

Shooting Back: Participatory Photography in Entertainment-Education¹

by

Arvind Singhal*

Lynn M. Harter

Ketan Chitnis

and

Devendra Sharma

Ohio University

*Please direct all editorial correspondence to Arvind Singhal, School of Communication Studies, Lasher Hall, Ohio University, Athens, OH 45701, USA, email: singhal@ohio.edu. Phone: 740-593-4903; Fax: 740-593-4810.

Paper submitted for publication consideration to *Black Praxis*.

Shooting Back: Participatory Photography in Entertainment-Education

In 1973, while conducting a literacy project in a barrio of Lima, Peru, the noted Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (and his colleagues) asked people questions in Spanish, but requested the answers in photographs. When the question "What is exploitation?" was asked, some people took photos of a landlord, grocer, or a policeman (Boal, 1979, p. 123). One child took a photo of a nail on a wall. It made no sense to adults, but other children were in strong agreement. The ensuing discussions showed that many young boys of that neighborhood worked in the shoe-shine business. Their clients were mainly in the city, not in the barrio where they lived. As their shoe-shine boxes were too heavy for them to carry, these boys, rented a nail on a wall (usually in a shop), where they could hang their boxes for the night. To them, that nail on the wall represented "exploitation." The "nail on the wall" photograph spurred widespread discussions in the Peruvian barrio about other forms of institutionalized exploitation, including ways to overcome them.

The present article analyzes the role of visuals -- especially photographs generated through participatory research practices -- in entertainment-education practice and research. The main tenets of participatory communication, including the dialogic pedagogical processes espoused by Paulo Freire, as well as certain notable experiences in using participatory photography, are presented. We then analyze our experience with using participatory photography in an entertainment-education radio initiative in Bihar, India. We conclude by discussing the potential and caveats associated with this visual approach to participatory communication.

Participatory Communication

The discourse of participatory communication gathered momentum in the 1970s, as discontent mounted with top-down and trickle-down communication approaches to social change (Jacobson, 1993; Servaes, Jacobson, & White, 1996; Uphoff, 1985).

Participatory communication is defined as a dynamic, interactional, and transformative process of dialogue between people, groups, and institutions that enables people, both individually and collectively, to realize their full potential and be engaged in their own welfare (Singhal, 2001; Singhal & Devi, 2003).

All participation is communication-driven, but all communication is not participatory (White & Nair, 1999). Gumucio Dagron (2001) provided a useful typology to distinguish participatory communication from other communication strategies for social change (**Table 1**). Participatory communication means working with and by the people, as opposed to working on or working for the people. For many observers, “participation” and “participatory” make sense as means. That is, with participation, projects and programs become more humane, more effective, and more sustainable (Chambers, 1983; 1999). For others, participation is an end in itself: A set of desired processes and relationships. Whatever the mix of reasons, a new consensus has put participation at the center stage of social change initiatives during the 1990s. While there may not be a clean way of resolving the issue of participation as means or ends, the compass of participation rests on preserving and enhancing the dignity of the individual.

(Put Table 1 about here)

At the risk of oversimplifying, one may contend that there are two major, but interrelated, approaches to participatory communication (Servaes, 1999). The first

approach centers on the dialogic pedagogy of the noted Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire. The second approach, often broadly labeled as the participatory community media approach, or the alternative communication approach, centers on the ideas of access, participation, self-determination, and self-management, sharpened during the UNESCO New World Information Order debates of the 1970s. While both participatory approaches share several commonalities, their arenas of communicative application have been somewhat distinct. For instance, the Freirean theory of dialogic communication is based more on interpersonal and group dialogue in a community setting, and hence, has found more application in the practice of community development, literacy education, participation, and transformation. The participatory community media approach focused on issues of public and community access to appropriate media, participation of people in message design and media production, and self-management of communication enterprises. Its applications are thus more in community radio and television, street theater and folk media, participatory video, and community informatics, Internet, and telecenters.

Paulo Freire's Dialogic Pedagogy²

Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educationist, in his classic book, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Freire, 1970) argued that most political, educational, and communication interventions fail because they are designed by technocrats based on their personal views of reality. They seldom take into account the perspectives of those to whom these programs are directed.

