Affective Attachments:
How "Doing and Being Good" Undermine the Liberatory Possibilities of Participatory Action Research

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Abstract

Critical appraisals of participatory action research (PAR) tend to focus on better partnering practices among community and university collaborators with less attention to theorizing the material effects of our affective attachments and aspirations toward socially just outcomes and relationships. In this qualitative inquiry, I draw on interviews with 29 academics, community-based professionals, and peer researchers with extensive experiences of PAR. I use affect theory as an analytic entry point to explore how our commitments to socially just outcomes and relations act to paradoxically undermine PAR's liberatory possibilities and displace the socially unjust conditions that PAR practitioners aim to transform.

Keywords: participatory action research; community-based research; affect theory; social justice

Introduction

As a participatory action research (PAR) practitioner from the site of community and more recently from academe, I have a sustained commitment to working with communities toward social change. My commitment is held in tension with the ways in which practices of inclusion, which engage communities struggling with multiple sites of social inequity, can both reproduce and resist relations of dominance. It is the space between the liberatory possibilities and oppressive practices of PAR that is the site of my scholarship. This space is entangled with my affective desire to do "good" research that furthers social justice projects and engages in equitable research relations.

Macías (2012) proposed that we ask questions about who we are in the practice of reading and, by extension, who we are in the practice of writing (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). I consider the affective attachments that I have embraced over time, initially as an unambiguous advocate of PAR's liberatory praxis. Over the course of multiple PAR projects, ambiguity and bad affect seeped in as I reflected upon our failures to activate social change and the enduringly uneven benefits conveyed to community and university collaborators. Did I move out of community into academe to escape these failures, and the bad affect that ensued, by situating myself as a critical outsider? As I consider this question, I implicate myself in the production and preservation of "good" affect associated with the socially just aims of PAR. I am an inside/outsider, as I continue to collaborate with diversely, disadvantaged communities and lean into the possibilities of co-created knowledge for social change, while at the same time thinking and writing about PAR's limits.

Scholars have inquired into how "good" inclusive projects preserve relations of dominance, notably in the field of international development (Henkel & Stirrat, 2001; Heron,

2007; Kapoor, 2005; Sharp et al., 2010) and the voluntary sector and social services (Badwall, 2014; Cruikshank, 1999; Miller & Rose, 2008). Studies have focused on partnering strategies for community/university-engaged research (Hall et al., 2015; Jagosh et al., 2015; Munck, 2014) and considered power relations, but uneven partnerships are positioned as ultimately remediable through better practices. However, less attention has been paid to how our desires to do "good work" have material effects on the relationships and outcomes of PAR. Affect theories have been conceptualized by scholars using PAR approaches, particularly in research on education (see for example, Miller, 2017), but have yet to be deployed as a framework for the analysis of PAR practices and outcomes.

In this paper, I draw on affect as a theoretical lens to trace the effects of our desires to feel good and do good work, collectively termed "good affect," on the social relationships and social outcomes of PAR. Specifically, I argue that our attachments to good affect paradoxically erode our social justice commitments and require the displacement of the socio-political contexts of PAR partnerships. In the following sections, I outline the methodology followed by a discussion of the theoretical and analytic framework of affect as governance. I then offer three strands of analyses of: 1) the production of good affect, 2) the preservation of good affect, and 3) bad affect as counter praxes. I conclude with a synthesis of the ways in which our attachments to "being and doing good" displace the social outcomes, social conditions, and social relationships of PAR.

Pluralist Post-Qualitative Methodology

In this paper, I share analyses that were nested in a larger study, which deployed a post-qualitative methodology (Clarke et al., 2015; Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) to emphasize how multiple theoretical analytics offer convergent and divergent ways of inquiring into the material and discursive effects of PAR. The pluralist methodology retains both the possibilities and the limits of PAR through a prism of perspectives. Affect theory, one of five theoretical entry points in the larger study, the focus of this paper, enables us to track the socio-political effects of our attachment to being good researchers and doing good PAR.

My ethical and political commitments to co-created knowledge dictate that I place my theoretical analyses in conversation with the insights shared by the brilliant people who participated in this study. The quotations in this paper emerged from group and paired interviews with 29 conversants[1] who identified as academics (8), graduate students (2), community-based professionals (9), or peers (10) who are personally impacted by the social issue under inquiry. I only identify the research positionalities of conversants (e.g., academic, community-based professional or peer) but not the social identities (e.g, racialized). I do so because this research explores PAR collaborators' understanding of research subjectivities as these relate to affective practices and effects rather than the lived expertise of individuals, which would, indeed, be mediated by the intersectional social identities of conversants.

