



Image: Azadeh Ghahvie

Cinematography: A Medium in International Studies – The Germination of a Documentary.

Cinematografía: un medio en estudios internacionales - La germinación de un documental.

Abstract:

“The Genesis of a Documentary” is the opening article of a trilogy of articles applying research and analysis to a cyclical phenomenon, namely the germination of an idea to a film, to turn it into a cinematographic reality conscious of social impact. This study concerns itself with the position of the researchers and the researched, being part of the former. Retracing the epistemology of an ever-evolving idea, like a kaleidoscope, the article pieces together the memory of key informants to get to the germination of threads of notions, which become a solid reality manifesting itself over time to turn into a cultural expression: a documentary film. Three authors, one article, and voices from the past culminate in a refined picture of the genesis of BROKEN-the-film, an altruistic attempt to continue the implementation of International Law for those whose voices cannot be heard. This article is testimony to the creation of an advocacy tool.

Resumen: “La génesis de un documental” es el artículo de apertura de una trilogía de artículos que aplican la investigación y el análisis a un fenómeno cíclico, es decir, la germinación de una idea a una película, para convertirla en una realidad cinematográfica consciente de impacto social. Este estudio se refiere a la posición de los investigadores y de los investigados como parte del primer artículo de una trilogía. Remontando la epistemología de una idea en constante evolución, como un caleidoscopio, reconstruyendo la memoria de informantes clave para llegar a la germinación de hilos de nociones que se convierten en una realidad sólida que se manifiesta, con el tiempo, para convertirse en una expresión cultural: un documental. Tres autores, un artículo y voces del pasado culminan en una imagen refinada de la génesis de BROKEN-the-film, un intento altruista de continuar la implementación del Derecho Internacional para aquellos cuyas voces no pueden ser escuchadas. Este artículo es testimonio de la creación de una herramienta de promoción.

Keywords: BROKEN-the-film; humanitarianism; Participative Action Research; stream of consciousness; the Researched; *Verstehen*

Palabras claves: BROKEN-the-film; corriente de conciencia; Investigación Acción Participativa; la Investigación; humanitarismo; *Verstehen*

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Introduction

Marx writes that “philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways, the point is to change it” (11th thesis on Feuerbach, 1888). This article is about an idea that grew in complexity and eventually evolved into a documentary film, whose primary aim was to generate lasting change in the lives of people affected by injustice in certain parts of the world. The researchers ask themselves where the idea came from, how change occurred from the subconscious level and evolved into something as concrete as a documentary film, and how long did this idea linger in the mind before its material evolution. In the end, research can only do guesswork in this kind of inquiry and narrow down these guesses to the closest thing there is to reality. The whole idea of change is inextricably linked to the reason why this article was written.

Additionally, this opening article forms part of “Cinematography, A Medium in International Studies – A Trilogy”. Although all three inquiries and analyses can stay on their own feet, the Trilogy is a holistic approach to document the evolution of 1) an idea becoming a film, 2) an advocacy-based film seen in the context of international law, and 3) the taking on new meaning in a context where the origin of the film takes on a secondary role and is appropriated and absorbed into a new culture.

“The Germination of an Idea” sets out on a journey from Critical and Action Research Theories via the notions of Phenomenology and Stream of Consciousness through a methodology strong enough to withstand the critique of the researcher becoming the researched and having his say based on reflection, introspection, and memory. The basic assumption of this research is that this attempt at epistemology is crucial to the deep understanding, *verstehen*, of how documentary film for advocacy originates, but crucially evolves and is deemed to help filmmakers and producers to open up to the learning inherent in their own artistic products and processes to embrace unintended change in their scripts over time.

2. Theory

2.1 Critical Theory & Phenomenology

In his essay “Traditional and Critical Theory” (1937), Horkheimer explains the differences in methodology between scientific theories, social theories (categorized as traditional theories) as opposed to critical social theories, which will be discussed in this article. Traditional theories can either be deductive or analytical and are always focused on coherency. According to traditional theory, scientific truths should always be tested empirically and those who espouse the traditional theory are therefore committed to the idea of an objective world in which knowledge becomes a mirror of Reality. This idea is firmly rejected by Critical theory. Critical theorists, such as those of the Frankfurt School, maintained that the object of knowledge is implanted in a historical and social process.

