Photovoice as Knowledge Mobilization

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Abstract. This article was motivated by an awareness of the knowledge mobilization aspect of photovoice facilitating meaningful social change. Photovoice aims to platform excluded voices and alternative forms of knowledge through photographs. In this project, immigrants with a professional background articulated their experiences in finding work in their field in Canada, this leading to photo exhibitions and round table discussions with relevant stakeholders. To highlight knowledge activation and exchange and explore how knowledge mobilization might be bolstered, we use an example of a photovoice project involving skilled immigrants to Canada. Because photovoice is situated within Freirean and feminist approaches, we employ these lenses to understand opportunities in photovoice for knowledge mobilization. We establish that key mechanisms for deliberately extending photovoice into the realm of knowledge mobilization are deepening reflexion (conscious raising and conscientization); facilitating affirmation, legitimation, and validation through strengthening the processes of mutual exchange (relationality); building a common narrative that exposes structural forces impacting lived realities through critical dialogue (collective identification and collective action); and engaging those who hold power in further critical dialogue.

Keywords: Photovoice, Knowledge Mobilization, Conscientization, Consciousness Raising, Freire, Feminism.

Introduction

This article contends that even as social change is a goal of photovoice methodology, it is only by paying increased attention to the often-overlooked aspect of knowledge mobilization that this aim will be achieved.

Photovoice was originally used in the context of health but has been applied to diverse contexts and fields of practice internationally (Jongeling et al., 2016). It has a strong social justice and human rights agenda, aiming to *project onto the mainstream the image and lived reality of marginalized societal groups*. The method uses the re-production of images to facilitate the expression and articulation of individual and collective conscientization and voice. Through the photovoice process, reflections are distilled as a focused collective narrative emerges. Individuals from a discriminated-against or overlooked group record their lived experience as visual images and develop commentaries or stories associated with such images (Jarldorn, 2019). Importantly, these images portray the individuals' and ultimately a collective point of view rather than an imposed construction of their reality. As such, the photography becomes "a political tool which can be used to challenge stereotypes, for self-expression and to build solidarity with others" (Jarldorn, 2019, p. 2).

Photovoice specifically positions itself as a research method that unlocks marginalized voices (Brown, 2024; Milne & Muir, 2020) through conscientization that makes visible structural oppressions and legitimates space(s) for action. Even as photovoice centres the lived experiences and knowledges of those less heard or seen in dominant society, unlocking participants' voices and accessing their tacit knowledges through photography and reflection, we argue that social transformation is only activated with intentional knowledge mobilization. There is an often-missed opportunity for photovoice as a methodology to go beyond affirming such voice/s towards activating such knowledges for social change and as suggested by Graham et al. (2018) and Liebenberg (2018) "moving knowledge into action" (Graham et al., 2018, p.22), i.e. prompting service planners and providers to become future knowledge users. This is because the emancipatory effects of the photovoice might not be actualized if participants do not have the societally validated means to bring about the relevant change that photovoice advocates and promises. Commonly, projects would end with academic knowledge mobilization such as conference presentations or publications, thereby deviating from photovoice's original goals of active contribution to social justice (Call-Cummings et al., 2018; Cubero, 2024). By avoiding active knowledge mobilization, the personal and private knowledges are denied and thus prevented from entering and acting on the public sphere. Thus, it is important *to create a legitimated platform for the hidden voices and knowledges to enter the public arena and broad networks through building partnerships and solidarity,* for researchers and communities to drive for

social change and improve relationships between communities (Cubero et al., 2024).

Knowledge Mobilization

Critical social work research highlights systemic issues and strives to identify transformative actions to address them (Strega and Brown, 2015). Its main premise is that knowledge creation should be informed by a social justice and social action agenda. The purpose is to engage in a social critique of dominant regimes of truth (structures and narratives); transformation of oppressive reality and power imbalances by validating lived experience as a source of knowledge; restitution, emancipation, and liberation; social change and social action (Lincoln et al., 2018). Consistent with these goals, knowledge mobilization in critical research is informed by questioning who benefits from the project, whose interests are served, and how research will be used (Potts & Brown, 2015), and amplifies silenced voices, ensuring that the perspectives and experiences of marginalized groups are recognized and authentically integrated into research agendas, processes and outcomes (Strega & Brown, 2015; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2021). One of the key aspects of mobilizing knowledge for the inclusion of silenced voices is the emphasis on participatory research methods that engage marginalized community members as active collaborators in the research process, by facilitating a stake in the outcomes while building trust and fostering greater community engagement (Israel et al., 2008).

