



# The Stakeholder Spectrum. The History and the Current State of Participatory Film in Hungary

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**Abstract:** The Research Centre for Minor Media/Culture (founded at the Department of Media and Communication, ELTE University, Hungary) includes a number of research areas and work processes. One of them is to reveal the history and to map the actual state of the participatory film in Hungary, conceived not just as a visual social research method, but as a wide spectrum on which there are many different examples according to the depth and nature of the involvement of the stakeholders. The academic activities in the Research Centre cover the historical and theoretical aspects of participatory film, its foreign and Hungarian antecedents, contemporary national and international examples. Following the definitions of the field and examples from abroad, the author attempts to delimit the possible sub-themes that belong or could belong to the scope of participatory film. The author also mentions some aspects that seem useful for the analysis of the research topics, specifically film examples. From these varied examples a broad repository of participatory-based film will hopefully emerge: the stakeholder spectrum.<sup>1</sup>

**Keywords:** minor image/minor media, participatory film culture, anthropology, stakeholders.

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1 The present article is a revised and synthesised version of two articles written in Hungarian. Its first source is a comprehensive survey of the research started at the Research Centre for Minor Media/Culture in 2020 (Müllner 2020a) (Balázs Cseke, Anna Gács and Márton Oblath provided useful comments on this, which I have incorporated into the text and for which I thank them.) The other article is an introduction to a thematic block on participatory film in the journal *Replika* edited by me (Müllner 2022). The selection of articles on participatory video published in this issue has been produced within the framework of the research mentioned above and led by me, András Müllner, titled *The History and Current Practices of Hungarian Participatory Film Culture, with an Emphasis on the Self-representation of Vulnerable Minority Groups*, No. 131868, supported by the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund of the National Research, Development and Innovation Office.

“Only the participating, active subject is capable of ‘understanding’ here. Assuming this subjectivity, one could organize sociological experiments in any dimension.” (Bertolt Brecht: *The Threepenny Lawsuit*)

## Participatory Film Culture

Participatory filmmaking can be defined on different levels and from many aspects. For example, the video material upload by internet users can be regarded as participatory video, an integral part of contemporary participatory culture (e.g. 694 hours of video was streamed on YouTube every minute in August 2021, according to Ceci 2022). It is not this (mostly individual) type of participatory video culture on social media and online video-sharing channels that is the subject of the present article, but rather the role of the moving image as subject of social (action) research on minority representation and method for community development. This visual research method, which has been used globally in the past fifty or more years, has been adopted in Hungary increasingly in forms of programs, projects or actions, providing concrete examples for those concerned to learn about this visual research method. There are many differences in the method of participatory video, depending on the field in which it is used, and this influences its definitions, which in turn allows for a diverse historical narrative (or even parallel narratives) to be constructed. Method, territory, definition, history – these are interrelated aspects; each of them can be used to approach participatory video as a phenomenon, and discussing any of them inevitably brings up the others.

The terminology prescribes the directions of our research at the Research Centre for Minor Media/Culture<sup>2</sup>: first of all, our research refers to *participatory film culture*, meaning that we study the moving image in its contextual (social and cultural) embeddedness, and to integrate as many branches and activities in our research as can be defined through the participatory use of moving image in making activist documentaries, facilitating community development and prioritising minority representation. Participatory film of that kind has been outside the circle of the contemporary mainstream media for decades. Characteristically, participatory film, at least from one aspect, can function as a form of criticism of or resistance to majority media culture, and it often functions

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2 The name of the research centre is inspired by the phrase “minor literature,” discussed in depth in Deleuze-Guattari’s book on Kafka (Deleuze and Guattari 1986). See webpage in Hungarian here: <http://media.elte.hu/minor-mediakultura-kutatokozpont/>. Last accessed 11. 02. 2023.

as communal representation, or it offers such an experience. We do not use the term *participatory video* as an overall concept, since all pre-video filmic forms are potential subjects of our research; and for the same reason we do not use the term *filmmaking* as an overall concept either, since for the bigger part of the history of film and of the global film industry, marginalized communities were excluded from actual filmmaking or were used as exotic extras, however, they took part in the consumption of moving images, and in many cases this act was a definite political expression in terms of construction of their identity. From that point of view, there has been no broader research done in Hungary so far, concerned with participatory film culture.

