Chapter 1
Research Photography Is…

> I've always felt that about photography, that it is a medium that has been applied endlessly with very little understanding of its relevance.
>
> —Nathan Lyons

Photographs captivate and it has become almost impossible to pass a day without seeing a photograph (Burgin, 1982). Contemporary society has witnessed an explosion of the visual through photographs and the immediate and multisensory impact of photographs (Spencer, 2011) has been recognised and elevated photographs into a position of power to access cognitive memory and communicate seemingly complex messages with visual simplicity (Bell & Davison, 2013). Photography forms *one* element and *one* form in the field of 'visual research' and 'images', which are both umbrella terms that refer to loosely connected research practices which are linked to the visual appearance of the surrounding world (Warren, 2005).

Traditional social research methods often represent access barriers, for example, to people with intellectual disabilities (Boxall & Ralph, 2009) and perceived vulnerable groups or children; yet visual research methods, especially photography, have increasingly proved its usefulness as a social research method when working with people who belong to marginalised groups. Photographers have long realised the potential of photographs to reveal information, which is difficult to obtain from other sources (Peters & Mergen, 1977). However, the full potential of photography as a social research method is yet to be realised and the use of photography in social research studies overall remains relatively scarce (Ray & Smith, 2011; Roberts, 2011).

1.1 The Power of a Photograph

The following '*Untitled*' photograph (Fig. 1.1) first appeared on Twitter without an extensive narrative. It shows Laith Majid clutching his son Taha and daughter Nour, embraced by his wife Nada, on a beach of the Greek island of Kos, after having

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Fig. 1.1 'Untitled' © Daniel Etter/Redux/Headpress (Reproduced with Permission)

safely arrived on a flimsy, partly deflated boat. The photograph held an expression of people who fled their homeland, escaping a fate of many other refugees, whose lives ended in the Mediterranean Sea (Aubusson, 2015). Aubusson (2015) of the *Sydney Morning Herald* saw a moment in this photograph, in which desperation gave way to joy. Among the many comments that this photograph received, two notable Twitter comments underline the significance of this image. O'Brien (2015) described that 'all the words and TV reporting of the refugee crisis in a single image'. Fitzgerald (2015) wrote that 'an entire country's pain captured in one father's face'. Photographer Daniel Etter witnessed an extraordinary moment and more so, was able to spatialise (we intentionally do not say 'capture' or 'freeze') this moment in a photograph. The message and effect of the photograph went beyond its printed borders and became a *thoroughfare*, spurring interpretations, implications, social action, raising critical awareness and most importantly in this context, rehumanised an often dehumanised group of people.

Daniel Etter's striking photograph reminds us that we need to go beyond the image itself and explore its conceptual complexity, its insights and its many interpretations, which help us to begin to understand what photographs in a social research context represent and why they are an important component to and in social research. It follows then that one approach to understand what a photograph represents is learning to see.

1.2 Learning to See—What Does a Photograph Represent

Photographs have capabilities of representation (Scruton, 1981), but *what* they represent warrants close attention. For the naïve observer, a photograph may simply represent a 'truth' and the photographic universe and the world universe would be one and the same (Flusser, 1983). Yet, even the naïve observer sees photographs in between the borderlines of black and white and all wavelengths in between. Black and white are theoretical concepts of optics, which can never *actually* exist, but arise out of theory (Flusser, 1983). Colour does not rest within objects, it is only when white light hits an object that selectively absorbs and reflects different wavelengths, and is transmitted to our eyes, that the colour of an object becomes real to us. As soon as the naïve observer asks the question of how they see, they are inevitably embarked towards a debate of what they see and what a photograph truly represents (Flusser, 1983). If we do not engage in the same debate of what photography represents as a research method and photographs as research, photographs will remain an immobile and silent surface and will continue to claim to be an automated reflection from the world onto its surface (Flusser, 1983).