Our consciousness is determined by the society to which we belong and by our historical background, which impacts the perceived object. There is, therefore, a connection between the

perceiver and the perceived object. The only way to truly know, according to Critical Theory, is from a socially embedded perspective of interdependent individuals (interpretatively, or interpretative critical theory). The interpretative critical theory approach allows their activities to be practical in a moral sense, rather than simply in an instrumental sense. They aim to seek 'human emancipation', as Horkheimer puts it, acting as a 'liberating...influence' and aiming to 'create a world which satisfies the needs and powers of human beings' (Horkheimer 1972b [1992, 246])

Social change is the objective of Critical Theory, and, for social change to occur, an understanding of society is crucial. Weber considered that structural and action approaches were both central to developing a full understanding of society and achieving social transformation. The concept of 'verstehen' (deep understanding in English), which could translate as an empathetic understanding or perception of the nature and meaning of a phenomenon, was fundamental to understanding social action and social change. Weber uses this term to refer to the attempt of social theorists to grasp both the intent and the context of social action. He maintains that, before confirming the cause of any action, the meaning the individual attaches to this cause has to be understood first. This Weberian idea of 'verstehen' will be used later in this article in an attempt to understand the ideas and intentions behind the making of the film and why the film came into being. It will be argued that intent is not necessarily always at the beginning of this verstehen principle, but a stream of consciousness can help reveal a deeper sense of an intent that is not necessarily clear to the actor.

This article looks at ways in which an idea can be detected, analyzed, documented, and seen in perspective. Before looking at the idea itself, it would be noteworthy to mention the concept of Phenomenology, the philosophy of conscious experience, and the study of how the individual experiences things or phenomena. It is a way of understanding the germination of the idea, by whom and for whom the documentary subject of this article was created, as will be seen later in the case study of this article. What interests the phenomenologist is describing consciousness and the structures of experience as experienced from an individual perspective. What meanings do things truly have in an individual's experience? According to the adherents of phenomenology, which include Husserl and Heidegger, the source of all meaning is the lived and perceived conscious experience of individuals. The central structure of any experience is intentionality or intent.

As was discussed earlier with Weber and his concept of 'verstehen', understanding the meaning of a phenomenon is crucial to understanding social action properly. It is also crucial to understand the meaning that an individual attaches to any action in order to understand its cause. Understanding the individual is, therefore, central to understanding society and the actions that occur within it, and to achieving social change.

Another important point to understand the context of the film's origins is the idea of epistemology. How much do we truly know? Are some things impossible to know, no matter how hard we try to reason? Is it possible to know how an idea came into being, how it unraveled and evolved into

something concrete like the film we are discussing in this article? According to Cartesian philosophy, our beliefs are unjustified, and we should always doubt them. This will be clearly illustrated in the case study part of the article.

2.2 Action Research (AR)

According to the Action Research Network of the Americas, their research approach involves seeking to evaluate changes over time by social actors while they are performing their political, humanitarian, social, communal, or individual actions. Their research and continuous analysis are then connected through critical reflection, seeking deep meaning and intent of actors in a cyclical evaluation and re-evaluation process. Therefore, Action Research can be readily, and to great advantage, be compounded with the ideology or philosophy of Critical Theory as they both seek to understand social changes at their roots. They are adamant that this type of research places the researcher inside the actual inquiry and does not leave him/her simply as an outside observer. There is no claim of impartiality on the side of the researcher, but rather they interpret and justify the researcher's position in the action and inquiry itself. This goes on to have an almost synergistic relationship with the concept of *verstehen* as mentioned earlier. The emphasis on finding a deeper understanding able to be comprehended by the reader, the audience, and the people for whom knowledge is intended to be transferred, is conglomerated to Action Research. To take this argument even further, seeking meaning in the concept of "stream of consciousness" for every relevant action, opens the researcher's capability to expand her/his getting to the depth of meaning possible which would be otherwise near impossible.

Action Research can, of course, be seen as a general expression used for numerous practical and intellectual efforts which evoke or elicit change mechanisms. Its broad, and arguably democratic outlook, characterized by fluid boundaries and interdisciplinary reach and applicability, provide both opportunities and hazards for future development. Action Research can be further expounded as a process taken in social research emphasizes participation and action by those within that community and for those outside it.

