# Photovoice

## Transcript

Video: https://youtu.be/Pv3wEAbXSKw

Photovoice is a particular approach to research that emerged in the 1990s in response to wider developments within qualitative research. Trends moved towards participatory and creative approaches to minimise hierarchies, to reduce power differentials, and to equalise responsibility within research. In addition, smartphones, tablets, or action cameras have eased availability of and accessibility to relatively cheap and simple means for recording through photography. Where once detailed knowledge of the photographic process may have been required to enable individuals to capture meaningful information and data, editing apps and software further facilitated the development of photography. As a result, research projects employing photographs became more prominent.

Initially, photographs were an opportunity to record, capture and document in the context of ethnography and anthropology, especially as part of a positivist research paradigm (e.g., Král, 1956; Collier, 1957). But as researchers became more consciously aware of their positionality, of relationships and power dynamics between researchers and participants, participatory approaches gained traction.

Eventually, in 1997, Wang and Burris coined the term "photovoice" and made it popular, after having initially called the approach "photo novella" (1994). Photovoice then was seen as an approach to carrying out research using photographs as a means to tell stories and to genuinely connect with audiences. The three key criteria that would distinguish photovoice from other research approaches using photographs were

1. to enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns
2. to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important issues through large and small group discussion of photographs, and
3. to reach policymakers (Wang and Burris, 1997, p. 369).

Photovoice, thus, directly taps into the Freire's (2017) problem-based education, feminist theory and the efforts of activists, community educators and photographers to enable and empower the marginalised. The scope for photovoice was seen to lie within the context of health and public health issues, especially with groups and communities who would otherwise be excluded from research and public debates relating to such topics. In their research Wang and Burris (1994, 1997) used photovoice with women in two rural Chinese counties. Their argument that photovoice enables, empowers, and includes as well as fosters action was made convincingly.

Nowadays, researchers across all disciplines use photographs as part of their studies.

Full resource: https://www.ncrm.ac.uk/resources/online/all/?id=20817

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