Feeling and acting 'different' emotions and shifting self-perceptions whilst facilitating a participatory video process

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Feeling and acting 'different': Emotions and shifting self-perceptions whilst facilitating a participatory video process

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Abstract

Participatory video (PV) can raise new levels of self-perception and can contribute to forming, transforming and reconstructing the identity and visions of those involved. Although this aspect is often underlined in the PV literature, reflection on the emotional process underpinning these changes is lacking, particularly from the perspective of community researchers facilitating the PV process. Why and how does facilitating PV contribute to changing attitudes, roles and perceptions of community researchers? This paper explores these aspects by drawing on empirical material (interviews, informal conversations, participant observation, email exchanges) collected during a three-and-a-half year EU-funded project in South America where the PV process was led by five Guyanese Indigenous community researchers. We found that the community researchers working on the project had to repeatedly deal with a rollercoaster ride of emotions: from fear of failing, dissatisfaction, and social pressure; to pride, satisfaction, commitment, and belonging. The question we ask is: can PV shape emotions and emotional bonds in the community researchers in ways that render their actions more sustainable and effective across space-time? We show how the emotional force of PV practice creates 'thick places' where community researchers challenge their specific abilities, capacities and ambitions and develop more autonomous research skills.

Keywords: emotions; self-perceptions; participatory video; identity; Indigenous; Guyana

1. Introduction

As White (2003, p. 63) points out "participatory video as a process is totally self-involving"; researchers and participants film themselves and film others, they edit the video, they watch it, discuss and reflect on it and share it with others. The focus of this paper is on how this self-involving process affects the emotions of the people involved in participatory video (PV), with a

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particular focus on the community researchers facilitating the process. We discuss our experience within Project COBRA, a research project focused on the Guiana Shield region of South America funded by the European Commission 7th Framework program (see www.projectcobra.org). The aim of the project was to integrate Indigenous community-owned solutions within international policies in order to address current and emerging social and ecological challenges, through accessible information and communication technologies. Five Indigenous community researchers from four different Indigenous communities of the North Rupununi, Guyana, were recruited by Project COBRA on a three year contract to facilitate the identification and recording of community owned practices of sustainability through the use of PV, and share these with other Indigenous communities across the Guiana Shield. Two of the community researchers were female, of 25 and 18 years of age, unmarried and single parents, with previous experiences on a PV and on a cinema project respectively. The other three community researchers were men (of 25, 28 and 35 years of age). The two older have children and only one of them had previous research experience (with limited coordinating tasks). The five community researchers were supported by a rotating team of outside researchers and professionals experienced in community-based natural resource management and/or participatory approaches. The team included the authors of this paper. Out of a group of seven individuals, a maximum of three outsider researchers would support the community researchers in field-based activities, but this would rarely exceed a period of three weeks, with community researchers often undertaking their work autonomously for months at a time. Our role (the authors) was to build their capacities in the participatory techniques (including PV) and the concepts underpinning the process of community engagement. We rarely engaged directly in the community research, but were very active in observing proceedings and supporting the evaluation of the activities and various outputs, including the resulting videos.

In the first phase of the project (September 2011 - June 2012), the five community researchers were responsible for engaging their communities through a PV (and participatory photography) process, for the identification of a wide range of sustainability indicators (Berardi et al., 2013, 2015; Mistry et al., 2014 a). In the second phase of the project (July 2012 - January 2013), community researchers engaged with the wider community to stimulate thinking on future scenarios for their region and communities (Mistry et al., 2014a). In the third phase of the project (February 2013 - August 2013), building on reflection carried out in the first two stages, six community best practices for survival were identified and thoroughly documented by the community researchers (Mistry et al., 2016). Finally, in the fourth and last phase of the project (September 2013 - June 2014), the five community researchers shared and exchanged the best practices with six other Indigenous communities of the Guiana Shield: Kwamalasamutu (Suriname), Kavanayén (Venezuela), Maturuca (Brazil), Katoonarib (Guyana), Laguna Colorada (Colombia) and Antecume Pata (French Guiana) (Mistry et al., 2014, b; Tschirhart et al., 2016). In each of these communities, the community researchers were central to training a small group of local people in identifying their own social and ecological challenges and best practices, and to use video and photography to record and share these with other communities and wider audiences.

