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# TIME AS AN ISSUE OF POWER IN PARTICIPATORY DESIGN

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## ABSTRACT

Participatory design researchers address complex issues through collaboration with other actors.

These can be communities, third sector organisations, industry or governmental bodies, as well as other academic disciplines. Collaborators are seen as knowledgeable, and empowerment, mutual learning and democratic processes are emphasised.

However, such positive claims have long been undermined by skewed power relations, many of which are related to time. Time, an evasive phenomenon tending to escape visibility, is in this paper given centre-stage. The aim is to identify time challenges in participation, exploring their effects and social implications. The analysis of a project in Kenya reveals how time challenges; limit the diversity of participants; hinder participants from taking on roles that can evolve as projects progress; and impedes opportunities for co-production of knowledge. Together, these issues indicate a need for increased responsiveness from funders regarding the importance of emergent project structures and inclusive budgets.

## INTRODUCTION

Participatory design often builds on action research methodology (Swann, 2002; Kensing & Greenbaum, 2013; Hasdell, 2016) and the idea that research should live up to high standard academic achievements, whilst at the same time reaching social transformation (Greenwood & Levin, 2007; Chevalier & Buckles, 2013). Research of this kind is formulated as being conducted *with* people and the inclusion of participant expertise is highly valued as it increases the robustness and social relevance of research (Guggenheim, 2006; Grant et al, 2008; Ehn, 2008; Polk, 2015b). It also contains the democratic notion that those who may be affected by the research need to be given the possibility to be involved in setting research priorities as well as influence its outcomes (Schuler & Namioka, 1993; Saad-Sulonen et al., 2018). In recent years, the need to also collaborate with other disciplines, in inter- and transdisciplinary constellations is highlighted and seen as necessary for being able to tackle complex contemporary issues (Guggenheim, 2006; Polk, 2015b; Lambe et al., 2020).

Apart from having the notions of collaboration and democracy in common, action research, participatory design and transdisciplinary research are all characterised by iterations in processes. This is seen as fruitful as it provides for an exploration of complexity and learning by doing. However, establishing collaboration and working through iterations is time consuming, and described as a “laborious” experience (Otieno, 2015, p. 48), which is hard to sustain from beginning to end, not least for participants outside the academic realm (Polk, 2015a, b). Similarly, collaboration entails simultaneous coordination of activities on multiple levels, which demands a high level of commitment and time from all actors (Jantsch, 1970; Hoffman et al., 2017). Time scarcity is seen as a hindrance for reaching the goals of mutual learning and co-production of knowledge, as well as there is a tension between reaching a certain sensitivity, depth and



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degree of participation, and time efficient research (Polk, 2015a, b). In short, accumulated reports on time-related issues from scholars engaged in participatory research suggests that time must be recognized as a significant challenge, and it is stated that “we are still far from having an established time-sensitive discourse” (Saad-Sulonen et al., 2018, p. 5).

This paper acknowledges time, an often neglected void in research, as an issue of power in participation. It aims to identify time challenges in participation, exploring their effects and social implications, with the purpose of contributing to the foundation of a time-sensitive discourse. The authors connect to and build further on the time-lenses presented by Saad-Sulonen and colleagues (2018), as well as on the concept of *Ma* and in-betweenness by Akama (2015), for discussing strategies towards reaching time-responsive project set-ups that allows for participant diversity and expansion of participants role over time as projects progress. A theoretical framework based on three participatory research approaches (action research, participatory design and transdisciplinary research), contributes to a nuanced understanding of time related issues. Empirical material from a longitudinal participatory design project in western Kenya illustrates an unjust distribution of time between stakeholders and how these are dependent on various structural, socio-economic and cultural aspects.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK – CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF TIME IN LITERATURE ON PARTICIPATION

Time is embedded in all aspects of life, including research. However, in academic discourses, time is rarely a place from where the analysis starts (Grosz, 1999). A reason for its unarticulated presence is its intangible and fleeting qualities, which makes it hard to conceptualise in a concrete fashion. Even though everything that appears in life requires time (Derrida, 1992) and even though time shapes and affects all relations (Grosz, 1999), it is an evasive phenomenon that tends to withdraw itself from visibility (Derrida, 1992). Furthermore, time is dynamic and asymmetric in distribution, which gives both political and epistemic implications (Derrida, 1992; Grosz, 1999). Thus, time, even though it should be an important point of departure, not least due to its clear connections to power, is often absent in participatory research discourses.