The sampling for this research was intentional (i.e., purposive) and relied on local networks of PAR colleagues who approached the work with criticality, reflexivity, and a commitment to transformative research. Conversants had an average of nine years' experience in community/university allied PAR projects, an explicit social justice agenda, and engaged with marginalized communities on issues nested within the health and social sciences, and

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[1] I use the term conversants to avoid the scientism of "research subjects," the one-directional stream of information implied by informant and respondent, and to sidestep the slippage between research participants and participatory approaches.

humanities. The intention was to convene diversely positioned conversants (i.e., who identified as academics, community-based professionals, or peers) in group interviews to engage with social relations in "real-time." However, many conversants were not comfortable critically reflecting upon the social relations of their PAR projects with diversely positioned collaborators. Therefore, traditional paired interviews were offered as an alternative. I situate my research in academic and community collaborations occurring in the context of the neoliberalization of academe, in a specific locale (i.e., the Greater Toronto Area – a large Canadian city), and timeframe (i.e., most of the projects occurred from 2000 onwards).

Theoretical Frame: Affect as Governance

Scholars inquiring into PAR typically are informed by post-positivist (Viswanathan et al., 2004; Cook, 2008; Jagosh et al., 2015) or critical theories, most notably the feminist and critical race, as well as decolonial, frameworks (Akom, 2011; Brydon-Miller & Maguire, 2009; Cahill et al., 2010; Guishard et al., 2018; Gustafson et al., 2019; Tuck, 2009). Although critical theories are well aligned with the social justice aspirations of PAR, they are less helpful in understanding how PAR can be both transformative and oppressive at the same time. Foucauldian informed scholars, particularly those who theorize affect as a site of governance (Ahmed, 2004; Hunter, 2012; Schick, 2015), offered a useful framework for exploring how PAR is both reproductive of and resistant to relations of dominance. Following Miller and Rose (2008), I understand the term governance as inclusive of state or sovereign government and governmentality. Governmentality, Dean (2010) emphasized, operates through multiple sites of authority, desires, interests, and everyday practices. Dean argued that all governmental practices have a utopian goal and assemblage of desires through which governance is made intelligible. The desires we hold for PAR can be located in our affective attachment to socially just outcomes and relationships.

Ahmed's (2004) conceptualization of affective economies illuminated how desires for goodness and good feelings organize social relations and social structures. As Ahmed stressed: "Rather than seeing emotions as psychological dispositions, we need to consider how they work, in concrete and particular ways, to mediate the relationship between the psychic and the social, and between the individual and the collective" (p. 119). Schick (2015) defined affective economies as an "efficient and concise use of nonmaterial resources such as emotion" (p. 57), which alerts to the ways in which affective "goods" (and "bads") circulate in PAR for instrumental aims. Hunter (2012) similarly maintained that emotions are a connective medium woven into networks of governance. Affect, as both Ahmed and Hunter argued, conceals its governmental work through seemingly residing in individual bodies rather than between individuals and social bodies. Similarly, other affect scholars (Cvetkovich, 2012; Duggan & Muñoz, 2009) explored affect as social and political phenomena. Central to this scholarship is contesting that only good affect can launch a political project. Informed by this scholarship, I take up the effects of good and bad affect in PAR, as productive of particular transformations and displacements.

Analyses: The Production, Preservation, and Disruption of Good Affect in PAR

The Production of Good Affect in PAR

Good affect in PAR is produced through socially just aspirations, desires to be in proximity to community, and the "exceptional" affective labour of collaborative relations. As Bogolub (2010); Guishard, et al., (2018); Mikkonen et al., (2017) suggested, aspirations to do

socially just research are a primary entry point into PAR. A community professional [14][2] described his pathway into collaborative research as arising from a "commitment to doing very meaningful transformative CBR [community-based research]." An academic [4] situated the goodness of PAR in a desire for social impact against the questionable value of knowledge for its own sake: "It's just not good enough to develop knowledge; that knowledge has to make something better." Another academic [8] similarly located the goodness of PAR in a desire to be socially useful. However, implicit in such a contrast is that knowledge lacks social value, which problematically severs epistemic and social transformation, a severance that is discussed later in this paper.

