STUDIES IN QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY VOLUME 7

SEEING IS BELIEVING? APPROACHES TO VISUAL RESEARCH

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2004

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STUDIES IN QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

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First edition 2004

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 0-7623-1021-9
ISSN: 1042-3192 (Series)

♾ The paper used in this publication meets the requirements of ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (Permanence of Paper). Printed in The Netherlands.

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VISUAL RESEARCH: POTENTIAL AND OVERVIEW

Christopher J. Pole

In assembling a collection of papers which address issues relating to the visual image as the medium through which we might come to know the social world, we are in a sense, merely drawing on something that most of us do and take for granted during all of our waking hours. For most of us, the world in which we live is experienced through our capacity to see and to make sense of what we see. At its most fundamental, visual research draws on our basic capacity to interpret the world through our sense of sight. In this respect, for those of us who are not in anyway visually impaired visual research might be seen to be little more than something that we do all the time in order to go about our everyday lives. We might also argue that all or at least the great majority of social research relies on our capacity to interpret and to make sense of visual images. This is true not only in cases where methods of observation and participant observation are used, but also in respect of the need to read written data of various kinds, to interpret statistics and merely to orient ourselves within any given research location. Whilst there is no intention here to deny or overlook the contribution that blind or partially sighted researchers may make to our understanding of social life through their work with the written medium or through their capacity to give accounts of their personal experiences of research sites and locations via other, perhaps more developed, senses such as hearing, touch and smell, it remains a fact that most social research relies on the capacity of the researcher to see and to interpret on the basis of what is seen.

Seeing is Believing? Approaches to Visual Research
Studies in Qualitative Methodology, Volume 7, 1–7

ISSN: 1042-3192/doi:10.1016/S1042-3192(04)07001-6

Although it may be true to claim that visual research is just an extension of the act of seeing, what we do all the time, this would be to privilege the visual over the research. Indeed, we might make similar claims for other approaches to research which are based on participation, interviews or conversational techniques. These may draw on activities in which we all engage every day, however, the point is, that as we go about our lives we do not usually deploy them in such a way which consciously yields data for research. In this, visual research is no different. For example, as parents, although we may participate in parent-teacher committees or attend school concerts we do not ordinarily use these occasions as opportunities for research. For the sociologist of education, however, they may well offer rich sources of data, but for the average parent, participation is on the basis of their role as mother or father and not as social researcher. Similarly, whilst it is likely that most of us take photographs from time to time, which may very well be of great interest and use to social researchers of many kinds and for all manner of reasons, on pressing the camera shutter we would not usually have this in mind. In this respect, visual research is similar to many data collection methods at the disposal of the social researcher in that, it draws on familiar activities that we take for granted and perhaps fail to realise their potential as rich sources of information about the social world. However, what the contributions to this volume show is that although visual research may be rooted in the ordinary and the everyday, its potential as a research method goes much further than this. Moreover, the contributors present a number of challenges to what we might regard as data and how we analyse and make use of visual data in a context which continues to privilege the written medium. They also pose challenging questions about perspective, truth, reliability, inclusion and omission in the context of using the visual as a medium for knowing about the social.

In seeking a working definition of visual research which is useful in the context of the contributions to this book, we need to be mindful of the different sources of visual information available to us not just as social actors but as social researchers. In relation to documentary sources Plummer (1983) tells us that the world is awash with documents with the potential to yield interesting and important insights into social life. The same could be said of visual research. For example, we have already spoken of photographs but as Martin and Martin demonstrate in Chapter two of this collection, we should bear in mind that photography is a relatively recent technological development. With the invention of photography dating back only 160 years or so, with the development of a chemical process which allowed the capture of images on glass plates and merely some forty years since further technological developments gave birth to the kind of cheap and easy photography that we now take for granted, photography is only useful as a source of information about the relatively recent past and the present day. Even within this timescale it is

further limited to those societies and people who have ready access to the required technology. Indeed, in chapter three, Harrison outlines some of the technological changes that have taken place in the field of photography during its relatively short history and alongside this she discusses some of the changing conventions of photography in respect of what is deemed to be appropriate subject matter for photographers. Although the technological changes that have occurred might be seen as a liberation or democratization of photography as it has become a familiar aspect of social life for many people, Harrison argues that everyday photography is not really about everyday experiences. The conventions of social respectability and appropriateness, together with a taken for granted approach to everyday activities which means that we see the regular and the ordinary as mundane and, therefore, not worthy of photography, results in aspects of the social which remain, bye and large, un-photographed. One might speculate, for example, on the reaction of mourners at a funeral to the presence of a photographer, or on the likelihood of deliberately taking photographs of the process of housework or of the family watching the television. In each of these cases photography seems unlikely.

Moreover, whilst those of us in the so called developed world are able to deposit films at any number of specialist processing shops, chemists or photographers' studios, collect high quality prints an hour later, and have the means of paying for them, in other parts of the world this would not be possible and photography remains an unusual and seldom practised activity. Moreover, if, for example we wished to know about the lives of sixteenth century Dutch Merchants it would clearly be pointless looking through photographic collections found in galleries in Amsterdam. A more productive method would be to scour the walls of the Rijhlks Museum and study the paintings of the Dutch Masters. Although much more limited in what they include, paintings may perform a similar research function to some photographs in that they offer a window on the past, of a particular moment. Also like photographs, however, we should remember that paintings will reflect only what either the painter or his/her client wish them to include. As Aries (1962) points out, if we were to study Medieval art, until about the twelfth century in an attempt to examine the social composition of society we could reasonably conclude that it was only comprised of adults. Jenks (1996) make a similar point.

> It is in fact the case that the figurative painting of the Middle Ages is notable for its dearth of depictions of children. They were apparently considered of such little importance that they did not warrant representation in a unique and particular form. (p. 64)

Aries' and Jenk's observations highlight a further issue in respect of the capacity of visual representations to provide useful information about aspects of social life without reference to other sources of information. This is a concern of Becker (1974) for whom the photograph can only ever have meaning if the social context

in which it is taken is known. Clearly the paintings referred to by Aries and Jenks do not tell the whole story and to understand what they say about aspects of society in the Middle Ages we need to know something of the context in which they were commissioned and produced. Children clearly did exist before the twelfth century but the interesting question to pose here is why they were deemed inappropriate or unnecessary for inclusion in painting of the day. In this instance, visual representations not only yield a supply of historical data but also prompt a line of questioning about what is not included in the representation and the reasons why.

In addition to photographs and paintings we could also include film, video, drawings and cartoons, a whole array of web-based sources, graffiti, advertisements, clothing and packaging in our definition of visual data. We might also extend this to include artefacts and architecture, rural landscapes and many other spaces. In fact, if we take an inclusive definition to visual sources, which incorporates anything we experience through the visual medium, then the list of what the visual researcher might legitimately regard as a source of data would be virtually endless. In fact, it might be so wide ranging as to render it more of a description of possibilities than a definition of a research approach. In seeking to characterise visual research, therefore, we need to go beyond the possible source of the data to include the ways in which the researcher works with the source and the data it might yield. In this sense, it is about method and methodology, in so far as visual research relies on more than merely collecting and displaying visual images (Prosser & Schwartz, 1998). Again, this may be something that we all have experience of, the classic example being the family photograph album (Musello, 1979; Pole & Morrison, 2003; Scott, 1990). Whilst collections of photographs, etchings or paintings may be interesting, things of aesthetic beauty or a means of recording and chronicling the past, this does not mean that collection, cataloguing or the very existence of the visual constitutes research.

In considering the place of the visual in research methods and methodology it may be helpful to consider two different aspects of the role of the image. These are the significance of the image to people's lives and the way in which the researcher uses and interacts with the visual image in order to understand that significance. If we take the example of architecture or even more broadly of the built environment, then the way that people use buildings or spaces as they go about their daily lives (Lee, 2000; Webb et al., 1966) may say a great deal not only about those buildings and spaces but also about those people and their lives. Visual research depends on the researcher's capacity to make sense of the interface between people and the image (Grint & Woolgar, 1997). For example, whilst for some the opulence of the Foyer of a grand hotel may be enticing and inviting, for others in may be threatening, exclusionary and forbidding. Similarly, the décor and layout of a

particular shop may appear intriguing and exciting for some potential customers, whilst for others it may appear to be intimidating or vulgar. To understand the space we need to know more than what it looks like. We need to understand a whole range of issues which might relate to the kind of clientele the shop or the hotel wishes to attract, the cost of its goods and services and location. Similarly we also need to know about the social characteristics of those who find the spaces inviting and of those who find them intimidating in terms, for example of social class, gender, ethnicity and age. The significance of the space in these examples and therefore of the way in which the visual image is interpreted relies on the interaction of the social with the material.

In the two examples discussed above we are dealing with the significance of images which have been created for the construction of particular kinds of spaces. Whilst it may be argued that the way in which the spaces are experienced and indeed the social impact of the spaces is mediated through a visual experience and are, therefore, relevant to this discussion of visual research, they may not be what is immediately brought to mind in this context. However, the chapter by Dant in this collection, although concerned largely with the capacity of video to yield socially significant data, builds on some of his earlier ideas (Dant, 1999) to engage with the relationship between individuals and artefacts. Issues of material culture are addressed in respect of cars and car maintenance. The use of video recordings allows Dant to interrogate the relationship between the material and the social not only in terms of the visual but also in terms of feel, touch and movement. Dant argues that the video camera, which offers the capacity to constantly play and replay sequences of images, facilitates a level of analysis not available via still photography or forms of observation. Similarly, but in the context of very different subject matter, Chapter five by Pink also discusses the use of video technology to engage with ideas about the social significance of living spaces as she tours peoples homes and invites them to provide a commentary on what they regard as significant about them, which Pink simultaneously films. In this way, although as with Dant, the visual record is made by the researcher rather than those being researched, it is the researched who decide what appears on the video. For Pink, the act of making the video is an integral aspect of the process by which decisions are made about what is significant about the home and what is not.

Images of the home are also included in the chapter by Allatt and Dickson. However, here the images, some of which are taken from video recordings made by young people of secondary school age, are used not in a literal sense to convey a representation of the home, but as context for the authors' focus on the social geography of independent learning amongst A level students in the North of England. In addition, photography is extended to the locality, education institutions and other aspects of the lives of the young people. Whilst images of the locality in

which the research was conducted are used to illustrate and add detail to the chapter in a way which would not be possible via more conventional textual representation, the authors also argue that an important role for the visual in social research is to bring the audience closer to the research. In doing this, the images included in the chapter go beyond a mere supporting role, which is often the fate of visual material (Bolton et al., 2001) in accounts of social research, combining what Chaplin (1994) identified as both representations of culture and representations about culture, to situate the experiences of the young people in terms of geography, social and cultural capital.

Chapter seven by Felstead, Jewson and Walters also includes images of the home, however, here the concern is with the home as a site of work. Images of bedrooms, sitting rooms and purposely equipped studies provide the focus for a discussion of shifting work spaces. Again, like Allatt and Dixon the authors subscribe to the view that pictures can often say more than words and also facilitate the sharing of data between members of the research team who may not have been able to visit the research site. However, the chapter which is in the form of an auto-critique also discusses some of the problems and disappointments associated with visual research. The chapter concludes by emphasizing the importance of theoretically grounding visual research, as it is this which will distinguish visual sociology from photojournalism. In this sense, Chapter eight by Smith and Donnelly demonstrates a similar perspective, albeit on the basis of very different subject matter. Their discussion focuses on the connections between visual sociology and sociology of development. They argue that photographs exhibit a moral voice that invites us, as the viewer, to reflect on the circumstances in which people find themselves and their conditions for survival. Ultimately, this chapter points to the problematic nature of the relationship between the sociology of development, images of development and the meanings attributed to those images by the viewer. Working through a case study, the chapter offers critical insight into the role of the visual in the context of contemporary theories and practice of development.

Chapters nine and ten are concerned with the use of visual research methods in the context of education. Moreover, in different ways they both discuss the potential for visual data to contribute to processes of evaluation. Raggl and Schratz argue that visual methods allow the researcher to look into the inner world of the school in a way which is freed from some of the constraints imposed by language. They argue that photographs capture a more holistic perspective and also have the capacity to facilitate self-evaluation. Whist the focus in this chapter is clearly on schools and processes of learning many of the issues raised by Raggl and Schratz are applicable to other settings and to processes of evaluation therein. For Hurworth in Chap. 10, photo-evaluation provides an opportunity to demonstrate the impact of particular actions in before and after shots, or to provide a longitudinal view of social action

within a particular location or setting. Hurworth raises important questions about the use of photography in a positivistic sense warning against their use merely as a means of providing literal representation. Like the earlier chapter by Felstead et al., she emphasizes the need for photography and evaluation to be located in firm theoretical foundations.

Overall, this volume seeks not only to offer insight into the process of using the visual medium as the primary source of data, but also to argue the distinctiveness of visual research. In commissioning and editing these contributions across a reasonably disparate range of topics, the intention has been to demonstrate that visual research is more than simply an additional source of information at the disposal of the researcher. The contributions show that visual research has the capacity to offer a different way of understanding the social world. The authors in this volume have shown how visual methods provide access to different aspects of the social world, not possible by other means and have also demonstrated how social life is frequently situated, shaped and given social significance by the interaction of individuals with artefacts and spaces.

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HISTORY THROUGH THE LENS: EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

John Martin and Ruth Martin

Traditionally, historians have focused primarily on written accounts as their main source of material. Until relatively recently other forms of evidence have received scant attention from mainstream researchers. This has been particularly true for oral history; personal recollections have been largely neglected. It is even more so for photographic evidence. Academics have all but ignored the adage "one picture is worth a thousand words." Contemporary photographs have tended to be overlooked as serious sources of information. Apart from a limited number of specialised books, the trend has been to use only the occasional photograph as garnish to a section of text. More often than not they are only on the dust cover to entice the casual browser.

This chapter will focus on the use of photographs in respect of the social and cultural impact of the Asian community on Leicester, *Asian Leicester* (Martin & Singh, 2002) assembles a collection of photographs chronicling the lives of Asian settlers; their work, leisure, festivals; creative arts, religious institutions, environmental impact and involvement in local civic live. It portrays the experience of ordinary members of the Asian community; industrial workers, teachers, shopkeepers, businessmen, broadcasters, local politicians, community leaders and women's groups. The research provides unique insights into these largely neglected dimensions of life in Asian Britain today. This chapter will focus the examining the early development of photography, the merits of using this medium in research, copyright issues, and the use of photography as propaganda.

Seeing is Believing? Approaches to Visual Research
Studies in Qualitative Methodology, Volume 7, 9–22

ISSN: 1042-3192/doi:10.1016/S1042-3192(04)07002-8

THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF PHOTOGRAPHY

There are several contenders for the title of being the "pioneer of photography," of which in France, Louis Jacques Mande Daguerre (1787–1851) is the most internationally famous. In Britain, it is widely accepted that although William Henry Fox Talbot (1800–1877) was not the first to produce photographs, he had a major contribution to the development of photography.

Daguerre announced his development of the camera "daguerreotype" on the 7 January 1839, after having developed a number of different processes over the previous decade partly in conjunction with Joseph Nicephore Niépce (1765–1833). Within the French government, Francois Arago (1786–1853) realised the importance of this new procedure and in particular that it would revolutionise the task of copying the Egyptian hieroglyphics, as he claimed that with the daguerreotype "a single man would suffice to bring this vast labour to a happy conclusion" which "cover the great monuments at Thebes, Memphis and Carnac" that would otherwise "require scores of years and legions of artists."[1] Arago persuaded Hippolyte Bayard (1807–1887) to postpone publishing the details of his own invention led to him being denied the chance of being credited as the inventor of photography, even though he held a photographic exhibition of his extensive works on 24 June 1839.

In contrast, Fox Talbot M. P. publicly announced his method of "photogenic drawing" at the Royal Institution, on the 25 January 1839 and also wrote to Francois Arago, Daguerre's wealthy and influential political ally, explaining that he himself had been the inventor of photography. At this stage, he was not aware that the two processes were fundamentally different; as daguerreotypes had sharper focus than the calotype and tended to show the imperfections of the printing paper, but had the advantage of being reproducible.

The nineteenth century saw significant technological advancements in the field of photography; although many historians may have difficulty in obtaining or utilising photographs from the beginning of this period effectively. The limited nature of the cameras in having exposure times of over thirty minutes meant that "nature in motion could not reproduce itself," as "all which moved or walked did not appear in the drawing."[2] The long exposure times meant portraits were characterised by the rather stilted expressions. Another drawback that precipitated the scarcity of photographs was the expense. In 1839, a camera obscura and other instruments were purchased by William Henry Fox Talbot for seven pounds and fifteen shillings. The typical servant's wage would have averaged between ten and twenty pounds a year.[3] Additionally, the use of chemicals of the calotype process in the early Victorian era, which had the disadvantage that the prints tended to fade rapidly, meant that few photographs, taken during this pioneering age, have survived intact.

However, photography was revolutionised by the development of the wet collodion process in 1851 by Frederick Scott Archer. This new process was more sensitive to light than the calotype process, so exposure times were dramatically reduced to as little as two to three seconds enabling the taking of less stilted pictures of individuals. This enabled a new and more realistic dimension for this art form that had previously been confined to still scenes or people. More importantly the new process that used a glass base which meant sharply focused images could be produced. As the new process was never patented, so photography became more cheaper and more widely adopted; especially as the price of a paper print was less than a tenth of the cost of the Daguerreotype process.

Many of the more sophisticated photographs in terms of technical quality were taken by professionals, which were becoming increasingly numerous as early as the 1870s. By this time, the bulk of their work was portraiture using fixed props, painted backgrounds and often artificial lighting in studios as a result of the need to "sensitise the plate almost immediately before exposure and expose and process it whilst the emulsion was still moist."[4] However, there was occasionally the prospect of producing multiple sets of prints with a postcard format, if photographers were willing to brave the outside environment. As a result of the need to use a heavy tripod mounted field camera and have an accessible area to process the photos there are a limited number of images from the outside from this era. Additionally, photographers even in the great outdoors tended to concentrate on formal group compositions such as haymakers often wearing their Sunday best clothes that would not have been worn in normal working conditions.

The popularisation of this as an art form was further transformed by the development of small visiting card portraits (Carte-de-Visite photography). A system devised by a Parisian photographer Andre Disderi (1819–1889) who in 1854 patented a way of taking a number of photographs on one plate. In England, this heralded a boom in collecting portraits of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, as well as other leading members of aristocratic society. Its popularity as a new art form led to many families commissioning the production of their own carte-de-visite for the prestige of seeing themselves on miniature photographs. These light, cheap and easy to produce photographs became highly treasured collectable items in an age where other forms of entertainment were absent. Cartes-de-visite were albumen prints using egg whites in the development process. The props used in these prints reflect the predetermined fashions of the age initially with balustrades and curtains; followed by columns bridges and stiles and later in the century, palm trees and bicycles. Quantity rather than quality however, tended to prevail, although there are some impressive exceptions. It has been estimated that in England alone in the 1860s, around four hundred million portrait photographs were sold each year. Hundreds of thousands of photographs from this period have survived both in collections and archives, as well as in attics, many of which are still un-catalogued.

Another important source of visual evidence is the postcard, which became popular at the start of the twentieth century. However, the growth in amateur photography, and the corresponding increase in the number of photographs occurred in the 1880s, expanding considerably the visual resources available for historians. This occurred as a result of further technological advancements in the form of the development of the dry plate coated with gelatine and silver salts, which were more than 60 times more sensitive than the mixture on the wet collodion plates. The plates could be bought ready-made and produced instantaneous photographs that did not need to be processed immediately after use. This marked the beginning of a recognisably modern technique of photography.

THE MERITS OF USING PHOTOGRAPHY IN RESEARCH

Although most historians tended to neglect photographs as a valuable research tool until the mid twentieth century, anthropologists were using photography and photo-interviewing as a "visual notebook . . . to document aspects of society" (Banks, 1995) from the late nineteenth century. These early investigations have provided a wealth of material on sociological issues, for example Franz Boas' study of the customs of the inhabitants of the Trobriand Islands, which can now be analysed as an informative record of the area's social history. The development of more effective methods of photo-elicitation has occurred in order to extract historical information from participants, particularly for oral history studies. Its success has been shown through Collier's belief that whereas "picture interviews were flooded with encyclopaedic community information . . . in the exclusively verbal interviews, communication difficulties and memory blocks inhibited the flow of information" (Collier, 1979). This is known as cue-dependent memory, where information cannot be remembered until appropriate prompts are given. Although this has the drawback that it might lead suggestible participants to exaggerate the magnitude of their reflections, it may provide a larger sample of respondents.

When giving lectures, photographs are effective tools for communication, as they tend to spark the audience's interest in the subject, as well as portraying unfamiliar ideas and objects more vividly. For example, in *Asian Leicester*, photographs of the different styles of places of worship, such as the finery inside the Shree Swaminarayan Temple and the outside of the Al-Bukhari Mosque would have been difficult to describe, and would have led to subjective, differing interpretations across the audience (see Figs 1 and 2).

The inclusion of photographs has the advantage of being more memorable for the audience; as the simultaneous use of words and photographs have greater depth of analysis and lead to a "longer lasting, stronger memory trace" in comparison

Fig. 1. The Al-Bukhari Mosque, Loughborough Road, Opened in 1985 and was the Second Purpose-Built Mosque in Leicester (*Leicester Mercury*).

Fig. 2. Deities at the Shree Swaminarayan Temple in Loughborough Road, 1992 (*Vasant Kalyani*).

with "shallower levels of analysis" (Eysenck & Flanagan, 2000, p. 46) using only words. This Level of Processing psychological theory can also be used to explain the importance of photographs, which visually have a much greater impact on the reader, in comparison with the written word.

CLASSIFYING PHOTOGRAPHS

In history, there have been classic examples of people not recognising the importance of carefully storing and classifying photographic records. For example, Winter (1971) in notes with dismay the way a large collection of negatives was left in the cottage of an important nineteenth century photographer after his death. These were then used by the new occupants to build cloches for lettuces one row of plates being thrust into the earth each side of a row of lettuces while another row of plates was placed neatly over the top.

The belated efforts to classify photographs in an indexing system, in order to make them available to a wider audience are in stark contrast to the effective systems categorising books in libraries, pioneered by the Dewey Decimal Classification system (D.D.C.). This has arisen out of recognition of the need to appreciate the value of photographs as historical sources and the subsequent development of some impressive indexed database collections. One of these is the Helix Project, which has been pioneered by De Montfort University and has more than 50,000 images that can be accessed via subscription by U.K. universities via the EDINA service. The indexing system allows access in terms of subject, but also by multiple word indexes as well as in terms of the photographer. Access of this type can enable the user to find relevant images more efficiently and quickly. Additionally, some photographic archives can be accessed via the Internet, such as Pathe Newspapers,[5] which contains 12 million still images. The index searches using place names, keywords of categories such as sport or politics, surnames and even the type of shot, for example close-up, mid-shot or long-shot. Moreover, at present there is no universally agreed single standard for defining images as themes or key words are used that lead to a more rigorous search in order to avoid overlooking useful images.

Furthermore, many smaller or financially poorer collections may be more difficult to search, as a result of the fact that the process of key-wording photographs is at least as expensive as the digitalisation of the photographs. As Arms (1999) noted, "describing pictorial images accurately is time consuming and expensive. Unlike a book, which usually has a title page on which basic information is recorded an image does not describe itself." The recognition of this difficulty has led to the development of the Getty keyword system, which is based on more

than 1,500 key word descriptions, which not only encompass themes and topics, but also moods and emotions; – something which is not usually found in most academically orientated image collections. The question of cost has also led to the National Council of Archives to devote time to assisting others in attaining National Lottery Funding.

The development of techniques for restoring old or damaged photographs has also had beneficial effects on this medium. The least expensive process is copying restoration, which incorporates photographic copying and duplication of the image, reducing or increasing the contrast in the prints. This is generally used to lighten stains and to enhance old photographs. Other techniques include chemical restoration, which is mainly used for black and white, faded photographs. They can be redeveloped with greater contrast and clarity, after silver compound chemicals have been added to the image and oxidised. The most expensive and technologically advanced technique is Electronic Image Enhancement (E. I. E.), where the picture is digitised and discolorations and flaws are removed by a computer operative.

In order to contact possible collections of amateur photographs for the *Asian Leicester* project, we organised a meeting advertising our project via the local press and radio at which we invited representatives of the community to attend with their photographs. The *Leicester Mercury*, the local newspaper for the City proved invaluable in this respect being willing to include articles about our project and advertising the initial meeting. Radio Leicester was also extremely useful being willing to allow us to give a series of talks about our project and to answer readers' queries that helped to solicit another valuable source of enquiries. Through this process, we realised that few people recognise the significance of their photographs as an historical source of evidence and that cataloguing photographs is undertaken by a small minority; as a result there is a potential treasure trove of archival material lying at the bottom of drawers, in attics and in cupboards, where the owners do not appreciate its potential. Many of these photographs also require further detailed investigation to obtain the necessary background information.

COPYRIGHT

Photographs, as with other forms of media images are protected by copyright. Which determines whether or not it is possible to use a particular photograph, even in an academic text. The most important piece of legislation in the nineteenth century was the 1862 Copyright Act, which led to the deposit of hundreds of thousands photographs at Stationers Hall in the City of London. The 1862 Act was intended to protect photographers' commercial interests by enabling them to

register the photograph in order to prevent unauthorised reproduction or publication by others. In the region of 250,000 photographs were recorded in the sixty years that the Act was in force and during this crucial period, every photograph which a photographer or editor considered important in Britain and its Empire was registered in London. The geographical spread of these photographs was virtually unlimited and included photographs of life in the South Seas, the Arctic, China and literally every part of the globe, as explorers with their cameras braved inhospitable terrains in their efforts to record and bring home images of previously unseen areas of the world.

This archive constitutes a uniquely valuable source for historians of the modern media, providing an insight into what photographers living in the Victorian and Edwardian ages considered important, as unlike other archives it is the photographers themselves, who selected the contents of the archive by the very act of registration. It was possible for anyone to register their photographs provided they were covered by the Act and were willing to pay a small fee Consequently there were no cultural or archival directors who decided what went in and want was excluded.

Crucially, as there were no policy makers to decide if the photographs were art, or were socially significant, the subject matter of the collections is of almost unimaginable breadth. The choice of subject was even more wide-ranging, covering the whole social spectrum, ranging from members of the Royal Family, politicians and actors to malnourished and poverty-stricken individuals at the other extreme. The registering system was however brought to an abrupt end in 1912 when photographs no longer had to be recorded for copyright purposes.

Hiley (1983) has remarked that he researched this archive for more than two months in the 1980s. In order to view the archives it was necessary to laboriously unfold the paper forms that were tied into bundles. Attached to these forms with glue were fragile original photographs, many of which were folded and required extremely careful handling. However, since Hiley's research, the photographs, now in the care of the National Archieve, have become so fragile that public access to this source is now severely restricted.

Opening up the Copyright records via the digitalisation of the images will enable scholars to research the way photography, as the first of the modern mass media, has influenced society. These invaluable copyright records provide a quantitative index to the commercial photographs in circulation after 1862 (Plunkett, 2003) and Statistical analysis of the publication of these photographs year by year has, for example, revealed the changing popularity of the different members of the Royal Family and politicians such as the Prime Minister William Gladstone and even of stage actresses such as Ellen Terry. However, copyright is potentially

still a minefield. For example, even though individuals may have a photograph of themselves they do not necessarily possess the copyright, being unable to grant permission for the photograph to be reproduced and published. Photographers own copyright whilst alive which is retained by their estate for seventy years after their death. As a result, it is possible to inadvertently infringe copyright even when the photographer is long since dead.

USING PHOTOGRAPHS

There are two principal and frequently used methods of writing a text that utilises photographic images. The first is to compile the written text and then search for photographs to support the thesis. This has the major drawback that it may be difficult to find relevant illustrations and may also lead to the neglect of other important aspects of the topic. An alternative method would be to find as many photographs on the general topic as possible, and then organise them into sub-sections in order to write about them. However, this has the disadvantage of being more time-consuming; as there is a surplus of photos that needs to be assessed. Therefore, writing text without photographs, we found that the most effective compromise when writing *Asian Leicester* was to have definite ideas about the important sections and kept an open mind about the photographs, which would then reveal any other important ideas not yet considered.

It is also a fact that the vast majority of individuals who possess what might be deemed suitable photographs for research purposes, have not usually retained written details, relating the names of people and the specific events depicted therein. As such, they will be limited in the scope of information which they are able to convey. In addition, where there is the intention to display the photographs writing appropriate captions can be a challenge, requiring painstaking investigations into the actual events. We found this particularly true in collecting agrarian history photographs, as upon stopping at a village in mid-Wales we discovered a number of very attractive prints depicting aspects of rural life being offered for sale. The most interesting was a charabanc loaded with children, about to embark on their annual Sunday school outing. Sadly, as with so many photographs of this type there was no date or even place which could help to contextualise the photograph. Additionally, dating is a major problem even in terms of identifying who is on the photograph and what is implied, as often people's recollections of who is included and even of the year may be vague. More important, it is problematic to attribute the motives of the photographer and subjects.

Deciding which photographs to include and which to exclude can be a difficult balancing act which may unintentionally flatter or demonise certain individuals.

For the *Asian Leicester* project we established a small working party to offer advice and guidance on the photographs which were to be included. However, the inclusion of "good" photographs because of their technical merits or highlighting of key events, does not necessarily produce a comprehensive survey of the community under investigation. We found this to be particularly true in our research which we recognised from the onset could not provide a comprehensive survey of the community, and that organisations, individuals and places have been omitted that are an integral part of the city.

WAYS TO ANALYSE PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs can often be likened to anonymous archival records produced under unknown circumstances. Consequently, their interpretation may need to be approached with a degree of caution in an effort to take account of the perspectives both of those responsible for taking the photographs and of those responsible for their selection and inclusion in the study. Here the work of Barthes (1982) and more recently is useful.

Barthes introduces the concept of the "studium" and the "punctum," where the former denotes the interest that the individual shows towards the photographs in attempting to determine their underlying meaning. In contrast, the "punctum" is the recognition of the meaning contained within the photographs. Furthermore, in his 1961 essay "The Photographic Message," he outlines the two varying depths of meaning of photographs. The "denotative" refers to the objective, impartial and literal substance and meaning within the photograph, whereas the "connotative" is the subjective interpretation placed upon the photograph, which varies particularly in respect of its culture, time period and ideology.

Furthermore, Burke argues that photographic images should be regarded as extensions of the social contexts in which they were created, rather than simply as reflections of the place and time in which they were created. This should arise from the placing of photographs within a contextual framework, where viewing a sequence of images provided a more reliable insight than individual photographs. It also enables the researcher greater ease of interpretation and analysis. For example, in *Asian Leicester*, the effect of the social and political context is evident in the photographs of the 1950s, as there were relatively few of them, as cameras and photographs were still comparatively expensive in a country where people were struggling to cope with the aftermath of post-war austerity. Additionally, and atypically in comparison to the wider society there was the tendency to record family groups rather than formal events, which is explained by the Asian communities commissioning photographs to send

back to their families in India. It was not until the 1960s when the post-war boom and full employment enabled photography to become within reach of the masses.

A further issues in respect of analysis relates to the social process under which images are made. For example historians need to keep in mind the opposite tendencies of image-makers to satirise or idealise the world that they attempt to represent; as they face the problem of distinguishing between representations of the typical and images of the eccentric. For example, it is well documented that fashionable artists especially miniaturists who made their living painting their subjects frequently pandered to the sitters whims and traded on deceit, as the demands of people for a good likeness and an attractive portrait were not always compatible. Moreover, although the camera may be expected to reveal the sitter with uncompromising truth, dispelling cherished illusions of youth and beauty, there are of course many techniques for amending photographs, not only for aesthetic reasons, but also to portray a particular image. The old adage that one picture is worth a thousand words is true in the sense that a single image may have a more dramatic imprint than a text and may be more memorable. However, it should be qualified by the fact that we do not necessarily know which thousand words it is intended to replace. The same photograph looked at in isolation may also convey an entirely different message to one person than another and more importantly may be used to convey a message, which was not necessarily intended by the photographer.

PROPAGANDA AND THE PHOTOGRAPH

Another difficulty that needs to be overcome by researchers when using visual research tools is that they portray the subjective reality perceived and arranged by the photographer, and sometimes by the subjects. A example of this arose in the United States of America, during the race for the Democrat party nomination for President. In February 2004, a photograph was discovered of the frontrunner, John Kerry at an anti-Vietnam war rally in the 1970s, sitting next to the actress Jane Fonda, who had been reviled by many in the U.S. as a result of her visit to North Vietnam whilst the war contined. The photograph was seen by many via the internet and was also printed in British tabloids. The photograph was only discovered to be a forgery, when the original photographer of Kerry (Light, 2004) came forward to the press to reveal how it was his "photograph with an image of Jane Fonda dropped in." This example offers a salutary lesson in the ways in which the manipulation of photography has the potential to mislead the course of history. Byrne believes that "all images that appear in the press are manipulated in

one way, shape or form, whether they're by choice – by that image being chosen over another – or by cropping, or by digital manipulation" and as long as you are somewhat aware of the fact, then there's not so much to be afraid of. Understanding the potential pitfalls, it might be argued that this has led to a higher recognition by the public that photographs are literally a snap shot, a fossilised moment in time which need not be representative of the period or could even be contrived. An important example here being the debate over the veracity of photos purporting to show British servicemen torturing Iraqi prisoners in April 2004.

Brady (1980) (cited in Berger, 1980, p. 52) believes that the manipulation of photographical images can be seen in history, as "the very 'truthfulness' of the medium encouraged its deliberate use as a means of propaganda." This is evident even as early as the American Civil war, where wet collodion plates were developed in darkrooms on wheels. A leading photographer, Brady's, depiction of this watershed event was undertaken by a corps of photographers, whom he employed to provide an instant pictorial history of the war. The photographs led to a series of popular exhibitions. In New York, where the audience also bought pictures for their own albums at home. His photographs were never intended to document hard facts, but were a means of visually portraying the collective sentiments and popular perceptions about this landmark event[6] although even some of these photographs were staged. The First World War was the first conflict where photographers were officially attached to the armed forces, although they were not allowed to take photographs of troops in action under fire. Therefore the vast majority of the pictures showing troops advancing were in practice re-enactments undertaken simply for the benefit of the photographer. Consequently, the real horrors of life on the Western Front were not emphasised in the photographs, for example, they did not tend to show dead bodies, and the plight of the soldiers was not publicised in this period. This was to wait until photographers began to accompany brigades in the Second World War and the Korean War. Perhaps even more significantly, the Vietnam War was the first war in which independent photographers were allowed to operate freely, and the as Isaacs and Downing (1998) contend American people were "fed a nightly diet of news that showed scenes of carnage and destruction," as opposed to the Korean War, where photographs and film had been "taken by official military cameramen" (p. 223).

CONCLUSION

Although the process of photography evolved from two independent investigations in the nineteenth century, it is only relatively recently that this particular role and function of this art form has been examined, and interest in photographs

has grown beyond the merely nostalgic into an important reference source for anyone interested in historical and social research. There has concurrently been a massive increase in awareness of the data needed to analyse sources, in particular dating the photograph and knowing the photographer and the motivations behind it, which have come about partly as a result of its inclusion in the history curricula of schools and universities. Therefore, this wide audience's revived interest in photographs as an historical source seems almost certainly to continue for the foreseeable future.

However, photographs are still relatively under-used as a means of data collection and analysis, which may result from their perceived difficulty of use. Those wishing to search for and use written materials in research have the assistance of librarians and information assistants and fully indexed, computerised systems, whilst in contrast, many photographs are in smaller, private collections that are harder to discover and access. With the advent of more advanced techniques for photograph restoration and also new forms of indexing and more recently digitalisation of prints, it is much easier to search for, and locate relevant photographs. Undeniably, photographs present the range of problems common to all single source data collection methods. They require interpretation to show for what reason they were taken and, where possible, to establish by whom they were taken and when. In spite of these difficulties, photographs constitute valuable evidence not only for historians but also for social scientists across a broad gambit of disciplines. Photographs provide a fascinating starting point for looking at the past, although they often come no nearer to the definitive version of it than any other source. Corroboration from other evidence is essential for placing photographic sources in the context, through which we can understand history. Appreciating the history of photography, the inherent bias which may exist, the subliminal messages which they can convey can significantly assist us to unlock the potential benefits which this still largely neglected medium is able to offer.

NOTES

1. http://www.rleggat.com/photohistory/history/arago.htm.
2. Article from La Gazette de France (7th January 1839) http://www.rleggat.com/photohistory/history/.
3. http://www.rleggat.com/photohistory/history/cameraob.htm.
4. "Development and use of the collodion process" in Photography, Art of, p. 311, *Encyclopaedia Britannica, No. 14. 1975*.
5. www.britishpathe.com.
6. For a detailed critique of Brady's photographs see Sullivan, G. E. In the Wake of Battle: The Civil War Images Of Matthew Brady, Prestel, 2004.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like thank Professor Gurharpal Singh, Mike Hiley and David Clarke, for their assistance with the chapter and the with the *Asian Leicester* project.

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SNAP HAPPY: TOWARD A SOCIOLOGY OF "EVERYDAY" PHOTOGRAPHY

Barbara Harrison

INTRODUCTION

In 1984 the number of photographs taken by people in the U.K. broke the 1 million mark and 75% of all households had a camera. By the end of the millennium (1999) people in Britain spent over 1 billion on cameras, film and processing and the number of photographs taken had exceeded 3 billion.[1] There is little doubt that most people are familiar with cameras, and the majority will be engaged in forms of photographic practice as amateurs, that is as a "pastime" or hobby or as an adjunct to events, activities and leisure in their everyday lives.