### DISTRIBUTION OF TIME - RESEARCHERS AND PARTICIPANTS

The inclusion of stakeholders in the initial stages of projects is considered essential for collaborative work. Action researchers emphasise the importance of

involving local stakeholders early on for setting priorities (McIntyre, 2008; Chevalier and Buckles, 2013), whilst participant inclusion when negotiating the project-frame is highlighted in participatory design (Winschiers-Theophilus et al., 2013). In transdisciplinary research, early inclusion in initial stages is considered crucial, since it is the space where a functional collaborative climate is to be set, where stakeholders are to establish a common ground for communication, as well as an understanding between different knowledge types, cultures, practices and worldviews (Hirsch Hadorn et al., 2008; Hoffman et al., 2017). However, this, and the task of jointly formulating the challenge at hand demand a substantial amount of time (Lang et al., 2012; Talwar et al., 2012; Wiek et al., 2012). In relation to this, Polk (2015b) argues that the time needed for initiating and managing transdisciplinary processes is often underestimated. Similarly, Talwar and colleagues (2012) see lack of time to establish a functioning team as a main obstacle for reaching co-production of knowledge. Furthermore, although time for collaborative framing is emphasised, examples given by scholars indicate that projects are commonly framed by researchers (Talwar et al., 2012; Polk, 2015b). Non-academic stakeholders are often excluded from the initial stages, making it difficult to accomplish a purposeful degree of involvement in the following phases (Talwar et al., 2012). This lack of stakeholder involvement follows from the need to secure funding and the prevailing application structures from funding agencies, with which scholars are more familiar compared to actors outside academia (Talwar et al., 2012). In addition, researchers need to apply for funding since it is the way of securing their future employment (Siebenhüner, 2004). Likewise, in participatory design it is mentioned to be too easy for researchers to exercise power, framing projects according to their own agendas, whilst leaving little room for participants’ views (Steen 2011; Bratteteig et al., 2013).

Turning to the actual project process, scholars emphasise the importance of shared responsibility and power amongst stakeholders to enable co-production and mutual learning (Lang et al., 2012; Bratteteig et al. 2013; Polk, 2015a; Saad-Sulonen et al., 2018). However, there seems to be a major difference between this methodological emphasis and what is realised in practice. Regarding transdisciplinary projects, it is stated that it is especially the practitioners and often overworked public officials that find it challenging to devote time, as opposed to researchers who generally have more freedom in how they can use time. Some stakeholder groups may also find it hard to stay devoted to projects that stretch over longer time periods, and they may have other timelines than researchers (Lang et al., 2012; Polk, 2015a). In action research, Otienoh (2015) acknowledges the difficulty for teachers to set

off time for school-based action research due to their already pressed schedule. Participatory design scholars have further noted that these challenges are related to costs or loss of income. Researchers most often get remuneration for their time in projects, whilst other stakeholders' ability to participate in a fair way is dependent on various social and economic aspects. It may even be the case that people's participation comes with a cost, since they may need to take time off paid work or compensate someone else for taking care of their work shores (Kraff, 2018b; Kraff, 2020).

#### DIVERSE CONCEPTIONS OF TIME

Conceptualisations of participants often stay on a general level in literature on participatory research. Action research typically refers to researchers and practitioners (Greenwood & Levin, 2007), while transdisciplinary research identifies academia, government, industry, civil society, and society (Lang et al., 2012). Participatory design initially mainly involved staff in Scandinavian workplaces (Kensing & Greenbaum 2013), but now also engages residents and disadvantaged or marginalised groups across the world (Light & Akama 2012; Blomberg & Karasti 2013; Lambe et al., 2022). As a result of this broadened engagement, the term community is commonly used (DiSalvo et al., 2013), which has received criticism as it contributes to a vagueness regarding who participates; it is "simultaneously elusive and familiar" (DiSalvo et al., 2013, p. 183). Hidden behind broad conceptions is also the common phenomena that those who participate often belong to already strong groups (Kothari, 2001; Kothari et al., 2019). In recent years, however, there is more nuance in descriptions of community participation. Participant diversity is recognized through mentions of community leaders, elders', youth and women's groups, as well as through discussions on their multiple individual realities (Winschiers et al., 2013; Poderi et al., 2018; Lambe et al., 2022), which gives people differing preconditions for participating (Kraff 2018b).

