



# A Participatory Research Approach Applying Video Stories and Sketches

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**Abstract.** This empirical research study explores the use of video stories and video sketches applied in participatory and design-based research. The aim is to explore whether and how the two methods can provide a space of inquiry and broaden the insight into a phenomenon from a research perspective. The empirical data are derived from a research and development project exploring the transition processes of young people leaving their childhood homes. The theoretical framework is inspired by inquiry-based learning. Workshops were conducted with young participants aiming to create a time, space, and process for them to explore, frame, and communicate their perspectives. The analysis reveals alternative perspectives when the young participants used video stories and video sketches to investigate the data collected earlier in the research project. This paper illustrates how researchers can employ these methods and how video stories and video sketches can be analyzed. Furthermore, it addresses the challenging aspects that require consideration when using video stories and video sketches.

**Keywords:** Participatory Research · Design-Based · Video · Storytelling · sketching

## 1 Introduction

In this study, we use video stories and video sketches as a participatory and design-based research approach. The aim is to investigate whether and how the two methods can provide a space of inquiry and broaden the insight into a phenomenon from a research perspective. Furthermore, we explore various approaches to analyzing video stories and video sketches, as well as the potential and barriers when applied in participatory research.

This paper begins with an introduction to the participatory methods, video stories and video sketches, followed by a presentation of a research project applying these methods, including a detailed description of the workshop format. We then unfold the analytical approaches developed in the research project and provide reflections on insights gained through the applied methods. The paper concludes by discussing the participatory approaches, followed by concluding remarks.

## 1.1 An Introduction to Video Stories

Video stories are inspired by digital storytelling (Lambert, 2013), a method in which participants create short 3–5-min videos focusing on a personal story related to a given theme. Participants shape and explore different scenarios, using various artifacts, recording short videos on their own mobile phones, and receiving feedback from other participants and facilitators in so-called story circles. The primary use is often to create individual stories, but collaborative stories can also be created. The digital storytelling method can be employed to enhance participants' engagement and perspective in research, foster relationships within groups, or create a reflective space in educational contexts (see, e.g., Jamissen et al., 2017; Ribeiro et al., 2014).

Based on our experiences with video stories, we have found that it can be applied in certain concrete ways (see e.g., Henningsen & Ørngreen, 2018; Ørngreen et al., 2021; Henningsen, 2022). During the initial phase of a storytelling workshop, participants gradually enter into the theme of the workshop and into their personal perspectives through sharing exercises. They share pictures from their phones or images illustrating locations or situations sketched by the participants. In the next phase, the participants identify the story they wish to work on within the workshop's framework. This marks the beginning of a narrative exploration of their chosen story. They explore resistance in their stories and potential turning points. They create hand-drawn sketches or use tangible props while experimenting with different scenarios. Additionally, the participants engage in feedback sessions within smaller groups.

Video stories can potentially enhance participants' empathy and ownership and make phenomena more relevant to them. It can also amplify participants' perspectives or "voices" within a given theme. However, challenges also emerge when using video stories. Participants may become very self-conscious when seeing or hearing themselves on video, and it can be difficult for them to relate personal perspectives to a predefined theme. Additionally, participants may find it uncomfortable when the conventional boundaries between private and public become blurred.

## 1.2 An Introduction to Video Sketches

Video sketching (see, e.g., Henningsen et al., 2017; Ørngreen et al., 2017; Gundersen et al., 2018) is a method inspired by sketching in design and development processes (e.g., Buxton, 2007; Goldsmith, 2003; Schön, 1992). The purpose of this method is to facilitate an exploratory space focused on experimentation. Pen, paper, and available materials are used to support the investigative and reflective processes. The participants create short video recordings of their sketching process, which they subsequently review and can choose to adjust. The recordings constitute a form of sketch—a video sketch.

Various activities are applied to support experimental inquiries. For example, inspired by systematic inventive thinking by Barak and Albert (2017), participants try out different perspectives by removing, magnifying, or combining central elements in the sketch to explore which meanings are then conveyed. Another example is inspired by Olofsson and Sjöln (2007), in which participants choose to primarily explore diverse designs as a stream of ideas or primarily focus on disseminating one design, a chosen solution. In video sketches, the participants work iteratively and create multiple versions of them.