This chapter aims to provide a sociological conceptualisation of the role of photographs in people's everyday lives, with a particular focus on what I have called "everyday" photography. It arises out of a more general interest in photography as a social and cultural practice over time, and initially this took me in two directions. Using a Foucauldian approach I have explored the role of photographic practices and their resultant images, alongside other forms of visualisation, as aspects of power/knowledge in particular social institutions or settings (such as medicine for example) (Harrison & Aranda, 1999). If, as a number of writers (Green, 1985; Tagg, 1988) have argued, photography is a component in the acquisition of knowledge and the exercise of power then it might also be a means of resistance. The idea of power/resistance within the context of people's everyday use of photographs seems also worth considering and, more recently, I have returned to this theme in the context of thinking about photographs as visual narratives and counter-narratives

Seeing is Believing? Approaches to Visual Research
Studies in Qualitative Methodology, Volume 7, 23–39

ISSN: 1042-3192/doi:10.1016/S1042-3192(04)07003-X

(Harrison, 2002a, in press). A second focus has been a methodological one. Here, I have suggested that photographs and cameras can provide both a topic and resource for sociological investigation (Harrison, 1996, 2002b).

In the context of considering the methodological uses and value of cameras and photographic images, it seemed important to understand in more depth these social and cultural practices in relation to the production and consumption of photographs. An important aspect of this was to investigate how such practices function in the context of people's everyday lives, taking up the kinds of questions that Bourdieu (1990) and Chalfen (1987) addressed in their work on "everyday" photography but now in new contexts and time frames. I have over recent years been undertaking field work which is exploring many of the themes which this chapter addresses. The analysis presented here draws mainly on secondary material, but also ideas which are emerging from the field work, although it will not include data as such. The aim is to highlight some dimensions of a sociology of "everyday" photography as a basis for thinking about how we use or could use photographic media for other purposes.

WHAT IS "EVERYDAY" PHOTOGRAPHY?

First some clarification of what constitutes the concept of "everyday" photography. This draws on a familiar sociological concept of "everyday," as in everyday life, in two important respects. First, we can think of everyday life as the "rhythms and routines of daily existence" (Bennett, 2002, p. x) but equally over time the everyday involved the idea that some days are indeed distinguishable from others and that what had previously been essentially the private domain became more visible in the public. Second, in terms of agency we have increasingly become interested in those practices that are "ordinary," "lay" and able to be performed by everyone, and the way in which these articulate. The primary orientation of the analysis here is "ordinary" people's consumption and production of photographic images in everyday life and throughout the life course, but there are different ways in which people participate in these processes of consumption and production. In this context we find that a number of dimensions of the "everyday" are present. Taking production first, "everyday" photography is distinguishable from professional photography where it is a means of livelihood/work, and/or part of "art worlds," and will usually have involved some degree of training. "Everyday" photography is therefore one kind of amateur photography. But amateur is itself not necessarily "everyday" either, and may share components of the professional. Indeed some writers argue (Slater, 1991) amateur producers of images do have different levels of photographic skills from the "snapshotter" (a term Slater uses to describe

himself as an everyday photographer). In addition, some "amateurs" have very different reasons for engaging in photographic practice at all. There is a difference between the camera-club enthusiast, or the skilled amateur who develops their own photographs on the one hand, and the person who buys the throwaway camera on holiday so that they have a few photographic mementos of an occasion on the other. Equally, those working professionally in photographic or other visual media, may distinguish this practice from that which they engage in outside of work contexts. Again these practitioners in the everyday context may be differentiated by levels of skill.

In terms of consumption the concept of "everyday" photography reveals similar complexities. We might commonly think of photographs which can be seen in forms of domestic display and family albums, as forms of personal and even private archives, but which may also serve purposes beyond this domain to more public audiences. Certainly the archiving of family photographs, as Holland (1991, p. 1) points out is "an act of faith in the future" and looking back become "an act of recognition of the past"; thus there is the idea that these will have audiences beyond the present. A common element in the way people relate to their personal or inherited collections of photographs is that they are the temporary custodians of images for others in future time. Amateur and professional image production, in the sense outlined above, are also important aspects of "everyday" consumption. A wide variety of images are consumed, and there is a specific place, normatively defined, for formally constructed and professional productions in a variety of social contexts, such as wedding, school and portrait photographs.

Before leaving these issues of definition, and therefore the constitution of the boundaries of what this chapter will discuss, it is important to stress that individuals will at any particular time occupy a certain kind of relationship to production processes and to any image or set of images. Meanings of photographs will change, and the processes of memory, history making, narration and self-actualisation, are ongoing features of personal and social relations with photographs. The degree of proximity to production and consumption will vary, and will have consequences for the uses/purposes and sense that is made of these forms of representation. At one time one can be the subject of the photographer, at another the producer and director, just as one can be looking at photographs where the self features, and on other occasions those of people whom one does not recognise in any personal sense. The production of a photographic image, may be direct, as in the taking of the photograph by depressing the shutter, or it may be indirect, in that one is the subject or one of a number of subjects within it. There are also those occasions when one is directed to take a photograph so that the photographer can themselves become a subject within the image (a common occurrence in holiday photography for example).

There are also a range of interesting questions around who takes photographs, and therefore who will be absent from particular images, as well as who makes decisions about selection, storage and display. It is not uncommon to find there is a division of labour such that in a partner relationship, one decides what is taken, another takes the photograph, and one takes on selection and display decisions. The extent to which gender, class or age determine these relationships of production and consumption, are interesting questions also because they will be relevant also in the use of photography with research participants. Thus these forms of relationships, including those with others as well as the self, require investigation. Finally, we need to consider possible changes in productive relations and in the use of images as the technologies available to the "everyday" or "lay" photographer allow the images to be deleted, manipulated combined with other materials and variously stored. I will return to this issue later in the chapter.

CAMERAS: THE IMPACT OF CHANGING TECHNOLOGY IN EVERYDAY CONTEXTS

Sociologists and social historians with an interest in visual and textual discourses (e.g. Jordanova, 1987) have emphasised the importance of technological developments to the nature of, and forms of, discourse, and it is also important to issues of documentary survival. Two aspects of camera technology need to be emphasised here. First, the process involved in taking a photograph. The early history of photographic practice in knowledge production, which is also an underlying premise of much documentary photography, has privileged the camera with a form of objective observation, a "realism" that follows from depiction as a consequence of a mechanical rather than human process. While such a epistemological privileging of camera technology is now questioned, there are elements of such assumptions which I argue continue to feature in social understandings of, and personal orientations to, photographic imagery. A holiday photograph can provide some evidential support to the narrated story of the holiday, and attest to particular qualities and experiences, or we use the photograph to attest to the accuracy of our memory. At the same time, a rejection of the idea that camera images reflect certain "truths" has provided a starting point for an orientation in which any meaning and certainly alternative meanings are derivable from a photographic image. Indeed the possibility for multiple meanings has become a selling point for cameras, and provides for the possibility that any photographic image has the capacity for generating different stories. (An advertisement for Canon in 2002, for example, is of a photograph of a woman between two American

police officers, with the question Actress? Inmate? Recruit? and the caption Write your own Story.)

Second, ideas about what cameras produce, and how people themselves can do that production has been a continuing feature of the technological development of cameras for a mass market. The marketing of photography from the end of the nineteenth century was linked to the increasing consumption of other goods and services for the domestic sphere. In this respect, what might be called the "industrialisation of holidays," occurred alongside the increasing consumption of cameras and film. Before the 1880s as Slater (1991) points out, it was either a specialist craft skill or a committed and mainly bourgeois amateur who took photographs. Many commentators attribute the "Box-Brownie" with the change that allowed for "everyday" photographic practice, but Slater argues that more important than the camera were the advances in film technology and this was what Eastman himself concentrated on at Kodak. A film that could be prepared and processed allowing a number of exposures, all independently of the photographer, was what was needed. Roll film and a camera already loaded that was then sent back for processing, were available by 1890, and became the means of selling photography itself. The idea that all one needed to do was "point and press" has remained a cornerstone of developments in camera technology in the twentieth century: continuing with "instamatic" cameras, in making the loading of film simple and infallible, in the degree to which the SLR camera comes with automatic features, and videos that are small, light and with automatic features, while the rise of digital technologies dispenses with the need for film and allows instantaneous decisions to be made about deletion or preservation. It is Slater's (1991) contention, that cameras are simply a means of selling film and processing, and this is reflected in their greater proportion of sales value, reflected in the expansion of processing outlets on the high street, the number of mail-order processing possibilities, the special offers which provide free film with processing, and the reductions or offers on processing time. By 2004, however, there are signs that this is changing. In the 4th quarter of 2001 Kodak lost $206m (Digital Photography Review, 2002) and more recently reported substantial falls in the sale of film with the loss of many jobs (Guardian, 23/01/2004) a reflection of the impact of digital technologies, so that in the USA filmless cameras now outsell conventional models. It is also interesting that high street processing while incorporating the printing of digital images, have diversified into preservation, make-overs and specialist products incorporating personal images. Clearly technological changes do impact on "everyday" image production and use, but it is perhaps interesting that while the ability to manipulate the image might be one selling point, in marketing new kinds of cameras and related technology, advertisements will still draw on older conventions. One such advert for Hewlett Packard uses the caption "you still say cheese. That much is the same."

The impact of technology in the creation of a mass market for cameras, film and processing is not the only consideration here. Those features which make it possible for anyone to do photography, are important to our experience of it in our everyday lives. In particular as Slater (1991, p. 54) argues, it minimises any sense that one is either "doing photography" or that it has a conventional character.

> Most fundamentally, the simplicity and the reliability achieved by making the photographic process invisible, also makes the practice of taking pictures transparent. If photography requires no thought to carry it out, then it can be taken for granted, unconsciously inserted into everyday social situations.

Some of my interviewees were surprised that they could talk at length about their photographic practice, the images they produce and what they do with them. For many it had a "taken for granted" character. In beginning to articulate their own orientations to, and practices around, cameras and images it became evident that it also had a conventional character.

"EVERYDAY" PHOTOGRAPHY AS A SOCIALLY REGULATED PRACTICE

Any examination of "everyday" photographic practice will reveal that it occurs in some contexts and not others, and that only some topics, events and people are evident in the content of photographic images. As Bourdieu (1990) pointed out, while everything may be photographed, both theoretically and in terms of the technology available, only certain things are. This suggests that it is a socially regulated and highly conventional activity. In these terms, Bourdieu argues certain ontological choices are made about what "is worthy to be practised": what is photographed, what is stored, communicated, shown and admired. Underlying "everyday" photography are models, socially derived, of the "takeable" photograph. This social dimension of "everyday" photography also ensures that the meanings of the images are in some measure available to everyone, drawing on shared values and systems of thought as well as aesthetic criteria. Personal image making draws on wider public narratives.

Furthermore, as with other imagery considered as a form of representation, both "everyday" and "commercial" photographic images (such as those used in advertising for example) draw on underlying cultural codes that not only construct the meaning of, but provide for self identification with, the representation. There are shared genres also, and an interpretative trading between self and image content (see Goffman, 1979; Williamson, 1980). Over time some topics and genres have remained relatively constant while others have changed. There is often, for

example, little distinction over time between the formal arrangement in family portraits or wedding pictures, except that dress and sometimes settings are more historically specific. On the theme of domestic or family photography, it is evident that some topics are considered appropriate for the "snapshotter" while others require the more formal and professional image (at least alongside the former); weddings and graduations for example.

Conventionality then is associated with what may and may not be photographed, but also with defining the significance of particular events by the very fact that the photographic record is itself part of it. The association of both professionally produced images, and those produced by participants and/or family members, with key social rituals or significant transitions in the life course, are almost unimaginable without the presence of cameras and photographers. But what events or rituals are photographed remains restricted. For example, although photographs have often been part of funeral rituals, the idea of taking photographs of a funeral in the "everyday" context is uncommon (their sombre nature being important here). Indeed such occasions and the emotion of grief were evident in the field work as occasions when the camera should not be used. Photographs of Christmas or other significant indoor gatherings have been less common, due in part to the limits of flash technology in the past, but also because such events have been less important in terms of communicating key family values as a public display of group solidarity. I am not saying here that people do not take photographs at Christmas, there are no doubt endless pictures of baby's first Christmas on video and in albums but not of Grandad asleep in front of the TV. My argument is rather that there is no recognised conventionality for the Christmas photograph.

Bourdieu again offers some insights into the role of ceremony in "everyday" photography and draws attention to some changes over time in the French context. He argues that:

> photographs of major ceremonies are possible because – and only because – they capture behaviour that is socially approved and socially regulated, that is behaviour that is already solemised. Nothing *may* be photographed apart from that which *must* be photographed (1990, pp. 23–24 his emphasis).

In these terms Bourdieu sees ceremonies as something which are photographed because they are outside of daily routines and must be photographed because it realises an image that a group seeks to give of itself. So he would suggest that the importance of various kinds of ceremonies is reflected in whether or not they are photographed. For example, he points to the rarity of photographs at baptisms, which "are never the occasion of big ceremony" (p. 21) while wedding photographs are an important part of ritual exchange between two groups. Whilst such an argument about ceremony has plausibility for comparisons between baptisms and

weddings, it does not explain entirely such variability. Two other factors would seem to be important. Some ceremonies will assume greater significance for particular social groups only, the first communion being one (Bourdieu noting however, that these have only come into being since the 1930s) while weddings have a wider currency across diverse social groups and, it could be argued, ritually signal important continuities of family and social standing as well as ritual exchange. The second factor, to which the example of funerals belongs, is that despite the ceremony's importance as a mark of transition, of family, group or community unity, it is generally a solemn and sombre ritual, and one where the "need" for photographs in Bourdieu's terms, is not present.

Cultural variability in the significance of transitions and the meaning of rituals that relate to them, will give rise to different "needs" for photographs. I speculate here about the importance of the high school year book in the USA as marking a significant transition where, unlike here, nearly all students leave a local public high school together as a cohort, and this signifies a particular relation to their shared pasts and futures in terms of community, work and higher education. In a fairly recent exhibition at the Barbican in London "Africa By Africa" we have a different example. Here we have a long tradition of professional portrait photography for private consumption, and almost any excuse, including buying a new dress, or meeting up with a friend can be an occasion for a photograph, according to the curator of the show (Newnham, *Guardian*, 22/1/1999). Repeated motifs occur over time, but also backdrops will reflect sitters' aspirations as well as confirming existing bonds. It might be argued that for some groups such as these the taking of a portrait is itself a kind of ceremony.

In the Malian context, Elder (1997) has demonstrated distinct changes in the mode of photographic practice over time, for example from studio photography to street photography necessitated by the ID photograph, and then the more recent mobile photographer, and these have significance for the relation of photographic imagery to everyday life. Elder's study is a valuable referent because it is one of the few recent empirical sociological and historical studies of the role of photography in a society. It also allows us to examine the extent to which the kinds of conventionality and social regulation identified above can be found across different societies and cultures and where the differences lie. Despite some distinct form of practice in the Malian context, in particular its professional nature, considerable commonality can also be found in the kinds of and content of images, and conventions about what "makes a good photograph." It is the work of the mobile photographers since the 1980s, which she argues comes closest to the "snapshot" of Western societies. She distinguishes two major occasions which call for the work of the mobile photographer: first, everyday activities the most common of which are "souvenir" photographs taken of family members and friends or other

groups in both domestic and public settings. The second are festive occasions such as Ramadan, weddings, school graduation, Independence day and so on. In both categories there is a blurring of the private and public in that in the first, the uses to which the images are put, such as ID photographs, and greeting cards, is conditioned by social demands including those of public agencies, and in the second there is a mixture of family or domestic occasions and those that extend to the wider culture. A further division of public and private can also be seen in the distinction Elder's practitioners made about whether they were "invited" or were just there, although the public or private nature of some events, such as weddings was sometimes contested. Both these examples of "everyday" photography in African contexts, draw attention to the changing meaning of snapshot photography, the role of professional image-making and the positioning of self in relation to others. Here we have the continued importance of the family, but alongside friends, an indication of new meanings of public spaces, aspirations and achievements, indications that people can express their own individuality through the settings and backdrops against which they choose to be photographed. Work of African portrait photographers (Laumiere, M., 2001) and the archive of the Brixton "high street" photographic studio run by Harry Jacobs from the 1950s until 1999 (The Photographers' Gallery, 2002) confirm the continuance of traditions of commercial portrait photography for personal use.

Nearly all writers on forms of "everyday" photography have noted that in our "western" societies it is, as Susan Sontag (1979, p. 9) put it, about the family and tourism. We might ask why is it that everyday photography is mainly about these topics? We should note also that these categories include events which are of significance in family contexts, significant others (including pets), and not only tourism but holidays and leisure (the seaside, the garden, the trip to the stately home) and other forms of consumption. Again, Bourdieu (1990) suggests that the practice of domestic photography developed as a consequence of the differentiation of the public and private spheres, and Slater (1991) links the rise of the mass market in cameras, film and processing to domestic consumption. Equally, it would seem important to consider photographs as attesting to important social relations, as symbolic realisations and testimony to people's encounters with the "exotic," the other, those things that are in some sense not ordinary. In this sense, Bourdieu talks about holiday photographs as transforming "places and moments into monuments to leisure, certifying one has leisure and the leisure to photograph it" (p. 36).

Thus an essential characteristic of "everyday" photography is that in the socially regulatory framework which defines what should be photographed, little is concerned with the everyday (Spence & Holland, 1991). On holiday we may indeed photograph what is for others aspects of their everyday existence (often to their amusement – because they would not think of taking these pictures for

themselves), but rarely do aspects of our own everyday lives become a focus for the camera. An interesting example of this taken-for-granted aspect of photographs, is provided by Jo Stanley's (1991) account of a community photographic project on women's work. Two quotes at the beginning of the paper illustrate the point: "Pictures of me? at work? Well I don't think so dear"; and "Well I have got plenty of me with the girls from work, but when we go out, but nothing in the factory, you know. Well you wouldn't, why bother?" (p. 60). It reminded me of how often in the past women in my family have removed their aprons for a family picture.

A final aspect of the conventionality in "everyday" photographic practice is display, and the role of photographs as a form of gift exchange, in which elements of display are also embedded. Here both "amateur" and "professional" images are evident. It might be argued that the kinds of photographs which are displayed is even further limited by convention. Group photographs, family photographs and children predominate. Some photographs will be metaphorically locked away, while others have a more public place in which they can be continually contemplated. One aspect of this which emerges strongly in the fieldwork, is the extent to which display is a collective activity, forming relationships (as in the case of new partners or friendships), as shared experiences, and enabling "stories" to be told to others whose experience it was not.

IDENTITY, MEMORY AND HISTORY: FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS, ALBUMS AND ARCHIVES

Holland (1991, p. 1) argues that family albums reveal "many possible pasts." Memory is interwoven with private fantasy and public history as viewers "make their own tracks" through an album. On each and every occasion it is viewed, the past itself will be reconstructed, and thus there are many pasts contained within it. This is also a consequence of the shifting position of the self and as a viewer new understandings can arise in the interrogation (not necessarily in an active way) of any image or image(s). It is important to emphasise that while the meaning of personal imagery such as that in family albums owes much to a positioning of the self in relation to memories of the past and in the present, such meanings will also be shaped by social meanings and by the public conventions that are part of their production. In this respect, the family album is noticeable for its particular constructions of "what a family is" and for the silences and absences of both people and topics as many analysts of family albums have pointed out (Hirsch, 1981; Spence, 1980, 1986; Williamson, 1984). Slater (1995, p. 129) argues that we can see family albums as an "existential relation between photographs and memory which folds individual and collective identities into familial narrative

time." Whatever, the physical form the "family album" takes, he argues that family identity is constructed and constituted through the selection processes that gives these images their iconic significance as bearers of the past. Commentators, such as Musello (1979) have suggested that family photography is primarily for private use, and that the uses of these images are varied, including a presentation of self and identity and a reinforcement of particular relationships, although of course these may be idealisations. He also stresses that the meanings these images have cannot be understood simply through the images alone, because they are carefully selected and socially patterned representations. Importantly, despite the idea that the family album produces the family, and produces particular forms of it, there is still room for manoeuvre within it as Kuhn (1991, p. 22) has argued. "These traces of our former lives are pressed into a never-ending process of making, remaking, making sense of, ourselves-now," so that there can be no "last word" about a photograph. Indeed such remaking can be seen as a kind of resistance, an alternative narrative to the conventional reading of the representational image (Kuhn, 1995).

There is a strong connection between the idea of memory and the photographic image, in that both function to anchor our present selves with the past (Barthes, 1981; Lurie, 1998). Both image and memory are partial renderings, selective stock-takers or referents, and both will require some kind of activity, usually narration, to make them meaningful, involving associations beyond what is captured and remembered, what is in the representation. Researchers have found this to be the case when they have used people's personal images in forms of biographical and narrative inquiry (Winckler, 2002). What the person recounts or narrates can lie outside of the image and to the audience is often unrelated to what is in the image.

One reason why material forms of visuality such as photographs have such a strong connection with memory, as a synthesising of experience and arriving at understanding, is because recall and remembering requires the utilisation of visual as well as other sensory cues as core elements of the imagination. This involves creating mental pictures of what happened, who was present and so on. Furthermore, as with photography, recent interest in memory has emphasised that it too has a cultural form, including codes and conventions, and the retrieval of memories is a culturally constructed activity while at the same time appearing to be transparent and "natural." This is to recognise that memory is not just about recall or a calling up of the past, it requires agency. Hirsch (1997) distinguishes post memory from memory by its "generational distance" and from history per se by its connection with the personal. Memory is more directly connected with the past, even though mediated, she argues, while post-memory cannot function through recall because the experiences occurred or preceded the person's birth. Post-memory is used to refer to those narratives that have arisen in the context of traumatic collective events but which can neither be understood nor recreated as

first – hand experiences. (There is clearly a question here as to the extent first-hand experience is necessary to understanding.) Children of Holocaust survivors, or other such collective traumatic events would typify this. In contexts of post memory then, photographs mediate familial memory in the face of loss and carry an additional emotional weight which lies not just in the horrors of looking, but in what the viewer needs to bring to the images in order to complete "the story." Photographs can be considered as part of the "debris" that can be collected and put together for a variety of stories – some of which compete. It is equally the case that not all instances of "generational distance" in Hirsch's sense involve trauma, as family images now also include those for whom there can be no memory as generations of distance separate the person, the occasion and the viewer.

Family albums and displays of formal and professional photographs, illustrate well the difficulties of maintaining a clear distinction between private and public production and consumption. Any visit to a shopping centre will witness many "lined up" for the photograph of baby or children, and the portrait photographer is alive and well on the high street. Further, witness the growth of the school portrait, no longer the class of 3a but individual children, whose very growing up can be attested to by the annually changing image. In a recent journalistic piece on family portraiture (Lane, 1999) the author makes an interesting distinction between "normal family photographs," that is those taken on an occasion, and professional portraits, which she argues "are the occasion" – rather like the ceremony referred to above. Families featured in the article; testified to the attention they gave to what to wear for the occasion, its colour schemes, the backdrop and location. Even the seemingly informal portraits reveal a formal approach to its production, a contrived naturalness: one family in a field "decided to all wear black and white," noting that "my sons like Adidas stuff, but it wouldn't have looked right to have that writing in the photograph." Again, these families reveal the extent to which ideas of family solidarity, capturing and celebrating the development of children, and that such photographs are for posterity, are widely accepted aspects of these productions.

One final aspect of family photography also points to a seeming contradiction to both the sentimentality that surrounds it and the importance attributed to its role in identity construction and social solidarity. Slater (1995) cites market research conducted in 1982 that found that 39% rated family albums as their most treasured possession, yet 60% only looked at these photographs once a year. This, Slater suggests, indicates that taking pictures and having pictures is more important than looking at them, although other forms of display also need to be considered. But the value of photographs to people continues to be asserted. Indeed in my field work an Australian woman told me that when the bush fires come you save your family first your pets second and your photograph albums third. "You lose your memories" she said, and this sense that photographic collections in whatever form are a way

of preserving memories is demonstrated in people's regret that there was no photographic record, and their difficulty in disposing of (or rationalising) their images.

Taking these data and arguments it seems to me it may be quite wrong to think that photographs are inert or function as accumulations of "scraps" as Kracauer (1993) has suggested. Rather as Edwards (2001) has argued, photographs can be seen as performance, in that in the context of social biography, "things" are active not passive in the making of meaning. She argues this theatricality happens in two ways: in the intensity of its presentational form (as a framed fragment of reality, experience etc.) and in its particular signifying properties. Thus, "Photographs have a performativity, an affective tone, a relationship with the viewer, a phenomenology, not of content as such, but as active social objects" (p. 18). Edwards too, stresses the link between orality and a historical relationship with the photograph, as "people talk about photographs, with photographs and to photographs" (p. 21), and to others in photographic contexts. In this way too relationships can be formed with family albums whose compilers and subjects are unknown to the reader/viewer (Langford, 2001).

NEW CONVENTIONS OF "EVERYDAY" PHOTOGRAPHY?

In the section on camera technology, I suggested that new technologies might impact on the production and consumption of "everyday" images. Digital photography opens up the possibility for the manipulation of images which has in the past been restricted to the dark room. Not only will images now have a more open-ended quality, but once stored on discs and available for use on computers, there is potential to combine them with other materials including sound (Lister, 1995). This manipulation and storage in relation to widespread home computer consumption poses interesting questions especially as there seems to be some ambivalence among both practitioners and non-practitioners about what it offers. Some commentators have suggested that the photograph is "dead" (Mirzoeff, 1999) but this is to neglect the many ways in which the presence of a photograph as a material entity is crucial to how people engage with them. It is this that leads a number of people to reject the thought of "going digital." We thus might find that digital technologies occasion a similar response to that which has been found in people's evaluation of video. Chalfen (2001) interviewed American teenagers about video and many of them rejected it as a basis for sharing and collective "story-telling"; as "stopping you from thinking" and as something that could not be looked at "again and again" Videos were often seen as "boring," and the quality and even aesthetics of video production was the subject of derision. Some of my

respondents, however, did like the addition of sound to the visual images. What we might find is that a differentiated practice arises; where digital photography and its use are distinguished from video and that of still imagery.

Related to this possibility, Slater (1995) has raised a number of interesting points in relation to what digital technologies may provide. He suggests that there are two significant developments in relation to domestic images in contemporary everyday life. The first is that those images that have a place in everyday life are not those bound up with memory or commemoration, but with forms of practice that are happening now. That is they are a form of "communication rather than a reflective representation." In this sense the ability to send, exchange images of the immediate, can be important to maintaining forms of solidarity and group identity at a distance (Harrison, 2002c). Second, he argues, "self-*presentation* rather than self-*representation* should play the largest role in identity formation" (pp. 139–140 emphasis in original). A more appropriate metaphor in this context, he suggests is the "pin board." Private images are combined with public ones, and perhaps other ephemera, in a shifting collage produced within the present. In this way the role of domestic photography in mediating between the private and public spheres is changing because of its location within patterns of consumption and leisure which themselves have become increasingly privatised. Thus, there are new contexts of "home entertainment," a technological possibility for an expanded range of images, including an increasing flow of images from outside the private sphere, even while photography remains an activity of, and testimony to, family leisure. However, he suggests:

> What is important in the development of domestic photography is not so much the digitalisation of photographic processes; but rather the potential flows and convergence of images in the home as they are structured by digital domestic commodities.

We may need to consider here the changing nature of households and relations between kin that are occurring in any case, and some of my interviewees used photographs as part of information flows to maintain kin networks across diasporas.

However, it may be early days yet for domestic images to have fully entered into the possibilities offered by multi-media data streams, and questions about what kinds of images will circulate and be retained are open, although it seems that some forms of imagery, such as the family portrait remain somewhat immune to these new social forces. In addition despite the potential that can be realised through digital images and visual communication flows that can account for new mobilities across borders and boundaries, the materiality of the photograph may still be essential to many of the roles people in everyday life see it as performing. As a Kodak spokesperson commented recently "quite frankly people do not want films or digital cameras they just want pictures" (BBC News, 27/9/2002).

CONCLUSION

The first part of the title of this chapter "snap happy" was purposely chosen to indicate one way in which "everyday" photographic production and consumption is conventional and socially regulated. In particular, "everyday" photography in both amateur and professional image making, shows people, their families and significant others, and their leisure pursuits as happy, healthy, together or united in untroubled worlds. These are idealised and often contrived images that realise significant moments in the present, privately initiated for displaying a public identity, functioning also to preserve aspects of the past for the future. As numerous authors have noted (e.g. Chalfen, 1987; Cronin, 1998; Seabrook, 1991) photographic images act as an *aide memoir*, as a "trigger" to memory. They become the material repositories that allow people to engage in forms of "memory work" that is both individual and collective whether or not the past is their own.

Photography is considered to be a practice accessible to everyone, such a common and familiar cultural practice that it can be used in any one of a number of contexts as a means of articulating a critical consciousness about self and others (see Cohen, 1989). What is worthy of being photographed, displayed or stored, reveals ontological choices that confirm values, social relationships and identities. In this chapter, I have stressed that photography is a normatively regulated and thereby conventional form of social practice. Cameras and images function within particular social contexts and moments, which also define their significance. Leisure, celebration, ceremony and ritual provide moments which require group solidarity, as well as elements of social differentiation, to be seen and preserved. Moments can be relived and remade as people attend to images from the past in the present. These aspects of "everyday" photography form an important element of any sociological analysis of visual culture in the post-modern world.

NOTE

1. These figures were provided by the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television, Bradford, U.K.

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RECORDING THE "HABITUS"

Tim Dant

INTRODUCTION

The arrival of cheap video equipment would seem to have opened up a whole range of methodological opportunities for the social scientist, especially the sociologist. The poor quality, expense and time-consuming clumsiness of film has over the last ten years been replaced with a flexible and easy to use technology, cheaply available in the high street that enables the researcher to record social action "au naturel." As a social researcher who has been seduced by this opportunity I would like to comment on the process from the experience of a recent project. Without the breadth of experience to offer anything like a systematic methodology for using video in the social sciences, what I hope to do in this piece is to raise methodological issues that affect every research method but which take on a different quality with visual data. It is remarkable how little film and video data feature within the social sciences. Because of the capability of capturing the visible and hearable actions and interactions of people going about their ordinary life, it would seem to provide a rich source of data for those social scientists interested in studying local social situations. The flow and pattern of life as it is lived is recorded and retained in the moving picture with sound, to become available for close study and multiple replays. The action can be frozen, slowed down and instances separated in time and place easily compared.

The possibility of being able to see video data of Goffman's asylums or Whyte's street corner would seem to offer a considerable advance on the relatively crude process of the ethnographer's note taking. Audio tape recordings retain the real time of conversations and have proved to reveal nuances of interaction through the techniques of linguistics, conversation analysis and discourse analysis (e.g.

Seeing is Believing? Approaches to Visual Research
Studies in Qualitative Methodology, Volume 7, 41–60

ISSN: 1042-3192/doi:10.1016/S1042-3192(04)07004-1

Atkinson, 1984; Boden & Zimmerman, 1991; Levinson, 1983; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Video recordings add visual data which enables the analysis of non-verbal communication and the possibility of analysing interaction which is meaningful but only in the material context of the setting. Instead of relying on the reported observations of "key informants," the video recorder can be the key informant that, apparently, does not operate a selective memory or filter data according to schemes of relevance tied to the informant's interest in the situation. Ethnographers learn to attend to the unintended, the accidental and coincidental, to record what seems obvious and ordinary as well as the noticeable and remarkable. The perspective of "ethnographic disinterest" would seem to be supremely invested in the video camera that does not care what it records.

Of course this potential for a full record of what happens is not all it seems. As casual watchers of the burgeoning of so-called "reality TV" over the turn of the millennium we have become suspicious of the presentation of "ordinary lives." The early examples of "fly on the wall" documentaries from the 1960s, especially the horrible fascination of the superlative black and white films of Fred Wiseman, seemed to show things as they really were. As watchers we were amazed that ordinary people being themselves (as opposed to actors "taking a part") would, in front of a camera, behave in ways that revealed their propensity for intolerance, insensitivity, prejudice and even violence. Indeed, they convinced us that what we were seeing must be unrehearsed and unprepared and therefore "true," because no one would act like that if they thought about it. But then, as experienced watchers of film and TV, we have come to realise that the extremes of behaviour that attract our interest have been selected by cameramen, editors, directors and producers. They know what will stir our emotions enough to stop us switching over and they point it out to us with framing devices, titles, voiceovers and judicious editing.

HABITUS

I am interested in how we interact with our material world in ways that are characteristic of contemporary culture (Dant, 1999; Dant, 2004) and managed to persuade the ESRC to fund a video based research project to study the material interaction of technicians working on cars in service and repair garages.[1] It is their working situation that is the habitus of my title. The term is most usually associated with Pierre Bourdieu who writes of the habitus as "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures . . . which generate and organize practices" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 53).[2] Such "dispositions" are not dependent on conscious aims or complete mastery of how to achieve them but instead reflect

the regularity of the social setting that is produced within the setting but is not reducible to a system of rules. In a 1935 lecture on the "Techniques of the body" Marcel Mauss used the term "habitus" in a rather simpler way to refer to ordinary skills and habits including "the techniques and work of collective and individual practical reason" (1973, p. 73). Both he and Bourdieu use the term to distinguish social, shared and collective ways of acting from the characteristics and talents of individual people. Mauss made it clear he was not talking about customs (local dances or rituals for example) that may distinguish a particular culture but was referring to those acquired abilities that appear as "techniques of the body" and are oriented to the practical aspects of everyday life. The example he gave was the different techniques that French and English soldiers used during the first World War for digging – because the English troops did not know how to use French spades, when a division from one country replaced a division from the other, 8,000 spades had to be replaced. Within each culture the techniques for using a certain sort of spade had been learnt from within the habitus as part of what it was to dig. Within the each army, soldiers constituted a habitus that had a shared set of habits for doing ordinary things like digging. No doubt each army could, given time, have learnt how to use each other's spades but each group would have resisted, arguing that, given the right spades, their way was perfectly good.

What I hope to show is that recording the ordinary actions of technicians in garages can enable analysis of the way actions unfold from the habitus as ordinary and routine within that setting. How technicians use tools, tackle practical problems and follow a sequence of tasks is only demonstrated in the work. Much of their skill is learnt through practical experience, through trial and error and through working alongside others and learning from what they say and do. They do undertake some formal instruction and do use some abstract knowledge but their work is reliant on what we might call "embodied knowledge" in that it is contained within the relatively unconscious, ordinary "ways of doing things" that constitute the shared habitus.

HABITUS OF THE GARAGE

Car maintenance and repair is a major industry in industrialised countries that requires a different type of habitus to that of the original production of cars.[3] Marx clearly described the development of machine tools in the cotton industry, in particular what he called "self-acting" machines (1976, p. 503), that not only displaced the human physical power but also the skill, dexterity and organisation of the work characteristic of hand-tool manufacture. During the twentieth century, dedicated machine tools, the production line and robots in the car industry have, in a

similar way, either replaced human skilled interaction with objects or subordinated human workers to the operations of machines. But the repair and maintenance of the private car continues to require regular hands-on, skilled work that has become a ubiquitous local industry.

In this research project the aim was to find out how technicians interacted with the material objects of their tools and the cars they worked on. The reason why it is interesting is precisely because it is an easily researchable type of interaction between human beings and objects that demonstrates the complex situations, the variety of objects and the unanticipated mechanical contingencies that make the work beyond the capacity of a machine. In the modern garage there are a range of power tools (such as the hydraulic car lifts and the air driven power tools) and some electronic diagnostic tools but the work is predominantly undertaken by human beings applying embodied skill and using hand tools. The technicians control the work, including the pace at which a job proceeds, and draw tools into their interaction with the objects of the car rather than have their work determined by an automated machine. In a similar vein Julien Orr has described how the repair and maintenance of photocopiers is work on machines rather than work determined by machines (1996). Using ethnographic techniques of observation he describes the social organisation of the work of cleaning, replacing and adjusting of parts but does not use visual data to analyse the interaction between technicians and photocopiers.

In looking at material interaction we were asking how the technicians use their culturally and socially acquired, embodied skills to transform material things such as cars and their components. One of the owners of the garages we studied said that cars were "not designed to be repaired" by which he meant that design is primarily oriented to manufacture and the effective functioning of the finished car. The result is that the engine compartments of modern cars are extremely full with little room to see, get at or work on the components. Nonetheless, the car is made up of a series of components that are fitted together, usually by bolts, nuts and screws that are, in principal, repairable by removing and replacing defective parts. It is in identifying the precise component that is defective, negotiating its removal and fitting the replacement part, that human embodied skill is required to effect a repair. The technician is always engaged with material objects that have been designed and made by someone else and are intended to work in specific ways. Rather than following the instrumental logic of machine production, the technicians must follow what Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. 106) calls the "intentional threads" that link them to the objects they are working with. These threads of intentionally are sustained by embodied knowledge about how things work (how they fit together, what tools are appropriate and how to use them) and are broadly shared by those who share the same habitus or working environment – here, a garage.

To illustrate this process and to show what video enables the researcher to do, I will look at a junior technician replacing the windscreen wiper assembly on a car. What we can see are the skills that the technician has to employ to firstly make the replacement part fit and secondly to make it work as was intended. He uses skills that are distinctly human but also distinctly characteristic of the habitus of the garage. There are instances of interaction with other technicians who help and advise and who share common understandings of the use of tools and the work of technicians. Before turning to the example, let me make some general points about taking a video camera into this sort of setting.