In the broader research community, knowledge transfer is often presented as synonymous with knowledge mobilization. However, knowledge transfer infers a mono-directional process, while knowledge mobilization emphasizes the bi- or multidirectional co-construction of knowledge characterized by intentionally *acting* on knowledge (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council [SSHRC], 2023, July 3). Knowledge mobilization is not about *giving* voice to individuals and groups but rather about amplifying the voices of those who are often unheard and silenced by creating platforms for making them visible, resisting and eliminating barriers that silence the marginalized, as well as disseminating such knowledges to facilitate social change. While photovoice is a participatory and empowering approach, the insertion of a researcher implies a power differential that must be made visible and acknowledged. Accordingly, knowledge mobilization involves creating platforms and channels such as community meetings, accessible reports, and digital media that reach broader audiences (Potts & Brown, 2015). By using diverse and inclusive communication strategies, knowledge mobilization ensures that the information is accessible and actionable for those who need it most, thereby promoting greater awareness and advocacy. Facilitating such diversity and inclusion needs to go beyond tokenistic neoliberal capitalist notions to full and wide participation, as described by Cooke and Kothari (2001). Ultimately, mobilizing knowledge to include voices that typically do not have a platform helps to challenge and rectify power imbalances

within research and policy-making processes (Lincoln et al., 2018). Traditional research methods and institutions often reflect and reinforce existing power structures, which can further marginalize certain voices and perpetuate inequity (Strega & Brown, 2015). Knowledge mobilization seeks to counteract these dynamics by advocating for policies and practices that are informed by the experiences and needs of marginalized groups (Anderson & McLachlan, 2016). Incorporating feedback from marginalized communities into social policies can lead to more equitable solutions that address their specific challenges, rather than imposing one-size-fits-all solutions that may not be effective or appropriate.

Knowledge mobilization is not without challenges due to the difficulties to power imbalance among the involved stakeholders, access to knowledge and information, or decision-making authorities, diversity of participants experiences and knowledge and means of expression (Turin et al., 2020). These issues must be intentionally addressed.

To demonstrate how knowledges made visible through photovoice can be activated for change, we apply Freirian and feminist frames to an example of a photovoice research project that engaged immigrants who had formal careers in their countries of origin but faced multiple obstacles in entering their professions in Canada (Morgenshtern et.al., 2024).

Photovoice as Freirean and Feminist Knowledge Activation
Photovoice has its roots in Freirean as well as in feminist thinking (Wang and Burris, 1994; Milne and Muir, 2020); it also is founded in exploring the links between the representation of subjective individual and collective realities (Liebenberg, 2020; Macdonalds et al., 2022). We discuss each because while Freirean and feminist thinking share similar axiologies, they complement and reinforce rather than replicate one another (Cataloni & Minkler, 2010; Liebenberg, 2020; Macdonald et al., 2022; Milne & Muir, 2020), see Table 1.

Table 1.

Freirian and Feminist Frameworks in Critical Knowledge Mobilization

Freirian Framework	Feminist Framework
Critical Consciousness	Emphasis on marginalized voices
Dialogical process, inclusion & participation	Challenging power dynamics
Inclusion and participation	Intersectionality
Praxis	Feminist ethics & reflexivity
Education for liberation	Advocacy & social change
Empowerment & agency	Empowerment & agency

In conceptualizing knowledge, Wang & Burris (1994) identified the Freirian concepts of education for critical consciousness and conscientization as part of photovoice's theoretical foundations. Freire (1970) was interested in lifting out silenced and marginalized voices and encouraging communities to act on their social conditions. He suggested that critical education was essential for activism because dominant forms of education that 'banked' knowledge in individuals, and relied exclusively on experts' knowledge, constrained critical thinking (Carroll and Minkler, 2000). Further, Freire (1970) posited that education for critical consciousness was central to recognizing and eliciting the knowledges people carried about their own realities and believed that inductive reasoning and analysis would generate an appreciation of structural and systemic dynamics. For Freire, the co-production of knowledges and acting on one's circumstances was only possible through individuals being able to develop their own rather than imposed analyses. Collective critical dialogue and reflection were similarly important in permitting the uncovering of real problems and actual needs, engendering alternative explanations, and encouraging individuals to analyze their own reality. Understanding how the reality of the self was part of a broader, collective experience shifted individuals and communities from passive subjects to actors in their own circumstance (Freire, 1970). In recognizing that everything was political, Freire re-situated individual troubles as collective, communal issues, in contrast to neoliberal processes of individualization, atomization, and blame. Indeed, Freire maintained that such awareness led to the mobilizing of marginalized and suppressed knowledges towards advocacy for a reality free of oppression (Carroll and Minkler, 2000). Freire's position can thus