This approach can support the exploration of multiple understandings in a relatively short period of time. Figure 1 presents a model of the video sketching process.

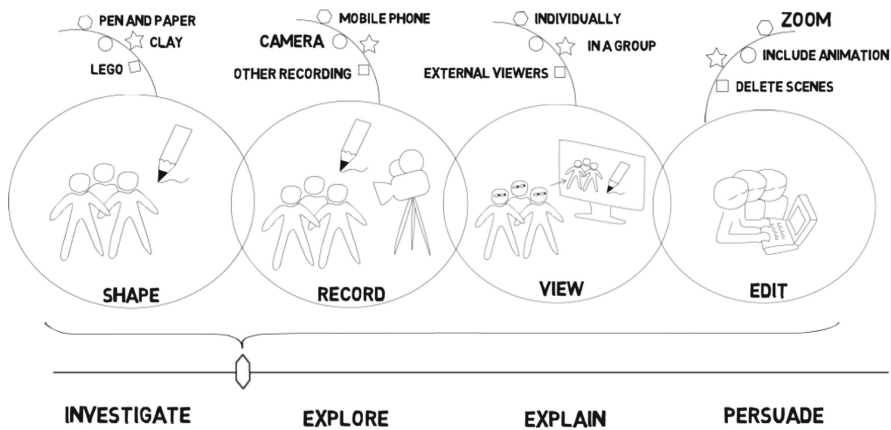


Fig. 1. Model illustrating elements of video sketching (from Henningsen et al., 2017, Fig. 3)

## 2 The Research Project and Context

The empirical data stem from a Danish participatory and design-based research project that studied the characteristics of young people's transition processes from living at home to living away from home. The project identified young people's sense of belonging, their challenges during the transition process, and the strategies they utilize. The research project was conducted in 2017–2020 and was funded by the Nordea Foundation. It was a collaboration between the Center for Youth Research and the Research Center for Video, both affiliated with the Aalborg University Copenhagen campus in Denmark. In our research, we involved young people and supplemented their input with perspectives from parents and youth organizations. The research project made two contributions: first, it identified various types of transition processes among young people, including potential risks, and second, it yielded design-oriented outcomes identifying potential interventions.

The research project applied workshops that used both video stories and video sketches. Other data-generating methods were also included in the project. This included individual semi-structured interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014) with 36 young individuals aged between 17 and 25, 2–3 times before and after their moving from home. Whenever possible, the young participants' parents were also interviewed. In total, 97 qualitative interviews were conducted with young individuals and their parents. Additionally, text message interviews through mobile phones were conducted with young participants, workshops were held with youth organizations, and data were collected during the 2018 "Folkemødet" (a citizen festival centered on democracy). Here, interviews with participating pedestrians were conducted, and postcards were written and

collected. All these data served as the starting point in the workshops. The various data were presented to the young participants at the beginning of the workshops at different tables in the room, where the participants could choose which data they wanted to dive into. As video stories and sketches were developed during the initial workshops, these videos became part of the data material used in the subsequent workshops.

In the research project, three workshops were held, all applying video stories and video sketches with young participants between the ages of 15 and 25 in various youth contexts. These 2-day workshops were organized at a folk high school, a production school, and at a university with bachelor-level students. This resulted in 32 participant-created video stories.

We, the authors of this article, were involved in several data-generating processes in the research project. We developed and facilitated the workshops, conducted text message interviews with 16 young participants over a period of three weeks, facilitated the workshop with youth organizations, and conducted street interviews. This allowed us to be involved in various data collection methods and provided us with insight into the participants' reflections, which supported our facilitation of the subsequent workshops. However, it inevitably also influenced and colored our facilitation and analysis. These factors of involvement and subjectivity are thus both potentials and barriers and are often seen in participatory action and design-based research methods (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012; Kim, 2016).

The dissemination of the research project was carried out through a digital platform where videos developed by the participants were accessible to youth, educators, and relevant stakeholders with access to the platform, along with guidelines for conducting the workshops. Furthermore, the dissemination of the research project was done through book publications and research articles.

### 3 Participation and Design-Oriented Through Inquiry

The research project was a design-based research approach employing interventionist and participatory perspectives (e.g., Anderson & Shattuck, 2012) that develop knowledge and methods for both practice and the research field. In this research project, the aim was to explore and develop designs for transition processes in adolescence. Through the participatory design-oriented approach, we strived to foster a collaborative and co-creative environment in the workshop, prioritizing the young participants' input when designing for this specific domain. The intention was to engage participants in various inquiry processes.