Freire's most important career lesson came in the early 1950s when he was in charge of establishing adult literacy programs in poverty-stricken Northeastern Brazil.

During an introductory seminar for illiterate and semi-illiterate adults, a wage laborer, who had listened to Freire's presentation on the benefits of learning to read and write, challenged Freire to understand the "world" in which members of the audience were living. Speaking in the local vernacular, the illiterate laborer painted a highly evocative word-picture of the grinding poverty that he and his family endured, of his inability to speak like educated people, and daily struggles with domination and exploitation.

The laborer's moving story, told in his own words, influenced Freire's ideas about what education should and should not be. He realized that an educator's greatest challenge was to understand, appreciate, and respect the knowledge of people's lived experience as expressed in their vernacular. He also realized that politics and pedagogy were inseparable. With experimentation and experience, Freire's pedagogical methods incorporated ideas on critical reflection, dialogue and participation, autonomy, democracy, problematization, and the crucial connection between theory and practice (Freire, 1970).

Freire's dialogic pedagogy emphasized the role of "teacher as learner" and the "learner as teacher," with each learning from the other in a mutually transformative process (Freire, 1970). The role of the outside facilitator is one of working with, and not for, the oppressed to organize them in their incessant struggle to regain their humanity (Singhal, 2001). True participation, according to Freire, does not involve a subject-object relationship, but rather a subject-subject relationship.

In Freirean pedagogy, there is no room for teaching "two plus two equals four". Such rote pedagogy, according to Freire, is dehumanizing as it views learners as empty receptacles to be "filled" with expert knowledge. Freire criticized this "banking" mode of

education, in which “deposits” are made by experts. The scope of action allowed students (or intended beneficiaries) “extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits” (Freire, 1970, p. 58). Instead, Freire advocated problem-posing as a means to re-present to people what they know and think, not as a lecture, but as an involving problem. Freire emphasized that the themes underlying dialogic pedagogy should resonate with people’s experiences and issues of salience to them, as opposed to well-meaning but alienating rhetoric (Freire, 1970). Once the oppressed, both individually and collectively, begin to critically reflect on their social situation, possibilities arise for them to break the “culture of silence” through the articulation of discontent and action.

Freire strongly believed that visuals and photos, especially if they were taken by the people themselves, could play a key role in helping them reflect on their own lived experiences, in clarifying and articulating their discontent, and in framing their ideas for action.

The Role of Visuals in Participatory Action and Research

Along with Freirian scholars, for several decades, scholars and practitioners of visual sociology, visual anthropology, and visual communication have had an interest in visual documentation and activism (Wang, 2003). Sociologists and anthropologists have primarily used photographs to document social realities, looking at local communities as “objects” of study. For instance, Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead’s 1942 book, Balinese Character, included 759 photographs to document Balinese life. The cultural meanings of the photographs were explained in the text. Documentary photographers and filmmakers have visually documented drugs and drug culture (Clark, 1971), the U.S.

civil rights movement (Hansberry, 1964), the anti-Vietnam War movement (Kerry, 1971), and the AIDS crisis, raising public awareness of these social issues.

In contrast to the primary use of visuals for documentation, as done mostly by visual sociologists and anthropologists, the relationship between the researcher and the subject is more dialogic, when employing the technique of photo-elicitation. In a typical photo-elicitation interview, a discussion is stimulated and guided by images (Collier, 1967). While the researcher takes pictures of the subject's world, it is the individual pictured (or an individual from the pictured world) who interprets the images, creating a "listening" opportunity for the researcher.

Participatory Photography

Known variously as "photo voice," "talking pictures," or "visual voices," this technique of participatory photography puts the camera in the hands of the people, who are encouraged to document and co-share their own reality through photos (Wang, 1999; Wang & Burris, 1994; Wang, Burris, & Xiang, 1996). The process of taking a photograph provides an opportunity to develop a story that was previously rejected, silenced, or overlooked. Further, the photograph's narrative becomes a participatory site for wider storytelling, spurring community members to further reflect, discuss, and analyze the issues that confront them (Lykes, 1997; Wang, 2003).