be summarized as a reflexive process of conscientization that through individual reflection and critical dialogue lifts out the collective and communal experience towards knowledge mobilization and (class) liberation. Photovoice has adopted this agenda of un/re-covering and reproducing knowledges. It tacitly also promotes knowledge mobilization though this area seems to receive less attention in published photovoice research.

The second foundation to photovoice is feminism for its problematizing of power dynamics in traditional research methods, practices, ways of understanding the world, emphasizing marginalized voices and seeking creative ways for engaging community (Hesse-Biber, 2014; Wang & Burris, 1994). Although initially focused on bringing women's experiences to the forefront of community discourse through photovoice, Wang and Burris' (1997) feminist approach is to "be used to challenge oppression, including that based on age or socio-economic, health, or racial or ethnic status…and intersecting oppressions" (Milne & Muir, 2020, p. 4; Wang & Burris, 1997). As such, photovoice's feminist emphasis foregrounds research participants' lived experience, self-worth, and decision-making agency; centres partnership in determining the research process; *and* privileges participants' right to inform social change (Lykes, 2015; Macdonalds et al., 2022; Robinson-Keikig et al., 2014). In paying attention to power, empowerment, and consciousness raising to guide awareness of the ways in which the personal is the political, a feminist lens also expects knowledge mobilization to lead to the emancipation from oppressive experience (Liebenberg, 2018; Macdonalds et al., 2022). Moreover, feminist research is relational, paying special attention to equalizing power and hierarchy in the research relationship through facilitating reciprocity and interdependence between the researcher/s and participants in knowledge construction. Intersectionality allows an understanding of power as fluid and complex and enacted in some dimensions of social location while being repressed in others. Relationality changes both the researcher and the participants through facilitating inclusive knowledge creation and socially just change (Calderwood et al., 2024). Additionally, the feminist lens demands analysis of the intersectional and how this determines communal experience (Crenshaw, 1989). Accordingly, a feminist lens in photovoice credits unheard voices, appreciates the complexity of knowledges represented in such voices, promotes relationality and reciprocity, and motivates societal change.

The intersection of feminism with race, ethnicity or social status suggests complex and multiplicative effects of these dimensions on the experiences of Black gendered individuals in the context of survival and resistance to violence against Black bodies (Noxolo, 2023); non-Hispanic White or White and Black women (Charter, 2022). Sato and Tawill (2022) and Brown (2018) deepen the intersectionality analysis by bringing the multiple forms of domination, while emphasizing different epistemic values and lived experience and recognition for distinct epistemic values of

different geographical locations. The awareness of intersectionality of experiences emerged in Weiler's (1991) critique of Freire's liberatory pedagogy and his omission of diversity of gendered differences; rather, feminist pedagogy is considered a more liberatory vision by questioning the role of authority, the importance of lived experience and exploring diverse perspectives.

These two theories both reinforce and challenge one another. Both feminism and Freirian theory embrace an analysis of power and thus speak to notions of reflection, consciousness building, empowerment and advocacy, solidarity and action. Feminist theory foregrounds gender, while Freirain theory emphasizes class. Together these theories can complicate understandings of photovoice by connecting individual and group narratives. These theories will also shape how sampling is approached, activating people's networks, while recognizing both areas of disempowerment and privilege.

These theoretical foundations also speak to the importance of knowledge mobilization as the result not only of an individual, but also collective (group and social) reflective (individual) and reflexive (critical praxis that understands self in the context of structural) process that results in action. Freirian and feminist lenses thus require photovoice research to go beyond awareness, conscientization and the facilitation of group identity towards broad solidarity with others similarly affected, as such facilitating participants' empowerment towards advocacy. The knowledges that have been affirmed and those that have emerged through conscientization and reflexion should be applied towards developing further critical consciousness and social change.

