

The possibilities of participation: vulnerabilities, processes and emancipation

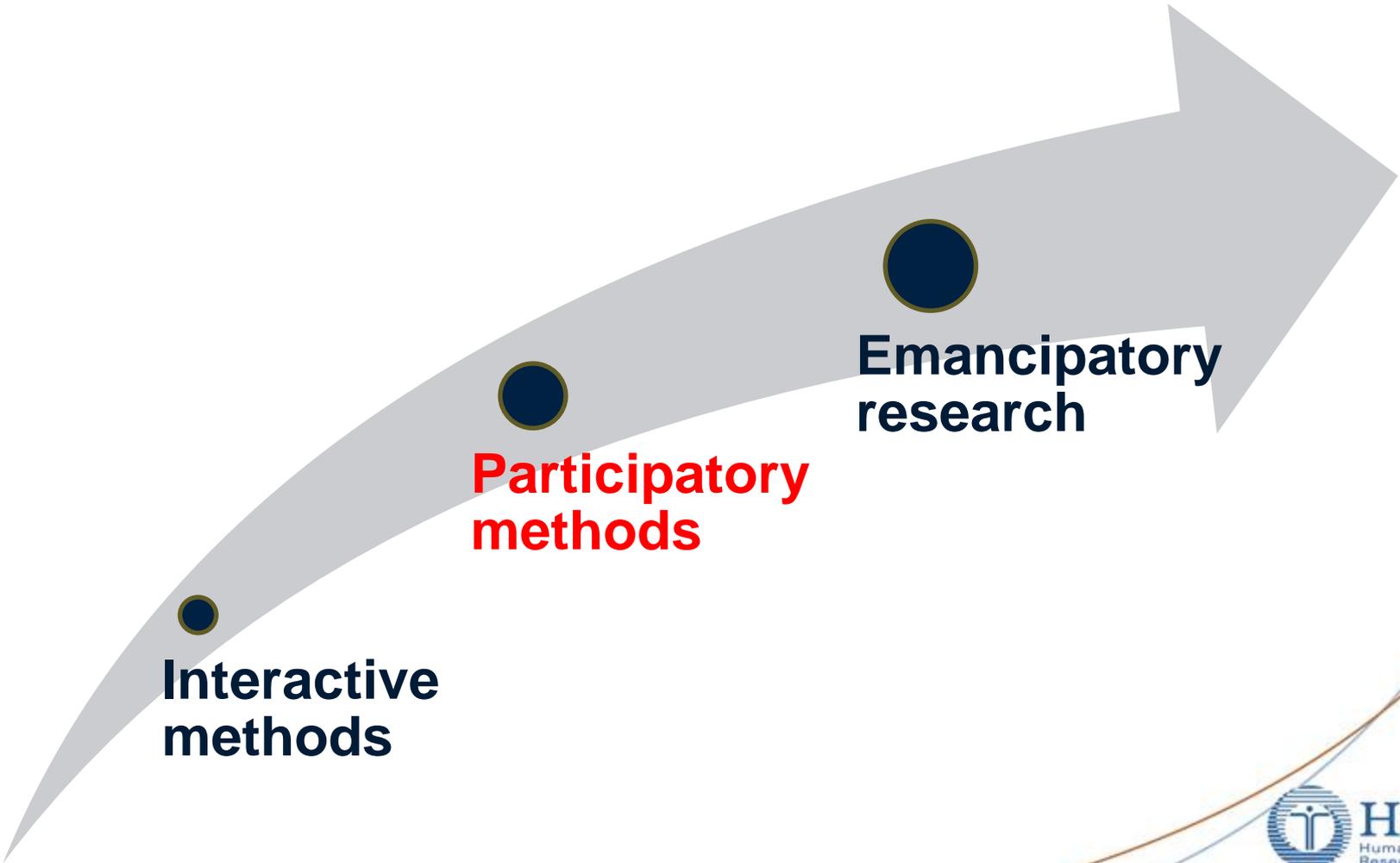
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Outline