Participatory photography has been utilized in varied settings with diverse populations, including the homeless in Ann Arbor, Michigan (Wang, 2003); peer educators for youth sexuality in Cape Town, South Africa, (Moss, 1999); young homeless women in Detroit (Killion & Wang, 2000); with slum youth in Nairobi, Kenya; and with street children in Guatemala (Gonzalez, 2003). The purpose of Fotokids in

Guatemala, for instance, is to develop skills and self-esteem among children (Gonzalez, 2003). Founded in 1991 by Nancy McGirr, an American photojournalist, underprivileged Guatemalan children learn camera skills to shoot pictures, and to articulate their viewpoint through photos to community members. The work of Fotokids, which has since expanded to neighboring Honduras, has been exhibited in Britain, Germany, and Spain, and featured in promotional campaigns for children's rights. Several "Fotokids" are presently studying art, photography, and journalism, having found an empowering way to express themselves.

Another notable example of participatory photography from Guatemala is PhotoVoice, a project of the Association of Maya Ixil Women, who live in the highlands of Guatemala. PhotoVoice has helped local Mayan communities to recover stories of its three-decade long internal war, reflect upon its debilitating effects, and rebuild community (Lykes, 1997). Through photography, indigenous Mayan women developed a public record of their lives. PhotoVoice was inspired by the action-based participatory photography project conducted by rural Chinese women in Yunnan province (a photo book called Visual Voices: 100 photographs of Village China by the Women of Yunnan Province, 1995, was compiled).

In essence, by placing cameras in the hands of people, a facilitator or researcher can gain insights into people's lived experiences, which were previously overlooked, rejected, or silenced. The photograph's narrative becomes a participatory site for wider storytelling, community discussion, and action.

Participatory Photography in the *Taru* Project

Inspired by this Freirean technique, disposable cameras were handed out (under the guidance of the present authors) in 2002 to 11 listeners (7 women and 4 men) of *Taru*, an entertainment-education radio program in India. *Taru* was a 52-episode entertainment-education radio soap opera, broadcast in India from February, 2002 to February, 2003. Its purpose was to promote gender equality, small family size, reproductive health, caste and communal harmony, and community development.

The purpose of our participatory photography exercise was to gauge the influence of *Taru* on audience members in three villages of Bihar, India – Abirpur, Kamtaul, and Madhopur. Several *Taru* listening groups were active in these villages during 2002-2003, when *Taru* was broadcast in India's Bihar State. As opposed to asking subjects' questions, and thereby constraining the nature and scope of their word responses, they were asked to capture *Taru's* influence on them (or their community) through the language of images (Singhal, Sharma, Papa, & Witte, 2004). Our invitation to *Taru* listeners -- to "shoot back" (in images) the influence of the radio serial in their lives -- yielded some 145 photographs. After developing these pictures, we took the pictures back to our participants and asked the participants to narrate what the picture was depicting, what it meant to them, why did they take it, and so on.

We analyzed the data to answer the following research question: *How do our participants' photos allow them (a) to co-share their lived reality, (b) to raise certain social issues for community discussion and action, (c) to develop a story that was previously marginalized, rejected, silenced, or overlooked, and (d) to talk about Taru's influence on them or their community?*

Co-sharing of Reality

Several photographs allowed the participants to co-share the reality of their lived experiences in rural Bihar. Photographs captured (a) the prevalent traditions and customs of Bihar's patriarchal society, (b) the norm of large family sizes and the resulting low levels of maternal and child health, (c) how children, especially young girls, engage in hard manual labor at home and in the fields, (d) how young girls are denied an education because of responsibilities to attend to household chores, and (e) how women's health is at risk because of poverty and other environmental factors.

Soni's photo of an old woman, who is trying to cover her head with her sari, captured the strong patriarchal undercurrents in rural Bihar. She noted: "This is a very old woman who always covers her head when any man passes her. I asked her why she covered her head and she said because the man who passed us is her brother-in law. Even if he is younger to her because he is from her in-laws family she covered her head. It's to show respect."

