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“Good morning video diary...”
**Co-producing meanings of
domestic ‘masculinities’ using
participant-generated videos**



Angela Meah
Dept. of Geography
University of Sheffield

Visual research methods

- Archives
- Participant photograph albums
- Internet sources
- Magazines, newspapers, catalogues etc
- Selfies

‘Found’, or
existing, visual
material



- Drawing;
- Maps; memory maps
- Collage
- Scrapbooks/memory books
- Puppetry/performance
- Photography
 - Participant generated
- Video recording
 - Participant generated

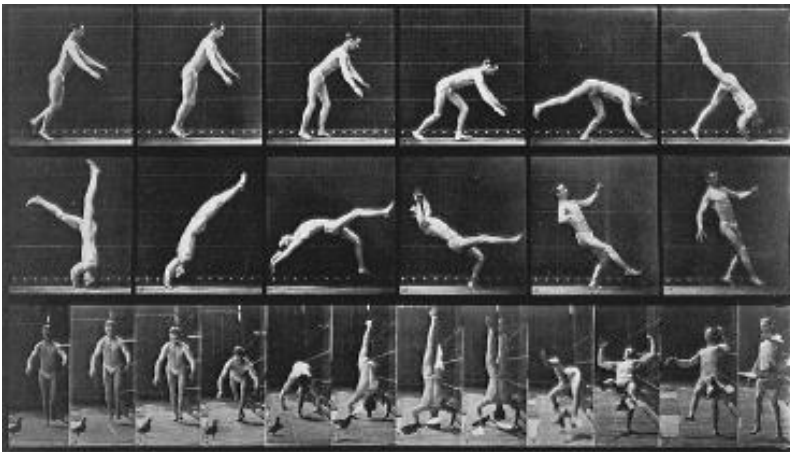
Researcher
initiated visual
products



Innovative methods...?



Lewis Hines, 1911



Eadweard Muybridge, 1884-86



"I take notes while Gregory films a children's play group" (Mead 1977: 235). Fieldwork with the Iatmul people of the New Guinea, 1938. The Library of Congress maintains the photographic collection of Mead's fieldwork.

Bateson & Mead, circa 1938

Questions and concerns in the 21stC

- ▶ Ethics
 - ▶ ‘Harm’ and ‘Protection of human subjects’
 - ▶ Disembodiment
 - ▶ Ownership
- ▶ Researcher subjectivity
- ▶ Power relations between researcher and researched
- ▶ Representation
- ▶ Reflexivity



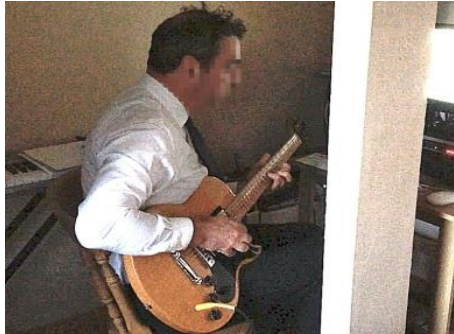
The politics (and practices) of looking (Martens, 2012)

- ▶ The researcher's subjectivity is central in the production and representation of knowledge (Pink, 2001).
- ▶ Images do not stand alone as an objective reality, with only one interpretation, but meaning is **created in the interaction between the photograph and the viewer** (Power, 2003).
- ▶ Defining the type of photograph depends more **on the context in which it is viewed**, rather than on the individual who took it, or for what purpose (Becker, 1998; Banks, 2001; Pink, 2001).
- ▶ The **purposes for which we look are politically fraught**, requiring interrogation of research practices in which looking plays a prominent role (Martens, 2012).

Masculinity: *[mass noun]* possession of the qualities traditionally associated with men (Oxford Dictionaries 2013)



‘Being a man’



	Roger (51)	Darren (45)	Dave (47)
Occupational background	Ex-military officer/pilot; Operations Executive	Sales; self-emp. landscape gardener	Fire Officer
Ethnicity/social class	White; upper m/c; postgrad education	White; working class; higher education. Wife Afro-Carib	White; working class; higher education
Marital status	Widowed; separated; non-cohabiting partner	Married to Carol	Divorced; non co-habiting partner
Children	Simon (10); Libby (7) ; Adult daughters + g/child	Charlie (7); Billie (5); Adult daughter from previous relationship	Harvey (13); Jack (11)

Methods

- ▶ Qualitative, multi-method pilot study
 - Life history interviews
 - Videoed participant observation/go-along
 - Photography
 - Participant auto-ethnographic video/video diaries
 - Review of data with filmmakers and their subjects





“Good morning video diary...”



“I was conscious of the two different ways and also the strangeness of having a camera, *initially, that feeling that I’d got to address it to explain, sort of ‘scene set’, if you like: ‘here you are, this is who I am, this is our house’, plodded on like that; and the second bit I kind’ve thought, well, you know who I am, you know where you are, just watch it... I was gonna ask you that question, from your point of view, was it any better or worse?”*

“I’ll put you down here...”