In line with this acknowledgement of participant diversity, it is important to also understand what this means in relation to time. For example, individuals and groups in a community, may have diverse timelines and expectations on project time, whilst local and external actors in cross-cultural projects may have different understandings of time. Kenyan philosopher Mbiti (1969) conceptualises interpretations of time in Africa as phenomenon and event based, ruled by important happenings, as opposed to a chronological and numerical clock time, which normally controls the idea of time in for example Europe and North America. Linguistics also affects how we view time. In English speaking contexts, time is seen as having a certain length, as in short or long meetings, whilst other languages (e.g., Spanish) depicts time as an amount, as

in plenty or little time (Pallas, 2018). Such differences highlight the importance to recognize that peoples varying relations to time affect their interpretation of the participatory approach and the use of methods and tools. It illustrates the need to not see time only from one perspective, and to not to impose one's own conception as more right than any other, but to take different timelines into consideration and explore where they may clash (Huybrechts et al., 2018; Poderi et al., 2018).

#### 'IN-BETWEEN TIME'

Methods and tools of participation are interesting to explore in relation to time. Literature on transdisciplinary research rarely goes into depth with methods and tools. This is on the contrary common in other participatory approaches. In development studies, discussions are kept on challenges with the collaborative workshop format. Pottier and Orone (1995) state that as workshops are often built around open discussions it is hard to discuss sensitive, complex and contested issues, especially in the early stages of projects. Dealing with conflicts demands establishment of trust, which takes time (Ibid, 1995). In short term projects, there is little opportunity to build trust, which can result in narrow results built on shallow compromise (Shah & Kaul Shah, 1995).

Participatory design has historically placed emphasis on methods and tools (Bratteteig et al., 2013). In recent years however, explorations are called for regarding what takes place in-between design events, since problematic issues, concerns and tensions do not always emerge during organised activities such as workshops, but also during informal encounters (Halskov & Hansen, 2014; Saad-Sulonen et al., 2018). Similarly, Akama (2015, p. 266) introduces the Japanese philosophy of *Ma* for acknowledging the importance of paying attention to "between-ness" in participation. Between-ness can be pauses and unspoken but felt tensions in conversations or other intangible undercurrents that affect relations between participants. Thus, the availability or lack of between-ness influences outcomes and requires the ability to slow down and notice the impact of "small moments" in collaboration.

#### FEMINIST METHODOLOGY AND THE 'SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF TIME'

A long standing focus in participatory action research is the challenge of reaching a sound gender inclusion in community based projects (Gujit & Kaul Shah, 1998; Cornwall, 2003; Omondi et al., 2019). Gender needs to always be kept as an area of analysis, and appropriate methodologies and support for sound gender inclusion needs to be continuously developed (Cornwall, 2003; Omondi et al., 2019). Scholars also propose that those engaged in participation should take lessons from

feminist methodology on how to detect and deal with gender challenges (Gujit & Kaul Shah, 1998).

Accordingly, turning our gaze towards feminist studies, we find discussions on the “economy of time” (Glucksmann, 1998, p. 239), “gendered patterns of time” (Neilson & Stanfors, 2014, p. 1066) and the statement that time exchanges have the potential to reinforce old or produce new hierarchies and inequalities (Glucksmann, 1998). Feminist scholars argue that we need to see to the “total social organisation of time”, which includes paid work time, unpaid household work (including childcare time), community engagement and the gender asymmetries that lie within it (Glucksmann, 1998, p. 243; Negrey, 1993; Neilson & Stanfors, 2014; Collins et al., 2020). Such asymmetries manifest themselves in women’s multiple responsibilities, referred to as dual burden (Odi, 1991), double burden (Chen et al., 2007) or double days (Sirianni & Negrey, 2000), in instances when they are the main responsible for the home and family whilst also working (Owano, 2014).