The tools provided by Action Research can help those, including humanitarian practitioners as in our case, to better understand the crux of the issues at hand as it allows for immersion into the situations, even demanding it. It can be a living, emergent process that is impossible to be predetermined as its nature is in constant change or evolution. The key to understanding this type of research lies in the understanding and acknowledgment that social phenomena develop and that those who are engaged deepen their own understanding of their problematic as they become aware of them. Consciously addressing this phenomenon by the researcher aids to further expanding her/his capacity as investigator, as well as the research teams and the research community. According to the Action Research Network of the Americas, their approach to research involves seeking to evaluate changes over time by social actors while they are performing their political, humanitarian, social,

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Action Research has been applied increasingly and to ever greater effect once its inception in the 1960s and numerous well-documented cross-disciplinary studies have shown that this immersive process allows for far more meaningful conclusions to be drawn than earlier theories trying to account for change, flux, transcendence, etc. Meghna Guhathakurta writes in her article, "Theatre in Participatory Action Research: Experiences from Bangladesh," that this method allowed researchers to take a more involved approach when it came to discussing issues documenting endemic and recurrent

poverty in marginalized communities. They were able to establish a discursive understanding of and portray a face of poverty which humanized the poor and allowed the researchers to even facilitate change processes without, arguably, falling into traps of cultural insensitivity and unintentional disrespect. Action research empowered the research to make changes a reality by allowing those who would normally stand apart to become an insider.

Another case study by Ernie Stringer, "This is so Democratic!! Action Research and Policy Development in East Timor," highlights how Action Research can be significant across sectors shown at the example of government performance and helping to make them more efficient. In this study, action researchers interacted with citizens as sentient beings rather than simple expressions of statistical values or even mindless robots. This allowed government agencies to measure their performance in a more holistic way. Capacity-building processes were thus established consciously and merged as integral parts of the research and the described needs by those researched. Stakeholders of, in this case, a school improvement project, were allowed to be part of the learning process and were given the opportunity to acquire the necessary knowledge, data, and information with which they could facilitate their own quest for change.

3. Applied Methodology

3.1 Participative Action Research (PAR)

The core of this article describes phenomena that are largely based on Participative Action Research in order to fully comprehend the scope and processes, both cognitive and emotionally driven, to achieve or subject humans to change. The film which our research uses as its vehicle is a formidable breathing ground for an inquiry into how an idea or ideas turn into a film. From its conception to its realization, every step was immersed in both on-ground research and drew from the expertise of its initiator, and all others who had input. Those who will be interviewed in the course of this research will need to have varying levels of knowledge of the film, its inspiration, and its initiator. This is where Participative Action Research finds its greatest application.

It is a type of research that is primarily concerned with the development of practical knowledge in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes. Its goal is to combine action and reflection, theory, and practice, in participation with others, in the hopes of achieving applicable solutions to pressing issues, and to enable the flourishing of individual persons and their communities.

Participative Action Research is critical in showcasing specific methods for attracting interested actors and strengthening the channels for knowledge sharing and building via a repetitive process of action and reaction. Subsequently reflection and re-reflection in a cyclical re-evaluation of that action. Through its heavy reliance on rigorous and iterative investigations into individual behaviour, that of entire communities or societies, and their shared problems on action research can offer useful and practical advice for how practitioners can perform the tasks. This is particularly useful when, as in this study, linkages between the worlds of advocacy and research in a humanitarian context are to

be found and analyzed. Advocacy is more than just trying to bring forward issues on behalf of others, it is an ongoing process that tries to influence those with power and capacity to bring about changes that will be able to address the issues faced by those suffering. It works hand in hand with Participative Action Research as it allows for possible avenues to analyze and enact real change. Humanitarian practitioners can be considered as 'insiders' or 'outsiders' in a community of concern or understudy, such as those directly impacted by the Wall in the West Bank. Humanitarianism is concerned with the promotion of human well-being and Participative Action Research is a vehicle through which this can be achieved in a way that leads to holistic awareness of situations that influence the actions which are necessary to be taken.

3.2 Considerations of the Researcher

This ethnographic research considers the researcher as central (the idea is key to the researcher but even the researcher can't be...sure? maybe). Also, it is important for researchers to ensure that they are not enforcing their own thinking, their own views, and interpretations, on the individual being interviewed. The researcher should be careful not to unconsciously steer the conversation. It goes without saying that the researcher has the ethical obligation to conscientiously respect interpretation and try to understand moments of silence and reflection, as well as gestures. The researcher should therefore always remain alert, mindful, and sensitive. The sensitivity of the researcher proves a great ability to analyze with the highest ethical considerations.

3.3 Practical Considerations

The researchers realized that the analysis needed more time than was given by the publication deadline. In the tradition of Action Research, the learning, and impressions inherent in carrying out semi-structured to open-ended interviews with people directly engaged in that subject matter needed more time and consideration, and thus this article and its inquiry could not be finalized at such an early date. We consciously did not submit the final draft for publication, and an extension had to be granted because so many new issues, knowledge, impressions, and new ways of looking at the case emerged following each interview, that our study never actually anticipated. The theme would not have been satisfactory to us had the article been submitted at an earlier date.

