. Examples on Photovoice:

In this section, I chose the UK-based non-governmental organization "PhotoVoice" – Ethical Photography for Social Change – to showcase its work. The NGO is just dedicated to implement photovoice projects all around the world, in order to promote self-advocacy of marginalized communities through photovoice methodology.

Figure 6: Nepal

(Maya, 1998)

The project "Rose Class" has been implemented in 1998 in Nepal. It mainly aims to provide a platform for refugees of Nepal to project on the real way of living and growing up in a refugee camp. The project selected 13 young people and trained them on photography so they can use it to reflect on their daily lives as refugees.

One of the participants stated: "Before, I was living in this camp and thinking there was nothing I could do for my community. Now I feel that I can make a useful contribution to our community. I am grateful for that. I do not want my life to be futile. The word refugee does not mean devoid of desire, curiosity and interest. I have to express my opinion."

Figure 7: Afghanistan

(Unknown, 2010)

In Kabul, PhotoVoice selected 14 boys and girls under the age of 16 and trained them on photography so they can reflect on the life of Afghanistan from a young perspective. Coupled with education on rights of the child, PhotoVoice asked young people to take photographs related to a policy they choose. The project gave the opportunity for young people to be heard and seen, but also encouraged public debate on child rights in Afghanistan.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF SELECTED CASE STUDIES

Despite the common use of photovoice as a methodology, literature still lacks the way of implementing a photovoice project (Sutton-Brown, 2014; Wang and Hannes, 2020). The reason behind this is that there is a no one-size-fits-all approach to implement photovoice, it is applied differently and respectively to every context. However, there are some steps to follow when implementing a photovoice project, firstly invented by Wang and Burris (1999).

Based on Wang's guideline (1999), and drawing on Sutton-Brown' s work (2014), I developed a descriptive table for 3 selected case studies that have adopted photovoice, then I critically and comparatively analyzed them in the discussion. Finally, I came up with some ways and interpretations on how to conduct a photovoice study, based heavily on Wang and Burris' work, as well as other scholars' observations and my personal experience. In the first column of the table, I inserted the 9 steps of photovoice that I explained later in the discussion section. In the three other columns, I described how each of the three case studies has implemented each step respectively.

A. Case Studies

1. *Justification*

As all of the case studies have adopted photovoice as a methodology, each one of them used a different way to implement it. As the focus in this paper is on the photography technique, the first case study involved a photographer all along the project, who has also taken photographs for a development purpose. However, the

second and the third case studies just involved a photographer in the first part of the project or the training phase. The purpose of this selection is to comparatively analyze the role that a photographer can play as well as the risks.

The second difference between the case studies is the purpose of the project. The first and the second case studies aim to preserve the intangible cultural heritage of a marginalized community (Bedouins) in two different countries (Lebanon and Palestine). As for the third case study, the project is dedicated to fight hunger in a marginalized poor community. The purpose of this selection is to comprehend in which context photovoice would work better. Noting that the methodology has been adopted in many disciplines, but it might be more effective in one than the other.

2. *Description*

a. Case study 1: Cultural Corridors of Peace:

The Cultural Corridors of Peace (CCP) is an 18-month project, funded by the British Council's Cultural Protection Fund, in partnership with the UK Department for Digital, Culture and Media and Sport, and the American University of Beirut. It aims to document and safeguard the intangible cultural heritage of the Abou Eid Bedouin community in the Beqaa of Lebanon. The overall goal was mainly to create an open access archive (already done), and a website covering the Bedouin culture with the aim to revive this marginalized culture within the Bedouin community, and among the other communities.

The project does not see the Abu Eid tribe as an object of study but "agent" that regain power of their marginalized lives through the project and get an opportunity to live in a worthy way.

After achieving the first phase of the project that ended with an exhibition of Abu Eid' cultural heritage, the project was extended into another phase, that targets all tribes in the country (North, West Beqaa, South…). The ultimate goal is to create a network among all the Bedouins to strengthen their relationships to each other and unite their culture and ancestry.