Furthermore, the recognition in gender studies of temporal time limits (Negrey, 1993) indicates a need to reflect upon whether there are stakeholders who find it difficult to participate within certain timeframes. Similarly, the notion of ‘multiple work temporalities’ (Glucksmann, 1998, p. 255) is important to take into consideration in contexts where people often rely on multiple jobs for their livelihoods (Chambers & Conway, 1992), since it affects their possibilities to participate in projects. Another component is community participation, where one devotes her or himself to community related activities, which takes commitment and time. In short, it is important to see to the ‘total social organisation of time’ and reflect on how the relation between paid work time and household work time can facilitate as well as hinder peoples’ community participation (Negrey, 1993).

#### CALLING FOR CHANGE

The time related challenges described in this theoretical section calls for critical reflection on how projects are organised between stakeholders, and for support structures that allow for just participation and collaborative ways of setting up frameworks. Scholars engaged in transdisciplinary research argue for institutional as well as methodological support, that is flexible enough to deal with the complexity, multiple interactions and mediations that such projects entail (Pohl et al., 2010). Changes are required in academic systems and university research agendas (Lang et al., 2012; Wiek et al., 2012), and there is a need for new types of funding schemes that can provide with the institutional support that “this type of highly time consuming, often intangible work” involves (Polk, 2015b, p. 181). It is proposed that funding of projects

should be extended in time to include implementation periods (Siebenhüner, 2004), as well as to monitor and evaluate outcomes (Wiek et al., 2012). Pohl and colleagues (2008) suggest specific funding procedures for the time consuming first phases to identify problems and design the approach.

Turning to participatory design, scholars argue for nuanced examination and the establishment of a rigorous discourse regarding participation and time. Time should be a concern in processes that engages a diversity of actors (Poderi et al., 2018), and there is a need for taking a temporal approach to participation in which focus is placed on how participation unfolds over time (Bratteteig & Wagner, 2016; Vines et al., 2015; Kraff, 2018; Saad-sulonen et al., 2018). This includes paying attention to *use before use* and *design after design* (Redström, 2008). Also, Saad-Sulonen and colleagues (2018) propose, as a complement to the current focus on project- and future-oriented temporalities, that scholars make use of five lenses for expanding their temporal sensitivity:

- phasic lens: paying attention to phases, cycles and iterations
- emergent lens: reflection and problematisation during projects of how participation unfolds over time
- retrospective lens: evaluating how participation unfolded in retrospect
- prospective lens: imagining how participation may unfold in projects, or how implementations are cared for after projects
- long-term: taking the full perspective – before, during and after projects

Similar suggestions include Huybrechts and colleagues (2018) use of collective scripting, a form of future scenario writing that aims to set the stage for community-led actions in post-project time. Poderi and colleagues (2018) make use of retrospective mapping to critically examine all project phases and activities. This, they argue, makes it possible to visualise the multiple realities, aims and needs of participants. Furthermore Kraff (2018) makes use of a model for reflecting on participant diversity and their changeability over time in projects and discusses how the actions of researchers can affect the situation of and relations between participating groups.

There are, as the above discussion shows, examples in literature on how researchers can reflect on and pay attention to time. However, as Akama (2015) points out, writing out empirical stories connected to time, particularly if they deal with between-ness, is not awarded due to their ambiguous nature. Thus, reflective accounts regarding time still tend to be left out of research reports.

## TIME CHALLENGES ILLUSTRATED - PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH IN KENYA

Placing a temporal lens on a participatory design project in Kenya serves to illustrate how time challenges can take shape. The authors use a retrospective lens (Saad-Sulonen et al., 2018), and a focus on power-relations between stakeholders, which reveal time challenges that are yet to be fully acknowledged in the academic discourse. Running between 2012 and 2016, the project was funded by the research centre Mistra Urban Futures and its local platform in Kisumu, Kenya. The context was a fishing community on the shores of Lake Victoria about five kilometres from Kisumu city, and the set-up was a transdisciplinary North-South collaboration. It involved PhD students from Sweden and Kenya coming from design, marketing, urban planning and ecology, as well local organisations and residents in the community. The application area was small-scale ecotourism development, identified by local scholars and the county government as a driving force for sustainable development and the creation of local jobs.