For this article, six people from very different social, cultural, and professional backgrounds were interviewed. Their ages ranged from around 30 to 70 years old. This was done to incorporate a wide variety of interpretations and impressions about Stefan, the initiator of the documentary, and the origins of an idea that eventually gave birth to it. He is included in this series of interviews, and his input will be added at the end of this case study. Of these seven informants interviewed, five people are close to Stefan and knew him before the film was even conceived. One of the interlocutors is a recent acquaintance who works with Stefan on projects related to the documentary but had nothing to do with its making since she first met Stefan long after the film was complete. She was interviewed as an unbiased outsider with a keen interest in what Stefan is doing, but without much knowledge of Stefan or his time in Palestine.

The first person interviewed is a British male of South Asian descent who is from a corporate legal background. He met Stefan on a humanitarian training course in Palestine at a time when he was seeking a transition from the legal and corporate sector to the humanitarian field. He is a close friend of Stefan and has been helping him with a variety of projects related to the film ever since. The second person interviewed is a Swiss-based Australian male, the oldest of the informants interviewed, who worked with Stefan for an NGO based in Geneva, who was the acting director of the NGO, and Stefan was one of the trainers of this course. The third person interviewed is a Palestinian female in her 30's who is based in Ramallah and is former Project Manager of the Barrier Monitoring Unit. The fourth person interviewed is a Swiss female of Lebanese background and the youngest of the interlocutors. The fifth person interviewed is a female of Central-Asian background and a former postgraduate student of Stefan. She remains very close to Stefan and currently works with him on various projects connected to the film, including its production.

4. Researching the Researched – An Illustration

When discussing the analysis of thought processes and intent, as well as introspection and self-examination, it is useful to look at the concept of stream of consciousness to better understand the origin of the idea and how it became a film. Although the term stream of consciousness has its origins in psychology, for the sake of this article, it is a particular type of narrative technique or interior monologue used in fiction that is of interest. Its intention is to depict the flux and flow of countless impressions, visual, auditory, physical, associative, subliminal, that influence an individual's consciousness and shape a part of their awareness. Adepts of this technique aim to capture the ever-changing flowing consciousness of their characters, Bloom and the Flaneur, rather than simply limiting themselves to their rational thoughts. This provides an element of realism to the character who is presented as a manifestation of the author. Thus, the author attempts to represent the richness and complexity of a functioning mind, by including moments of incoherency, irrational thoughts, and associative thinking in the minds of their characters. They merge dream and imagination with reality and rationality and subliminal thoughts with conscious thoughts of their characters.

A character often used by adepts of this narrative technique is the casual wanderer and observer of society, who is both an outsider, in the sense that he observes what happens around him, but is also an insider, in the sense that he is an integral part of the scene. French poet Baudelaire depicts this casual wanderer as the Flaneur, who tries to reach a form of transcendence by being an observer as well as someone who is a part of his own experience. He strolls around and observes the street life of 19th century Paris while being an integral part of this society. He wanders the streets and arcades of the city, observing and listening to the kaleidoscopic manifestations of Parisian life. Three topologies that utilize and adapt the concept of the flaneur in different ways will now be compared: James Joyce, Walter Benjamin, and the creator of the film.

Irish author James Joyce uses the stream of consciousness as a technique in his novel *Ulysses*, in which the author uses this technique to describe the minds of his characters. The author enters the minds of his characters, and the characters thus become manifestations of the author himself. His main character is a prisoner of the Hellenic maze, the meta-story, created by the author. He is a structural onlooker, a witness with neither choice nor free will. Bloom could be compared to a robot, according to the film's creator, because the author induces all the life into him. The character and the author are inseparable, and the character is nothing without Joyce. He is a representation of the author. Similarly, the idea which will be later discussed is a representation of the researcher.

The second example is Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*, the flaneur, who takes the stream of consciousness a step further. Walter Benjamin uses the character of the flaneur to explore the impact of the modern city on the human mind. He is fleeting, thinking, observing, and wandering. He observes people living their lives and makes inferences about them and their intentions. He is an observer like Bloom, in fact, he is Bloom, but is able to abstract himself from his character. The difference between Benjamin's character and Joyce's is that one is freer than the other. Benjamin's flaneur is not confined in a maze, he is wandering in an arcade making inferences and interpretations. He is an integral part of this arcade but has the liberty to think and observe using different angles. He is independent of the author, yet he is kept a prisoner of himself and his surroundings.