VIDEO IN THE SETTING

The ESRC was initially doubtful that garage owners would allow us to video their work for fear that the material might be used to expose them as "garages from hell"; in fact, garage owners expressed no such fear because they felt they had nothing to hide. We approached a number of garages in two different areas (rural and urban) and some garage owners did refuse for very practical reasons: they did not have enough space for a researcher and camera; they did not want their busy work interrupted; technicians did not want to be watched as they worked. Nonetheless, getting people to agree to participate in the research was surprisingly easy and most garage owners and their staff (some individual technicians did ask not to be filmed) were most helpful and willing. Since the garages were in effect self-selecting we do not know what we did not see; presumably any garage that was engaged in dodgy practices would simply have put us off with a practical reason. Some of the techniques we saw and videoed did not comply with current health and safety legislation but we saw no examples of customers being "ripped-off" by careless or unnecessary work. The ease of getting consent to the research meant that we had to be very conscious of the ethical implications of what we were doing, in particular not exposing garages and individual technicians to critical comment. We promised to avoid identifying individuals or garages and so only publish papers using still images in which identifying material (names or number plates) is pixelated. Publishing video material on the internet or on CD-Rom is a possibility but we could not control how the material would be used; the video data could be taken out of context and used without our knowledge or control in ways our subjects did not consent to.

We promised not to interfere with the normal working of the technicians by constantly stopping them and asking what they were doing or why. Some technicians enjoyed having someone take an interest in what they were doing and were very happy to talk as they worked. Others simply carried on as normal,

ignoring the camera and the cameraman. We cannot be sure what was "normal" work; were those who were happy to work in front of the camera "playing up," were those who ignored it "on their best behaviour?" For the researcher looking at the recorded material it often appears as if their view is as a "fly on the wall" but there are instances in the corpus of data of a technician's nervous glance at the camera when things were going wrong and occasionally putting their body between the camera and the work to hide it from view. Clearly the camera did not "disappear" for the technicians even when they had become used to it and there are some instances of technicians turning to the camera to say things like "there you are, that's the sort of thing that happens" and jokes between technicians about impending stardom now they are on video. Nonetheless, for the great majority of the time, the technicians simply ignored the camera and seemed neither embarrassed by it or to perform for it in the way that people so often do when a video camera is used in a family at home or on holiday.

Maintaining access to the field situations was dependent on the skills of the researcher. David Bowles was the research associate who undertook the fieldwork and was behind the camera negotiating what to film and how – without getting in the way.[4] Other researchers had suggested that a camera running on a tripod without someone looking into it would more easily become part of the furniture and so be ignored by the technicians. Initially we had planned to set up the video camera on the tripod at some distance from the work but David rapidly realised that this meant we would miss most of the action; even though cars are large objects many of the bits are small and the very inaccessibility of components quickly emerged as an issue in the work. David developed his skills of holding the camera to follow the action and used the eyepiece instead of the LCD screen to save battery life. This produced the potentially most intrusive form of videoing with the camera in front of the head of the researcher, obscuring his facial features but accentuating the one, unblinking, enlarged, mechanical eye. Getting to know the people being filmed and building a rapport with them was very important if this was going to work.

The camera operator needs to move the camera slowly; a few minutes playing with one shows you that it doesn't work like a human eye and rapid "panning" and "zooming" is vertiginous to watch and so blurred as to be useless. Moving the camera slowly also requires that the camera operator moves slowly and together with their restricted vision through the lens, this makes him or her rather clumsy. The foldout screen on the camera did enable certain types of shot such as with the camera held low-down pointing up under a car or high-up pointing down into the car. Digital cameras can be set to self-focus and operate well with very little light which meant that we did not need any extra lighting, even to film in the dark recesses of car engines. Background light, from an open door or a large window

did sometimes interfere with the camera's response, plunging the action in the foreground into impenetrable darkness. Once captured, digital images were easy to manipulate on a lap-top computer to review recordings in detail, edit sections together as digital files and extract still images.

We did not plan to interview the technicians but we were able to "overhear" snatches of naturally occurring conversation and responses to David's occasional questions. Some conversations were recorded by letting the camera run while pointing at the floor; this allowed a friendly face-to-face interaction without the intrusion of the camera lens. These snatches of talk were picked up quite well by the camera's built-in microphone but because of the high ambient noise in garages (engines, alarms, telephone bells, shouts, compressed air tools, constant radio) they are often very difficult to hear on the tape. The technicians had become very used to talking above the noise but the microphone on the camera automatically adjusts the sound recording level to the loudest sound, often putting close-by but relatively quiet speech into the background. Using a separate microphone, ideally stereo, would have improved our audio data but would have restricted the work of the researcher in the field.

Using a video camera interferes with the normal techniques of the ethnographer of either simply observing from a distance or getting involved in the action as a "participant observer." Looking after the camera (changing batteries, tapes, setting it up, putting it away) takes up some of the researcher's observation time in the setting and separates him or her from others. There were occasions when David literally "leant a hand" but in general since he was neither qualified nor insured, the camera provided an excuse for "simply looking." To the technicians working with tools, the camera was a tool of David's trade. The presence of the camera attracts interest – other technicians and customers were curious – and provides an identifying label distinguishing the researcher from, say, a trainee. It also makes the usual technique of writing notes in the setting impossible; David wrote "fieldnotes" on his impressions and general observations at the end of the day.

REPLACING THE WIPERS

This task, which lasts for over an hour and a quarter, illustrates how practical reasoning and embodied skills are shared and used to achieve a repair. The customer had complained that the wipers "dragged" as they crossed the windscreen of his car so a replacement drive unit was ordered. Much repair work involves replacing parts and fitting often simply reverses removal of the old part. However, things are not always straightforward and in this example two problems had to be solved; firstly, the part is not identical with the one taken off, secondly the part needs

to be adjusted before it will work even as effectively as the one taken off. The wiper drive unit comes as an "assembly" including the electric motor and a system of articulated levers and cams that link it to the two separate wiper axles and translate the motor's drive from going round in one direction to going backwards and forwards through a fixed quadrant.[5] The references to the data specify the tape number in this corpus of data (Tape 66) and indicate the time at which something can be seen or heard on the tape (e.g. 13:03 is thirteen minutes and three seconds after the tape started).

Because the wiring on the replacement assembly is not identical with the old assembly, before installing it Will had to extend the five wires carrying power and switching control to reach the sockets in the car. For each insert, four ends have to be stripped, two connectors each have to be crimped twice and two plastic sleeves shrunk on. Will works smoothly picking up the tools (snips, crimps, strippers and a cigarette lighter to shrink the sleeves) and parts (lengths of wire, terminals) in a sequence of cutting, stripping, joining, crimping and sealing each end of each extension. The job is repetitive but would have been difficult to specify precisely in advance or write down in a manual or set of instructions. It is based on what he has learnt of how to use these tools and the spare parts and his familiarity with how this type of job is done in this setting; he has identified the place to work, drawn together the items necessary for the work and proceeds steadily through the repeated sequence for each of the five wires. Will's own skill may well have been supplemented by discussion with a colleague about the task; he and his colleagues share the tools, parts and techniques that constitute the habitus of this workshop (Figs 1 and 2).

Will had invited David, the researcher, to see what he was doing and after initially explaining the task, they stand side by side at the bench, chatting. While they talk the video records roughly what David would have seen if he had simply come to chat to Will. The hands and eyes of both men are taken up with their tools but they are free to think and talk of other things.

After the unexpected modification of the wiring, Will puts the assembly in place, plugs the extended wires into the sockets on the car, and fits the nuts onto the bolts on which the assembly is mounted. Before the wiper arms and blades are refitted one of Will's senior colleagues, Mike, tests it by working the switch while they both watch the movement of the axles and levers in the assembly. The motor runs and the wiper axles turn but something is not right. Mike concludes that "the switch is a little bit dodgy" but they are also wondering if the original problem of dragging wipers might still be there, caused by something else (66–30:22). After testing and looking for a period of minutes, Mike suggests that Will fits the wiper arms "and see how fast it is with the wipers on" (66–32:56). At the moment that Will closes the cap over the nut on the second wiper arm, Mike reappears and as he reaches in

Fig. 1. Shrink-to-Fit Terminal (66–13:03).

to test the wipers, Will stands back with his spanner behind his back. The wipers rise from their at-rest position, but as they sweep back down the screen they dip below it and point into the trough where the assembly is. Mike says "Whoops" (Fig. 3: 66–35:36) and Will winces and reaches forward with his left hand to grab the wiper before it moves any further.

Fig. 2. Crimping (66–14:58).

Fig. 3. "Whoops" (66–35:36).

In fact the driver's side blade goes past the axle for the passenger side blade and Will has to lift it against its spring mounting away from the windscreen to free it. Even though the wipers are working and not "dragging," they are dipping below the line of the windscreen. Mike and Will think it is to do with the way the wipers have been mounted on the axles – with the arms and blades removed, Mike again tests the assembly while Will looks on (66–36:63). After nearly a minute, Mike remounts the driver's side wiper on its splines so that the "park" position is different, not quite at the bottom of the screen.

In contrast to when he was recording Will's work at the bench, the researcher, David, is a couple of yards from the action and interaction which is between Will and Mike. No one talks to David and his camera takes in not just hands and things but includes heads and eyes. Glances between Will and Mike and between each of them and the wipers are caught on video.

When they try them again, Mike holds the blade so that he can keep it from getting into the wrong position and he gets Will to work the switch. After a couple of movements of the wiper, they take it off, adjust its mounting on the splines and try again – even when the "park" position is half-way up the windscreen the wiper still dips to the bottom of the screen on its return swipe (Fig. 4: 66–38:01).

There are more tests, more moving of the wiper on the splines and then a lull during which Will picks up the old assembly from the floor to see more closely how it works. First he picks it up and looks at it, then he glances from it across to the new unit that is fitted in the car; he is holding the old assembly against his body in an orientation in space such that the new assembly could be a sideways

Fig. 4. Holding onto the Wiper (66–38:01).

transposition of the old, or vice versa (Fig. 5: 66–39:26). Even though Mike and Will are no longer interacting, here Will does not discuss with David what he is thinking and doing as he did earlier at the bench.

They still cannot see what is wrong . . . Mike switches on and off the new assembly a few times and eventually puts the driver's side wiper back on once more, setting it with the at-rest position 45 degrees off the level – when switched off it would be directly in the driver's line of vision! But when he tries it, the

Fig. 5. Comparing with the Old Assembly (66–39:26).

Fig. 6. Mike's Smile (66–40:12).

wiper sweeps the driver's side of the windscreen properly and returns to the 45-degree position. He looks up at Will and a smile breaks out on his face (Fig. 6: 66–40:12) – Will says something like "How's it gone and done that!" (6–40:15).

It's at this stage that Dan is called over to watch; Mike explains to him what has been happening and offers to demonstrate but before he can, Dan seems to have grasped what's wrong:

41:27	D:	When you work it full, that goes down too far does it?'
	W:	It goes right down
	D:	Your motor's all in the wrong place, and the regulator
	M:	Yea:::h (2.2) I can't see how though because it can only go in that way.
		[to Will] Is that how it come out?
	W:	Yeah, well that, well look [fetches old assembly from floor] (4.7)
		[shows the old assembly to Mick and Dan across the car]
	D:	Yeah, but its where you actually bolt the (0.3)
	M:	motor
	D:	motor on to

The transcription ends as a very loud compressor kicks-in obliterating the sound track, although the conversation continues with the technicians leaning over the bonnet of the car to talk. There is no sign of the strain of having to be heard; this

is normal. Then Mike is called away and the camera moves in closer and we can hear Dan explaining to Will how to adjust the regulator.

42:29 D: Put it in situ like it is now
W: Yeah
D: Push it off (.) right (0.8) pull the arm (0.2) right over (0.7) so this comes right down (0.2) put it back up again (0.3) and then try it
W: (0.3) OK

At this point David is almost close enough to be part of the interaction but he is in effect ignored. Neither Dan nor Will glance at or talk to him – but then neither do they react to the camera. Getting two or more people interacting in shot usually puts the researcher at too great a distance to be part of the interaction.

Dan's explanation is accompanied by hand gestures that locate the indexical components of his speech (this, it); parts are touched as they are referred to and directions (over, down, up) are reflected in hand movements.[6] Will gets to work to make sense of what Dan has said by getting a small Y spanner and undoing the link between the motor and the drive on the assembly, as it is mounted in the car. As he works, the camera is able to get close up shots of his hands and David moves from one side of the car to the other to be opposite as he works, often able to catch Will's expression in line with his hands and the spanner. While Will works, Dan picks up and looks at the old assembly, moving the levers to see how the link between the motor and the drive is adjusted (Fig. 7: 66–43:52).

Fig. 7. The Regulator on the Old Assembly (66–43:52).

Fig. 8. Touching the Wiper (66–51:06).

When Dan and Mike put the wiper back on to see if it works, Will says "Is that alright or what?" but Dan watches the wiper; its axle, its blade and the path it's just traced. When it moves again (it is switched to intermittent) Dan's right hand rests on it, allowing his hand to follow its movement (Fig. 8: 66–51:06). He says "It's nearly right but if you watch, it jumps down at the beginning . . . that's where you want that straight." Will takes the whole assembly out of the car and on the bench he adjusts the regulator to be straight; when he refits the assembly, it works just as it should.

What was a straightforward replacement of a part has required a mixture of human dexterity, skill, know-how and some problem-solving ability. If the wires had been the same length as on the old assembly, if the regulator had been set straight with the motor at "park" in the factory it would have worked correctly first time. The wiper assembly had been designed and made to work in a particular way and was intended to be a direct replacement part but the technicians had to identify how the assembly fell short of its intended form and add other parts to modify it and then adjust it so that it would work as intended. The failure of the part to work as expected suggested a number of possibilities;

- the intentionality in the wiper assembly was not being realised by its workings because of some fault in the assembly or motor (e.g. as the wiring had been incorrect);
- the intentionality in the wiper assembly was in accord with its workings but that there was some other fault interferring (e.g. that an electrical or switching fault was producing this effect);

- the intentionality in the wiper assembly was not being realised by its workings because of the way that it had been fitted (e.g. the wipers were not fitted on the splines in the correct alignment);
- the intentionality in the wiper assembly was not being realised by its workings because of some adjustment that was needed (e.g. the regulating arm needed to set straight down when the motor was in "park").

All of these possibilities were considered and all were given some practical consideration; they affected what the technicians did with the wiper assembly to try to get it to work as they believed was intended. Identifying the intentions of wiper assemblies is not difficult; they had all used wipers on cars and had all probably worked on them and had some idea of how motor power was used to give them their functionality. But what was characteristic of the habitus of garage work was that things did not go quite according to plan and the practical experience of those in the setting had to be used to realise the intentionality embedded in the objects they were working with. It is noticeable that the way these technicians worked was a mixture of trial and error, embodied skill and experience and collaboration – and this mix was characteristic of what we saw in all the garages we studied. What they did not do was work in a rigid or systematic way, for example by following fitting instructions or strictly learnt or established procedures – exactly the sort of precise sequence of actions characteristic of machine tools and computer programmes. It was not by measuring the connecting wires against a standard that they were found to be too short; it was by putting the object in place and seeing that they were too short. When the wiping mechanism did not work as they had expected, the technicians did not seek out a manual or look for fitting instructions in the box. What they did do was try the mechanism, with different switching positions, with wipers off, with wipers on, with hands holding the wipers, with wipers in a different position on the splines and with hands touching the wipers.

They did not consult a diagram but at different times both Will and Dan picked up the old assembly, which was easy to see and manipulate outside the car, and tried to work out how it, and so the new assembly, should work. The old assembly had no power or wipers attached and their embodied techniques for using it as a diagnostic resource were different. Will held the old assembly against his body in such a way that he could make easy sight references between old and new assemblies, checking for instance that all components were there, were of the same size and were in the same orientation. Dan looked at the old assembly as a device in itself; he moved the various levers, putting the components into different orientations with each other. These two different forms of material interaction with the old assembly were not the first things they did; these were how they explored the possibilities about the

new assembly away from the car. We cannot know what was going on in the minds of the technicians although we can see the mindedness of their actions; there were moments when they stopped and looked at the part but no one went off to "have a think about it" (Dan and Mark were engaged in other jobs which is why they only appear when they get the feeling Will's job is not going right). Most of the time their consideration of the assembly is not simply with their eyes but their bodies and hands are also oriented to it. This bodily material interaction with the workings of the wiper assembly are easy to see in the video but are not clear from the still images. Both Mike and Dan at different times put their hands on the wipers and felt, as well as watched, the way that the wiper arms moved.

A different type of analysis might have focussed on the power relations between the three mechanics; Will allows the others to take the lead in diagnosing and issuing instruction and advice. He stands back and takes his hands and tools away when one of the others is getting involved and yet it is he who does the majority of the work with the assembly. Although Mike takes charge of the job, it is Dan who works out what is wrong – he is involved by Mike at a point when the failed intentionality of the objects appears incomprehensible.

The data shows how working with tools involves not simply mechanical movements by the body, such as could be done by a machine, but a blend of physical and mental skills that cannot be separated out into "cognitive" and "muscular." Feeling is part of seeing and both are part of understanding which is part of knowing what to do next and the blend of these human capacities flows together in "material interaction." I use this term to refer to the way that human material bodies intentionally interact with material objects to bring about changes that may affect their future interaction with human bodies. The fault in the wiper assembly changed the nature of the material interaction between the owner of the car and the assemblage of the car. This led to the material interaction between the technicians and the car that involved replacing, modifying and adjusting the assembly so that it would work and provide a felicitous interaction once again between the owner and his car.

LIMITATIONS OF VIDEO

Video has helped to show how the habitus of the garage operates in detail by capturing the flow of human interaction with material objects and other humans. As with audio recording, the temporality of events is recorded by the video camera with great precision; a clock on the editor system can be used to measure the length of time things took, including the pauses between events. But because the video can repeat the action endlessly, sequences of action can be studied precisely and

the details of complex action unravelled in ways that the social actor in the setting would not be conscious of. This can mean that non-action is a significant part of the data as when a technician's hands withdraw and a tool is put down while they stop to think and look.

As watchers of TV and film we are used to seeing a recognisable world through a flat, rectangular screen, that has its own "diegesis."[7] But of course the world we live in is far more dynamic than the world recorded by a video camera which, despite visual and aural information in real time, is distorted in comparison with human action and experience. What is missing is the ability to engage with environment, to move, to turn ones head or even just the eyes, to use peripheral vision to see stereoscopically and of course the visual image does not allow us to feel what the technicians can feel. The researcher may have moved the camera to follow action of the technicians' hands but it cannot allow the viewer of the video to glance quickly between his hands and his eyes, to overcome obstructions to vision or to make sense of what is going on in the periphery (glances between people and objects are often crucial for other participants making sense of what is going on – e.g. Goodwin, 1994; Heath & Hindmarsh, 2000; Hindmarsh & Heath, 2000). The rigid boundary of the frame of the recording constantly reminds the viewer of what is out of sight, "off-camera," that might have a part to play in the action. On the other hand distance can be overcome with a zoom so that you can sometimes see better on film than the technician could doing the work.

Because we are used to seeing image sequences that have been edited on film and television, there is a temptation to treat video data as the raw material for making a programme. Video for research can be edited in the same way; we have presented research papers with sequences of video clips as illustration. However, for analytical purposes, it is not the attention grabbing or aesthetic quality that is important, it is that video data shows a continuous, unedited flow of action. Although the choice of camera angles has "framed" what is to be recorded, it is in analysis that that the researcher decides what is significant and construes meaning in the flow of images. That meaning is expressed as a text that is written for presentation to an academic audience which may refer to, or "quote" from the data, in a similar way to other data sources (such as tape recordings, statistics or notes). Although video provides a fuller record of actions and events than other types of recording, it is still data rather than a complete record of what went on; the experience of the researcher who was actually present is often crucial to giving the context for interpretation. The detail in video data does provide a problem in analysis; to study what is going on may take many repeats of the same section and a second viewer of the data will often see different things. The analysis of video data is several times more time-consuming than the slow business of analysing audio recordings.

When still images are used to illustrate text, the crucial flow of action is lost (hands gesturing, holding the wiper as it moves) and those researchers who have specialised in using video to capture interaction between humans in workplace settings often closely analyse sequences of talk and action that occur in very short time spaces (e.g. Heath & Luff, 2000). Brief snatches of face-to-face talk are blended with glances at screens, actions of reading and writing, pointings, remarks to others and even conversations on telephones in a complex process of interaction that must be painstakingly unravelled so that sequence and synchronicity can be precisely described. This type of analysis embeds the images in the flow of talk to show how the material environment of bodies, objects and screens affect how the human interaction proceeds. One "quotation" technique is to use a series of still "frames" in sequence that show how non-verbal forms of communication are integrated with talk (e.g. Heath & Luff, 2000, pp. 28, 29).

INTERACTION WITH MATERIAL OBJECTS IN THE HABITUS

In this piece I have commented on the use of video to explore how the habitus of the garage setting is lived out through the interactions between technicians and the objects they are working with and on. It is one, rather specific, use of video recording that has I hope illustrated some of the advantages and limitations of the use of video. The same data could have been used for other purposes, for example to explore the working environment – we have elsewhere explored the significance of dirt within the garage environment (Dant & Bowles, 2003) – or to analyse social or interactive relations. For the difficult task of studying the way that garage technicians interact with the material objects in the garage, video was an ideal method of recording data. Because what they were doing and the objects they were working with were unfamiliar – we know how wipers work, but not what makes them work – the opportunity to replay and study the data closely helped to make them familiar. The detail of the activity of working on such things is so focussed that fieldnotes alone would have produced very broad generalities and the language used for such objects and actions is very limited and highly indexical. Despite attempts such as those of kinesics (Birdwhistell, 1973) or Labanotation (Farnell, 1994) to produce simple graphic ways of recording body movements, these are for specific purposes (non-verbal communication, dance and other meaningful movements) that are inadequate to capture the flow of everyday, ordinary material interaction. The very familiarity of our own material action (opening doors, making cups of tea) makes it very difficult to recognise the complexity that is specific to particular contexts beyond remarking on skill, which is taken to be a personal characteristic rather than a socially produced feature of the habitus.

Of course while video reveals something of the habitus, this is not to say that Bourdieu's "structuring structures" are shown; it is in the regularities of action, the ways that tasks are approached in a similar way, the way that tools are characteristically brought into use, the consistent way that advice is sought and given, the ways rules are applied or ignored that demonstrate such structure. To demonstrate this character of habitus requires extensive and detailed analysis of a large corpus of data and here video is of limited use. Because of the time taken to review and make sense of the data, such a macro sociological task is enormously difficult using video – data must be summarised and abstracted with the result that original instances are lost from sight. On the other hand, Mauss's rather more microsociological notion of habitus as "habits," "practical reason" and "techniques" is eminently discoverable in video data. The complexity of manipulating objects in garage work, together with their relatively unpredictable nature, requires a set of distinctly human skills which it is difficult to imagine a machine doing. In general, these embodied skills of practical reason used to work with material objects are characteristic of human beings, but they are specific to this habitus of people who routinely share work with a set of objects – in this case, cars, parts and tools. It is the habitus of the garage that enables the material interaction between technicians and the objects they work with and is the source of the practical reason that is particular to garage work; the set of embodied skills that equips them to understand the intentionality embedded in objects, to interpret the intentionality of both manufacturers and customers and to transform this type of mechanical object. The analysis of video data allows us to record and study the features of this habitus.

NOTES

1. The project, Car Care: The Professional Repair and Maintenance of the Private Car, was conducted at University of East Anglia and funded by ESRC Small Grant No: R 00023370. The study involved fieldwork in five local garages of different sizes and organisational structure over a period of seven months in 2001/2002. The principal form of data gathered was video of repair and maintenance work as it proceeded normally; the research was designed not to interfere with the flow of ordinary commercial work.

2. See also Bourdieu (1977, pp. 72–95) on "Structures and the habitus," reprised in a revised and slightly less convoluted version in Bourdieu (1990, pp. 52–65).

3. The value of the servicing and repair market in the U.K. has been calculated at £15,800M in 2000 of which 55% was for replacement parts and 45% for labour (Mintel, 2002). The increasing sophistication of cars has dissuaded owners from DIY servicing but it has also increased the intervals between services (now averaging 10,000 miles). Only 3% of owners are prepared to service their own cars if it is less than five years old, rising to 11% for cars six years or older. Dealerships continue to dominate the market (47% share), especially in servicing cars still under warranty but the demand for newer "fast-fit" outlets

and "service centres" (27% share), as well as traditional small independent garages (18% share) provide a very competitive market. All of these types of garage were studied in the Car Care project.

4. May I record my thanks to David Bowles who participated in every part of the project including the writing of earlier papers. Although David kindly reviewed and commented on this chapter, he was not directly involved in the writing – so all mistakes and misunderstandings are mine. He has turned his attention back to his doctoral research on social capital and voluntary work with elderly people.

5. The wiper arms and blades are separate; the original ones were reused.

6. This continuity between gesture and talk is nicely recorded on video and while it lasts less than a minute would need extensive description to analyse its communicative richness.

7. Diegesis is "... the sum of a film's denotation: the narration itself, but also the fictional space and time dimensions implied in the narrative, and consequently the characters, the landscapes, the events, and other narrative elements, in so far as they are considered in their denotative aspect" (Metz, 1974, p. 98).

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PERFORMANCE, SELF-REPRESENTATION AND NARRATIVE: INTERVIEWING WITH VIDEO

Sarah Pink

> It's just basically some of my favourites that's on here. I'm into the desert, I like Vincent Van Gogh very much, two funny cards, that's what my best friend looks like, that's exactly what he looks like. Take away the hat and that's the exact spitting image of what he looks like. *So in actual fact if you come back this way*, *zoom in on that*, that is my best friend and as you can see the resemblance between him and Chef is quite staggering. That's why I've called my bear Sal because he looks like him. And basically the rest of it I went to France in the World Cup, just the memorabilia, that which is round my neck there, because I write a lot I like to have a nice creative environment. So my favourite things around, nice pictures around, a nice environment that would inspire me or help me think (Mario, UK).

In modern western cultures much of the information we communicate with is visual and includes references to the media culture that forms part of our everyday experience. Yet a tape-recorded interview transcript can only convey words about these aspects of informants' lives. The transcript cited above is from a "video interview." Mario, in his late twenties at the time, was living in a student hall of residence while working as President of a students union and as a freelance writer. As he showed me around his room the visual and material dimensions of this space became integral to his way of telling me about himself and his home. The presence of the camera and our mutual knowledge of contemporary media culture informed the way he represented himself and his visual and material environment audio-visually.

Seeing is Believing? Approaches to Visual Research
Studies in Qualitative Methodology, Volume 7, 61–77

ISSN: 1042-3192/doi:10.1016/S1042-3192(04)07005-3

INTRODUCTION

Visual ethnographic methods are increasingly popular in social science research. Much has been published on their design and use (e.g. Banks, 2001; Pink, 2001; van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001). Yet little has been written on using video in in-depth interviews, or how such video-interviews might differ from tape-recorded interviews. In this chapter I discuss the video interview, as developed in my research about gender in the sensory home,[1] to reflect on the nature of the ethnographic knowledge about everyday life and experience this method produces. I focus particularly on informants' uses of narrative as a vehicle for self-representation that reveals and conceals. Video invites informants to produce narratives that interweave visual and verbal representation. In doing so they reference familiar everyday narratives and practices that are in part visual. Here I discuss how three narratives – which I shall call the "*Hello* magazine," "estate agent" and "self-analysis" narratives – were developed in an audiovisual research context.[2]

From 1999 to 2000 I interviewed fifty people as part of two research projects developed with Unilever Research.[3] The fieldwork was in England and Spain and in this chapter I draw from both cultural contexts. Both projects explored people's relationships with their homes, one focusing on cleaning and lifestyle and the other on laundry practices. The research sought to set people's cleaning and laundry practices within the context of their everyday lives in, and relationships to, their homes. The research for these projects was what I shall call "video ethnography," using a form of "video interview." By the video interview I mean not simply a video-recorded interview. Rather a situation where the video camera and the informant's understanding of video's potential for representation is an integral part of the interview itself and of the way it is analysed. I spent approximately two hours formally interviewing each informant, although in most cases the actual meeting extended to three or four hours and in some cases involved further participant observation. Each meeting began with a one-hour tape-recorded interview during which we discussed the informant's identity, everyday life and domestic practices. The second half of the interview, also about an hour, was the video interview. The idea, as I introduced it to my informants, was for us to "tour" their home, to explore each room, the items in it and how they cared for them. I told them that were not obliged to show me or tell me about anything they felt uncomfortable with and were entitled to stop the interview at any point (although no one did). In this sense the way the tour was conducted was left quite open to each informant to interpret as he or she would. However it was also structured by my checklist (which I always kept at hand) and my probes and prompts to discuss in more depth items and practices of particular interest to the research. After the first few minutes of video-recording I usually wound the tape back and played it to my

informant to show how I was recording them and how they looked on video. I hoped this would give them confidence in my work and promote their involvement and interest in the video process. We usually also viewed a segment of the finished interview before I left. Most informants told me they had never done anything like this before, or spoken with anyone about some aspects of their cleaning practices, and that they had enjoyed the interview. Once the project was completed I asked all the informants whom I could trace for permission to use their interviews in my published work. Nearly all agreed and I have only used materials from my meetings with those who did.

INTERVIEW AS NARRATIVE

Hoskins introduces her book *Biographical Objects* by noting how 'Through "telling their lives," people not only provide information about themselves but also fashion their identities in a particular way, constructing a "self" for public consumption' (1998, p. 1). As she emphasises life histories do not exist "out there," ready to simply be "collected" by ethnographers. Rather they are created in the context of the interview because "An ethnographic interview, whether conducted at one time or over many years, is a complex dialogue, a co-creation of a narrative that is in part structured by the listeners questions and expectations" (1998, p. 1). Hoskins' experiences are pertinent because she was not only interested in the life histories of the Kodi people (of the Island of Sumba, Eastern Indonesia) but in their domestic and ritual objects. Hoskins discovered that she "could not collect the histories of objects and the life histories of persons separately" because "people and the things they valued were so complexly intertwined they could not be disentangled" and when she asked her informants about objects rather than persons she found that they produced more personal, intimate accounts of their lives (1998, p. 2). Hoskins' reflections are on the Kodi cultural context, however they also provide a way of thinking about the relationship between informants' narratives about objects, spaces and places and their narratives of self in modern western cultures. Narratives based on the material/visual home can also inspire modern western informants to reveal intimate and personal information about their lives, experiences, concerns and emotions. Such narratives provide a framework in which informants can situate and order such experiences. However narratives of the material/visual home can also be used to order such experience to selectively reveal and conceal aspects of experience and levels of emotion. The video interview allows informants the opportunity to use established narratives that depend on visual as well as spoken experience to structure their performances of self. To explore this in the first two sections of this chapter I first consider the nature

of the "video interview" and the knowledge it produces, then I discuss performance and narrative as ways of understanding informants' self representations on video.

DEFINING THE "VIDEO INTERVIEW"

Video has a short history of use in qualitative research. In the 1980s anthropologists welcomed video, it was cheaper than film and could be left to run for longer periods. It was as such used within a realist frame to "objectively" record social performances, activities and behaviours (e.g. see Collier & Collier, 1986, p. 146; and as discussed in Pink, 2001, p. 77). However, with its lower image quality, video was used for research rather than filmmaking. Many anthropologists still use video to record events and interview during fieldwork, although usually these visual methodologies go undocumented. However as new video formats bring increasingly high quality, video is becoming more widely used in ethnographic representation. Sometimes now digital video is used almost as a replacement for film, which yet works in rather different ways, in ethnographic documentary making (see MacDougall, 2001). Observational researchers from other disciplines have also used video. In the existing qualitative methods literature video is usually referred to as a recording device that allows one to record non-verbal communications (Alasuutari, 1995, p. 43) and the details of behaviour that might be missed though observation (e.g. Fetterman, 1998, pp. 68, 69). In none of this existing literature however is the question of video recording interviews as a research method discussed. Instead the focus is on producing either footage suitable for editing into an ethnographic documentary or for recording visual information that might otherwise be lost. My working definition of the "video interview" differs from these uses, although it has more in common with the literature on interviews in ethnographic films (discussed below). I see the video interview as an interview in which the video camera becomes a (non-human) agent in the process by which knowledge is produced. The camera is part of the intersubjectivity between researcher and informant; it becomes an integral part of their relationship and is essential to how they communicate with one another. The context of a video interview is one in which both researcher and informant are aware that their interaction is mediated by a video camera. This does not mean simply that they temper their performances with regard for the camera, but that they perform to the camera by using it as a medium though which to communicate with one another. Thus the camera is used to both reveal and conceal, it may be seen as offering opportunities to both show and hide more. The camera is simultaneously a catalyst for forms of communication not normally developed in tape-recorded interviews.

The idea of the video interview raises the question of how it compares with other similar methods, in particular what we might call "video participant observation." It is not my intention here to argue that either the video interview or video participation is a "better" method. Rather to note that one should chose ones method according to context and circumstances. Working in other people's homes, video participant observation would have been less practical and time consuming.[4] Indeed the video interview methods used here, whereby the researcher makes visits to, rather than lives in the informants' home are parallel to methods designed by anthropologists of the home who do not practice visual methods. Ethnographers might spend only short periods of time with informants in their homes, and may find informants have not met their neighbours are, rather than sensing any community with them (Miller, 2001, p. 3). Video participant observation involves the researcher video-recording actual activities and events, as they unfold in everyday or ritual contexts, in a way akin to participant observation. This method has similarities to the production process for an observational ethnographic documentary. In Henley's words, observational cinema and conventional fieldwork methods both "involve a judicious mixture of observation and participation" and share a "belief that understanding should be achieved through a gradual process of discovery, that is through engagement within the everyday lives of the subjects" (Henley, 2000, p. 218). The researcher becomes someone who normally lives her or his everyday fieldwork life with a video camera at hand, not necessarily always recording but, participating as a researcher/video-maker rather than simply as a researcher. It could be argued that the observational cinema method is more likely to produce data about what people actually do whereas the video-interview tells us only what they say (with the embellishment of visual communication) about what they do. However this distinction is too clear cut, and does not accurately represent the relationship between saying and doing. Reflecting on the work of the ethnographic documentary maker David MacDougall, Lucien Taylor compares the interview based documentary to observational documentary to remind us that we usually dealing with performances whether in interview or participant observation. In fact neither method guarantees a closer version of the 'true' way people experience than does the other:

> In the standard interview setting, subjects are invited to *say* what they think or do or reflect on their experiences after the fact, while observational filmmakers, like ethnographers, are more interested in what people *actually* do, in experience itself as it is lived. To be sure saying and doing are not altogether distinct from one another, and phenomenologists have a tendency to forget that reflecting on one's life is an integral part of living it. Likewise, performances staged for the camera may have affinities with those that people put on for themselves – and the performers may be no less true to themselves for it (Taylor, 1998, p. 5).

The research video interview is likewise an opportunity for informants to reflect on their experiences, to tell about their lives. Talking is certainly a form of "doing";

it is an everyday practice that is enacted in multiple narrative forms by the same individual each day. However such interviews need not be just the "talking heads" that we picture when imagining a documentary film interview. For example my interviews involved exploring my informants' homes. I accompanied them around their homes with my camera, video-recording things they drew my attention to, activities they performed to "show" me, and things I found interesting for my research. I was not just interested in what they said but in what they showed and what we both experienced as we explored their homes. As MacDougall describes it "interviews in films not only convey spoken information but also unspoken information about the contexts in which they occur. They allow the speakers to describe their subjective experiences of past and present events, while simultaneously we interpret the emotions and constraints of the moment" (1998, p. 117).

Therefore I am interested not only the content of what is said or in talk as performance. Rather in how talking, representing self, and the material/visual home are co-implicated in the production of a narrative that tells a story about the everyday relationship between a particular self and her/his material/visual home. In my fieldwork the audio-visual interview performances involved particular components – the individual, her or his home, the objects in it, her/his historical/biographical experience and the researcher and perceived audience. My informants wove these together using existing cultural narratives that could conveniently incorporate them.

PERFORMANCE AND NARRATIVE AS WAYS OF UNDERSTANDING VIDEO INTERVIEWS

Like most public performances[5] the event an interview forms part of does not necessarily begin when the tape-recorder is switched on or even necessarily when the interviewer arrives. My informants knew that they would be video-recorded in their homes and began to prepare for this experience (or performance) both mentally and materially before the event. Although they had been asked to do nothing out of the ordinary to their homes before my visit, so I should find them as they would have been "usually," many prepared both themselves and their homes in some way. This might range from cleaning the house from top to bottom and dressing up and doing hair and makeup to simply tidying away personal items they did not want to be seen and ensuring they felt comfortable with their clothes. In the interviews we reflected on what they had done to prepare, to incorporate the pre-performance part of the event into the narrative of the interview. These initial preparations for the interview even before my arrival reflected how each informant had started to perceive the interview as an audio-visual event and how

this informed their approach to it. This also inevitably influenced the narratives they chose. Likewise after the interview the event did not simply end when I switched the video camera. We viewed some video clips and when time permitted, having spent two hours telling me about themselves, my informants often questioned me. By situating the video interview in this way it can be seen as part of a wider event within which, and with reference to cultural knowledge and personal experience, specific interview narratives develop. Noting how "... experience and life do not have a narrative structure *per se*. Rather, they are constructed in the form of narrative" (2000, p. 76), Flick describes rather well how two key cultural and context specific elements figure in the construction of narrative. When people create narratives in this way they work with "contextualized and socially shared forms of knowledge" that are negotiated in two spheres. First by using "prototypical narratives given in a culture" the informant negotiates between her/his experience and the established narrative. Second she/he negotiates with listeners who are either convinced by or reject (elements of) the story (Flick, 2000, p. 77). My informants were also aware that they were addressing other viewers who would see the tapes later. They were anonymous, defined as "the research team" and would not comprise a public audience unless at a later date the informant signed a form agreeing to this. Considering my video interviews in these terms I saw my role as researcher (listener/viewer) to treat my informants' narratives as credible – I was interested in their explanations and probed only when I suspected they were open to discussing other possibilities. I left the situation open to let them chose their own narrative style. However of course my very involvement in the situation impinged on how they made such choices, which were not arbitrary but informed first by how the informant perceived the interview in anticipation, and second by their interpretation of the interview context once the event was underway. Some informants mentioned how they felt about the way they were communicating – and as such recognised that they were working with existing narratives. For example, as one informant noted it was a bit like a counseling session but at the same time different. Later after the interview the end of the performance was signified as my informants often changed mode, from performer on video to a person who asked me questions. The interview event continued but the audiovisual performance I am interested in analysing here was concluded.