## **Participatory Film**

To step toward the more wider cultural contextualisation we need to know how we can define participatory film as a visual method in social research. What kind of visual interventions belong to the participatory film? The following are a few temporally and thematically wide-ranging examples from the video-period of participatory moving image: Dorothy Todd Hénaut and Bonnie Sherr Klein (Hénaut and Klein 2010), working for the National Film Board of Canada, collaborated with residents and activists in the St-Jacques neighbourhood of downtown Montreal to improve health care; in December 1998, Sara Kindon and members of an indigenous Maori tribe co-produced a video, which revealed the technologically determined nature of Western “realist” conventions that can and, in fact, should be relativised, such as framing the horizon through the camera and white balancing (Kindon 2016); in 2006, participatory video was used in Sümeg, Hungary, as an internal evaluation method in the European Union’s LEADER programme for agricultural development to test the relative effectiveness of filmed self-evaluation compared to a far more formal and administrative external audit (High et al. 2012, 36–38); Community Video Units were set up in India in the 2000s to produce sensitizing films on various topics, including rampant sexual harassment, resulting in a helpline for women in Mumbai among other things (High et al. 2012, 38–40); Between 2007 and 2010, five countries from the Western Balkans created a Green Agenda of participatory community storytelling on video, challenging participants to make local cultural heritage stories part of a larger national and even larger regional identity (Nautiyal 2011); in a workshop in Vietnam and Nepal, children learned about natural disasters and climate change, in the latter case rebuilding a bridge washed away by flooding from melting

glaciers (Plush 2012); in Uganda, the topics of sexual health and HIV prevention were explored through participatory video and drama (Waite and Conn 2012); participatory video was used in an auto-ethnographic experiment in a project in which Australian and New Zealand girls made films on the topic of becoming a woman (Bloustien 2012); Klára Trencsényi and Vlad Naumescu (2021) worked with refugee youth in 2015 in the Open Learning Initiative (OLive) program, which sought to provide something often absent from documentary films about refugees: the telling of their own stories in their own voices; Stefano Piemontese (2021) involved Roma youth in his own research on migration back and forth between Eastern and Western Europe, with a special focus on marginalised communities. The list could go on, indicating that participatory video has become embedded in visual research and development methodologies over the past half century, and also showing that the method is not unified, with each workshop and project producing a new variation.

Studies, collections, manuals and methodological guides on participatory video have been published continuously since the early 2000s,<sup>3</sup> and the global reach is reflected in the range of disciplines involved. The editors of the *Handbook of Participatory Video* list the often overlapping disciplines in which the visual method is used: Anthropology, Communication, Cultural Studies, Education, Film Studies, Geography, Health Studies, International Development, Media Studies, Peace Studies, Rural Development, Sociology, Social Psychology, and the Social Sciences (Milne et al. 2012, xviii). It is clear that participatory video has moved beyond the fields of applied and visual anthropology and activist documentary to other fields in the social sciences, humanities and the arts. This adaptability of participatory video is (partly) due to its ability to be combined with other visual and performative methods. Miller and Smith speak more broadly of *participatory media*, as participatory video is often complemented by different methods such as photography (digital storytelling, photovoice), journaling, digital mapping, storyboarding, etc. (Miller and Smith 2012, 346). Similarly, we should mention the close relationship of participatory video with performative-improvisational performing arts (Schensul and Dalglish 2015).

This diachronic and synchronic diversity and heterogeneity of participatory video raises the question how well researchers can be aware of other uses of the method. Tom Waugh notes, in his foreword to a collection of essays on participatory video that no matter how broad a slice of the history of participatory film we can

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3 For the literature review of the field see Mitchell et al. (2012), and Low et al. (2012); for early participatory video researches with young people, see Chalfen's study (2008).