> I did a lot of volunteer work in community organizations and kept thinking that here I am typing up things or stuffing food into bags, which is very important work, but I have ten years of university training. I can't believe that I have learned nothing that is of any value to these community organizations. [Academic 8]

For some conversants, the goodness of collaboration was troubled over time. A community professional [11b] described being driven by a "dewy-eyed" idealism that became increasingly "murky" over time. During the same group interview, a graduate student [11d], in the following quote, constructed commitments to PAR as driven by a desire for belonging. The capacity to seek community belonging through PAR is mediated by privilege and situated as a personal choice. In the quote below, desires for affiliation and proximity are explicit but also contested in the framing of this desire as "dewy-eyed," which echoes the co-conversant's description and ironic stance toward engaging with community.

> I started with participatory community-based work because I was seeking to build community … There was never a community to identify with for me, so participation in CBR became this dewy-eyed idealistic thing that we could create something transformative together.[Graduate student 11d]

The "goodness" of community was often positioned against the "badness" of academe. An academic [9] contested the vilification of academe: "You are kind of constructed as inherently wrong because you're from the academy." The same conversant went on to describe what essentializing the goodness of community conceals: that oppressive discourses are reproduced by community, as well as academic and professional collaborators.

> A lot of this work is very descriptive because community voice is "legitimate"… "authentic." And I have in my transcripts racism, sexism, homophobia coming from community members. But I can't problematize that, I just say this is the voice of community.[Academic 9]

In the quote above, as elsewhere, conversants are actively working through different affective positionings toward PAR. However, these tensions are often situated, as in the quote below by an academic [8], at an individual rather than institutional scale where the divisions between academic and community are constructed. Also noteworthy is that the affective negotiation of social identity (i.e., from academic to community to activist) can feel "accidental" only from the sight lines of privilege.

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[2] The number (e.g., [14]) that follows the research location of each conversant designates the unique contributions of the 29 community and university collaborators who participated in the study. The letter that follows some numeric identifiers (e.g., [11b]) signals that the conversant was part of a group rather than dyadic interview.

It was a huge issue for me: reconciling what I did professionally with my desire to be engaged with community and activist issues. Where I am now, I have managed to merge those activities. And those skill sets and identities feel accidental. [Academic 8]

In contrast to the fluid identities discussed above is a quote by a community professional [11a] who characterized her pathway into PAR as one of "default," which signals that their affective affiliations are not mediated by choice but by necessity.

I got involved in doing research by default. I wasn't a researcher, but I was at a meeting around HIV research many years ago. People were talking about research, and I asked: "How come nobody is doing research with women?" [Community Professional 11a]

Goodness was not only aspirational but spatially produced as a desire to be close to community and far from academe. We can locate this affective binary in the following quote by an academic [8] who reified the impossibility of being both genuine and an academic and being both a member of the community and an academic: "The answer to a lot of these things is having genuine partnerships and genuinely being part of the community, as opposed to being the academic." A community professional [16a] made a similar spatial claim to goodness by locating her organization's distance from academe.

Neither of us consider ourselves academia, neither of us have a PhD …Whereas a lot of the other community-based organizations doing CBR have a PhD associated – either in partnership with a university or they have one in-house … so our model is truly community-based. [Academic 16a]

While some conversants produced PAR's goodness through socially just aspirations or proximities to community, others constituted goodness through exceptionalizing their affective labour and politics. An academic [5a] contrasted the affective labour of collaboration with the comfortable spaces of privilege outside of PAR. Although the social negotiations of collaboration are acknowledged in the following quote, these are constructed as elective, which fails to recognize that for some collaborators (e.g., racialized, gender diverse, disabled) there is "no outside" of the uncomfortable intimacies of oppression.

I find that the best working relationships have been not only alliances but deeper than that - they have been friendships. That requires a close working relationship and there are a lot of very uncomfortable intimacies in naming power dynamics and addressing issues of racism, colonization, privilege, class … And then creating a working space where that's always on the table all the time. For me, that's the part that gets really tiring. Particularly, when there are so many spaces available where you don't have to do that and that's where most of the people I know spend their lives. [Academic 5a]

The exceptionalized affective labour of PAR can also be traced in the following observation by another academic [5b]: "I think a hard dimension is that we are all engaged in issues that we really care about and they are all politicized." The production of good affect in PAR paradoxically aspires to social justice outcomes and equitable relations, while concealing how its goodness is mediated by privilege.