Efforts to understand what a photograph represents from different perspectives have yet to produce unequivocal conclusions (Soszynski, 2006). Photography as a medium is both increasing in size and also inhabiting different spaces and extending in its dimensions (Plummer, 2015). The representational attribute of a photograph covers a range of concepts. A photograph can represent a *relation*: *x* (the photograph) represents *y* (the subject). Yet, a simple causal relationship fails to explain the full representation of a photograph, as it is absent of thought, intention or other mental acts (Scruton, 1981). Instead, a photograph represents a site of a complex intertextuality with overlapping series of texts, becoming object texts with social intention and meaning (Burgin, 1982). This relational intertextuality of a photograph is defined by Brummitt (1973) as representing a *communication*. A successful photograph communicates an idea. The skill of the photographer determines the extent to which the produced photograph represents and communicates that idea to the viewer. It follows then that the photographer is a more important contributor to the production of images than the camera apparatus itself. The camera does not discriminate between the important and the inane (Brummit, 1973). Therefore, photographs also represent a reflection and communication of the photographer's meaning and intention, and what is important to them.

Gerhard Richter claims that a photograph does not represent anything and introduces the need of interpretation by the viewer for the photograph to attain a representative status. Richter (1995) argues that much like the human eye, 'a photograph, or an artist's rendering of an object can never represent 'the real' because we never know the real—merely the appearances behind which the real remains hidden'. For Richter, photographs are not a reality-bearing medium but one that challenges the real and argues that photographic representation is closer to an enigma that needs to be deciphered, than one of clarity and ideology (Coulter, 2013).

It is perhaps Henri Cartier-Bresson, who provides the most telling idea about what a photograph represents. Cartier-Bresson (often characterised as a documentary photographer and the father of photojournalism) argues that a photograph represents a 'reportage' (Davies, 2008). It is the photographer's ability to 'report' on the world that confers meaning to the world, represented in a photograph (Davies, 2008). The photograph does not presume clarity or ideology, yet also does not shroud itself in mystique or enigma. What a photograph represents therefore is a patterned social activity that is shaped by a multitude of social, cultural and group-specific influences (Schwartz, 1989), suggesting that photographs are a *gateway* to building relations and telling a story. Photographic 'truth' therefore may not be understood by the relation between the photograph and the world, but by the relation of what we see in the photograph, our understanding of the world and how we see it. To develop this argument, the Deleuzian concept the *fold* provides a useful way forward.

1.3 Photography and the Fold

An important element of Deleuze's philosophy is that of *becoming*. Becoming is based on the argument that the world and everything in it are in a constant state of folding, unfolding and refolding (Deleuze, 1993). For Deleuze (1993), the fold is firstly a point of inflection where things change their form as forces are applied. It is where variation takes place. Secondly, the fold is form in that folding involves enveloping/developing and involution/evolution. This is illustrated by Deleuze (1993) who uses the example of how a caterpillar envelopes a butterfly (it is folded inside it), that then develops (unfolds) into that butterfly. He goes on to explain that when it dies, the butterfly involutes (refolds) back into its constituent parts. These constituent parts become inorganic folds waiting to evolve once again into an organic fold—though in a different form. So, there is constant movement from fold to fold that together form a multiplicity.

Deleuze (1993) discusses the idea of a *continuous multiplicity*. Multiplicities are made of *becomings* and bring with them the art of implication (Lomax, 1995). Those implications are continuous, one implication implicating another, folding upon folding (Lomax, 1995). Lomax (1995, p. 46) has considered the possibility of the photograph as a *becoming*, as 'partaking of a *continuous multiplicity*'. A becoming occurs when something affects another, its doing creating a composition with each other and something new becoming between the two (Lomax, 1995). This is because photographs are always involved with something else, either in a visual, metaphorical, literal, abstract, actual or a virtual sense. They are always combined with something else, therefore always partake in becomings, constantly folding and devoid of any delineated 'inside' or 'outside' (Lomax, 1995). The state of the image in the fold becomes fluid, extensible; it is a stretching, and folding, rather than a cut (Lomax, 1995). We cannot draw a neat boundary around images, nor should we argue that multiplicities in photographs are indivisible, messy and

disorderly. One logical step would be to turn to binary opposition to counter the disorderly multiplicity, to divide and to draw boundaries to the photographic image. However, this would again reduce a photograph to merely representing some elusive truth or fact. Instead of binary opposition, we can *enfold* photographs. To enfold means to fold-in, to adopt a practice of inclusion and involution, with one side implicating the other, being both and neither, being in-between (Lomax, 1995). Deleuze encourages this involution with AND, which has its place between sets and elements, neither one nor the other, constituting a multiplicity (Lomax, 1995). AND divides, it divides continuous multiplicities, which pertains to a fold (Lomax, 1995).