capture on our radar, it cannot be emphasized enough that “the material history of images, aspirations, problems and indeed failures needs to remain uppermost in our minds, not only to avoid re-inventing the wheel, but also to keep in sight the tremendous and determining weight of history on today’s strategies and ideals alike” (Waugh 2012, xiv) The issue raised by Tom Waugh also emerges in an essay by Richard Chalfen, who embodies decades of anthropological interest in participatory and private culture: in 1966, alongside Sol Worth, he participated in the film training of Navajo indigenous youth, then as an MA student in communication at the Annenberg School for Communication, and later made a name for himself in the field of anthropology as a researcher of private/amateur images. Chalfen uses the same metaphor as Waugh, quoted above, when he makes his reader aware that “the norm of reinventing-the-wheel” (Chalfen 2008) will dominate participatory film projects if they do not follow each other’s results. For his part, he tried to avoid this by comparing sixty participatory video projects between 1998 and 2008 in terms of motivation, support, target audience and project leaders, and the outcomes and re-use of the results.

## **Anthropological and Sociological Precedents**

The possibility of participatory filmmaking stems from the very nature of film as a technology of reproduction based on teamwork from the start. Early German film theory concluded from this that film, by virtue of its technology, enables unprivileged social groups without cultural capital to participate creatively in art. Moreover, early leftist film theorists regarded film as a symbolic anticipation of democratic and participative social order, since film, unlike branches of art based on individually produced works, requires the harmonious collaboration between a number of professionals as a collective (Brecht 2000b, 172). Yet, the production and distribution costs of film required a model driven by business or ruled by the state, and one that was based on industrial production and the work of highly qualified professionals (Benjamin 1968, 244). The history of documentary filmmaking in the 20th century shows, however, that there have also been ongoing attempts to make films based on democratic participation, not on financial return of investment.

Scholars studying human communities, such as anthropologists, did not consider either participation (see Marcus 2001, MacClancy 2001 on the Mass Observation movement) or the scientific application of the moving image a self-evident necessity (see the slow and troubled canonization of visual

anthropology). The combination of these two began in Western countries in the 1950s–1960s, when anthropologists began to regard film not only as a useful recording technology applicable in white man’s research, but as a possibility for the artistic and scientific critique of a hegemonic colonial order and for the emancipation of disadvantaged groups. Involving researched communities in the research on them through the practice of filmmaking has been embodied primarily in the films of visual anthropologists. The earliest example is Robert J. Flaherty’s work with the man known to us as Nanook, the result of which, *Nanook of the North* (1922), is considered by many to be the first participatory ethnographic documentary. French documentarist and anthropologist Jean Rouch should be mentioned also here, as well as the North-American initiatives aimed at empowering rural communities like First Nation People through supporting their self-representation, bio-documentary and self-ethnography. Examples include the Challenge for Change program in Canada (Waugh–Baker–Winton 2010), participatory filmmaking with Navajos in Arizona, US (Worth and Adair 1972), and the Wapikoni Mobile in Canada, active in our present days. It is worth recognising the significant role of independent fiction filmmakers working participatively with the communities concerned, such as the work of Lionel Rogosin, who was coming from the direction of fiction film and met Jean Rouch, coming from the anthropological side, about halfway. The collaboration of director Pál Schiffer with Gyuri Cséplő and the Gypsy community of Németsfalu is a comparable Hungarian example. The tradition of participatory activist documentary filmmaking, which can be linked to the National Film Board of Canada’s Challenge for Change programme, goes back a similarly long way. The method they developed has been transferred by authentic intermediaries to places as far as India and South Africa, among others, and there is now a very strong tradition of development work based on participatory film in both of these countries. It has been demonstrated that participatory filmmaking had a beneficial impact on the communities concerned, as far as it managed to counterbalance the stigmatized and simplified minority images in the majority’s imagination with its creation of its own (positive and diverse) images.

In the 20th century, as the above mentioned examples show, participatory filmmaking would always be initiated by a recognized individual professional with cultural capital and privileges (Jean Rouch, Sol Worth, Lionel Rogosin, or Pál Schiffer), who used their access to institutional opportunities and involved a marginalized community in the filmmaking process. Participatory and community-based filmmaking has expanded significantly in visual culture, as

the age of small media like video has radically reduced the technological costs, and minority communities have gained equal rights in political representation, though to a varying extent, due to the civil right movements. The political and social evolution of the moving image has been central to research in the relatively new academic field of media anthropology since the 1980s (Ginsburg et al. 2002).