Shailendra's photo of a young mother and her six children depicted the social norm of large families in rural Bihar which result in low levels of both maternal and child health. He noted: "This woman has six children. Most of them are malnourished and don't keep good health. She had so many children at a young age, which has affected her and the children."

Meenakshi's photo of a young woman sitting in front of a smoke *chulha* (clay oven) pointed to how poverty in rural areas jeopardized the health of village women. She noted: "This oven is a source of smoke, which affects the health of women. The WHO

has said the women who use this oven inhale 40 percent more smoke than an average person but due to poverty or other reasons this is the primary source of cooking.”

Several photographs captured how young children -- both boys and girls – engaged in hard manual labor. Manjeet’s photo of a young boy working in a field was accompanied by the following narrative: “This boy is planting some seeds. This represents how this boy goes to school as well as he works on his parents’ farm.” A similar photo of a young girl taken by Manjeet was accompanied by the following statement: “This girl is planting potatoes. She is farming.” Several photos spoke to how young girls are held back at home to help with household chores, depriving them the opportunity to go to school. Vandana’s photograph of a young girl who is helping with household chores was accompanied by the following narrative: “This is a small girl and she is working so hard, as you can see. One should not make young girls work so hard. They should be encouraged to study further.” Meenakshi’s photo of a 4 or 5 year old with half a dozen goats reinforced this sentiment: “This girl is taking the goats to graze.... girls are not encouraged to study, in the same way this girl is sent to work. Parents shouldn’t do this. Girls should be sent to school, but because of poverty girls are not given an opportunity and their future is ruined.”

A Call for Community Discussion and Action

Several photographs, and their accompanying narratives, went beyond just describing the lived reality of participants and called for community discussion, mobilization, and action.

Kumkum’s photo of a woman in front of her sewing machine was accompanied by a call to the community to engage in more self-help and income-generating initiatives,

especially for uneducated women: “This woman teaches sewing at home and earns money. Every village should have a stitching center. Women who don't go to school or are illiterate can at least do this. You don't have to be literate to learn this and earn enough to stand on your feet. They (women) won't have to depend on anyone for money or anything else.”

Vandana's clicked a photo of 16 year old girl, who was married a year or two ago, advocating for stopping this practice of child marriage. Vandana noted: “She was married at a very young age. You can make out how sad she is. One should not marry a girl at such a young age. Her life also gets ruined and there are other problems too. This was the age for her to study and she is married with a kid.”

Vandana took another photo to advocate for rural communities to have small families, noting how large families contribute to poverty and malnutrition. Vandana narrated the photo of a young mother with six children as follows: “Too much population! One woman has so many children. People from different castes and tribes come to the village. They have such large families. Even food is being cooked outside. Will they be able to provide for so many family members? They don't have a home, they have a shelter and they were sitting outside with their kids so I took the picture. Some people have everything, some nothing!”

Several photographs documented the unhygienic, unsanitary, and polluted conditions of the village environment, and called for the community members to get their acts together to do something about them. Vandana's photo, and its accompanying narrative, captured this sentiment: “There is so much trash next to where these people are sitting. There is sewage close by too, which is a breeding ground for flies. All these lead

to the spread of diseases. I took this picture so that we can clean up places like this.”

Meenaskhi Kumari took a long shot of the village well and its surrounding area and noted: “This is near a well in our village, which is very useful for us. But next to the well there is dirty stagnant water. This dirty water is not cleaned which affects people who live nearby and also those who use this water. I haven’t done anything about it. But I feel I can tell people to keep cleaning. They may not listen to me but at least somebody can put chemicals to clean it.

Voicing a Marginalized, Silenced, or Rejected Story

Several photographs provided an opportunity for our participants to develop a story that was previously marginalized, rejected, silenced, or overlooked. In some cases the participants, through their photos, spoke on behalf of “others,” including for the children, the elderly, and the *dalits* (people of the lower caste). In other cases, the participants gave voice to their own previously-silenced stories.

Speaking for Others. Several photographs that were discussed in the previous section gave voice to children’s causes, advocating, for instance, for the education of young girls. Children’s voices are often missing in societal discourse, and several of our participants (as noted previously) tried to speak on their behalf.