The Preservation of Good Affect in PAR

Displacing the Social Outcomes of PAR

As advanced in the previous section, the goodness of community/university PAR is produced through our aspirations to socially just outcomes, proximity to community, and exceptional labour. These "good" aspirations responsibilize PAR collaborators to realize social change within the context of singular time limited projects. Ambitions of social transformation, while laudable and saturated in good affect, constitute PAR collaborators as super agents who can activate change unencumbered by complex socio-political conditions. PAR is, thus, prefigured as an impossible project. Therefore, to preserve good affect, PAR's aims are reconfigured at the scale of individual transformations. This shift of focus from the social to the individual to preserve good affect is made thinkable through neoliberal rationales of individualism, entrepreneurialism, and short-term project-based funding.

Failures of scale of impact are discussed in the participatory development literature, which critiques interventions aimed at exclusively local rather than structural change (Hickey & Mohan, 2004; Kapoor, 2005). Although the problems associated with a focus on change at a local scale are identified by these scholars (e.g., limited, often unsustainable, incremental change and individual rather than community-wide benefits), the possibility of participatory projects driving social change is retained. Similarly, conversants held out desires for catalyzing social transformation in tension with prevailing descriptions of individual transformations. For example, an academic [4] outlined several possible scales of impact but concluded that the individual level was ultimately where transformation could be achieved. The tensions between desires for social transformation and realities of individual transformation signal the ways that our affective attachments operate to displace social change outcomes while avowing to do just the opposite.

> At the individual level trying to make things better by providing people with opportunities to build skills, to develop certain capacities. And at the community level perhaps developing new insights that people can take up in their work. At the structural level some of those insights might then inform policies. But I find the easiest place to make change, the one that is more in my control, is at the individual level. [Academic 4]

These unmet desires for social transformation threaten the good affect associated with PAR, which is recuperated through a shift toward scaffolding individual community collaborators' social mobility, either through employment or educational attainment. An academic [8] located the goodness of PAR in support to further labour market participation: "The changes that we are going to effect will be building some of their skills, providing them with employment, and creating new relationships for them." The academic conversant went on to make explicit the shift toward individual outcomes: "It stops being CBR and becomes something else. It becomes research that might have participatory elements, but the goal is employment, so that they get Canadian experience." However laudable these objectives are, the focus on individual social mobility bypasses structural change. In this case the bypass is challenging the racialized organization of the labour market, which determines what is a legitimate site of experience. This shift to individual rather than social transformation is also apparent in a community-based professional's [14] reflections on supporting newcomer scholars' leadership opportunities. Again, the specific goal is employment, which consolidates the neoliberal individualism and entrepreneurialism taking hold of PAR.

> We're piloting a paid mentorship opportunity for internationally trained people who have previous research backgrounds, but they are having a hard time finding jobs in the research field. They are teamed up with a mentor and they do a small piece of research. It's not CBR in the typical way. It's not engaging marginalized communities per se … We want to create the next generation of leaders. [Academic 14]

The promise of enhanced social mobility brings into view the troubling displacement of social outcomes: where aspirations toward social change are reconfigured into what looks remarkably similar to the supports offered by social service programming. The shift is apparent in the contention by an academic [4] that a key impact for youth participating in PAR is entry into post-secondary education, which is usually the purview of social services. Similar to the goal of obtaining Canadian experience, deploying PAR to mediate the exclusion of racialized youth from universities fails to address the systemic racism that limits access to higher education.

> If you're looking at PAR with racialized youth, the biggest benefit … is post-secondary education. The only way things can change for communities is having more youth come to places like this university … it gives them so many assets and forms of power – right? [Academic 4]

The shift of focus to PAR acting as a conduit for social mobility warrants particular attention when considered alongside ongoing neoliberal austerity cuts to social services. One academic [9] outlined how programs are increasingly sustained through research collaborations: "Program funding has been cut considerably but there always seems to be money for CBR right? So, people are participating in CBR projects to keep staff on board." When research funding is being used to attenuate reductions in core funding for social programming, the collusion of PAR with neoliberal attacks on social welfare is troubling and is particularly visible in PAR practices of capacity building that replicate those of social services (Janes, 2022b; 2017).

