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Critical video engagements: Empathy, subjectivity and changing narratives of water resources through participatory video

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ABSTRACT

This article engages a critical feminist analysis of a community-based participatory video (PV) process focused on water and sanitation issues in underserved settlements of Accra, Ghana and Cape Town, South Africa. With focus on emotions and empathy, we highlight these concepts in relation to participant narratives and shifting subjectivities. In so doing, we consider how arts based engagement (in this case, through participatory video), might serve to foster new ways of relating to water resources and water infrastructures. The analysis highlights how the participants themselves reflect on PV as a vehicle for personal transformation, knowledge co-creation and a shifting sense of their own 'watered' subjectivity. We find that the PV process helps to uncover and identify knowledge and process gaps on by enabling individuals and communities—often unheard—to participate in civic and political debates around resource governance. While many positive elements were emphasized, we also suggest that there is a need for critical engagements that also address challenges associated with these methods, including limitations with respect to fostering fundamental long-term change in communities. In the conclusion, we broaden beyond our individual case studies to consider implications for community engagement and citizenship practices in the realm of natural resource governance.

1. Introduction

This paper critically assesses the role Participatory Video (PV) can play in water and sanitation governance through case studies with communities in underserved settlements of Accra, Ghana and Cape Town, South Africa. These case study sites, as with many other regions of the world, are important given concerns related to equitable access and governance of water and sanitation resources. While the broader context of our work highlights issues of citizen engagement, our focus here is on the participants' changing subjectivities through the research process and the important role emotions and empathy play, both in resource governance, and also in how we understand water and water infrastructures.

It is estimated that globally 783 million people lack access to clean drinking water and an additional 2.5 billion people lack access to improved sanitation – meaning that as much as 37% of the world's population lack access to basic water and sanitation (UNICEF, 2012). According to UNESCO (2006), this crisis has been mainly caused not by a lack of supply or technology, but rather is a consequence of failures in water governance. Water governance, as described by Castro (2007), involves the interactions around water, including those between governments, large businesses and political parties, civil and other organizations representing sectoral interests, international agencies, NGOs and other relevant power holders. These competing interests inevitably result in socio-political confrontations around how water and water infrastructures should be governed, and by whom. Developing governance practices and processes grounded in principles of sustainability and social justice therefore "is one of the most urgent challenges facing water governance in the 21st century" (Castro, 2007; p. 99).

There are a number of approaches that attempt to address these complex environmental, political, and social processes that shape the management of water and sanitation, many with the goal of improving access for vulnerable and underserved populations. One approach is through action-oriented community-based initiatives intended to enable communities to participate more meaningfully in decisions that affect their lives. Community-based Research (CBR), including Participatory Action Research (PAR), involves focus on collaboration with the populations affected by the issue being studied, for purposes of education, enhancing community agency, or effectuating change (Evans and Foster, 2009; Bergold and Thomas, 2012; Hall et al., 2015; Tandon et al., 2016). Those concerned with water governance have highlighted key opportunities that

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such approaches may hold to empower communities and work collaboratively towards fundamental change (Figueiredo and Perkins, 2013; Scurrah, 2013; Harris and Morinville, 2013; Perkins, 2014).

Our work here analyzes a Participatory Video (PV) effort undertaken in underserved communities of Accra, Ghana and Cape Town, South Africa between 2015 and 2016, with the overarching aim of working towards improved access to water and sanitation services. More immediately, a goal was to provide a platform for reflection on what might be needed from a community perspective to enable more participatory and equitable water governance. By analyzing narratives of those who participated in the PV exercise, here we consider the successes of the effort, and also engage in critical reflection to enable learning from the work. Based on interviews with the participants we aim to give a sense of their experience of the PV training and production, while also attending to their changing understanding of, and relationship to, issues of unequal and unreliable water and sanitation in their communities (specifically in Site C, Khayelitsha, Cape Town, South Africa and Teshie, Accra, Ghana). Among other matters explored through a critical feminist lens, we address self confidence of the participants connected to the experience with video training and production, related narratives of self-transformation, as well as key elements of interest for our analysis including themes of emotions, empathy, changing citizen subjectivities. Further, we also reflect on the potential for, and limitations of, research and training efforts of this type. We provide a brief discussion of what our work suggests in terms of the opportunities and challenges of PV in Section 3.

1.1. Contextualizing subjectivity, emotions, and empathy in participatory video

Neimanis (2013) provides a refreshing take on how a feminist subjectivity 'watered' can change our understanding and relationship to other places and beings — in brief, water is porous and necessarily connects diverse bodies, ecologies, and places. Thinking through, and understanding ourselves through water, in turn, can help us to better understand the complex linkages between ourselves and others, our bodies and other living beings that similarly depend on the same resources, and also are subject to the same challenges when water bodies are contaminated. As she suggests, a feminist 'watery subjectivity' serves other goals connected to environmental justice and eco-feminist ethics, while also connecting to broader philosophical and epistemological frameworks, including better understanding linkages to questions of language, coloniality and racism. As Neimanis states, by figuring oneself as a body of water, "one can embody these pivots and become the confluence of these questions" (p. 38). This conceptualization weaves together feminist ideas and ethics of embodiment with broader ethical, political and ecological contexts, bearing an influence on how one charts and comes to understand one's own politics of location—as we are located and embodied in webs of ecological and social relations that bear on our politics and sense of self in important ways.