We have already explored the ethical dilemmas that surface when community researchers take leading roles in the PV and participatory photography process (Mistry et al., 2015). In this paper, we focus specifically on the different emotional issues the community researchers experienced during the PV process, and particularly when they travelled to other Indigenous communities. These reflections are the result of a participatory ethnography carried out with the community researchers during the entire project. This process highlighted how facilitating PV activities in other communities affected the community researchers' perception of themselves and places, especially of their communities and 'home'. Indeed, there is a need to investigate how emotions relate to the way in which community researchers develop behaviors that help to organize, mobilize and sustain

community participation through PV in a variety of distinct locations and during the unfolding of the process through time. This article explores the interplay between facilitating PV and emotions, with the aim of showing how emotions are often strategic in how community researchers are able to raise awareness of the PV process and to the sustainability of PV practice across space-time.

2. Challenging emotions in the PV process

The growing body of literature on emotional geographies (Anderson and Smith, 2001; Davidson and Bondi, 2004; Davidson and Milligan, 2004; Thrift, 2004; Thien, 2005; Davidson et al., 2005; Tolia-Kelly, 2006; Thomas, 2007; Smith et al., 2009; Pile, 2010) has widely underlined the importance of taking emotions seriously within geographical discourse. Emotions matter not only at the immediate level of bodily experience but at different scales, such as affecting how we perceive and create home and community. Mobility shapes our emotions as well: travelling to different places affects our perception of home and of the self and leads us to constantly re-negotiate our relations with the social and built environment. This is because all experiences, and the knowledge produced through these experiences, influence us emotionally through their spatial, social and temporal situatedness (Rose, 1997; MacKian, 2004). Emotions are a relational output of the relationship between peoples and places (Bondi et al., 2005; Thien, 2005; Sultana, 2011). They are not only personal mental states, isolated from contextual social matters; there is strong emotional relationality between people's minds and bodies and their environments (Bosco, 2007; Morales and Harris, 2014).

The role of emotion is central to participation, as engaging in a participatory process touches upon the desire to "do something in some way" (Askins, 2009, p. 7). Participation, in order to be sustainable and equitable must be attentive to both people and contexts (Kindon et al., 2007). As underlined by Morales and Harris:

> " applied to participatory natural resource management, acknowledging these linkages between individuals and their context offers forceful suggestion that if participatory initiatives are to be successful, they must simultaneously engage individual capability and experience, as well as broader social and institutional contextual factors that mould and influence individual behaviours and senses of self"
> (Morales and Harris, 2014, p. 705).

At the same time, there needs to be attention to place and its critical role in en/disabling certain emotions and behaviours within participatory processes, especially the relationality of different sites and localities (Wynne-Jones et al., 2015). Simultaneously, emotions can re-make place, in a mutually co-constructive way: emotions inspire actions which in turn shape place. Nowhere is this more clearly manifested than people's attachments to their gardens and backyards, where their dreams and aspirations are translated into labour, which in turn produces the crops, flowers and fruits, reinforcing this virtuous cycle between emotion and place (Gross and Lane, 2007).

Framing emotions means being aware of them, creating the conditions which lead to enhancing the possibilities for mobilisation, including the creation of trans-local coalitions and networks (Bosco, 2007). And framing emotions also means to promote cohesion between people in the participatory

process. As Jasper (1998) and Taylor and Rupp (2002) point out, emotional bonds among activists often provide the building blocks that cement emerging networks for collective action. Moreover, in order to take power and politics into account within participatory research and practice, it is important to acknowledge that emotional and cognitive functioning work together, and that an holistic approach to empowerment and change needs to recognize that emotions are at the same time socio-culturally constructed and deeply embodied phenomena:

> "[t]his means a recognition of the fact that our ways of thinking and feeling can be transformed, in part, through critical analyses and discourse, but also that new ways of thinking and feeling can be cultivated by using alternative methods and new media that directly engage with emotions as embodied (or affective) knowledge"
> (Wijnendaele, 2014, p. 279).

