1   **Co-producing knowledge through documentary film-making:**

2   **A community-based participatory study with older adults with homeless histories**

3   Victoria Burns, Crystal Kwan, and Christine A. Walsh

4   Dr. Burns' main research interests focus on the intersection of aging, place and homelessness, all

5   of which are inspired by several years of community-based social work practice with older

6   adults.

7   Dr. Kwan's research interests and experiences are within social work and include ageing, practice

8   research, community and international development, social policy, green social work, social

9   innovation, livelihoods, and social work education/professional development.

10   Dr. Walsh's research interests involve contributing to the understanding of violence across the

11   lifespan, and populations affected by social exclusion, poverty and homelessness.

12   **Abstract**

13   Despite the increased recognition of older adult homelessness in research, policy, and practice,

14   few studies have considered the potential to coproduce knowledge using community-based

15   participatory research (CBPR) filmmaking with older adults with homeless histories. This project

16   redresses this gap. using walk along and drive along interviews the documentary focused on the

17   older adults' experiences of finding home after homelessness. In this article we offer insights

18   into the tensions revealed in CBPR filmmaking and share reflections of social work students

19   regarding their experiences working on this project. We offer recommendations for educators to

20   enhance students' competencies and interests regarding the fields of homelessness and aging and

21   for researchers who may be interested in engaging older adults in CBPR filmmaking.

22

23   **Keywords:** Community-based participatory research, documentary film, homeless older adults

24

25

Introduction

In the current context of population aging (United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA] and HelpAge International [HAI], 2012), societies have begun to respond to the issues, challenges, and possibilities brought about by an unprecedented number of older adults (UNFPA & HAI, 2012). Research plays an important role in informing policies and services that are inclusive and responsive to this population (Blair & Minkler, 2009). In particular, community-based participatory research (CBPR) methodologies that engage older persons in the co-production of knowledge are vital to ensure that such policies and services represent the perspectives of the end-users (Bindels, Baur, Cox, Heijings, & Abma, 2013; Blair & Minkler, 2009). CBPR is a broad term that includes a wide range of research approaches such as participatory research, participatory-action research, action research, feminist participatory research, and collaborative inquiry (Minkler, 2004). In their recent review, Kwan and Walsh (2018) found that despite being conceptualized in diverse ways, five key attributes were common across CBPR methodologies:

(i) community as a unit of identity; (ii) an approach for the vulnerable and marginalized; (iii) collaboration and equal partnership throughout the entire research process; iv) an emergent, flexible, and iterative process; and (v) the research process is geared toward social action. (p. 370)

CBPR's foundational principles: participatory, empowerment, and commitment to social justice (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008), align with the transformative desires of social work research (Branom, 2012) and have the potential to facilitate a platform for marginalized voices that are seldom heard (Kwan & Walsh, 2013).

48   Despite the potential of CBPR in advancing and mainstreaming the range of issues,

49   challenges, and possibilities related to population ageing, the use of such approaches with older

50   persons has been "slower to develop compared to other user groups" (Buffel, 2018, p. 53).

51   Further, while there have been calls for participatory designs and the co-creation of knowledge in

52   qualitative research circles, scant research has focused specifically on how older persons can

53   participate in CBPR (Bindels et al., 2013; Blair & Minkler, 2009; Jacelon, 2007). There are even

54   fewer examples of CBPR studies with older persons that utilize documentary film (Black &

55   Lipscomb, 2017; Kwan & Walsh, 2013). This paper seeks to address this critical gap in research

56   by considering the potential and practical realization of co-producing a short documentary film

57   with seven older adults with homeless histories. This study is based on a larger research project

58   that explored how sense of place is created by older adults (aged 50+) after homelessness,

59   residing Calgary, Canada (Burns, Walsh, & Hewson, 2019). The research project, informed by a

60   CBPR approach to inquiry, engaged older persons as co-researchers and co-creators of a short

61   documentary film, which was disseminated within and beyond traditional scholarly channels.

62   This paper is divided into five sections. First, we provide a brief review of the literature

63   regarding documentary film-making as a unique visual method in CBPR research. Second, we

64   describe the background information of the research project and discuss the rationale for

65   integrating documentary film-making as part of the research process. Third, we delineate the

66   process of co-constructing the CBPR documentary film and discuss the challenges and

67   opportunities of utilizing documentary film-making in advancing the voices of marginalized

68   older adults who are rarely included in research, policy, and practice discourses. We conclude

69   this section with recommendations for researchers who may be interested in engaging older

70   adults experiencing homelessness in CBPR film-making. Fourth and lastly, we share reflections

71   of student research assistants (RAs) on their experience with the project and offer suggestions for

72   educators to enhance students' competencies and interests in the fields of homelessness and/or

73   ageing.

74   **Use of Documentary Film-Making in CBPR Research**

75   The use of visual materials in research has a long history within the social sciences (Rose,

76   2016). Rose (2016) for example, argued that "both anthropology and human geography have

77   used visual images as research tools for as long as they have been established as academic

78   disciplines . . . . [albeit,] visual sociology is a more recent development" (p. 15). Such an

79   approach can incorporate a broad range of visual materials, including, for example, photography,

80   drawings, paintings, sculptures, video, and web-based digital media (Pink, 2013). The extent to

81   which visual material is used throughout the research process varies, including using it as

82   research data, to illicit further discussion in an interview or focus group, or as part of research

83   dissemination (Pink, 2004, 2013). The source of the visual materials also differs, being

84   participant-generated, researcher-generated, and/or generated from an existing source (Pink,

85   2013).