Such a renewed watery subjectivity can also inspire a renegotiation of the relationship between nature and culture, as well as fostering a feminist and posthumanist appreciation for more-than-human beings. Following from Neimanis, attention to our watery locations and subjectivities, including the ways that we are intimately albeit differently connected to other beings or forms of pollution, we can also effectuate greater attention to systemic oppressions that affect some humans, or species, more than others. As Andrijasevic and Khalili (2013) argue, "by interrogating the formation of subjectivities, bodies and communities, starting with water, we begin to sketch a mode of analysis that would consider how human histories, cultures, and politics are constituted by way of water and how they employ water" (p. 103).[1]

In working with community members on issues of water and sanitation, and using arts based methods to do so, we are particularly interested in how participants narrate their own shifting senses of self in relation to the water related infrastructures and environments they inhabit, including other community members and the broader ecologies in which they are embedded. Niemanis' work is central to the analytical approach we take in seeking to understand the individual as agent of change, and as a pivot of transformative relationships, while necessarily attending to broader socio-ecological, political, and infrastructural relationships. By highlighting PV processes in enabling new understandings and relationships to water and sanitation (in)access, we are also interested in drawing attention to ways that these inequalities influence one's sense of self, or of others (cf. Morales, 2015), as well as the interest and capacity to take action to improve access or work towards change in different forms (cf. Latta and Wittman, 2012 and others working on themes of environmental citizenship, for instance).

Linked to changing understandings and senses of self, work across the humanities and social sciences has been increasingly attentive to the intersection of emotion and subjectivity, including for resource governance and access (e.g. Morales and Harris, 2014). Several scholars have demonstrated that decisions regarding resource use and management are often influenced by emotions, relationships, power dynamics, and shifting subjectivities (Wutich and Ragsdale, 2008; Wong and Sharp, 2009; Nightingale, 2011, 2013). Sultana (2011) and others (see Wutich, 2009; Goldin, 2010) argue that resource struggles are not just material struggles, but also emotional ones. Emotion, similar to the concept of subjectivity, is understood not as individualized, but rather as lived and experienced in embodied spaces, and in contextually specific ways (Woodward and Lea, 2010). Speaking to the contextual dimensions of emotions, it is important to recognize that emotions "may often be triggered in response to power structures, and are frequently experienced in relation to whether one violates or meets expectations related to social norms" (Morales and Harris, 2014; p. 706). Specific to natural resource management, the work of Wutich (2009) and Nightingale (2011) in particular demonstrate how community members' shifting subjectivities according to contextual situations were predominantly experienced as shifting emotions – e.g., from those of pride and power to powerlessness and discomfort.

Avelar (2015) also speaks of the crucial aspect of emotions in water security and resource struggles with women in rural El Salvador, and the way they influence the outcomes of resource access and ultimately, shape the way critical resources are managed and experienced in everyday practices and survival struggles. As such, these authors call for greater attention to the ways that resources and emotions matter in everyday survival struggles, including access to water for basic needs. It is noteworthy that works along these lines draw on diverse methods, including interviews, surveys, life histories, and other approaches (often quite distinct from the methods and concepts associated with the discipline of psychology). In light of this, and particularly given the insight that emotions are not an individual phenomenon, but are linked to community and social dynamics (cf. Morales and Harris, 2014), there is interest in pushing methodological approaches on these concerns forward, including experimenting with alternative research methods, such as storytelling and art, to access and critically reflect on emotion and subjectivity. For instance, work by Mumby and Putnam (1992) found that as individuals share emotional experiences, their initial sense of anonymity gives way to feelings of community through the development of mutual affection, and coherence of purpose. How individuals narrate and navigate shifting emotions and senses of the self in a community context (subjectivity) is a key concern of the work presented here.

Subjectivity has been described as "one's understanding of self and of what it means and feels like to exist within a specific place, time, or set of relationships" (Morales and Harris, 2014; p. 706). Furthermore, it may also reference ones sense of identity (e.g. to feel as a woman) while recognizing that such connections are not fixed, nor uniform, and that

[1] See Krieger (2011) for further discussion of eco-social theories that similarly focus on embodiment.

subjectivities are strongly connected to and influenced by social context, and as such often shift in relation to changing circumstances (Sultana, 2009; Nightingale, 2011, 2013). Subjectivity – *how one feels about oneself and how one understands oneself in relation*–can thus change as political, social, ecological or infrastructural contexts and situations shift. Power structures and dynamics are often central to such shifts, and have been increasingly explored within the context of environmental citizenship and linked debates (cf. Agrawal, 2005).

Building on these themes, our contribution here works to connect interest in emotional geographies with broader interest in shifting subjectivities and citizenship. Antonsich (2010) has described the notion of citizenship as 'belonging', "a discursive resource which constructs, claims, justifies, or resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion" (p. 4). Similar conceptualizations have been proposed by Fenster (2005) who sees belonging as an intimate attachment to place ('sense of belonging') produced out of everyday practices. Although there have been advances in demonstrating that citizenship is an experiential and negotiated social process (see Ehrkamp and Leitner, 2006), less is known about the way citizenship is reflected, manifested and contested through emotions – a concern that has been largely sidelined in the social sciences. Ho (2009) argues for greater consideration of emotions with respect to citizenship, and that we should "think about citizenship in a contextual and situated way, starting from the emotional constructs and experiences through which individuals find meaning in the social world" (p. 801). This, Ho argues, highlights the agency of individuals to give "emotional meaning to the social relationships and structures shaping their everyday lives" (p. 801). These considerations can be helpful in understanding how, for example, particular emotions are translated into motivations, which then produce behavior, action, and policy in relation to resource use and governance (cf. Wright, 2010).