One of these alternative methods is participatory video, which is defined as a "group-based activity that develops participants' abilities by involving them in using video equipment creatively, to record themselves and the world around them, and to produce their own videos" (Shaw and Robertson, 1997, p.1). Emotions are inherent in the PV process since as a "collaborative creative process, regardless of the technologies utilized, [PV] provides an opportunity for individuals to reflect on how their personal narratives are connected to larger social concerns" (Luchs and Miller, 2011, p. 6). Through PV, self-representations of both participants and facilitators are shaped and reshaped by an ever-widening set of contexts, social practices, and audiences where individual emotions are constantly negotiated (Luttrell et al., 2012; Mistry et al., 2014 c). Bloustien (2012, p. 115) discusses, for example, how in her research *Girl Making* (focusing on how young women from a range of cultural backgrounds negotiated growing up female): "participatory video not only facilitated new levels of self-perception but also pointed to the ways in which identity may be arbitrarily (trans)formed and reconstituted". Behaviours, feelings, actions that are silenced, or which lie just beneath the surface of consciousness, can come to the surface when playing and performing with the camera.

In particular, we are interested in understanding how community researchers, facilitating a PV process, emotionally experience their actions and how meaning is constructed out of those experiences and feelings. Empowering Indigenous community researchers to autonomously use visual methods allows multifaceted identities and multi-layered reflexivities (self, interpersonal and collective) to come to the surface. This process includes what Brown and Pickerill (2009, p. 2) conceptualise as emotional reflexivity: "being consciously aware of emotions, of paying attention to emotions (individually and collectively, such as during meetings), and to incorporate what Barker et al. (2008, p. 433) call 'skilful emotional self-management'".

It is interesting in this respect to adopt Hoschild's (1979) concept of 'emotion work' which implies the act of trying to change an emotional state. This concept suggests that people have an active role in shaping and modifying their own emotions, and of those that they are engaging with. This implies changing the meaning of social interactions and power dynamics:

> "emotion work begins with a focus on how power dynamics are felt and normalized at an individual level, while also working to recognize and transform these 'rules' at a broader communal level. Emotion work tools may be used to transform an individuals' understanding and experience of their public participation in natural resource management, resisting and challenging social norms and feeling rules that have been restrictive or oppressive, and ultimately encouraging marginalized groups to actively engage in management and decision-making […] The core idea is that by changing connotations of

pervasive images or ideas, normalized expectations or practices associated with these may be confronted and imagined in new ways"
(Morales and Harris, 2014, p. 707).

The idea is that of constituting new subjectivities where critical reflection and critical discourse are the main "techniques of self in most participatory research and practice. Gaining critical insight is considered to be the first and principal step in the process of cultivating new subjectivities" (Wijnendaele, 2014, p. 275). In a similar way Bosco (2007) highlights how social movements originating in Argentina strategically deployed and framed emotions in order to develop activism. Emotional support among participants in particular was crucial in developing self-confidence in the activists. Bosco (2007), like Morales and Harris (2014), uses the concept of emotion work and suggests that managing one's own and other people's emotions is crucial for nurturing emotional sustainability, what Brown and Pickerill (2009, p. 2) define as "the ability to understand one's emotional responses and process them in order to continue to act effectively as an activist".

3. Investigating community facilitators' emotions within PV

As pointed out by Wood and Smith "how we can know and what we can know are intimately linked" (2004, p. 533). The question for us then turns into "how can we know about community researchers' emotions?" Despite the centrality of emotions in everyday lives, expressing them or even being aware of them – and therefore investigating them – is often quite challenging. In our case, these aspects came out quite naturally and informally through spontaneous and informal conversations with the community researchers throughout the entire project. Discussing how they felt during PV facilitation and how they have changed through the project was a topic the community researchers often approached spontaneously within the research team, and the self-reflective nature of the project and the long lasting friendship amongst us made this possible. Although community researchers were not interested in having a voice on this issue in the form of an academic paper, most probably due to the subject matter that we were considering (all other academic papers/book chapters presenting evidence and results from the project have the community researchers as coauthors), these reflective sessions were extremely beneficial to the community researchers (as often stated by them), giving them the opportunity to share what they enjoyed, discuss problems and air concerns. This is the main reason why we were motivated to write this paper, i.e. to encourage other researchers applying participatory video with community researchers to explicitly take into account participants' emotional states during the process.

These conversations progressively built into a participatory, self-reflective process where community researchers found the time and space to elaborate on their experience as community facilitators. These moments of discussion and exchange with the community researchers (which allowed us to openly carry out an ethnography 'with' them) gave us important insights of their personal experiences and perspectives, and convinced us on the ethical importance of seriously and thoroughly taking into consideration community researchers' emotions within PV in order to make PV ethically suitable for them. Community researchers felt it important to share how their emotional worlds changed through the project and in particular through travelling to different contexts in the Guiana Shield to facilitate PV activities amongst different communities.