86   Documentary film has a long tradition in ethnographic research, with key publications in

87   the 1990s and early 2000s that mainstreamed and set the context for its design and use (Banks &

88   Morphy, 1997; Ilisa & Lucien, 1996; Lucien, 1998; MacDougall, 1998, 2001; Pink, 2001; Ruby,

89   Pink, Wessels, & MacDougall, 2001). For instance, MacDougall (1998), a principal contributor

90   in the development of ethnographic documentaries and visual anthropology, wrote extensively

91   on the differences between written text and film, and the subjectivity, reflexivity and

92   positionality of the ethnographer. While ethnographic documentary film and/or video-making

93   remains "a specialized genre and a skilled practice, which has to be learned, and this is especially

94   the case for the production of finished films" (Pink, 2013, p. 103),

95   the rapid development and accessibility of digital technologies have opened new possibilities and

96   tensions regarding the use of this visual method within research.

97   　　Participatory documentary videos, as a visual method, have unique features that both

98   enrichen the CBPR research process and findings while raising ethical issues. As this visual

99   method continues to be used for the purposes of research (Pink, 2013), it is vital for scholars to

100   discuss, document, and debate its strengths and limitations. In response to this call, this paper

101   expands the literature on the use of documentary film-making within a CBPR research paradigm,

102   while highlighting unique opportunities for student researchers and vulnerable older adults as co-

103   researchers.

104   **Background Context of Study and Rationale for CBPR Documentary Film-Making**

105   **Study Design and Recruitment**

106   　　This study was embedded in the larger study, "Beyond Housing: Creating a sense of

107   place among older adults after homelessness," which examined the process of finding home after

108   homelessness among older adults with diverse histories of homelessness (Burns et al., 2018).

109   Upon obtaining ethics approval from our university Institutional Review Board (IRB), the study

110   was conducted between 2017 and 2019. Service providers from Calgary-based housing facilities

111   determined which residents were physically and cognitively able to participate in a one to two-

112   hour interview. Participants in the study were 50 years of age and older, as this age is the most

113   widely used in the homelessness literature to denote old age (Grenier et al., 2016). In recognizing

114   the term homeless has many definitions, this study employed Canada's most recent definition

115   that includes people who are unsheltered (living on the streets), residing in emergency shelters,

116   provisionally accommodated (couch surfing or living in cars), or 'at risk' of homelessness

117   (residing in substandard housing) (Gaetz, Gulliver, & Richter, 2014). All of the participants

118   provided written informed consent and were provided information about the voluntary nature of

119   the study. As rich visual data was central to answering the study's research objectives, the older

120   adults selected were comfortable and willing to depict their lives through film; thus, participant

121   consent did not include the possibility of anonymity. Consent was an on-going process, whereby

122   older adults had choices about the ways in which their experiences were depicted. For example,

123   as the older adults were involved in the film editing process they exercised the right to remove

124   their footage until the final cut. All were eager to tell their stories, choosing to use their image

125   and real names on film. Participants received $25 CAD for each interview.

126   **Participant Characteristics**

127   The older adults included four women and three men, ranging in age from 55 to 67 years.

128   They had diverse identifiers: five self-identified as Caucasian, two were racialized minorities,

129   one was Indigenous; one woman identified as 'queer' and two were immigrants. All had been

130   married and divorced at least once, six were living alone and one who was living with her

131   fiancée at the time of the interview. Five lived in congregate-site housing for adults aged 55

132   years. Congregate-site housing refers to a single building with several rooms or units and

133   common areas, or clustered units in a single building, which generally includes on-site health and

134   social services (Klodawsky, 2009). One older adult lived in a rent-geared-to-income apartment

135   complex with mixed ages and one was residing in a private market rental house (which is

136   housing rented out by private individuals and/or companies).

137   **Data Collection**

138   Building on research with older adults anchored in the tradition of visual ethnography

139   (Gardner, 2011; Lewinson, 2014), we used go-along interviews (walk and drive-along),

140   Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997) and Videovoice (Pink, 2013) techniques as tools to document

141   their outings and actively explore their physical and social practices by asking questions,

142   listening, and observing (Kusenbach, 2012). To this end, the older adults were expected to carry

143   a small digital voice recorder in their pockets with a small microphone attached to their clothing

144   to capture the discussion. Over the course of the study, all of the older adults completed at least

145   three individual interviews, each of which lasted from one to two hours.

146   First, the *welcome interview,* aimed to build rapport and trust, collect sociodemographic

147   information, and begin to understand the older adults' meanings and relationships to home and

148   community. This conversational interview centered on understanding the older adults' pathways

149   into homelessness and how each older adult came to live in their current housing. Second, the

150   *guided home tour* asked the older adults to guide the researcher through a typical day in their

151   home (private room or apartment), with attention to the physical space, important objects, what

152   they like/dislike about their home, and what makes them feel at home. Third, the *guided*

153   *community tour,* was designed to take the researcher and film-maker through a typical day from

154   preparation in the home, through journeys in the building, to travel outside of the home.

155   Interviews focused on where and how far they went, reasons for the journey, who they saw,

156   mode of travel, supports and barriers to travel, and feelings and thoughts regarding place-making

157   as evoked by these journeys.

158   Interviews were conducted by the researchers and research assistants with assistance

159   from a film-maker, who became part of the research team. During the last full shoot, we

160   concluded the interviews by asking the co-researchers and RAs to comment on their experience

161 being part of the research process. The following sections presents the study methodology as it

162 unfolded.