Other recent work by Horschelmann and El Refaie (2014) speaks to emotions and the everyday practices of citizenship by exploring the perspectives of youth in the UK following the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. Their work demonstrates the complex entanglements of young people's lives with international politics and develops a relational conceptualization of citizenship. This perspective recognizes that "citizenship is already practiced by young people across different spheres of their lives, not a future achievement" (p. 445). In this way the authors, and others (see Lawy and Biesta, 2006), conceptualize citizenry not as a status or outcome of a developmental trajectory but as a practice, embedded within the day-to-day reality of people's lives. Similarly, Askins (2016) describes the concept of emotional citizenry as a "process grounded in the complexities of places, lives and feelings, exceeding any fixed status of citizenship to be achieved in the formal political sphere" (p. 515). These works together argue that these emotional encounters evidence desires to (re)make society at the local level, beyond normalised productions and practices of citizenship as bounded in/outsiders, in which a politics of engagement is enacted. A relational citizenship, in this way, is therefore argued to be engendered through local spaces and enacted via desires to belong and quests for recognition.

It is certain the focus on emotion does not deny the importance of material connections and embodiment. Indeed, many feminists have refused binary distinctions between mind and body, as the previous example of 'water subjectivity' above suggests. In this way, feeling (emotion) and thinking (rationality) are necessarily linked—as we understand ourselves differently in relation to waterways and other bodies, we are able to understand our intimate embodied connections to other beings—connections that are also rational as our health and well-being also depends on health of these connections, and of the waterways that link us. In this way, our attention to emotion and embodiment should not be taken to suggest that we assert any unwarranted and tired connections between masculinity and rationality, the mind and objectivity, or femininity as linked to emotion and the body—indeed, we refuse such mappings and instead seek to attend to multiple and complex interconnections (Longhurst, 2001; Tolia-Kelly, 2006; Thomas, 2007; Smith et al., 2009; Pile, 2010). We do seek to extend the critique that the exclusion of emotion from discussion of policy, or linked notions of rationality, has implications for how and in which ways we interact with our surroundings, and ways we make decisions in its regard (Bondi, 2004). Instead, we find that a more holistic conceptualization that recognizes and is based on our linkages and connections to nature, to waterways, and to other beings is likely to be a preferred basis, both for theory and practice in the realm of resource governance.

Our analysis also gives particular focus to *empathy*, as one of a number of particular emotions that has been emphasized in recent discussions. Empathy refers to one's capacity to gain a grasp of the content of other people's interests, and to explain what one thinks, does, or feels in relation to our capacity to respond to others ethically (Coplan and Goldie, 2011). The focus on empathy provides a particularly fruitful entry point regarding the broader themes of watery subjectivities (ethics and linking diverse bodies and locales), and as such, we hope our analysis will foreground empathy among a list of other emotions that have already been considered as important for resource governance and nature-society linkages, including hope, shame, sadness and frustration (Goldin, 2015). Our discussion of empathy in particular stems from recent interest in what it might mean to foster critical creative empathy, and what potential this might have to create new types of politics and solidarities, including possibilities that empathy might serve as one of many possible triggers to social change (Angeles and Pratt, 2017). We find the empirics of our work, as described in the next section, speak loudly to and warrant a particular focus on empathy as an important consideration in community driven interventions such as this. Summarizing recent trends in work of this type, Sultana (2011) argues that "resource access, use, control, ownership and conflict are not only mediated through social relations of power, but also through emotional geographies where gendered subjectivities and embodied emotions constitute how nature–society relations are lived and experienced on a daily basis" (p. 163). Our analysis learns from and contributes to the growing interest in these questions, with particular attention to how emotions such as empathy shape, and are shaped by, our relationship and behavior towards water resources and infrastructures, including linkages between ways that emotions and experiences are mediated through, shaped by, and contribute to possibilities for participatory resource governance (cf. Morales and Harris, 2014).

1.2. Participatory video: Two case studies

The research discussed in this article was conducted in collaboration with community partner organizations Iliso Care Society in Khayelitsha, South Africa and the Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC) in Accra, Ghana. This project was part of larger (removedforanonymity)[2] research effort being conducted at the (removedforanonymity). The organizations were invited as partners on this project given the context, knowledge and impact of their work in these communities.

ISODEC is an Accra based non-governmental organization committed to the promotion of human rights and social justice, especially those suffering marginalization. Their work reaches urban and semi-urban residents targeting issues related to justice, transparency and accountability in resource governance. Iliso Care Foundation, based in Site C Khayelitsha, is also a non-profit organization founded to address poverty, unemployment, and community well-being. Some of their activities include running a childcare center, a nutrition and food program, health and skills development, and a youth choir among other

[2] More details on the broader research program are available on the Program on Water Governance website: http://watergovernance.ca as well as the site for the Environment & Development: Gender, Equity, and Sustainability (EDGES): www.edges.ubc.ca.

initiatives.

Each of these case study sites has distinct identities, issues and challenges, all of which are potentially important to consider when attempting to deal with the complex questions of emotion, subjectivity or citizenship. Khayelitsha is a rapidly growing black township on the outskirts of Cape Town. Official statistics state roughly 400 000 residents live in the expansive settlement, with researchers citing numbers surpassing 1,000,000 (Thompson and Nleya, 2008). Official statistics suggest unemployment in Khayelitsha as high as 38% in 2011 (CCT, 2013) and the situation remains one of inadequate services, given the long histories of inequality linked to the Apartheid era and continuing to the present. In 2011, the national Census reported an estimated 96.6% of households in Cape Town had access to piped water within 200 m from home while 87% of households had access to piped water inside their dwelling or yard (HDA, 2013). These numbers are, however, lower in semi-informal and squatter settlements in townships such as Khayelitsha, where only 62% of households have access to piped water in their dwelling or inside their yard (HDA, 2013).