And what grew more and more important was not only to listen to what community researchers said in order to know about their emotions, but also to let their tacit feelings emerge, and let aspects that they were not necessarily able to articulate verbally (or even consciously) to come to the surface. As Wood and Smith underline "the challenge of understanding emotions has [...] fuelled a search for

new ways of knowing: ways that range beyond the visual and representational traditions which have for so long dominated social thought" (2004, p. 534). Emotions can be surfaced by exploring how people behave, their 'non-representational' practices (Thrift, 1997, 2004, 2008; Massumi, 2002; Lorimer, 2005), how they interact with each other and with the physical world, through their body gestures, through the physical manifestation of their emotional experiences and how they are linked to places and evolve over time.

In this framework, we tried to get in touch with the community researchers' emotions by observing the practices of PV they were involved in (during pre-workshop knowledge gatherings, training workshops, filming, editing and screening of the videos), by observing them in their movements and actions during interactions with other participants (in formal public meetings as well as in more informal settings), and with us. During fieldtrips, we all noted down our observations in our research diaries and end-of-day reflection sessions, and discussed them amongst us, thus engaging in a participatory ethnography process. Moreover, we used PV itself as a tool to investigate community researchers' emotions: storyboarding and video interviews, for example, were used at the end of training sessions as a tool for facilitators to reflect on how they carried out PV activities, on what worked well and what did not. Despite our attempts to make our reflections with the community researchers as participatory as possible, we recognise that our own presence, as outsider researchers, first acting as trainers and mentors, and subsequently observing and evaluating resulting action, will have had a significant influence on the emotional state of the community researchers. This has been taken into account in our analysis.

4. Feeling and acting 'different': challenging subjectivities through PV

During the visits to Indigenous communities in the final phase of the project, activities were coordinated by two-three community researchers supported by one-two outsider researchers (amongst them the authors). Community researchers visited each community three times (for about three weeks overall) using PV as a mean to discuss and record community challenges and community owned solutions. Undertaking these extensive trips to engage with other communities of the Guiana Shield triggered a wide range of emotions that significantly affected self-perception and PV practice (many of these emotional anxieties were experienced as well, although differently, by outsider researchers). Here, we are dividing 'self' into three emotional states which manifested themselves during the community exchange process: challenging self-esteem ("hiding behind the camera"); gaining confidence ("using PV to reach out to people"); and fostering emotion work through PV. We analyse how their PV work as Indigenous community researchers in all these other places and different situations generated a wide range of evolving emotions that have reshaped their self-perception and practice.

4.1 Hiding behind the camera: using the technical side of PV to avoid engagement with the community

Despite being very excited and eager to share their knowledge and skills, during the initial visits to other Indigenous communities the community researchers experienced emotions linked to anxiety, stress, fear of failure, and 'doing it wrong'. One of the project's main goals was for community researchers to become independent in carrying out the PV activities and to develop competences and leadership for ultimately supporting Indigenous rights and autonomy. Being the ones in charge of coordinating the PV activities in the communities we visited (from organizing logistics, to carrying out the PV training, organising the sessions, facilitating subsequent filming and screening activities, etc.) community researchers experienced pressure and stress, particularly during the first

trips when they were not used to being in the public eye, and were not very confident in their capacities of carrying out the work by themselves. The whole experience was very challenging for the community researchers as it required them to be the centre of attention. They had to explain to recipient communities why they were there: the aims and concepts of the intervention; the use of PV and how it works; and the need for technical training on how to use the video cameras, video editing equipment, community screening and feedback sessions, etc. During project meetings to organize the activities, the two female community researchers were reluctant to take the floor, and when they did, they would speak so quietly it was hard to hear them. The males found it easier to talk during project meetings, but felt very anxious during the first public meetings with communities: their voices would tremble, they would start sweating, they would often lose track of what they were supposed to be doing (telling us after the training sessions "I got completely lost") when explaining activities or the project concepts, asking us to temporarily step in, and they would repeatedly and anxiously look at their notes.