In the following three sections I discuss how different informants referenced specific established narratives that may also be seen as characteristic themes of modern western culture. I have called these the self-analysis narrative, the *Hello* magazine narrative and the estate agency narrative. My informants did not strictly follow narratives from these genres but adopted components of and/or referenced these distinct narratives as part of their personal audiovisual narratives. In parallel with this run other themes of modernity, namely: the visual and technological

aspects of modern western media culture; consumer culture; and the self-reflexivity of modern western subjects. These themes were to some degree interwoven with all the interviews. Below to make them explicit I associate them with particular interview narratives in which each was predominant.

THE SELF-ANALYSIS NARRATIVE: INTERVIEWER AS LISTENER

The self-analysis narrative refers to the testimonial and confessional style adopted by some of my informants. By exploring their homes and the objects in them they showed and discussed the personal meanings this material context had for them. The spaces of the home and one's possessions often have deep emotional significance, sometimes associated with joyful or painful memories, current on going troubled relationships, or bereavement. Some informants, in showing me an object on video described its meaning for them in terms of the emotional content of the feelings and relationships they associated it with. In doing so, reflexively talking me through relationship stories of conflict, rupture or reunion, or stories of personal change, achievement and progress as we toured the home. This way of talking about spaces and objects (and indeed sometimes photos and paintings displayed on the walls) is in some ways parallel to photo-elicitation. Harper (2002), reflecting mainly on research done in modern western cultures, claims that photo-elicitation methods make it is possible to delve deeper into people's emotions and memories. However the video interview extends this as the self-reflexive and testimonial style develops in relation not only to visual images and but to material objects and spaces (see also Hoskins, above).[6] For example in Mario's interview we turned to examine his desk:

> *. . . this is where you actually sit and do your work is it?*
>
> Yes this is the hub of my brain. TV and video, I don't really use it very very much I've just got it. This is my pride and absolute joy, my computer, which I've called The Daddy because it's great and the printer and things like that. Now I write in notebooks a lot and then type it up on the computer and I use this just to bounce things on, bits of writing work, freelance writing projects I'm working on I stick up there. Because again not only is it very useful to have it, because I tend to forget about things so it's good to have it actually on show, but also this says to me I am a working freelance writer. It creates that environment which I enjoy very much.

The quotation from Mario's interview demonstrates how the presence of the computer, notebooks and papers stuck on his wall prompted him to tell us about himself and his identity – it "also says to me I am a working freelance writer." However rather than simply evoking responses based on the visual/material, video interviewing adds another layer to the methodology of visual and material

elicitation as it is combined with informants' own visual self-representations. Part of Mario's interview was also about representing (by showing the camera) the environment he discussed – how the desk was organised and the large sheets of paper with lists and notes relating to his writing projects on the wall.

Other parts of the video interviews were in "talking head" style. Here it is useful to draw some parallels with interviews in ethnographic film. The video interview can also be seen as an example of what MacDougall calls "the subjective voice" in the form of:

> *Testimony*, the first person perspective, approaches subjectivity through the self-expression of the film subjects. It is found in films (or sequences) in which the primary source of experiential information is communicated to us by those who have had the experiences. Although it sometimes occurs in spontaneous dialogue, it is typically the mode of interior monologue, confession, and interview (MacDougall, 1998, p. 102).

For example the first few minutes of Mario's video interview were recorded in 'talking-head' style. I asked him who had taught him to do the laundry:

> No one. I had to learn. I got some advice from my mum as you do but no generally I can't remember the first day, whatever it was the day came and I must just have gone over with my bag and just bunged it in. I do remember asking people how to do laundry before I came away to university. I didn't really understand and luckily the halls' machines are fairly idiot proof so good because I was a bit of an idiot then.
>
> *What was it that you didn't understand?*
>
> Temperatures, whites and non-whites, powder amounts and tumble drying, hand washing, stain removing, I just didn't have a clue. It was all alien to me (Mario, UK).

Some informants represented their domestic practices as direct reflections of emotional needs or responses that were explicable in terms of psychology. For example:

> It'll be interesting for you – I have this hate, horror of grease going over my cooker – this should be interesting, I need a psychoanalyst here. I don't know what it is – it's funny, it's like a real obsession, and it's like other people come and they sort of like . . . get that grease. I just hate grease, anyway (Jenny, UK).
>
> I think I spend quite a bit of time at home, actually. I quite like being in my home. Although then I do have various spurts throughout the year where, like I'll be away for 3 weeks or 2 weeks. I mean usually in a month I'll be away perhaps 2, you know, away at friends or family, 2 weekends out of 4. But I usually find that I can go 2 weekends and then after that I need to get away. So it sort of becomes a psychological thing (Jenny, UK).

Others spoke of their domestic practices as having therapeutic effects relating to shifts in frame of mind between different activities, or producing ordered environments and selves:

> Yes, it's good to clean before making phone calls to sort of like prospective employers and, yes. It puts me in a frame of mind, an ordered frame of mind I suppose.

Does that show you something you feel about yourself?
Yes, I suppose so, yes. I'm a more efficient, ready to communicate person (Malcolm, UK).

However we should not treat such subjective self-expression in the testimonial mode as necessarily "true" accounts, but ones that are imbued with introspection and self-analysis. MacDougall notes although "Interviews are perhaps the ideal medium for confession and self-revelation" they can represent "limited perspectives and uneven mixtures of candour and self-justification" (MacDougall, 1998, p. 117). The video interview allowed informants to reflect about and simultaneously construct versions of their identities through the narrative of showing their homes in an audiovisual medium. In doing so they produced first person testimonies about themselves and homes, authenticated by references to self-awareness and by the visual/material home that served simultaneously as their prompt and their evidence.

By the self-analysis narrative I refer to how people reflected on their everyday housework practices within a frame of self-understanding and on the interview itself as a process of learning more about themselves. In doing so they employed familiar modes that are part of established practices of self-reflexivity and self-representation in modern western culture. Defining oneself in terms of one's trajectory of personal awareness and development, be this to friends or a therapist, is culturally established and appropriate. In an interview it is a confessional stance that stands as a "safe" narrative and offers a frame within which to talk about oneself and about personal issues that bind ones experience to ones material/visual home, without transgressing known forms of expression.

The significance of video in this interview process is threefold. First, it provides informants with a platform from which to speak authoritatively, giving their subjectivity a voice. Second, by focusing on the visual and material environment the video interview is a form of visual/material elicitation that might evoke "deeper" accounts and memories. Third, video gives informants an opportunity to show and display the visual/material symbols of self-identity that represent personal trajectories and ambitions and form part of the constitution of self in the home.

HELLO MAGAZINE: NARRATIVES FOR PUBLIC CONSUMPTION

Hello magazine features two main types of interview with celebrities in their homes. The first (and most common) covers the family and (public version of) the personal lives of the celebrities featured. They are interviewed about their family lives, work, children, homes etc and photographed posing in various locations

in their home and/or garden. The second is a feature about the interior design and decoration of a celebrity home. It covers (usually) her design choices and creativity and photographs of a number of rooms discussed in the feature. My informants' interviews were not parallel with these published interview styles or with the visual representations of *Hello* magazine. Nevertheless the model of *Hello* is a useful reference point that indicates the presentation of self and home as it is produced for public consumption. In the interview I discuss below there are some themes in common with *Hello* interviews, such as family (the couple, children and parents), home decoration, and "conventional" priorities. This theme was particularly relevant in Spain, where *Hola* (the Spanish version of *Hello*) is widely read. However rather than relating the theme specifically to the magazine, it is better contextualised in terms of the traditional relationship between street (*calle*) and home (*casa*) in Spanish culture. As Corbin and Corbin (1986) emphasised the distinction between the public *calle* and domestic *casa* is important in Spain, the latter being an essentially private, domestic space. During my previous participant observation in Spain (1992–1994) I found in comparison with English homes which are used more for entertaining friends and colleagues and for socialising, in Spain most non-family socialising takes place in the *calle*, in bars and restaurants. It was unusual to be invited to a person's home until one knew them well. Therefore in Spain showing one's home in the video interview context transgressed usual norms differently to in England. Spanish informants needed to seek appropriate narratives for this event, which displayed private space publicly. Susana was about 30 when I interviewed her. She was married and pregnant with her first child. As she was to be videoed Susana decided to combine the interview with a "going out" narrative. We did the interview just before going out for lunch so she was already dressed and made-up for a public domain when the camera was switched on.[7] Susana took me on a selective tour of her home, excluding a room she felt was untidy and unprepared. In the rooms we viewed, themes of family, life stage and home decoration prevailed. In her bedroom she told me:

> [I am] getting everything ready for the baby girl. The layette, the cradle, all her clothes, her little shoes. Everything. So at the moment the house is a bit untidy, but we are getting a bedroom ready for her.
>
> *This is you, isn't it?*
>
> Yes, it's me when I did my first communion. My collection of boxes. I like boxes very much, wooden ones and boxes of all sorts. They are ears of wheat. I picked them 2 years ago. I dried them and I've put them up as decoration. I really like them. This is a sketch my mother-in-law did. I found it in the house, framed it and hung it up.

However the use of a familiar narrative that encompassed themes of family and home decoration allowed the informant to draw a line between what she did and

did not want to discuss and what she implicated and excluded in her strategy for visual representing her home.

> The decoration is all very rustic. This is a Singer sewing machine, which was my grandmother's. Well I wanted to turn it into a table, but I'm going to leave it like that, I'm going to take the head off and get it working so I can sew.
>
> *And how do you clean this?*
>
> All I use is wax, which I have made to nourish the wood, because virtually everything here, doors and all are wooden, and I clean them with that.
>
> *Do they make it specially for you?*
>
> Yes . . . they make it in the city in a very old cleaning materials shop, its been there for ages. They also make floor wax. For tiled floors they mix a wax with a slightly reddish colour and which nourishes the floor. First you have to apply a salt so that the lime scale comes out of the floor and then you apply the wax.
>
> *Did you chose all this yourself.*
>
> Yes, I had it all made, but I chose it and told them what I wanted. The cushions for example are fastened here with old nails, called gypsy nails, made from iron (Susana, Andalusia, Spain).

By focusing on processes of decoration, family heirlooms and conventional family relationships Susana presented the surface of her emotional life at home. For example, preparations for a new baby, pictures symbolic of family relationships, the restoration of her grandmother's sewing machine, and the special treatment of her furniture. These public representations do not delve into the self-analytical. Susana's biographical photographs displayed around the house represent her as a beautiful young woman, and at her key life stages such as first communion and wedding. These images tell us about what is important to her, however she does not engage in a narrative about her feelings on these occasions.

In this interview narrative video has a particular role to play. Susana used the opportunity for visual representation to present an appropriate and conventional scene, she showed the researcher and camera the things that were important to her, and indicated their importance verbally describing the work and time she dedicated to their preparation and care. Her self-presentation was important and she ran her hands through her hair to re-style it during the interview. Her home was, in the view of her friends and family, particularly beautiful, and the video interview offered her a chance to showcase it.

THE ESTATE AGENT: HOME IMPROVEMENT NARRATIVES[8]

While doing fieldwork for this project I was house hunting myself. When viewing houses I often found myself looking around the house with my researcher's eye. This was partly because the "tour" that sellers take buyers on is similar in format

to the route of my video tours – the informant usually chose the order of the rooms and was considered the expert on the home while I asked questions. When people show their homes to prospective buyers they frame the buyer's visual experience of the home with a spoken narrative. As such they invite and intend a particular way of seeing. The buyer may indeed resist or contest the gaze that is offered, or believe that it has been deliberately constructed to reveal and conceal aspects of the home that show it only to its advantage. In addition in my experience sellers often combine showing their homes with a selective narrative about how they have lived their life there. Often these narratives focus on the biography of the house, which is inevitably interwoven with the biographies of those who live in it, and centre on how the home had been "improved," altered and developed. Some informants took a similar, businesslike and "factual" approach to showing me their homes. For example, as Christine described her house

> Ok, this is [name of the house], we've been here 8 years and we have done quite a lot since we've been here. The last window to the right, up and down, is an extension with a lounge downstairs and a bedroom en suite that we had built of my father. He only lived with us, unfortunately, 2 months but at least he did have somewhere to go. The front door is new, there used to be a bedroom there and we've made that into the hall with the, just the little porchway. Between the 2 windows on the left there was a front door that was blocked off but didn't go anywhere, so we bricked that in. We've also had all the thatch re-done and I think that's all we've done to the house (Christine, UK).

In these situations I also probed underneath to explore the questions I wanted to draw out about their relationships to their homes as this stance was very different from the more revealing self-reflexive mode (although no more or less "true"). For example, Pete showed me his living and dining room telling me how its decoration reflected his character and indeed his personal life and self-awareness:

> I plan to decorate rooms and I just never, I mean you'll see this room – I've obviously painted 1/2 the ceiling, 1/2 the wall! I've got an incredibly low boredom threshold. I'll set my stall out to paint that room and by lunchtime on Saturday I'll be so pissed off with it that I'll go and do something else. And if somebody rings up and says do you fancy a pint? No contest! I'm gone.
>
> *I mean have you always been like that about cleaning and decorating and everything?*
>
> Yes, I think it's driven some of the women that I've had in my life absolutely crazy. I've got jobs that really should take a weekend, last 6/9 months you know. And it sometimes never gets done. And I think people find that incredibly irritating. I've learnt to live with myself (Pete, UK).

In contrast when Christine showed me where she kept her horses she stuck to describing a process that had and would be completed, without reflecting on her own capacity to achieve this or dwelling on how this was bound up with her self-identity:

> I've just tidied, this is the last little piece I've tidied up and seeded it. I've got to paint that shed next.

How long have you been waiting to do that?

Well that wasn't finished built until February so that'll be one of my next jobs. Do you want to film that then? So there's a ditch running all the way round where this white fence is, so all this has to be strimmed, but I do pay to have that done. And this was all untidy, we've gradually cut this down so obviously I can run a tractor over this. Mind the cow pats (Christine, UK).

Whereas Pete showed his home decoration as an example in a narrative that focused on his self-identity, Christine indicated I should film her out-buildings to illustrate the process of improving her property. Like other informants who talked me through their home-improvement projects – such as extensions, attic conversions and new kitchens – her narrative placed personal space and embodied labour in the context of material and visible change, rather than one of personal development and emotional or psychological need. Video was significant in this: it is a medium through which the visible and material can be prioritised in an audiovisual narrative, situated by the informant's commentary. This works similarly to Banks (2001) notion of directed photography, whereby informants indicate (often spontaneously) what the researcher should photograph (see also Pink, 2001), and thus point out what is important. In the video interview context this is exaggerated. The informant has license to direct the gaze of the camera from themselves to objects and back again. Although the researcher holds the camera and ultimately the shots are framed by her or his subjectivity, this is negotiated as the informant indicates her or his preferred visual perspectives.

Because the established narrative of showing a potential buyer around one's home depends largely on "showing" – on the visual experience of the home – and on revealing and concealing in this context – this provided an appropriate and comfortable means of presenting home in the interview context. It offered a narrative that took the focus away from the personal while implicating the personal and emotional investment that must have gone into creating a home. In this situation it is up to the interviewer to probe and make the connections. In my work this also involved linking them to the identity issues I explored in the tape-recorded interviews.[9]

CONCLUSION: PUTTING NARRATIVE AND THE VIDEO INTERVIEW IN CONTEXT

Above I have discussed the video interview narrative, outlining three examples of how informants referenced established narratives in ways specific to the audio-visual qualities of the video interview. On video informants communicated about their everyday practices and biographical experiences with reference to familiar audio-visual narratives they feel comfortable and safe with. An understanding of

how this develops is key for researchers using the video interview. Researchers need to negotiate video interview narratives to ensure that although informants have ultimate control over what they chose to reveal and conceal, the narrative is not constructed in such a way that it does not cover the concerns of the research. To achieve this we need to maintain an awareness of narrative and the types of narrative available in the culture we work in, as well as having the cultural confidence and sensitivity to know when one might appropriately probe underneath them. When working in one's own culture or in a context one has significant research experience of a researcher might use this knowledge intuitively rather than self-consciously ticking off the type of narrative used as it is produced. In other contexts where one's awareness of the culture is lower the analysis of narrative might form part of the continual process of interpretation as the research develops.

Like any interview the video interview, needs to be situated in relation to established cultural narratives. However the video interview also encourages informants to work with established *audio-visual* narratives. These might be drawn from uses of images in still and moving audio-visual media for commercial and home media productions and from existing practices of showing, displaying, viewing and looking. In the examples discussed above I analysed the video interviews in relation to contemporary modern narratives of self-analysis, media representation and house selling and the visual perspectives of these practices. I linked these with three (not necessarily mutually exclusive) key features of modernity that have been developed by a number of social theorists. First in Britain we live in an economy that is inter-linked with to the housing market in ways that are not evident elsewhere. Home ownership, market value and buying and selling homes is an important factor in the relationships people have with their homes. This is a key aspect of consumption in Britain, linking with both domestic consumption and with domestic space (the home) as a commodity itself. Second modern media cultures are central to how we communicate in everyday life. In the example discussed here I indicated how visual and written magazine narratives might provide templates for familiar representations of self and home. Third, the self-reflexivity of modern western subjects can be seen as part of individuals' everyday relationships with their friends and family as well as, in a different way, to their therapist and counselors for those who have them.

Used and analysed appropriately the video interview can provide researchers with much more than a visual record of an interview. The combination of visual and verbal knowledge and representations it produces offers rich research material, that is, like any interview transcript, embedded in local and cultural knowledge.

NOTES

1. This research is written up in my book *Home Truths: gender, domestic objects and everyday life* (Pink, 2004).
2. Elsewhere (Pink, 2004) I note that these narratives were used, here I follow the point up to unpack how they functioned within the research.
3. In 1999 I developed *Cleaning, Homes and Lifestyles* with Katie Deverell and in 2000 a project about Laundry practices with Jean Rimmer, both at Unilever Research Port Sunlight, U.K.
4. Some such methods have been developed in commercial research, notably by Siamack Salari at Everyday Lives – see http://www.edlglobal.net/). However, as far as I know have not been used in academic anthropology.
5. For example in the case of the Spanish bullfight, for a bullfight *aficionado* the event does not start when then performance commences in the arena, but when the bullfight *aficionado* dresses up smartly to go out and then takes his or her aperitif in the bar before the performance. As for other events like a football match or a rock concert, what happens before and after the performance form a part of the narrative of the event itself and it is important to take note of this.
6. Of course here I recognise that photographs themselves are material artifacts and that material objects are also visual in some way or other. My aim here is rather to distinguish between the photo-elicitation interview whereby an informant discusses a set of photographs (normally focusing on their visual rather than material qualities) and the video interview context where the informant draws a range of visual and material objects into her/her narrative.
7. Some other (women) informants asked for a break between the tape-recorded interview and the video interview so they could change their clothes and do their hair and make-up.
8. Another possible contemporary interpretation of these narratives would be in terms of abundance of home improvement and home decoration programmes currently screened in television in the first years of the twenty-first century. However I would argue that this is not applicable in the cases analysed here for the following reasons. First the interviews discussed here (with the exception of Mario who was interviewed in 2000) were undertaken in 1999 when such programming was still not in its heyday and did not form an important part of British popular culture. Second, my informants never mentioned such media representations. Third in Spain as far as I know at the time such programmes were not broadcast. Had the interviews been carried out now in 2003 I would expect informant references to this genre and that some of the elements of the genre would be reflected in interview narratives.
9. In some situations it can be important to supplement with a video interview with a tape recorded interview as some people might not want to talk about intimate feelings on video.

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ON USING VISUAL DATA ACROSS THE RESEARCH PROCESS: SIGHTS AND INSIGHTS FROM A SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S INDEPENDENT LEARNING IN TIMES OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

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Eyes for Listening, Andrezej Jackows (2000).

Seeing is Believing? Approaches to Visual Research
Studies in Qualitative Methodology, Volume 7, 79–104

ISSN: 1042-3192/doi:10.1016/S1042-3192(04)07006-5

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In all its stages, qualitative research inhabits a visible world. Yet the use of visual data across the life of a research project is a visual span seldom considered in the methodological literature (Albrecht, 1985; Brannen, 2002). From a study largely based on observation and interviews in which visual data did not feature at the outset, we illustrate this longer perspective by focussing on two aspects of span. One refers to the inclusion of visual data throughout a project, from the search for a research setting to the final stage of dissemination. The other concerns the more frequent approach that includes a mix of visual methods, ranging from visual documents of film and photographs (Denzin, 1989) to other visual images and sights fleetingly observed. We argue that to use our eyes in the peripheral as well as the central data gathering stages, and to glean data from what is incidentally noticed as well as harvested with specific visual tools, generate an extended sociological understanding. The visual widens the window on the world of those being studied, bringing the intricacies of their lives closer to both researcher and audience. In this latter regard, we note the value of visual data at the dissemination stage, particularly for audiences of practitioners and those with interests in policy formation.

Incorporation of visual material was not part of the original research design. It grew from difficulties in finding suitable research settings: educational institutions in the Teesside region of the north east of England willing to participate in a qualitative study of 17-year-old A-level students that tracked independent learning[1] from educational settings into the home. Historically, independent learning, the pedagogy whereby responsibility for learning is transferred from the teacher to the learner, is a long established practice in the post-16 academic strand, logged, for example, in classic studies of the early 1950s and 1960s (Jackson & Marsden, 1962; Morris, 1969). Our aim was to investigate the contemporary nature of this "disembedding" of learning from the public sphere and its reconfiguration in the private – processes defined by Giddens as "the 'lifting out' out of social relations from their local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of space-time" (1990, p. 21). Unexpectedly, the consenting colleges fell within a visually distinct, relatively discrete locale. Here, as elsewhere, students, parents and teachers were variously navigating the changing post-16 sector. The visually vivid local dimension, however, contributed to an increasing awareness that geography intersected with education policy to critically shape young people's learning careers (Allatt & Dixon, 2002a). Against this background, and to frame our analysis, we first situate our approach. We then describe how the visual led us into the social geography of independent learning, its power to penetrate facets of educational change, and its role in oral dissemination.

THE THEORETICAL-METHODOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Although varied and opportunistic, our use of visual material fell within a rich methodological tradition. First, following Becker, theory directed our gaze (1974 cited in Harper, 1994; Denzin, 1989). Geographers and social scientists have variously noted the geo-political interface of locality and externally fuelled change, asking how people "attend" to the problems of globalization and wide societal changes "in their daily lives" (Beynon et al., 1994, p. 197; Holloway & Valentine, 2000; Massey, 1984; Ryden, 1993). We similarly focussed on this macro-micro issue – in this case, the interface of centralized education policy with the geography of local difference – and examined and how this conjunction shaped what Highmore calls "the landscape of everyday life" (2002b, p. 101). That peopled by our participants ranged across topographical and social sites, in particular the public arenas of college, employment and travel, and the private spheres of home and emotional interiors. It is here that our visual images were located.

Second, theory not only showed us where to look but also shaped our way of seeing. According to Simmel, "Of the five senses the eye has a unique sociological function," conveying, for example, appraisal, welcome and dismissal through the nuanced glance (Ball & Smith, 1992, p. 2). Our concern with the relations between individual, geography, and educational change promoted a relational mode of looking – what could be called a "positioning eye". Through this lens we recognized and then explored the relational messages held by the images encountered – roads and neo-classical buildings, stables, maps, chairs, bedrooms, timetables – that placed people in terms of status or fit in the configuration of educational change.

Third, to use what is "visually available" is a well recognized strategy; we cumulatively used our varied material, becoming researcher-bricoleurs who "construct . . . objects [research accounts] out of whatever materials are at hand" (Ball & Smith, 1992, pp. 47, 66). To this we added the visual lexicon, a vocabulary richly available in the metaphors of academic texts, literature, and everyday speech (Lakoff & Johnson, 1981; Richardson, 1994). This linguistic visualizing tool not only offered visual concepts that distil diverse data into embracing ideas – seen, for example, in Ball and Smith's (1992) text as well as their themes and illustrations. But alertness to everyday usage awakened us to the research relevance of the mundane visual world; like Solberg (2001),[2] we began to *see*, our opened eyes unlocked our thinking and led us into new theoretical pastures, particularly those concerning identity and the everyday.

Fourth, although the general qualitative literature addresses the traversing notion of span, its visual dimension is seldom considered. Methodological accounts describe the reflexive transformation of research material in its progress from

raw state to public document (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; Denzin, 1994; Flick, 2002), but those that track the visual through such transformations or across the research stages seem rare. In an aptly entitled article, "Video Safaris: Entering the Field with a Camera", Albrecht (1985) described the sociological use of video techniques across several stages of the research process – for generating ideas, constructing and testing hypotheses, and developing theory; he also noted the general deficit of photographs at the dissemination stage, a continuing neglect Brannen (2002) more recently critiqued.

Rather than follow Albrecht's methodologically generative approach, we focus on interpretation and understanding. In a triangulating process, we interweave the visual and non-visual elements of the research – namely, accumulating researcher knowledge, participants' texts, and audience receptivity. We attempt to integrate Geertz's (1993) thick description, constituted from different perspectives, with Becker's (1974) notion of thick, conceptually rich visual data. Across the project, from the earliest research phase to its release into the public sphere, we illustrate the special contribution of the visual to an "interpretation" that, borrowing from Geertz, "trac[es] the curve of a social discourse"(1993, p. 19) in the contemporary social geography of independent learning.

THE RESEARCH AND DATA

The original research design took little account of geography in an extended theoretical sense; the Teesside location was selected to offer broad regional comparison with a section of the project based in south and west Yorkshire. The Teesside students were in the first year of their A-level studies, attending either an FE college or a 14–19 community college located in two coastal towns. The colleges served a semi-rural, post-industrial economy and inland moorland of scattered settlements lying on the edge of a large industrial conurbation. Parental occupations ranged from professional and small business owners to skilled and semi-skilled workers. Some students were from homes where parents were either university educated or from backgrounds with such a heritage. Others were the first generation to "stay on" beyond the age of compulsory schooling or consider higher education.

The data were collected in the academic year 1999–2000, a period of relative curricular calm prior to the introduction of Curriculum 2000 in September 2000. The total data set comprised verbal, observational, and visual material. Interviews were conducted with four teachers; four young people; and two student groups. Individual interviews were also conducted with seven families of students and their parents. Classroom observation was undertaken for one course in each educational

setting, each for one term; titles are undisclosed to preserve anonymity in a small locality.

The visual data belonged to the worlds of geographical landscape, material artefacts, and time. They comprised photographs, maps, shipping charts, historic posters, government leaflets, students' weekly time-tables, video diaries, observation and glimpses of artefacts not visually recorded. As we can look inwards as well as outwards, we also included researcher visual memories (Ball & Smith, 1992; Kondo, 1990, cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Only video diaries recorded participants but none are represented here. For ethical considerations, although largely in the public domain, the data were anonymized.

Progressively, the visual entered our researcher sights. The increasing significance of locality to the study meant that photographs of the area – of industry, shorelines, streets, shops, people, and countryside – could not languish as illustrative background material. They "became [data][3] relevant to the enquiry" and subject to analysis (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, p. 419), making "a distinctive contribution" (Bolton et al., 2001, p. 504). This early material was augmented with maps, older representations of the area, and photographs directly connected to interview data. The intention that students keep written diaries was extended to include a visual element by offering disposable cameras to record anything connected with their lives (Flick, 2002). However, diaries were not written and cameras disappeared into the black hole of adolescence. Later, students (selected with the help of teaching staff, considered necessary to protect departmental equipment) were invited to make individual video recordings. Greeted with enthusiasm, this produced nine videos, four of which were from the family group.

To convey our unfolding insights, the chapter is broadly chronological. We first describe the locale and the visual processes in its selection. We then turn to visual imagery of education policy and the role of the visual in exploring policy effects, first for teachers and then students. Finally, we consider the visual dimension of dissemination.

A VISUALLY DISTINCT LOCALE

Within the Teesside region, one area is visibly distinct, not separate from adjacent sites but subtly distinguishable from them. Lying a few miles to the east of Steelton, a major industrial urban centre with sectors high on indicators of social need and disadvantage (Abbott & Godfrey, 2000), it is characterized by a boundedness on all sides, clearly visible in cartographic and topographic representations.

Most visibly to the east, the North Sea borders the coast. A river estuary and flood plain, still the site of steel production and sprawling chemical plants, lie

to the north. To the west and to the south, moorland rises in a plateau, dropping to the old, coastal fishing communities. Though an area of contrasts, containing pockets of affluence, it is best described as a post-industrial, semi-rural hinterland of scattered settlements with a range of fragile economies: iron and steel, chemical processing and offshore oil, farming, fishing and tourism, all in decline.

Decline and marginality visually thread through historical time. The local museum, a repository of local meaning (Ryden, 1993), sells facsimiles of 1950s' railway posters recalling once popular seaside resorts; and Lloyd's mid-nineteenth century *General Wreck Chart of the British Isles* (Plimsoll, 1873) plots the numerous vessels sunk off this coast. Both convey more intense industrious times. This geography of the edge, captured over 400 years ago in Waghenaer's (1985) Dutch sea chart of this north east coast, is caught today by Shields' (1991) definitions of marginality and visually held by our photographs. Marginality refers to peripheral geographies of decline. Poor transport infrastructures link scattered settlements – significantly, respondents measured journeys by time rather than distance. They may be places of illicit and disdained activities – reflected here in high rates of unemployment, part-time work, and low staying on rates beyond the age of compulsory schooling. And they display a sense of otherness to a distant

Fig. 1. An Approach Road to the Locale.

centre and main culture – found here in feelings of geographical distance, the localism of aspiration and, for some, apprehension about the unknown world of higher education (Allatt & Dixon, 2002a).

Marginality and otherness are visually conveyed in a mundane photograph of one of the few approaches to the locale (Fig. 1). Though commonplace, its detail renders it a "*thick* visual document . . . visually and conceptually dense" (Denzin, 1989, p. 220 citing Becker, 1986, p. 243, italics in original). An anonymous, modern road with its ubiquitous lighting sweeps between verges of scrub toward an industrial complex on the horizon (which we know to be in commercial difficulties). The photograph hints at continuing attachments to a dominating, external world. In a landscape from which industrial capital is in flight (Beynon et al., 1994), the first blush of oilseed rape in the marginal farmland bordering the road visually symbolizes newer external connexions – to European subsidies and perhaps the global agro-chemical business beyond. To view the photograph as a snapshot "pasted into" (Chaney, 2002, p. 43) a particular discourse retains this landscape within a continuing narrative of externally driven change. We transpose this theme of abstract change to the education sphere, but first describe the visual processes by which we lighted on this locale, and from which it all started.

THE VISUAL DIMENSION OF SELECTION: WAYS OF LOOKING AND MENTAL MAPS OF VISUAL DISCERNMENT

Now able to describe this coastal economy and recognize its theoretical power to open up the social geography of independent learning, it was not an obvious choice. How then did we select it and what part did the visual play? Following Ball and Smith's discussion of Simmel, we draw upon types of looking and the discerning function of the eye, aspects of "a practice that is universal to social life" (1992, p. 64), to retrospectively unravel the visual, often tacit, dimensions of selection.

Different ways of looking shaped the selection process, integrating what we knew with what we saw. Following normal practice, "looking for" educational settings began with the cognitive search that gauges suitability against specified criteria – A-level courses, college prospectuses, formal ratings of academic performance, area statistics, informal perceptions of academic standing. Constructed away from the field, cognitive images of reality were visually fleshed out by locating them on a map, and then, with our "informed eye", by physically "going to look". Finding institutions in situ, however, implies a process of viewing, of "looking at" them, their settings, and the routes taken to reach them.

From the first step into the field, we are steeped in visual images. Within a radius of some 30 miles, we travelled[4] inland and out to the coast; through suburbs, villages and townships; across moorland; past industrial sites and post-industrial wastes, schools, colleges, training centres, and homes; into shops, cafes, and museums – all inscribed with geographies and histories that coloured the everyday worlds we were to uncover. More specifically, potential educational settings were viewed from outside their walls, their proximity to each other and to near and distant settlements noted; we saw the character of the surrounding neighbourhood, and speculated about catchment areas and local labour markets.

These elements are not constituents of passive scenery, but activate the taken-for-granted skill of visual comparison. "There are maps on paper . . . and in our heads" (Franklin, 1993, p. xi). Immersion in this visual field fostered what could be called a mental map of discernment. To discern is to "make out or espy, to catch sight of with the senses or the mind . . . to distinguish or tell apart" (Pocket Oxford Dictionary); the term combines differentiation with flashes of sight and insight. This discriminating function of the eye set the coastal locale in sharp relief to the "normal appearances" of the wider area (Ball & Smith, 1992, p. 64), a difference which we also "felt". Influenced by the willingness of colleges to participate, its selection offered a new dimension to the investigation. When we made the decision, however, we had little idea how fruitful it would be.

A VISUAL SYMBOL OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY: CHANGE AND CHOICE

Fom this local geography we stepped into the colleges, to be symbolically greeted by a political discourse of educational change. In the main reception area of Longscar FE College, addressed to present and potential students but accessible to all who passed through, lay small, single-sided, official leaflets (Fig. 2). Visually symbolizing the changing experience of learning, the image and text also foreshadow its troubled interface with local lives. We first indicate the significance of this leaflet by outlining the context of educational and social change.

Current education policies in the post-16 sector emphasize the principles of expansion and choice. Over the last 30 years, A- and A-S level entry has grown from an academic elite of some 8% to over 30% of the age group (Edwards et al., 1997). The students belonged to this less homogeneous constituency, and while some, irrespective of background, remained "subject hungry," others "stayed on" because they had done well at GSCE O-level and there was nowhere else to go.

Choice finds expression in the quasi-market of education and the commodification of knowledge. It is seen in college choice, subject modularization,

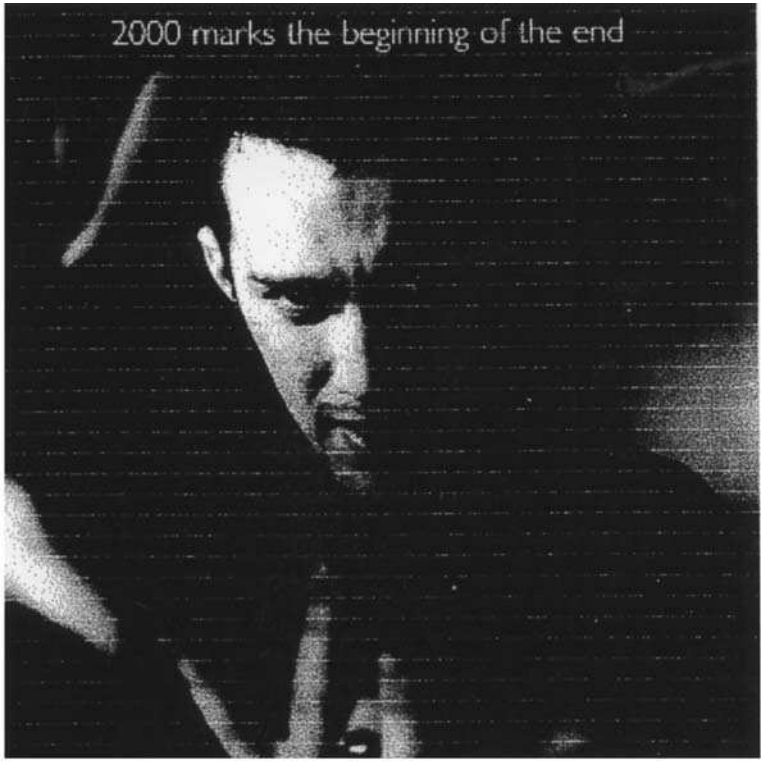

Fig. 2. An Official Leaflet Placed at a College Entrance.

and the pedagogy of independent learning. Choice, moreover, is formally devolved to the young themselves, this locus mirrored in political and theoretical discourses. The first resides in debates on children's rights following the U.K. ratification of the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child in 1991 (Roche, 1996), the second in individualization theses which promote the centrality of the self and the reflexive shaping of biography (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991).

The leaflet visually encapsulates this primacy of the youthful self. But a surprising aspect of the portrayal is its dark undertone. The figure's angle, tension, age, countenance, and thrust of the fingers seem aggressive and threatening, mirroring the "in your face" culture of contemporary advertisements.[5] The implicit power shift carries messages for teachers as well as learners. It suggests the meeting of two antagonistic educational cultures, voicing something new which stands in opposition to what has gone before and "had its day". But rather than offering young people choice, choice seems thrust upon them.

Visual placing inscribes things with meaning (Ball & Smith, 1992; Hall, 2002). The leaflets sat at a gateway – sites anthropologists regard as significant – and signalled a physical and symbolic educational juncture. At this Janus-faced turning point, individuals look to both future and past – towards what they were moving into and might become, and backwards to where they were from, at what they had been, were relinquishing, retaining, losing, rejecting, or building upon. The leaflet's imagery spoke to dilemmas current policy raised for both teachers and students. We visually trace some their facets by moving deeper into the college setting, its surrounds, and homes.