Community residents were invited to participate in three workshops in the initial stages, with the aim of bringing forth ideas and concerns for ecotourism development. With the purpose of keeping the project accessible for residents throughout, an available project space was set-up, four public presentations were held, and six (non-academic) project reports made available. A central aim was also to integrate a gender perspective and to include women in otherwise male dominated tourism professions. The authors' closest collaboration was with a local guide organisation, whose members live in the community. Members of this group were actively engaged throughout, in collaborative workshops and in general planning. Small-scale implementations were made continuously, and the practical results included the development of guided tours, an improved marketing strategy for the guide group, and infrastructural improvements through waste collection points and a signage system. Other outcomes include the initiation of a countywide association that aims to support local guide groups around Kisumu County and a CBO for women wanting to work in tourism.

The main empirical material is the authors' research journals based on direct observations and reflections during field work as well as reflections after each activity regarding what was said and done through formal and informal discussions with each other, research colleagues, members of the guide group and other stakeholders. In addition, twenty-one open-ended interviews (recorded and transcribed verbatim) were conducted with local stakeholders, of which one (with a guide) focused specifically on time in relation to the project.

## DIVERSE TIME PRECONDITIONS AMONGST LOCAL STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

The stakeholders from the community who dedicated most time to the project were the members of the guide group. Many of them are also devoted to general community development and are often involved in several groups and projects simultaneously. One of them mentioned that there are projects that you are passionate about, which you can 'dedicate most of your time' to, even if you are not paid for it. These can be projects that are within his area of work, for example the ecotourism project that this paper concerns, which he feels he can spend time on since it is directly connected to his work as a guide. It is beneficial in terms of gaining new knowledge on ecotourism development but also since it has tangible effects for the local tourism business. Furthermore, his membership in the group, where they share revenues collectively, gives him the opportunity to earn an income even in the days when he partakes in projects.

This is however not the situation for everybody. Many individuals and groups in the community find it difficult to devote time in projects, since it means losing out on income. Members of the guide group comment that residents generally experience it as difficult to participate in workshops that stretch for several hours. This issue can be a contributing factor as to why project participants often represent already strong groups (Kothari, 2001). Another example is that other guide groups in Kisumu County (who became part of the countywide association for guides) find it hard to participate in projects as they are not formalised enough so that they can provide members with compensation during project attendance. As a guide from another site in the county expressed it, although training or new knowledge is provided that is important for the future, he finds it difficult to attend workshops, since it is time that could have been used to make a living.

In an initial workshop with a group of female fishmongers an aim was to gather their perspectives regarding the local ecotourism business, and the fact that it attracts, not only visitors, but also a large number of researchers and students. Images of visitors and researchers coming to the community were used to aid conversation and the women were asked to place red or green stickers to illustrate whether they considered such situations as negative or positive. The women all expressed positive thoughts on tourism and that they enjoyed interacting with visitors in the fish market. However, as one woman placed a red sticker on an image representing a researcher interviewing a resident this created tension between her and the other women. The group did not want to discuss the matter in more detail then and there and simply stated that researchers coming to the community was positive. This can be seen as a moment of in-betweenness filled with unspoken

frictions (Akama, 2015), that is easy to rush past for the sake of moving on with the process. However, as the authors' Kenyan PhD colleague, who was present in the workshop, was deeply immersed in the women's situation due to her own research on fish markets, this moment was revisited. In this case general knowledge on gender related issues should indicate that women may experience it as more difficult to participate (Gujit & Kaul Shah, 1998), however the specificity of each situation needs to always be examined. Further discussions with the authors PhD student colleague, the guide and fishmonger group slowly revealed how the specific work schedule and level of organisation of the fishmongers affected their ability to spend time in projects. They have a full working schedule from morning till evening, and attending a workshop would directly lead to a decreased income that day. They only have a specific and small window of time, when the fish is drying (maximum two hours in the morning), that they feel comfortable leaving their workstation. However, they would need to put someone else in charge, which gives extra expenditures. Thus, insight in their profession made their specific temporal limitation (Negrey, 1993) visible, which in turn made it possible to establish a format through which they found it feasible to participate.