## **Participatory-based Ethnographic-anthropological Films in Hungary, and Critical Feedback from Informants as a Form of Active Participation**

To my knowledge, there were no film projects in communist Hungary comparable to those that aimed to empower Native Americans in the sixties and later on (Worth–Adair 1972). Did they know about such projects and were there any similar attempts on the periphery of official and authorised media use, within the frame of the so-called 3T (i.e. *tiltás, tűrés, támogatás*, in Hungarian, meaning: silencing, tolerating, supporting) sanctioned by the cultural management of the communist regime? Who were the Hungarian researchers and film experts who tried to widen the circle of stakeholders beyond the professional filmmaking, expertise, and official crews, endowing the film subjects or other amateurs the right of representing themselves verbally or visually?

In this context, the initiators of ethnographic filmmaking in Hungary, such as ethnographer and filmmaker Anna Raffay, who was one of the leading figures of the Hungarian amateur film movement (Négyesi 1983), or anthropologist Lajos Boglár, can be considered as guides. As the latter put it, in both a concrete-technical and a metaphorical sense, “we have to give voice to the informant” (Boglár 2004, 54). This attitude, and the way in which Boglár talks about action anthropology, already carries with it the anthropological claim of participation, whether in traditional or visual anthropology. But the participatory aspect in case of Boglár is also present in other ways, for example in his commitment to show the anthropological film to the community it is about. In a biographical interview with him, he recounts an incident that reflects the importance to him of what Jean Rouch, also in an interview, called feedback, or the “audiovisual reciprocity” (Rouch 2003a, 44). In the interview, Boglár recalls his 1964 film about the carving of a boat out of one piece of log: “the film was finished, and in ‘65 I wrote to Tiszafüred to invite the Kanalas family [who as traditional Gypsy woodcarvers were involved in boat making] to see the film. And the Ethnographic Museum had a relatively large screening room, and Miska Kanalas appeared in a blue suit

and red tie. I said, ‘Miska, where are the others?’ He said, ‘it is only me who has a suit.’ There were two of us sitting in the projection room. We’re looking, looking at the film, he says: ‘well, my friend, we only cut down one tree, who cut down this other one?’ Then I got a lesson in what anthropology is, and the informant slapped me so hard in the mouth that I told you not to do that again” (Boglár 2004, 40). The reason for this criticism was simply that Boglár had filmed the woodcutting with two cameras, from two different angles, and had superimposed the two films in a conventional montage sequence. For the informant, these two perspectives, and above all their combined appearance, were incompatible and consequently, incomprehensible. In other words, the editing of the film, or the montage structure that was built up, did not correspond to the cutting down of one single tree, as a woodcutter experiences it in his everyday life. For him there were two trees in the film, in contrast to reality, in which there was only one.<sup>4</sup> Regardless of whether we consider the criticism justified or not (since it is relative), it is the conflict between representation and the represented world that deserves attention here. [Fig. 1–2.]

Situational documentaries form a special chapter of participatory filmmaking, some of which have been shown in cinemas and on television in Hungary. These included Rouch’s 1961 *Human Pyramid*, which was dubbed in Hungarian in 1981, according to the Internet Synchron Database, and Lionel Rogosin’s 1956 Cannes Documentary Grand Prize winner *On the Bowery*, which was slightly distorted in the Hungarian translation, as if to refer critically to capitalism: “The Street of the Boosers.” Both films can be associated with one of the best known representatives of Hungarian situational documentaries, *Cséplő Gyuri*. Rouch’s film was compared with Pál Schiffer’s documentary in a long essay by Andrea Pócsik, and although the context of the two films is fundamentally different, they are very similar in several ways. According to Pócsik, Rouch saw the essence of the shared anthropology “in the fact that the observer, after finally coming down from the ivory tower, tries to gain substantial knowledge with his camera and voice recorder, the validity of which is finally judged not by committees of scientists but by those he observes” (Pócsik 2013). Similar to Rouch’s film, in