We were inspired by John Dewey and his thoughts on inquiry when designing the workshop format. According to Dewey (1938), inquiry and knowledge-building processes are initiated when habits and routines are disrupted. This triggers a need for reflection. Within an inquiry process, a challenging situation transits from being "undetermined" to attaining stability and becoming "determined" (Dewey, 1938, p. 104). Dewey also pointed out that the creation of knowledge is fundamentally a social process, and he frequently emphasized the significance of tools, whether they are physical tools or tools of language and ideas (Brinkmann, 2006).

By using video stories and sketches, our aim was to facilitate a space of inquiry where participants could reflect on the presented data, their own experiences, and potential solutions. The intention was to facilitate a kind of “constructive disturbance and disruption” through various approaches, the use of materials, the presentation of other young people’s stories, etc. Therefore, the participants were initially presented with the reflections and experiences of other young people and introduced to various tools they could use in their reflections. Furthermore, they used personal experiences and interpretations and participated in various collaborative sessions. The young participants were thereby involved in analyzing the presented data, exploring potential future designs, and sharing their personal perspectives through their stories and sketching work. They reflected on and explored their own experiences and offered alternative understandings.

Furthermore, the participants contributed to the project’s dissemination through their video stories, which were available to other young people and relevant stakeholders. The video stories allowed the young participants to express their perspectives in a relatively unedited manner. They also contributed to the overall data-generating process of the research project through their finalized video stories.

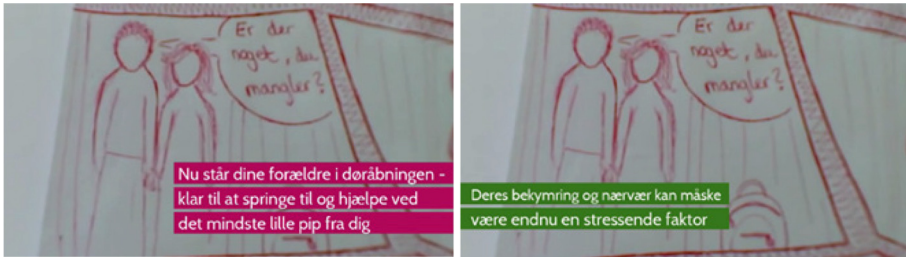
## 4 The Workshop Format

During the two-day workshops, participants were presented with previously gathered empirical data, as described earlier, which included quotes from interviews, photos of objects and locations taken by other young individuals, audio files from street interviews, text- and image-based dialogue from text message interviews, and so-called portraits of youth characters. These portraits were inspired by the persona approach (Nielsen, 2013), in which the interviews served as a basis for developing fictional young characters or personas.

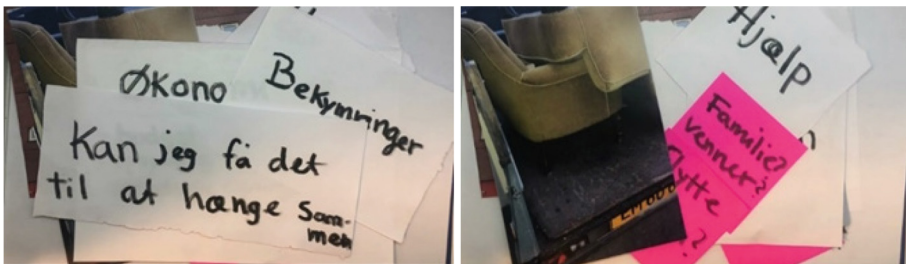
The intention behind presenting the previously collected empirical data to the young participants was to steer the focus toward the theme of the research project and kickstart the development of the participants’ own personal video stories. These young individuals could choose to explicitly comment on the presented data or to develop a video story without a direct link to the presented data. In other words, they could choose to draw explicitly on the empirical data, be inspired or provoked by it, or choose to explore and communicate something that did not yet exist in the data. The following are excerpts of the video stories developed by the participants (Figs. 2, 3, 4 and 5).