1. Interaction, Participation, Emancipation
2. Points of convergence and divergence
3. Three case studies
 - Ikasi: Ethical participation and research as intervention
 - Old enough to know: Using participatory methods as a process for change
 - Teenage Tata: Opportunities for emancipation through social network interviewing
4. Emancipatory possibilities for participation

Interaction, Participation, Emancipation



**Interactive
methods**

**Participatory
methods**

**Emancipatory
research**

Interactive research

1. Photoelicitation
2. Photovoice
3. Social network interviews
4. Mini videos – current and desired
5. Voting (with beans)
6. Life story drawings
7. Community mapping
8. Sentence completion
9. Rank order activities – circle of influence
10. Mind maps
11. Interactive assessment activity

Participatory research

- “Recognizes the value of engaging in the research process those who are intended to be the beneficiaries, users and stakeholders of research” (Biggs)
- **Key feature - location of power**, commitment to the democratisation & demystification of scientific research
- Community members as knowledgeable collaborators
- **Underlying values** - action-oriented, dialogue, relevant and iterative, justice (Kurt Lewin - the “Northern Tradition”)
- **Core elements:** Mutual respect and trust, accountability and reflexivity
- **Biggs’ modes of participation:** Contractual, Consultative, Collaborative and Collegiate

Emancipatory research

- What do you know, what do you want to know?
- **A feminist approach – to dissolve the “the knower-known” dichotomy**
- To counter exploitative research, **transfer of technology from the developed countries to poorer nations**, “the imbalance of benefit’ (Baker, Lynch et al)
- Part of a radical social agenda of equality (Paolo Freire - the “Southern Tradition”)
- **Critical to the poor and the voiceless, aims for self-determination and sovereignty, transference of research ownership**

Paulo Freire on Emancipation

- Advocated 'conscientisation' and 'dialogue' among the 'poor and oppressed' about the conditions of oppression, to be able to 'name their world' (Freire, 1972, p. 61)
- To 'perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform' (p. 25-6).
- Using 'problem-posing' rather than 'bank-deposit' methods
- So that 'men and women [are able to] deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world' (Richard Shaull, Foreword to Freire, 1972, p. 13-4).

Challenges of emancipatory research

1. Time consuming
2. Internal validity – iterative nature
3. Sustaining participation
4. Uncertain outcomes
5. Who is include, who excluded, who decides?
6. Dependence on local stakeholders
7. Unintended consequences of participation
8. Money issues (e.g. funding, and paying for research)
9. Ownership of knowledge

Participation or emancipation?

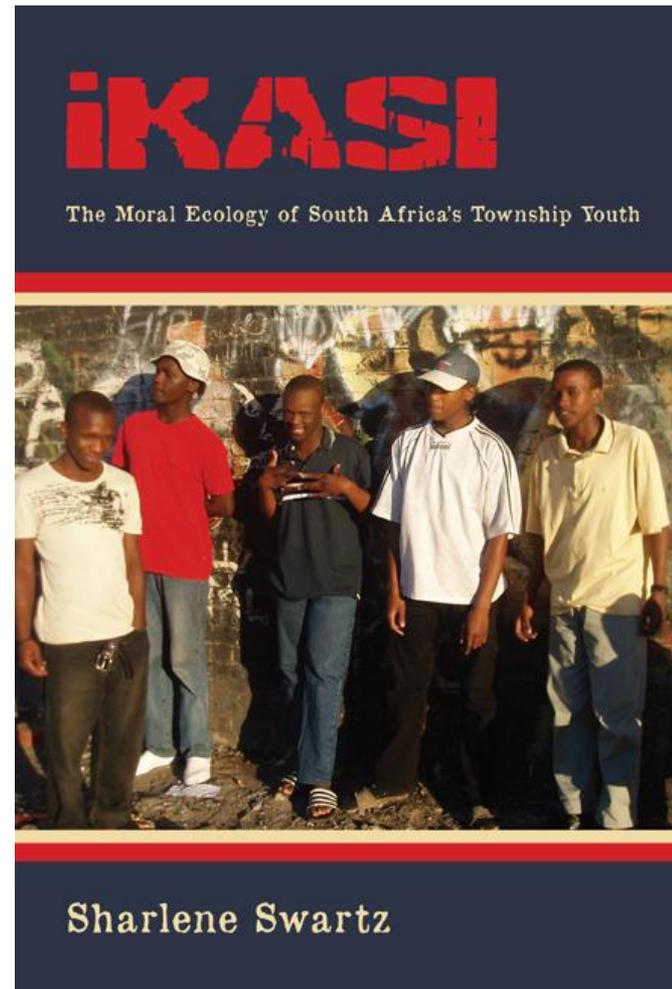
Participation	Emancipation
Consultation about topic	Topic chosen
Joint planning of design	Design initiated
Member checks	Empowerment to self produce
Joint presentations	???
Co-authorship	Relinquishing of ownership