A Case in Point: Knowledge Mobilization in a Photovoice Project with Immigrant Professionals

We next offer an example where conscientization and consciousness raising led to the activation of knowledge on individual, collective, and social level for immigrant professionals.

Description of the Project.

Immigrant professionals in urban and semi-urban Canadian conurbations face many barriers, such as service providers not understanding the structural barriers to gaining employment and instead focusing on individuals' job search skills; the lack of recognition of foreign qualifications; and few opportunities to demonstrate their professional skills. These prevent them securing employment in their areas of expertise (Akbar, 2019; Bhuyan et al., 2017; Gauthier, 2016), though interventions offered are often counterproductive because they individualize the process, assign blame and ignore the challenges created by the host society (Morgenshtern et al., 2024; Bhuyan et al., 2017; Ku et al., 2018). A university-community collaborative project explored immigrant experiences of empowerment and exclusion, and educated service

providers, policy makers and local community members about immigrants' challenges and strengths. Indeed, photovoice is premised on eliciting participants' capacities and strengths and to create space for their voices.

Photovoice was chosen for its promise to create spaces where immigrant professionals could capture and express their individual realities; build solidarity and support through communal connections; develop insights around the structural factors impacting their experiences; and feel empowered towards individual and collective action. On reflection, it is evident that the engagement of participants and their empowerment would have been strengthened had they been invited to determine the research method. Instead, the research team had selected this as a relevant approach, missing this step towards full participation. Further, as an evocative methodology it could convey a holistic and robust story from the participants' collective point of view to the public and particularly to stakeholders in the migration and employment field thereby potentially shift the discriminatory decision-making frameworks around immigrant professionals. The project received ethics approval from Trent University. A heterogenous group of participants who were immigrants to Canada, had pre-immigration professional employment experience in their home country, and were sufficiently proficient in English to participate in the study were recruited through availability and snowball sampling strategies suitable for accessing members of minority groups (Calderwood et al., 2024). These recruitment approaches cued into members' collective sensibilities. We also focused on ensuring women voices were adequately represented.

In this next section, we discuss how knowledge mobilization occurred in this project, demonstrating that activating knowledge must go beyond initial processes of conscientization and collective identification. Service providers who participated in the roundtable discussion are named SP1 etc., and policy makers PM1 etc; participants chose their own identifiers.

The First Phase: Conscientization, Relationality, Collective Identification.

The process of conscientization is central to knowledge mobilization in photovoice and includes cognitive and emotive reflection. Analysis begins with participants reflecting on what they wish to capture and then have photographed, how their images might connect to the research questions, and what their images might illuminate and amplify in relation to their knowledges and insights about their social circumstances. In presenting the photos to other participants and engaging with the images and associated narratives created by other participants, analysis links individual experiences with larger group discussions, and facilitates connections and identification with collective experience (Wang & Burris, 1994). This inclusive dialogical engagement builds a picture of collective lived experiences (codifying) and facilitates the critical interpretation of

such lived experience (decodifying) (Freire, 1994). The sharing of experiences, the identification of common themes, and the appreciation of lived experiences lead to new understandings (and thus knowledges) of the collective experience which uncover prevalent synergies and commonalities as well as obscured structural and systemic forces. Potentially, in an iterative process, the stories offered to explain the photos deepen and shift each time they are told as participants continue to make sense of their photos and their own context. While photovoice research begins by gathering individual perceptions of experience, the emphasis should be on the collective account of social conditions and their impact on lived realities. Accordingly, photovoice research should aim to reflect upon and record the community's strengths and concerns, highlight issues of importance to the community and promote critical dialogue and knowledge about those issues (Wang & Burris, 1994).

These mechanisms were reflected in the knowledge mobilization process for the re-search participants, specifically individual reflexion (conscientization/critical consciousness); affirmation, legitimation, and validation through mutual exchange (relationality); critical dialogue and common narrative of structural forces (collective identification); and critical dialogue with those in power.

