CREATIVE, VISUAL AND PARTICIPATORY METHODS

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OUTLINE

Visual data production
Visual analysis
Visual dissemination
VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY

19th Century

Photographic methods
Analyses and represent ‘other’ cultures
Embedded in power relations
Imperialism

Photography became part of the objectifying gaze of the colonial project
THE COLONIAL PROJECT

A picture held us captive...

Reductive realism

Regulatory system

Hierarchical ordering of race

Pseudo-science

Authorative evidence

Photograph is a construction of culture

Truthfulness of the appearance of things

The indignity of speaking for others
The ability to create written and especially printed records depends on a number of social, political and economic factors.

Tight binds between literacy, archives and the colonial authority in making of history.

Oral cultures are dominated by power.

Invisibility marginalised groups.

Or high visibility of demonised caricatures – ‘porn poverty’
Material products that emanate from the domestic activities of women, such as needlework, pottery and other crafts, serve as a testimony of their lives and achievements in the same way in which written documents produced in a formal political environment provide information on administrative and legal processes.

‘I quilt because I don’t want my history, my story to die. Quilting gives me a voice when I can’t write or speak’ (Goggin 2003)
Politically-significant stories

Arpilleras - Pinochet's Chile - tapestries or quilts sewn by women that 'speak out' visually about political repression and human rights abuses through their stitches

Convey processes of resistance, memory and the search for truth and justice in a context of repression
PARTICIPATORY-PRODUCTIONS

Participatory-productions – social scientist as the participatory facilitator

Research ‘with’ not ‘on’ participants

Participant led

Presenting the everyday lived realities rather than the sensationalised

Engenders a space for empathy

Empowering marginalised groups

Participatory or partially participatory?

Critical ‘easy marriage’ visual and the participatory
PHOTO-ELICITATION AND PHOTO-VOICE
MAPPING AND DRAWING
COLLAGING IN DEBT

Crime

Family Shopping

Saturday Explore!
STICKER ACTIVITIES
ARTEFACTS
BRICOLAGE

Suitability and ‘childishness’
Artistic ability
You will do my ‘participatory’ method!
Suite of methods
Flexibility
Drawing or collaging or photo-elicitation or narratives or film or objects or sandboxing or just interviews?
VISION OR VISUALITY?
VISION OR VISUALITY?
INTERTEXTUALITY

Imagery evokes memories, reflections and feelings

Interpretation depends on our accumulated cultural knowledge

Experience imposes a set of available frames for reference

Tropes – metaphors or analogies - ‘no sooner is an image seen than it must resemble something: humanity seems doomed to analogy’ (Barthes cited in Spencer 2011, p.19)
The audience, then, actively make their own meanings from an image. Yet, if the research is interested in the ways in which people assign meanings to pictures the study of images alone as, as data whose meaning is intrinsic, is a mistaken method (Banks 2001)

The reading of visual images then suggests that the message lies within the visual image

Analysis provides the opportunity for the image to speak?

But cultural assumptions, personal knowledge and the context guide our reading
HOW THEN CAN WE KNOW THE IMAGE?

To gain an understanding of the internal narrative of the image

Imperative to acknowledge the role of the image-maker

The notion that the most salient aspect in understanding a visual image is what the maker intended to show is often referred to auteur theory (Rose 2001)
ASSUMPTION AND EXPLANATION
Night time
Tina: You probably would have mentioned the college and the driving... and my Mum’s house obviously but you wouldn’t have known anything about the way I feel about the night
ACCESSING INTERNAL NARRATIVE

Tina offers me an insight into aspects of her world that I would not have considered salient and reveals a subjective relationship with the night sky that I have no prior knowledge of (Mannay 2010, p.100).

Images then can be understood not as simple windows to the truth but rather as contested and subject to multiple readings; and asking participants to interpret their images has become standard practice for many social science researchers (Luttrell 2010).
ETHICAL PRINCIPLES IN RESEARCH

Anonymisation of respondents

Informed consent

Confidentiality

Avoidance of harm

‘central issue raised by participants concerned the vexed issues of anonymity and identification of visual materials’ (Wiles et al 2008, p. 4)
Cautionary tale of Vidich and Bensman’s (1958) study ‘Small Town in Mass Society’

Publication of the study was met with an angry response from the participants

Recognise themselves and others in the research despite the use of obligatory pseudonyms (Clarke 2006)
ANONYMISATION AND VISUAL DATA

Visual data production

Artistic interpretations and photographs documenting the immediate local area, participants and their friends and family

Concerns such as concealed identities and preserving anonymity become methodologically challenging
DO WE NEED TO LOOK?