Several other photographs portrayed the neglect of the elderly by their children. While it is still the norm in rural Bihar for sons (usually the eldest one) to take care of elderly parents, the photographs suggested that such was not always the case. For instance, Vandana’s photo of an old man on a dirt floor captured the following sentiment: “He is a very poor old man who is disabled. He has three sons neither of whom takes care of him. He was sleeping on the floor in dirt.” Meenakhi’s photo of an elderly man was

accompanied by a similar narrative: “These days he doesn’t work. He did whatever was in his capacity to educate his two children. His children are grown up and have their own family. But, today his children don’t support him and do not look after him. They are disrespectful. This is a big problem in our society. Parents rear their children but then their children distance themselves from their parents. How do you think the parents feel? This shouldn’t happen.” Soni Kumari found irony in the situation that parents in rural Bihar crave for a male child, who in later life abandons the parents. Her photo of a dilapidated straw house in Abirpur Village was accompanied by the following narrative: “In this house, the son doesn’t look after the parents at all. People crave for a son but then see...this [man] has a son, a daughter-in law and even grandsons but nobody looks after them. I felt really bad for the people who live there [in the house]. I felt that if they had a daughter the situation would have been different.”

Some photographs spoke on behalf of the *dalits*, especially highlighting the need for them to have opportunities for education. For instance, Kumkum’s photo of a teenage *dalit* girl was accompanied the following narrative: “This is a lower caste girl. She does housework, as she is uneducated. Education is very important. Say if you need to sign; you cannot sign unless you are educated or you cannot read a letter unless you know how to read.” Vandana in Kamtaul Village took a photo to show how the *dalits* could engage in self-help and literacy activities. She noted: These women are from the backward classes and are teaching other backward women.”

Speaking for Self. Several photographs gave voices to the participants own stories that were previously marginalized, silenced, overlooked, or rejected. For instance, Soni asked someone to take a picture of her with a telephone and provided the following

narrative: “Earlier when I used to hold the phone my hands would shake now they don’t anymore.” Soni’s narrative alludes to how material symbols of progress, such as a telephone, are usually the domain of urban elite homes, not of rural households like her own. Further, when such technology comes to the village (Soni’s home is one among a few hundred households that has a telephone), usually such symbols are appropriated by the men. Through her narrative, she is voicing the empowering dimensions of appropriating a new technology.

In another photo, Vandana (who asked her cousin to take the picture) is standing next to a young man of her age (about 17-years-old). When asked what the picture signified, she said: “This is my friend. He is [attending] my school. People say that girls shouldn’t talk to boys. Some people still think that way and say, ‘why did you take this picture?’ But I think I did the right thing and it is okay.” When one of the present authors (Singhal) further debriefed her on this picture a few months later, she noted: “Yes, this boy studies in my high school and we attend the same coaching class. I feel comfortable talking to him and sharing my thoughts with him. I am not shy and timid like other girls of Village Kamtaul, who feel nervous talking to boys. If Taru and Shashikant [two of the main characters in the radio soap opera] can be good friends, why can’t we?” In the picture, Vandana is donning jeans, an outfit that conservative villagers regard as inappropriate. Also, perhaps for the first time in the history of Kamtaul Village, a young woman invited a young man to stand beside her and pose for a photograph. Interactions between young unmarried men and women are taboo in rural Bihar. Such a norm is understood; it is not debated, discussed, or voiced. Vandana credited her listening of *Taru* as being the engine for her to voice such hitherto “silenced” thoughts.

Taru's Influence

Some photos, and their accompanying narratives, directly alluded to *Taru's* influence on the participants. In their photos, participants found a way to represent several of *Taru's* themes, as well as the attributes of some of its key characters. For instance, Kumkum took a picture of a daughter-in-law combing the hair of her mother-in-law, noting: "In *Taru*, Neha is showed taking care of her mother-in-law. Similarly, in this picture, a daughter-in law is taking care of her mother-in law. So I wanted to show the love these two have for each other through this picture." Shailendra Singh took a photo of a *dalit* community worker and noted: "He stays in the lower caste neighborhood (*harijan basti*). Like Loni baba in *Taru*, he too protests against the disruptive elements in society."