Yet, another time difficulty was the uneasiness that the guides felt about the digital meetings that happened in-between the authors field-periods in Kisumu. During this time, the authors and the guides communicated via email, which the guides found easily accessible. However, it was not until late in the process that one of the guides, who was responsible for communication, explicitly stated that digital meetings were experienced as stressful. The guide group shared one computer between them, which meant that he needed to negotiate with the other guides before being able to confirm a meeting time. As the microphone and camera only worked sporadically, and as there were occasional power cuts in the community, it meant that he often needed to travel to an internet café in town, just to realise that the time for the meeting had already passed. The guide group and the authors established a relationship early on that allowed for time related issues to be openly discussed in person. However, the fact that the stress connected to digital meetings did not surface until later, indicates that tensions and moments of uneasiness (Akama, 2015) are particularly difficult to detect, and thus also deal with when communication goes digital.

Participatory activities that are public and open for community members and groups to attend may seem accessible for everybody at a first glance. However, considering the above examples in relation to the "economy of time" and "total social orientation of time" (Glucksmann, 1998, p. 239, 234), it illustrates a need to create an understanding of the diverse groups and

individuals in communities, their varying positionalities and "differential allocations of resources" (Bozalek, 2011, p. 469). In the Kisumu project, the guide group in the community, other guide groups in the county and the fishmonger group all had very different preconditions to participate, as they had varying levels of control over the disposal of their work time and free time. This illustrates how time can limit the diversity of participants, and hinder some groups and individuals from participating, whilst premiering other often already strong groups. Thus, asymmetries in relation to gender, group belonging and level of group formalisation needs to be taken into consideration. Also, a group may hold positions of both privilege and disadvantage at the same time, depending on what you put their situation in relation to (Bozalek, 2011). For example, the guide group in the community had a privileged position compared to other residents, although they had a disadvantaged position in relation to the researchers engaged in the project.

#### DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION OF PARTICIPANTS' ROLES OVER TIME

Participation demands time from everyone involved (Polk, 2015a). It is a challenge to find a good balance between a high level of involvement to reach shared responsibility (Lang et al., 2012), and the risk of overwhelming people with too much participation. When writing about the project in earlier publications, the authors reflected on their own roles as researchers as well as the role of the guides (Kraff & Jernsand, 2014a,b), which indicated a need to involve the guides in discussion on these writings. However, a risk when aiming to involve local stakeholders also in reflection is that they end up in a situation previously acknowledged as problematic for researchers, namely where the duality of being heavily engaged in managing the practicalities of projects, whilst at the same time needing to engage in time consuming reflection, come in conflict with each other (Lang et al., 2012). This also connects to the aim in transdisciplinary research of reducing the gap between practice and research, and reaching co-production of knowledge (Talwar et al., 2012; Polk, 2015b). Thus, it is interesting to question how far from the traditional roles of researchers and practitioners we can and should go, and how flexible project frameworks and funding systems are when people's roles develop over time as a project progresses.

In the Kisumu project, one of the guides became increasingly devoted as the project progressed, taking on more responsibilities and engaging in reflective discussions. He expressed that he had felt set aside from the writings of the first four reports, which had been written by the authors without the guides' involvement. This led to the last two reports being written in collaboration with him, and the authors invited him to a research seminar in which he presented the project to an

international audience of researchers in sustainable tourism. This is an example of how transdisciplinary research, to some extent, can transcend the boundaries between academia and practice. However, the deepened participation and extended responsibility did not lead to changes in the overall project set-up and there was no budgetary room made for the additional time that the guide spent in the project. The project thereby remained within the rigid forms of traditional research funding and budgeting. This example shows a need for researchers to engage in collective and critical discussions regarding roles and the allocation of project resources. It also illustrates a need for flexibility in project budgets to allow for equitable participation for people whose involvement and responsibilities increases over time, as well as a flexibility regarding what stakeholders are accepted to be included in project budgets.