Payne (1996, p. 19) argues that ‘humans see as well as hear and think. If the locality is relevant, then it is even more important than in other walks of sociology to see what it looks like’

BUT Crow and Wiles (2008, p.9) contend, although research that only includes ‘safe’ photographs can be accused of losing ‘something of the discipline’s edge’ once research data are placed in the public domain and re-worked in the media the impact and interpretation of visual images become extremely difficult to control
IMAGES BEYOND CONTROL?
I fell pregnant with my daughter when I was 13 years old from my ‘first time’. Everyone thinks it won’t happen to you but it did to me. The father didn’t want to know. My family didn’t find out until I was 5 months pregnant. It was very tough but I didn’t want to give up my baby or my schooling so I managed to have both. I went back to school when Emily was 4 months old and completed my GCSE’s, coming out with 10 A*-Cs.

My name is Anne-Marie and I am 19 years old. I have a daughter called Emily who is 5 years old and another baby due in November 2008. I have been with my partner for 3 years now and we rent a house together. He works full time and I finished working full time back in March, when I found out I was pregnant again.

I moved in with my partner after my GCSE’s but I still continued at sixth form and gained 3 A levels and an AS level whilst running a family house and looking after my family. This enabled me to start working for a high street bank.
WHO DECIDES?

The concept of anonymity is complicated further by the fact that individuals, particularly young children, appear commonly to want to be identified in their visual images (Wiles et al. 2008).

One answer to this situation could be to follow an approach now favoured by some researchers, such as Back (2004), who present visual data and text in its entirety with consent based on the premise that data will not be anonymised.
Preoccupation with anonymity acts as resistance to discourses of participant visibility

Engenders a potential for advantage

Act of being seen was regarded by many participants as a transforming process; which provided pleasure in seeing the photograph, a new perception of self, the seizing of opportunities and the affirmation of greater ownership of Southampton

Belonging and community involvement
‘ETHICS OF RECOGNITION’?

This approach though, is not suitable to all types of research data, especially in a study such as this where the majority of the participants want some level of anonymity

Sensitive topics - domestics abuse, abortion, violence, divorce

Images cannot speak – whose voice?

Time immemorial

How can images be disguised ethically?
DO THESE DISGUISES WORK?
‘UNKNOWING OTHERS’ (MANNAY 2011)
INFORMED CONSENT

Participants can only consent for themselves

Is the consent informed?

Do they understand how their data will be used – what is a conference, journal article?

Open Access? (Mannay 2014)
MANIPULATING IMAGES

Bill Brant – 1930s British photographer

Altered prints with paint, ink and pencil. Scratched lines in his negatives… altered the mood of the image (Harper 2012)

Crude by today’s standard

Contemporary technology provides the tools to reformat, manipulate, crop, colour, resize
BEING SEEN?

Ethical principles in research include informed consent, confidentiality and avoidance of harm.

Arguably visual research engenders ethical dilemmas.

Consider the ethics of recognition.

Rethink informed consent as ongoing and negotiated rather than fixed.

Appreciate the dangers of Open Access.
DISSEMINATION WITHOUT THE PICTURES

Poetry - I like rough pubs (Mannay 2013)
Dialogic epistolary form – letter writing (Carroll 2015)
Play – Under us All – (Richardson 2015)
Visual re-representations
VISUAL RE-REPRESENTATIONS

http://sites.cardiff.ac.uk/cascade/looked-after-children-andeducation/
https://www.youtube.com/user/ministryoflifetv
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Carroll, K. (2015) ‘Representing Ethnographic Data through the Epistolary Form: A Correspondence between a Breastmilk Donor and Recipient’, Qualitative Inquiry, ifirst edition http://dx.sagepub.com/content/early/2015/02/21/1077800414566691.full.pdf+html


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Thank you for listening!