From Photovoice to CBPR Documentary Film-Making

164 Photovoice has been documented as an empowering tool for place-based research with

165 older vulnerable populations (Lewinson, 2014). However, this method was not as effective for

166 this population as some participants felt intimidated by the technology. Also, one participant

167 expressed the method felt "contrived" and would prefer to share her experience directly via a

168 "real conversation". In response to this feedback, the research team determined to move from

169 Photovoice methodology to the exclusive use of ethnographic documentary film (Pink, 2013).

170 This change was appreciated by participants who expressed a preference to share their stories

171 directly through the film-making process. This also shifted participants to co-researchers, with

172 the older adults in the study taking more ownership on the direction of the study and more

173 specifically how their stories would be shaped in the documentary. In shifting from Photovoice

174 to documentary film-making the older adults took greater ownership in the project, increasing

175 their level and quality of participation and necessitating the change from participants to co-

176 researchers. Co-researchers "situates participants as joint contributors and investigators to the

177 findings of a research project" and, in doing so, "validates and privileges the experiences of

178 participants, making them experts and therefore co-researchers and collaborators in the process

179 of gathering and interpreting data" (Boylorn, 2008, p. 600). Rodgers-Farmer and Tripido (2001)

180 elaborate that co-researchers "participate in defining the research questions, establishing

181 methodology, and interpreting and applying the results" (p. 446) with the purpose of some form

182 of social action on behalf of the target population/community.

183   This epistemological shift from participant to co-researcher with an emphasis on social

184   change (Walsh et al., 2008; Walsh et al., 2016) occurred naturally as the co-researchers were

185   eager to get move towards action. A number of the co-researchers had backgrounds as activists

186   and advocates in senior's issues, homeless issues and LGBTQ rights, allowing us to capitalize on

187   these skills and aspirations in creating the documentary film.

188   As the project progressed we recognized that the research team, comprised of three

189   university-based social work researchers, four social work student RAs, and the seven co-

190   researchers, did not have the necessary skills or expertise in film-making. We realized we needed

191   to hire a professional videographer, and given the subject of the study, we wanted a community-

192   minded filmmaker with experience working with marginalized populations. Through an internet

193   search, we found a videographer, who had previously worked with people experiencing

194   homelessness and was thus was aware of some of the opportunities and challenges of working

195   with this population.

196   Creating a documentary film is cost-intensive; most videographers charge approximately

197    $600 CAD per day and with fees for renting equipment we estimated that we would need at least

198    $15000 CAD to make a high-quality documentary film (run time approximately one hour). To

199   raise the extra funds, we submitted a pitch to a competition for short documentaries and were

200   awarded $10,000 CAD to produce the film (Burns et al., 2018).

201   **Co-Constructing a CBPR Documentary Film: Tensions, Challenges, and Opportunities**

202   Tensions unique to CBPR methodologies must be anticipated and solutions developed prior to

203   engaging in research in the community. The following section describes three main tensions that

204   emerged and were addressed during the research process. It follows with a discussion of how our

205   findings relate to existing CBPR and documentary film literature.

Tension 1: Openness to Intimate Sharing versus Privacy

Part of the rationale for using documentary film was that co-researchers were eager to tell their stories in order to engage in social action and service to other people still suffering. As Anne, aged 67 aptly stated, "I want to share my story, so I can help others." The older adults thought digital media was an effective and fun way to raise awareness of social issues. For instance, in answering the question, what bring you joy? Stephen commented, "getting filmed on camera, that's pretty neat!" His response highlights how empowering film can be to this population, who frequently have been subjected to deep exclusion (Burns et al., 2012). Portraying themselves on film was also a source of pride, co-researchers mentioned carefully choosing their outfits, fixing their hair, and "looking their Sunday best" when they were being filmed.

While the majority of the co-researchers were eager to be on camera, Bruce, age 55, initially expressed anxieties and asked to only be audio-recorded. Initially, Bruce was also reluctant to allow a film tour of his apartment as he felt it was not in in a state to be on camera and he expressed shame about being homeless and did not want his friends and family to know about his situation. However, by the second interview after developing some rapport with members of the research team, Bruce became more comfortable and volunteered to be filmed, including in his apartment, which motivated him to give it "a long overdue cleaning." Also, George, age 65, who was sharing a room with three other men, did not allow us to film in his room as he wanted to respect the privacy of his roommates. He was also reluctant to provide us with guided tour of his housing complex, as he feared the administration would "not like it" even though we had received permission from the administration to film the guided tour. He later

228   shared that because he had been evicted so many times previously, he was being "extra cautious"

229   in following the rules.

230   Most co-researchers shared that being asked to share their stories on film as a

231   combination of "difficult" and "therapeutic". For instance, Anne, age 67, reported the overall

232   experience as demanding because of the introspective nature of the project, as she explained:

233   It's difficult at times, because it requires looking in, you're good at asking those difficult

234   questions [laughs] but it's also been difficult to see more of the injustices that seniors

235   experience and, it comes out when I am on Twitter, when I talk to people, when I go to

236   conferences, but being retrospective of what my life has been, that has been difficult

237   because I would not have considered myself invisible homeless, I'm just one of these

238   people who gets on with it and doesn't put a tag on it, but now that I put a tag on it, it's

239   different.

240   Yet for some, the process of looking inward to share their story helped them counter their own

241   internalized stereotypes of what it means to be homeless, as one Bruce expressed:

242   I've really enjoyed working with the team. It's been a process for me to put all the

243   different parts together, the homeless problem…I mean everybody's different, what

244   makes a homeless person, I mean there are some common denominators.

245   In contrast, Stephen, age 60, found it relatively easy to share his story:

246   It's been interesting…nothing's been overly personal for me…I know in the beginning I

247   was political about it. But as I said earlier, [with recovery] you start to think clearer so I

248   wish it started now. People have been very friendly. I've been well taken care of.

Tension 2: Varying Levels of Participation and Ownership

Even though the intent was to have each co-researcher take an active role (editing the footage, in directing the interviews, and in participating in dissemination activities and in using the finished product for their own endeavors) the level of involvement varied amongst co-researchers. Some co-researchers were more or less comfortable with technology and for some, at times, their mental and physical state impacted their ability to actively engage over the length of the project. For example, one co-researcher experienced a serious infection and hospitalization, another had complications from a stroke, another had repeated hospitalizations for mental health and one died near the completion of the project.