For participants, the process of gathering images and naming what these represent was a consciousness-raising process. Immigrant professionals specifically articulated their challenges, reflected on their own experiences, and built on the knowledges and insights they already carried. They also developed a complex understanding of the systemic and structural factors at play. They then applied these insights to their collective experiences:

> [D]ifferent photo, different picture, but somehow the lines that were written are pretty much the same thoughts that I would feel ... [A]lthough we're facing different scenarios, but we are feeling the same way. (FLS).

Hence, participants suggested that their awareness shifted from focusing on individual barriers to identifying communal challenges. Ruth shared:

> I felt like, yeah, I can relate with that. At one point, I've been there, I'm still there ... And I was happy about how deep it was. They were just pictures, but the way it talks to me I felt like, I'm not alone, so I have that sense of belonging. It's so interesting.

In the process of telling and re-telling their stories and receiving the stories of others, participants also had novel insights into the collective impact of structural barriers. This process embraces critical narrative thinking in lifting out preferred stories and structural contexts, and like critical autoethnography interweaves individual and collective stories (Holman Jones, 2005). Michelle maintained: "I found out about the other professions that are also involved, and I was like, "Oh my gosh it's not only healthcare who's going through this, it's practically every immigrant who has some sort of skill, is going through this thing". Cynthia observed:

[I]t has impacted me much more [than I expected]. You feel validated in your thoughts and your ideas, in your logic, trying to get to understand why the society's is working like that, how can it change … trying to go farther away of what is happening to you to what is happening in the system, and how each player has different views and different feelings ... I have a better understanding of life and society, now than I had before when I was just into my bubble.

Participants developed their own interpretation of the meaning behind their photos and accordingly shifted their individual narratives into a communal and intersectional discourse as they became conscientized and saw connections between stories. They moved away from a position of self-blame to recognizing the problem as systemic. Additionally, shifting the core problem from the self to systems, and finding a common story validated their resistance and resilience to the troubles they faced as individuals and as a collective and facilitated their intention to act: "[E]ducation is a must, in terms of dispelling any myths or misconceptions as it relates to immigrants and the value they bring to Canada." (Anonymous).

The photos and commentaries were reflexive and intentional representations of the self and by implication, of a group or community. By compiling a literal common story through the photobook/exhibition and as guides to the photo exhibits, participants could articulate their individual and collective experiences and highlight structural barriers to meaningful employment as well as their perseverance and resilience.

The Second Phase: Acting Collectively.

In contrast to traditional documentary photography, which casts members of
marginalized groups as objects of research, the community-based approach favoured in photovoice *documents members of marginalized communities as actors*, placing the knowledge creation in the community, and exercising minimized power hierarchies between researchers and participants (Wang & Burris, 1994; Milne & Muir, 2020). Research participants, not researchers, both control the research process and transform knowledge into action relevant to their lived experiences. Research participants are thus intentionally involved in the process of knowledge development as social justice (for example, Abma et al., 2017; Ganann, 2013; Maiter et al., 2008; Vaughn et al., 2017). Beyond creating solidarity and shared knowledges through the reflection of the individual experience in the common story, photovoice also targets stakeholders such as policy makers (Wang et al., 2004; Wang & Burris, 1994; Wang & Pies, 2004) and facilitates change through the emotionally evocative narrative power of the photos (Macdonald et al., 2020).

The gathered images are then, through all parts of the research process (Brown, 2024), *woven into a larger, comprehensive story* through critical dialogue, enabling participants to understand societal dynamics

contributing to their social condition (conscientization), and to see themselves reflected in the stories of others- and thus not to feel alone in their troubles, and to appreciate that such difficulties are not of their own making. Because of enhanced, complex understandings and awareness of issues affecting a group, shifts in attitudes and cultural perspectives towards greater critical and ethical inclusion, increased well-being and an increased capacity to cope with barriers and oppressions (Brown, 2024) participants ultimately engage with their environments from a greater sense of empowerment (Catalani & Minkler, 2010; Liebenberg, 2020).

It is this weaving together of individual stories in a larger representation of an issue and a new appreciation of un/re-covered knowledges that forms a starting point for advocacy in community forums, exhibitions, presentations to policy makers and interventions beyond the photovoice process and sits at the heart of knowledge mobilization. Thus, photovoice, as a dynamic, iterative process of meaning making, with organic and repeated reflection on the initial images captured and the stories they represent, ideally curates, must generate and mobilize knowledge in novel ways.