**How are interactive methods,
participatory methods and
emancipation related?**

Three case studies

Ethical participation and research as intervention

Ikasi: The moral ecology of South Africa's township youth.
Johannesburg (Swartz, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)



Ikasi: The moral ecology of South Africa's township youth

Research question

How do young black South Africans growing up in an impoverished community understand and articulate their conception of morality (right and wrong)?

Sample

37 young men and women, aged 14-20, in a township (favela, barrio, slum) school

Methodology

Ethnographic, over 16 months with return visits

Methods

- Participant observation
- Interviews
- Photovoice

Dual aims of ethical research

...Within an emancipatory framework (Swartz, 2011)

1. To 'go deep' and utilize 'an ethics of parallax perspectives'
2. To 'give back' by employing an 'intentional ethics of reciprocation'.

Stated as questions

1. How has the chosen research activities allowed participant's voices to be heard polyphonically?
2. Is there evidence of transparency and self-reflection to make clear the researcher's politics of involvement?
3. How have I attempted to develop mutuality, respect and trust in order to diminish inherent power differences?
4. How have decisions about language and representation contributed to or prevented a 'colonizing discourse'?
5. What commitments have I made to 'research-as-intervention' amongst vulnerable groups in this study?
6. In what way has this research been emancipatory and relational rather than dominating and oppressive?