The very first engagement with other communities was a new experience that put them in a difficult position, not knowing how the other communities would react to their training, lacking confidence and feeling frightened, feeling confused by the multiple lists of objectives to achieve and pressured by time to deliver community engagement and training. In this context, for instance, the video camera was sometimes used as a way to escape from interacting with participants more than as a way to foster interaction. Community researchers were often observed 'hiding' behind the camera. Particularly during the first visits, they would often be fiddling with equipment. For example, they would be looking at their cameras and laptops sometimes to 'avoid' what was going on in the training because they felt uncomfortable. But there was also a tendency for them prioritizing the 'technical help' role. At the beginning in particular they felt much more confident with the equipment and technical side of PV, rather than the conceptual side, so would almost automatically 'assume' the role as 'technical video and computer person', focusing on showcasing their technical expertise (e.g. by taking over the handling of the cameras and computers) rather than supporting community participants in the technical tasks and taking a lead in the process as a whole.

These emotions had a significant impact on community researchers' visions of self-identity in their new role as being responsible for facilitating the process of community engagement. During the unfolding of activities with communities, they would start to feel more and more anxious about each day's tasks and sometimes they were less communicative when collective planning was taking place. One member of the team who was particularly nervous and sensitive, experiencing these feelings said that this was too hard for him, that this was his first and last experience, and that he would not pursue community-based participatory projects after COBRA.

4.2. Using PV to reach out to people

This instinctive rejection of the project was clearly linked to the difficult situations. As underlined by Bosco (2007, p. 4), creating a 'safe' space where people, in this case the community researchers, can explore and share these testing emotional states "might be just as important for emotional sustainability as fostering the more positive emotional responses". The situation slowly evolved, fieldtrip after fieldtrip. By building on their technical expertise in operating video cameras, community researchers progressively gained confidence in other areas of facilitation. Teaching participants to use the video camera, sharing their knowledge with them and filming together allowed them to overcome their sense of inadequacy: the participants' positive feedback on their facilitation of sessions ("we love Grace" [one of the community facilitators], "I really liked

storyboarding today", are some examples of the positive comments expressed by participants in the training graffiti boards where they were asked to evaluate the daily activities). The cumulative experience contributed towards building confidence in themselves, generating more self-directed initiatives and impacting positively on the team's mood to pursue work. During the team evaluations of the day activities every night after dinner, community researchers took the habit of opening up to how they felt during the day and to receive comments and helpful suggestions from the whole team. Comments such as "I think you did very good today", "I'm not very happy of how it went today, I was scared!", "Today I enjoyed the activities, I was more relaxed", "This activity just doesn't work, what can we do?" were often heard during these exchanges. These informal moments significantly helped the group to grow closer and helped individuals to sharpen their facilitation skills and gain confidence. In this sense, the process of emotional framing impacted PV both individually and collectively, and framing emotions was extremely important for confidence building. Similarly to the experiences of Bosco (2007), emotional support from each other and from the outsider researchers was crucial in developing self-confidence among community researchers. Indeed, managing one's own and other people's emotions is crucial to nurture group and community dynamics, and it was imperative that we as outsider researchers, in our position as observers and evaluators, constantly provided constructive and positive feedback to the community researchers so as to mitigate against the initial negative emotions that they experienced.

One key factor was that filming other communities' best practices was a process in which community researchers found themselves less scared and progressively more and more engaged. From hiding behind the camera, they started seeing the camera as a tool to engage participants, teaching them how to record video, sharing with them their views on how the video could be made better, and discussing with them the community's problems and how they could be filmed. This gradually developed pride in the community facilitators' capacity to handle participatory filming, which began to have a positive feedback on their practice as facilitators. During the fieldwork in the community of Katoonarib, south Guyana, every night one of the female researchers would ask us "so, tell me how I did during PV sessions today, I want to improve". On the male researchers' side, on several occasions during the last fieldtrip to Antecume Pata in French Guyana, we heard the two most inexperienced researchers say "this is the best participatory video practice we ever facilitated", or "this trip is heart-warming". This feeling, which was triggered indeed by the very positive output of the videos produced by participants, affected in an extremely positive way their attitude to the PV activities.

Having gone through so many weeks of training, by the time the community facilitators began work with the final community in Antecume Pata, the community researchers felt in greater control of the process and did not only deliver PV training almost entirely autonomously, but actually took ownership of the community exchange, taking well-grounded decisions when they were needed. It triggered critical thinking and interesting discussions. For example, the community researchers had very inspiring and encouraging words for the local participants, and were actively engaging in discussions with our French counterparts to understand this particular community's practices. This developed into a virtuous circle, where videos as concrete outcomes would provide the motivation to do even better the next day, to communicate with other team members and to plan accordingly. One community researcher, who only a few months before was saying how this would be his first and last experience of working in community-based participatory video processes, progressively reversed his discourse and became extremely motivated in pursuing work in Antecume Pata. One other male community researcher experienced similar feelings, saying that once the project was over he wanted to become an "Indigenous community consultant".