Also, it cannot be taken for granted that people have the possibility to stay devoted over longer periods of time (Lang et al., 2012; Talwar et al., 2012). Local stakeholders may be involved in several projects at the same time. and as one of the guides expressed it, 'sometimes you find that people criss-cross between projects. If they are taking place at the same time, it means that people do not have enough time to learn and share from each and every project'. This ecotourism project was the longest so far, which he considered positive. However, people have different timelines (Talwar et al., 2012; Huybrechts et al., 2018; Poderi et al., 2018), and some of the guides did not find it possible to participate in all phases. One of the guides who provided an important critical perspective was often engaged in other projects, which made it hard for him to be available for meetings and workshops. People's ability to participate and be committed can also be related to the notion of livelihoods (Chambers & Conway, 1992). Many community members juggle several jobs, which argues for consideration of people's "multiple work temporalities" (Glucksmann, 1998, p. 255), when designing the approach for participation.

## CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

Although research has identified issues of power in participatory projects for decades (Gujit & Kaul Shah, 1998; Chambers, 1994; Steen, 2011; Bratteteig et al., 2013), their constant recurrence indicates continued need to raise concerns. Using a retrospective time-lens (Saad-Sulonen et al., 2018), this paper makes visible the relationship between power and the elusive phenomenon of time, and illustrates how time challenges: emerge and persist between stakeholders; limit the diversity of participants; prevent participants from taking on roles that evolve as projects progress; and impede co-production of knowledge. These issues demand continuous critical reflection in projects, and it

requires a temporal lens when setting up and managing projects. Furthermore, it signals a need for wide-ranging debates between funders, universities, researchers and other stakeholders who have practical fieldwork experience, with the aim of reaching necessary changes in structures and funding systems.

The traditional roles of researchers and participants are since long set in motion through various forms of participatory research, however funding systems are yet to fully follow. The time that different stakeholders put into projects is not sufficiently highlighted and certain groups and individuals risk ending up in the space between engaged citizens and paid project partners. There is a need for flexibility from funders, for example in terms of what roles these stakeholders can take, and what remunerations they should be given. As funders increasingly request broadened participation, they need to also open up for the inclusion of more actors than scholars and university administrators in project budgets. Such projects need to allow for openness and emergence, as people's level of involvement may change as projects are progressing, for example by making it possible to keep budget-posts earmarked for alterations in project participation. Furthermore, building on the idea of the prospective lens (Saad-Sulonen et al, 2018), keeping budget-posts earmarked can be complemented with reflective workshops conducted in the initial project stages, where two or three scenarios are formed as a means for being able to speculate on how participants' roles may evolve over time.

Another concern is the in-between moments of unspoken, but felt tension in participation, that are easy to rush past, despite their importance for project progress (Akama, 2015). The discussion in this article exemplifies, develops and merges the idea of an emergent time lens (Saad-Sulonen et al., 2018) with the notion of *Ma* and in-betweenness (Akama, 2015), as a means to open up for reflective discussions during projects on how participation unfolds. Scholars need to aim at being responsive to such in-between moments as part of securing participation that is accessible for a diversity of participants, as groups may have different and highly specific time preconditions. Although, important to keep in mind is that in-between moments can be particularly difficult to detect in initial project stages, before relationships are established, or during digital encounters.

Furthermore, peoples access to time for participating can vary greatly, and it may be dependent on the level of formalisation of the groups to which they are affiliated. For example, it matters if their affiliation can ensure income during the time spent in projects or if participating means paying someone else for taking care of your work tasks. This provides further evidence to the acknowledged need for time in initial stages (Lang



et al., 2012; Wiek et al., 2012; Polk 2015b) as a means for establishing understanding of the diverse and sometimes highly specific time preconditions that participants may have.

Lastly, time related issues have been addressed in slightly different ways in discourses on participatory design, transdisciplinary research and action research, which indicate that learning can take place between these. Scholars engaged in transdisciplinary research, for instance, have placed emphasis on the difficulty of organising sound project set-ups within existing funding schemes and systems (Siebenhüner, 2004; Talwar et al., 2012; Polk, 2015b). In participatory design focus is placed on how time-lenses can be used for reflecting on people's participation, before, during and after projects (Redström, 2008; Huybrechts et al., 2018; Saad-Sulonen et al., 2018). In other words, the often overarching and generalised transdisciplinary discussion could benefit from the hands-on empirical examples given in design. At the same time, design scholars can find a starting point in the transdisciplinary discourse, to argue for altered and more flexible funding schemes.

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