In the capital city of Accra, there are also huge spatial disparities in access to potable water (Songsore, 2008, 2010). The Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL), the sole regulated provider of piped water to all urban areas in Ghana, is able to meet only 46.5% of water demands across the nation (GSS, 2012). In the metropolitan capital city of Accra 64.4% of residents have access to pipe-borne water (both in-house and in-compound), while the rest depend on other water sources mostly provided by informal private vendors (GSS, 2012). An earlier study by Ainuson (2010) estimates that in Accra, only 25% of residents have 24 h water supply, while 30% access water supply service average 12 h a day for five days a week. For another 35% of residents, water supply is estimated at two days per week and the remaining 10% who live mainly in poor neighborhoods at the urban fringes have no access to piped water supply.

Both these sites, however distinct, share a daily struggle of access to water and sanitation. As such, they share a common condition in terms of living in a locale with insufficient access to basic services, and with daily challenges related to securing water access, quality, affordability and linked concerns. In this sense, we expected that residents in both locales would narrate their daily experience of these conditions, emphasizing material resource conditions related to water and sanitation infrastructure, while also expressing their emotional experiences, including senses of frustration or sense of exclusion or inclusion related to water access, affordability, or governance. As we report below, much of what we emphasize here highlights the particular shifting subjectivities and emotions among those who participated in our PV process, learning from their neighbors' experiences of these issues, but also receiving benefits through direct engagement with the participatory video training and research.

2. Methods

In each urban site, a week-long training workshop was conducted involving leaders from partner organizations and members of their communities. In Khayelitsha this included 23 youth participants between the ages of 19–23 (12 women, 11 men) who were selected by the partner organization. The youth are part of a choir and were already familiar with working together in a group setting. In Accra, the participants were selected by the partner organization ISODEC based on previous connections and interest and experience with water and sanitation issues, and included 13 participants (8 government Assembly representatives, 3 NGO representatives, and 2 community members from Teshie). As such, the two sites were distinct in that Khayelitsha participants were youth (without a particular interest in water and sanitation), whereas the group in Teshie included NGO activists and local officials who had shared interest in and responsibility for water and sanitation in this community.

The training was identical in each site and included story-board theme development, script writing, communication skills, and all phases of video production (preparation, production and co-editing). The participants then conducted interviews in their community on issues related to water and sanitation over the course of an additional week followed by group co-editing sessions. The design of the project and themes in the videos materialized through the workshops and mutual collaboration. As such, there was attention to water and sanitation, but also broader themes of interest to the communities (e.g., garbage collection, government responsibility, crime and safety). Several sub-themes emerged in the Khayelitsha workshop, including hygiene, dignity and safety around the use of communal taps and public toilets, pollution and impacts on water quality, and other social concerns including teen pregnancy, drugs and alcohol abuse. In Teshie, Accra, prominent themes included water access, quality and infrastructural challenges, and a significant lack of sanitation facilities.

In each of the communities, following the production of the community videos, focus groups were conducted with local government officials working in water, sanitation and social development. The goal of this phase was to share the outputs of the participatory video process, and also to use the videos as tools to elicit feedback from those directly engaged in the policy realm. As such, the videos were used as a vehicle to share and amplify community perspectives, working to ensure that these perspectives were known to appropriate policy audiences. We also sought to explore the ways that policy makers' senses of these issues might shift through engagement with the community videos. In addition, we held screenings of the final videos in each community, and additional focus groups with civil society organizations in each city working directly in the area of water and sanitation. A major source of the data for the current paper is the post-project interviews that were conducted with all of the individuals who had participated directly in the PV training. Our interest was to gain an understanding of their experience, the impact of the process on their own sense of self (e.g. to assess empowerment, or other senses of individual transformation), and to critically assess the role of PV in community engagement and policy change. Working with community members, we developed an interview protocol to carry out with the participants, including questions about the issues (e.g. how their understanding and relationship to questions of water and sanitation had changed) as well as what they personally had experienced and learned as part of the PV process. We have used pseudonyms in the discussion below to protect the confidentiality of participants.

3. Changing narratives and understanding of water and sanitation issues

Our discussion here focuses on three primary themes that emerged from interviews with PV project participants in Khayelitsha and Teshie: *subjectivity, emotions and empathy.* The themes were chosen based on our reading of associated literatures (detailed above), with careful attention to how these themes were expressed through the interview transcripts. These results illustrate how, and in which ways, PV can be an effective and powerful tool for changing narratives around ones understanding of self and, in this context, water resources. The results suggest that video methods, including the combination of images and sound, have strong potential to convey and evoke empathy and a range of other emotions. In addition, the results support recent claims with respect to the ways that video and critical arts-based interventions can serve as effective vehicles for personal transformation and knowledge co-creation (Tremblay and Jayme, 2015). As we discuss in turn, we found compelling insights related to the key themes of subjectivity, emotion, and empathy, which we detail before turning to the question of how PV and other arts based techniques might be meaningful to garner insights and also to promote change on these important questions.

3.1. Subjectivity

Our particular emphasis here is on the ways that participants discuss their own transformation during the PV process, and in particular, the ways that they narrate new appreciation or understandings of the self, and themselves as citizens, notably in relation to the water related infrastructure and the broader social-infrastructural environment that surrounds them (including how participants emphasized differentiated access and inequality as key to these considerations). We believe that by highlighting one's changing relationship to water, and how one expresses one's own position in relation to socio-technical and hydro-social complexes related to water access and conditions, we might be better able to think through practices of critical reflexivity—enabling a basis from which to think more critically about the impact of our assumptions, values, and actions on others (Cunliffe, 2004).

Many of the participants experienced a changing sense of self ('*subjectivity*') though the PV process. Ebo, from Teshie, for example experienced feelings of confidence and pride in his new found abilities.