The overall purpose of conducting the workshops was to create a time, space, and process for the young participants to explore, frame, and voice their perspectives on the research subject. Thus, the participants could contribute to the research project by providing empirical data and an analytical view of the existing data. In other words, we aimed to set up a space for inquiry for the participants as well as framing a research inquiry. Kim’s (2016) review found, among others, that participatory action research studies require iterative cycles, which in turn require time and resources. However, in the reviewed youth studies, the method often had less time and more fixed tasks. Although time was scarce, our workshops sought to provide a frame with an open interpretation frame.

Various technologies and physical artifacts were introduced to support the participants’ experiments, such as lightboxes, which resemble a portable, small “stage” with



**Fig. 2.** Excerpts of a video story. The text on the images translates to: “Now, your parents stand in the doorway—ready to jump in and help at the slightest hint from you” and “Their worry and presence may be yet another stressful factor.”

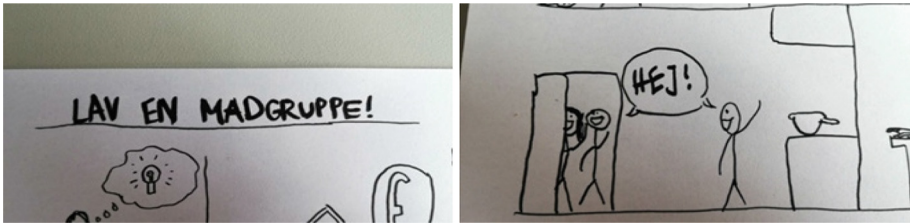


**Fig. 3.** Excerpts of a video story. The words on pieces of paper on the images translate to: “Can I make it work? Finances, Worries, Help, Family? Friends?”



**Fig. 4.** Excerpts of a video story. The text on the images translates to: “There are differences in norms. In my culture, people typically move when they get married” and “You easily end up taking many things for granted when living at home.”

a strip of LED lights at the top of the box (see Fig. 6). Recordings were done through a mobile phone placed on top of the box at the camera opening. The box was originally developed for scanning papers and documents; hence, its original name “standscan” was introduced to us via Peter Vistesen and his work with stop motion (Vistisen, 2016). The participants spoke “directly” into their phones or used handheld microphones or headphones with microphones. The lightboxes served as a confined space where participants could place objects and photos and record while drawing. Figure 6 depicts



**Fig. 5.** Excerpts of a video story. The text on the images translates to: “Organize a food club” and “Hi!”

various lightboxes and a handy camera mounted on base with a flexible cable. Recent workshops have demonstrated that the lightbox can enhance concentration and provide a structured framework for inquiry, fostering a productive and focused environment. The workshops concluded with a joint presentation and feedback session, and the workshop was evaluated after completion.



**Fig. 6.** The first image depicts a lightbox made of cardboard called a “standscan.” The second image depicts a lightbox made in wood developed by one of our master’s students. The third image depicts a flexible cable camera in which the “neck” of the camera can be shaped, allowing for a change in perspective. The last photo depicts a lightbox created from a regular cardboard box utilizing bicycle lights.

## 5 Two Distinct Analytical Approaches

In the research project, we developed various analytical approaches to involve the participants and support qualified use of the participant-produced video stories in the research project. The pair below is particularly notable.

### 5.1 Analysis Through Video Stories and Video Sketches

Participants contributed with analytical perspectives through their video stories and video sketches. Some participants chose to integrate the presented empirical data explicitly into their video stories. A participant chose to create a “sequel” to a previous video story. Since we conducted three workshops, the participants in the later workshops could choose to

explicitly comment on earlier video stories. In a video about “Bob,” a participant related his video stories to a previous video story. Both stories describe a young man who gets into financial trouble when starting his new life away from his parents’ house. In the “sequel,” the storyteller presents an alternative ending and offered a different perspective on the depicted issue.

Other examples of a participant explicitly choosing to draw on the previously collected empirical data in their video stories include a participant who used a postcard from the presented data. The participant marked out some of the text on the postcard with a red line to draw special attention to it and commented on the sentence in his voiceover. In other examples, participants used quotes from printed interviews. They selected and grouped these quotes and combined them with photos from other young participants available at the storytelling workshop.