Displacing the social conditions of research relationships in PAR

The goodness of community/university collaboration, whether constituted as socially or individually transformative, is a powerful hook into PAR. While these affective hooks bring collaborators into PAR, these commitments are sustained through the good affect produced through collaborative research relationships. Ahmed (2004) traced affective production through "sticky words," which connect the individual to the social and can be identified through their citational frequencies. In the PAR literature, certain sticky words prevail such as: "relationship building" and "trust" (Nichols et al., 2014), and "friendship" (de Leeuw et al., 2012). Although scholars acknowledge the difficulties of social relations between academic and community collaborators, these challenges are positioned as reparable through better partnering practices. A better practice approach constitutes technical what is a socio-political and ethical challenge that is not remediable in the context of the unequal social conditions and social locations of PAR collaborators. The discursive operations of affect-laden terms like "relationships," "trust" and "friendship" act to conceal the diversity of social identities of individual collaborators and the varied socio-political contexts of these relationships within PAR. Situating relationships among PAR collaborators as outside of social and political conditions is enabled by locating these affective encounters as interpersonal and individual rather than mediated by social and institutional conditions (e.g., university ethics review and funding mandates).

Ahmed's (2004) framing of affect as appearing to reside in individuals and interpersonal encounters, while concealing its activations in the socio-political, clarified how relationships among collaborators can be imagined as outside of power relations. Relationships are centred

in PAR to retain the affective "goodness" of PAR, while also enabling the instrumentalization and institutionalization of these relations. The social relations of PAR are constructed by a community professional [16a] as requiring ongoing affective labour. The institutional positioning of partners determines whose affective needs are privileged and subject to instrumental care (i.e., care to sustain partnerships). Notably, the academic collaborators are singled out as particularly exceptional in their affective needs, which signals whose good feelings are prioritized and preserved. The relational labour captured in this quote also aligns with the feminization and domestication of PAR collaborators who are frequently described as "sharing power" and "non-directive" (Janes, 2022a; 2017).

> The hardest piece is navigating all those layers of relationships in doing PAR. You have academic or bureaucratic partners, you have funders, you have CBO [community-based organization] staff, and peer researchers. Often in all those relationships, there is navigation that has to happen … making sure the academic partners feel like they are not losing their identity … it takes so much energy. [Community-based professional 16a]

Despite the centrality of relationships in PAR, an academic [8] maintained that there is a lack of inquiry into social relations. Relationships are introduced in the quote below as embedded in power relations, but then re-constructed as personal, and therefore, outside of social and institutional contexts of PAR.

> I find it interesting that we don't recognize how important the interpersonal piece is in terms of maintenance of the power relationships, partnerships, and the success of the partnerships going forward. There's all this stuff happening that's interpersonal that doesn't get documented cause it's fuzzy and you can't describe it. You can't say that I like this person and that's why we work together. How do you put that into how to do CBR? Personal sense of trust, personal affection, personal respect. [Academic 8]

The operations of privilege, for some conversants, enabled PAR relationships to be constructed as personal. We can trace this phenomenon in the quote below by an academic [9] who described navigating research relationships as a matter of personal choice. The willingness to "walk" away obscures who has the positional privilege to elect to take on, or not, the affective labour of PAR relations.

> I am not sure I really connected with them and so I am fine to just walk away from that. I don't feel that I have to try to make this work. I heard colleagues talk about taking years to develop relationships and trust. That's lovely, but I am not sure … I don't want to force that. [Academic 9]

Critiques of research relations as extractive and exploitive of subjugated peoples are well documented (Macías, 2022; Smith, 2021). Despite the wealth of scholarly and tacit knowledge of research as a tool of dominance, many conversants persisted in positioning research relationships without historic and contemporary contexts. Trust was similarly constituted as outside the social by a community professional [11a] who observed that: "A lot of people don't want anything to do with research because they were very, very distrustful of researchers," without any commentary on the source of this lack of trust. The absence of the socio-political context of distrust was also apparent in this quote by an academic [4] who noted, but did not explain, community reluctance to collaborate with academe: "You're trying to figure out how you're going to work together … so that they trust you. You're feeling each other out. So I could see why they {community} would be: 'No we don't want to go there.'" When the social

conditions of the research encounter are erased, so is the bad affect elicited by legacies and contemporary continuities of harmful research relations with marginalized communities.