> *"About myself, I got to know that there was nothing like impossible when it comes to video, yah, because even after our first exercise, I think I had a very good, the best shot in the first video. Terry encouraged me that I can go further, do better than that, So, I'm capable of doing anything I wish or, ah, I want to do. I know I can do it. So, it has, it has really given me the experience, ya, to know that I can really get hold of the camera and do good."*

Sisi, also from the community of Teshie, revealed a feeling of agency through the workshop – an enhanced ability to share opinions and observations about her experience and that of her community. "*Here, through this workshop, I was not- I can not even talk to my community but through this workshop I kind of view my communities, talk to them, know about information in the community, the problems they are facing in sanitation."* Here, we see confidence, skill building, and also community interaction and enhanced familiarity as all served through the PV experience. Emotional aspects expressed include pride, confidence, and stronger sense of community cohesion. We also observe senses of responsibility and care towards the greater community. Consider Khayelitsha youth Andile's expectation in moving forward with the project. His goal is to transfer the knowledge learned to other youth in the community, with an eye towards the bigger picture of the project and long-term impact for social change.

> "*So I think its just to acknowledge that its not just about us, umm, the first group that was trained but also about transferring those skills, umm, to other people that can learn. I think as well from us as well I expect that you must be open to learning, as well, in terms of there are other opportunities where we can learn more skills and we can advance what we've learned here. So I would expect, umm, for, for, for everyone to then become comfortable to, to, to explore those learning avenues so that what you've learned in the workshop not only ends there, but then it is taken forward."*

Another participant from South Africa, Aviwe, describes the impact the video process had for him personally but also collectively, to work as a team.

> "*It is a learning curve and also it have a huge impact because I learned a lot besides only video shooting… to work as a team and to know the issues that are happening… also an impact for the young people that were involved. I think it will be a huge impact because some of them, they have no skills besides going to school, after that because of the challenges that they facing, they cannot go further and achieve what they want to achieve. So, it was skills for them and then it was an opportunity to have this now, so that I can do it or make something, all of it."*

Developing employable skills and new capacities was a key interest and motivation for many of the South African youth in this project. Realizing this potential and those of others in Aviwe's group provided a powerful sense of self-accomplishment and enhanced capabilities. Indeed, one outcome of the video project was the creation of a media cooperative, with 10 original members from the group, in which Aviwe played a key leadership role. Since that time, the group has managed to secure several contracts for video work in the community.

In relating to an emotional sense of belonging to place – important for senses as citizenship, as referenced by Antonsich (2010) above, some of the participants expressed a changed narrative or 'watered subjectivity' of their own identity and/or that of water and water issues through the engagement process. Bongani, for example, articulated a new sense of belonging as a citizen. "I *think like, I used to see myself, like as unsatisfied……. I can say like now I have an ID so I can call myself as a citizen, like yah even though I'm still like a teenager, or young. I can say like, I'm a citizen."* This new appreciation or changed sense or recognition of self as a citizen has the potential to be an impactful outcome. Indeed, it is precisely this sense of being recognized, and needing to be engaged, that many emphasize in the literature on environmental citizenship in terms of shifting identification with issues of this type.

For Anathi, we also see the emergences of a 'watered subjectivity' in the way her understanding of water and water conservation in particular has been altered through the project. As she explains "*I learned a lot, the waste that people make in the car washes and the saloons and the taps. People leave the taps open while doing their washings, yes, yah."* In this way, there is some evidence of a renewed sense of the value of water and the need to conserve. Here as well, Anathi understands herself differently as linked to the community in different ways—in part, it is the fluidity and connection through water that forges this sense of awareness and interest in the issues. In a similar way, another youth participant, Bonani, expressed a new appreciation for water in his life, in ways that he previously did not see, or feel.

> *"Ahh, previously we were having, umm how you say, a romance, where these say, we're going to pay water and stuff and then, I didn't care because I don't work, I don't do anything at all and my mother when I pay her money and you are wasting water and I didn't know. I was washing three times a day because I didn't know anything about water and stuff…but I get a lot of things, lot of things about water and stuff and stuff. But now I go deeper and deeper because of the video thing. Because video, it–it means a lot of things man. Today, wha–wha–what I can say for everyone, we need water, you need water, I need water, so take care of water. You see, is what I can say now because water is life for us, you see*"

Although we are able to provide a few brief examples we find here that there is provocative suggestion of the ways that participants understand the water situation, and themselves in relation to it, a bit differently. We see some evidence for an enlivened sense of the possibilities for community engagement in discussion and decisions related to water and sanitation, just as we also find a sense of enriched appreciation for the complexity and interconnections of the issues at stake. As such, our work endorses a sense that PV can be a useful tool in promoting an appreciation of watery subjectivities in the water and sanitation realm—developing an enhanced sense of how we relate to water, as well as the ways that water mediates complex linkages between different peoples, or broader ecologies (in this case, socio-politics and hydro-infrastructures perhaps more than ecologies and more-than-human beings as emphasized by Neimanis). Sultana (2009) in a slightly different mode, similarly draws attention to the ways that water access and conditions are negotiated through bodies, spaces and locations –all drenched with symbolic associations. As she stresses, subjectivities produced in relation to water are simultaneously spatial, ecological and social, yet are unstable and reproduced/challenged in a variety of ways. "It is through the re/negotiations and re/understandings of their waterscapes and hazardscapes that people come to relate to their environments and to each other" (p. 439). While other research methods have made progress towards better understandings of these dynamics, as we explore further below, through training, and the use of images

and audio, PV holds notable potential to explore and draw out these changing relationships and embodied understandings.

3.2. Emotions

In both contexts, PV provided a fertile basis to draw out and speak to emotional concerns, and also appears to have been important to shift the terrain of how the participants felt in social and decision-making settings. In this way, the work offers a specific example of the ways that the terrain of emotion might be dealt with more centrally to enable more equitable and participatory resource governance, particularly for marginalized populations (cf. Morales and Harris, 2014).

One Khayelitsha participant, Akhona, describes feelings of confidence, and pride in learning to use video and the communication skills to interview others in the community.