The participants also contributed their analytical perspectives through their collaborative dialogues when reflecting on the video stories. This included the ongoing group dialogues throughout the storytelling workshop and the concluding plenary dialogue, in which all participants took part in a collective viewing and reflection on the individual video stories. A challenge we identified in the plenary dialogues was a significant difference in participation. How and the extent to which the participants engaged in the collective dialogues varied widely. Our data from the workshops pointed to various reasons for this non-participation. One reason was fatigue and “saturation” after an intense workshop day. Another reason was that some participants found it challenging to provide feedback on personal films.

We tested initiatives to address the identified challenges in the plenary dialogues. One initiative was inspired by the method of reflective teams (Andersen, 1996). This initiative was tested in another project and in a different context but also among young participants. In a workshop held at the teacher education program in Greenland, the use of reflective teams created a structure and support for the dialogues, allowing participants who had not yet contributed to the conversation to have explicit speaking time. However, there were also challenges to the use of reflective teams, which can be perceived as an excessive level of control over the conversations.

## 5.2 Analysis of Video Stories and Video Sketches

An analytical approach involving the affiliated researchers using printed storyboards of the video stories and sketches made by the young participants was placed on a portable board. This analysis did not involve participants directly, but it nevertheless turned out to be a valuable analytical approach. In this analysis format, the affiliated researchers started by collectively viewing the video stories. Subsequently, we gathered around mobile boards with printed storyboards of the video stories reflecting on them. The storyboards were crafted using screenshots from the produced videos, which were then printed out, making them movable on the board. Figure 7 shows examples of storyboards that include still images of the “scenes” in the video stories and a brief transcription of the voiceover of the video stories.

The individual storyboards served as a form of memory marker for the individual video stories, allowing us the researchers to recall details from each video story. As the storyboards hung on the mobile boards, we gained a visual overview across the



**Fig. 7.** Portable boards containing storyboards for each individual video story.

individual video stories. We had a “simultaneous” view of the individual video stories, allowing us to navigate between the films. We could point to the images during the collective dialogues, rearrange and group the storyboards, and place post-it notes on the storyboards, etc. to facilitate the analysis of the video stories. The mobile boards were in the room, making the video stories easily accessible for revisit during the period in which the research project was conducted. The collaborative analysis dialogues among the researchers were recorded via audio and subsequently transcribed.

The challenge with storyboards was that the video stories’ aesthetic, sensory, and affective dimensions were partially lost. There was a reduction, and the experience of “meeting” the person behind the video story was limited. For instance, one could no longer hear the tone of voice and possible accents in the narrator’s voice. This reduction can be partly reduced by continuously revisiting the video stories in their original modality as moving images.

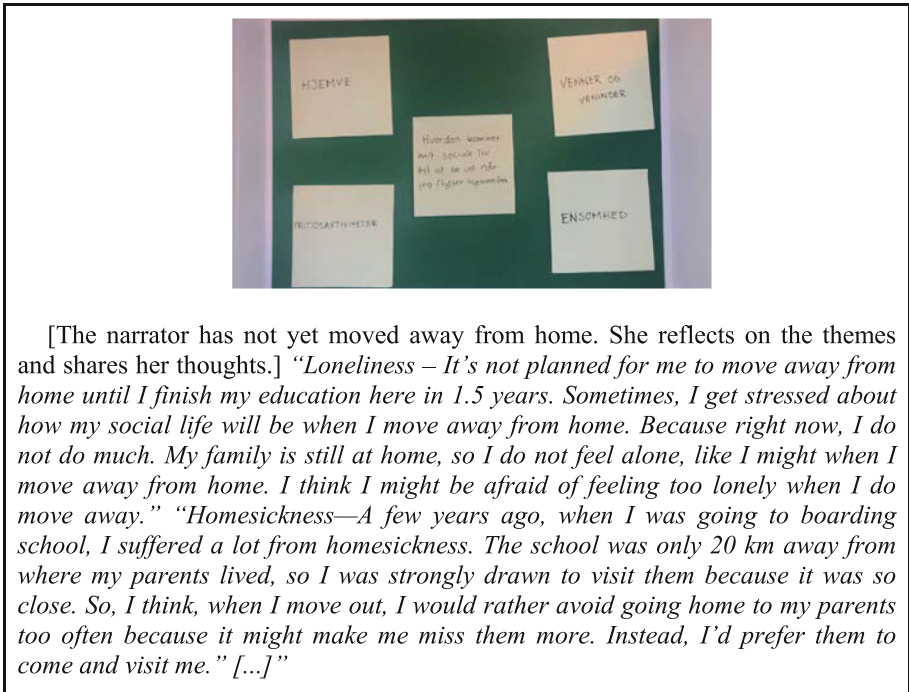
The displayed storyboards made it possible to identify patterns across the video stories and relate them to the previously collected empirical data in the research project. For example, we identified findings in the video stories that mirrored the original empirical data. Therefore, we could use the video stories to “enrich” the previously collected empirical data. We also identified contradictions and absences of perspectives when compared to the previously collected empirical data.