For the first phase, the project relied on semi-structured interviews based on a specific questionnaire, where the Bedouins reflect on their lives and culture, using their own words, in order to reach the objectives and the goal. The questions revolve around different topics as the origin of Bedouins, their roots, mobility and the case when they were nomads, the customs and traditions, the overall cultural heritage. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and translated.

As for the second phase of the project, the project adopted the photovoice methodology in order to teach the Bedouins how they can solely preserve their own cultural heritage. The project team has selected young Bedouins from the Abu Eid tribe, offered them cameras and taught them the techniques of photography and sound system. This case study considers that teaching Bedouins how to preserve their own cultural heritage is a capacity building work, and has a long term impact. This phase is still in process; we have not seen any of their work published yet. However, they participated in some exercises which I am going to review later.

b. Case study 2: Protecting Bedouin Lived Cultural Heritage – Palestine

The project is a 15 month long that focuses on the nomadic Bedouin communities of the Palestine. It engages with young people to explore the relationship of their cultural heritage to land and agriculture. The Bedouins of Palestine have a rich

cultural heritage linked to the semi-nomadic lifestyle that has historically defined their identity. This heritage includes oral tradition, agricultural practices, food and drink, and traditional arts and handicrafts. Of particular importance to all of these practices is the centrality of the Bedouin's relationship to the land and agriculture, specialist knowledge and understanding that has the potential to be lost due to ongoing conflict in the region.

For this purpose, the project aims to capturing and recording at-risk heritage and providing training opportunities to young people from very deprived communities. The wider long term aim is to gather resources that could support the resilience and sustainable economic development of future generations.

During the project, 20 young researchers were recruited and trained in documenting oral history, and supported to record testimonies with elderly people and social and religious leaders in their community. Data gathered will be transcribed and uploaded to an open-access cultural inventory (not done yet), and the young researchers will develop and work on proposals to protect the cultural heritage identified through their research.

The second phase of the project builds on the previous stage of the project, by working together with the Popular Struggle Coordination Committee (PSCC) to extend the reach of the project from the four initial villages to around 28 villages in the South Hebron Hills. The activities planned will deepen the intergenerational work to protect the intangible cultural heritage of the South Hebron Hills, and will also foster connections with other Bedouin communities in the Palestine and MENA region.

Ten more youth researchers were recruited during Phase 2 of the project and they attended oral history methodology and film and video training workshops. Youth researchers will receive training and practice skills required to educate and advocate for

preservation of their cultural heritage through additional engagement with key stakeholders in Palestine. They will pursue new opportunities to engage with Bedouin communities in the MENA region and audiences in the UK.

c. Case study 3: Hunger through my Lens – Denver metro area

In 2013, Hunger Free Colorado introduced Hunger Through My Lens to provide real-life experts—Coloradans who have experienced hunger firsthand—with a platform to share their stories about the realities of hunger throughout Colorado. Hunger Through My Lens was based on the photovoice model, the participatory action research.

Due to its impact and success, Hunger Through My Lens expanded from Metro Denver to share perspectives from different regions of the state, including the San Luis Valley, the Roaring Fork Valley and the Arkansas River Valley.

In 2018, Hunger Through My Lens evolved to become a broader storytelling and advocacy platform to support more Coloradans in sharing their stories and experiences with decision makers. In addition to photography, Coloradans are now able to share their story through written, video or audio recordings, as well as personal artwork.

B. Descriptive Table of the Case Studies:

Steps of photovoice	Case study 1: Cultural Corridors of Peace – Lebanon	Case Study 2: Protecting Bedouin Lived Cultural Heritage – Palestine	Case Study 3: Hunger through my Lens – Denver metro area
Identification + Invitation	-Recruitment of 3 young participants working on an already existing project. -Three participants were selected based on their frequent and active	-20 participants were selected for a project dedicated solely for photovoice (phase 1). Ten additional participant were recruited in phase 2.	The project recruited and engaged 15 female participants