Some photos emphasized the theme of intercaste harmony, a major issue in *Taru*. Manjeet (a high caste participant) asked a friend to take his photo with a *dalit* and provided the following narrative: "This person is from a lower caste. We shouldn't have any discrimination because of caste. Even in the past we were trying to overcome the caste issue but after *Taru* program caste discrimination [in our village] is on a decline.

Mukesh's photo of two girls helping each other to ride a bicycle, emphasized the gender equality message of *Taru*, including certain changes in young women's behaviors in his Abirpur Village. As he noted: "These girls are trying to learn to ride a bike. After listening to *Taru*, girls are changing. Listening to radio these girls learn new ideas. It doesn't have to be because of *Taru*, but they are influenced by something new.

Conclusions

Our experience with using participatory photography as a way to understand the world of E-E audience members yielded rich insights. Our participants provided insights

into their lived experiences, and were able to develop certain narratives that were previously marginalized, silenced, overlooked, or rejected. The photograph's narrative, in some cases, called for wider community discussion, mobilization, and action.

For visuals to become truly participatory, at least in the Freirean sense, it is important that the participants not just take the photos and share their stories with the researcher (as was the case in the present project), but also share their stories with other community members, concerned citizens, and policymakers. We recommend that for participatory photography interventions, instead of just asking participants to take photos and then have them tell stories about those photos, participants share photos and their narratives with other community members to further gauge the commonality and differences of their meanings and interpretations. These community discussion sites can then also serve as a catalyst for community decisions and actions.

Sharing pictures among community members can serve other useful functions as well. In our present research in Bihar, when Mukesh was describing a photo that he took, the young girls around him (who overheard his narration) challenged him and made him own up that he was simply making up a story which he didn't believe in. Thus, collective sharing also would enhance the validity of the findings.

Sharing pictures with policy makers and other concerned citizens (outside the community) is important, as well. Consider the case of SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association), a union of more than 250,000 women members, headquartered in Ahmedabad, India, which uses participatory video to bringing issues to the attention of policy-makers. In the early 1980s, SEWA used participatory video with women vegetable vendors of Manekchowk³, who for three generations sold vegetables on the sidewalks of

the Manekchowk market. With the increasing growth of Ahmedabad city, these vegetable vendors lost their customary place due to increased automobile traffic, the construction of new parking lots, and zealous efforts of the local police. The municipal authorities of Ahmedabad considered the women vegetable vendors to be a nuisance and legal action was taken against them in 1985. The vegetable-sellers' illegality provided the local police with an opportunity to demand bribes and to harass these women.

In response to this threat, the vegetable vendors were organized by SEWA, who filed a legal suit with the Indian Supreme Court to protest the municipal action. The Supreme Court directed the municipal government to provide an alternative space for the vendors in Manekchowk. SEWA videotaped a meeting held to inform the vegetable vendors of the municipality's proposal for an alternative space for them.

The municipal proposal met varied reactions. Some women were skeptical about the honesty of the municipal authorities. Others felt that the proposal should have been made earlier. Some felt that SEWA would face strong political pressures if they accepted the municipality's proposal. Other women felt that no price was too high if they could escape police harassment. The women of the Manekchowk market showed emotion, enthusiasm, and rational logic as they discussed their problem and various solutions. The next morning, the General Secretary of SEWA, Ela Bhatt, invited the Municipal Commissioner to watch the videotape. He viewed the agitated faces of the women and better understood their fear of the police, their distrust of the municipality, and their sense of solidarity. He empathized with the women of Manekchowk and their problems. As a result, the proposal for an alternative space for the vegetable-sellers was dropped. So,

participatory visuals, in the form of photographs or video, have the potential to bridge the gap between citizens and policy-makers.