In our third topology, we have Stefan, the researcher who gave birth to the idea which eventually germinated into the film. Like the flaneur, he is an onlooker who is a part of his surroundings. He wanders and observes, questioning what he sees happening around him. He is immersed in the scene yet is able to abstract himself, to act as the researcher who is a part of the subject being researched. He is looking at the world around him, questioning his position and role in this world. Unlike the two previous examples, however, the researcher is free from his surroundings and has free will, yet it could be said that he is a prisoner of his own memory.

For this research project, the two iconic persons described above served to illustrate the position of the inside versus the outside in social scientific discourse. They are clearly defined. The third case illustrates a position that goes one more level up in terms of blinding the boundaries between the researcher and the researched. It is by no means implied that our author falls into the same league as Walter Benjamin or James Joyce. It is the illustration in chapter 4 which affords a thorough discussion and conversations of objectivity. The team decided to opt for some introspective approaches to learn from.

I'm Stefan, the researcher turned researched, as well as one of the authors of this article. My direct speech finds expression in this format because it needs to stand apart from the rest of the article and the three researchers, including me. The methodological challenge posed by this inquiry, can, we argue only be overcome if a) introspection is accepted as a scientific research methodology and b) the tradition of PAR applies equally to the researched researcher.

At the example of Joyce and Benjamin, we tried to exemplify the conundrum of being on the outside while being on the inside. There was no deterrent from our quest to be true to all phenomena and influences on the subject of ideas. So then, how did my idea become reality? The hypothesis of our research was to see whether there is a clear moment of truth traceable after years of being involved in turning an idea into a film. The short answer is there is no one idea, there is a kaleidoscope of ideas at best, and each time you try to capture it, it changes colours, shapes and Gestalt.

The long answer you find in the below case studies, where long-term friends, colleagues, and affiliates were asked the same questions as my colleagues asked me. If we want to find the closest thing to the kaleidoscope, it is by narrowing down an infinite number of possibilities to the ones which stand out the most. Beyond that, we couldn't venture, not only because of the lack of time and resources at our disposal but because the exercise runs the danger of becoming a rat's tail and our focus is turned away from the essential concern of making films, not study ideas in a void.

5. Giving Voice to an Idea - Case Study

5.1 Investigation

This case study was done through filmed interviews, conducted separately on Zoom, with six informants, including Stefan, interviewed subsequently. The researchers not only took into account the answers of each interlocutor but also made observations about non-verbal communication, such as their body language, as well as pauses and other forms of hesitation. This goes hand in hand with the processes within Action Research as it allows for a deeper meaning to be obtained and ties in with the concept of *verstehen*. Among the five (excluding Stefan), four were internal sources who knew Stefan before the film was made and before his idea was first generated. To provide balance to the choice of interlocutors who know Stefan too well, one informant was an external source who, being a relatively new acquaintance, did not influence Stefan nor did she contribute to the making of the film. Her impressions are therefore completely unbiased. The following four semi-structured questions were asked:

Question One: When do you believe the idea of the film germinated?

Question Two: Why do you think he pursued this idea?

Question Three: Do you think that his aim was fulfilled?

Question Four: Do you think his idea changed from the moment of conception till now?

The first informant, A(male), met Stefan when he had just left his corporate legal profession in the UK and was seeking to enter the humanitarian field. Stefan was teaching a course and it was during this time that he wanted to gain more knowledge about this subject and get to know Stefan's mission on a much deeper level. The second informant, B(m), first met Stefan at an NGO training session in 2014 and had a gut feeling that Stefan's work would eventually become something much larger. He further stated that from that moment on, he knew that he would want to become a part of this journey.

The third informant, C (female), was the project manager of the Palestinian Monitoring Unit at the time she met Stefan. He employed her for that role in Ramallah, and she worked with him for three years, collaborating on subsequent projects on and off during her Ph.D. The fourth informant, D (f), who is the latest interlocutor to know Stefan, connected with him through the online networking site LinkedIn. Stefan found out that she was working for a Palestinian non-profit and decided to write her to talk about his film. They talked for several hours and have been working together since. The fifth informant, E (f), met Stefan in 2016 in Austria when the film was still in the making. She was taking a humanitarian course taught by Stefan while working for an educational NGO with refugee children. While on the course, she became interested in the Learning Alliance Project. Following that, we got involved in establishing Learning Alliances among civil society actors. Of the six informants, two were male and two were female.