The participating researchers were from different academic fields and had different roles in the project, which made it possible to contribute diverse viewpoints to the video stories. The involved youth researchers contributed with domain-specific knowledge on youth, and they also conducted the interviews with young individuals, while we as researchers focusing on the development of research methods provided context-sensitive insights, having conducted the workshops, and participated in the analysis dialogues with the young participants. The researchers therefore engaged in data collection at separate times and with different young individuals. This involvement supported the analysis dialogues across the researcher group and potentially ensured that the videos were not analyzed in isolation. Researchers who had not participated in the workshops could, from a more external position, question the facilitators’ insider understanding of what had occurred during the workshops.



[The narrator speaks in the first person. He explains that he has not moved away from home and has heard friends talk about looking forward to moving away. The voice says:] *“As someone who hasn’t experienced that urge, it can seem like others are much more mature and have their lives more together than I feel I do. Back then, everyone seemed so much more certain, while I was carrying around various worries about how to earn enough money, find time to tidy up, cook, and still balance education. In fact, it was mainly in the hope of becoming more ready to move out that I chose to go to college, try it out, and get used to the idea of living on my own. Fortunately, I have gotten older and have gotten to know many friends better, including those here at college. It has dawned on me that many of the others carry around some of the same concerns.”*

**Fig. 8.** Storyboard of a participant-produced video story – example 1.



**Fig. 9.** Storyboard of a participant-produced video story – example 2.

## 6 How the Methods Provide a Space of Inquiry and Broaden the Insight into a Phenomenon

The participatory methods using video stories and video sketches, including the presented analytical approaches, supported diverse perspectives and insights into the phenomenon we studied. This included new perspectives that had not been identified in the previously collected data and contradictory perspectives. Furthermore, we identified perspectives that were obvious but absent and excluded from both the previously collected data and the videos produced by the participants.

An example of a video story revealing a new perspective that had not been identified in the previous data was a video story in which the storyteller pointed out challenges when communicating in public arenas, such as communicating with estate managers, the municipality, or the doctor. The storyteller expressed a feeling of lack of a linguistic repertoire when engaging in dialogue with these authorities. She mentioned being nervous about saying something wrong and not understanding what was being said when interacting in these contexts. The nervousness was amplified by the fact that this communication could become crucial for the young person’s opportunities and actions. The storyteller also depicted difficulties in using public services when one feels unable to ask the “right” questions. Several participants confirmed this experience during the plenary discussions after viewing the video story. Therefore, this video story drew our

attention to young people's experiences of lacking a specific linguistic repertoire and competencies in navigating contexts such as public services and the healthcare system.

Another video story that unfolded a new perspective was that of a participant who commented on the presented data in his video story and pointed out that the transition processes in his culture were different. In his video story, he wrote, "There is a difference in norms. In my culture, people typically move when they get married." In this case, the facilitators had continuous contact with this participant due to technical challenges during the workshop. This gave complementary insights around this participant's perspective.

Some video stories "amplified" already identified perspectives and thereby broadened our attention to these perspectives. One example was a video story in which the storyteller described how he perceived other young people seeming to manage their lives and their transition processes successfully, unlike himself. Due to this video story, we started exploring young people's (mis)perceptions about other young people, including scientific literature in this field, which pointed to potential interventions and strategies to manage some of these challenges among young people.