The instrumental logic of PAR relationships was more apparent to community-based conversants who identified the institutional conditions of research relations. A community professional [11a] challenged project-dependent research relations: "So when I work with researchers, I tell them: 'You are coming for the long term. There's no way that you're going to collect the information and then you're off to publish!" A graduate student [6] questioned the sustainability of these relations outside of institutional funding that determines the timelines of research activities: "A project lasts as long as it's funded … And so, what then? Do we just dismantle those relationships?" Instrumental friending was felt keenly by a peer researcher [1] who was astonished at its exchange value: "Amazing! Don't talk to me about friendship just because you gave me a TTC [public transport] ticket." As Guishard et al. (2018) challenged, relations among PAR collaborators must aspire to transcend the research encounter. These instrumentalized research relationships warrant attention, as does the impact of not attending to the social locations of collaborators. As an academic [9] advanced, not activating (and documenting) the material support required to participate determines who is included and excluded from PAR along class lines.

Many people are doing this work without having thought about a lot of these issues. They learn all this stuff, but they don't put this into the literature. People are making the same mistakes over and over again, by not learning basic things like that peer researchers need tokens [public transportation] in advance so they can get to meetings.

The displacement of the social conditions of PAR is not only a methodological issue, as argued by Bergold and Thomas (2012), but can lead to ethical trespass. An ethical trespass occurs when community members are recruited on the basis of a particular social identity – a PAR "good" and then that same identity is erased if it becomes a PAR "bad" (Janes, 2022b). This ethical breach is starkly captured in the following reflection by a peer researcher [2a]. Paradoxically, the very social identity, in this case, a psychiatric diagnosis, which was the criteria for the inclusion of peer researchers, is subsequently unsupported. Here we can see how the social location (i.e. "disabled") that activated participation in PAR is displaced by ableism and sanism mediated by bad affect.

I had a breakdown during the project when my uncle had died. I was begging everybody on the project to get me psychiatric help, but nobody would help me. Here you are engaged in a project because you have lived experience, but you can't get any support! [Peer Researcher 2a]

The bad affect of subordinate collaborators is concealed, so that those with relative social privilege can preserve the good affect, which adheres to claims of equitable relations. Bad affect and its material effects made transparent can re-emplace collaborators' social identities and social conditions, as a practice of resistance to the individualizing, instrumentalizing and institutionalizing of PAR.

Disrupting Good Affect: Bad Affect as Counter Practice

In the preceding sections, I advanced that to preserve our affective attachments to "good" outcomes and equitable relations, the social change aspirations and social conditions of PAR are displaced. Therefore, rejecting these affective attachments to goodness may offer a counter practice to revitalize our commitments toward socially transformative PAR. The following proposals do not entirely escape the problematics identified in the earlier sections but offer what affect scholars Duggan and Muñoz (2009) described as a "sideways move out of the impasse"

(p. 280). A sideways move invites us to mobilize bad affect and resist the pull to preserve the good affect of those with positional privilege. Resisting the pull of good affect and embracing bad affect requires a critically reflexivity that is accountable to both socially just relations and outcomes (Gustafson et al., 2019; Mikkonen et al., 2017). Reflexive practice, as framed in the quote below by an academic [8], transcends better partnering strategies to embrace an ethical, humble responsibility and transparency to community collaborators. The last caution in this quote echoes the earlier argument of the impossible aims of social transformation in a single PAR project.

> We need to step back and think long and hard about what it means to create change … to think very consciously about what you really can accomplish, what engaging people in this process is going to do for them, and what is the potential for future change. And being very clear about what those possibilities are and how difficult that change might be. Most of them [community collaborators] know, but sometimes they think that you're going to accomplish amazing things in one project. [Academic 8]