In future work, we intend to position participatory photography at the interface of theory, method, and praxis (see also Morphy & Banks, 1997). A methodological tool in practice cannot be theoretically neutral since it is aligned with the objectives of the research and privileges the researchers' biases. In taking stock of the sociology of visuals – whether in the form of photos or as video – it is not difficult to discern the obvious conclusion: Almost all photos and videos are taken by “the powerful, the established, the male, the colonizer” to “portray the less powerful, less established, female, and colonized” (Harper, 1994, p. 408). We advocate handing over the means of visual production to the oppressed, the silent, and the muted. While recognizing that visuals allow the “oppressed” to make statements that are not possible by words, we should also remember that all photographs, or video clips, are socially and technically constructed (Harper, 1994). Photography and videography is, by its very nature, more “active” and “intrusive” than simple observation (i.e., methodological “representation” to build theory). The visual act, by itself, is praxis, shaping and changing that which is being documented. For example, our analysis indicates that participants, through photography, opened for critique those seemingly “natural,” common-sense assumptions that take on hegemonic status in social, political, and economic structures.

Our initial analysis illustrates how images, as captured and narrated by participants, are ideological constructions that shape (and are shaped by) cultural and social environments. How images, as embodiments of personal and societal narratives, are incorporated within cultural processes and influence the trajectory of socio-cultural

systems merits further attention. Specifically, our future research goals are to analyze the properties of visual systems, understand conditions of their interpretation, and connect visual systems to complexities of the social and political processes of which they are a part. At the same time, we hope to foreground the absence, or invisibility, of particular characters, scenes, etc., within visual imagery that are as crucial to interpretation as “presence.”

We believe that visual images reveal and evoke the experience of the habitual or routinized nature of social behavior – that is, how the world is seen, felt, and understood by participants. Visual understanding, what we see and how we interpret it, is an important part of the way we exist as humans in the world, and should be treated as such by scholars-practitioners.

References

- Alinsky, S. D. (1971). Rules for radicals. NY: Vintage Books.
- Bateson, G., & Mead, M. (1942). Balinese character: A photographic analysis. New York: New York Academy of Sciences.
- Boal, A. (1979) . The theatre of the oppressed. New York: Urizen Books.
- Chambers, R. (1983). Rural development. Putting the last first. London: Longman.
- Chambers, R. (1999). Foreword. In S.A. White (ed.) The art of facilitating participation (pp. 8-10). New Delhi: Sage.
- Clark, L. (1971). Tulsa. New York: Lunstrum.
- Collier, J., Jr. (1967). Visual anthropology: Photography as a research method. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Freire, P. (1970). Pedagogy of the oppressed. NY: Continuum.
- Gonzalez, D. (2003, May 7). Young lives transformed, guided by a camera lens. The New York Times, pp. 1 and 5.
- Gumucio Dagon, A. (2001). Making waves - Stories of participatory communication for social change. New York: The Rockefeller Foundation.
- Harper, D. (1994). On the authority of the image: Visual methods at the crossroads. In N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds.) Handbook of qualitative research (pp. 403-412). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Hansberry, L. (1964). The movement. New York: Simon & Schuster
- Jacobson, T.L. (1993). A pragmatist account of participatory communication research for national development. Communication Theory, 3(3): 214-230.
- Kerry, J. (1971). The new soldier. New York: Macmillan.
- Killon, C., & Wang, C. C. (2000). Linking African-American mothers across life stage and station through photovoice. Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved, 11, 310-325.
- Lykes, M.B. (1997). Activist participatory research among the Maya of Guatemala: Constructing meanings from situated knowledge. Journal of Social Issues, 53(4), 725-746.

Morphy, H., & Banks, M. (1997). Introduction: Rethinking visual anthropology. In H. Morphy & M. Banks (Eds.), *Rethinking visual anthropology* (pp. 1-35). New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Moss, T. (1999). Photovoice. *Children First*, 3(26), 28-29.

Rose, K. (1992). Where women are leaders: The SEWA movement in India. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Singhal, A. (2001). Facilitating community participation through communication. New York: UNICEF.

Singhal, A. (2003). Entertainment-Education through participatory theater: Freirean strategies for empowering the oppressed. In A. Singhal, M. J. Cody, E.M. Rogers, & M. Sabido (eds.), Entertainment-education and social change: History, research, and practice (pp. in press). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Singhal, A., & Devi, K. (2003). Visual voices in participatory communication. *Communicator*, 37, 1-15.