The analysis using movable storyboards attached to the boards revealed absent and excluded perspectives. An example was the absence of reflections on socioeconomic and structural premises. The young participants generally portrayed individual strategies for action and did not include reflections on societal and structural conditions, such as conditions in the housing market. This finding led to various methodological considerations. The question was whether the work with personal stories prompted the participants to reflect "inward" and thereby not including reflections on surrounding societal framing or whether the specific group of participants, in this case young people in general, tended toward a more inward-looking perspective and self-reflective than outward-looking and focusing on the structural conditions. The youth researchers in the research project confirmed that among young people, there is a tendency to reflect more "inward" than "outward." They tend to consider their own roles and abilities rather than adopt a more outward-looking perspective. Our facilitation of the applied methods in other contexts shows that other groups of participants do include reflections on surrounding premises. This means that working with personal video stories does not necessarily mean that participants lose focus on the structural conditions of their inquiry processes and video stories.

## 7 Discussion

In considering the analysis of audiovisual content broadly, we found numerous analysis formats within the domains of image and film analysis. Gillian Rose (2016) mapped out types of analysis, including compositional analysis, psychoanalytic analysis, discursive analysis, and social semiotic and multimodal analysis.

Some scholars argue that it is not possible to conduct an analysis solely centered around the specific visual material, which has resulted in overlooking the significance of context for understanding the visual material (Rose, 2016). Other scholars advocate for incorporating ethnographic methods in the analysis of specific visual materials (Pauwels & Mannay, 2020). The challenge in including context is that complexity increases, given that context is often "messy" (Shaw, 2012). In our analytical approaches,

we sought to include context through the knowledge of the specific young individuals who participated in the workshops and through domain expertise in youth life by the associated youth researchers.

In our analysis using boards and printed storyboards, we used physical artifacts to support the possibility of moving, grouping, and organizing into patterns. This approach includes tactile and spatial inquiries. Furthermore, the physical materials in the analysis dialogues can thus support the collaborative dimension in joint investigations of what is seen and potentially level hierarchies (Mannay, 2020). The materials can be engaging, encouraging participants to touch and thereby participate. They can potentially function as “talking sticks” and facilitate comparison processes and ownership (Buur et al., 2018).

Research focusing on visual communication and sketching has identified the risks associated with visual methods and the use of sketches (Henningesen, 2022). For instance, challenges arise when drawings inappropriately exaggerate, distort, and caricature points. Our data contain similar aspects of exaggeration and stereotypes in their visual expressions. Examples include two video stories on “Bob.” In the first version of the Bob story, several caricature drawings are included, and the second version of the Bob film uses flashy visual effects in the transitions between images. These various effects made the videos appear comedic, and during the presentation among the young participants, several of them laughed. This reaction seemed to be the intention of the creators of the video stories. One can argue that the focus is diverted from the essential issue, which in this case is a serious problem among young people. However, the humor appears to make the videos more approachable among the young participants and less “educational” and further amplifies the argument. Despite the humor in the two versions, we, as affiliated researchers, were able to identify relevant issues and potential initiatives in our analysis of the video stories.

In digital storytelling, various analytical approaches have been developed. Some focus solely on specific films, others include the context surrounding the development of the films, and some involve the participants. For example, participants are engaged through story circles (Hakanurmi, 2017), enabling insights into both the participants and the films, and is considered a form of focus group interview. In other analysis formats used in digital storytelling, participants revisit their films after one year to allow them to reinterpret their stories (Flicker & MacEntee, 2020). Certain analysis formats center on specific films, such as examining the appeal forms of pathos, ethos, and logos (Eide, 2012), or mapping narratives, such as identifying whether they are closed narratives, open narratives, or potential counter-narratives (Hakanurmi, 2017). In future research projects, it would be interesting to explore these different analysis formats. In other projects, we applied the format in which participants revisited their video narratives after one year. This enabled a different time perspective in the analyses and understandings of the video stories.

Researchers in the field of participatory approaches discuss the risks associated with participant involvement and the idea of “giving voice” based on the belief that they have answers and important knowledge to contribute (e.g., Buckingham, 2009; Milne, 2016; Milne & Muir, 2020; Shaw, 2012). The question is whether the participants always have something to say. Perhaps they feel that they have nothing to say or lack the answers or contributions that are desired. Participants may also feel pressured to share

from their perspective or their own experiences, which they either do not wish to share or which they arrange in a forced dramatic form to be interesting to others. The creative processes following participatory research also risk devolving into methodological fetishism (Berger, 2002), with the risk that sophisticated methods are used to examine relatively trivial subjects, and the methods “grow beyond” what needs to be investigated. Regarding extracting knowledge from participant-produced films, some critics point to the risk that external parties, such as policymakers, may inadvertently misunderstand the films and thus reinforce stereotypes, despite participatory research aiming to change such assumptions (Milne & Muir, 2020).