Another strategy for unsettling our attachments to good affect is to embrace failure as a pedagogic and political opening. A community professional [3] expressed frustration at the erasure of failure, and the associated learnings, from the gloss of goodness that adheres to PAR: "At the conferences I've gone to in recent years people don't raise the issues of what were the real challenges and what didn't turn out. I'd love to have a conference on how your project failed.[3]" The conversant also cautioned that engaging with PAR's limits required a careful tempering of hopefulness: "At the same time you need an element of cheerleading, so that people are excited and see possibility … so how to balance all of that?" To inhabit the affective space in-between the hopeful possibilities and the failures of PAR is to reject the binary that good affect activates and bad affect arrests social justice projects. Activating the transformative possibilities of bad affect asks PAR collaborators to strive for social change, while acknowledging its im/possibility within a singular research project. An academic conversant [8] challenged the logic of neoliberal rationales to call for a revitalized commitment to modest social change:

> Participatory action research tries to change things within the individuals with the idea that the individuals will then change the system. But we don't really change the system itself. Can we go a step further and say that we are engaging in research that's targeting changing social systems directly? [Academic 8]

To counter the displacement of social outcomes, Blackstock et al. (2015) proposed that we cultivate a "multi-scalar imagination" (p. 260), which aspires to both individual and modest social change. Absent from this proposal is a third scale of impact, that of the epistemic possibilities of bad affect. Borg et al. (2012) advanced the transformative possibilities of epistemological reflexivity, which questions the parameters of what knowers and knowledges are engaged in methodological and methods decision making. Epistemological reflectivity can activate and appreciate pluralist ways of knowing, including affect, to shift what is thinkable and *doable*. A community professional [16a] observed that PAR enables an epistemic breach to the narrow confines of what is deemed legitimate knowledge: "Inclusion research has allowed for the concept of what you feel to be a reality and it allowed more scope for what becomes

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[3] Interestingly, an international conference on community/university collaboration offered a category of submissions documenting failures, creatively conceptualized as a wake. I applied and received notice that this section would not go forward as it had only one applicant [me]. I continue to be interested in "wake work" and hopefully others will be, too.

evidence." Despite this opening toward affect as a way of knowing, the privileging of Eurocentric rational ways of knowing remains durable in the Anglo-American PAR literature. The entrenchment of Eurocentric knowledges similarly limits my scholarship, which until recently did not substantively draw on the work of Indigenous scholars. Diverse ways of knowing abound within the urban Canadian context of my research on PAR. However, when taken up by the institutionalized PAR under scrutiny in this paper, these transformative approaches may be subjugated. The focus of my recent scholarship (Absolon et al., forthcoming) is to learn from and support decolonizing ways of knowing, gathering and co-creating knowledge that take seriously how relationality and affect determine the contours and consequences of our collaborations.

Concluding Thoughts

I propose that our affective attachments to "being and doing good" act to displace the social outcomes, social conditions, and social relations of PAR. These affective attachments benefit those with positional privilege, determine how (and where) goodness is produced, and govern whose good feelings are preserved. Aspirations to social transformation in a single time-limited PAR project are largely impossible. Therefore, to retain good affect we displace our desires for social change and community-wide benefit with a shift toward improving outcomes for individual community collaborators. Social outcomes are, thus, supplanted by aspirations and activities that look remarkably like social service programming. While these individual interventions to scaffold community collaborators toward employment and educational attainment are often successful, these activities may attenuate the effects of neoliberal erosions to core funding for social service programs. PAR's re-orientation toward activities associated with social service programming, I argue, is activated by the pursuit and preservation of doing and feeling good.

Another displacement of the social is evident in the desire for good relationships among PAR collaborators, which are frequently constituted as individual and interpersonal, and independent of the social locations of diverse collaborators and the institutional context of our work. The occlusion of the socio-political and institutional conditions of PAR obscures who has the privilege to elect to engage in social justice research and who confronts the everyday navigation of socially unjust worlds. Making transparent the instrumentality of the relationships of PAR collaborators brings back into view the social and institutional conditions of our work and resists the creep of neoliberal rationales and tactics.

Governance through affect is unstable and, therefore, I put forward counter practices that embrace bad affect as methodological, pedagogical, and political opportunities. Bad affect, rather than understood as exclusively a repressive force that undermines PAR projects, is proposed to be a productive strategy for reactivating our commitments to social change with humility. Furthermore, the epistemic possibilities of affect to disrupt the dominance of Eurocentric rational ways of knowing and knowledge gathering are advanced as promising sites of transformative PAR practice. By tracking how the production and preservation of good affect can transform the social outcomes and relations of PAR, I offer a challenge to the individualism, instrumentality, and institutionalization that limit our community/university engagements.

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