The participants took photographs representing opportunities, challenges, and solutions to their employment search, collaboratively reflecting on and analyzing the photos for a multifaceted collective story (McIntyre, 2003; Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang, 1999) The participants together also decided to compile a digital photobook and a travelling photo exhibition to disseminate their knowledge. All local municipalities, welcome centres, and public libraries were invited to host the travelling exhibition. Self-selected participants and members of the re-search team offered guided tours, viewers could provide written comments, and round table discussions were held where audience members contributed their reactions and reflections to the exhibition and ideas of what needed to happen next. This process reflects one of community development and capacity building (Wehbi & Parada, 2017).

The aim of photovoice knowledge mobilization is social transformation. As highlighted in the photographs below, this project created opportunities for collective understanding and awareness for re-search participants and attitudinal, cultural and capacity impacts for settlement and employment service providers and policy makers. Knowledge was moved into action.
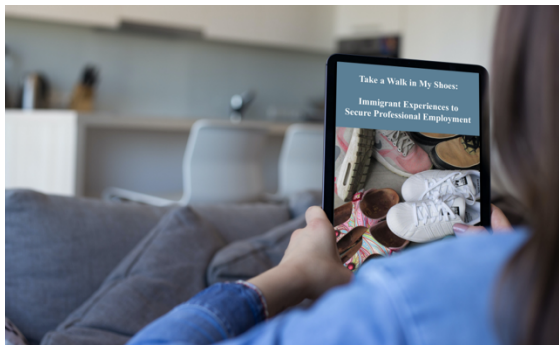
Photo 1: Digital photobook

Photo 2: Guided Tour—Employment Centre

Photo 3: Travelling Exhibit—Public Library
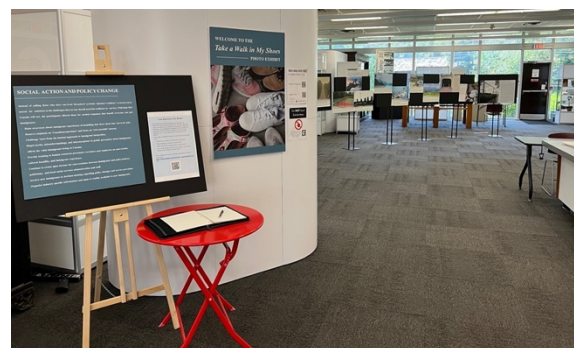

Photo 4: Travelling Exhibit—School Board

Photo 5: Travelling Exhibit—Heritage Museum

Photo 6: Travelling Exhibit—Welcome Centre

It was not only the immigrant professionals who were moved towards action. By seeing the photos, reading the commentaries, and then engaging in critical dialogue at the round tables, immigrant and employment service providers and decision makers were able to recognize structural factors and potential professional biases (conscientization/critical consciousness), legitimate and validate the immigrant professionals' stories (relationality) and identify needed shifts to action in their work.

For example, SP2 noted, "[T]he exhibition was an eye-opener on the misconceptions concerning immigration ... I want to become an advocate and an ally in this journey of reflection and action". PM1 claimed that,

> [T]he project helps us recognize that there is some unlearning and decolonizing to do, not only of the processes and policies at the City but also at the systemic level. This project shows the importance of diversity of thought; and diversity of experience is so valuable to the hiring process of the new immigrants.

Strega and Brown (2015) identify cognitive justice as an essential condition for social justice. The exhibition evoked such intellectual responses, PM2 reporting, "What a great project and a very engaging and accessible format for sharing the insights. I was buoyed by the optimism and hope in the narrative and pictures, though saddened by the negative challenges the participants faced". Indeed, connecting with the knowledges presented resulted in some momentum among service providers towards understanding how they are implicated in dehumanizing their immigrant service users and crafting alternative and meaningful responses to immigrant professionals. SP10 noted, "[A]s a hiring manager, I sometimes fail to provide feedback and [now see] the importance of taking time to respond to those who have been interviewed ...". Others, such as SP7, realized that they are "really focused on the benefits that these [employment] programs are going to offer to the clients, but we don't talk about the negatives. It makes me reflect on how the issues discussed through the exhibit can translate into my work". Viewing the photo exhibition also increased relationality and facilitated the change in prevailing beliefs about immigrants by some service providers emphasizing the importance of shifting away from social hierarchies and divisions to seeing immigrants as whole persons, thus humanizing them:

> The project has pieces on being vulnerable, feelings of being less than, feeling of a challenge, feeling of having to shift and reinvent oneself. These are universal in everyone's experience. This exhibit should not be restricted to immigrant circles, and it should go to wide audience. The hiring managers who aren't sitting here will connect with this, even if they are not immigrants. The project has the power of creating change. (SP12)

> The photos illuminating both the individual and communal experience potentially allowed stakeholders to go beyond a stereotyped construction of 'the immigrant', to recognizing the interaction of social structures, social markers, and individual identities (or intersectionality) of the participants. They could then shift towards identifying next steps in facilitating the employment journey of skilled immigrants. This was demonstrated in SP15's observation:

> The exhibit made us reflect more on the processes followed, what can be changed, what conversations need to be brought back to our

organizations, what is working and what is   not, what changes are needed, what barriers need to be removed [and] so on and so   forth. Photovoice then becomes an invitation to the self, one's community and different community stakeholders for action and systemic change, and hence for knowledge mobilization.

Application to Social Work: The Added Value of Photovoice as Knowledge Mobilization Tool

Freire (1970) claimed that "Knowledge emerges only through invention and reinvention, the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry beings pursue with the world and with others" (p. 72). The example of the immigrant professionals demonstrates that knowledge mobilization is necessary in photovoice research to respond to social conditions. Knowledge mobilization *builds on* the foundations of the photovoice *and extends* its relevance, scope and meaning.

The following emerge as central to the process of knowledge mobilization:

- Participants need the opportunity to engage in an iterative process of individual and collective reflexion towards developing a common, critical story that facilitates a sense of belonging and creates space to articulate and relate previously silenced/devalued knowledge/s.
- This experience of conscientization about the common story and the associated affirmation, legitimation and validation empowers participants to project this co-constructed common story to the 'outside', specifically being able to engage those holding formal power. Capacity is thus built.
- Through articulating and projecting this story, participants become legitimated and indeed are sought out as curators and agents of knowledge by service providers and policy makers that may previously have overlooked or disregarded their experiences. Being seen as credible and being validated empowers participants to inform transformative social change (Skeggs, 1997).
- Building in further opportunities for reflexion and dialogue and facilitating cognitive justice, for example, through commentary books or round table conversations, is essential to conscientization shifts on behalf of those who hold institutional and systemic power, so they can recognize underlying structural factors and potential professional biases, validate and acknowledge the immigrant professionals' experiences, and pinpoint necessary changes to improve their work practices.

Overall, in focusing on knowledge generation, and using conscientization, self-reflection and shared critical dialogue photovoice allows invisible individual and group knowledges to emerge and to be brought into public view as new or counter-stories (Brown, 2024; Cubero et al., 2024). This process, moving from the micro to the mezzo and even

macro level in turn facilitates the generation of new, critical knowledges. In addition, capacity is built, communities can be mobilized to position themselves against systems of oppression, and the possibility of social change is created. We have thus argued that photovoice is an effective method of not only capturing but also activating alternative knowledges. Through prompting social change, the social realm is shifted.

The co-production of knowledge in this form is not uncomplicated or innocent. For example, one ethical consideration is the sustainability of knowledge mobilization. The traditional disciplinary response is to archive new knowledges in reports, journal articles and textbooks. Who owns the knowledge generated and its physical representation in the form of photos; and where is this knowledge stored and curated? How do knowledges generated and mobilized through photovoice become available to others once a project is complete? Also, the role of the re-searchers in knowledge mobilization requires special attention. They are engaged in an on-going sensitive dance that is creative, relational and open, and while attending to participants' needs by "remaining in charge of the research in order to ensure the research remains on point and participants are not harmed (stepping on toes), handing over responsibility and control to the participants (stepping out), and supporting the participants with their research, especially where they may be missing some expertise or skill (stepping in)" (Brown, 2024, pp. 32-33), must ensure that they are always primarily supporting the legitimation of the re-search participants' knowledge.

In conclusion, photovoice as a research method positions itself as making visible and legitimating the voice and experience of those occluded by dominant society. There remains much room for photovoice to also be more intentional about critical knowledge production, building solidarity beyond the immediate group, and being an agent of social change.

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