Singhal, A., & Rogers, E.M. (1989). India's information revolution. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Singhal, A., & Rogers, E.M. (2003). Combating AIDS: Communication strategies in action. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Singhal, A., Sharma, D., Papa, M.J., & Witte, K. (2003). Air cover and ground mobilization: Integrating entertainment-education broadcasts with community listening and service delivery in India. In A. Singhal, M. J. Cody, E.M. Rogers, & M. Sabido (eds.), Entertainment-education and social change: History, research, and practice (pp. in press). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Servaes, J. (1999). Communication for development: One world, multiple cultures. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Servaes, J., Jacobson, T.L., & White, S.A. (1996). Participatory communication for social change. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Uphoff, N. (1985). Fitting projects to people. In Cernea, M.M. (ed.) (1985). Putting people first: Sociological variables in rural development (pp.369-378). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Visual Voices: 100 Photographs of Village China by the Women of Yunnan Province (1995). Yunnan, China: Yunnan People's Publishing House.

Wang, C. (1999). PhotoVoice: A participatory action research strategy applied to women's health. Journal of Women's Health, 8(2), 185-192.

Wang, C. (2003). Using Photovoice as a participatory assessment and issue selection tool: A case study with homeless in Ann Arbor. In M. Minkler & N. Wallerstein (Eds). Community-based participatory health research (pp. 179-195). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Wang, C., & Burris, M. (1994). Empowerment through photo novella: Portraits of participation. Health Education Quarterly, 21(2), 171-186.

Wang, C., Burris, M., & Xiang, Y.P. (1996). Chinese village women as visual anthropologists: A participatory approach to reaching policy-makers. Social Science and Medicine, 42(10), 1391-1400.

White, S.A., & Nair, K.S. (1999). The catalyst communicator: Facilitation without fear. In S.A. White (ed.) The art of facilitating participation (pp. 35-51). New Delhi: Sage.

Table 1. Participatory Versus Non-Participatory Communication Strategies

Participatory Communication Strategies	Versus	Non-Participatory Communication Strategies
<u>Horizontal</u> lateral communication between participants	Versus	<u>Vertical</u> top-down communication from senders to receivers
<u>Process</u> of dialogue and democratic participation	Versus	<u>Campaign</u> to mobilize in a short-term without building capacity
<u>Long-term</u> process of sustainable change	Versus	<u>Short-term</u> planning and quick fix solutions
<u>Collective</u> empowerment and decision-making	Versus	<u>Individual</u> behavior change
<u>With</u> community's involvement	Versus	<u>For</u> the community
<u>Specific</u> in content, language, and culture	Versus	<u>Massive</u> and broad-based
<u>People's needs</u> are the focus	Versus	<u>Donors' musts</u> are the focus
<u>Owned</u> by the community	Versus	<u>Access</u> determined by social political and economic factors
<u>Consciousness</u> raising	Versus	<u>Persuasion</u> for short-term

Source: Gumucio Dagron (2001).

Endnotes

¹ A version of this paper was presented to the Entertainment-Education and Global Africa Conference, Athens, Ohio, USA, April 15-17, 2004. This paper draws upon Singhal and Devi (2003). We thank Yogita Sharma and Kanta Devi for their inputs to the present project. We thank the following individuals and organizations for their collaboration, support, and conduct of the present research project: David Andrews and Kate Randolph of Population Communications International (PCI), New York; Gopi Gopalakrishnan, Arisingh Dutt, Shejo Bose, Neelam Vachani, Sourov Chowdhury, Pankaj Kumar Singh, Gopa Chatterji, Akhilesh Kumar Sharma, and Sushil Kumar of Janani in Patna, India (some of these individuals have moved from Janani since our collaboration); Karuna Shrivastav, Dr. Alka Kumar, and Kamal Dutt of All India Radio; Pandit Ram Dayal Sharma of Brij Lok Madhuri; Mrs. Usha Bhasin of Doordarshan; P.N. Vasanti, Mumtaz Ahmed, Chetna Verma, Alok Shrivastav, Alee Sinha, and the team at field researchers of the Centre for Media Studies, New Delhi, India. This research was supported by a grant from PCI to Ohio University.

² This section draws upon Singhal (2003).

³ This case draws upon Singhal and Rogers (1989).