	participation in the project. The photographer did not interfere in the selection process.	37	
Education	The project organized a couple of meetings with the participants to introduce the topic and the methodology. No photovoice examples were provided. The participants showed acceptance and interaction.	The project was solely dedicated for photovoice. The participants were introduced to the topic and the methodology since the very first beginning.	Project solely dedicated for photovoice. Training in the mechanics, art, and ethics of documentary photography.
Consent:	IRB from AUB Oral consent of participants for their voluntary participation in the project.	Consent taken	photo release forms, signatures whenever a person or identifying information was clearly visible in a photograph
Documentation:	The general topic is "preserving intangible cultural heritage". Most of the topics have been proposed by the researchers (women, food security, poverty, food heritage…) However, during the project – especially the evaluation part after the first phase has ended –participants were encouraged to suggest some topics for the coming phase of the project. For example, women empowerment and entrepreneurship, herbal medicine.	As the project claims, the topic were chosen by the researcher since the beginning: explore the relationship of their cultural heritage to land and agriculture. As well as capturing and recording at-risk heritage and providing training opportunities to young people from very deprived communities. They also identified that the wider long term aim is to gather resources that could support the resilience and sustainable economic development of future generations.	Hunger Through My Lens is a project specific to hunger, but we are aware that hunger most often does not happen on its own. Participants face other issues that they may need to discuss, and they may also want to advocate on behalf of these issues. The project manager gathered resource references for direct services and organizations that advocate for other issues.
Camera distribution:	Cameras were not provided to participants since the beginning of the	The participant got cameras. No photographer was Following up with	Participants were provided with digital cameras.

	training part because of administration reasons. They used the photographer camera to make some practice and they used their smart phones (noting that not all of them have phones so they used their parents' or siblings') They tended to forget the photography basics after the training since they were not practicing it.	them after the training part has ended.	The first training also established that Hunger Through My Lens was the participants' project, and that the project manager's role was to engage Hunger Free Colorado's networks to facilitate the group's vision. Participants were responsible for identifying exhibit sites and for choosing themes to highlight within the overarching issue of hunger.
Narration	The participants preferred to narrate freely about their work, the facilitator helped them to elaborate.	SHOWeD method was not applied (What do you **See** here? What is really **Happening** here? How does this relate to **Our** lives? **Why** does this situation, concern, or strength exist? What can we **Do** about it? (Wang 1999)	Discussions were framed using the SHOWeD method, which was introduced during the second training
Ideation and Presentation	The participants did not present to public photographs solely taken by them (the project has not ended). However, the exhibition done by the research team was a collaboration work with participants.	No presentation has happened.	Participants exhibited and discussed their captioned photographs displayed via traveling exhibits held in community settings. Exhibits served as an opportunity for Hunger Free Colorado and project participants to connect with policy makers, media, and other individuals in positions of power, as well as engage in

			dialogue with community members.
Confirmation	Not all the participants were able to attend the exhibition, but many of them did. On a policy level, nothing has happened yet but the project team is aiming to reach UNESCO in Lebanon.	On a policy level, nothing has happened. (in a country of conflict, how can photovoice serve its habitants)	Nothing has happened on the policy level yet.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are basically a comparison between the 3 case studies on the way they implemented photovoice, following the nine steps guidance by Wang and Burris (1999).

In this section the first case study refers to Cultural Corridors of Peace project in Lebanon, the second case study refers to Protecting Bedouin Lived Cultural Heritage project in Palestine, and the third case study refers to Hunger through my Lens project in Denver metro area.

Step number 1: Identification and Invitation:

This step consists in identifying the place, people, and the purpose of the project, as well as recruiting people and inviting them to participate in the project. The recruitment of participants is done either through an ongoing project or just for project dedicated exclusively for photovoice. It could be with or without the help of an insider. It might include partnering with local organizations or using existing client databases (Hergenrather et al. 2009). Regardless of the recruitment technique, a group size of seven to ten participants is ideal (Wang 1999) to encourage in-depth group conversation.

For the first case study (CCP), the project team recruited 3 young participants who were already working on an existing project. The selection was based on their frequent and active participation in the project. Also, the photographer did not interfere in the selection process. As for the second case study, 20 participants were selected for

a project dedicated solely for photovoice (phase 1). Ten additional participants were recruited in phase 2. The third case study recruited and engaged 15 participants, who are only females.