VISIBLE CULTURES

"Cultures are visibly different" (Ball & Smith, 1992, p. 5). In Longscar FE College visibly distinct, educational cultures lived in uneasy co-existence. Following recent reorganisation, part of the local A-level provision occupied a wing of a strongly vocational college, still referred to as "the old tech". A-level students comprised only 5% of the college roll of 800, with no transfers between the sectors. Within the wing itself, the new A-level constituency entered a culture where teachers were committed to preserving the academic ethos that had shaped their own biographies. They had histories of teaching elites, their relationship to teaching was as experts in their subject, and they expected of their students a lively engagement and signs of emerging academic identities. In contrast, many students sought security rather than independence in their learning, were passive and task orientated, and displayed a disengaged and mechanistic approach to schooling and homework. These two life-worlds, two distinct biographies of desire (Adam, 1995; Hodkinson & Sparkes,

1997), visibly met in the classroom, expressed in the defensive adoption of didactic, paternalistic teaching styles and student practices that reflected attitudes of younger pupils. We do not develop this here, but show how visual data deepened and extended these observations. Moving between landscape and college, we focus first on the teachers and the visible markers of their academic identities.

A VISUAL GEOGRAPHY OF STATUS AND IDENTITY: FROM ROBERT HOOKE TO TINY TASKERS

Educational buildings punctuate this landscape. Symbols of history and policy, their bricks and mortar stand as a visible, public narrative of educational change as teachers and taught transfer to new or alternative buildings. The A-level wing represented the latest stage in the local journey for part of the academic sector of post-16 education. It began in the early eighteenth century with the opening of Sir Edward Tasker's Free School (Fig. 3), its neo-classical proportions probably designed by Robert Hooke. In the mid nineteenth century, following vicissitudes, the school re-opened on a new site as the New Grammar School. In 1976, with the introduction of comprehensive education, it was relocated to a former secondary school and operated as a sixth form college (Philo, n.d.). Today, following local reorganization in the late 1990s, part of the local A-level

Fig. 3. Sir Edward Tasker's Free School.

Fig. 4. Tiny Taskers Nursery Sign.

provision is housed within Longscar FE College, competing for students in the local A-level market.

This academic journey visually lingers in a landscape of palimpsests: the original purpose erased, buildings and sites are re-used, reinscribed with other forms. The original Free School is the local museum; the site of the grammar school supports a library; and the sixth form college – the building's second transformation – is an outreach college with an attached nursery, whose logo visually and symbolically ingests the original Free School. Within a ubiquitous, contemporary design, equally appropriate to a working men's club or leisure centre, the founder's name is alliteratively merged into the nursery's name – *Tiny Taskers* (Fig. 4).

Visible only to the knowing eye, this landscape holds what Ryden calls "repositories of place-based meaning" (1993, p. 75), for the eye is receptive to feelings transmitted by material objects as well as humans (Ball & Smith, 1992; Ryden, 1993). Moreover, landscapes, buildings,[6] and other artefacts (Forty, 1995; Miller, 1998) transmit ideologies as well as sentiments, resonating with Shotter's (1993) notion of knowledge of the third kind, that seeming intuitive recognition of relative status, conveyed here by the changing occupancy of public buildings.

As Robert Hughes (2003) observed when discussing Hitler's architect, Albert Speer, "Symbols of power and politics . . ., architecture puts us in place." These concrete symbols of an elite's temporal journey meshed with teachers' narratives of discomfort with their current position. Only called to our attention because of our educational brief, we began to see the "inward significance" (Ryden, 1993, p. 41 citing James, 1967) these buildings held for them. We began to recognize the insinuation of education policy into identities, and the emotional depth of teachers' visual strategies of resistance, to which we now turn.

VISUAL DEFENCES: VISIBLE SYMBOLS OF SOCIAL SPACE

Local A-level provision had lost its public face; the academic tradition was no longer inscribed in a public building that spoke-without-saying, neither inwardly to teacher identities (or those of students) nor outwardly to the external world. Though a separate wing, and despite its separate public entrance some yards distant from that of the main college, no external feature distinguished the academic sector.

According to Bourdieu, "Structures of social space show up in spatial opposition" (2002, p. 125). Just as leaflets visually heralding a changing educational culture were positioned in the main foyer, symbols of resistance were positioned at the two access point to the A-level wing. Recognizing the power of visual signifiers, teachers used them to hold on to a past by weaving it into the present. To the visitor's gaze, the college's main reception area resembled that of any modern enterprise, from commercial office to hotel. In contrast, prominently displayed inside the small, public entrance lobby of the A-level wing were emblems of a traditional academic culture: grammar school memorabilia including commemorative boards of former pupils fallen in the two world wars. On vacating the Sixth Form College, staff had brought them to this new and alien territory – and more were to follow. For as Bourdieu observes, ". . . structures of social space . . . are inscribed in physical space and cannot be modified except by a work of transplantation, a moving of things . . ." (2002, p. 124). Like the advertising messages Ball and Smith (1992) describe, these artefacts were symbolic visual referents – here to a traditional past struggling to retain its place in the educational future, attempting to establish what Bourdieu calls an "eternization" that will "hand on to posterity" (2000, p. 72).[7] Visually they distinguished the academic from the vocational educational world.

While these mobile sentries of tradition greeted the eye at the public entrance to the wing, at its rear a subtle boundary lay underfoot, embedded in the fabric itself. Deep within the building, this entrance was approached though corridors and stairs

leading from the main college entrance. Arrival was signalled not just by a door but in a qualitative change of flooring, from synthetic surfacing to polished, wooden parquet tiles. Writing of the sociological significance of the "infra-ordinary", that which, as Highmore (2002a, p. 175) explains, is "neither banal nor exotic", Perec argues that we "need to question bricks, concrete, glass" (2002, pp. 176, 178). The fleeting act of noticing this change in texture, something which "doesn't call attention to itself" (Perec, 2002, p. 176), threw one researcher into the reflexive, visualization of a biographical past,[8] summoning up the image and ambience of a girls' grammar school, the pungent scent of fresh polish at the beginning of term, and a whole tradition of schooling laid into a personal biography over 50 years ago. In looking inward as well as outward we have ourselves as analytic tools. Here, in calling up memory, the visual experience of architecture and its dressings brought us analytically closer to understanding the lives and feelings produced by changing times.

According to Braudel (2002), life is lived across different temporalities, the past and the future threaded through the present. We now turn from the visual representations of temporal strands in the biographies and educational worlds of the teachers to those of young people, living in the same changing educational landscape but weaving their lives with different threads. Visible artefacts illuminated the submerged histories of teachers and their relation to the contemporary educational world; for students, we focus on invisible presences – invisible time and absent things. We first note the visual strategies which enabled us to see the "timescape" (Adam, 1995) in which homework and schooling were emebedded and then turn to the home.

MAKING TIME VISIBLE: PROFILING THE TEENAGE WEEK

Time management dominated student lives, expressed in the struggle to defend boundaries between various activities. Independent learning, with its notion of self-responsibility, uncoupled substantial elements of the curriculum from the spatial-temporally managed college order. From the standpoint of an individualization thesis, the freedom of the new order promised personal satisfactions, yet many students felt oppressed. This arose not solely from deadlines and self-accountability for academic work, rather from the fullness of their lives. Historically prioritized by those on the academic route, today lessons and homework compete for place with other activities – part-time paid work, leisure, family commitments, domestic obligations, and, in this locale, the extensive chore of travel (Allatt & Dixon, 2002a, b). Photographs showed where students spent

their time – the chip shops, cafes, and retailers where they worked, college, gym, and clubs, homes and bedrooms; they said nothing, however, of its allocation.

Diagrams render "the invisible visible" (Ball & Smith, 1992, p. 65). "Drawings or sets of lines . . . enable the listener to visualize what is being expounded" (Pocket Oxford Dictionary), distilling complexities to make them "available at a glance" (Ball & Smith, 1992, p. 61). Visual representation of clock time, the type that fuelled these students' concerns, is well documented. Solberg (2001), for example, used tables of time budget data to expose gender and generational differences in domestic labour, Garhammer (1995) pictorially represented the family balancing act of time use, while Davis (1994) contrasted different types of time in care work – clock time and process time – through lines and spirals. We transformed interview data into time profiles, sequentially mapping temporal slices of activity across the day and the week, building a layered picture of students' busy lives (Fig. 5). Cumulative imaging conveyed temporal density more sharply than words.

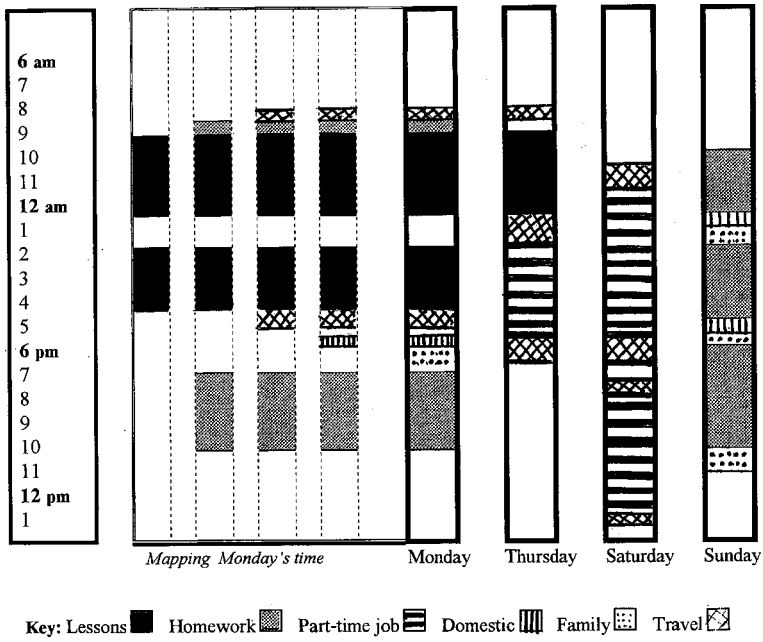

Fig. 5. A Composite Example of a Time Profile, Showing the Cumulative Layering of Time in one Student's Day, and a Comparison of her Time Allocation Across Three Days.

It exposed the loading of time across the student day, differential daily patterning and activity range. It highlighted sites of potential tension and aided analysis of the dynamics of boundary management, verbalized in interviews. Profiles brought into view "individualized" student types differentiated by time use, and challenged assumptions regarding a relatively unproblematic academic track into higher education (Allatt & Dixon, 2002b).

ABSENT IMAGES: YOUNG PEOPLE'S BEDROOM FURNITURE

Absent images can reveal presences. The final illustration from the data gathering stages concerns absences in a video still of a student's bedroom. To have one's own bedroom is a defining feature of young people's lives today, and their dominance in the videos reflected the importance attached to this private space (Dixon & Allatt, 2001). Young people's bedrooms are of the commonplace. Rather like "the habitual" Perec defines, "We don't question it, it doesn't question us, it doesn't seem to pose a problem, we live it without thinking, as if it carried within it neither questions nor answers, as if it wasn't the bearer of any information" (2002, p. 177). Yet problems and information lodge in these rooms. Their very existence denotes a historic change in household assets and the parental distribution of household space; the limits of their privacy symbolize generational issues of domestic order and family dynamics; biographies and developing identities are traced in their furnishing and decoration – in nursery wallpaper superimposed with teenage posters (Dixon & Allatt, 2001; Weatherell et al., 2003); and their contemporary use as "study-bedrooms" indicates the penetration of schooling and the state into the private sphere of home and consciousness.

Angie's bedroom was a contested site. All the students had their own bedrooms, some jealously preserving this private space by doing homework at college or in the communal spaces of the home. But when used for homework, we assumed, from evidence here and elsewhere (Allatt, 1996), and, especially as these were A-level students, that bedrooms would be suitably furnished – with at least a flat surface and an upright chair. Angie's room had neither (Fig. 6). A place on which thought and money had been spent, it was a young woman's bedroom, the small, narrow room fitted with modern furniture – bed along one wall, along the other wardrobe, wall mirror, and storage space, and a small, low easy chair between. Whether this configuration stemmed from Angie's or her parents' image of a room appropriate to a young woman of her age we do not know. What is clear is that it spoke not of familial support for academic study, but rather as a place for rest, recuperation, and the grooming of the self for presentation to the outside world. It

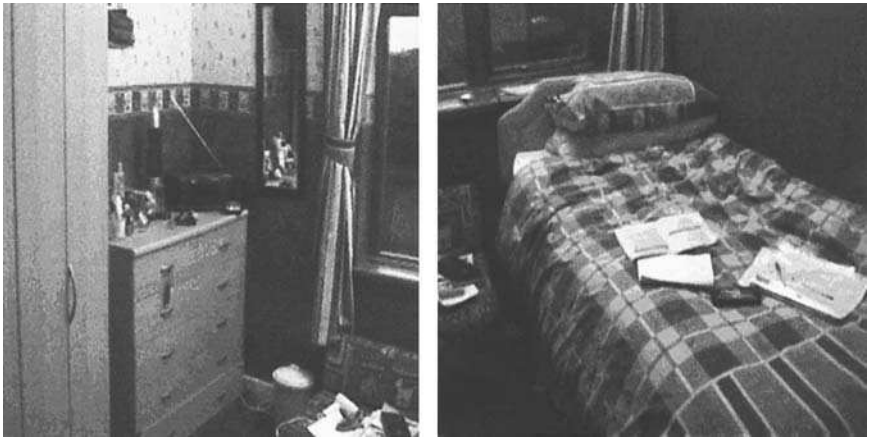

Fig. 6. Two Photographs of Angie's Bedroom.

is the bedroom of a young worker. Symbolically, Angie had arranged her school books on her bed, where she did her homework, and in the accompanying sound track described the resulting pain, "I haven't got a desk or anything, so I find that I'm just sat on my bed doing it . . . leaning over . . . which soon hurts my neck."

"Chairs were comfortable because they accommodated biology, but they also accommodated the postures of the time," notes Rybczynski (2001, p. 97) in his history of domestic comfort. Angie's bedroom fittings, neither biologically nor culturally, accommodated appropriate posture in the time of independent learning. If furniture and furnishings orientate and define us in relation to the wider society (Baudrillard, 2002; Bourdieu, 2000) this room spoke of disjoined relations, "fundamentally defined by an *absence*" (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 123, italics in original). The fitments symbolized an older spatial and temporal order between the public and private spheres – the local trajectory of the young worker. Declining but still inscribed in the local labour market and visible amongst some young friends, this youth trajectory lived on in such parental support. Following Rybczynski and Baudrillard, furniture incorporates symbolic and moral[9] qualities. Furniture that supports homework articulates with a contemporary ethic of parental support for learning, fuelled by a public rhetoric of parental responsibility. This linkage is recognized, understood, and translated into action by those parents who convert their children's bedrooms (privacy and sleep) into study-bedrooms (privacy, sleep and work) (Allatt, 1996). According to Bourdieu, "Social relations objectified in familiar objects . . . impress themselves through bodily experiences" (2000, p. 77). The disjoined interface, between the central policy imperative of independent learning and a facet of a local culture that drew on older patterns of youth

transitions, was embodied in physical pain. The noticeable absences, concealed within the home until led there by Angie's video, further opened our eyes to the state's incursion into the mundane practices that shape identity.

THE THEATRE OF DISSEMINATION

"Having told our story to ourselves, we must now tell it to others" (Denzin, 1994, p. 502). In its several meanings,[10] wanting others to see lies at the heart of dissemination; it encapsulates the challenge of communication, and is the pinnacle of the research endeavour. According to A. C. Grayling, "Showing is more potent than saying" (Radio 4, 20 May 2003), and we sought to bring both story and research experience – our unfolding sense of discovery – closer to the audience through what could be called visual strategies of audience inclusion.

The audiences comprised those with policy or practitioner concerns and academics. The visuals, all in colour and displayed by overhead projection, were either drawn from fieldwork data or created for presentational purposes. With extracts from interview transcripts, they were woven into oral presentations lasting approximately 30 minutes. Focussing on the visuals in this composite, we highlight three presentational strategies: visual images and audience rapport; visual grounding; and the visual framing of the argument.

VISUAL RAPPORT AND VISUAL GROUNDING

Visual images promote rapport; people warm to pictures. We neither enter into pedagogic reasons nor the influence of an image saturated environment, but note that the appearance of pictures heralds a discernible settling into seats, silence, and an air of anticipation. To catch the eye is to capture attention, and its immediate engagement recalls the device of the opening joke, reflective not of amusement but identification of speaker with audience. Visuals *in themselves* bring audience and researcher closer, facilitating a mood of critical openness towards the narrative about to unfold.

Within this ambience, visual imagery grounds the narrative in a real world. Images, like those illustrated, not only perform analytically but also visually weave a rich tapestry of mundane detail. This visual usage mirrors those writing styles that "bring the reader to the cultural world rather than reporting on it from a distance" (Harper, 1994, p. 407). To see for oneself is validating. As a woman in one of the food queues of America's poor tellingly observed, "The people in Washington . . . 'need to come down and see how many people are in these lines' "

(Borger, 2003). Our audiences, of course, were not seeing these other social worlds with their own eyes, and the inevitable filtering of data by researcher, participant and audience has been extensively debated (Denzin, 1989). Yet our visual hugging of the everyday[11] brought them a little nearer to the lived experience of educational change.

A VISUAL FRAMEWORK: ANALYTICAL AND POSITIONING IMAGES

To hold the audience, the story was visually framed. Within an argument, images (sometimes the same image) may operate at different levels. Those of the kind we have illustrated, what could be called analytical images, were set within a framework of positioning images, visual statements that structured the argument. These placed the research in its theoretical context, located it at a crossroads of enquiry, and construed fieldwork as a journey of discovery.

Almost "at a glance" (Ball & Smith, 1992, p. 61), a visual metaphor positioned the story in the geo-political context of independent learning. An outline map of England, empty except for two points, marking London and the north-east locale some 350 distant, provided the opening visual statement. A glance geographically placed the study; a second look, however, refocussed by verbal comment,[12] transformed the descriptive geography of place into a visual symbol of the "politics of location" (Massey, 1993, p. 142), displaying what Harper calls "the larger frames of power" (1994, p. 411). The map conveyed both geographical and symbolic distance between southern capital and regional periphery – respectively, the powerful centre and origin of abstract education policy and a distant other where policy decisions are lived in the practices and emotions of the everyday (Ryden, 1993). Photographs – of the approach road and other pictures – then visually transporting the audience to this "other" place.

A second visual metaphor then fostered the view of research as an exploratory journey (Fig. 7). Two women walking away from the camera across a grassy, patchily worn, public space towards a 1960s' housing estate became a multi-layered metaphor of enquiry. Images of local people in a mundane setting implicitly connected the abstract notion of research to ordinary lives and meaningful places; the photographer's stance created the sense of following; and, the caption, *Women in Landscapes*, suggested a teasing complexity not visually apparent. Verbally elaborated, the image represented the research directions of the enquiry. It situated the study in the everyday world the women were traversing; metaphorically reached back into the historic, socio-economic landscape whence they had come; and was poised to follow them into the private spheres of home and inner lives.

Fig. 7. Women in Landscapes.

This visual configuration provided a referent for a narrative which took up these themes.

Finally, dispersed across the presentation rather than positioned, we visually framed fieldwork as a process of discovery. Like the patterns displayed by temporally layering young people's activities, visuals sequentially unveiled the micro-elements of a finding. Similarly, taken-for-granted assumptions would have remained intact, or understandings of a situation tainted, had we not "gone to see" places referred to in participants' interviews. For example, although young people generally talk of clubbing, the Longscar experience is very different to that of Newcastle. And when Gemma spoke of her horse, though knowing she lived in the poorest part of the town, it evoked in us a multi-layered class imagery – of middle class connexions if not circumstances, connoting a potential reservoir of cultural capital which might be drawn upon to promote her academic career.

Photographs of the stabling demolished these presuppositions more tellingly than words (Fig. 8). This was not the world of the pony club. Part of a set of defunct railway carriages, the stable stood in the shadow of industry, surrounded by industrial waste. Gemma had considered leaving school for stablework, but on obtaining reasonable grades at O-level had stayed on to "give A-levels a try." Each day she left college early to care for her horse, earning from stable work in order to keep it. Rather than signalling high status leisure, the practice spoke of retention,

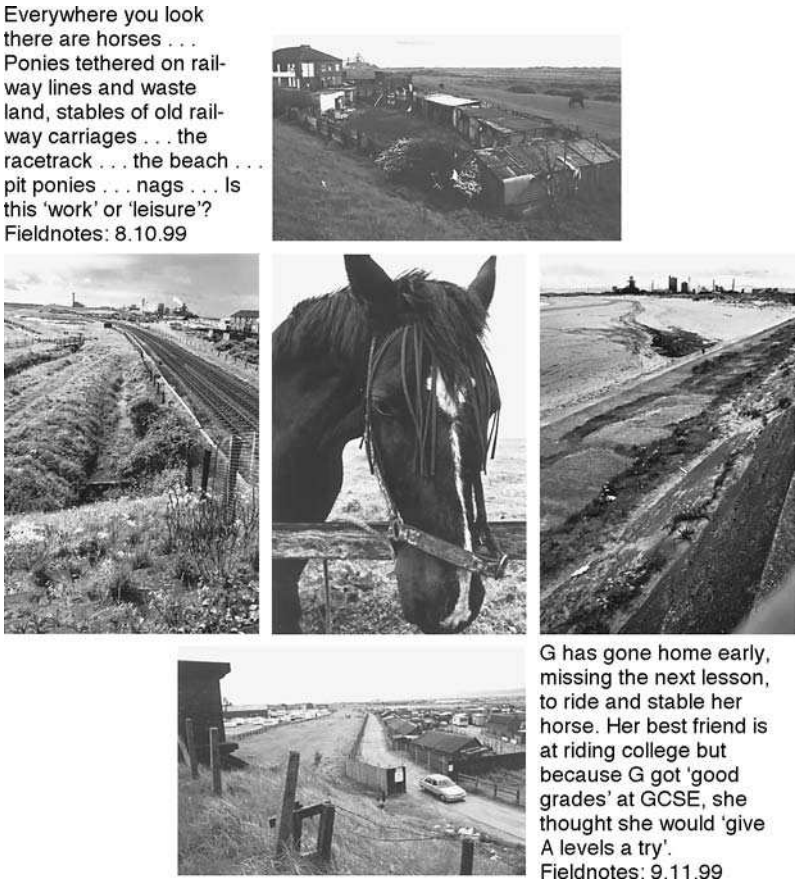

Fig. 8. Gemma's Stabling and Surrounding Landscape.

of a bridge into employment in a poor local labour market. In presenting the visual after Gemma's statement of ownership, the aim was to startle, exposing the socially situated assumptions tucked away in the cultural baggage of both researcher and audience.

CONCLUSION: EYES FOR LISTENING

. . . ever enlarging vistas opening before me as I progressed deeper in my knowledge of the country.

Conrad (1994, p. 11)

The chapter has traced an unanticipated visual journey during which eyes were used to listen. It originated with difficulties in finding a research setting for a study of young people engaged in independent learning, drew on an eclectic range of visual data, and concluded with the dissemination of findings in public presentations. The character of this visual span and the fact that the design of the study was sufficiently robust without its inclusion raise questions as to its particular contribution – what more did the visual tell us?

Our use of the visual focussed not on technique but on enhanced sociological awareness. The visual statement that opened the chapter and has so far lain dormant, Jackows' *Eyes for Listening*, ascribes to the eye a sense that reaches beyond surfaces, denotes that images have something to tell and the viewer a capacity to listen. Just as Walker observed of photographs, visual images "exist on the boundaries of what is familiar and what is unknown" (1999, p. 298). Crossing this boundary and drawing on this "voice or view of the image" (Walker, 1999, p. 298) deepened our sociological understanding of the worlds we were investigating.

The visuals, therefore, were not purely illustrative, whether of geographical setting or daily life – although illustration plays an important role in grounding a study in real experience, showing the texture of the everyday. Nor were images the afterthought Walker attributed to photography a decade ago, "tacked on in the final stage of a project" (1999, p. 280). Rather, arising from its inception and continuing across the project, analysis of mundane sights led us further into participants' worlds, bringing into view layers of meaning which might have remained implicit, unspoken (Bolton et al., 2001), unrecognized, or backgrounded as context.

What we hear an image say, however, and then translate into words, is filtered through the theoretical lens we train upon it. Our selection of visuals was shaped by a theoretically informed, discerning eye that subsequently tightened the theoretical focus by binding the geography of place with the interplay of educational policy and everyday lives. Our eyes became analytically sensitized to the relational messages of status and fit visually inscribed in a changing educational landscape that found expression in geography, colleges, homes and minds.

We live in a visual world, inescapably immersed in a language laced with visual imagery. Yet such ubiquity may blind us to the sociological insights this offers. Indeed, the explicitness of the title Jackows gives his picture hints at a general visual deficit – what could be called a visual deafness. Yet once attuned to the image's voice, new vistas are opened – the sweep of a road, the jolt of an absence, the tread underfoot – link into both intimate and wider "social and cultural arrangements" (Ball & Smith, 1992, p. 31). For us the possibilities that presented themselves were used in the manner of the researcher-bricoleur, deploying what is to hand to reach a goal. Landscape, maps, roads, leaflets, buildings, timetables, furniture, memories emerged as visible facets of the locally lived experience of central educational

policies. The effects of educational change on the practices, identities and inner lives of teachers and students came into view: time became visible, absences made present, and taken for granted assumptions revealed. With regard to dissemination, visual images, created rapport, provided a framework for the argument, and brought the audience closer to the worlds of researcher and researched – in the hope, in Janet Lewis's phrase, "of reaching people's hearts as well as their minds" (1997, p. 29). By keeping our eyes open we perhaps opened the eyes of others.

For us, difficult circumstances foregrounded what we had noticed, and visual discernment led to a research locale which set us off on a visually informed, sociological journey. Good visual data are conceptually dense, but their collection is not necessarily technically complex; and while respondents' eyes and their contribution may take us into their private worlds, much is available in the public sphere. We would argue for a wider inclusion of the visual in sociological enquiry. The educational discourse we traced was enriched and extended for us and, we hope, our audiences, by embedding a visual dimension across the study, in viewing the visually commonplace through a powerful and developing theoretical lens, and through bringing to bear upon the visual Mills' sociological imagination in an attempt "to grasp what is going on in the world" (1978, p. 14).

NOTES

1. Learning assignments, set within educational settings, are undertaken outside formal boundaries. They include homework, unsupervised tasks on college premises, work experience, and work placements.
2. Anne Solberg describes her growing visual alertness to children's work activity; her italics suggest her visual awakening: "I *saw* how eager and willing they were to work" (2001, p. 109).
3. This transformation is variously denoted. Clandinin and Connelly, for example, refer to "field documents" becoming "field texts" when they have been analytically worked upon (1994, p. 419).
4. Such exploratory tours seem little noted in research accounts, though travel finds its way into research costings.
5. A café in the region calls itself "Get Stuffed".
6. The neo-classical architect Sir John Soames (1753–1837) wanted architects to speak through their buildings (Radio 4, 14 September 2003).
7. Attempts to collectively reinforce this cultural memory were embodied in the A-level wing's Remembrance Day Service.
8. Former uses of institutions are frequently absorbed through the senses – from panelling, flooring, window height etc.
9. It is of note that writing earlier on this subject we were at pains not to impute blame (Dixon & Allatt, 2001).

10. The following are but some of these meanings – to show, disclose, bring to attention, perceive, comprehend, understand, open the mind, see things afresh, see what has been obscured or unnoticed, mentally discern, grasp the meaning.

11. Pictures do not necessarily have to be of the particular locale. A recent book on Germany and war destruction used pictures unlinked to the text to give a sense of the real world.

12. While Brannen (2002) notes the video's power to convey clear messages by stripping away the nuances of verbal discourse, our static image provided a base for elaboration.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The data are from a larger study, *Youth, Family and Education: the Formation of the Independent Learner*, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (Award number L 134 251009) within the *ESRC Research Programme: Youth, Citizenship and Social Change*. The research was based on two sites, Teesside and Yorkshire, conducted respectively by the Universities of Teesside and Leeds.

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IMAGES, INTERVIEWS AND INTERPRETATIONS: MAKING CONNECTIONS IN VISUAL RESEARCH

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INTRODUCTION

Barthes (1977) famously argued that the meaning of an image does not become apparent until it is accompanied and explicated by text. Pictures are ambiguous, he suggests, and their interpretation is dependent on words to specify and focus their multiple and uncertain meanings. However, it is also apparent that relationships between texts and images may take many different forms (Becker, 1981; Berger, 1972; Chaplin, 1994; Pink, 2001). Furthermore, for the social scientist, the texts that mediate the meanings of pictures come in two different forms and contexts. There are the words of respondents – captured by interviews, questionnaires and other research devices – and those of social science theory and analysis. Similarly, images may be generated by respondents, by researchers or derived from secondary sources by respondents or researchers. Thus, an examination of the methodological foundations of visual research in social science must address the varied and dynamic interrelationships between pictorial images, interview transcripts and theoretical interpretations, through which meaning is constructed rather than simply found. As Chaplin comments, sociologists *make* rather than *take* photographs (1994).

This chapter does not offer a comprehensive classification of the many ways in which these relationships can be constructed. Instead, it charts the experience of the authors in undertaking six visual research studies, all of which employed

Seeing is Believing? Approaches to Visual Research
Studies in Qualitative Methodology, Volume 7, 105–121

ISSN: 1042-3192/doi:10.1016/S1042-3192(04)07007-7

cameras to generate still and video images. It describes our unfolding awareness of these relationships and analyses the roles played by images, interviews and interpretations in each study. All six of projects discussed here were embedded in two ESRC-funded projects, comprising part of the "Future of Work" initiative (*Working at Home: New Perspectives* L212252022 and *Transforming Places of Work* L212252051). The first examined the domestic and employment lives of managerial and professional employees who work at home. The second investigated changes to social relations in the office, associated with loss of personal space and personal workstations. In addition, the second project examined the employment practices and social networks of people who work on the move from place to place (e.g. in trains, cars and planes). Our initial plans made some provision for the use of visual methods, particularly in the second project. However, the main thrust of our research design entailed a large programme of interviewing and data analysis that did not incorporate such techniques. Nevertheless, as time went on, visual methods increased in salience, both in the conduct of the research and the presentation of findings.

STUDY ONE – PHOTOGRAPHING WORKSTATIONS IN THE HOME

Study One entailed interviewing 72 people, and their spouses/partners, who worked at home for a substantial proportion of the time (144 respondents in total). We asked a series of questions about relationships with managers, clients, co-workers and other household members. Towards the end of interviews, once rapport had been established, we also asked respondents whether they would mind showing us the place where they worked and allow us to take a few photographs. The response rate was very high, with virtually no refusals. Digital cameras were used and paper versions of the images were created using a standard colour printer. In this way, we generated 245 colour photographs. In most cases we had several pictures from different angles of each workstation and its location in the house.

When embarked on taking photographs, our expectations were shaped by existing theoretical frameworks. Although the literature on how people incorporate workstations into their homes is not extensive (Ahrentzen, 1990, 1992; Beach, 1989; Bulos & Chaker, 1993; Felstead & Jewson, 2000; Haddon & Lewis, 1994; Haddon & Silverstone, 1993; Michelson & Linden, 1997), it delineates two typical configurations. On the one hand, segregated workstations that are cut off from the rest of the household and, on the other, integrated workstations located in the midst of domestic life. Indeed, on the strength of this assumption, our interviews were intended to discover what determined respondents choices between these options.

When all the images had been printed off, they were laid out together on a large table. Because transcription takes a considerable period, the pictures arrived before the interview texts. Looking at *all* the photographs *together* it rapidly became apparent that a two-way classification of the relationship between home and work was far too simple and failed to capture the variety of the images before us. Instead the images suggested a continuum from segregation to integration. Our encounter with these images, therefore, forced us to reconstruct our taken-for-granted classificatory scheme. Accordingly, we decided to search within the photographs for *visual* evidence of spatial boundaries that appeared to represent divisions in social relationships. We focused on features such as the disposition of artefacts, the style of décor and the use of physical barriers and markers within the home. In conceptualising such boundaries, we drew upon conceptual models derived from sociological and anthropological theory, in particular the work of Douglas on "group" and "grid" (1973) and Bernstein on "classification" and "frame" (1973).

Our interrogation of the images involved several stages, each comprising an attempt to classify observed boundaries within the photographs into a series of formally defined types of domestic arrangements. Each typology typically generated anomalous images, leading to further refinement of the categories and redistribution of the images within them. Eventually we produced a five-cell typology, representing distinctive types of domestic spatial configurations, which enabled us to classify all the images (photographs illustrating each of these is displayed in the panel overleaf). In this process, the benefits of taking photographs became increasingly obvious. Photography had provided a permanent and readily-available record of all the research sites that could be "revisited" at times and places of our choosing. We were able to juxtapose images, shuffle them around and create tentative associations, generating several alternative classifications. The production of multiple digital copies was cheap, fast and simple.

'Detachment' – clear and precise physical and aesthetic segregation of working space and domestic space.

'Juxtaposition' – work activities clearly demarcated from the rest of the house but within sight, sound and touch.

'Assimilation' – the aesthetic look and feel of the home environment obscures work.

'Collision' – both domesticity and employment compete for the same space.

'Synthesis' – the worlds of work and home are blended and fused.

More generally, making and analysing images not only generated substantive findings but also created new leads in the research process and sensitised us to our own unquestioned assumptions. The *process* was valuable in itself, independently of its outcome. The photographs contained more information about socio-spatial boundaries in the home than ever *could* have been captured by interview. Words could not have represented the wealth of detail contained in the photographs. Moreover, careful scrutiny of photographs revealed aspects of domestic interiors that respondents were likely to take for granted or even seek to hide. Furthermore, photographs enabled us to identify aspects of the sites that were significant within *our* theoretical schema, rather than those of respondents. Thus, our five-fold schema was generated by inspection of the photographic images themselves, without recourse to interview transcripts. Later we did examine the interviews but our initial analysis was developed independently and was not subsequently revised by them.

Study One, therefore, was driven primarily by the interaction between images taken by the researchers and sociological theories developed by the researchers. Respondents' comments played little direct role.

STUDY TWO – SHADOWING MOBILE WORKERS

Study Two entailed shadowing ten "mobile workers"; that is, people who routinely conduct work activities in trains, planes and cars as well as transitional places, such as motorway service stations and airport lounges (Brown, 2001; Cairncross, 1997; Felstead et al., 2005; Laurier, 2001; Laurier & Philo, 1999; Rifkin, 2000). A variety of recording techniques were employed, including making extensive written notes

and tape recording long sequences of conversation. In addition, we used digital cameras to photograph places visited by respondents and locations of work-related social interactions. Nevertheless, although we had the consent of respondents, the practicalities and social dynamics of some situations inhibited taking pictures.

Unlike Study One, on this occasion the benefits of visual methods were limited and secondary. Cameras enabled us to make reliable and accessible records of the various places that respondents travelled through, and worked in, during the course of a day. Furthermore, comparison of photographs with interview transcripts revealed that respondents were not always accurate or comprehensive in remembering, or even recognizing, where and how they worked. In this instance, researchers' images were more accurate than respondents' words. Another benefit of taking photographs was that all the members of the research team could see something of the texture of the working lives of shadowed respondents. This was important because the practical limitations of time and resource meant that only one researcher could shadow each respondent.

However, the output from shadowing was dominated by the huge volume of interview transcripts that this method produced. Photographs functioned primarily as illustrations to respondents' words. This was partly because establishing and maintaining rapport limited the number of photographs that could be taken. It was also, however, because our decisions about what and when to take photographs were not guided by a strong theoretical framework. We did have some conceptual models in mind – derived from the work of Goffman (1959, 1963) – but these were not linked to the image making process through a precise specification of when, where and how the camera should be used (as in Study One). As a result, the visual aspects of Study Two became somewhat *ad hoc*.

In Study Two, then, visual images functioned primarily as illustrations of, and adjuncts to, interview transcripts. They had little significance in their own right and did not play a major role in the development of theories and explanations.

STUDY THREE – PHOTO-ELICITATION WITH "MOBILE WORKERS"

The objective of Study Three was to generate theoretically focused qualitative evidence about the practices of "mobile workers." Unlike Studies One and Two, visual methods were central to the research design from the outset. Moreover, this time we decided to put the camera into the hands of our respondents and give them responsibility for selecting and taking images. In this way, we hoped to facilitate a more active collaboration between respondents and researchers (cf Chaplin, 1994; Pink, 2001). We wanted to devise a methodology that would bring the words and

images of respondents into a productive dialogue with one another. Furthermore, we sought to locate that dialogue within a researcher-led analytical process of generating theoretical models and explanations.

Study Three took the form of photo-elicitation; that is, a mode of research in which respondents are presented with images that are intended to elicit their verbal responses, captured in interview (Emmison & Smith, 2000, pp. 36–38; Harper, 1986, 1988; Prosser & Schwartz, 1998; Schwartz, 1989; Walker & Weidel, 1985). Images may be culled from secondary sources (such as the media), derived from respondents' own sources (such as family snap shots) or generated by the researcher. In Study three, however, respondents were asked to take the photographs themselves, a method known as "autophotography" (Clancy & Dollinger, 1993; Ziller, 1990). In extended interviews, respondents were subsequently asked why they had shot these pictures and the meanings they attributed to them.

Seven "mobile workers" agreed to take photographs of their working environment over the course of a week. Each was given a disposable analogue camera, capable of 27 shots, and altogether they produced 115 images. Conscious of the lessons of Study Two, the researchers provided respondents in with specific instructions about what pictures they should take and when.

> In this project we are interested in the places, and in the ways, in which people work in the 21st century. Accordingly, would you please take pictures of the following: (a) the range of different places where you work; (b) the tools you use to carry out your job (however expensive or ordinary they might be); (c) your most and least favourite aspects of your working environment. Please feel free to take pictures of anything and everything that strikes you personally as relevant. Don't worry about the artistic quality of the photographs! It is their content that interests us. Please take as many or as few photographs as you wish.