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4 In a certain sense, in both cases, the natural order is interfered with, since there is an inorganic reworking and recontextualisation of the organic material, based on a technically manufactured or traditionally perpetuated template. The same happened to Jean Rouch while making his film about hunting hippos. The protagonists objected to the soundtrack of the horns (inspired by American adventure movies) at the beginning of the hunt, claiming that he (Rouch) “should remove the music because the hunt must be absolutely silent.” Rouch recalls that “since that adventure, I have paid much attention to the way music is used in my films” (Rouch 2003a, 42).



which we see the protagonist working as a Nigerian migrant worker in the capital of Ivory Coast, Schiffer also wanted to show a certain strangeness in *Cséplő Gyuri*, through the fate of a gypsy migrant worker living on the margins of society and looking for work in the capital (Budapest), guiding the reception of events through his own diegetic commentary. The inspiration for doing *Cséplő Gyuri* as a documentary-like situational feature film was Rogosin's *On the Bowery*, as Gábor Havas, sociologist and collaborator of István Kemény and Pál Schiffer, told in a post-screening discussion in a program of Roma Visual Lab. Havas recalled that István Kemény, leading researcher on poverty in socialist Hungary (and later forced to leave the country by the officials), had seen Rogosin's film in Budapest in the 1960es, and because it had been extremely captivating in its sociologically driven approach, he recommended something similar to his friend and colleague, Pál Schiffer, who, after several unsatisfactory documentaries on Gypsy themes, made the film, *Cséplő Gyuri* in 1978.<sup>5</sup> The above examples demonstrate that projects that show the life of subalterns through intensive communication with them, actively involving them and sharing control on the film with them have reached Hungary, and even Hungarian examples have been born as a direct or indirect result of these movies.

All this raises questions about the possibilities for participation before the regime change, in an author-centred and centralised Eastern European film culture under strict control by the totalitarian communist regime. In addition to the situational documentary genre, I will expand the scope of participatory film with a few examples that are far from a narrow definition of participatory video, but perhaps we can argue for their participatory nature based on certain characteristics. In what follows, the experimental documentary films of the Balázs Béla Studio (including re-enactment, sociological experiments, magical realist feature films and experimental film adaptations of private film), and fandom as a form of partial participation will be discussed.

## **Other Forms of Participation**

The spectrum of cinematic participation opens up if we do not set authorial film in rigid opposition to participatory film. In this case, we must take into account the much older phenomenon of canonised authors' efforts to make participatory-like films. Here we should think of experimental documentaries that, in different genres,

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5 All the films mentioned here have been screened in the Roma Visual Lab, which is an open course and film program at ELTE University.

claim to critically redefine the majority image of vulnerable minority groups, with the involvement of the groups themselves. These films were mostly interpreted by film historians and were outside the field of interest of other humanities and social science researchers. Some examples, all from the Balázs Béla Studio: György Szomjas's *Enchanting Girl* (*Tündérszép leány*, 1969), Domokos Moldován's *Spell and Hope* (*Rontás és reménység*, 1982), Júlia Szederkényi's *Paramicha* (*Paramicha, vagy Glonczy az emlékező*, 1993). They are auteur films of a hybrid genre (re-enactment, sociological experimental, or magical realist), bordering on documentary and fiction, but working with their Roma characters in a non-conventional way, in that they are invited to actively shape their narrative and to represent their minority group to some extent, or to refuse representation when it is given. It is this refusal that shows that attempts at participation are not always successful. For example, a more detailed analysis can only show the ways in which the 1969 film *Enchanting Girl* tries to subvert the deeply stereotypical image of the Gypsy woman rooted in Hungarian social imagery, and why it fails to do so. Among other reasons, it is precisely because the reporter's method, used in the documentary part of the film to counterbalance the highly ambivalent and cliché-like fiction part, proves unsuccessful in empathetically hearing the voice of the Roma girl (Müllner 2020b). The latter is suppressed by the white men (the non-Roma interviewers and the starring young boys), and despite all efforts to communicate, the Roma woman is intersectionally objectified (in her Romaness and femininity), that is, she is the object of the film rather than its participant subject. From both a feminist and a postcolonial point of view, one of the most critical parts of the film is when the men (white actors and reporters) interrogate the main female character about her Roma identity, her identification with other Roma people, her responsibility for minority representation, and they cannot help it when she shuts herself off. She shuts herself off more and more during the conversation, and, let's add, she is interviewed in a much narrower time frame than the men.