In participatory action research, there is sometimes criticism of the position of power between experienced researchers in relation to participating young people (Kim, 2016). This is a factor that we strived to be aware of before, during, and after the video stories and video sketches workshops. We have discussed the fact that the relationship is not symmetrical, and that there were power relations at play, both in respect to us, the researchers, and concerning the teachers, who planned the young people’s participation on their behalf. This awareness does not alter the fact, but it indicates that it was an explicit factor for us and the participants. However, in relation to other forms of participatory research studies, where data are analyzed together and simultaneously, the video stories and video sketches provide a different setup. Here, the participants are facilitated with respect to making video stories and video sketches and are encouraged to relate personally to the empirical data they gain access to. They make their own selection of data and analysis, and do not have to “compete” for the researchers’ views on the same data. Thus, power structures regarding analysis are perhaps less prevalent but also an aspect that needs further investigation in the future.

Regarding the issue of whether participants have something to say in terms of answers and experiences, in our workshops, we initially “prepare” the participants. They are presented with and experience other participants’ experiences through audio clips, post-cards, and personas, after which they develop their own video story on the same theme. Besides being prepared through encounters with previously collected data, the participants explore their own experiences and perceptions through the investigative processes to support ownership and give them some degree of definition power. Participants investigate what needs to be told, how, and whether something should be shared. The initial presentation of other empirical data naturally also holds a certain defining power and influences the participants’ video stories. However, we observed that some video stories contradicted the presented data, indicating a certain authority among participants to define their perspectives.

Regarding the criticism of the idea that participants should have a special opportunity to voice themselves through participant-centered methods, in our research project, we have focused more on creating a personal investigative space. We are inspired by the idea of giving participants a voice but are more focused on supporting an experimental investigative space where participants reflect on their own experiences using tools and initiated through initial disruptions. In other words, there is a particular emphasis on facilitating the participants’ processes.

In participatory approaches, one should consider the degree of voluntariness regarding participation. In the three workshops we conducted, most participants had not signed

up on their own. They participated as part of a class of students at an educational institution, and the workshops were arranged through their teachers. We aimed to address this by permitting participants to opt out if needed and providing them with the broadest possible framework for their investigations and final productions. In one workshop, we found that the premise of participation was initially unclear between the participants and us as facilitators because the agreement was established through an instructor. Therefore, the participants had many questions initially about the workshop's purpose, and on the second day of the storytelling workshop, some were absent. This points to a central dilemma in relation to participant involvement. If participation is based on the participants' voluntary registration, there is a risk of "attracting" a particular group and limiting the diversity in the empirical material. However, if participation is based on affiliation with an organization, such as an educational institution, there is a risk that participants feel compelled to participate and do not understand the reasons for their involvement.

Other challenges included participants focusing on a theme different from the intended one in their video stories, making these video stories unsuitable for direct use in the research project. Additionally, conducting workshops that make use of video stories and sketches could be demanding and time-consuming. Finally, the variation of methods, artifacts, and approaches used in the workshop format aiming to support an exploratory inquiry also led to an increasing complexity, and this required that participants needed to possess, be open to, and navigate many competencies.

## 8 Conclusion

In this paper, we presented how we used video stories and video sketches as a participatory and design-based research approach. The aim of this research was to investigate if and how these two methods can provide a space of inquiry and broaden insight into a phenomenon. We found that it was possible through workshops to facilitate a space of inquiry where participants could reflect on the presented data, their own experiences, and potential solutions. We also found that the presented method imposed some challenges, for example, regarding power structures, volunteerism, and level of participation, and pointed to some examples about how to work with this. The intention to facilitate a kind of "constructive disturbance and disruption" through various creative and collaborative approaches, the use of materials, and the presentation of other young people's stories worked to gain new knowledge about the domain. The results show that the workshop format provided a way of having participants relate to existing data from a personal perspective, thus enabling them to conduct an analysis through the use of video stories and video sketches. The researcher's analysis of these stories and sketches, through, for example, analytical storyboards on mobile boards, provided new knowledge and new perspectives to the project that were not part of the initial research results.

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