Once they had finished, respondents mailed their cameras and film to the researchers. Two sets of each film were then developed. One was given to respondents *after* they had completed the elicitation interview. Respondents had not, therefore, seen the pictures that they themselves had taken prior to the interview. In contrast, before each interview, the researchers carefully inspected all the photographs, looking for unexpected images, inexplicable details and any other representations of potential significance. The researchers, then, entered the elicitation interview fully appraised of the images, with an agenda of questions and comments to put to respondents.

At the elicitation interview, the photographs were presented to respondents one by one. With each picture, initial questions were standardized and general (e.g. "why did you take this picture?") but gradually funnelled down to detailed and specific queries. Interviewers lingered over each photograph, not presenting the next until it was apparent that respondents had no more to say. Interviews averaged approximately an hour.

As in Study One, the photographs revealed aspects of respondents' lives that they were unlikely to have spoken about in a conventional interview because they took them for granted or were unaware of their significance. Furthermore, the pictures provided a means for researchers to press respondents for verbal responses. The images made it possible to delve into the experiences, practices and knowledges that underpinned the nomadic lifestyle of "mobile workers." The minutia of tacit and taken-for-granted "cook book" knowledge could be teased out in photo-elicitation interviews. The photographs typically acted as a catalyst that inspired respondents to construct a verbal narrative. They wrapped stories, anecdotes, histories and mythologies around the images. The photographs were triggers of memory and narrative (cf. the role of family photograph albums, Chalfen, 1998). Unlike Study Two, therefore, the images and interview texts of Study Three were closely linked, each informing and enhancing the other.

Study Three was informed from the outset by Actor Network Theory, alerting us to the importance texts, devices and disciplines in ordering networks of social relationships (Law, 1986; Law & Hassard, 1999). In addition, Study Three drew on the work of Goffman, particularly with respect to spatial forms in the presentation of the self (1959, 1963). The instructions issued to respondents were directly attuned to these theoretical concerns. As a result, Study Three successfully revealed how "mobile workers" assemble and repair networks of long-distance control and mobility, navigate their way through and between physical and symbolic locations, and exert influence over others at a distance. Theoretical perspectives provided the lens through which images and transcripts were ordered and interpreted. At the same time, interview transcripts and photographic images together elucidated our theoretical perspectives, developing their themes and articulating issues. In Study Three, therefore, images, interviews and interpretations were more equally articulated with one another than in earlier studies.

There were, however, some limitations. Respondents did not always remember to take pictures or it was inconvenient for them to do so. It was sometimes difficult for the researchers to read the time gaps between still photographs. Since nearly all the pictures had been taken by our respondents, our interviewees themselves rarely appeared. It was possible that some items, places and people had been posed. Arguably, images that our respondents perceived as damaging or discrediting were unlikely to be presented. Respondents may also have refrained from taking photographs that they perceived not to be of interest to researchers. This reflects a general characteristic of photo-elicitation studies. Conventional interviews entail a good deal of face-to-face interaction between researchers and respondents, in which each grooms the responses of the other from the outset. In contrast, photo-elicitation offers far fewer cues to the respondent about what is expected or required

until late in the study. These issues were, however, explored in the interviews. Indeed, a rich vein of further questioning concerned the pictures that respondents had *not* taken.

Overall, then, in Study Three images, interviews and interpretations all played a major role in the research process, informing each other and driving the research process forward through their interaction.

STUDY FOUR – PHOTO-ELICITATION IN "COLLECTIVE OFFICES"

Flushed with success from Study Three, we decided to conduct a similar photo-elicitation study in what we have termed "collective offices"; that is, offices in which personal space has been eliminated and replaced by collective facilities, such as "hot desks," "touchdown desks" and bookable rooms (Felstead et al., 2005; see also Becker & Steele, 1995; DEGW & BRE, 1996; Duffy, 1990, 1992, 1997; Law, 1999, 2001). In "collective offices" workers are required to assemble and defend individualised sequences of activity in time and space. They find themselves navigating between temporarily available workstations within an office building, often experiencing disruption to their work plans. They have to invent ways of making contact with colleagues at the same time as avoiding unwanted interruptions from others. Parallels between the skills and practices of "mobile workers" and "collective office" workers suggested to us that Study Four should adopt a similar methodology to Study Three.

Study Four was conducted in a private sector agency, with approximately 120 employees engaged in highly creative forms of "knowledge work." Twelve respondents took part, using 27-shot disposable analogue cameras. Altogether, they produced 297 images. They were given written instructions intended to delineate a clearly defined task that was intended to tap into their lived experience of working in the organization.

> This is a project about ways of working and use of space in [Name of the organization]. We are asking you, along with a number of other [members of staff], to make a photographic record of your experience of your working environment(s) over the course of a week. With the enclosed disposable camera, please take a photograph every time you move between one location and another. Please feel free to take pictures wherever you work. Our only requests are that you begin the roll with a picture of yourself, take at least five shots per day and record the date/time on the back of the camera.

On first sight, the photographs produced by respondents were puzzling. Many appeared to depict incidental or trivial subjects. In part, we attributed this to the more open-ended instruction that respondents had received that may have

allowed for idiosyncratic interpretation. We went into the interview phase of the study, therefore, seeking clarification by means of many open-ended questions. However, interviews in Study Four were highly informative. Initially, photographs were presented one at a time and respondents were asked to explain what they showed and why they had taken this shot. Once all the pictures were on the table, interviewees were asked what they thought the entire collection said about their working lives. Finally, respondents were questioned about specific aspects of the images. As in Study Three, respondents talked fluently and revealingly about their pictures. Once again, the images triggered off rich verbal reflections on working in "collective offices."

Thus, in Study Four, interviews enabled us to grasp the meaning that respondents gave to the photographs whilst, at the same time, their images drove and enlivened the verbal dialogue between researchers and respondents. Transcripts comprised both pictures and words. Each was required to make sense of the other. This conjunction of respondents' images and texts created a new synthesis, superseding interviews and photographs alone. We have called such transcripts "photo-scripts." "Photo-scripts" proved very useful in disseminating our research results. Thus, for example, we constructed a public exhibition that comprised quotations from interviews conducted in Study Four juxtaposed with respondents' photographs. However, "photo-scripts" also enabled the researchers to devise new theoretical interpretations of the social relations of "collective offices." We constructed concepts that incorporated lay perceptions but also went beyond them. This evolved into a nine-point ideal type that teased out a series of consequences for social relationships of the abolition of personal space in the offices.

In Study Four, then, images, interviews and theoretical interpretations all played a part in the research process. Each informed the other, each made sense in the light of the other. They were three interconnected but independent threads of meaning.

STUDY FIVE – VIDEO DIARY OF A "COLLECTIVE OFFICE" WORKER

Study Five comprised a video diary of life in a "collective office," shot by two employees of the organization that featured in Study Four. The respondents were not asked to make a finished film but, rather, to shoot as much or as little video as they liked of everything and anything they thought relevant and interesting. This footage was then to be jointly edited by the researchers and respondents into a documentary format, drawing upon the expertise of technical professionals as required. Our expectation was that Study Five would produce masses of short pieces of video that, in collaboration with respondents, we would assemble and

edit to illustrate our newly constructed ideal type of the "collective office" that had emerged from Study Four.

It was agreed that one respondent would operate the camera and the other would appear on screen, although this division of labour became blurred. They planned to take shots as and when they had spare time over approximately ten working days. A hand-held DVD video camera was used in the hope that this medium would be easy to edit. In effect, the plan was that one respondent would shadow the other and that the results would be available to the researchers as a video record. Sound would capture conversations but the main source of evidence would be the pictures.

We hoped that the involvement of office workers themselves would reduce the number of posed images, sometimes encountered in previous studies. In addition, and very importantly, we wanted to enhance the autonomy and scope of respondents in the research process. The brief was deliberately general and open-ended. Respondents were asked to record anything *they* thought interesting. Moreover, they were to be fully involved in, although not wholly in control of, the editing process.

It has to be said that these arrangements did raise difficult ethical issues. It might be argued that the researchers had put the respondents into the role of "mole" or "spy" inside the organisation. Insiders were, arguably, more likely to get permission for filming from colleagues, were already privy to office secrets and were more likely to capture candid moments. Nevertheless, when we received the results of our respondents' work, there was much excitement in the research team. Four hours later, however, we were confused and dispirited. There were long sequences that seemed to have no bearing on the use of space and time in "collective offices." It was not clear to us what themes informed the images and we could not grasp the significance of much of what was shown. There was, moreover, another serious difficulty. The technical quality of the video was not good enough for public exhibition. Even the bits we found relevant often did not have the appropriate clarity, lighting and length of shot that would enable us to compile a film for public consumption.

On reflection, we realized that we had made two mistakes in Study Five. First, we had sought to produce visual materials for public display with kit likely to produce technically flawed output. Technically good images required the use of high quality tripod cameras and lighting. Our second mistake had been that of expecting respondents to illustrate our pre-conceived theories, whereas, naturally enough, what they did was to describe their own lay perceptions. We decided, therefore, to look again with fresh eyes at the visual materials they had produced – and only then to incorporate them into theoretical discourses. Accordingly, we replayed the video images, putting aside our theoretical preconceptions and trying to grasp our respondents' viewpoint.

The key to rereading the video diary in Study Five came from remembering a casual remark by a respondent in the photo-elicitation interviews of Study Four. This respondent had accidentally taken a picture of the furniture in the café. Apologising, she added that the benches in the canteen had been deliberately introduced, replacing chairs, in order to force staff to interaction with one another. Occupying a place at a bench, as opposed to sinking into a chair, forced other diners to stand up, squeeze together and start talking. We realised that the humble bench was a symbol of a widespread and deliberate managerial strategy in the company to achieve control through the integration of employees into an intense organizational culture and small group socializing. Furthermore, and this was the new realization, this intention was written in and through every aspect of the *aesthetic* of the building, large and small. Participation in and performance of this aesthetic was central to the way in which company values, mission, myth and memory were transmitted and received.

The casual remarks of our respondent about the benches in the café brought to mind Strati's wonderful discussion of the chair (1996, 1999) and Gagliardi's work on corporate landscapes (1996). This, in turn, shifted our reading of the visual materials generated by respondents in Study Five. The apparently extraneous images of the video were, in fact, depicting everyday aspects of the aesthetic of the workplace, which inculcated particular dispositions and attitudes in the workforce. The video was telling us about a central aspect of workplaces that we had failed fully to understand; that is, the role of aesthetic orders of meaning in processes of managerial control. For respondents, the aesthetic of the workplace was a crucial aspect of their individual identities within the company and, to outsiders, a valued badge of membership of a highly successful corporation. Moreover, the aesthetic actively performed and creatively reproduced by employees. In the performance of the aesthetic of the building, corporate culture was institutionalised, energised and celebrated. It also became apparent that this was encouraged – indeed required – by senior management. In the absence of bureaucratic rules, the fabric of the organization was its culture and its culture was exemplified in its style. Style and surveillance, décor and discipline, went hand in hand. The workplace itself had become an image that constituted the social relations of the labour process (Nickson et al., 2001, 2003; Witz et al., 2003).

Study Five was, therefore, a mixed blessing. It failed to deliver materials to illustrate our preconceived theoretical model of the collective office. However, by reading the images through our respondents' eyes we were led to a whole new line of enquiry and, ultimately, new ways of theorizing social relations in "collective offices." The process of conducting Study Five had great heuristic value, even though it did not lead directly to a specific output.

STUDY SIX – VIDEO OF "COLLECTIVE OFFICE" WORKERS MADE BY THE RESEARCHERS

Study Six comprised a video planned, directed and edited by the researchers, with the technical assistance of a professional camera crew. It was shot in the same "collective office" that had figured in Study Four and Five. It was explicitly intended as an exposition of the ideal type model of the "collective office" generated in Study Four. In Study Six, then, image making was firmly directed from the outset by a strong theoretical frame developed by the researchers. We devised a storyboard that provided a tight shooting agenda for the camera crew. However, we also recorded chance events that occurred whilst we were on site, provided that they were relevant to our theoretical objectives. Several hours of film were edited down into seven and a half minutes of video. Each section of the video is introduced by a brief caption, indicating the key ideas expressed in one element of the ideal type. This is followed by a sequence of images of the workplace, presented as a collage of short shots. This film has proved very effective in disseminating our research findings to both academic and lay audiences.

It might be argued that the video produced in Study Six is no more than an illustration of our ideal type of the "collective office." The images were explicitly selected as servants of an established theoretical interpretation. However, it is our contention that the video does more than simply illustrate; it also elucidates and illuminates. There are aspects of the ideal type that are more firmly grasped and deeply understood as a result of *seeing* the images portrayed in the video. In these instances, issues and themes are not only conveyed by, but also *constituted* in, the image. A good example concerns the role of the aesthetic within the social order of the office, to which we were alerted in Study Five. To see an assembly of logos, décor, furnishings, posters, artefacts, signs, colour schemes and insignia conveys a sense of the aesthetic texture of the organisation and its corporate landscape that is difficult to capture in words alone.

In Study Six, then, researcher-generated images were used to illustrate researcher-generated theories. Images were used by the researchers as a mode of communication in their own right, to evoke ineffable aspects of social relations.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored some of the ways in which visual images, interview texts and theoretical interpretations interrelate in the conduct of research projects that utilise visual methodologies (see also Banks, 2001; Grimshaw, 2001; Rose,

2001; Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001). Several general points emerge from the six studies described here.

Words and text, of researchers and respondents, colour the meanings attributed to images. There is no escaping the ubiquitous framing power of texts. However, in addition, images can change the way interview transcripts are read and serve as a catalyst to theoretical reconceptualization. Even when simply used as illustration, the presence of an image changes the way in which texts are apprehended. Images communicate some messages more acutely and subtly than words ever can. Some aspects of social life and lived experience are particularly suitable for visual expression, such as the function of aesthetics in social organization. Hence, as Pink (2001, p. 96) remarks: "the purpose of analysis is not to translate 'visual evidence' into verbal knowledge, but to explore the relationship between visual (and other) knowledge."

In social science research there are many different ways in which the relationships between pictorial images, interview transcripts and theoretical interpretations can take place. It is necessary to be clear and explicit about what kind of dialogue is intended and achieved. Interactions between images, interviews and interpretations may occur in various sequences; one or the other may be the driving or dominant force at any particular stage in the investigation. Furthermore, images may play a variety of different roles in these interactions. Images may record, reveal, elicit, illustrate, demonstrate or evoke meanings.

The camera never offers a simple "slice of objective reality." It is not a simple truth-revealing mechanism (Edwards, 1992; Winston, 1998). The picture is a product of decisions about lighting, camera angle, framing, posing, editing, staging and even faking. More generally, the picture is grounded in a set of assumptions, premises and dispositions of the image-maker and the image-reader. In many ways, these are even more difficult to excavate than those contained within the spoken and written words. Far from being the nemesis of visual sociology, however, this presents its opportunity. The image can reveal that which respondents cannot say in words, are not aware that they know and do not realize is of immense relevance to the project. Exploration of the field of vision – the visual habitus – of image-makers offers a very fertile ground for understanding the experiential world of research subjects. In this chapter we have seen the apparently irrelevant visual output of respondents later reinterpreted as an opening into new modes of understanding.

For this to work, however, researchers must be reflexively aware and theoretically informed. Reflexive understanding requires researchers to interrogate their own unquestioned assumptions and taken-for-granted premises. It also requires researchers to adopt a stance of openness to the visual field respondents, reflected in a willingness not to dismiss their images but to seek to understand what their pictures show. Such an attitude calls for a distinctive kind of theorising.

Theory is essential to visual sociology as to all sociological work. The interpretative power of theory raises image making into a sociological enterprise (Becker, 1974, 1998). It is theory that distinguishes visual sociology from photojournalism and documentary recording. However, theory never exists in isolation – it is always theory *of* something and always engaged in making sense of empirical evidence. The truth of the photograph in sociological research consists in its *relationship* to a theoretical framework that makes the researcher aware of its significance and relevance within an overall structure of sociological explanation. Without a theoretical framework that is explicit and systematically applied to the image gathering process, there is a danger that the project will drift into impressionistic description.

One of the key ways in which the conceptual framework of sociological theory engages with the concrete process of making images is through the instructions or task given to the photographer. We have seen how variations in the breadth and specificity of the task given to image-makers – both researchers and respondents – can have major implications for outcomes. "Fishing trips," where the brief is permissive and unrestrictive, may prove to be beneficial. However, they may also descend into description or the mere collection of curiosities. Equally, a narrow and pedestrian task that is ineffectively theorised will also be to be disappointing. The ideal situation is one in which the task of the image-maker is clear, concise, and fully informed by key theoretical perspectives.

A collaborative relationship with respondents, in a creative partnership, is one way of achieving open-ended reflexivity. This is not to deny the ultimate responsibility of the researcher for the project nor to suggest that the story that the researcher tells is merely a rehash of commonsense translated into sociological jargon. It is the researcher who brings the disciplinary understanding and imagination that makes a sociological study – which may even contradict the truth claims of respondents. However, dialogue and shared activity is highly likely to open the researcher's eyes and ears to the worlds of meaning that respondents inhabit. In collaboration, the conventional roles of researcher and researched, if not reversed, are reconfigured.

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POWER, INEQUALITY, CHANGE AND UNCERTAINTY: VIEWING THE WORLD THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT PRISM

Matt Smith and John Donnelly

> The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled (Berger J., 1972, p. 7).
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> . . . reports of the suffering of distant others are morally meaningful to audiences in a way that is much more complex and confusing than journalists intend. Their meanings also seem to be much more complex than the existing social theories which deal with the matter seem to be able to accommodate (Tester K., 2001, pp. 11–12).
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> . . . photography remains the least investigated media, under-examined even in the mainstream of cultural studies, when paradoxically photography remains the prevalent form in which visual images intrude upon us, are transmitted and viewed (Evans J., 1999, p. 129).

This chapter develops and explores connections between visual sociology and the sociology of development. In doing so, it supports the argument that a focus on the visual, on representation or on mediation should not be solely harnessed to explorations of the cultural. Instead, the paper argues that visual sociological methods and sensitivities can afford significant insights into the contemporary theory and practice of development, and in doing so, are intimately connected to issues of global social, political and economic relations, social justice and inequality. However, the above quotations, which we will return to later in the chapter, point to the problematic nature of the intersections between the sociology of development, images of development and the meanings attributed to those

Seeing is Believing? Approaches to Visual Research
Studies in Qualitative Methodology, Volume 7, 123–145

ISSN: 1042-3192/doi:10.1016/S1042-3192(04)07008-9

images by the audience. They point up the complexity of processes of perception in the context of the inadequacy of existing analytical frameworks and the relative lack of focused research. This chapter is an attempt to address these shortcomings through a discussion of the role that the use of images can play in development education and the contribution that a visual sociology of development can play in highlighting issues of theoretical importance for understanding and promoting development. In the process, this work is also able to contribute to wider social theoretical understandings; if "development" is a classic example of a grand (if troubled) narrative, then analysis of its visual production and reception can afford a significant vantage point on debates around modernity and post-modernity.

The paper begins with a brief outline of the context of this work. The growth and current state of the development industry, including its actors, theories and practices, and the "globalisation of development" is explored. Section two explores the connections between development, modernity and the visual, exploring some of the ways in which visualisation has been included in the theory and practice of development. Section three reviews and discusses the ways images of development have been critiqued and shifted, highlighting the limitations of focusing on stereotyping and suggesting a need for recognition of the increasingly contradictory ways in which development is visualised. This theme is developed further in section four which draws on qualitative research conducted into young people's responses to complex visual images of development. The section argues that these contradictions – and the research technique – hold out the possibility of transforming political engagement, as well as affording important theoretical insights around development and agency in a global context. The chapter concludes with observations on the urgency of further work in this area and the potential of linking the sociology of development and visual sociology to do this.

SOCIOLOGY AND THE GLOBALISATION OF DEVELOPMENT

In order to sustain our argument that a blending of visual sociology and the sociology of development can be productive and politically engaged, we need to locate the debate in the wider developmental context into which sociological interventions can be made. As this chapter will demonstrate, popular understandings of development, mostly mediated by visual imagery, reflect a rapidly changing development industry, as well as affording significant social theoretical insights. Thus, we need to briefly consider some of the key features of the development landscape, and the ways in which sociologists might engage in this, particularly in the context of the globalisation of development; the ways in

which processes of globalisation are transforming the actors and agents involved in development, the roots of development authority and legitimacy and the changing ways in which development is defined and understood. This already hints at an important link with the visual; "development" must be understood as being linked to the same processes and relationships which underpin a world increasingly shaped by the visual image.

Debates around what development is, should be or has been occupy the centre of the study, practice and politics of development. Thus, the study of development cannot be divorced from its normative roots: it can be argued that moral engagement is a *sine qua non* of the study of development and hence, sociological theorising of development. The core concerns of the study of development – global inequality and poverty, global social justice and strategies for improving the life-chances of the majority of the world's population – require an "engaged" approach underpinned by a moral vision, rooted in a concern for justice, freedom and care (Ignatieff, 1998; Quarles van Ufford & Giri (Eds), 2003; Tester, 2001). In itself, this presents a complex challenge for researchers, but is made all the more complex by the complex and shifting norms and frameworks of development practice as well as the "growth of supraterritorial relations" (Scholte, 2000, p. 46) – in other words, globalisation.

Whilst there is insufficient space to fully engage in these debates here, it is important to acknowledge some of the central questions and complexities, as these inform both the ways development is visualised, and the ways in which visual images of development are "read." For the purposes of this chapter, when we refer to development we are referring to directed processes of social, political, economic and cultural change in the context of poor nation states and communities; in other words, we are not concerned simply with processes of change, but with the ways in which these are engendered. What beneficial change is has shifted and moved over time and between different actors and agencies in development. But rather than follow a smooth transition through different visions, competing theories of development interpenetrate and jostle for power – particularly in terms of their adoption by key agencies. For example, modernisation theory's privileging of economic output remains, but its emphasis on the nation state has increasingly shifted, via institutions such as the World Bank and IMF, to structures of global governance and agents such as Trans-National Corporations. On the other hand, the emphasis on participatory development, which focused attention on micro level democracy, has been increasingly mainstreamed. Development theory's survival in an era in which grand narratives are increasingly dispensed with perhaps partly explains the emphasis on policy and practice away from theory, leaving unresolved the fundamental tensions of universalism vs. relativism which lie at the heart of development; what is the balance between enabling diverse voices to be heard,

and sticking to fundamental rights to survive and thrive? As later sections will show, analysis of the visualisation of development provides a key insight into both the theoretical and political problems inherent in failing to adequately address this dilemma, particularly in terms of democratising development through engendering engagement with it. As we will also show, these insights are grounded in linking visual sociology's insights and sensitivities to the core traditions of sociological investigation, such as a concern with structure, agency and morality.

Informed by and informing the shifting theories of development have been changes in the key actors and agencies of development. In many respects, it is fair to talk of a development industry, with diverse institutions, agencies, experts and subjects, linked together in often complex and contradictory ways. Whilst the state formed the centre of development theory and practice in the aftermath of empire – Nehru's India is a strong example – the growing emphasis on the market has undermined this centrality. This has partly informed the growth of multilateral agencies in promoting and sometimes delivering development, and is also strongly linked to the rise of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) who, some claim, have stepped in to replace the state's welfare function. The perceived failure, amongst many, of the state-led and market-led systems, has informed a new emphasis on civil society, both at national and global levels. It is important to remember, though, that these spheres – state, market, civil society – are not independent of each other. For example, NGOs compete with each other to attract funding from the state and to market themselves with the public, whilst the state employs NGOs and corporations to deliver development policy. Indeed, the proclaimed emergence of a global civil society has generated a hugely diversified but complex picture, with a growing number of civic actors engaging in development in diverse ways, from grassroots networking and local development, to global advocacy and development education. This diversifies the potential for engagement as well as shifting the rationales for visualising development. A key factor in the growth of global civil society organisations and networks has been communications, particularly ICTs, in facilitating transnational organisation. As a result, both text and images have been increasingly central features of the development industry.

Change, contradiction and complexity in development theory and practice, makes the maintenance of coherent moral engagement all the more challenging and all the more pressing. In many respects, there is an irony in suggesting the need to develop a visual sociology of development as part of the process of taking the sociology of development forward, since it is the arrival of the approaches often associated with the visual – post-modernism, post-structuralism, cultural studies – that has unsettled the universals on which the sociology of development so depended. Yet we wish to show that a visual sociology of development

can contribute to the reinvigoration of morally engaged theory and practice in development.

What is implied by this emphasis on morality? This can be taken to be expressive of a sense of responsibility as well as a need to understand and explain. If ethics can be taken to relate to a responsibility to the "other," then development ethics can be taken to relate to a global responsibility for human rights and social justice (Quarles van Ufford & Giri (Eds), 2003). It implies an ethical concern of care for "distant strangers," while at the same time providing an opportunity for shared learning. This can be related to what journalist-turned-politician Martin Bell refers to as a "journalism of attachment" – a journalism that is a kind of moral enterprise informed by a sense of right and wrong and that cares as well as knows (cited in Tester, 2001, p. 10). But a "moral voice" of care by itself is insufficient; this needs to be supplemented by a moral voice of justice. Research by Gilligan (cited in Tester, 2001, p. 66ff) and her colleagues has identified a "gender focus" (although not a gender specificity) to these two moral voices, with men being more likely to voice a justice-based concern and women more likely to voice a care-based concern. Tester's (2001, p. 66ff) discussion of these distinctions in relation to the concept of compassion relates these different moral voices to an inescapable moral incommensurability. We do not find this convincing. Rather than being incommensurable, these moral voices are complementary. If for example we look at some of the photographs taken by David Bailey for Band Aid (Bailey, 1985) – and there are three differing photographs of the same child that reoccur in that book that imprint themselves on the memory (pages un-numbered) – or some of the photographs of Don McCullin from war-torn Biafra of an emaciated mother trying to suckle her child or of a dying Albino boy (McCullin, 1995, pp. 79, 91. See also his account of taking the latter photograph in his autobiography (McCullin, 1990, pp. 123–124) and the discussion in Cohen (2001, pp. 299–301)), our initial reaction is one of pity, sorrow and hence a moral voice of care. But this is almost immediately supplemented by an anger fuelled by reflections on the causes of the inequality and poverty depicted, underpinned by a belief that what is represented is wrong and hence exemplifying a moral voice of justice. A similar response is elicited from the photographs of Sebastiao Salgado of workers in the Brazilian gold mines, sugar cane workers in Cuba or canal builders in India (Salgado, 1993, pp. 23ff, 300ff, 378ff). Cohen (2001, p. 299) finds Salgado's work to represent a purely aesthetic response to suffering and to represent "beautifications of tragedy," whereas in our opinion they clearly exhibit a moral voice of justice that invites us to reflect on how people have to work to survive, why this should be necessary and why things are not otherwise. Salgado imbues his subjects with a human dignity that is perhaps denied by the earlier images mentioned but they are no less moving or arresting for that.

At the heart of this argument is the reminder that development theory and practice increasingly hinges on global social relations, and in particular, on visually mediated relations between individuals and communities in the "North" and the "South." Everyday relationships with individuals and communities in the "South" through the processes of global production and consumption are largely hidden – few people are aware of the complex relations behind the supply of cheap clothes, food and other consumer items – whilst few people have the opportunity to forge direct relationships. Instead, relationships between North and South are reified through visual imagery, often centred on poverty, famine and appeals for money, through media reporting of "distant suffering," calls to participate in campaigns or through development education. As we will show, a visual sociology of development has an important role to play in understanding the processes and dynamics of these mediations and the moral engagements they engender, since, as Tester argues:

> . . . reports of the suffering of distant others are morally meaningful to audiences in a way that is much more complex and confusing than journalists intend. Their meanings also seem to be much more complex than the existing social theories which deal with the matter seem to be able to accommodate (Tester K., 2001, pp. 11–12).

However, before we go on to explore how we can develop new insights through a visual sociology of development, located in the shifting and complex context outlined above, we need to acknowledge the different ways in which connections between development and the visual have already been identified and articulated.

DEVELOPMENT, MODERNITY AND THE VISUAL

> The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled (Berger J., 1972, p. 7).

That visualisation is closely linked to knowledge claims, and that theories and practices of development are ultimately claims to particular, technical, authoritative or authentic knowledge, provides us with an important starting point. Connected to this, the other key starting point must be the embeddedness of development theory and practice within modernity and hence its connection to visualisation as offering knowledge and certainty.

The economistic and technocratic approaches of development theory were profoundly unsettled by interventions from authors highlighting the contested nature of development knowledge. Whilst some – such as Booth (1985) – developed a more traditionally rooted analysis, a range of critiques focused on the connections between contested visualisations and mainstream development

theory and practice. These connect closely with debates around modernity and postmodernity. Recognition of the privileging of "vision" in "Western" modernity (Gregory, 1994, p. 64) leads us to acknowledgement of its important role in the construction of "knowledge" of the "Third World" "other." Perhaps the most famous of these interventions was Said's *Orientalism*, which explored the power dynamics of colonialism through the "texts of empire," and highlighted what he refers to as "semiotical power" (Said, 1978, p. 125). *Orientalism* was problematic in many ways, not least for its failure to provide a normative strategy, but it was also hugely influential. Whilst not solely focused on visual images, Said nonetheless did highlight the ways in which visual representations of the then Orient could not be separated from practices towards the Orient; as suggested above, visualisation cannot be separated from social relations. In the concluding chapter of the revised edition (Said, 1995), Said draws connections between visual representations of the "Orient" and the ways in which development interventions are also premised on visual and textual constructions of the societies and communities of the "South." Central to his Foucauldian analysis is the claim that despite being ostensibly about the "other" – whether the Orient or the developing nation-state – the "other" is largely absent, their definition primarily reflecting the "self" (Said, 1978, p. 208). Thus, although not explicitly addressing development, Said interrogates the visual images generated by those studying, recording and categorising the Orient as a means to understand the worldview which underpins domination and exploitation. Extending this focus to development, and referring to contemporary media images, Escobar asserts the importance of examining development

> . . . in relation to the modern experiences of knowing, seeing, counting, economizing and the like (Escobar, 1995, p. 12).

The idea that "to see is to know" was not only a fundamental tenet of colonial domination, and appropriation – as Rydell notes, "to see is to know" was the motto greeting arrivals at the anthropology exhibits of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 – but also underpins development theory and practice (Rydell, 1984, p. 44). This is reflected in data from research on the communication of development in U.K. schools.[1] For example, a geography teacher explains her decision to focus on development in Egypt in terms of having been to Egypt and hence seen underdevelopment:

> Well I saw women washing in the Nile and I went on a felucca down the Nile. But mainly I mean you go to Egypt you're looking at the tombs and things. You can't help noticing how people live, the crowded nature of the cities. The way human life seems quite expendable really (Interview, Sue Barton).

Thus, "seeing" is equated with "knowing": development – a set of complex processes – becomes seeable, reified and hence, knowable. Sue Barton perceives

having seen something in reality as offering greater authenticity and certainty; she has seen "underdevelopment" in the women washing in the Nile and has seen overpopulation in the crowded cities. Thus, she " 'conquer[s]' truth,' " as Driver puts it borrowing from Conrad, by "establishing a particular reading of the landscape" (Driver, 1996, p. 348). "Seeing" the reality of being "developing" is thus perceived as making the staff better equipped to teach about development; "seeing is believing."

The hidden role of the visual in development theory and practice has also been taken up by a range of contemporary development theorists. A number of these interventions drew on the post-structuralist interventions of that time, offering analysis of development's discourses, texts and narratives. For example, Mitchell offers a critical analysis of USAID and World Bank policies toward Egypt by analysing the ways in which the organisations visualised the topography and resources of Egypt (Mitchell, 1995).

The elucidation of the ways in which visual imagery is embedded in the practice of development points us to its relationship to knowledge, processes of legitimation, authority and power. However, what it fails to do is provide a normative framework; the emphasis is more deconstructive than reconstructive, something that is incommensurate with engendering ethical development. Also, the emphasis here has been on the role of visualising the objects of "development" in the process of producing development knowledge. However, as discussed earlier, the shifting roles and agencies and relationships of the global development industry suggests we also need to focus attention on the ways in which development – rather than development's objects, as above – is in itself visualised and how these visualisations are read. Indeed, one could argue that the rise of a global civil society, with shifting patterns of accountability and authority, widens the number and character of groups engaged in and interested in development, regardless of geographical location, transforming the context and roles of visualisations of development. As a result, we need to add a further layer to our analysis of the connections between the sociology of development and visual sociology.

IMAGES OF DEVELOPMENT: CHARITY AND CHANGE

Whilst we have focused on the visual representation of development, this is perhaps a more elusive ambition than it would initially appear to be. In this section, we briefly explore some of the key methodological issues of visualising development, before reviewing and analysing key trends in popular representations of poverty and development in the "South." In doing this, we lay the foundations for our argument, in the subsequent section, for linking the sociology of development

and visual sociology as part of the process of development as well as affording theoretical insights about development, inequality and agency.

One of the central problems in exploring the visual and development is the tension between the snapshots that can be afforded by visual media, and the long-term process of development. Since development is complex and contested, involving numerous actors operating within and across a variety of spaces, is defined by economic, political, cultural and social "structures," is rarely a smooth predictable process and takes considerable time, it does not immediately lend itself to a methodology which centres on freezing a particular moment in time. Even with the use of film and video, the time scales of development and its elusive characteristics suggest that when we talk about visualising development, we are actually talking about something else; images of the lack of development or of development "signifiers." Thus, we are in a sense returned to Said's discussion of the representations of the Orient which reflect and constitute particular ideas not only about the individuals or institutions represented, but their societies, traditions, authority, knowledge, legitimacy and so on. For example, an image of an African child with flies around its eyes may draw on a whole constellation of ideas, understandings, past imagery and assumptions to reflect a famine situation, and a lack of development, even where such information is nowhere to be found within the image. For this reason, we cannot divorce the reading of the image from its constitution and formation; what we are talking about are the ways that images draw upon development discourses – upon understandings and assumptions of the reader – in order to tell a story about development. We will focus on such readings and their implications in the next section. Here, we will examine the images that have been produced and defined to infer a particular story or understanding of development. In doing so, we can also learn about the assumptions made around dominant readings of visual images of poverty and inequality.

At the heart of this are Non Governmental Organisations, who are dependent on communicating with publics in order to sustain themselves, using a variety of approaches, including mailed promotional flyers, newspaper advertisements and television adverts. As we will see, the shifting agendas and approaches of NGOs have reconfigured their use of visual images. As well as producing their own communications, NGOs make extensive and sometimes hidden use of other media organisations, such as by facilitating journalist access to particular geographical areas. Given the importance of the context and background to readings, NGOs are also particularly important since popular understanding of development charities provides crucial contextual information which shapes readings of the images presented. Whilst NGOs are key players, the wider media are also significant, beaming world events into sitting rooms. We also need to acknowledge the ways development visualisations may be produced in more unexpected ways. For

example, there has been a recent spate of car advertisements which present family saloons and four wheel drives against a visibly "Third World" background, drawing on ideas of development and modernity or its lack of it, to accentuate the vehicle's modernity.

Both NGOs and the media have been roundly criticized for the visual images they deploy, as the following quotations indicate:

> Development educators are now relatively unanimous in their rejection of the 'charity' vision of the Third World, in which the motivating force was to inspire compassion and to awaken a sense of 'moral duty' to help the less fortunate. Today most educators agree that this is a form of 'development pornography' reinforcing a harmful stereotype in which the Third World is presented as backward and hopeless. Not only is this felt to be morally questionable but also inaccurate, ignoring indigenous Third World development efforts of considerable importance for the North as well as the South (Arnold, 1988, p. 188).

> There is no doubt that sympathy and hence generous giving is more easily elicited by images of helplessness and distress . . . . together with the very mixed images contained in media news and current affairs programmes, it is fundraising propaganda that dominates public perceptions (Gladstone, 1989, p. 18).

Whilst, as we will show, these characterisations of visualisation of the "Third World" now need updating, they highlight the ways in which visualisations of development, or its absence and the resultant suffering, are complex and contested. Stan Cohen argues that the original critiques of the images used by development organisations to raise funds were rooted in the rise of dependency theory (Cohen, 2001, p. 178). Whilst modernisation theories placed blame for the failures of development at the feet of the nations and people "failing" to develop, dependency argued that this failure was rooted in global structures of inequality. Thus, real and systemic change could not be achieved by charitable donations to distant strangers, but required political action and global solidarity. This is in stark contrast to images which rest on the construction and emphasis on difference as a means of attracting funds through emotions such as pity and caring. In other words, traditional, "stereotypical" visualisations do not construct a sufficiently politically engaged narrative. This critique has continued, with Michael Edwards, a leading commentator on the roles of NGOs, claiming that NGOs' have produced "a constituency that may be supportive in principle, but is largely ill-informed and inactive in practice" (Edwards, 1999, p. 194). Thus, the messy and contested reality of interventions for change can be seemingly smoothed away by images which apparently depict the obvious truth of a morally complex situation. This can be seen in the following example from research conducted into the communication of development in U.K. secondary schools, in which an NGO which seeks to eradicate leprosy visits one of the schools.

> 9c had a speaker from [an anti-leprosy organisation] . . . and we're hoping to do something for her during the summer. She was showing them you know, how easy it is to help. With a little bit of funding you can change a child's whole life from a disaster to . . . She kept it very simple. She showed them a picture of a little boy with his hands all sort of curled up and a terribly sad look on his face. And she showed them the same little boy with one hand cured or one hand sort of treated and a great smile and how the other hand was going to be. Quite a small amount of money can make that (Interview, Fiona Bamford, Acting Head of Theology, Cardinal James School).