5.2 The Germination of an Idea

The exact time when Stefan conceived the idea is difficult to say, according to A. While working for the Barrier Monitoring Unit in Palestine, A and Stefan were both exploring new ways to deliver a message through the use of multimedia and online material, rather than simply writing the traditional report. At that time, there was already an exploration of alternative and non-traditional ways to make a strong point. A is not sure exactly how this interest in multimedia, and this exploration of non-traditional ways to deliver a message, translated into the conception of the idea to make a film. But he was always aware that Stefan had a very innovative mind and a desire to explore bold and unique ways to promote advocacy. According to A, "that spirit carried forward to keep the discourse alive".

On the other hand, C thinks that Stefan has had this idea for a long time. He had long been looking for the best way to make people understand the real impact of the Wall on the daily lives of ordinary people, and he had always believed that it was his mission to promote advocacy. He had mentioned the idea of making visual content, such as filming presentations and interviews, several times. Still, according to both C and B, the catalyst for the germination of the idea was when the Barrier Monitoring Unit was abruptly defunded and shut down.

Although there is no evidence as to why this suddenly happened, B believes that it was because of the new Swiss Foreign Affairs Minister, who was quite right-leaning. The sudden news was a huge shock to Stefan, who had invested a lot of time and energy building the Barrier Monitoring Unit, and B believes that the idea started to take form at this point. During this time, a master's student from Oxford University suggested making a film, and something clicked in his mind. Everything came together, and an idea had been born.

5.3 Solidification of an Idea

Informant A met many people in the course of three years while he was working in the humanitarian world, and, according to him, Stefan is one of the few true humanitarians that he has met. According to A, Stefan believed in what he was doing in the same way a doctor believes that its job is a vocation, a

duty. Also, according to A, B, and C, despite a great number of obstacles and challenges thrown at him from all sides - from within the UN, from stakeholders, and even from some Palestinians - he soldiered on and did everything that he could to make this film a reality. Stefan overcame all these obstacles in an effort to argue against the Wall, and to give voice to the voiceless. Stefan felt compelled to complete the film for the sake of the humanitarian cause. Informant D agrees that Stefan saw this film as his moral duty, a mission that he was forced to complete. Informant C believes that Stefan is an extraordinary individual who has the ability to think outside the box, and that he found on film a way to catch people's attention, a way to express how politics impact international law and human rights, and a way to "clean the mess".

Following the same thoughts, informant E added that Stefan's passion for the film was due to his persevering character and experience in humanitarian diplomacy, and that he consistently insists on reaching even the smallest of his goals, does not mind taking risks, and, in her words, "he is very much a person who doesn't take no for an answer". In retrospect, informant B agrees entirely with this point of view and can now see the power in his perseverance in the pursuit of such a venture in terms of education, communication, and delivering important messages. According to both of them, Stefan had something akin to a revelation and felt compelled to materialize his idea of a film.

5.4 Realisation of an Idea

Informant A puts forward that, for this idea to become a reality, numerous stumbling blocks had to be overcome. Such obstacles were both internal and external, as the making of a film is no minor feat. Informant B echoes these sentiments as he stated that he admired the way in which Stefan managed to stay positive in the light of missed opportunities and blockages to their progress. Both A and B go on to further say that Stefan is incredibly resourceful when it comes to ideas he believes in, and that he has the drive and the skill to inspire others to join him in bringing the issue of the wall to the forefront. Stefan knew that the idea of a film was an avenue that was relatively untapped when it came to this topic, according to B, and he knew that this was a way to reach even further. So, he pursued it and poured everything he had into this venture.

Informant D, while seeing the film, said that Stefan's willingness to sacrifice for what he believes in is clearly evident throughout its duration, and that the clear voice of advocacy for the voiceless is undeniable. According to E, Stefan was successful in turning his film into an educational tool. Also, she believes his aim has been achieved, despite the lack of support, especially financial, for his project which did not deter him on his path.

5.5 Mutation of the Idea

The informants were asked if Stefan's idea had changed from the moment of its conception till now. Informant B believes that not much has changed, and that Stefan is still focused on the same goal of what he had in mind at the start: that the film could make a big contribution to the field. While informant A agrees that Stefan's initial instinct did not change, because it was an "instinct of

understanding”, he stated that “the goal post always kept moving”, and that “the ground is always moving under our feet”. He claims that the film would not have been as successful had there been no change and since Stefan is very creative, had s been able to improvise and adapt, his ideas necessarily evolved. Stefan never knew what he would end up with, and always went with his gut feeling. One example of an unexpected change is that when Stefan first conceived of the idea, he did not know that there would be an International Criminal Court investigation.