There are many factors that may interfere in the selection process like: gender, age, religion, traditions, habits, etc. for example, although a girl might be creative and has an artistic intelligence, the community she belongs to might not accept the fact that she is going to attend trainings, and sort of "having a job". The third case study just involved women which is empowering and goes along with the feminist theory. However, there might be hidden talents among other genders. A gender balance in the selection process is preferable, with a special focus on disregarded people whether they are women, children, people with disabilities etc.

None of the case studies included the photographer in the selection process (identification). There is an artistic intelligence for every human being, that differs from one to another. Beside the socio-cultural factors that interfere in the selection process, there is also an artistic perspective to be considered. And that's because it is way more complicated to train someone who has never held a camera, and also not interested in holding it on the long term. In addition to that, the participant who has an artistic perspective has more potential to become a professional photographer later through the photovoice project. It could be perceived through a small activity or already-taken photos by suggested participants, so the photographer can measure the level of creativity the member has. As this creativity is higher, there is a possibility to develop it faster, and for a longer time. knowing that photovoice necessities long time to get implemented to make results, a proper selection that includes a photographer, would

reduce time consuming and ensure the permanence of participants in the project, as well as maximize the possibility of developing skills for long term photographers.

For each socio-cultural context, the photovoice would be implemented differently. What is crucial is to have a balance between the role of photographer and participant. The case of CCP project showed the importance of having a photographer when the project aims to preserve cultural heritage, because the second case study did not generate a rich content as much as the first since the photographer was just involved in the training phase. Participants might not pay attention to some details about their culture because it is part of their daily life. However, it is also important to find the balance between photographer-participant, because we are also at the risk of over exposing things by photographers, that might not be important for real, from the community's perspective. Also, as much as photovoice is important, it does not focus on creating photographers or story tellers on the long term. By acquiring photography skills, the community members are empowered on a long term not just during the project. By that, the project would build capacities among them that they might use, which could empower them in the future. The challenge remains in how to pick people, while at the same time, to not create power imbalances among community members.

Step 2: Education:

Basically, this step is implemented in the initial meeting with participants. It entails: what is the purpose of the project, what is the photovoice methodology with examples on past projects, and the responsibilities of the participants with a respect to the risks, the power, and the ethics involved all along the project. In this phase, it is

important to highlight that "*no picture is worth taking if it begets the photographer harm or ill will*" (Wang et al. 2000).

For the first case study, the project organized a couple of meetings with the participants to introduce the topic and the methodology. No photovoice examples were provided, and the participants showed acceptance and interaction. As for the second and third case study, they were both solely dedicated for photovoice. The participants were introduced to the topic and the methodology since the very first beginning of the projects.

This step needs a follow up all along the project. The participants might not pay attention or under-estimate the risks/ethics that accompany the photovoice. This step might not be just limited to this phase of the project. It must be supervised all along the project. It does work the other way around also. Many scholars pay attention to the risks and ethics that the participant might cause during the project and they consider themselves able to control it or to run it. However, it is important to have an objective neutral committee that also protect the ethics and risks of participants who might get stolen by the researchers themselves.

Step 3: Consent:

According to Wang and Redwood-Jones (2001), there are 3 consents: The first is for the voluntary participation in the study/project. The second is for the subject's (human) permission who is being photographed. The third is for the participants for publication and or public distribution of the developed photos.

The first case study has an approval from the institutional review board of the American university of Beirut. All of the projects took the oral consent of participants

for their voluntary participation in the project. As for the third case study, they have photo release forms and signatures for the participants whenever a person or identifying information was clearly visible in a photograph they take.

In this phase, there is a missing consent from the researcher/ photographer to not take advantage on the participants' photographs, to not use them or to do nothing with them without their consent. None of the case studies presented such consent. However, the third case study made an advantage by the photo release forms, or the signatures needed whenever a person or identifying information was clearly visible in a photograph.

Step 4: Documentation:

This phase consists in responding to questions or prompts related to the purpose of the project through photography. Not all cases, but sometimes cameras are provided. The researcher typically must choose a general narrow yet broad (Sutton-Brown, 2014), which allow an "evolutionary development" (Creswell, 2003), during the project phase, so that participants decide on the specific questions, problem, and/ or issues that they would like to address in relation to that topic. The researcher could inspire and help the members to brainstorm potential ideas.