After each filming session the rough cut was sent to the co-researchers, who decided if there were any segments they preferred not to include in the film. This was appreciated by the co-researchers, as Anne noted, "I had the right to say yes or no [if specific segments are included in the documentary], whichever I'm comfortable with". She further commented that she appreciated the skills she developed as a result of this process:

First, I thought ... it was just gonna' be videotaping, interview, videotaping, that was it.

And more and more things, you know, [name of the researcher] s been asking me, and

doing some editing and that and I was like, okay, I'm learning some skills, too, and

learning how to do things, and discussion of, should that be included, and why shouldn't

that be included, and where can we hop from there, and what can we do with the

bloopers, you know, different things, different conversations that can be done.

Also, the sense of ownership over the work differed among co-researchers. Linda, age 64, for example, preferred the direction of the project remain with the researchers, as she commented, "I really appreciate the work that you guys are doing, it's great."

13

Tension 3: Team Building versus Risk of Loss

As has been highlighted in other CBPR projects (Nugus, Greenfield, Travaglia, & Braithwaite, 2012; Nygreen, 2009; Walsh et al., 2008) interpersonal tensions emerged over the course of the project which required mediation on the part of the research team. For instance, one co-researcher ended up removing herself from the group's social media page because she was feeling left out of the conversations and the media attention that the documentary was receiving. Nevertheless, when the co-researchers were asked how they felt about being part of this research project, one of the most common responses was the community and friendships they established over the course of the study. As Hilary, age 58, identified, "what I like is the team aspect. That we are part of a team, that we aren't, you know, we're individuals but we're all part of the team, we're all gonna' have a say." Beyond being a member of a research team, co-researchers described deep connections, with some referring to the team as "family." This depth of this connection was evident when one of the co-researchers, George, unexpectedly passed away. This was a difficult time for the team and for the co-researchers, in particular. Several team members attended the funeral – Anne shared a portrait she drew of George, and Laura (age 67), wrote a eulogy that recalled early days in their shared history:

<div align="center">Remembering George</div>

I met George in June, 12 years ago, at [name of institution] place where we had both left the streets. [Name of institution] accepts street people who were of the age 55 and over. George had no computer and would spend lots of money on calling cards to call his mom in Pakistan. I offered him the opportunity to help him with my computer, to set up a Skype between him and his mom, by computer, freely, each day. We set up a specific time for this. We also met at

296   [name of another institution], a psycho-social rehab center which I and him had

297   gone, and with him being there for 19 years. He was in and out of places because

298   of his addiction, which I also understood because of mine, would continue to

299   cause him harm. Whenever he was stable, he'd be a great person to be around and

300   fun to work with. I helped to set up the computer in his second place, so he could

301   Skype his mom himself. The last time I worked with him is on this video project.

302   I really miss him. I'll be glad we got this video done together. I miss catching up

303   with his family and here at [name of institution]. George, Rest in Peace.

304   Members of the research team and co-researchers share a joint Facebook Messenger.

305 While originally created to communicate and post updates about the study, it has become a site

306 for community support, as illustrated by Hilary:

307   It's been incredible, even when we set up our messenger system, to share some of things

308   I've done, to share things I've done, or when I've had a bad day and just need to say

309   "Argh"! I'll be sad when that gets taken down, and I know it will eventually – I'll find

310   another way to socialize I'm sure, and to be part of this team – and I'll say this, because

311   it's been part of my life for 34 years, to be accepted as a queer women, a senior queer

312   woman who was homeless and not being judged for being a queer woman. To be

313   accepted and respected and loved by my peers and my colleagues it meant everything. I

314   talk about it all the time!

315 As the project is currently terminating, members of the research team and co-researchers are

316 feeling disappointment and seeking ways to reconfigure relations and move forward together.

317 Continued involvement in knowledge dissemination, advocacy and social justice initiatives is

318 one way of remaining connected. To date, the documentary has been shown internationally

319   (Japan, New York City, USA, Melbourne, Australia) and in Calgary with the co-researchers as

320   invited panelist.

321   **Recommendations for Engaging Older Adults as Co-researchers**
322
323   In this paper, we have outlined the process of co-creating a short documentary film with

324   seven older adults with homeless histories, highlighting some of the challenges and opportunities

325   of carrying out this type of CBPR project. Ultimately, we advocate for more CBPR film projects

326   as they can serve to promote participation and to advance the voices of marginalized and

327   underserved populations who are less frequently heard in practice, policy, and research

328   discourses.

329   We assert that the use of documentary film, as a visual research method, represents

330   methodological innovation not only because of its relative novelty, but also because of its

331   capacity to enhance aspects of the research process in unique ways. For instance, it allowed for a

332   rich and more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon of 'home', by helping to portray and

333   contextualize a phenomenon in a way that text alone could not (Bryne, 2014). We align with

334   Pink (2008) who contests that this methodology is particularly effective for place-based research.

335   It allowed the topic of place-making in reference to older adults to be approached in a multi-

336   sensory way, and this too opened up an in-depth exploration of "the invisible, intangible and the

337   unexpected, the unspoken, felt or sensed elements of everyday experiences" (Morriss, 2017, p.

338   292). In doing so, the documentary film-making process allowed us to hear "the voices of the

339   participants directly in a way that also capture[d] nuances of gesture, facial expression, vocal

340   intonation, and emphasis" (Petrarca & Hughes, 2014, p. 579).

341   Importantly, our use of documentary film facilitated the transition from participant to co-

342   researcher by offering older adults a more direct role in the research process. Documentary film-

343   making was described as empowering for older adults with experiences of homelessness in our

344   study, who are frequently excluded from society (Burns et al., 2012). The process of film-making

345   in itself, can encourage community engagement (Pink, 2013) as was demonstrated in this

346   research. It also provided a unique and privileged window into the phenomenon of interest (Pink,

347   2013) by affording members of the research team a more direct entry into their world, with less

348   researcher-driven interpretation (Petrarca & Hughes, 2014). In these ways, the documentary film

349   process was successful in actualizing values of a CBPR study: "knowledge building and

350   enhancing a sense of collective identity throughout a collective engagement"; facilitating a

351   platform for vulnerable and marginalized communities; and collaboration and partnership

352   between researchers and participants (Kwan & Walsh, 2018, p. 372).