Analysis

Interaction

- Fair ways to keep youth engage
- Developmental activities

Participation

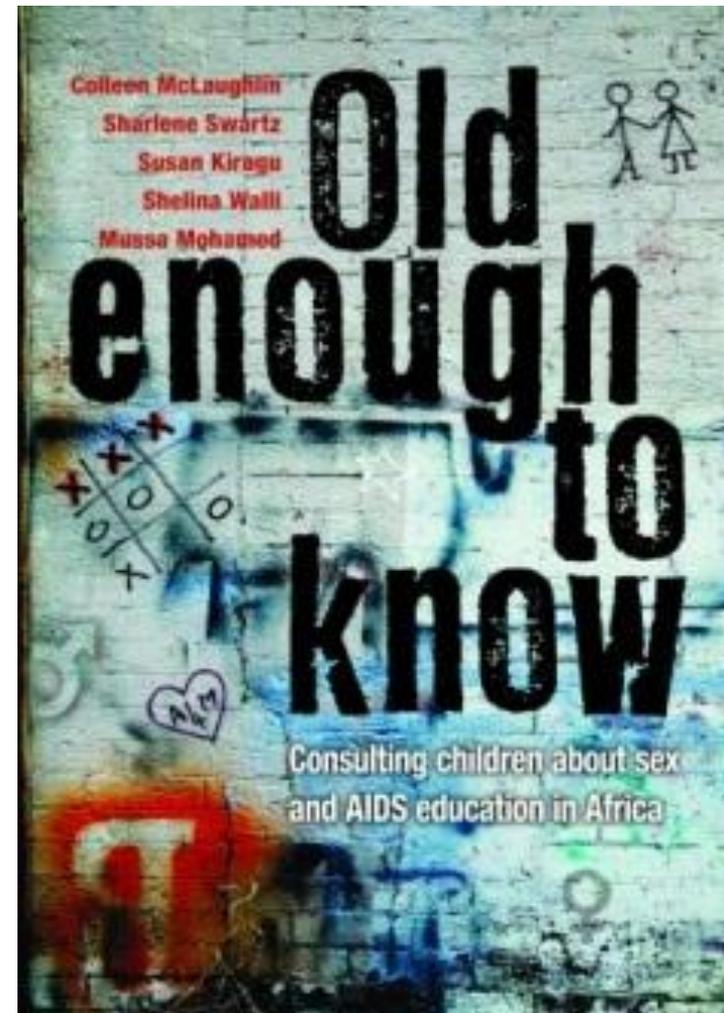
- Super-sized member checking

Emancipation

- A readable product
- On-going mentoring

Using participatory methods as a process for change

Old Enough to Know:
Consulting children about
sex and AIDs education in
Africa (McLaughlin, Swartz
et al, HSRC Press, 2012)



Consulting pupils about sex and AIDS education In Africa

Research question

What are the sources, contents and processes of children's community-based sexual knowledges; and how do these knowledges interact with AIDS education programmes in school?

Sample

125 children, 45 teachers, 40 stakeholders, in 8 schools in Tanzania, Kenya and South Africa

Methodology

Qualitative, over 12 months with return visits

Methods

- Lesson observations
- Interviews and focus groups
- Photovoice: Where do you learn about love, sex, AIDS and relationships from?
- Mini documentaries: What is sex education currently like, what would you like it to be like?
- Community dialogues: To discuss research findings, and analyse children's, teachers' and community stakeholders' struggles, impediments and limitations concerning AIDS and sex education.

Sex and AIDS education in schools - data from videos

- HIV/AIDS education **teacher driven, fact focused**
- Learners wanted
 - Participation
 - Active learning
 - Opportunity to have questions answered and misconceptions explored
 - Dialogue
 - Role play strongly favoured

Community dialogues

- Teachers and community stakeholders shown children's photos and 'desired videos'
- Ensuing discussion encouraged to see dilemmas from each other's points of view.
- Mr Moi from School B, Kenya commented: 'They are suggesting different methods of teaching like discussion and drama. And in drama they take part fully ... [this] would be very effective where learning is concerned'.
- Mr Ndegwa suggested 'Parents and teachers can sit together *and teachers can sensitise them...* on the responsibility he or she has on the child.'

Grandmother: When a child says that he or she is used to having sex, this is as a result of mistakes we parents have made where our children are concerned. For example, a parent chooses to sleep in the same room with their 12-year-old son or daughter. Therefore the activities that take place between you and the man, our children are seeing far and wide whatever you are doing. That child is not sleeping. The child watches and sees what is my mother doing. Such a child starts practicing the same thing he or she has been watching. The duty of us parents is to protect our children even though we are poor.

Female chief: It has already been agreed that we should start teaching our children sex education at an early age. Mine is still on the language issue. Mama C... has already said that we tell them '*jongo*' [a euphemism for 'penis', used instead of '*mboro*']. [Laughter] ...When we tell them *jongo* they will continue using the word *jongo*. I would like this forum to be used to decide the language that should be used. Like in standard one do I tell them the exact word or - ?

Ms Kerubo: What do I do? Or do I use the language we use like when we were being taught science, in standard seven or in standard eight or do we use *jongo* instead of telling them *mtoto analetwa na ndege* [children are brought by aeroplanes]. May I know that one? ... Okay I think in the school the teacher - whenever we have school meetings with parents - it is very important for somebody to [take a] stand. A teacher to talk to parents about sex and HIV/AIDS because ... it is very important we educate the parents. And also when we are in school, during our discussions with our pupils - let us bring them close to us so that they are free to ask any questions they want.