4.3. Fostering emotion work through PV

The community researchers were promoting their own community best practices in each context they visited hoping to inspire the new communities. In each context, part of the PV process was to first identify and document community challenges and then share practices from their own community that could help address those challenges. Through this process, community researchers became increasingly aware of the strengths of their own community, in a way that had never appeared clearly before. And they increased their capacity to look at different places, to compare them, to appreciate the relationality of different sites and localities and to re-make places (their own places and the ones they visited) by giving new meanings to them and by being inspired to act in them differently. They discovered how practices, probably taken for granted in their own context, were looked up to and valued in other contexts. For example, in Kwamalasamutu, they were struck by the enthusiasm of the local people to implement one of their best practices (self-help) in order to rebuild a bridge that had literally fallen into disrepair (a clear manifestation of emotion shaping space which in turn changes emotion), and how they were considered as experts and holders of knowledge born and developed within their own communities. Seeing that this 'self-help' practice, recorded through the PV process, had been observed and implemented successfully in another community was a major source of pride for them - pride not only in the actual practice, but also in their ability to communicate this successfully through the PV process. They also, to some extent, started applying their new capacities to their personal life, for example by planning through storyboarding. One of the community researchers indeed planned his future small family business by storyboarding each step of the activity with his family, and thus transferring his acquired knowledge.

Similarly, seeing their videos of Makushi-Wapishana practices projected in other communities, and seeing people commenting on them, for example asking them for more information on the fishing and farming techniques presented in the videos, was a very powerful experience for the community researchers. Through PV they looked at themselves and at their communities from a different perspective. Identifying the best practices, engaging with them, discussing them within their communities, researching them through PV, and finally screening them far away from home to different communities, not only increased their Indigenous pride, but also strengthened their capacity to verbally and visually express their relationship with places. They realised that their best practices were something of value that could be useful to others, and they had been able to bring them to other people living in different places but with similar social-economic realities through the videos. As a community researcher stated "it is good to see that what we do in the North Rupununi is helpful here, we have good practices after all". The implementation of the best practices from their homeland also had a positive impact on the community researchers' Indigenous Makushi-Wapishana identity. A new pride arose as some Makushi-Wapishana practices that they initially did not think would be useful for other communities, such as their community radio or their traditional farming practices, were now being adopted by other communities.

However, very different outputs in other contexts also reframed this way of perceiving home. In Laguna Colorada, Colombia, the community was small and the level of infrastructure was very low. As the community researchers were showing videos of their community best practices in the North Rupununi and how they had developed strategies to keep their culture alive, such as through Culture Groups, they were taken aback by the local people's reactions. The Sikuani people of Laguna Colorada immediately responded to the videos by voicing their pride about their own cultural specificities and practices, and how they lived them on an everyday basis. They started challenging the community researchers and the videos shown, saying that they did not have problems with keeping their culture alive, that they still spoke their Indigenous language and had deeply engrained rituals. In essence, they really did not need to consider this best practice. This triggered reflection

on the community researchers' part, through which they compared their practices to the local people's practices, trying to defend their culture and pointing out what traditional practices they still had. In the same community, during PV training they were also impressed by the very strong community spirit, which they realised they had partly lost in their communities. During PV activities, although tangible signs of 'development' were absent in Laguna Colorada, community researchers cast another eye on their homeland, deprived of certain more intangible characteristics. The focus on 'community best practices' in the new context forced them to reconsider some of their weaknesses and get inspired to make changes back home. The widening of experiences by comparing different contexts through PV was important, because even though community researchers might be embedded in similar local social traditions, localities are internally differentiated and not necessarily cohesive. Comparing home with the visited communities helped critical reflection and critical discourse to emerge. Moreover, as underlined by Wijnendaele (2014), gaining a critical insight over themselves, contexts and problems is the main step in the process of cultivating new subjectivities.