For the first case study, the general topic is "preserving intangible cultural heritage". In the beginning of the project, the researchers assumed that the community is aware of the fading of their intangible culture, and they were facilitating and helping this community to safeguard it. However, they noticed that these people were not paying attention to the fact that their traditional food is in danger of extinction because of modernization, what in turn can threaten their food security. So they proposed the

topic on the community and they agreed together on working on it. On the other hand, during the project – especially the evaluation part after the first phase has ended – participants were encouraged to suggest some topics for the coming phase of the project. For example, some suggested the topics of women empowerment and entrepreneurship, herbal medicine…

For the second case study, which also focuses mainly on the cultural heritage preservation and the land, the topic was chosen by the researcher since the beginning: to explore the relationship of their cultural heritage to land and agriculture by capturing and recording at-risk heritage. They also identified that the wider long term aim is to gather resources that could support the resilience and sustainable economic development of future generations.

For the third case study: although the project was specific to hunger, the researchers were aware of the fact that hunger is a result not a reason, and participants might have many other issues (maybe more important to them), to talk about. Since the organization is only concerned with hunger, the researchers gathered other resource references to advocate for the community's other issues.

In this phase, the photographer and also the researcher may find everything new interesting, whereas the community might not notice what they are used to see it "normal" and "part of their daily lives" as something "interesting to talk about". And here comes the role of the photographer where he also can play the role of the "observer". However, the other way around is also applicable; for example, a "normal" thing could be considered as interesting by a foreign person just because it is new, so the community can be aware of valuing things upon their importance.

On the other hand, it is crucial to shed light on the fact that sometimes communities have not pay attention to a specific issue (perhaps because it is part of their daily lives). Projecting on the first case study CCP, where community members were not aware of the food culture that is fading, researchers play an important role to highlight this issue for the participants and advocates. For that purpose, a photovoice project must be a two-way open project, where both participants and researchers suggest questions, ideas, and issues.

Although this step encourages participants to choose their interests and topics, they might suggest some sensitive topics that the project cannot take aim or responsibility for, but most importantly that does not fall under the political agenda of the funder.

Step 5: Camera distribution:

The project may or may not provide cameras (disposable cameras, Polaroid cameras, film cameras, and the most cost-effective digital cameras). Sometimes the researcher provides one camera (belonging to him/her) for all participants to use. A basic training on cameras is provided for participants. However, if necessary and if the participants show interest, photographer would provide more advanced courses in photography.

Budget and administration play an important role in this step.

For the first case study, cameras were not provided to participants since the beginning of the training part because of administration reasons. They used the photographer camera to make some practice and they used their smart phones (noting

that not all of them have phones so they used their parents' or siblings'). They tended to forget the photography basics after the training since they were not practicing it.

As for the second case study, the participants got cameras. However, the photographer was not following up with them after the training part has ended.

Digital cameras were provided to participants of the third case study since the beginning of the project.

The training consists of 2 complementary sessions, the theoretical and the practical sessions. These 2 parts must go in parallel, we cannot teach the members how to use a camera, without practicing it on spot and later in their free time, because the information they are acquiring is very new, and they have never been familiar with the content. For this reason, and in order to keep the information in their head, they must practice it directly. The second and the third case studies showed an improvement on a skill development level, because the participants used cameras since the beginning. In contrast, the first case study CCP wasted more time since participants were not provided by cameras in the beginning, and the photographer needs to train them again in the second phase.

The funding source must understand the importance of this point, so there will be no conflict between administrative reasons and goals of the project. The second training must not start without the equipment. Theory must go with practice, otherwise the participants will forget what they learnt in a day since they are not familiar with the photography concepts, and the efforts will be useless.

Basic theories are necessary for creativity: the concept of lighting/exposure (ISO, Aperture and shutter speed), the framing, the… however, it would be optional for them to dig into more settings… limited time, to make them look by themselves and not

just relying on the project, practice and curiosity which makes sense on why we must select upon artistic intelligence.