A particular story about someone in the "Third World" is told in order to generate a caring and benevolent response. As the teacher says, she kept the story simple, moving from a beginning, in which the child is suffering from leprosy, to a middle, in which the agency funded cure takes place, and an end in which the child is now happy. The story told in this instance is a seductive one in a number of respects: it has a happy ending and is simple; a cause and effect relationship is identified which is appealing in the direct and uncomplicated way it appears to better people's lives. There is also seductiveness in the identities this story constructs. In order to accentuate a contrast between then and now, the child is represented at the start as underprivileged and unhappy because of their leprosy and thus implicitly, because of the lack of money in his country to cure it; the activity makes "extensive use of very negative stereotypes of people from the South" (Sinclair, 1994, p. 55). That the pupils are able to secure change and do have the money to do so empowers them; where they live is constructed as a more desirable place to be and they are defined as having benevolent power within the "Third World." The structural factors informing the persistence of leprosy and the links between those structures and pupils, are not engaged with.

Critiques of the visual images used by NGOs, alongside shifts in approaches to development and the wider focus on issues of difference and diversity, have underpinned an unsettling of the approaches critiqued above. Rooted in ideas of the possibility of change, the agency, knowledge and capacity of the South and the new emphasis on empowerment, greater emphasis has been placed on positive images which convey evidence of development and people who appear happy and smiling. NGOs' awareness of the problems around the images used resulted in the development of a code of conduct by some NGOs (NGDO-EC, 1994, p. 132) and produced heightened levels of sensitivity and awareness within organisations about the ways in which popular images connect with their wider organisational vision. Arnold argued that there has been a move away from a charity based vision to one centred on "empowerment" (1988). This presents significant challenges, particularly in terms of the ways in which different types of images may engender different forms of engagement. There is also the risk of reifying NGOs' project based work as development. In some respects, development becomes visualised

like a children's dot to dot picture, in which one links up images of a set of disparate interventions, such as a new well, a forestry initiative and new school building, and end up with an image of development. As well as a shift in style and content, there have been shifts in the authorship of images of development. In recognition of a lack of Southern voice, attention has been drawn to the relative absence of Southern photographers, although it is claimed by some (e.g. Clark, 2004) that this in fact has little impact on the images themselves. Reflecting the emphasis on participation and actor-orientated approaches to development there has also been a rise in enabling those whose development is being sought to photograph and visualise development – or its absence or malfunctioning – from their perspective. This provides an interesting contrast to the situation Lutz and Collins observe in their analyses of National Geographic in which photographers capture indigenous people's encounters with modern technological artefacts on film as part of their record (Lutz & Collins, 1993, p. 207).

Whilst new images are being produced and communicated, these often sit alongside both more "stereotypical" images, and readings of images rooted in the latter; interviews with NGO development education staff reveal the way that, even if NGOs choose not to seek funds and to focus exclusively on an educational approach, teachers often ask how money can then be raised. The increasingly diversified work of NGOs, including the provision of services in the "South," raising money, running campaigns or educating constituencies, produces a set of contrasting and often contradictory imperatives which frame the images they may produce and communicate. Since, in many cases, different images are for different audiences and different readings, this may not be problematic. On the other hand, some individual communications in themselves produce contrasting visualisations, reflecting the tension between acknowledgement of the problems of sterotypes, and the simultaneous belief in their efficacy in raising funds. Thus, the visualisation is perhaps better defined in terms of contradictions, rather than in more monolithic claims about sterotypes (Smith, 2004). However, as the next section suggests, contradictory and unsettling visual images are potentially significant in terms of engendering and transforming engagement, as well as in terms of the ways that their readings afford important theoretical insights around development and global social relations; it is in relation to agency in a globalised world that the linking of visual sociology and the sociology of development has its greatest potential.

CASE STUDY: THE "CHANGING WORLD VIEWS" PILOT PROJECT

So far we have explored the ways in which visualisation and development intersect. We have suggested that an increasingly complex development industry alongside

the importance of development imagery within that, are significant factors in understanding and shaping the future of development theory and practice. To do this, we have drawn upon sociological concepts and ideas to analyse contemporary images of development, as well as reflect on the ways theorists have highlighted the role of visualisation in their work. In this final section, we go further in seeking to link visual sociology and the sociology of development by exploring the use of images of development as a research, action and pedagogical tool. For we have not developed work in which research participants take photos themselves – although, since what the viewer brings is part of the constitution of the meaning of an image, the distinction between viewer and photographer is perhaps unhelpful – but have used images of development in the context of a research project with undergraduate social science students into the ways the images are "read" and understood.

A number of sociological motivations underpin our approach. It was hoped the readings would afford insights into the ways in which the participants positioned themselves in a globalised context. In doing so, we hoped to learn something of the ways relationships to others were understood and defined, particularly in terms of the types of moral engagement particular images might engender. This is closely connected to the fact that the audience does not approach such images "innocently" but rather are carrying a baggage of social and cultural presuppositions and preconceptions that will influence the meaning that they attach to the images. This baggage not only relates to issues of class, gender, ethnicity and age, but also to the "moral voice" that each member of the audience brings to the interaction: social actors are also moral beings. The content of that moral voice may vary, arguments relating to a (Western) moral universalism notwithstanding (Ignatieff, 1998), but the mapping of such differences, tensions and contradictions can provide a foundation for moral engagement. Indeed, it was decided not to focus in particular detail on unpacking the ways readings were shaped, but rather, to explore the more general issues that the readings might raise in relation to the sociological issues and imperatives just outlined. Connected to our interest in locating and understanding moral engagement, the research was action orientated in that we hoped that participation would also engender interest amongst the participants in issues of development and justice. We were exploring the possibility of developing a visual image based approach to help develop a sociological imagination amongst the students. At the broader level, we also anticipated that responses to the images would afford data relevant to understanding the significance of visual imagery in the contemporary world. Underpinning all of these agendas was the hope that the knowledge and understanding we would gain could be deployed in our work as Sociology Lecturers seeking to teach the sociology of development.

Our approach presents the methodological challenge of what constitutes an image of development. Photographs are snapshots of particular "moments" in history, they freeze time as the shutter clicks. It is therefore difficult to incorporate

an idea of time or to document change within photography except by re-photographing a particular subject at intervals. Yet development is precisely a process, or set of processes, that occurs over time. How then might it be represented? As we have mentioned above, it is perhaps easier to document *under*development: the template photographs of hunger and famine, or poverty-stricken slum dwellings, or people scavenging among rubbish being familiar images. But how can the *process* of development and change be documented in a still image? By photographs of factories, or schools, or new government buildings, for example? While such photographs might be useful, it would be preferable to try to incorporate aspects of the developmental process in the same image rather than some simple "before" and "after" approach. Images that seek to combine elements of the old and the new, of tradition and modernity, of processes of globalization would contextualise and situate the subject matter, would exemplify patterns and possibilities and thereby aid discussion and analysis. Such images might "unsettle" preconceptions, jangle "taken-for-granted" assumptions, be difficult to "read." This fits into the tradition identified by Lutz and Collins which

> Through the use of surrealist (or more generally modernist) techniques such as juxtapostion and dislocation, this type of photographic practice raises questions about hegemonic definitions of what is good, normal, and valuable (Lutz & Collins, 1993, p. 272).

They would thus invite reflection on the part of the audience and sensitize the audience to the issues involved. The consequence would hopefully be a variety of responses that would lead to deeper and more systematic analysis (Gaspar, 2003). Such responses thus provide the basis for discussing development: visual sociology becomes a basis for development education. By using images of development of a less obvious and more "unsettling" nature – images that hopefully defy a straightforward "reading" – it is hoped to elicit a range of responses that can be used to highlight certain themes that in turn can provide the basis for theoretical insight and moral engagement.

The intersections that we are seeking to explore should now be clear. We aim to utilise the under-researched subject of the photographic image as a heuristic device to engage students in thinking and reflecting on the processes of development and to thereby engender both theoretical insight and the moral engagement intrinsic to the study of development. This is the promise of a visual sociology for development studies.

The above discussion has sought to justify the heuristic potential of a visual sociology of development. In an earlier piece of work (Smith et al., 2003), the authors explored the utility of such an approach. The aim of that research was to investigate the perceptions of development, change and globalization that students new to Higher Education were bringing to the teaching and learning environment,

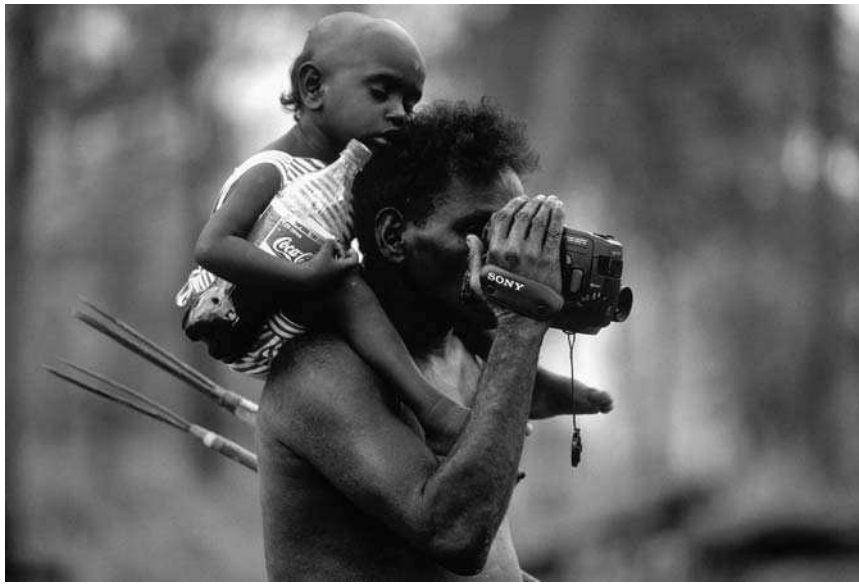
thereby providing us as teachers with an improved basis for dialogue, reflexivity and mutual learning. Images were seen as a particularly useful vehicle for this purpose, since as Cohen (2001, p. 185) has pointed out, visual communication can be said to have more impact than other media, attracts an immediate response and is arguably the dominant form of communication in the contemporary world. Moreover, photographic images can be seen as points of intersections of many differing "gazes," whose decodings can be related to broader historical and cultural questions (Wells, 2003, p. 325). A number of issues are raised by the choice of image to be used, since this will be shaped by/filtered through the moral, theoretical and educational engagement of the "academic gaze" (Lutz & Collins, 1994/2003, p. 370). Analysis of this aspect of the question cannot be pursued here, however. In general, the images needed to satisfy a number of criteria:

- they needed to "engage" in order to facilitate the effort needed to step outside the parameters of our own society and "think globally" (Cohen, 2001, p. 20);
- they needed to avoid presenting an over-familiar or stereotypical scenario;
- and as mentioned above, they needed to "unsettle" or be difficult to "read" in order to maximise reactions and discussion.

The images were obtained from Panos Pictures, an independent photo agency that specialises in Third World, development and global issues. One image (see

Photograph: Clive Shirley. Reprinted with permission of Panos Pictures.

below) was of a scene outside Freetown, Sierra Leone and depicted a communal standpipe being used by local people in front of a huge billboard advertisement for Coca Cola. A second image (see below) depicted an Aboriginal man from Arnhemland, Australia carrying his daughter, who holds a large bottle of Coca Cola, while he carries traditional hunting spears and is using a Sony camcorder. The images were presented sequentially to small groups of students (between 4 and 10), who were invited to record their immediate thoughts and reflections both on the sheets they were given with the images on and verbally. The discussion was also filmed.



Photograph: Penny Tweedie. Reprinted with permission of Panos Pictures.

ANALYSING THE "STUDENT GAZE"

> The interpretation remains with the viewer who, confronted with a disturbing frame, draws on familiar politics and cultural models for cultural explanation. Thus, for diverse viewers, the image of a starving African family may implicate American overconsumption, greedy multinational corporations, corrupt local governments, or the lack of industry of dark-skinned people (Lutz & Collins, 1993, p. 272).

Analysis of the data derived from the "student gaze" revealed a range of broad responses that can provide the basis for dialogue, both in relation to the moral

engagement seen as intrinsic to study in this area and in relation to theoretical and substantive issues in the sociology of development. Reading of our analysis along with that of Lutz and Collins' analysis of reader responses and readings of National Geographic provides some interesting similarities and contrasts which there is insufficient space for here. More detailed analysis would also allow reflection on the degree to which these responses have been mediated by class background, gender, age and ethnicity, although in Lutz and Collins' work this seemed to be fairly limited (Lutz & Collins, 1993, p. 224). In addition, our focus is on broad responses and the way they reflect student attempts to negotiate the contradictions and complexities the images suggest.

Four broad responses could be delineated from the data. One approach focused on the nature of the world system and the dynamics of power therein. A second approach emphasised the issues of poverty and inequality. The third approach appeared to be more optimistic in stressing the element of community with regard to the Freetown image. Finally, the fourth set of responses reflected confusion and ambiguity, stretching to outright disbelief. However, it is important to remember that these groupings do not necessarily correspond to particular individuals; participants expressed readings that fell into a number of the categories, indicating a further level of confusion. This shares similarities with Lutz and Collins' work, which also found a significant degree of self-contradiction. This might mean deploying several voices within a single interview, or that

> They express contradictions in more experimental or ambivalent ways; they try out sometimes conflicting ideas with tentative or self-assured tones, hoping for one thing and settling on another, seeing how things sound (Lutz & Collins, 1993, p. 226).

Let us examine each of these responses in more detail to see how they map onto voices of moral engagement and sociological insight.

The first set of responses was reflected in statements relating to globalization (understood as "Americanisation/Westernisation"), core-periphery relations, the corporate power of multi-national corporations in a Third World/under-developed country. These responses exemplify an approach based on a basic understanding of the relations and dynamics of power within the contemporary world system that provides a context for framing/"reading" the image. We called such responses "critical-systemic" (Smith et al., 2003, pp. 4–5) to highlight the way in which these responses indicated an element of critique that is fundamental to the learning process and the attempt to locate the images within a coherent, albeit rudimentary, analytical framework. In relation to the concerns of this chapter, these responses can be seen to resonate with a strong moral voice. Underpinning the responses is a clear concern for global social justice, thus facilitating the dialogue with moral engagement seen as central to development studies. There is also a degree of

politicised awareness here. This both challenges those such as Rosler (1989/2003) and Berger (1980/2003) who argue that images such as those used here deter/hinder a political response, and facilitates dialogue with those development theorists such as Leftwich (2000) who argue for the primacy of politics in development. More generally, these responses provide an easy avenue into discussions of sociological theories of development and underdevelopment. They also point to the wider shift in the politics of development, in which major non governmental players are placing increased emphasis on campaigns and advocacy in their armoury against poverty. The very visual collapses of WTO trade talks have heightened attention to global structures, often strongly mediated by the "development" prism, as has the debt campaign which has sought to reframe the issue in terms of a politics of justice (Yanacopulos, 2004).

The second set of responses overlaps somewhat with the first set, but with a more substantive focus. Here the emphasis was on the issues of poverty and inequality. Many references were made to the contrast between "poverty and affluence," "massive poverty and massive profit together," "need v greed" etc. (Smith et al., 2003, p. 5). Again, a strong moral voice can be detected here, but perhaps with more of a focus on care than on justice.

This set of responses highlighted the significant influence of development organisations, whose public faces are largely defined in terms of charity and compassion, notwithstanding more recent emphasis on campaigning and advocacy. It also suggests the ways in which emotion underpins such "readings." Whilst this may form an important motivating factor in charitable donation, it also individualizes the response rather than politicising it. Again, this provides a connection to what Lidchi refers to as the commodifying of the "South" (Lidchi cited in Cohen, 2001). This suggests a less politicised type of engagement, but is nonetheless a moral voice with which it is easy to engage and provides a basis for dialogue and discussion. Connections with core substantive and policy concerns within the sociology of development are again easy to draw and build upon.

If the first two sets of responses provide evidence of a strong moral voice and easy connection to the central concerns of the sociology of development, the other two sets of responses are more challenging but none the less interesting for that. A third and unexpected response celebrated the community it saw in the Freetown image. This highlighted the presence in the "South" of a "community brought together by everyday activities," a "community of necessity" but one that nevertheless was indicative of a spirit that was seen to be lacking in the West. While at first sight this might seem to be a positive and optimistic response, further reflection invites a more critical appraisal. The response smacks of a paternalism that reflects a superior and preferential Western lifestyle but which sees the people of the "South" as poor but happy. Hence a paternalistic moral voice that sees

community as compensation for poverty. In some senses this presents a direct reversal of the traditional "developed"/"developing" dichotomy, premised on a decontextualised approach to a politics of difference; a parallel can be drawn with the ways in which pluralist multiculturalism may celebrate cultural difference to the point of fetishizing it and at the same time, failing to engage with the conditions that produced that difference; "difference is spice," as Kincheloe and Steinberg put it (1997, p. 42). As a result, the dichotomy is reversed, meaning that the structural connections remain invisible. There is then the risk that cultural difference, as opposed to structural inequality, reframes the development question. Such a moral voice is more problematic for the teacher, since it presents both the risk of disengagement in the name of tolerance, as well as highlighting a confused and idealistic notion of community. The latter is especially pertinent in a context where water is becoming increasingly commodified and subject to "full cost recovery" policies (as in Ghana). As the provision of water becomes subject to "ability to pay," this is more likely to provide a basis for community cleavage than solidarity and to re-emphasise the sociological importance of power, poverty and inequality. In terms of community, strong parallels can be drawn with the Orientalist tendency to over valorise and celebrate the "other" as exemplifying values that have been lost to modernity, providing the rationale for a protectionism smacking of paternalism. In the context of teaching, this perspective needs to be engaged with and challenged rather than endorsed, but also provides a basis for dialogue and pedagogical discussion.

The final set of responses was perhaps the most challenging. These responses exemplified a range of views that stretched from confusion to distaste to outright disbelief. This group of students included those who found the images most unsettling. Some students thought the images "ironic and mocking" and representative of a "sick sense of humour." Others were bemused: "why would Coke advertise here?", the images were "strange" and looked "unnatural" with "weird" contrasts (this especially of the Aboriginal man with the camcorder). Expectations had been shaken: the clothes the people were wearing "look bought, out of place," "strange that they have Coca Cola." In particular, the image of the Aboriginal man raised questions about how he could have obtained the camcorder, what could he be filming, how likely was it that he would have a video to watch his recording on? The contrast between his traditional hunting spears and the high-tech camcorder was commented on, with his possession of the latter being regarded as particularly difficult to comprehend. Some saw irony in this, others questioned the camcorder's affordability for the man, while others thought notions of identity and stereotyping were being challenged and referred to "ethnocentric idea of property" and questioned "instant assumptions about the wealth/material possessions of black people." At their most extreme, responses to the images were

of outright disbelief. A number of students commented that the images didn't look real or were "unbelievable": "Is it real?", "is it staged?". These students conjectured that "perhaps it was a publicity shot – given a bottle of Coca Cola and camcorder to make an ironic portrait," or "has a tourist given them the camera, are they there for the benefit of tourists?" Whatever, the images were problematic for the students and contained scenes that could not be seen as a reflection of reality but which had to be explained as either having been staged or manipulated for some purpose or other. The difficulties that this group of students had in accepting the images betokens a far weaker moral voice, certainly when compared to the first two sets of responses. The perceived irony and questioning of these images exhibits an alienated moral detachment rather than the moral engagement that development analysts would seek to engender. Perhaps such a response is representative of the general influence of postmodernism, whose influence on photography has been to "*destabilise links between representation and reality . . . images were no longer to be taken at face value*" (Wells, 2003, p. 149). They could also be linked not only to what Moeller calls "compassion fatigue," but to DfID's report indicating that an important issue in putting young people off engaging with development issues is their forced participation in charity events whilst at school (DFID, 2000, p. 3). This presents a significant political risk in terms of the potential intersection of such responses with views suggesting that "distant others" are less deserving than the proximite needy. Nevertheless, the challenge of and to this set of responses provides an opportunity for teachers to open up a dialogue that might question ill-based assumptions and show how a sociology of development could dispel such confusion and detachment through its analytical perspectives.

The above discussion has demonstrated the complexity and contradictory nature of student responses to images of development and globalization. A range of "moral voices" has been identified – justice, care, compensation, alienation – as well as a range of greater or lesser analytical awareness and more or less well-informed assumptions and substantive knowledge.

It is our belief that the data generated by this research technique provides the basis for reflexive dialogue with students and demonstrates the potential of a visual sociology of development as a pedagogical tool for engendering a moral and theoretical engagement with development studies.

CONCLUSION

Having sought to map a wider terrain of the relationships between the visual and development, we have sought to offer a case study of the ways visual

sociology can afford insights into development that are increasingly significant in our global age. In particular, our approach has offered insights into changing global social relations, forms of political engagement, and issues of knowledge and authority in a globalized world. In offering some explanation of the roots of the range of responses, the potential relevance of a postmodern framework has been highlighted. In many senses, this would seem like the framework or non-framework of choice as a means of explaining the contradiction and confusion that characterise not only these findings but other research in this area (e.g. Smith, 1999). However, given our focus on the need for moral engagements with issues of justice and inequality, we are not happy with such an approach and wish, in our concluding remark, to suggest an alternative analysis. For whilst a lack of moral engagement, disbelief, cynicism and irony might fit neatly into various post-modern frameworks, we are more persuaded by Lutz and Collins' identification of failings of liberal humanism, exemplified by the "ambiguous" photographs of National Geographic:

> In part, the ambiguities are those endemic to liberal humanism – the paternalism and objectification that necessarily attend the benevolent stances of the powerful (Lutz & Collins, 1993, p. 279).

They argue that such images have acted as a "conservative force whose emphasis of a common humanity obscures 'American relationships with the third world' " (Lutz & Collins, 1993, p. 280). This is not to say that the images we used could be characterised in this way. But it does highlight the ways in which readers of images have been schooled in representations, as well as in wider liberal discourses of humanity and difference, whose impact is significant in relation to moral engagement. Thus, it is not the advent of a post-modern world, but the dominance of western liberal humanism that disengages whilst appearing, through appeals to individualised care and compassion, to be engaged. We would add to this the importance of global capitalism's atomising impact, which compartmentalizes and commodifies both images of development, and the forms of engagement that may follow. Thus, engagement is highly individualized, often in the name of valorising community. Linked to this, contradictory or ambiguous images are likely to be disregarded in the name of offering easily interpreted and "conclusive" images. Our argument would be that it is the dominance and contradictions of liberal humanism, themselves initimately bound up with global capitalism, that produce disengaged moral responses to the images we have used. Such a conclusion thus places emphasis on addressing not only the images of development frequently deployed – something which many NGOs and media agencies are increasingly sensitive to – but on examining and understanding the social relations inherent in the ways such images are produced and read. We

would see this is as the primary and important task of a visual sociology of development.

NOTE

1. The names of teachers and schools have been changed to preserve anonymity.

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USING VISUALS TO RELEASE PUPILS' VOICES: EMOTIONAL PATHWAYS INTO ENHANCING THINKING AND REFLECTING ON LEARNING

Andrea Raggl and Michael Schratz

FINDING A SILENT VOICE

Learning is a total human experience. Research rarely reaches the grounds of the inner world of how students experience learning. Conventional methods relying on spoken or written language suffer from the fact that the power relationship is slanted in the adults' favour when young people are confronted with verbal argumentation or pre-fabricated questionnaires. Culturally and historically speaking, this has to do with academic tradition, founded as it is on the written word. A move beyond the "outer" world of spoken and written language requires other possibilities of looking into the "inner world" of schools from the pupils' perspectives without their (and our) falling into the traps set by language.

Rob Walker initially stirred our interest in using a photographic method in research, as it "touches on the limitations of language, especially language used for descriptive purposes. In using photographs the potential exists, however elusive the achievement, to find ways of thinking about social life that escape the traps set by language" (Walker, 1993, p. 72). His aspiration to find a silent voice for the researcher first took body in black and white photographs. For him, looking at photographs creates a tension between the image and the picture, between what

Seeing is Believing? Approaches to Visual Research
Studies in Qualitative Methodology, Volume 7, 147–162

ISSN: 1042-3192/doi:10.1016/S1042-3192(04)07009-0

one expects to observe and what one actually sees. Therefore, images "are not just adjuncts to print, but carry heavy cultural traffic on their own account" (Walker, 1993, p. 91).

Those ideas were further developed in Schratz and Walker (1995), who argue that there has been a curious neglect of visual imagination in the social sciences. "Despite an enormous research literature that argues the contrary, researchers have trusted words (especially their own) as much as they have mistrusted pictures" (1995, p. 72). For them the use of pictures in research raises the continuing question of the relationship between public and private knowledge and the role of research in tracing and transgressing this boundary. "In social research pictures have the capacity to short circuit the insulation between action and interpretation, between practice and theory, perhaps because they provide a somewhat less sharply sensitive instrument than words and certainly because we treat them less defensively. Our use of language, because it is so close to who we are, is surrounded by layers of defence, by false signals, pre-emptive attack, counteractive responses, imitations, parodies, blinds and double blinds so that most of the time we confuse even (perhaps, especially) ourselves" (Schratz & Walker, 1995, p. 76).

A further study of the theoretical background convinced us of the power of pictures in carrying out research – visuals could be instruments in helping pupils to enhance their thinking and to reflect on their learning experiences. Elliot Eisner uses the term *epistemic seeing* as a kind of knowledge secured through sight. For him "[*p*]*rimary* epistemic seeing depends upon awareness of the particular. *Secondary* epistemic seeing refers to seeing the particular as a member of a larger set" (Eisner, 1991, p. 68). Accordingly, we see visuals as a valuable tool that assists the learner in becoming aware of the particular while referring to the wider world.

Ricki Goldman-Segall employs the notion of *points of viewing*, which encompasses "where we are located in time and space, as well as how our combination of gender identities, classes, races, and cultures situates our understanding of what we see and what we validate. . .. It not only brings together our various ways of seeing and interpreting the world around us, but it also underscores the often digital, atomistic, and random nature of how we construct and combine knowledges" (Goldman-Segall, 1998, pp. 3–4). In particular we use photography as a silent voice to point towards a greater story, as it offers "both participation and alienation in our own lives and those of others – allowing us to participate, while confirming alienation" (Sontag, 1979, p. 167).

According to constructivist theory we do not regard human behaviour as following a trivial cause-effect relationship (cf. Glasersfeld, 1997, p. 124). We rather tend to see it in its wholeness, the elements of which are interwoven in a network of interrelationships, each influencing the effects of the other. Therefore, it is the study of the social significance of human behaviour – how things, events, and rules of interaction become meaningful within the overall framework of reference

– which signifies the changes of the overall system and its structure (cf. Simon, 1993, p. 26). There is not only one "reality" in organisations like schools, but multiple realities. Taking pictures offers a challenging opportunity to bring to the fore the different layers of reality of the pupils' world at school. To do so, the camera offers a special lens which can be focused on the single elements of school life – shifting between the foreground and the background enables "unimportant details" to become the main focus of interest.

By presenting different approaches to the use of photographs we want to give visual insight into the "interconnectedness" between places, rooms, areas – and feelings, emotions, associations, which usually receive little attention in education, and much less so in schooling, where teaching is mainly based on cognitive aspects of the curriculum. By suggesting different approaches to using visuals in research, we offer tools and methods on how to capture learning from a more holistic perspective. Firstly, we show how photographs help in ethnographic work in class in order to enhance pupils' thinking and to make them reflect on their learning. Then we present a photographic method which has proved to be a valuable tool in self-evaluation.

PICTORIAL ETHNOGRAPHY

Intensive methodological discussions on how to find out more about student perspectives in creative learning were at the heart of extensive fieldwork in an international research project on the matter (CLASP).[1] It was mainly the age of the learners which caused a rethinking of traditional methods. During fieldwork it became obvious that it is necessary to offer young learners appropriate ways to express their own voices. Few publications feature the authentic voices of children or teenagers (cf. Weiss, 1995, p. 142). There seems to be a lack of trust in what this marginalised group thinks and feels, although the learners are the key stakeholders in the learning process. If we want to carry out research into learning from the young learners' points of view we have to ask ourselves: Do we know how to invite learners to tell us their stories? And to make these stories "visible?" Handing out questionnaires does not lead to children's real voices.

Inviting Pupils to Narrate

Children at every age like to narrate things about their learning if we as researchers offer them challenging ways to do so. Photographs may be very helpful in inviting them to portray their stories of learning. While working with photos, a coincidence led us to realize how powerful they were in stimulating pupils to talk: Andrea was observing 13-year-old learners who were selecting a topic for a presentation. To

help themselves do that, they had brought various newspapers from home. While they were negotiating a joint topic, she found a photograph on the front page of one of the newspapers: A little girl with a large cornet filled with sweets, which is given to children in Austria on their first day at school. The caption read: "Yippee school!" Andrea showed the picture to the pupil next to her and asked him: "What do you think about this one?" He immediately answered:

> That kid's obsessed by school. She doesn't know what it's like yet, so she looks forward to it. Just wait a year and she'll hate school. The fun disappears, unless you're enough of a swot to *like* school, like Adrian. Then you even look forward to secondary school. When you first start, you look forward to school, but then you only look forward to seeing your friends.

It was surprising to notice how in detail this pupil had described what he associated with this picture. Up to that moment in our experience, pupils had given only brief replies to questions about learning and school. Here are some more comments of what other pupils associated with this photograph:

> She has no clue of what school is about! Because 'Yippee' – no seriously, she doesn't know what school is about.

> She shows she's happy because now she can go to school and has her own schoolbag. She's proud of it. She wants to keep her exercise-books neat and have everything nice and tidy. She has the feeling of being more accepted now, like grown-ups at work. Yeah, she's sitting at her desk with her neat exercise books and she's writing something. She's glad to go to school because she's got more responsibility now, more standing, sort of. She can say: 'I'm going to school as well.' Nobody can tease her anymore and tell her she's still a kindergarten baby.

> She's laughing. She's happy because it's her first day at school. She doesn't know yet what school's about. She should be warned against it! It was the same with my little brother and I've warned him. He was really looking forward to school so I told him: 'NOW you're happy. You just wait! Later on it'll be different.' In the first weeks he really enjoyed school. They didn't get any homework and they did all sorts of interesting things like projects and he got to know other kids, new friends.

The detailed associations of teenagers sparked by a question connected to a photograph led us to further thoughts about how this approach could be used in various other ways. The following examples show the possibility of a multifaceted use of photographs to enhance children's reflections. Visuals can be seen as a door for the (adult) researcher into the thinking world of children and as an aid in getting them to talk about their own perspectives. The following questions seem crucial when choosing instruments that will involve pupils in research:

- Does the chosen method suit the age of the group under study?
- Does it correspond to the breadth of their curiosity, their imagination and their open mindedness?
- Does it invite learners to talk?

The following methods came up during the fieldwork, but have been changed by learners in the research process. One of the main insights has been that reflection *in* action (cf. Schön, 1991) may be difficult to do. Therefore, it is often useful to ask learners to reflect *on* or *about* action. Photographs are a good way to help pupils to recall learning situations, as we can see below.

Photographs Used to Reflect About a Former Project

A project called "design days" was carried out for a week in two parallel 2nd year classes (6th grade) of an Austrian secondary school. Together with their teachers and with the aid of parents, the pupils worked in self-appointed groups on different tasks to refurbish their classrooms. For example one group of learners worked with an artist and produced big paintings for their classroom.

Photographs were taken throughout the project and were shown to the learners some months later. The students were invited to look at the pictures in pairs in a quiet room next to their classroom. Forming small groups can reduce peer pressure and encourage individual learners to talk freely. It is important

for the pupils to take part in the conversations on a voluntary basis. The photographs roused their curiosity and helped them to recall those special days again: "*That's a long time ago!*" was the first comment students made in looking at the pictures, or they started laughing when they saw themselves in them: "*Look! I had shorter hair there!*" or: "*I still had those old glasses then!*" Without being prompted, they were engaged in commenting the pictures along the way:

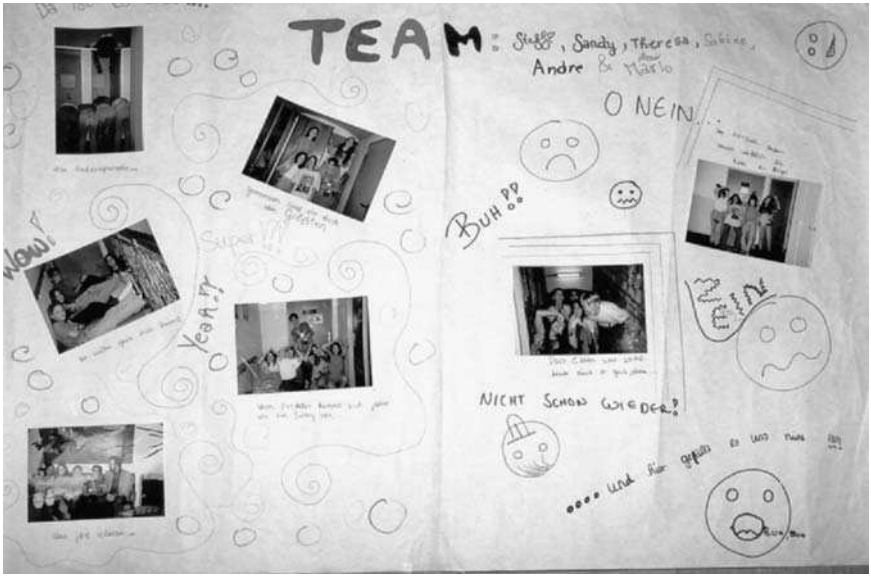
> I can still remember when we remodelled the classroom. I liked that project because we wanted to have a nicer room. There used to be those ugly yellow curtains. Somehow it's much friendlier-looking now with the comfortable lounge and the new curtains. Now we're used to the nicer room but in the beginning it really attracted everybody's attention.

Two girls were looking at the first picture. It showed the two of them making a draft sketch of a dragon on a big piece of paper hanging on the wall. Then they began looking at the whole scene, and Karen started to relate: "*We were allowed to do it in pairs and we could choose the topic. It was great to draw such a big picture.*" Sandra added: "*You weren't forced to be quiet. You were allowed to paint on the wall, not just on a piece of paper – it was much bigger!*"

The project had taken place some months before. With the photos it was easy for the pupils to remember what it was about and what it had meant to them. The comments of the learners showed us that those special days were connected with pleasant emotions. When the two girls saw the picture of the nearly finished painting Sandra said: "*We made this! You almost don't believe that you did it yourself because it really looks cool.*" Karen added: "*Yeah, cool. Although the artist had told us to draw these stupid lines. He just started to do it and we went on to do it, too, and then it got really nice.*"

Photographs Used to Reflect About Non-Directive Education

During a teacher's discussion with the pupils about their experiences with non-directive forms of learning, photographs were taken. In groups they had made posters which they presented at assembly time. The pupils had taken the pictures during their conversations. One photograph was taken against the window so that it was quite dark. Only some shadows of the pupils were visible. The writing on the poster read "Self-directed Learning." Some months later these photographs helped everyone to latch onto the discussion again. The dark picture was used to ask the pupils individually for their points of view. We thus hoped to shed more light onto the controversially discussed field of non-directive learning.


TEAM
Andre
O NEIN...
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> In some subjects, all they do is give you eight exercises and they tell you that you have to do them one after the other by yourself – that's not self-directed work for me. Self-directed learning for me means to let pupils do things themselves as much as possible – they can do more or less everything on their own without asking anyone . . . except for some things where you can't avoid it. . . . And it means to work with interesting materials, at least for half of the time in each lesson, because you remember things much more easily if you have materials to work with . . . . I think every second or third lesson should be self-directed, or maybe a bit less. Not every lesson anyway, that's no good either.

Photographs can be used to point out contrasts e.g. by showing pictures of a more teacher – centred lesson on one side and a more learner-oriented lesson on the other.

> I prefer non-directive learning because we can work in groups and I think it's easier to solve a problem together [. . .] You don't learn it until you do it yourself. We had a saying here in the classroom from Confucius: Explain it to me and I will forget it; say it to me once again and I will remember it; let me do it and I will learn, or something like that. But anyway, it does work quite well. And working in groups is just more fun than working by yourself because we can talk and joke, and if we work together, then things work out.

While comparing the two sides of the poster focusing on the two different types of lessons, interesting discussions took place on the following questions:

- What are the main differences between these two settings?
- Which setting do you think you learn more in and why?

Visuals offer the possibility to make meaningful body language visible and to discuss the reasons why people act differently – for example, by using photographs of students who are concentrating on their work or of others who look bored. With the aid of photographs it is easy for learners to describe how their behaviour depends on the whole setting:

> Marc: For me non-directive learning is something different from normal lessons, because we don't just sit at our desks where you have to listen to the teacher. You don't need to depend on the teacher and you can do some things with your friends and that's a lot more fun.

> Carol: The teacher doesn't stand in front of you and you don't have to copy everything from the blackboard – you work things out by yourself. And if you think about stuff yourself and you get the solution, then you remember it more easily.

> Ann: You have more freedom to do things in your own ways and you can try them out till you find the right answer. First you think of how it could work. Yeah, first you look to see what you could do to get the right answer and then you try it out.

> Joanna: I feel like I can understand stuff much better, when I work it out myself. Because I have the materials and I can try it out. Yeah, I can remember things better because I can try them out and I can find the answers on my own.

Pupils' stories give important insights into how they experience learning. With the appropriate methods it is possible to invite learners to tell us adults about their perspectives. They are able to tell their story of the reality they experience in the classroom. Adolescents show open mindedness, curiosity and imagination – we as (adult) researchers can learn from them how to adapt our research methods.