Participation is also present in other aspects of the Balázs Béla Studio, such as when Miklós Erdély conducted camera-creativity exercises with his students (one of the most prominent examples is the film *Train Road/ Vonatút*, 1981), or when Gábor Bódy and Péter Tímár made a montage film entitled *Private History* (*Privát történelem*, 1978), producing a deeply political work, based on a private family archive (see: Bódy 2006, 197, 215–217; Forgács–Vasák 1999, Forgách 1999). The powerful experimental film initiative of the authors Bódy and Tímár was then transformed into a series (*Private Hungary/ Privát Magyarország*, 1988–2002) by Péter Forgács. These examples form a chapter in the history of the artistic (film-

linguistic) adaptation of private films in Hungary, and although we are talking about auteur films in the traditional sense, the films were based on one (or more) family archives. For example, the silent films made by the Jewish Bartos family from the 1930s onwards (which provided the material for Bódy and Forgács) reflect the devastation of the Jewish community in Hungary, and although the films are primarily about private life, at the same time they are counter-images of the hegemon socio-political context. So it is not that the members of the Bartos family are making participatory filmmaking, but rather that their archival footage is being artistically appropriated, and through radical montage techniques (slowing down, freezing, highlighting, composing into a single image) they are rewriting the memory of the Holocaust forty years after they were recorded. With the approval of their descendants, the former actors in these films have become part of a participatory-like film action (Müllner 2020c).

It is important to realise that these examples are not strictly speaking part of participatory filmmaking, but just as it is essential for all scientific research to find precedents, so too must we take them into account when researching films depicting those who inspite their marginalised state were active in self-representation. One excellent contemporary example of the appropriation/reappropriation of the private photograph is the Sostar Group's video titled *Rewritable Pictures* (Sostar 2010). In this video we watch a re-enactment performance based on improvisation inspired by photographs. The authors used pictures of Roma people, some of them private, which were kept in the photo collection of the Ethnographic Museum. The anthropologist-museologist and pro-Roma ally Péter Szuhay, who worked there, made the pictures available to the artists.

The above examples show that the initiators were actors with cultural-social capital and privileges, although before the regime change they were to some extent restricted by official cultural policy because of their critical approach. At the same time, this capital has been used to critically subvert, or at least try to subvert, the negative image of the minority in the majority social imagination, and the subversion happened in collaboration with some representatives of the group concerned. In the case of archival private film, this participatory collaboration could take place long after the recording, with the permission of the descendants, but it is this extension that allows us to research examples of archival use with an artistic and symbolically representational function. The fact is that we know a lot about the process of the making of *Cséplő Gyuri*, for example, but much less about the other films mentioned above, their participatory processes, latent (or less latent) power relations, fandom in reception. The identity politics process

at work in the reception of the films, beyond the specific modes of participation in production, requires further research. For instance, what did the Bollywood movies that were part of the cultural transfer between USSR (consequently other communist countries) and India as a “neutral” and “friendly” country, mean for Hungarian Roma people in the 1950s and 1960s? (Lipkov 1994; Lemon and Vörös 1996, 267.) Here we are not talking about participation in the sense of production, but the positive identification in the course of reception. This process affecting the Roma in Hungary is, in its very nature, completely invisible. Further relevant examples from the history of screenings and the history of reception that can be related to identity construction include József Kővári Borz’s travelling cinema (similar to the *cine ambulante* in Mexico, which in the early 20th century was partly in the hands of Roma families migrating from Eastern Europe); or Roma Film Festivals in the 1990s in Budapest, organized by the Cirko Gejzír Cinema. These have not yet been the subject of academic analysis, but are important references for critical cultural research on the history of participatory film culture in the form of (Roma) fandom based on positive identification.