353   Using documentary film in the context of a CBPR study is an apt tool to improve

354   knowledge mobilization. Compared to traditional scholarly mediums (e.g. academic journals),

355   film is a more accessible and palatable medium (Petrarca & Hughues, 2014). In our study the

356   documentary film was not only used by the academic researchers in the context of conference

357   and educational presentations, but also by co-researcher older adults for advocacy, to advance

358   social justice issues and raise critical consciousness among multiple audiences. Overall, we

359   contend that documentary film-making is a powerful way to convey the reality of marginalized

360   and invisible populations, who are not often portrayed in mainstream media. In this way,

361   documentary film-making as a research methodology contributes to social work research and

362   CBPR's mutual of goal of advancing social action.

363   Utilizing documentary videos raises unique ethical research challenges, both in relation to

364   procedural and practice ethics (Murray & Nash, 2017). Albeit, IRBs are becoming more aware of

365   and responsive to these innovative approaches to knowledge generation in recognition that

366   documentary film-making is as a legitimate tool within the research enterprise (Brandt et al.,

367   2016; Friend & Caruthers, 2016; Petrarca & Hughues, 2014). At the same time, as the

368   mainstream use of documentary film within research has only occurred in the last two decades

369   (Pink, 2013), IRBs have been relatively slow to recognize such methods. Thus, researchers

370   seeking IRB approval may face various barriers, including even the contested nature of this

371   method as research tool in itself. Researchers interested in utilizing this method may find the

372   need to "negotiate and even educate those colleagues who constitute such [IRB] committees"

373   about the legitimacy of such a research method (Hugman, Pittaway, & Bartolomei, 2011, p.

374   1282), as Friend and Caruthers (2016) illustrated:

375   As scholars in the academy who embraced the opportunity to engage in documentary film

376   as research, we initially presented our plans for the What Kids Love and Hate about

377   School project to our university's [Social Science Institutional Review Board] SSIRB.

378   The innovative nature of our methods was debated among SSIRB members, and after a

379   face-to-face questioning session with us, the SSIRB determined that our project did not

380   conform to their definition of research. (p. 41)

381   Friend and Caruthers (2016) further explain that they were re-directed to the university legal

382   department and specifically to use their media release forms in obtaining consent to proceed with

383   their project. In contrast, in advancing this project we experienced few difficulties receiving IRB

384   approval due, in part, to portraying the strong desire of co-researchers to tell their stories and to

385   assert them as legitimate advocates advancing their own rights.

386   Documentary film vis-a-vi a CBPR approach to inquiry is an "emergent, flexible, and

387   iterative [research] process" (Kwan & Walsh, 2018, p. 370). It is malleable to changing contexts,

388   needs, and objectives negotiated between the researchers and the participants. As such,

389 researchers utilizing documentary film need to consider and critically reflect beyond that of

390 procedural ethics and focus on various ethical issues in practice, such as confidentiality and the

391 informed consent process. As documentary film entails an intrusion of people's private spaces

392 (Land & Patrick, 2014), it is important that confidentiality and its caveats are continually

393 discussed and negotiated with participants during the entire research process (Yu, 2008). For

394 example, discussions and decisions regarding site selection (where the filming occurs), whom to

395 film, what to film, and how to film need to consider the intrusion of not only the private

396 space/places of the participants/co-creators but also other people who share space/places with the

397 participants/co-creators (Land & Patrick, 2014). As our project demonstrates, this reflection

398 needs to involve all members in the research endeavor, including student researchers, who, as

399 this project illustrates, can be profoundly impacted by the issues and close relations they

400 encounter in CBPR (Fiorella et al., 2009).

401   Similar to other CBPR projects, researchers utilizing participatory documentary need to

402 manage the balance between enabling participation/engagement and over-burdening (Land &

403 Patrick, 2014). Participants may have limited or no experience in video-making (and even more

404 so, film-making as part of a research process). It is also necessary that participants' roles and

405 tasks as co-researchers throughout the research process are "congruent with the resources

406 available to them and their existing [interests], competencies and skills" (Kwan & Walsh, 2018,

407 p. 376). For instance, if participant/engagement entails the co-researchers' involvement in the

408 storyboarding, filming, or editing processes, they must have access to both the materials needed

409 to complete the tasks and the requisite training. Alternatively, co-researchers may not be

410 interested or have the time to be involved in this way and thus it is important to continually

411 discuss with co-researchers where their interests and skills lie and the extent to which they wish

412   to contribute throughout the development of the film and the different stages of the research

413   process.

414   Additionally, the ethical issues surrounding copyright and ownership of the film is

415   another important area of consideration (Land & Patrick, 2014). In alignment with the principles

416   and values of a CBPR project, it would be important for the researcher to "facilitate the idea that

417   the group has ownership of the film and the film-making process" (p. 10). Albeit, Land and

418   Patrick (2014) discover through their case study of facilitating a participatory documentary film

419   research project, that copyright and ownership details are not straightforward:

420   …the project team thought that the group should hold shared copyright. This was

421   facilitated by developing an agreed group name, in this case Dole Animators, with the

422   group holding copyright. However, there was then an issue with the management of the

423   copyright. The participants only came together as a group to work on the film project,

424   and there was little likelihood of their meeting again after the project. The project team

425   thought about using social media to connect the group after the project ended, but as not

426   all group members used the Internet, this was not an option. (p. 10)

427   In this case, the researchers and the participants/co-creators agreed that the best option would be

428   for the former to "manage the copyright on behalf of the group [which] mostly entailed

429   managing requests to screen the film from people outside the project" (p. 10).