In addition to the training on photography skills, there must be an important part on why photography matters and why smart phones cannot replace cameras for two reasons: first, to develop creativity skills among participants which cannot be done with the use of smart phones, and they cannot develop a skill that would create opportunities for them in the future. One more important thing to train participants on is the importance of photography and the risk of falling into smartphones' flexibility. Photography art is getting less appreciated since smartphones have overrun the world. For that, we must teach them the value of the medium they are going to use so they don't get triggered by smartphones' "flexibility" and thus lose their creativity. Because of technology, everyone is a photographer nowadays. And this is why the first part of the training (what I also call the pre-training stage) matters; we don't need to make photographers but we need creators and content makers to show an original work to the whole world. Being creative is the way to deliver the message or the story smoothly to the conceptual public that can't but accept it. When you're creative you can see stuff differently.

The main problem with photovoice projects is that the researchers do no pay attention to the long term impact of photovoice if the project focuses on creating real photographers. These people would be able to have a better life – assuming they are marginalized – if they become photographers. Also, many people who get part of the photovoice project are not educated and might not have any other skill.

To note that "the emphasis in photovoice is on the content of the photo and the meaning that the photographer attributes to it, not the quality of the photograph" (Wang 1999).

Step 6: Narration:

Narration or description of the photographs is done through collective discussions and focus groups. Wang and Burris (1999) use a specific technique for the participants to discuss each image named "SHOWeD": • What do you See here? • What is really Happening here? • How does this relate to Our lives? • Why does this situation, concern, or strength exist? • What can we Do about it? (Wang 1999)

Women did not prefer this method during Sutton-Brown's (2014) photovoice project, they chose to speak freely about their photographs. The participants of the selected case studies also preferred to narrate freely about their work, the facilitator helped them to elaborate.

The participants of both first and second case studies preferred to narrate freely about their work, the facilitator helped them to elaborate. As for the third case study, discussions were framed using the SHOWeD method.

As we are not expecting professionals, the criterion to select the pictures is not one-image-based. A set of images must represent a story, and the judgment is based on the consistency of the images amongst the whole set. There are no dos and don'ts in this phase, the priority must go for the content. The interpretation of photographs could be done through a negotiation process between both the viewer and photographer (Pink 2001).

Criteria for selection must follow a story, if they always have a story in mind, they take their photos accordingly but by just pressing the button, they will not be able

to deliver the message. Noting that they might have interesting and artistic photos (from a photography perspective) but they would be considered useless if they do not tell a story that everyone accepts to see and hear, only photographers would appreciate it.

Step 7 and 8: Ideation and Presentation:

Creating new knowledge that is inspired from narration and emphasized by already existing literature. The generated thematic strands are then converted into the findings of the work, complete with practical implications. Exhibition like poster, brochure, website, digital story, or museum installation. Interface of participants with individuals within the community who wield power—policy makers and others who have the capacity to make decisions—and can affect change

For the first case study, the participants did not present photographs solely taken by them to public (the project has not ended). However, the exhibition done by the research team was a collaboration work with participants. In this case study, the researchers used photovoice as a capacity building methodology more than a documentary methodology for the participants. Further, this project has an open access archive of the photographs taken all along the project. Although participants have not published any, the project is planning to publish their work in the coming phase of the project.

No presentation has happened in the second case study and there is no public site that shows the work of the participants, what could reduce the long term impact of the project, especially on the policy level.

As for the third case study, participants selected the photographs to be exhibited in collaboration with facilitators. They also discussed their captions for each photograph displayed via traveling exhibits held in community settings.

Step 9: Confirmation:

Photovoice researchers must attempt to apprehend how those who visited the exhibition received the presentation phase. Questions to ask in this phase: Was the message clear? What were the perceptions? Have policy changes been made? In addition, the researchers should try to find ways to sustain the project's energy and broaden the reach of the participants' voices.

Not all the participants of the first case study were able to attend the exhibition, but many of them did. On a policy level, nothing has happened yet but the project team is aiming to reach UNESCO in Lebanon.

On a policy level, the second case study project did not achieve anything.

For the third case study, exhibits were serving as a chance for Hunger Free Colorado and project participants to connect with policy makers, media, and other individuals in positions of power, as well as engage in dialogue with community members.

The first and the third case studies kept following up on social media.