We see how in this process community researchers are putting emotion work into practice, trying to change their emotional state: challenging both their perceptions of themselves as facilitators and their perception of broader social concerns (i.e. problems and opportunities shared by Indigenous communities across the Guiana Shield). Gaining confidence in their capability for changing their emotional states not only fosters a more aware and effective facilitation of the PV activities, but as underlined by Morales and Harris (2014) it allows one to explore and imagine new ways of confronting themselves with expectations ("will I be able to carry out these activities?"), practices ("how can I do this in a more effective way?") and places ("how is this place compared to home?", "how do I engage with this other community?"). In this process, following Bosco (2007), community researchers are able to transform their understanding and experience of Indigenous communities' challenges, encouraging participants to actively do the same.

5. Emotional reflectivity and the PV process

In order for community researchers to become skilled at self-representing local problems through PV it was necessary for them to go through a series of, sometimes tough, emotional states that led to the production of new subjectivities, as shown by the rescaling of notions of home and community. To reach positive feelings that would then constructively feedback into their professional practice, community researchers went through a succession of engagements in various places where the experience was not always positive and satisfactory. In these challenging contexts, it is fair to acknowledge that community researchers' perception of their professional (and to a certain extent self-identity) was deeply affected, which in turn affected the atmosphere within the team and the delivery of subsequent sessions. These feelings were clearly exacerbated by the fact that we, as trainers and evaluators of the process, were present, and therefore the community facilitators' initial feelings were that of having failed the 'practice exam' following the training. Performing emotional work on themselves as individuals and as a team was crucial to overcome these initial difficulties.

During the PV process, which did not only revolve around the 'shooting' of footage, but also involved talking and engaging with people in the different phases (engaging with community problems, deciding what to film and how to film, screening the videos and discussing them, etc.), community researchers found themselves reflecting on their own perceptions of themselves, of places, networks of people, and phenomena they were embedded in. Through facilitating PV, subjectivity was negotiated and reshaped. And experiencing different situations and adversities and

the different ways of reacting to them, contributed to re-constructing the self in different ways. Being progressively more conscious of their emotions allowed community researchers: a) to test themselves in carrying out the PV activities, reflecting on their actions and developing their skills as facilitators; b) to produce more nuanced and multi-layered representations of their Indigenous identity and of home by comparing the new contexts to their own, and c) to turn progressively to autonomously lead on the PV facilitation process and to experience the freedom of portraying their self representations of places, practices and past and future challenges.

Building emotional attachments and reciprocal support within the group (during the activities and during group evaluation meetings) was particularly important in order to achieve these goals and to create particular emotional moods during PV activities. We too argue, as Bosco (2007) and Morales and Harris (2014), that the support of the group (Indigenous and we outsider researchers) helped facilitators to work on their emotions, and to grow emotionally to persevere with autonomous PV facilitation. Through this emotion work, community researchers figured that PV did not mean coming to the communities with solutions or with a fixed timetable of activities. On the contrary, these were to be found together with community members, within the PV process, through building trust and exchange among the group, with all the difficulties that building this internal solidarity and this co-construction of knowledge implies. In a community researcher's own words, it meant to "get knowledge out of people and not bring knowledge to them" and to "share your feelings and ideas with the others of the team, even if sometimes it is hard".

During the PV process, community researchers experienced that improvement and good results would occur not only through direct work on technical activities (showing participants how to use the camera, walking around the village with them, etc.) but also allowing their own emotions to come to the surface (learning to put up with anger, sadness, tiredness, etc.), and through critical reflection and representation of their practices (going over their actions, sharing their views with others, etc.) (cfr. Wijnendaele, 2014). Exploring different ways of carrying out PV in the communities also allowed their lateral thinking to develop, based on creativeness, adaptability and flexibility. In certain communities it was important to repeat over and over very basic technical information (from how to turn on a computer to how to edit a video), for other communities it was necessary to spend longer on creating a storyboard; while others needed more work on motivating people to participate, etc. If at the beginning the intrinsic unpredictability and flexibility which characterizes PV was the aspect which scared community researchers the most, towards the end of the project they were able to come up with original solutions to the daily challenges the PV activities brought, realizing that there were minimal long-term negative consequences in doing so and were therefore no longer so worried of failures. As one community researcher said "once yes I was afraid of failures, but then I realized you can do things in many ways, and if you achieve something good for the community, your work is not a failure": As cognitive theories on emotion point out, a change in beliefs is essential to foster a change in emotions (Calhoun and Solomon, 1984). Understanding their emotional states and that certain beliefs they had were false ("I can't make it", "I'm not good enough", etc.) helped community researchers to change their emotions from negative to positive (Wijnendaele, 2014).