*“...I switched it on I did tend to, not necessarily forget, but it was (..) **so it was actually quite cathartic. It was something to talk to...***

*Once you’ve settled into it and you stop kind of noticing the camera, or **you just think of it as part of, an extension of yourself, or whatever... I think it’s a really good idea, but you need, I think, 2 or 3 weeks to kind of get over the alienness of it, if you like, the strangeness of it. Eventually it just becomes normal... I thought, in the end, it was actually quite enjoyable”.***

‘Documentary’ voice: “*This is a baba...*”



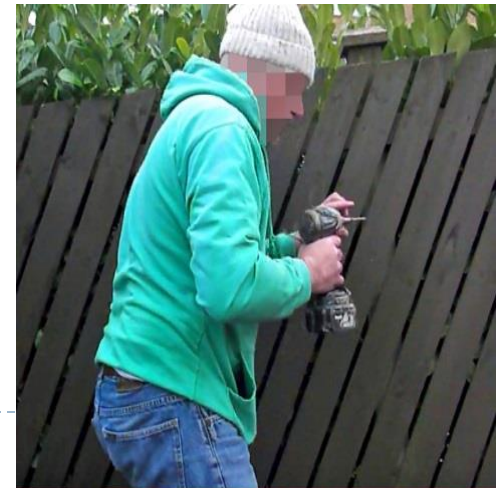
Televisual manipulations



“How televisually conscious are the people that’s using it? Because you see... people are quite conscious these days of having cameras into their houses and, in effect, **they’re performing for the camera.** Are they quite, sort of savvy to that, potentially manipulate it? I could quite easily have just, probably I have done to a certain extent, you might not have seen me attacking my children, or shout, I’m not saying that I do, losing it or shouting at them, that might have happened because early morning it can get a bit shouty...”

The movie method of analysing auto-ethnographic films Gibson 2005

- ▶ **Audience:** who's does it appear to be directed at?
- ▶ **Scene:** what identity aspects are revealed; how?
- ▶ **Director:** who's involved in directing it and what does it reveal about participant/their relationships?
- ▶ **Role:** what roles/subject positions are being expressed/performed?
- ▶ **Cut:** what is absent/hidden and why? What does this reveal?



Darren: *“I’ll be recording domestic chores and normal everyday things that might or might not contribute to me being a man”.*





Heteronormative reflections

- C But to [other prospective male participants], that wouldn't determine whether they're feminine or masculine. So, to them (..) filming something with me wouldn't show (..) d'you know what I mean?
- D But to a, but then you look at, yes it would (.) because we're heterosexual, so we've got a man/woman relationship; that would define me as being a man.
- C But you don't even think (.) So that's what I'm saying... you wouldn't have thought the relationship between me and you was a (..)
- A (.) It's a given?
- D Yeh, yeh, prob, so I don't consider that side of it, in terms of definitions of being a man, but part of it is, being a man, to be with a woman... er,
- C Because most men would, probably (.) think, OK, it's about how I bring up my different sexes of, my children, how I deal with my children, how I do chores,
- D Yeh, and also that definition of man-stroke-woman, if you look back from more traditional masculine-stroke-feminine roles within a domestic environment pretty much is, what is traditionally seen as women's work and what's traditionally seen as being men's work,
-



Roger: *“here’s me on my Lonely island”*



Accessing the emotional self

“I’m not particularly keen on this part of my life, in the sense of dropping the children off at home, or a house where I used to live, whether you’d describe it as a home is another question, I never really felt at home there because it’s where my ex-wife wanted to live... so I didn’t have much say... so many things I was excluded from, important decisions... It’s really not nice being away from [the children]. I think there’s a couple of significant misconceptions in separation, if you like, er, that the man is... always pleased to go, that he doesn’t mind being away from the kids... Interestingly, I don’t know of any men who feel that way, in terms of the children, at all. So every time I drop them off, it is actually quite painful, er, (.) it really is (...) I wish I weren’t separated from them, but I am (..) so you just have to try to make as good a fist of these things as you possibly can. But it doesn’t make for an easy life, emotionally, sometimes (.) but hey ho, that’s the way of the world sometimes. As long as they’re happy it doesn’t matter in many respects whether I’m happy I suppose. I’m just [laughs] I’m just here to pay the bills and make things happen, which was pretty much what my marriage was like (?) there was a degree of cruelty in that as well, and which I’m pleased to be away from”.



“Random talk”

D So would you ban Page 3 if you could then then Harvey?

J No, er, I mean yeh!

D You can say what you like.

H Of course I would!

D Jack wouldn't.

J If you were a sad loner, I'd feel sorry for them.

H Who the hell would want some fat, old, sweaty guy looking at you with just bras and Ann Summers knickers on?

J Ann Summ, oh I tried to go into Ann Summers.

H (.) What did you want to go in Ann Summers for?!

D Yeh Jack, what did want to go into Anne Summers for?

J I didn't know that it was a rude shop!

H Oh really?!

D What did you think it was?

H Oh, I know! Jack saw the bunny thing outside and thought it was a pet shop!

D Did you mistake Ann Summers for a pet shop, Jack?

H [Laughing] Dad, Jack probably thinks that Playboy is a toyshop!



Some conclusions...

- ▶ Visual methods can enhance our understanding of the social world, providing that we acknowledge our own subjectivities in the processes of looking.
- ▶ Involving PPs simply as collectors of data is not 'meaningful participation'.
- ▶ Importance of reflexive dialogue with PPs concerning the processes of production, what is being told, why, how and for whom – what do these reveal about the issue being investigated?
- ▶ What can we learn from our PPs about our topic and how to 'do' research?
- ▶ PP-led auto-ethnographic video cannot provide unmediated access to everyday lives, but may be revealing of complex and embodied nature of issues concerning identity, and how these are subject to interpretation and slippage – including in relation to us as researchers.



The movie method of analysis Gibson 2005

- ▶ **Audience:** who's does it appear to be directed at?
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And finally!

- ▶ Visual methods have long history
- ▶ Gaining greater prominence in social sciences
- ▶ Require reflexivity from researchers
- ▶ Co-produced video footage offers a valuable perspective
- ▶ Raises important ethical and epistemological questions.
- ▶ Provides means of accessing aspects of social life that are relatively inaccessible (invisible) via other methods.
- ▶ **Thank you!**