430   **The Role of Social Work Students in CBPR Documentary Film-Making**

431   Aligning with the participatory nature of CBPR we invited the four social work student

432   RAs who worked throughout the research process in various capacities (e.g., conducting a

433   literature review, assisting with the walk-along interviews, and preparation of the various

434   dissemination products (including the video and manuscripts), to share their reflections on their

435   experiences. One RA, whose primary role was on preparing a literature review and assisting with

436   the writing of manuscripts, shared:

437   While my areas of research interests are within gerontological social work, I didn't

438   realize my lack of knowledge regarding older adults who are (or have been) homeless.

439   Through conducting the literature review and assisting with various manuscripts, I

440   realized that this area is a novel and critical research focus that has largely been left out

441   of the scholarly discourse within gerontological social work and more broadly in

442   gerontology.

443   One older adult co-researcher who was going through a very difficult time and was suicidal

444   described the support of another RA as "saving her life." This RA shared learning about

445   "boundaries" and "the messiness of CBPR research". Another RA articulated that CBPR

446   changed the way she thought about the relationship between social work research and practice: "I

447   thought research and practice were more distinct, but with this study, I got to build rapport and

448   relationships with the older adults, I felt like a social worker." Another spoke about the learning

449   related to being involved in a film-based study:

450   I was grateful for the support and leadership of a professional videographer throughout

451   the project, who made the filming process comfortable for participants. Based on

452   previous work experiences, I know how challenging it can be to capture good footage -

453   visual and audio - that will be compelling to viewers while highlighting key ideas. I was

454   mostly moved by participants' openness and commitment to share their stories and their

455   passion for social justice, and their willingness to meet frequently, sometimes to reshoot

456   segments, making sure we had quality clips for the editing process. Finally, what I

457   appreciated about using film as a research tool is that it captured more than just words, it

458   provided deeper insights for the researchers to feel the story, rather than just critically

459   analyze text, which can disembody peoples' stories. I feel that the filming method created

460   space that honoured peoples' voices and stories in a respectful and wholistic way.

461   Students' reflective statements hint at some possibilities of how faculty researchers in

462 areas of homelessness and/or ageing can help mentor and foster interests and competencies

463 within these fields. For example, as CBPR projects expose students to innovative research

464 methods that are aligned with our professional values (e.g., social justice) (Branom, 2012). To

465 address the Grand Challenge to End Homelessness (National Association of Social Workers

466 [NASW], 2018), innovation is key. Social work students need to be exposed to a variety of tools

467 to engage in the decade of work our profession is calling for (NASW, 2018). Research projects

468 that utilize such innovative and social justice oriented methodologies are one way to tap into

469 ethical issues, while building and diversifying social work students' tool kit. Even more

470 indirect/passive roles, such as assisting with a literature review can foster students' knowledge

471 and interest about homelessness and ageing. Projects, such as this, that focus on the intersections

472 of ageing and homelessness, offer an invitation to students who may have only interests in one

473 area (e.g., ageing or homelessness) to critically reflect on the junction between the two – an area

474 of research and practice that is largely neglected but necessary to focus on if we are to address

475 the Grand Challenge to End Homelessness (NASW, 2018).

476   **Conclusion**

477   This paper contributes to the social work literature in that it builds on two neglected areas

478 of research. The first is methodologically focused on exploring the tensions of conducting CBPR

479 with vulnerable populations and specifically the use of documentary film-making as a research

480 tool, an area of limited social work research inquiry. This CBPR project aligns with the five key

481   attributes that appear to be common across all CBPR methodologies: "(i) community as a unit of

482   identity; (ii) an approach for the vulnerable and marginalized; (iii) collaboration and equal

483   partnership throughout the entire research process; iv) an emergent, flexible, and iterative

484   process; and (v) the research process is geared toward social action" (Kwan & Walsh, 2018 p.

485   370). These attributes are also fundamental social work values. Most importantly, the research

486   process was geared toward social action – this was planned for and realized throughout the

487   process during various opportunistic and planned knowledge dissemination activities.

488   Conversely, as this study demonstrated, adhering to these principles is replete with tensions and

489   require reflection and interventions. For instance, although community was a unit of identity, not

490   all co-researchers felt equally a "part of" the project; as a consequence, individual proclivities

491   and skills, as well as group dynamics and power differentials meant individuals differed in the

492   ways in which they participated (Minkler, 2004; Walsh et al., 2008). CBPR in documentary film-

493   making was a very powerful, collaborative method; it was also a very time intensive process – a

494   finding that has been documented in previous CBPR research (Plyes, 2015; Wahab, 2003).

495   Social work researchers have taken an active role in developing the field of visual

496   methodologies. Several studies within the social work field have been reported using visual

497   methods. For example, Chapman, Hall, Colby, and Sisler (2013) used photographs to examine

498   the ways in which images function to facilitate difficult discussions and can be used to stimulate

499   shifts in attitudes. Photovoice has also been used in community-based social work research with

500   youth (Dakin et al., 2015; Walsh et al, 2014), older adults (Kwan & Walsh, 2013; Lewinson,

501   2014), and sex workers (Desyllas, 2014), amongst others. Also, film is a powerful medium for

502   storytelling that has begun to emerge in gerontological work research (Scheidt, Bosch, &

503   Kivnick, 2014). Despite these promises, few social work researchers have described the use of

504   documentary film, particularly in documenting the lives and needs for housing and social

505   supports of older homeless persons.

506   The second contribution to social work literature concerns research topics that explicitly

507   examines the intersections of two phenomenon: homelessness and ageing. As identified earlier in

508   the paper, to address the Grand Challenge to End Homelessness (NASW, 2018), there needs to

509   be an ageing lens/perspective. This project explicitly approaches the juncture between the two

510   phenomena, and further encourages future social workers (students) to critically reflect and

511   engage in this domain of practice/research.