As the context changes, there is always a need to adapt, and the context is indeed always changing. Although informant E could not say what exactly Stefan had in mind at the time of the conception of the idea, she believes that, at some later stage, Stefan thought the film would also be destined for film festivals and TV stations. Still, he continued to focus on his initial goal of promoting advocacy through film and education.

One of the most significant changes that occurred from the conception of the idea till now, is that this film has led to other films, as well as new ideas and projects. The film is thus still evolving organically. The more people see it and the more positive feedback it receives from viewers, the more inspired Stefan is to find new ways to spread his message. The film, according to A, is now an effort to strengthen international law for the benefit of everyone on the planet, including other communities who are suffering from the injustice of imbalanced power, threatened by larger and more powerful neighbours. The film started off as an effort to point out the injustices suffered by the Palestinian community on account of the Wall, but Stefan has since understood that “the Palestinian context relates to a global context”, and the film is a reflection of his abilities and insight, as well as his “understanding of where things need to change”. Since its completion, the film has turned into a springboard for education and advocacy.

5.6 Findings of the Case Study

It is firstly worth mentioning that the research findings exclude Stefan’s views, which are expressed in the box below. Then, looking at the interviews carried out in the course of the Summer of 2021, it can be derived that all informants, regardless of their gender, age, social background, and whether or not they were present when the idea for the film was first conceived, all the interviewees share the same opinions about Stefan’s motivation and objectives. They all agree that Stefan has been able to remain positive and undeterred despite the huge number of obstacles he has had to face on the way. All agree that Stefan believed that it was his moral duty to give voice to the voiceless and to promote advocacy through film and education. Also, the three informants who were present at the time of the idea’s conception agree that the catalyst was the sudden defunding and closing down of the Barrier Monitoring Unit, but that Stefan was interested in exploring alternative ways to message the reality on the ground before the defunding happened. Finally, all informants agree that what pushed Stefan to pursue and materialize his idea was his innovative nature, his perseverance, and his passion for advocacy.

As in Chapter 4: Researching the Researched, Stefan's voice comes into the findings of this chapter expressing first-hand the impressions from his observation point. His personal introspective approach reflects all the interviews presented beforehand and summarises the deep meaning in a profoundly Gestaltist and holistic way:

Being not only part of this study, its inquiries and deliberations, but of its derivation of meaning, speak analysis, I am conscious of the researched being researched.

I am obviously not afraid of making very personal remarks and deviating from others being researched, but, of course, apprehensive about the distortions of meaning I attribute to what is being said and how the research takes its course.

First, I am absolutely grateful to those who have been interviewed without my presence for their generous reflections which went into their responses and the honesty they induced in them. Of course, all of the interlocutors are very well known and very dear to me. Nonetheless, reading their transcripts and the analytical work my two other co-authors have brought to the study I am astounded at the depth of emotions and analysis they express in their statements. A's assessment of how I would finally concentrate on film while involved in applying new technologies in the monitoring and documentation process of the BMU, it was revelatory! So were the expressions of others that I had never thought of myself.

Each respondent brought something personal and special to the conversation with my two co-authors, Siddiqia and Dorian. They shared not only the how but also the why my film has become a reality, including the germination of the project and the struggle to realize it. Of course, they knew quite intricately of the various steps to which they were privy, but their expressions of making sense in the process have added value to the study and me personally: They have verified me! They are the testimony to my story, which appears now, in retrospect, and given this study, is continuously in flux and undergoing new evaluations, depending on the standpoint and moment of the kaleidoscope.

The findings and understandings (*verstehen*) contained in the above chapters are brought to the conclusion below. They all add up to the final analysis of the overall interpretative, critical, textual, and linguistic discussion of this project.

6. Conclusion & Recommendations

Conclusion

This article chronicles an idea that developed and transformed into a documentary film to give voice to those who have been silenced and suffer injustices globally. The introspective dimension of this article allows for the researchers to understand how this film came into being, from conceptualization to realization. As mentioned earlier in the article, when contextualizing *verstehen*, to understand the cause of an action, it is crucial to first understand the meaning that an individual attaches to it, or the way the individual perceives it. The concept of phenomenology thus gave the interviewers a better insight into how each informant personally experienced, perceived, and understood Stefan's idea and its germination. The findings show that the informants agreed with each other, despite their difference in gender, age, and background. The findings also show that those who had not met Stefan at the time of the idea's conception also agree that the successful materialization of the film was, in a

large part, due to Stefan's character. In addition, they believe that Stefan felt it was his moral duty to pursue this idea and achieve his goal, which was to give voice to the voiceless using the medium of film. The people interviewed were not aware of each other's answers. They gave their personal accounts, describing their own experience and interpretations from an individual perspective. The findings show that they responded in very similar ways to the questions asked. With the conclusion to Article One, the cycle opens up to the two following articles in the Trilogy to take up the thread and make the three whole greater than the sum of its parts.