PUPILS USING PHOTOGRAPHS IN SCHOOL EVALUATION

Schratz and Löffler-Anzböck (2004) believe that the camera can be used as a tool to deconstruct the different layers of reality in a classroom or school at large. In taking photographs, parts of the micro system of a school can be "deranged" by isolating elements from the whole. In the notion of Eisner's "epistemic seeing" the photos taken of particular places or situations can make us aware of the particular and at the same time refer to the wider world of school life, such as school culture. We are convinced of the power behind putting the camera into the hands of pupils, especially when they are confronted with the question "*Where do you feel happy in school and where not?*". This aspect seems to be an important indicator for the quality of school culture seen through the pupils' eyes.

How Does Photo Evaluation Work?

It might be helpful to use the following step-by-step approach which has proved successful with various student groups (cf. Schratz & Löffler-Anzböck, 2000; Schratz & Steiner-Löffler, 1995, 1998).

(1) Self-selected groups of four or five pupils are formed.
(2) Each group discusses the four places in school where everybody in the group feels happy, and four places they all hate.
(3) The teams decide which arrangement will best show what they wish to express, e.g. just the place or with people in it or . . ..
(4) The members of the teams take the photographs according to what has been decided on in 3.
(5) When the pictures are ready,[2] the groups each produce a poster where they arrange the photos and write comments on/near them to highlight what they like or dislike and why they do so.

(6) Each group presents their poster to the rest of the class. (Usually the pupils get quickly involved in heated discussions about their situation in the school and about the school system in general!)
(7) The pupils present their findings to a wider audience (teachers, head teacher, parents, members of school board etc.) with a view towards any necessary improvement.

What Can be Evaluated by Pupils Taking Photographs?

A great number of aspects of every-day school-life may be evaluated, such as:

- how the students feel at school;
- how well students, and students and teachers, communicate with each other and with the rest of the school community, including parents and "relevant environments";
- how democratic the school is;
- to what extent teachers have accepted a "new culture of curiosity and learning";
- what condition the school buildings are in.

How the school deals with the whole project, whether it is seen simply as another way of teaching or whether it marks the beginning of an evaluation process, depends on the culture of the school. The extent to which a school is prepared to undertake and support pupil photo evaluation is, therefore, an indication of how confident the school is.

Taking Pictures for Self-Evaluation

Schratz and Löffler-Anzböck (2004) have found out that when starting photo evaluation, it is not so much the question of how a school goes about evaluating itself that is most important. It is more likely a question of how to convince the school that the pupils must not be forgotten when self-evaluation takes place. It is an issue of how to find an attractive way of getting them actively involved (and not just when it is time to fill in questionnaires!). In general, there are two different ways of introducing photo evaluation to pupils:

- You either start the photo evaluation in a way similar to other project work, as a class learning method, without emphasising the evaluation aspect (People may not want to change things afterwards);

- Or you start by describing the project as a part of a bigger whole: the self-evaluation programme that the school has decided to work on, particularly with a view towards pupil involvement.

Both approaches work. The one reverted to depends on the school culture. However, the more schools are asked to evaluate their own situation, the more they will be asked to apply evaluation methods and instruments which capture the pupils' view of how they experience living and learning in school.

Examples of Places Chosen by Pupils

After several years of experience with photo evaluation in several countries (cf. MacBeath et al., 2000, 176–182), we can give the following examples of places or situations highlighted by pupils.

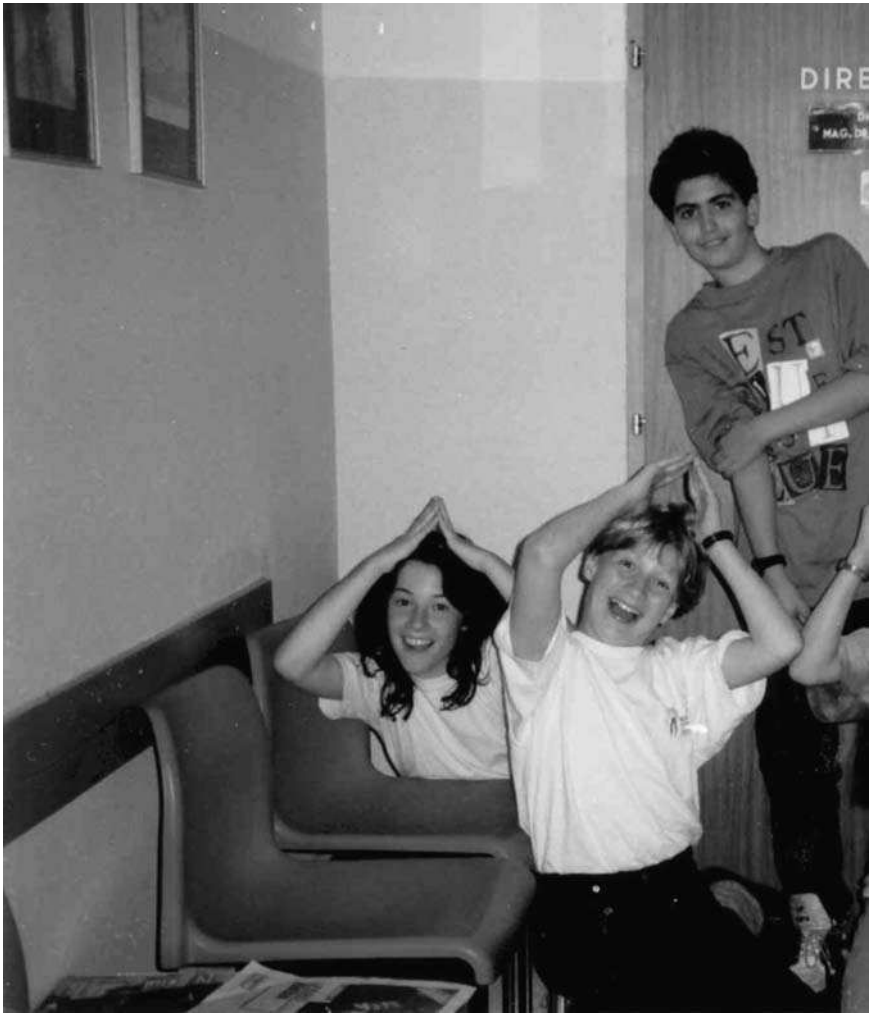
- The pupils usually choose places where they are allowed to move freely, to feel, to smell, to work with their hands, i.e. places like the gym, where the predominance of regular school work is weakened.
- Often they prefer places in school which symbolize "the way out," for instance windows or the front door of the school. (Comments by one of the groups: "*We have chosen the exit door because freedom lies behind it*.")
- Some areas they regard as ambiguous: the headteacher's office at the same school, seen positively because "*you always find a sympathetic ear there*," and negatively because "*you have to justify yourself there if you have done something wrong*."
- Hidden and forbidden places like the staff room are very attractive on the one hand, because they are taboo places, but on the other hand the pupils sometimes expect "*boring lessons*" or even punishment to originate from there.
- Often the positive or negative "appreciation" depends on the experiences they have had with certain teachers in certain rooms; for instance, the crafts room gets a "*minus*" because the members of the group do not like their craft teacher.
- Another important aspect: the children are given the chance to break taboos. For example, they can openly deal with the toilets, almost the only place in school where they are without supervision, and which are very noteworthy places to take photos of.

The pictures below give a glimpse of what pupils can come up when considering the significance of space in their schools.

Some Dos and Don'ts

Since it might be a waste of time to invent the wheel over again, the following "hints" may help teachers to implement photo evaluation in school in a manner that will save time:

- Make sure that the setting will produce substantial evaluation results, for instance by watching the process of decision-making in the groups. Who are the (opinion) leaders and the outsiders among the pupils?
- Watch your time resources: all groups must be able to take their pictures without time pressure. On the other hand it makes no sense to allow for too many pictures or too much time for each group. An important part of the process is learning to deal with the available time resources.
- Take the pupils' ages into consideration. With younger pupils it might be a good idea to have two teachers available to help them while working in groups.
- Use only one camera and have the pupils prepare an exact plan of the procedure: Who is going to take which photos? (If some of the pupils are allowed to use their own cameras you will hardly ever get all the photographs in at the same time, because they might not be developed simultaneously! It is necessary to have all the photos ready for the further phases of the project.)



- Taking pictures and looking at them may evoke strong emotions. *Where do you feel happy in school and where not?* carries the following message: what young people think and feel about things is so important that it is even worth documenting through photographs that you will use to make your opinions public . . . – so do not be puzzled if the students get deeply involved in their "jungle of feelings," as they called it. This expression refers to a good relationship between the teacher and the students.

- Another difficulty: Decision-making in the groups requires maturity as well as communication and conflict management skills. On the other hand, by engaging the pupils in learning by doing, this evaluation approach is an opportunity to deal with communication difficulties and conflict resolution; the venture may develop into a lesson on how to handle conflicts and emotions for both students and teachers!
- If the pupils decide to take on responsibility for the consequences of what they have discovered about their situation, the teachers should also be prepared to collaborate. Otherwise the pupils will get the feeling that their evaluation work is not taken seriously.

The reflections initiated by such a project usually do not arise often enough during the routines of everyday schooling. They may, however, start off a chain reaction. Other classes may be motivated to find and present the places where *they* feel (un)happy. Teachers may suddenly realise that they have not given sufficient thought to how they themselves feel about their workplace. In this sense the photos produced by the pupils are a valuable instrument of internal self-evaluation. Since the study probing aspects of the school culture is not done by external researchers, but the pupils themselves are encouraged to "look at" their own life at school, this approach is kin to action research aimed at improving social settings in school situations (cf. Elliott, 1991).

What we have Learnt from Photo Evaluation

We have learnt that photo evaluation requires communication and negotiation, because photographs deal with different realities: an image is not the "reality" it represents. Evaluation by pupils often means intervening in the process being examined. It foregrounds the commonplace insensitivity of everyday school-life towards the emotional needs of young people. If the school lacks a tradition of self-evaluation or the teachers lack experience in it, particular caution must be exercised to make sure that there is sufficient communication and negotiation between all those involved. Self-evaluation must be connected with a "new culture of curiosity" and with up-to-date theories of learning.

Further Ideas to Follow Up on Photo Evaluation

Photo evaluation is not a one-off activity. After you have succeeded in "stirring up" a number of pupils by showing them a way to deal with life at school, the method offers further opportunities. Here are some suggestions.

- Repeat the photo evaluation with the same pupils, one year later – and discuss with them what has changed.
- Find a way to publish (parts of) the findings, e.g. the school might produce documentation and information material for parents.
- Show some of the photographs to other pupils/teachers/parents . . . and let them guess which *they* think were the positive and the negative pictures.
- Ask teachers to take photographs of the places they like/hate in school and compare their results with those of the pupils.
- Take pictures of meaningful "social scenes" instead of places (with people "acting out" such scenes).
- Try out a photographic approach to certain topics in the curriculum.
- Ask your pupils what else could be evaluated by using photographs; they will surely have some excellent ideas!

Photo evaluation has meanwhile been used in several contexts in and out of schools, such as in an exploration of the issues surrounding the teaching of reading in an Irish primary school, within the context of home-school relations (cf. English, 1997), or in an international project called "Seeing beyond Violence," in which children in different continents used photographs to relevant data for violence-free family care in their villages (cf. Children et al., 2004).

NOTES

1. CLASP is an international research project funded by the European Commission, with further financial support from participating countries. The project is directed by Bob Jeffrey from the Open University, U.K.
2. The time needed to get the photos ready depends on the type of camera (regular, digital, Polaroid).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We thank Francesca Brotto in her translation support for not just looking at the English language of our text but for also going beyond its words.

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THE USE OF THE VISUAL MEDIUM FOR PROGRAM EVALUATION

Rosalind Hurworth

INTRODUCTION

Early in my career (similar I suspect to most other evaluators I knew of around the world) I had never considered using the visual medium as a major form of data for evaluations. This was not surprising, as we had been just emerged from a fifty-year period when the social sciences relied on quantitative, positivist approaches with the result that pictorial images were perceived to be imprecise, subjective, representations that could not be accepted as evaluation data.

So, the first time it struck me that visual data could prove a powerful force for change was at the end of the 1980s when I attended a series of workshops on qualitative methods. There, I met a fellow participant who was unusual in that not only did she hold a degree in Sociology but also possessed qualifications in Photography. She had used this combination of expertise most effectively, to carry out a social justice project that aimed to gain improvements in housing within an inner Sydney suburb. Photographs were taken of the homeless and those living in poor conditions nearby, and these were mounted in the foyer of the local Town Hall, with quotations from associated interviews placed under each photo. The resultant exhibition made such an impact that the local Council made concerted efforts, very soon afterwards, to improve housing for the less fortunate in the area.

About the same time I came across an article by D'Amico (1986) that revealed once again how the use of photographs could empower the powerless. In this instance the study focussed on poor settlements in Buenos Aires and photographs

Seeing is Believing? Approaches to Visual Research
Studies in Qualitative Methodology, Volume 7, 163–181

ISSN: 1042-3192/doi:10.1016/S1042-3192(04)07010-7

had been taken by researchers studying "towns and society." The photos were then compiled in a book planned as a lobbying tool to encourage programs for social change. Although the pictures had been taken by a university team, the residents decided which photos should be included and the captions again were individuals' comments as they talked to each other when viewing the photographs.

However, after this awakening to the potential power of the visual as a medium to enable change and improvement, I then returned to my usual practices and did not think of using visual data again until about five years later when I was contacted by the (then) President of the Australasian Evaluation Society. He explained that the organising committee for the forthcoming AES Conference had decided to try something novel and cutting-edge by evaluating the conference using photographs as data. However, the person contracted to undertake the task was no longer able to do so. The problem was that the Conference was imminent, the project had been well-advertised, and the printed program announced that there would be a plenary session, during which the process would be described and results presented on the final afternoon. The now panic-stricken President threw down the gauntlet and challenged me to undertake the task. So through a "baptism of fire," I found myself thrown in at the deep end. Nevertheless, this led eventually to an enduring belief that knowing how to manage this form of data collection should be part of every evaluator's "methods toolkit."

Lessons From Others Who Had Considered the Use of Visual Image for Evaluations

Once given the job of carrying out a photographic evaluation I realised that I needed to find out more about how others had dealt with such tasks. The obvious course of action was to look at relevant literature. However, I should have suspected that there was relatively little, for in conversation with other evaluators, comments would arise such as; "*I'd like to use photos too, but there doesn't seem to be much about it in the evaluation literature*" or; "*Have you come across any good articles about the collection and analysis of photographs in evaluation? – because I haven't!*". So I was not surprised when a thorough search failed to produce much beyond material written by a few sociologists, anthropologists or qualitative researchers (e.g. Ball & Smith, 1992; Brown et al., 1982; Collier & Collier, 1986; English, 1988; Hockings, 1975; Petersen & Brown, 1979; Wagner, 1979; Yogev & Shapira, 1982). However, I wanted material that was associated directly with evaluation and a few gems emerged so that later I went on to produce an annotated bibliography from the most useful material (Hurworth, 1996).

So what was talked about? Firstly, some authors wrote in general terms about the potential of photographs for evaluations. For instance, Fang (1985a, b) listed

possible advantages such as: systematic recording of program activity; highlighting specific events; illustrating a point; leading the evaluator to specific people, activities and places; verifying findings; offering multiple perspectives of the same event; and creating variety within reporting. In addition, he pointed out that during the act of taking a photo, evaluators need to consider sampling of events to shoot, record keeping, composition, obtrusiveness as well as technical aspects such as film speed and lighting.

Other articles reported evaluations that had actually used photographs or videos as data and then went on to consider the ramifications. For example, Brown, Petersen and Sanstead (1980) discussed the potential for using photography within program evaluation generally, and then proceeded to show how they applied photographic evaluation to studies of a student orientation program and a hall-of-residence program. During their discussion, the authors explored the potential of the camera to evoke evaluative responses and to produce images for the reporting of findings before going on to enumerate issues associated with ethics, bias and obtrusiveness.

The use of photography as an evaluation technique was also discussed by Watchman (1978) in relation to an evaluation of the ESSENCE environmental science curriculum project. In this case images were used in order to carry out clarification and monitoring forms of evaluation. Consequently, the camera was used during site visits in an attempt to portray the workings of the project and to convey an understanding of the associated curriculum in schools.

Also writing about the use of the camera in educational settings Falk (1976) described how photographs were used to assess the extent of student participation in an outdoor education program for 10–14 year olds. Several more traditional data collection methods to evaluate levels of participation were found to be lacking and so it was decided to try photographs as data. The camera was placed in a fixed position at a location that ensured coverage of at least 90% of students and then shots were taken at two-minute intervals. The data collected was then organised to record the ratio of students involved to the number of students involved in the activity. The task was approached quantitatively and validity was regulated by seven people coding each photo. Overall, photography was found to be a useful and relatively unobtrusive tool for providing a measure of involvement and Falk drew the conclusion that photography could be an invaluable tool for evaluating curriculum outcomes and impacts on student behaviour.

In similar vein Hine et al. (1970) reported on the use of photographs to evaluate the success of a school art program. Each of 144, 9–10 year old children were asked to take three shots of an object during the school year to see if learning would carry over and influence what they did in the way of selecting and positioning objects they chose to photograph. Results indicated that for the authors the use of photography

as an evaluation technique was sound and of particular value for children who have had a limited environmental enrichment.

Another evaluator who found the visual image to be particularly effective was Margolis (1990) who reported that photographs and videos can portray the reality of a program in a way that words cannot. Consequently, in a street outreach program in San Franscisco visual representations were used to illuminate the social processes, events, relationships and meanings of both the culture of intravenous drug users and that of the outreach program workers.

However, perhaps some of the most comprehensive information about the use of the visual image was provided by Patricia Templin, one of the most prolific writers about the use of photographs in evaluation. She concentrated on technical aspects of carrying out data collection such as how to sample and how to maintain equipment (Templin, 1978, 1979a, b, 1981, 1982).

So, armed with this information produced twenty to thirty years ago, how has the use of the visual medium been applied to evaluation settings with which I have been involved in the last few years? And what lessons have been learnt? These matters seem to be particularly necessary to address because, although there has been a considerable revival of interest in the use of the visual medium for research (Banks, 1995, 2001; Emmison & Smith, 2001; Prosser, 1996; Rose, 2001; Walker, 1993), the world of evaluation has remained virtually silent about the use of the visual image since the late 1980s.

Firstly, I present situations where the use of photography and video seems to have had particular potency in the field of evaluation and to present some examples. Indeed, I will show that in some instances visual data is really the only form of data that can be used. I then go on to suggest ways that the visual image adds value to evaluations before considering ways that common criticisms to the approach can be overcome.

TYPES, AND EXAMPLES, OF EVALUATION WHERE THE VISUAL MEDIUM HAS BEEN FOUND TO BE PARTICULARLY USEFUL

I, my students and others have found the use of photographs or videos to be particularly useful when:

(1) There is a Wide Range of Activity to be Documented

Examples

(i) an evaluation of a school fête (with food stalls, white elephant stalls, rides, competition booths etc.);

(ii) an evaluation of an international conference (Hurworth & Sweeney, 1992) (where there were wide-ranging activities such as registration, paper sessions, poster presentations, social events, meals etc.).

(2) Stakeholders are unable to participate in other forms of data collection, such as surveys or in-depth interviews [even though the evaluation question(s) may suggest otherwise]

Examples

(i) studies of small children

e.g. a project to examine kindergarten effectiveness for three year olds (Hurworth & Fergusson, 1988). Because the children involved were so young, traditional techniques, such as the use of interviews or questionnaires, were out of the question and so it was decided to use the visual medium as the main way to collect data. Using a quasi-experimental design, the group was divided in half with 20 children who attended a program (experimental group) and 20 who remained at home (control group). 1200, 30 second clips of children's activity and behaviour were collected and coded at the beginning and end of the program, thereby enabling an assessment of each child's change in cognitive and social behaviour.

(i) physically or mentally handicapped program participants

e.g. an evaluation of a program for those with severe cerebral palsy. Again common forms of data collection were totally inappropriate as these participants had little or no mobility, speech or writing ability. So to assess program engagement and level of success, the only solution was to take pictures and make videos of eye movement and expression.

(iii) those for whom English is a second language or who have low literacy levels

e.g. one of my students works for the Salvation Army and trains past alcoholics and drug addicts (often with migrant or disrupted educational backgrounds) to enter the workforce as kitchen hands, waiters or chefs. They: enter (often in an unkempt state); are cleaned up; undertake initial training; go on to work/serve in the Salvation Army's canteen for their own hostel residents; do more training; and then finally work in full chef's uniform/waiter livery with full silver service in a restaurant that is open to the public. However, in order to obtain another round of funding, the program had to be evaluated. The trainer realised that conventional evaluation methods were unlikely to be appropriate for this group and so decided to make a short video to depict the initial, mid-point and end stages. The presentation of this to decision-makers took just a quarter of an hour. After reviewing the dramatic changes that had taken place, the program was re-funded for another two years.

(iv) large groups of people or the public

Again, with large numbers of people, it is not feasible to administer surveys or to conduct interviews, so for mass education programs the visual image may be the best or only option. Examples include:

(a) an evaluation of police crowd control programs at sporting events;

(b) photographic monitoring of the sun-protection behaviour of sports' spectators (Borland & Theobald, 1990). This evaluation arose because Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world and so the response has been to introduce an education program for the public called "SunSmart." This involves messages about applying sunscreen, wearing sunhats, and covering the body. In order to assess the program's impact it was decided to carry out a longitudinal, photographic survey of public behaviour during certain major summer sporting events. So, examining and coding photographs (regarding the wearing of hats, widths of brims, lengths of sleeves etc.) at the same events annually (taking weather conditions into account) was considered an effective way to measure changes in spectator sun protection behaviour.

Mass education programs (such as "Sunsmart"). Can use photographs as data.

(3) The Visual Image can be Used as an Unobtrusive Measure

Example
To examine the degree of acceptance of the Sunsmart Program outlined above, further photographs of people in swimwear were examined in summer editions of women's magazines over a fifteen year period. The photographic images were coded according to tanning levels portrayed (and as hoped, as years progressed, the levels decreased and there was more evidence of hat-wearing and of less torso exposure).

(4) The Objectives of a Program are Abstract and are Therefore Difficult to Articulate or Measure

Example
Another former student was a captain in the Royal Australian Navy. Similar to the example just described at 2 (iii), the program for which he was responsible was

Photographs can depict programs that have abstract objectives (such as "Teamwork").

under threat and he needed to demonstrate that it was of benefit to participants. This course had to be completed before applying for promotion from Petty Officer to Warrant Officer and the objective for the program was to increase teambuilding capacity. As this is an abstract concept, those involved found it extremely difficult to talk or write about the program in a way that would provide rich and useful data. In desperation the Captain came to discuss how he might overcome these problems. I suggested that he take a series of slides, spanning the variety of program activities, showing how men worked in teams. He did this and captured some very powerful images (such as 9 men standing on a one metre square slab, pulling men through tyres under water and helping to convey men from one tree to another thirty feet above ground). After a ten-minute presentation of forty slides, the "powers that be" congratulated him on running an excellent program and it was re-funded for another three years.

(5) Programs are Highly Visual in Themselves, Such as Programs in the Arts

Example

Our Centre was commissioned to determine best practice elements of successful Arts Programs in Victorian schools. While visiting sites to collect material for case studies, many photographs were taken of art artefacts, dramatic productions, musical events and so on. This helped to convey exactly what was occurring and being produced in schools (Owen et al., 1989).

(6) A Program Leads to Change Over Long or Short Periods of Time

Examples

(i) There are currently many evaluations taking place of local Land Care programs. In Australia rural areas have been resourced to tackle problems such as increased salinity, soil erosion and river pollution. Frequently in Land Care literature and evaluation reports, photographs are provided to illustrate "before and after." For instance; "Here is a photograph of the area denuded of soil and this is the same area three years later with reafforestation and grasses sown to bind the soil." These images provide strong and immediate evidence of change.

(ii) Sometimes photographs reveal the historical evolution of programs. For instance, Dowdall and Golden (1989) examined photos of a mental institution, taken over a hundred years, to show how the treatment of patients has changed over that period.

(7) The Physical/Locational Context of a Program is Particularly Important

Examples

(i) Post occupancy evaluations of buildings. This type of evaluation has been pioneered in recent years by Watson (1995) an architect in New Zealand, so that architects are responsive to the changing needs of people who use the buildings that architects have designed. Using both a walkthrough interview with various stakeholders as well as the use of photographs of building elements, discussion forms the basis of recommendations to improve future building designs and usage.

(ii) An evaluation of whether a particular location is suitable as a leadership Centre for schools. In this instance, interviews produced supportive evidence from those attending a leadership program that the rural location chosen as the site was appropriate. Photos taken by the student participants were able to illustrate and support interview statements contained in a report (Bell, 2004).

(iii) An evaluation of programs run in Ugandan schools. If a report were presented as text only then there could be misperceptions of the context or it could be difficult to imagine. By providing pictures of what schools look like in Uganda, the reader gains greater understanding of program location, resources and difficulties.

(8) Carrying out Interactive, Empowerment, Participatory or Collaborative Evaluations

The use of photographs can foster interactive type of evaluations to effect social change by asking participants to take the photos themselves or to be discussants within photo-interviewing approaches.

Examples

(i) Using photos to bring about change in a community development and housing project.

The North Melbourne Tenants' Association (NTMA) is a representative body for people of diverse ethnic origin living in public housing in that suburb. The NTMA's Community Officer was keen to empower residents and a photo project was perceived to be one way to achieve this by encouraging residents to work together to practice decision-making. Eventually, a dozen residents became involved and the group decided they wanted to answer the question: What is it like to live in North Melbourne? They wanted the photographs to reflect both positive and negative aspects and, consequently, the project

evolved into an evaluation of local living conditions. Each team member was allocated a disposable camera and eventually 120 photos were taken from which 100 shots were selected providing an effective lobbying tool for change. Displays of photos were mounted outside polling stations and the library at the time of local government elections. Within days of the elections change occurred. The Dept. Housing sent tradesmen to deal with particular maintenance problems highlighted by the photographs.[1]

(ii) Informing and improving women's health

A form of photo-interviewing is referred to as photo novella (picture stories) or photovoice (Wang et al., 1996) where participants show the photos they have taken to talk about their significance and meaning. Consequently, these types of interviewing aim to be a tool of empowerment enabling those who are marginalised to communicate to policy makers where change should occur. An example of this approach was carried out by Wang, Burris and Xiang (1996) who used the technique with rural women in China to inform and influence improvements in women's health.

WHAT ELSE CAN THE VISUAL IMAGE ADD TO EVALUATIONS?

While being appropriate for particular types of evaluations the visual image can also:

- provide visual communication
- enable non-verbal information and imagery not available by any other means
- enable improved understandings about context and interactions
- invoke visual description that helps to develop insights
- allow the evaluator to understand events, settings and people more easily
- help to the interpret meaning of behaviours by connecting ideas with visual counterparts
- be more hard hitting than prose
- provoke emotional responses
- assist to document a culture.

In relation to types of data collection, the use of the visual medium can additionally:

- form an extension of participant observation
- be considered a form of document analysis

Furthermore, in connection with evaluation reporting it also allows:

- variety in reporting
- (in some instances) long and tedious reports to be dispensed with altogether, as presentation of short videos or sets of pictures only requires a few minutes in comparison with the considerable time required to read lengthy reports. This is greatly appreciated by extremely busy decision-makers!

WAYS OF OVERCOMING ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE USE OF THE VISUAL IMAGE IN EVALUATIONS

What has been presented so far in this chapter has promoted the positive attributes of the visual medium for evaluation. However, there are always cynics or detractors who argue that the collection and use of photographs as data is prone to criticism because of shot selection and subjectivity associated with interpretation (even though we know that variable selection and interpretation of results from statistical procedures can also be considered equally subjective!). Often there are claims that images can only be thought of as "happy snaps" with no rigour attached.

One person who considered such issues was Becker (1979). He raised questions about the veracity of interpretations and suggested that if we are going to use the visual medium for applied social science, we need to know whether images can be trusted as evidence, i.e. whether and how they "tell the truth." He then presented some clear ways of thinking about this problem. Firstly, he began by clarifying the question "Is it true?" and then provided a way to proceed, saying we must first specify what we are receiving the "truth" about and to ask ourselves what evaluation questions the photograph might be answering. However, he suggested that it is also possible to raise our own questions. Becker then discussed threats to rigour while emphasising that: the truth may not be the whole truth; the truth will not usually be thought trustworthy by the use of photographic images alone but will need multi-method triangulation such as using photos in conjunction with interviews or document analysis; we can never be absolutely sure of the truth of an assertion; and no single standard of proof is acceptable for all stakeholders and evaluation purposes. To conclude, Becker compiled a catalogue of specific problems in the use of photos as data such as faking shots, the production of art rather than reality, poor sampling, the lack of adequate theory and editing what can be seen. Similarly, Templin (1978–1982) attempted to tackle matters such as sampling.

However, I suggest that for use in evaluation *it is a matter of trying to be just as rigorous as with any other data collection technique in order to produce credible and trustworthy data. Additionally, strengths and limitations must be acknowledged in both design and data collection phases.*

Therefore, I suggest that common criticisms raised can be addressed in a number of ways such as by:

1. ENSURING THERE IS A STRONG EVALUATION QUESTION/THEORY TO DRIVE THE PROJECT

It is impossible to arrive at a site to take photographs without some kind of theoretical base to drive the evaluation. Therefore, to create rigorous projects there have to be questions in place. For example, in relation to the conference evaluation, the question that allowed us to make sense of the situation being photographed was; "Are the needs of the delegates being met?" and for the kindergarten study; "Is the program effective in terms of cognitive and social growth?" Of course, if using a qualitative approach, new questions may arise as more visual images are taken and analysed. This can help to refocus the evaluation and guide the investigative process.

2. USING TRIANGULATION, IF NECESSARY, TO STRENGTHEN THE EVALUATION DESIGN

In order to avoid criticism, one common way is to triangulate using multiple methods. By using photographs or videos in conjunction with other methods such as interviews, surveys or focus groups, collaborative evidence can be assembled.

Indeed the combination of photographs with interviews has been considered a strong approach for evaluations. For example, Dempsey and Tucker explained the techniques and challenges of using photo-interviewing as a tool for evaluation (Dempsey & Tucker, 1994; Tucker & Dempsey, 1991). They explained how this tool offers great promise when trying to collect holistic material, claiming that the approach is flexible and can detect unpredictable as well as expected behaviours. They also argued that the use of photographs in this way acts as stimuli as well as verifiers, and prompts reflection that goes far beyond typical evaluation interviewing contexts that do not use visual cues. They also outlined a nine-step process associated with how to carry out photo interviewing effectively before demonstrating how the approach was used successfully within several settings such as evaluations of a graduate 40-hour media course, a graduate hypermedia workshop and a high school chemistry program. Since then, I have looked at the development of photo-interviewing for research and evaluation in some detail and emphasised the strength of this approach (Hurworth, 2003).

3. CHOOSING A RIGOROUS SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

There are various sampling approaches available (see Templin's work) each of which has advantages and disadvantages that need to be articulated. These are now examined with an example of the type of an evaluation question appropriate for using the particular sampling technique outlined.

(a) *Fixed time sampling*
Process: Pictures are taken from a fixed position at regular intervals (e.g. once an hour).
Example: An evaluation of the use of a particular area/space in a library to see whether it is used effectively or whether it should be used for some other purpose.
Advantage: Reveals shifting patterns accurately (as long as the camera is set at the right angle and isn't moved).

(b) *Sampling across time*
Process: Pictures are taken at regular intervals across a full range of activities during a set time period.
Example: An evaluation of an all-day rehearsal for a school musical with photographs taken every half hour of the stage, behind stage and orchestra areas.
Advantage: Shows progression of a range of activities over a set time period (although it may fail to show interesting activities between times).

(c) *Event-based sampling*
Process: One element of a program, rather than the whole program, needs evaluating and so photographs/videos are taken of this type of activity only.
Example: In regard to a school fête the principal needs to know how effective the food stalls are and whether to increase the number for the following year.
Advantage: Focuses on events in a certain category.

(d) *Dimensionally-based sampling*
Process: When there are constraints of either time or space, making it impossible to cover the whole range of activities, a sample of each category may be selected.
Example: Emergency management training covers all types of emergency from fire-fighting to mine disasters and from tanker oil spillages to terrorism. It may not be possible to take photos related to all aspects of such training when evaluating it and so the evaluator might decide to take three shots pertaining to fire-fighting training, three related to dealing with mine disasters, three associated with training to deal with terrorism etc.

Advantage: Offers some degree of representation of what happens across a program.

(e) *Shadow sampling*
Process: Involves following one person or group through an entire day/routine in a program.
Example: What is it like to be a training officer in an agricultural extension program?
Advantage: Offers a focus and deeper understanding (although care must be taken with subject selection and to make sure that program activities are covered).

(f) *Snowball Sampling* (also known as Web or Network) sampling
Process: Asking a stakeholder who, or what else, might be photographed or videoed.
Example: You are interested in documenting well-decorated art classrooms. You know of one and ask the teacher there if they know of another. They send you to another school where you ask this second teacher if they know of another setting and so on.
Advantage: Gives access to unknown examples, as long as the person asked possesses knowledge and networks.

(g) *Theoretically informed sampling*
Process: The evaluation question may require the evaluator to take pictures differently e.g. from different angles, from behind subjects or lower down to get a child's viewpoint etc.
Example: What does work in a hospital ward look like from the patient's perspective? In this case photos may need to be taken lying down in a hospital bed.
Advantage: Can address the evaluation question directly.

4. ALLEVIATING THE EXTENT OF PHOTOGRAPHER/FILMER INFLUENCE

Similar to participant observation, there will always be some evaluator effect that influences program participants' behaviour. This can be exacerbated with the introduction of equipment such as a camera or video-camera. However, we have found that increased presence (i.e. prolonged engagement) is likely to lead to camera acceptance. Indeed, after a while those being viewed come to ignore the equipment. For instance, in the conference evaluation described earlier, everyone would turn to look at us during the first day but by the third day virtually ignored us. Then for the effectiveness of kindergarten for three year olds evaluation we realised

that reactivity might occur and so decided to pay several visits and "filmed" each time without any film in the video camera. This allowed children to become familiar with us coming to film so that when it was "for real" they were able to ignore the filming activity and simply acted normally.

5. ENSURING ORIGINAL IMAGES ARE NOT TAMPERED WITH

Similar to how evaluators maintain entire interview tapes and transcripts without editing or changing the language in any way, visual images must be treated in the same way. This means ensuring there is minimal distortion regarding line, angle or light. It also means making sure that there are no: altered photos; retouched photos; composite negatives; highly edited videos; use of models; falsifying or staging the setting; cropped photos; and out-of focus images. In other words images are meant to capture "reality" and "truth" rather than to create "art."[2]

6. RECOGNISING ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ISSUES

In an article written in 1990, Fang and Ellwein concentrated some discussion on the issue of ethics when using photographs in evaluation. They emphasised that the public nature of photographs carries ethical implications for application in evaluation practice but mainly they expressed concern about accuracy of representation, lack of a proper sampling plan, and non-explanation of selection. However, they did emphasise that informed consent must be obtained.

In the same year, Lubeck (1990) also discussed such issues in relation to photographs taken within a community mental health facility. Within such a program environment, special issues can arise with the use of photographs such as possible exploitation of the in-mates who may not understand the implication of the photographer's release form. This is also true of visual images taken of small children or school students. Consequently, in evaluation projects where we have been involved with educational settings, we have always asked parents, teachers or schoolchildren whether certain photographs or videos can be used. Another way to deal with such issues is to take photos from the rear, side, or from a distance so that individuals are not able to be identified easily.

7. EXPLAINING ANY SELECTION BIAS

The evaluator needs to explain any selection bias imposed by the client, political situation, the evaluator's own convictions or by social taboos. For instance, in one

evaluation there were fewer photos than intended when examining a swimming program for Moslem girls in schools. Parents were not keen to have their teenage daughters photographed and so their wishes were respected.

Another way to overcome a common criticism that "only the best (and therefore atypical) pictures have been chosen" to illustrate a report is to include galley proofs as an appendix. This then demonstrates that there were additional, similar photos from which to choose.

8. MAKING ANALYSIS PROCESSES TRANSPARENT

Similar to all other types of social science data collection the analysis of the visual image must be carried out and reported rigorously. In fact, the advantage of pictorial evidence is that it can be analysed quantitatively, qualitatively or by using both approaches (Hurworth & Sweeney, 1992). In addition there are now a number of qualitative data analysis software packages such as Atlas-ti, HyperRESEARCH, Qualitative Media Analyzer or VisualText which have the facility to deal specifically with photographic and video images.

CONCLUSION

I have endeavoured to demonstrate that the visual image can be a particularly useful, powerful and rigorous tool that can be used in a range of both qualitative and quantitative evaluation designs.

However, there are still some evaluation clients and funders unwilling to recognise the visual image as a major data source on the grounds of subjectivity, possible bias of the photographer and reactivity of those being photographed or filmed. To overcome such criticism, evaluators and stakeholders need to be encouraged to move away from the view that photographs and videos are merely subjective and illustrative. They need to realise that the use of visual images as a source of data requires the same kind of approach and decision-making as any other type of rigorous data collection for evaluation purposes, that is:

What sampling approach will be utilised?
How do we ensure rigour and trustworthiness when using this data collection method?
What ethical issues have to be considered?
How will images be analysed?
Will the use of visual images assist in answering evaluation questions?

Will they provide useful information from which to make decisions?
How will results be conveyed?

Once these major issues have been addressed, then it is more likely that those commissioning and carrying out evaluations will accept the use of the visual image as a mainstream data collection tool within the evaluator's repertoire.

NOTES

1. For further details of this and some of the other projects above see Hurworth and Sweeney (1995).
2. Until recently these actions have been easier to promise and achieve but with the increasing use of digital cameras all of this will need to come under scrutiny. This is because getting rid of unwanted photos or video clips, cropping, editing and so on are attractive features of this recent technology.

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