512

516

517   **Notes on contributors**

518   Victoria Burns is Assistant Professor at Faculty of Social Work, The University of Calgary; Crystal

519   Kwan is Assistant Professor at the Department of Applied Social Sciences, The Hong Kong

520   Polytechnic University; and Christine A. Walsh is Professor and Associate Dean at the Faculty of

521   Social Work, The University of Calgary.

522

523

524   **References**

525   Banks, M., & Morphy, H. (Eds.). (1997). *Rethinking visual Anthropology.* New Haven, CT:

526   Yale University Press.

527   Bindels, J., Baur, V., Cox, K., & Heijing, S. (2013). Older people as co-researchers: A Br

528   collaborative journey. *Ageing and Society, 34*(6), 951–973. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/

529   S0144686X12001298.

530   Black, K., & Lipscomb, V. B. (2017). The promise of documentary theatre to counter ageism in

531   age-friendly. *Communities, 42*, 32-37. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jaging.

532   2017.06.001

533   Blair, T., & Minkler, M. (2009). Participatory action research with older adults: Key principles in

534   practice. *The Gerontologist*, *49*(5), 651-662. doi:10.1093/geront/gnp049

535   Boylorn, R. (2008). Participants as co-researchers. In L. Given (Ed.), *The SAGE encyclopedia of*

536   *qualitative research methods* (pp. 600-602). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.

537   Brandt, H.M., Freedman, D.A., Friedman, D.B., Choi, S.K., Seel, J.S., Guest, A.M., & Khang, L.

538   (2016). Planting health roots: Using documentary film to evaluate and disseminate

539   community-based participatory research. *Family and Community Health, 39*(4), 242-250.

540   doi: 10.1097/FCH.0000000000000120

541   Branom, C. (2012). Community-based participatory research as a social work research and

542   intervention approach. *Community Practice, 20*(3), 260-273. doi:

543   10.1080/10705422.2012.699871

544   Bryne, E. (2014). *Visual data in qualitative research: the contribution of photography to*

545   *understanding the mental health hospital environment* (Doctoral dissertation). University

546   of the West of England, Bristol, United Kingdom.

547   Buffel, T. (2018). Social research and co-production with older people: Developing age-friendly

548   communities. *Journal of Aging Studies, 44*, 52-60. doi: 10.1016/j.jaging.2018.01.012

549   Burns, V., Grenier, A., Lavoie, J., Rothwell, D., & Sussman, T. (2012). Les personnes âgées

550   itinérantes – invisibles et exclues: Une analyse de trois stratégies pour contrer l'itinérance

551   [Itinerant seniors - invisible and excluded. An analysis of three strategies to counter

552   homelessness]. *Frontières, 25*(1), 31–56.

553   Burns, V., Walsh, C.A., & Hewson, J.A. (Producers), Burns, V. (Director). (2018). *Beyond*

554   *Housing* [Documentary]. Retrieved from https://filmfreeway.com/BeyondHousing

555   Chapman, M., Hall, W.J., Colby, R., & Sisler, L.A. (2013). How images work: An analysis of a

556   visual intervention used to facilitate a difficult conversation and promote understanding.

557   *Qualitative Social Work, 13*(4), 456-476.

558   Dakin, E.K., Parker, S.N., Amell, J.W., & Rogers, B. (2015) Seeing with our own eyes: Youth in

559   Mathare, Kenya use photovoice to examine individual and community strengths.

560   *Qualitative Social Work, 14*(2), 170–192.

561   Desyllas, M.C. (2014) Using photovoice with sex workers: The power of art, agency and

562   resistance. *Qualitative Social Work, 13*(4), 477–501.

563   Fiorilla, L., Landry, D., Loates, A., Kuzmak, N, O'Connor, A., Rutherford, G., Smith, L., Walsh,

564   C. A. (2009). Relationality and reflexivity in community-based research: Reflections

565   from the field. *Transformation Dialogues: Teaching and Learning Journal, 3*(2), 1-11.

566   Friend, J. & Caruthers, L. (2016). Documentary film: the next step in qualitative research to

567   illuminate issues of social justice in urban education. *International Journal of Learning,*

568   *Teaching and Educational Research, 15*(6), 33-47.

569   Gaetz, S., Gulliver, T., & Richter, T. (2014). *The state of homelessness in Canada 2014.*

570   Retrieved from

571   https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10315/29368/SOHC2014.pdf?s

572   equence=1

573   Gardner, P. J. (2011). Natural neighborhood networks—Important social networks in the lives of

574   older adults aging in place. *Journal of Aging Studies*, *25*(3), 263-271.

575   Grenier, A., Barken, R., Sussman, T., Rothwell, D., Bourgeois-Guérin, V., & Lavoie, J.P. (2016).

576   A literature review of homelessness and aging: Suggestions for a policy and practice-

577   relevant research agenda. *Canadian Journal on Aging/La Revue canadienne du*

578   *vieillissement*, *35*(01), 28–41.

579   Hugman, R., Pittaway, E., & Bartolomei, L. (2011). When "do no harm" is not enough: The

580   ethics of research with refugees and other vulnerable groups. *British Journal of Social*

581   *Work, 41*(7), 1271-1287.

582   Ilisa, B., & Lucien, T. (1996). Reframing ethnographic film: A "conversation" with David

583   MacDougall and Judith MacDougall. *American Anthropologist, 98*(2), 371-387.

584   Jacelon, C. S. (2007). Older adults' participation in research. *Nurse Researcher, 14*(4), 64-73.

585   Retrieved from http://web.ebscohost.com

586   Klodawsky, F. (2009). Home spaces and rights to the city: Thinking social justice for chronically

587   homeless women. *Urban Geography, 30*(6), 591-610. doi:10.2747/0272-3638.30.6.591

588   Kusenbach, M. (2012). Mobile methods. In S. Delamont (Ed.), *Handbook of Qualitative*

589   *Research in Education* (pp. 252-264). Cheltenham, UK: Elgar.