People in other communities often saw problems in different terms, and the solutions they proposed were often different from the ones experienced in the North Rupununi. Through PV, community researchers had to learn to take this complexity into account, learning to open up to the way in which other people saw the world, enriching their ways of looking at places, of finding solutions, of seeing reality in a more rich, nuanced and multifaceted way. The videos produced acted as mirrors in this process. Engaging with new communities and places, and carrying out PV activities through which these places have been experienced in-depth (observing local dynamics, discussing them, engaging with local strengths and weaknesses, filming them, etc.), has changed community

researchers' subjectivities. Moreover, screening the videos of their North Rupununi communities' best practices outside of home, seeing the reaction of different communities to their practices, training community members to find their own community solutions, filming them and seeing the videos produced by these communities, allowed the community researchers to develop an emotional sustainability (Brown and Pickerill, 2009).

The progressive growth of the community researchers' capacity for critically evaluating their own emotions and actions (what Barker et al., (2008) define 'skilful emotional self-management') was strictly linked to how they experienced and confronted places and on how they experienced mobility. At the beginning, home was seen mainly as a source of good practices to share with other communities, a feeling that probably never affected community researchers in that way before the project and the undertaking of these trips to other communities. Later, the comparison with practices carried out in the visited communities showed them how things could be improved at home, and home acquired a pro-active dimension: it could change for the better, learning from other places, and the community researcher could contribute to this change. At a later stage through PV, they were able to link their personal narratives to larger social concerns: the constant act of participatory filming the new places forced community researchers to try and look at the communities and at the places they worked in through the communities' eyes, becoming more empathetic in their views, and in so doing scaling up their vision of home. Home, then, was no longer only their own community: home was more widely the Indigenous communities across the Guiana Shield they were working in.

Each video produced with the communities they visited enriched their way of seeing and understanding Indigenous practices, Indigenous culture, Indigenous rights. And through the exchange of PV videos, community researchers realized that there are narratives and problems that link them to other communities. Although there is a danger that the medium of a short video (like any representation) could simplify complex and nuanced experiences via the inevitable process of editing, abbreviation and situated representation, we found that by performing emotional work, a new 'connective tissue' was built over each of the PV experiences, with home and with the other Indigenous communities. This connective tissue contributes in building 'thick places' (Casey, 2001) where the relationship between self and place (home as well as the 'new places') acquires greater awareness and new levels of consciousness. These 'thick places' are the result of merging images produced through the videos and helped build emotional reflexivity within the Indigenous facilitators: as the visual images of community researchers' homelands blend with the videos produced in the visited places, more nuanced and multifaceted visions of place emerge. What happens in one place can inspire actions in another place. And places become 'thick' because the sedimentation of experiences, exchanges, evaluations and reflections through constantly comparing the 'known' (home) and the 'newly known' (the visited communities) leads community researchers to test their specific abilities, capacities, ambitions and to develop their consciousness of how to transform these places. In so doing, paraphrasing Casey (2001), community researchers no longer go out to reach places; they bear the traces of the places they have known. These traces sediment themselves and contribute to re-shape their visions of their communities, of themselves, and their way of engaging with change.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, our experience shows that in order for effective decolonization and empowerment, and in order for participatory visual research to be controlled by community researchers, it is important to sustain emotional reflexivity in PV. In our case, carrying on ethnography of PV practice with the community researchers gave them the time-space opportunity to reflect on the

emotional work involved in PV practice, and this positively helped to improve their PV practice. In this direction, in order to achieve emotional reflexivity in an ethical and inclusive way, we stress the importance of carrying on ethnography on community researchers' emotional states fostering the community researchers' active participation in the process. The goal should be that of empowering community researchers to the point they are autonomous from outside researchers in building this reflexivity into PV practice.

In addition, we underline how the attention to emotions in PV practice is crucial to enable better reflection, learning, growth and transparent knowledge production. Being aware of emotions helps facilitators to enhance cohesion within the group and with the wider community, therefore strengthening the PV process and its outputs. In this direction, following Taylor and Rupp (2002), emotional bonds between team members, in particular, build blocks that cement action and make PV more effective. And they show how emotional and cognitive functioning work together; in PV practice, empowerment takes place through an holistic approach to change, with facilitators recognising that their ways of thinking and feeling can change through the process and that performing strategic emotional labour allows them to control the PV process more autonomously.

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