## **Theoretical Considerations on Participatory Film Culture**

According to Jacques Rancière, emancipation begins with the ascendancy of the principle of equality, when the subordinating opposition between looking and doing is eliminated, and it is thus understood that looking is itself an action that can confirm or modify the distribution of perception, and that “interpreting the world” can itself be a reconfiguration (Rancière 2007, 6). In order to ensure that viewing goes beyond the consumption of the spectacle as much as possible and becomes an object/instrument of pedagogical drama, there are various attempts, from film clubs combining film viewing with discursive programs to participatory filming involving active viewing and discussion. In these, in addition to the emphasis on the pedagogical drama rather than the spectacular illusion, the direction of the flow of knowledge can be reversed. The teacher is assumed ignorant, and the spectator is emancipated by becoming a teacher. This is already present in the work of many before Rancière, such as Paolo Freire (2011), or Bertolt Brecht: “as for the technology that needs to be developed for all such undertakings, it must work according to the principle that the audience is not only to be instructed but also must instruct” (2000a, 43). All three authors mentioned here see one of the authentic possibilities of participation in the dramatic involvement. In this context, it is worth noting that participatory video,

by its minor media nature, tends to present agonistic and conflictual relations, to highlight hierarchical systems, relations of dominance, thematize states of power and subordination, etc. The potentially dramatic nature of the representation of power relations is at stake here. This is replicated on another level, as the conversation about films is also theatrical and performative, which is an energy worth harnessing for the sake of emancipation.

In the analysis of minor films and their contexts, the decisive aspect is the opposition of and liminal spaces between self and other, the motifs of hybridity, the historicity and the present mode of operation of the performatives of identity, the thematization of ethical issues and human rights, acts of representation and dissociation from it, the quality and depth of the relationship to the camera and participation, as well as parody, pastiche and irony as deterritorializing events, etc.<sup>6</sup> I would like to make two comments here, one on the ethical aspects: in art-based participatory research, collaborators experience the ethical and political aspects of their practice more strongly. Participatory researches are under constant pressure to reflect, so they have a methodology by default. The second comment, although closely related to the previous one, relates to the inevitable Other defined, for example, on the basis of race or ethnicity, in the context of participatory filmmaking. From the point of view of the politics of recognition, the modes of participatory film seem at first sight to be based on a foundation that has long been an unquestioned presupposition of anthropology, for example, but which has become increasingly questionable over time, that is, the distinction between self and other. This distinction, and the latent or less latent hierarchies and power relations of dominance that it implies, have been highlighted by participatory films, which at the same time have maintained hierarchical differences, wittingly or unwittingly, through their divisive practices. The 1980s and 1990s saw the emergence of a critical movement, based among others on feminism that questioned the anthropological gestures of othering. This tendency was most authentically represented by those who, because of the hybridity of their identities, did not want to make the division between white and non-white, Western and non-Western cultures, or did so with a much more profound reflexive effort than had been made up to that point (Abu-Lughod 1991). The following questions can also be asked in relation to participatory film. Who provides participation, for whom? What invisible or visible power relations precede and accompany the participatory process? What cross-cultural divisions guide the

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6 On deterritorialisation as a minority artistic practice in minority literature see Deleuze–Guattari (2009).

participants? Do they reflect on the constructed nature of these divisions? Where do the differences come from? What are their historical origins? How are they embedded in the current filmic context? These questions apply to the analysis of all creative processes, but it is in the case of participatory filmmaking, which approaches hegemonic and subordinate roles reflexively and subversively, that their thematization seems to be of particular importance, both from an identity politics and postcolonial perspective.

Participatory film culture is also a potentially (although not automatically) democratic context of empowerment in Hungary, and arises from the need to share cultural capital between different social groups, albeit in different contexts and in different ways. This process is never without conflict, in so far as it is defined and determined at international and national level by the hierarchical relationship between the so-called centre and periphery, i.e. the participants are guided by different interests (for example, in terms of determining the subject matter of the films), in addition to common interests. The conflict can be overt or covert between the group of filmmakers and the “other” group. This must be borne in mind even if we accept that the conflict is not primarily between the groups involved, but between the dominant image and the minor image created in the process of participatory filming. This happens as a matter of course and in a calculated way, since the minor image deterritorialises the dominant image and questions it in the form of direct opposition, parody or artistic appropriation. Implicit in the latter statement is a further hypothesis that what is summarized in the postcolonial context as an “aesthetics of resistance” (Shohat and Stam 1992, 46) is also present in the participatory film culture in Hungary. The contextualising analysis of these images of resistance is one of the strongest ambitions of the research presented in this paper.

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