> "*We used to think that we could never have a chance like to hold a camera or w–we didn't even like, like have a clue like how to use videos. But now, at least like I know how to use videos, and also when I'm watching TVs, like I can analyze like this kind of, umm, video editing is poor or like is superb, yah, I think like it's cool and I like it. It's a positive impact that we got here by participating in this project."*

Here, as with the examples above, we note a strong sense of pride, confidence, and learning. Taking this further, for Doris in Lekma, learning the technical skills has given her the confidence to speak to other members of the community." *Video yah…how to old a camera and I learned all those things and I get them. Now, I can go outside, like with the confidence and say I can use a camera now, this and this and this."* Edward, also from Lekma, expressed similar feelings of agency in communication, including a renewed sense of his knowledge, and the ability to be involved in community discussions:

> "*Ah, this project offers new opportunities on ways to communicate on issues affecting mankind in general. So, ah, taking part, healthy, has been very helpful to me. I was, I was, say, I was a technology phobia, but now I have a lot of confidence to challenge professionals, if not, people within my ranks……. And about the community, I learned, ah, I have been involved in research for a couple of organizations but I, with this, I learned a lot of skill. How to approach people for them to trust me and then open up to them all so as to facilitate my work of research and, ah, ah, influencing work eventually*".

In these ways we see pride in learning new skills, and being able to work in a community setting—both readily transferable to goals related to fostering more engaged citizenry in resource governance and community decision making. Returning to our conceptual framing of 'water subjectivities' and the emotional implications, we see avenues here for expanding ones capacity to step out of the individual sphere into a communal space of knowing and being, of moving beyond the feeling of 'I' to 'We'. Thus, as individuals navigate shifting senses of both the 'I' and the 'we' or the self and the collective, we find that we can gain traction on the emotional dimensions in ways that speak to Bondi's (2004) conceptual push for emotion to be "approached not as an object of study but as a relational, connective medium in which research, researchers and research subjects are necessarily immersed" (p. 1). The process of collaborative research, and using arts-based interventions in particular, can in this way help to shift the sense of self and emotional lives of participants, while also serving to potentially soften the invisible lines between researcher and researched, furthering an enlivened and potentially more equitable process of knowledge co-creation (cf. Wheeler, 2009; Tremblay and Jayme, 2015).

Other emotional aspects stressed included renewed feelings of hope as described by one of the participants in Teshie who had been interviewing community members. "*Yes, there was impact because, the people–they had hope…….they thought maybe things would change."* There is some evidence here that suggests that through their participation with the project, including community interviews and video production, some level of reassurance or positive outlook was instilled, that their voice mattered, or that something, even if just a video, was being done to highlight the current challenges with water and sanitation in their communities. In all of these ways, the engagement process showed some evidence of enabling enriched positive emotions and associations of the type that might serve enhanced resource governance, or more engaged citizen involvement in community water futures. Wright (2012) reaffirms the significance of emotions in shaping society and in 'defining the transformation of people and places', along with broader implications for the discourses and practices of development (p. 1113). She calls for development to be 'perceptible to the senses' and the 'diverse, nuanced worlds that exist', often dismissed or ignored by institutions of power. In relation to enhanced citizenry, Ho (2009) draws attention to this emotional aspect of water as personal and as a matter of concern and motivation for some change to occur. In all of these senses, our work reaffirms the push and interest in emotions in the broader literature on political ecology and natural resources, and also highlights the specific potential for PV and other community based and engaged methods to enable shifting emotional lives in ways that might enhance community well being or promote more engaged community governance. Regarding watery subjectivity, conceptual issues explored related to water and sanitation challenges brought out a range of emotions, including senses of frustration or hope, which together fostered renewed appreciation of what does, and could, bring community members together.

3.3. Empathy

Finally, reflecting on the PV process in this project, many of the participants revealed a new understanding, and greater feelings of empathy in relation to their neighbours' struggles with (in)access to water and sanitation. This theme clearly links to the above discussions, in that this particular emotion might be notable in terms of what it means to foster renewed 'watery subjectivities' and understandings of connection between people and places, or between individuals and their communities. The PV process clearly facilitated and enriched senses of empathy, enabling participants to gain an appreciation of the situation of others' and understand themselves as necessarily linked to those concerns. Ntando, a youth participant from Khayelitsha, expresses how he has become more sensitized to the situation of the community struggling with (in)access to water and sanitation. For him, the process of walking through his community, a very poor and underserved area, and video-interviewing community members that he did not typically engage with on a daily basis provided new insight and feelings of compassion. In effect, Ntando discusses the benefits of the phase of the production that encouraged the youth to be community journalists—interviewing residents, uncovering stories and narratives, and documenting the difficult, and often shocking realities of many residents in the community. As Ntando describes:

> "*this program made me face the challenge head on because I have to approach these people. And I have to step down from my level, if I think I'm better, to step from whatever levels I think I am at just because I live in an RDP house (a formal house as opposed to a shack). So, I think it's, it's, sensitized me to the situation, that umm, that it is real……. So, I was really insensitive about the situation before, so now, so yah I learned that people do have challenges, and the challenges are real. Day to day challenges that people face everyday, umm people have to walk distances to get to their toilets, meanwhile I have a toilet at home. And then, when they walk to those toilets, they get robbed, some people get raped, real circumstances that, you know, we, I am, I was insensitive about before. So yah, I'd say it's, yah learning those, those types of skills that come in very handy….Umm, and have also been sensitized now to the challenges, umm, how does it feel, how do people feel for example when they live under the challenges. How do they survive under the challenges, so I think*

we are all sensitive now to the situation and we speak from a perspective."