Recommendations

- Ideas for documentary films of value to advocates or humanitarian diplomacy are not stable or inviolable.
- Learning is part of the cycle of an idea and/or ideas turning into film. It is important to bear that in mind since the beginning of such projects.
- Advocacy is an inherently pedagogical activity and to suppress change is futile.
- Budgets and administrative production processes need to adapt to change and embrace it to stand the test of time and ethics.

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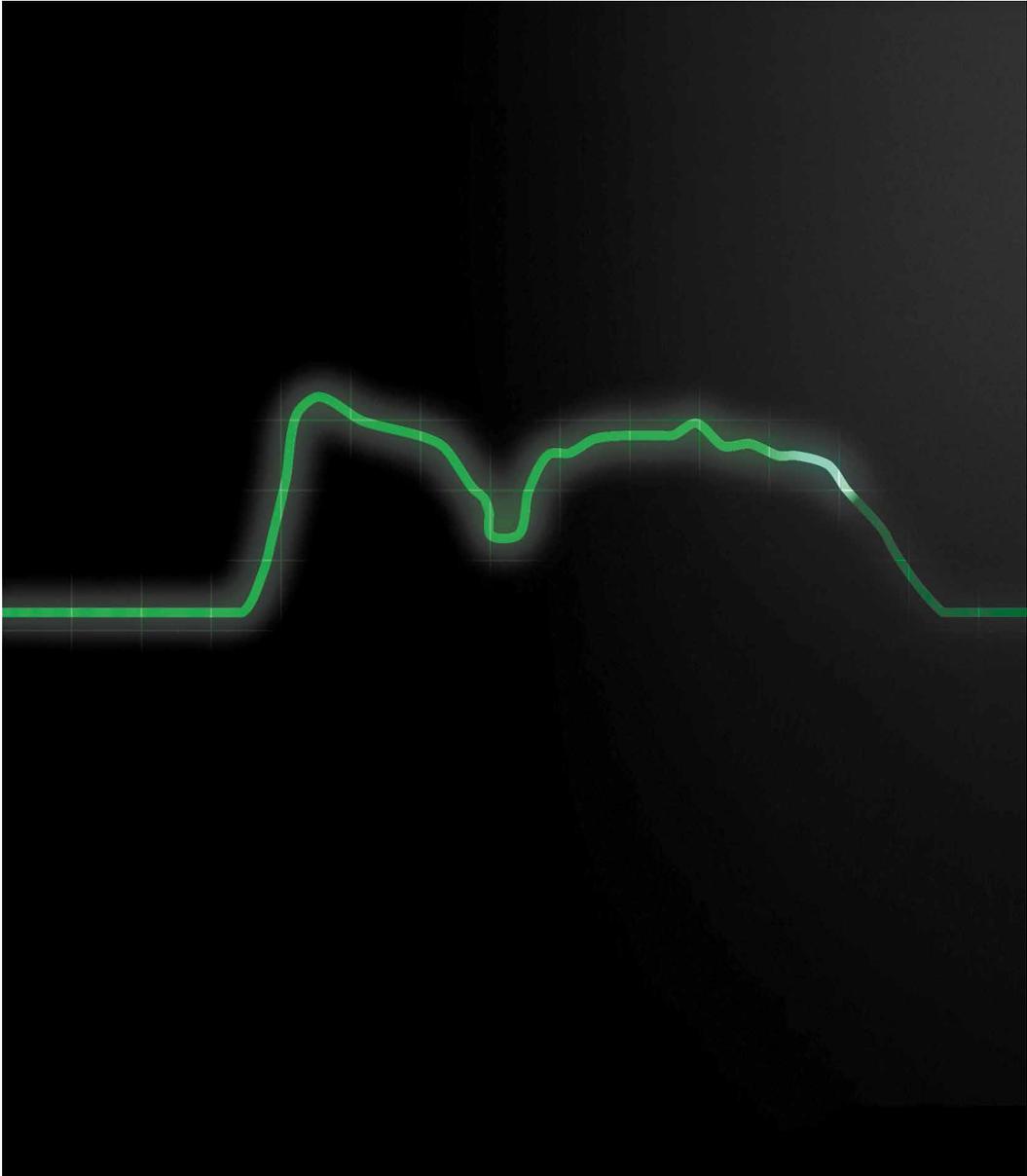


Image: Stefan Ziegler