Kustiantu (boy): If a lady is a virgin or another can no longer have children, and they have sex with someone who has AIDS, will these two ladies get AIDS? [Laughter and silence and murmurs in the audience.]

Mr Mbogo: First of all I did not understand the question. Did he ask that when someone who is a virgin and has sex with someone who has HIV/AIDS, can he get HIV/AIDS? [Boy nods]. Yes he can get HIV/AIDS. Even if she's a virgin or not. ... Why? Because what transmits the infection, is the liquid. Men produce semen and women also have a juice in the body, so the exchange of the liquids, which is found in either virgins or women who have stopped giving birth, the liquid is still found in both. So once there is exchange of liquid, then you get infected. ...Have I answered you? So it is the liquid and not the state of the lady at that particular time that is a factor. Okay?

Analysis

Interaction

- Sensitivities and ethics – what do we report back to teachers and how?
- Protecting children, offering insights and experience

Participation

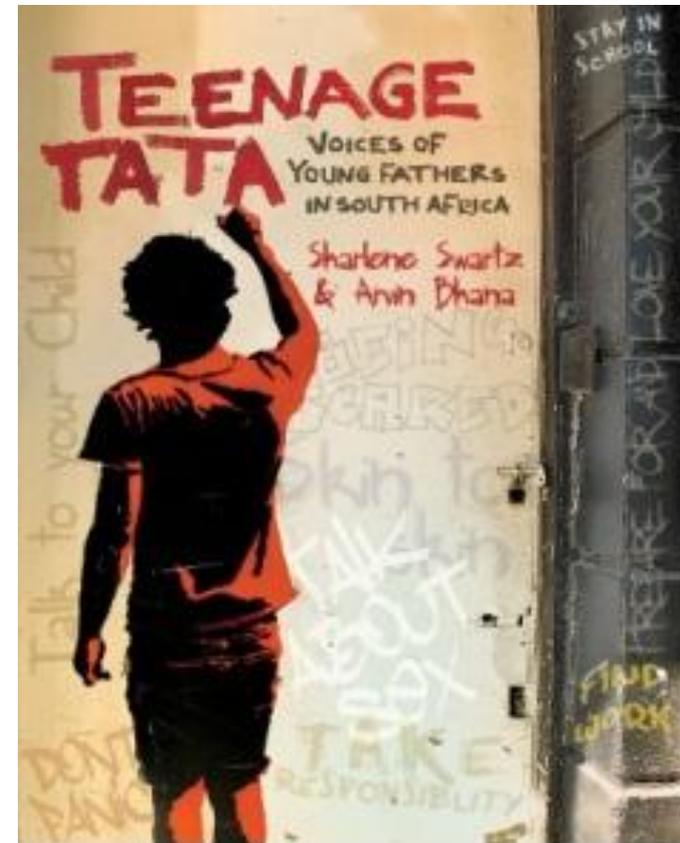
- Reluctant – a lot at stake

Emancipation

- Critical to include stakeholders e.g. parents and religious leaders
- Final dialogue essential to process
- Moves children's voices from periphery to centre
- A 'hybrid' curriculum

Opportunities for emancipation through social network interviewing

Teenage Tata: Voices of young fathers in South Africa (Swartz & Bhana, HSRC Press, 2009)



Teenage Tata: Voices of young fathers in South Africa

Research question

- What is it like to be a young father in an impoverished community in South Africa? What are the obstacles and enablements of teenage fathering?