590   Kwan & Walsh. (2013). Exploring older people's perspectives of community organizing: A

591   photovoice study in the Philippines. *The International Journal of Aging and Society, 3*(1),

592   15-30.

593   Kwan & Walsh. (2018). Ethical issues in conducting community-based participatory

594   research: A narrative review of the literature. *The Qualitative Report, 23*(2), 369-386.

595   Retrieved from http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol23/iss2/6

596 Land, E., & Patrick, R. (2014). *The process of using participatory research methods with film-*

597   *making to disseminate research: challenges and potential.* London, UK: Sage

598   Publications, Ltd. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446273050145 37226

599 Lewinson, T. (2014). Co-constructing home with photovoice: Older residents of an assisted

600   living facility build a photo-narrative. *Qualitative Social Work, 14*(5), 702–720.

601 Lucien, T. (1998). "Visual anthropology is dead, long live visual anthropology!" *American*

602   *Anthropologist, 100*(2), 534-537.

603 MacDougall, D. (1998). *Transcultural cinema.* New Jersey, NY: Princeton University Press.

604 MacDougall, D. (2001). Renewing ethnographic film: Is digital film changing the genre?

605   *Anthropology Today, 17*(2), 15-21.

606 Minkler, M., & Wallerstein, N. (2008). Introduction to CBPR: New issues and emphases. In M.

607   Minkler & N. Wallerstein (Eds.), *Community-based participatory research for health* (2nd

608   ed., pp. 5-23). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

609 NASW. (2018). *Grand Challenges for Social Work: End Homelessness*. Retrieved from

610   http://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/180604-GC-

611   homelessness.pdf

612 Nugus, P., Greenfield, D., Travaglia, J., & Braithwaite, J. (2012). The politics of action

613   research: "if you don't like the way things are going, get off the bus.*" Social Science &*

614   *Medicine, 75*(11), 1946-1953.

615 Nygreen, K. (2009). Critical dilemmas in PAR: toward a new theory of engaged research for

616   social change. *Social Justice, 36*(4), 14-35.

617 Pink, S. (2001). *Doing ethnography: Images, media and representation in research.* London,

UK: Sage Publications.

Pink, S. (2004). Situational visual research. In S. Pink, L. Kurti, & A. I. Afonso (Eds.), *Working images: Visual research and representation in ethnography* (pp. 1-12). New York, NY: Routledge.

Pink, S. (2008). An urban tour: the sensory sociality of ethnographic place-making. *Ethnography, 9*(2), 175-196. doi: 10.1177/1466138108089467

Pink, S. (2013). *Doing visual ethnography* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Plyes, L. (2015). Participation and other ethical considerations in participatory action research in post-earthquake rural Haiti. *International Social Work, 58*(5), 628-645.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) & HelpAge International (HAI). (2012). *Ageing in the twenty-first century: a celebration and a challenge*. Retrieved from http://www.unfpa.org/public/home/publications/pid/11584

Minkler, M. (2004). Ethical challenges for the "outside" researcher in community-based participatory research. *Health Education & Behavior, 31*(6), 684-697. doi: 10.1177/1090198104269566

Morriss, L. (2017). Multisensoriality and social work research. *Qualitative Social Work, 16*(3), 291-299. doi: 10.1177/1473325017705698

Murray, L., & Nash, M. (2017). The challenges of participant photography: A critical reflection on methodology and ethics in two cultural contexts. *Qualitative Health Research, 27*, 923-937. doi:10.1177/1049732316668819

Petrarca, D.M., & Hughes, J. (2014). Mobilizing knowledge via documentary filmmaking – is the academy ready? *McGill Journal of Education, 49*(3), 561-582. doi: 10.7202/1033547ar

641   Rodgers-Farmer, A. Y., & Potocky-Tripodi, M. (2001). Gender, ethnicity, and race

642   matters. In B. Thyer (Ed.), *The handbook of social work research methods* (pp. 445-

643   454). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

644   Rose, G. (2016). *Visual methodologies: An introduction to researching with visual materials* (4th

645   ed.). Oxford, UK: Sage Publications.

646   Ruby, J., Pink, S., Wessels, J., & MacDougall, D. (2001). Visual anthropology: digital video.

647   *Anthropology Today, 17*(5), 23-25.

648   Scheidt, R.J., Bosch, J.V., & Kivnick, H.Q. (2014). "Pushing the Envelope." *The Gerontologist,*

649   *54*(2), 322-324. doi: https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnu008

650   Wahab, S. (2003). Creating knowledge collaboratively with female sex workers: insights from a

651   qualitative, feminist, and participatory study. *Qualitative Inquiry, 9*(4), 625-642.

652   Walsh, C.A., Hewson, J., Shier, M., & Morales, E. (2008). Unraveling ethics: Reflections from a

653   community-based participatory research project with youth. *Qualitative Report, 13*(3),

654   379-393.

655   Walsh, C.A., Hewson, J., Shier, M., & Morales, E. (2014). Youth stakeholders in neighbourhood

656   revitalization: A case example. *Journal of Arts and Humanities, 3*(3), 1-11.

657   Walsh, C.A., Lorenzetti, L., St-Denis, N., Murwisi, P., & Lewis, T. (2016). Community

658   Voices: Insights on social and human services from people with lived experiences

659   of homelessness. *Journal of Sociology and Social Work, 1*(2), 27-41.

660   Wang, C., & Burris, M. (1997). Photovoice: Concept, methodology, and use for participatory

661   needs assessment. *Health Education and Behaviour, 24*(3), 369-387. doi:

662   10.1177/109019819702400309

663   Yu, K. (2008). Confidentiality revisited. *Journal of Academic Ethics, 6*(2), 161-172.

664   doi:10.1007/s10805-008-9061-0

665

666

667

668
669

670

671

672