The credit and copyright might generate a possibility to get stolen. If the community participants have no enough knowledge about their rights they might get stolen and no one could protect them. It is important to have someone who protects them and their rights but at the same to give them the right to publish and get full accredited.

What is important to note is that data might be stolen but people couldn't be. As a recommendation, using technology to preserve their rights that uses location for example.

For the policymaking part, it is important to assess the ability since the beginning of the project, for example, like the case in Palestine, is anyone able to change any policy in a region of conflict? Or politico-economic collapse (like the case of Lebanon)? However, although the photovoice project didn't achieve anything on a policy level in Palestine, it has been shown during the project and another project, that safeguarding their intangible heritage was a form of resistance against Israeli forces, as well as an identity for them. So this project, beside empowering some young people, helped a country in conflict to seize on its traditions and values, and use it as a form of resistance.

Photovoice is a powerful advocacy. Although photovoice expose marginalized people to the world which might help them on a long term, the research team might not be able to make any changes on a policy level. For that, participants must also aim to deliver their message to policymakers through photograph.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Photovoice is an empowering methodology that serves community development. however, it might work better depending on the goals of the project. For example, if the project aims to empower community members, gather qualitative data, and most importantly to document a culture or a tradition or lifestyle that might be endangered, it shows better results. And that was shown in the selected case studies, where the photovoice project served the preservation of the marginalized communities, which is an empowerment itself. Culture and traditions are the identity of people. Even though the first project CCP has not published any photographs taken by participants themselves, it exposed their culture to the whole world and gave them a sense of censorship and identity. So photovoice, when used in this context, could achieve community development on different levels.

As for the implementation, the three case studies engaged marginalized community members, they gave voice for women, young people, rural people, people who are victim to a discrimination (race, religion, gender…). We must also engage people in power within the community to facilitate the implementation and empower as much people as possible (community engagement project necessities involving people in power to not marginalize their role in society and treat them as inferiors).

On the other hand, just the first case study engaged a photographer all along the project. This will maximise the impact, and to have backup photographs in the case of documentation and safeguarding, in order to ensure that by the end of the work, there

are a backup of photographs to use in exhibitions and archives, as well as to advocate with them. However, in the context of hunger for example, a photographer involved in the whole project might not be as important as other contexts.

One of the main lessons learned in photovoice projects might be: expectations of photovoice should not be high, because not everyone is a "good photographer", so the solution would be first a good selection of participants since the beginning of the project, and second, as stated before, having a photographer involved all over the research/project, to make sure that the selection process, the implementation, as well as the editing and the exhibition are done with maximum impact and minimum risk.

Photovoice depends on the context. The second case study did not create very successful photographs taken by the participants to be displayed and exhibited. Not all the time participants are able to produce a good content acceptable by all.

Another challenge is the time. The photovoice is powerful methodology, however it takes a lot of time, so participants might get bored or not interested, as well as the long term the photovoice on building capacities and making "photographers". So here again, the involvement of photographer in the project would also play a good role in not wasting time and seeing results as soon as possible.

In addition to competition between the community members. Being aware of who is getting empowered is an important thing to note when implementing photovoice. Raising the number of participants would decrease the power imbalances within the community members. However, photovoice is not designed to empower all the community once. It is also a circular project; it is supposed to empower some who in turn empower others and the whole community.

Finally, the photovoice project needs a constant follow up. As much as the implementation phase (from the first till the ninth step) is important, there is also a need to follow up with the participants after. They might need some motivation, encouragement, or even a technical help.

Overall, this paper aims to shed light on the importance of photography in changing the life of people by creating opportunities for them, and also to reflect on their own lives instead of being subject to foreign photographers and researchers. When implementing a photovoice project, scholars marginalize the role of photographer which is logical because the methodology is a research based work. However, a combination between the art of photography and research would help these communities and minimize the risk of falling into an external political agenda.

The bottom line of this paper is to implement photovoice in a way that maximizes the chances of creating "socially aware photographers", who could use their skill to reflect on their own communities using photographs and narration. These photographs are supposed to help these people to reach the public and policymakers, as well as empowering these photographers by having a skill and a profession that ameliorates the condition of their lives.

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