The process of engaging with community through video interviews, capturing their stories and seeing with new eyes, enabled some of the group participants to better understand, and indeed empathize with, the reality of those struggling with limited access to water and sanitation. Through this embodied engagement, and the emotional aspects of the PV process, other peoples' complex relationships and embodied realities as linked to water are better understood. With an enriched sense of empathy, the project participants also felt more connected and linked to these realities (again reflecting on the sense of watery subjectivities, with enlivened sense of self, and enriched sense of connections to others, through water related connections). By the quote above, we see an unsettling, and disruption of the understanding of *self*, through which one may become more tolerant of different perspectives. This evidence tracks against Pollner's (1991) discussion of the importance of unsettling ones assumptions and experiences of reality. In this case, we observe the simultaneous potential of shifting subjectivities, understanding of community, emotion-work, unsettling of assumptions about the communities, as well as enhanced empathy. Ntando and other participants suggest a changed understanding of why they are, who they want to be, and other ways their perception of the community (and themselves) has been unsettled and challenged. Another quote from a Khayelitsha participant, Nceba, similarly emphasized this sort of productive disruption:

"*Because, I wanted to learn more. And more specially, I didn't know, I knew nothing about {this}…I only knew video when I use my cellphone, but I thought it would be healthy for me to know about for future. More specially, when I heard that we were going to learn how to interview people and I was like I've never interviewed people. And gave me an opportunity to see a lot of stuff because there's a place where you went to in Taiwan [site C]. There was a wetland with portable toilets…portable toilets. I didn't know that there was a place like that here inside (Site C).*"

Indeed, many of the participants in Khayelitsha expressed surprise at the situation of water and sanitation in their community: the lack of sanitation facilities, multiple families using communal taps, and the severe health risks believed to be associated with unhygienic conditions. Linked to these risks, other threats were highlighted during the interviews and storyboard exercise, including sexual assault and rape when using the communal toilets at night.

"*Yes of course! Yah, you–you–you, even, even, even, I, even, even me, I live in this kind of area. I–I didn't, ahh, quite know about the social changes, people of this area, they are facing. But, wh–when I'm joining this, this, this, this video project, I–I–I do the visiting about, around the community so I get to understand th–the soc–social issue that people of this community are facing. So, that's the kind of experience that I was exper–was experiencing, yes. So, it makes me feel other ways.*"

Another participant Nyaniso echoed these types of sentiments, similarly expressing that the act of going from place to place and interviewing community members made him confront unfamiliar issues, and in so doing, feel unfamiliar emotions, including greater empathy for others. Likewise in Lekma, Accra, participants emphasized the difficult situation in the community such as broken pipes and failing infrastructure causing wastage of treated water, affordability challenges, as well as limited access to water at certain times of the day, or throughout the week, as well as quality and taste concerns. Residents also voiced their concerns about the lack of drains and gutters, causing floods during rainy season and impacting businesses and households, lack of toilets in public spaces, and open defecation, as well as sanitation and pollution. While many participants emphasized their learning in terms of the challenges the community was facing, others also touched on the issue of empathy by interacting and learning from interviewees. While we don't go into detail here regarding the phase of the research where we shared videos with policy communities, it was clear in those sessions that policymakers also experienced complex emotions, including some evidence of empathy, but also of hostility, including feeling defensive when confronting with community perspectives, especially in South Africa (work in progress).

Ebo, a participant in Lekma, expressed the use of the video as a way to change societal behavior and our way of being with water (again recalling Neimanis' interest on the politics and ethical possibilities of fostering *watered subjectivities)*.

"*I learned that there are so many challenges in relation to water sanitation within the community. And, me as a member of the community can help improve the water sanitation problem through these kinds of video and process. So by going out to take, and capture videos concerning assess to water and sanitation in the community. I'm able to, I give a voice to those who are not able to express themselves in relation to that… I think when this video goes out, than we should learn to change our attitude toward sanitation and water itself.*"

Ebo described his sense that he had to adapt during the interviews, and apply new communication skills to create a safe space for sharing and documenting community knowledge and experience. As he describes, the PV process required him to practice, and gain new skills in relating to people, as well as in demonstrating interest and concern for their situation during the video interview process.

"*Yah, and one thing I really liked from this workshop is that, when going out to interview somebody, I don't really like talking. So, when I come to, I just ask my straight questions but I got to learn that it is not a good way to do it. That is something I really liked…I really learned … you have to make the interviewee feel very comfortable or, how like, oh where you from, how are you, are you okay, your name and all that, so I really taken that points down and it's stuck in my brain and I think it will really help me in the future if I want to take this seriously.*"

For Isaac, another participant from Teshie, his 'favorite part is how when I went out to communicate with people I've never done that before but through this workshop I'm able to get the voice of problems they are facing in their communities." As such, we find ample suggestion that participants both learned to better understand the situation of water and sanitation from the perspective of others in the community, but also the direct engagement and interaction with the issues and the people served to foster empathy. Participants also learned skills in terms of interpersonal relations, allowing them to communicate more effectively.

Through this experience, participants are invited to reflect on their own position and relationship to the issues (including positions of privilege or marginality), and to practice relating to others, particularly when confronted face to face with the visual, and lived dimensions of those challenges as part of the video process. The experiences demonstrated here are consistent with the literature on the potential for PV being a productive medium to dig into these emotional, personal and communal level interactions in ways that are particularly effective and meaningful. Some notable work in this area includes a recent study by Bignante et al. (2016) reflecting on the emotional processes of facilitating PV from the perspective of the community researchers. They describe a "rollercoaster ride of emotions: from fear of failing, dissatisfaction, and social pressure; to pride, satisfaction, commitment, and belonging" (p. 5). Similarly, Luttrell et al. (2012), in a youth PV project, describe the process as *self identity work* and consider how the youths' self representations are shaped by an ever widening set of contexts, social practices and audiences. They found that there are many complex layers of meaning and knowledge embedded in the video-making – in their choices and intentions, the images and narrative they produce, and in how they hope to be seen by others.