Sample

27 teenage fathers, and social networks of some, in South Africa, in two township communities

Methodology

Qualitative and innovative (SNI)

Methods

- Two interviews with young father
- Circle of concern
- Social network interviews: Inviting young men to interviews parents, extended family, family of the mother of the children, teachers, friends and religious leaders

Sample Social Network Interview Questions

- “What kind of father do you think I have been since my baby was born?”
- “What advice do you have for me about being a young father?”
- “What role do you think a young father should play in the life of their children – if they are not married to the mother? Should this role change over time, for example when the child is newly born, when s/he is 10, when s/he is 18 years old?”

The achievements of SNI

- Rich data about men's lives
- Collaborative learning process
- Corrective messages that can be heard
- Building empathetic relationships
- Returning power to make autonomous choices

Corrective Messages

“As your closest friend, uh, because I’ve been spending a lot of time with you – [I can see that] you don’t take care of your baby. You’re very – Sometimes you become irresponsible – you’re [with your new girlfriend] instead of doing what you must do to keep contact with your baby.”
(Close male friend)

Rebuilding Links and Empathetic Relationships

“The culture forced us to stand for you at the beginning when the family had to tell you that you make their child [pregnant]. So they could not talk with you because of your age. That’s how the culture made you a good father. But it also made you a bad father because of excluding you in many things.” (Grandfather)

Analysis

Interaction

- Pathologizing marginalized young men
- Putting them at physical and psychological risk of harm

Participation

- Local ownership

Emancipation

- Unsupervised potentially volatile interactions
- Enduring effects
- Tangible benefits to participants

3 Case studies – Participatory ethics?

	IKASI	TEENAGE TATA	OLD ENOUGH
Choosing appropriate research activities (interactive methods)	✓	✓	✓
Deliberately building relationships with research participants	✓	x	✓
Conveying researcher subjectivity	✓	x	x
Developing mutuality and flattening the power gradient	✓	✓	x
Considering how language is used and representations are made	✓	✓	✓
Planning 'research-as-intervention'.	✓	✓	✓

3 Case studies – Emancipation?

	IKASI	TEENAGE TATA	OLD ENOUGH
Interaction	✓	✓	✓
Participation	✓	✓	✓
Emancipation	x	✓	x
Agents – deciding on the ‘problem’ of their choosing	x	x	x
Providing the space to continue the process of agency, and self-emancipation	x	✓	x
Ownership	x	x	x

Some possibilities

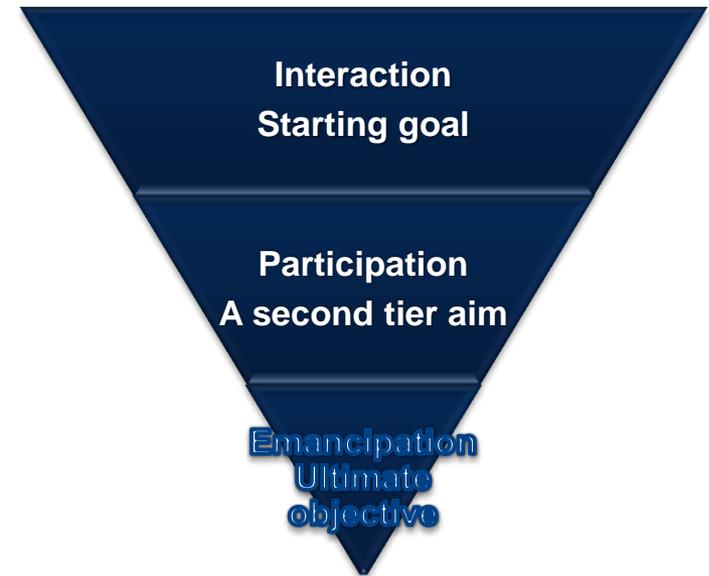
Interaction
Starting goal

Participation
A second tier aim

Emancipation
**Ultimate
objective**

Concluding questions

1. What will it take to invite participants to set their own research agendas?
2. What is needed to create a space for self emancipation after the research process is over?
 - Trust
 - Funding transformation



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