VISUAL LANDSCAPES OF IN/VISIBILITY:
EXPLORING AND CHALLENGING THE REPRESENTATION AND DEMONISATION OF MARGINALISED MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS

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In/visibility and Difference: A Visual Methods Workshop - Berlin, 3-4 December 2015
INTRODUCTION

Silenced voices
Speaking back
Being seen
Visibility and Invisibility
Impact and/or protection
Ethics, practicalities and time immemorial
Reflections on projects with marginalised communities
THE OBJECTIFYING GAZE

19th Century
Photographic methods
Analyses and represent ‘other’ cultures
Embedded in power relations
Imperialism
Photography became part of the objectifying gaze of the colonial project
THE COLONIAL PROJECT

- Reductive realism
- Regulatory system
- Hierarchical ordering of race
- Pseudo-science
- Authorative evidence
A PICTURE HELD US CAPTIVE...

Photograph is a construction of culture
Truthfulness of the appearance of things
The indignity of speaking for others
REPRESENTATIONS OF MOTHERHOOD

Morant (1998)

‘motherhood is objectified as a young, feminine woman. She seems to have the stereotypical rosy glow of motherhood and looks calm and contemplative... work to define what forms of femininity are socially acceptable and desirable. But at the same time they also render invisible [other] women
‘OTHER’ MOTHERS

Figures are brought to life and endowed with affect through mediation

This figure of chav mum circulates within a wide range of media, celebrity media, reality television, print media, literature, news media, films, and “chav hate” websites. Through the figure of chav a new publicly sanctioned wave of middle-class contempt for the lower classes is bodied forth

Impacts on public perceptions and social policy (Tyler 2008)

(Mannay, Grant and Mason – current project)
SILENCED VOICES

The ability to create written, visual and printed records depends on a number of social, political and economic factors.

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

Visual cultures are dominated by power.

Women’s invisibility and stigmatising high visibility.
VISUAL VOICES

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

Arpilleras - Pinochet's Chile – Roberta Bacic
‘OTHER’ MOTHERS SPEAKING BACK
(BRADY AND BROWN 2013) – BUT TIME IMMEMORIAL? OPEN ACCESS?

PRESENTATION COPY - IMAGE REMOVED
‘ETHICS OF RECOGNITION’

Preoccupation with anonymity acts as resistance to discourses of participant visibility (Sweetman)

Sensitive topics - domestics abuse, abortion, violence, divorce

Images cannot speak – whose voice?

How can images be disguised ethically?
INFORMED? CONSENT AND UNKNOWING OTHERS

Participants can only consent for themselves
Is the consent informed?
Do they understand how their data will be used – what is a conference, journal article?
Open Access? (Mannay 2014)
What about unknowing others? (Mannay 2011)
VISUAL OPPORTUNITIES, DEFAMILIARISATION, IN/VISIBILITIES
VISUAL RE-REPRESENTATIONS
SUMMARY

The visual offers a range of exciting possibilities for social research but it also brings an array of challenges and ethical difficulties.

Visual and creative researchers themselves need to remain ardent critics of the research process, to be aware of the possible difficulties, and to continue to explore landscapes of representation, interpretation, voice, trust, confidentiality, silence; and the intended and unintended consequences of research with narratives and visual images.

It is also useful to consider the ways in which creative narrative forms can replace visual images and detailed, identifying, biographical accounts, yet still retain impact; and ethically, yet powerfully, communicate the stories that participants have shared in the research process (Mannay 2015).
Thank you for listening!
REFERENCES


Mannay, D. 2010. Making the familiar strange: Can visual research methods render the familiar setting more perceptible? Qualitative Research, 10 (1), pp. 91-111.