3.4. Further considerations and critiques

Despite the obvious positive outcomes of PV, as illustrated by some

of the quotes above, and as commonly expressed in the broader literature (e.g. Kindon, 2003; White, 2003; Wheeler, 2009; Corneil, 2012), it is important to critically evaluate the potential for PV, with concurrent attention to the limitations and drawbacks. In our work, it is clear that there are limitations in terms of long-term continuity and the capacity for such engagements to have concrete and lasting impacts. Here of course, even with hopefulness, there is no guarantee that things will change over the longer term. Plush (2015), Capstick (2012) and others caution that despite the intention to empower communities, the reality of designing, facilitating and implementing participatory video in an ethical, sustainable manner remains complex, and often out of reach (particularly with a long-term view). Indeed a primary challenge of action research projects is to translate the goals and intentions of the project into practice while avoiding raising expectations that cannot be met. Even if well intentioned it is clear that the recognition and adoption of community knowledge into concrete political action is challenging. It is important therefore that practitioners and community co-researchers consider the expectations that participants may hold for PV, and to address directly with participants the possibility that their visions may not be met, or that institutions may influence or even coopt the practices towards other ends (Tacchi, 2010). In this regard we emphasize the need for more critical engagements with participatory video and similar community engagement processes, particularly given the limitations with respect to the fact that PV is unlikely to affect broader power dynamics and top down governance common for water access and management. In relation to our study, despite efforts to support participating communities in achieving concrete political change, it remains a challenge to do so. Some short term outcomes emerged in the Teshie case, where participating members of the Assembly (local government) adopted the use of the Ipads and process of community engagement in more a formal program of ‘citizen science’ monitoring in the community. There has been no follow-up or evaluation of the use or implementation of community feedback into decision-making processes from this new initiative. As noted above, the outcomes in Khayelitsha were similarly hopeful, with newfound skills and a video cooperative. That said, hopefulness in this case always is tempered with the realities of unemployment and lack of opportunity.

It is also worth acknowledging that the PV process is not just about skills development, but often involves participants to get out of their ‘comfort zones.’ In this example, participants learned a lot about their community, but in so doing were also forced to confront hardships, including confronting the realities that members of their communities are at times raped or subjected to violence. This sort of interaction can often be helpful to foster empathy and understanding, but also involves asking a lot of the participants, both PV participants and those they interview. It is further cautioned therefore that PV and other critical arts-based interventions also aim to be sensitive to the potentially negative emotional impacts for the participants, reflecting some of the broader ethical considerations in field-work more generally (Shaw, 2016; Millne, 2016).

4. Towards a changing narrative of water resources

This paper distills key theoretical, empirical and methodological insights to a growing body of knowledge in several areas, including those related to community arts-based methods, feminist political ecological scholarship and participatory water governance. As documented through this project, the Participatory Video process allows the participants an embodied understanding of the complexities of those living with (in)access to water and sanitation. The participants built confidence in their ability to co-research and through the process expressed enhanced sense of empathy and understanding for others in their community. This is significant as it demonstrates the potential of video and other critical art interventions as spaces for social transformation and informs how and in which ways emotions matter in nature-society relations. It is through these engagements with ‘watery subjectivities’ as described earlier, that we can re-imagine, and have greater awareness of hydro-social interconnections and the ways that diverse bodies, sites, infrastructures, and ecologies are linked. As such, a critical feminist lens provides an important and thought-provoking frame for understanding the full potential of participatory interventions of this type.

Our work reinforces other claims related to the transformative potential of community engaged research, as well as the centrality of emotions in decision-making and in ‘enabling enhanced comprehension of how resources and emotions intermingle in everyday resource management practices’ (Sultana, 2015). In this way, PV and similar approaches can help to move beyond other research methods in terms of simply researching or documenting the situation. While not clear in terms of the long term outcomes, our interviews with PV participants highlight the clear potential of work of this type to catalyze community change, and perhaps, to build more citizen representation and engagement on these questions (including the authority to speak about issues with which participants are now more familiar). In this example, we found in particular the expression of critical empathy among participants, and linked to this, shifting subjectivities.

From these insights, we see potential here to further explore the opportunities and limitations arts-based research in community engagement and in decision-making processes. This can be particularly useful for legitimizing and valuing multiple ways of knowing in the world and to bring forth citizens narratives – the way that residents describe the issues, tensions and key points of resonance. By acknowledging these changing narratives (*and subjectivities)* there is greater potential for decisions about water and sanitation to be more informed, inclusive and potentially accepted locally. Citizenship as a concept has moved beyond simply participating in political processes. It is an approach practiced as people move through their daily lives and activities – whether at the home, community, schools or government offices (Staeheli et al., 2012). In this view water and sanitation infrastructures and service delivery can serve as sites of everyday citizenship engagements and encounters with the state (Rodina and Harris, 2016). PV and other art interventions, as applied in our work here, helps to examine the various ways people see themselves as citizens through narratives of their everyday interactions with water, water infrastructure, and governance practices. While at times community members felt sidelined in formal governance, it is clear from the project that they also felt more confident and assured in their own voice and experience of these issues, with a heightened sense that their voice and concerns do matter, and should be taken seriously.

All told, arts-based approaches open up new ways of thinking, new approaches to dialogue, and new ways of understanding subjectivity, community wellbeing or how we relate to human and non-human ‘others.’ As feminists and critical scholars, we must continue to rethink our positions, our embedded relationalities, and the ways that we are located in the world around us. Video and other critical creative methods are potentially important tools to rework, and rethink where we are, and where other communities might be, in terms of key practices and decisions that affect our lives.

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