The becoming of photographs is achieved by folding its meanings we derive from it, implication upon implication connected with 'and'. The folds in the photograph demand us to be responsive to the possible multiplicities enfolded in a photograph and unfolded by a researcher; a responsibility which Lomax (1995) explicitly argues is held by *both* the image maker and the image viewer. The application of the concepts of enfolding and unfolding then appears to have a strong influence of which photographs appear and disappear (Dados, 2010). Similarly, enfolding and unfolding also influences the way researchers or participants perceive photographs for their research projects as useful or useless. This *selected unfolding* of images (choosing some over others) appears to be a relationship between experience, information and the image (Marks, 2008).

1.4 Selectively Unfolding Photographs—Image, Experience, Information

Why do only certain events and photographs draw the attention of people? Marks (2008) conceptualises images as vehicles that enfold the past through experience and hypothesises a triadic relationship between image, experience and information, by which we as viewers selectively unfold its meaning and perceive its usefulness. Images are selective unfolding of experience and are determined by information. They are enfolded through experience, but are also unfolded through experience, which is translated into information, which for the viewer becomes useful (Marks, 2008). The selecting and unfolding of images happens in accordance with the viewer's interests at hand, determining which images are worthy of circulation (Dados, 2010). Dados (2010) argues that images are not unfolded by experience alone, yet are also selected and unselected on the basis of information, rendering enfolded experiences within image either accessible or inaccessible.

1.5 Enfolding Experience and Information into Research Photographs

Researchers are often observed to code the surface signification of research photographs, thereby reducing their philosophical and contextual beyonds to insights, which can be articulated (Dados, 2010). The articulated insights and how they are unfolded are dependent on the chosen analytical approach of the researcher (see Chap. 5). This is determined by what one wants to find in the photograph, influenced by either a research question or exploring a phenomenon. Following Dados's (2010) development of Mark's experience–information–image relationship, research photographs can be a fold of information over experience, or experience over information. An image of experience is opaque and an image of information floats unanchored above experience (Dados, 2010), both in the same need of unfolding and analysis by the researcher. Photographs in their *becoming* can be argued to be a flux of two separate events—the spatialising and the interpretation—and the link between the two resides in the photograph (Dados, 2010).

1.6 Photography in Social Research

The reasons for employing photography in social research vary from the discovery and understanding of contextual social circumstances and structures of people (Miller, 2015) to its use as a theoretical vehicle for practical change. Such *use* of photography for anthropological reasons beyond illustration was first exhibited by Bateson and Mead (1942) in their field study *Balinese Character: A Photographic Analysis*, in which they visually documented the lives of Balinese women. However, only since the days of Collier (1957) have social scientists used photography as a valid and useful *method* for collecting data. Photographs were thus able to replace written field notes (Kanstrup, 2002) and have since found increasing functionality in research. For example, in Brekke (2003) study of daily lives of asylum seekers in Sweden, photographs created a positive effect on the relationship between Brekke and the refugees. By being engaged in taking photographs combined with the intended, the purpose of these images gave the asylum seekers time to think about their situation, consciously selecting what they themselves wanted to express. Brekke (2003) reported that the asylum seekers looked forward to seeing how their images turned out and displayed a sense of ownership in that the photograph were *theirs*, held in their hands. Using photography to explore society is capable of giving us more than good research relations a single striking image (Becker, 1974). Researchers can generate, utilise and create scholarly value with photography in different ways with the aim to ask questions, invite participants' responses, shifting its meaning and emphasis and presenting subjects or situations.

Photographic research *methods* are essentially modes of engagement which spatialise the concept of enfolding and unfolding of photographs for researchers.

This opens new understandings to existing photographic research methods and to the roles of the researcher and participant and the types of input they have in each method: *who* enfolds photographs and *who* unfolds and interprets them. After all, Chaplin (2002) recognises that photographs in sociology are *made*, rather than *taken*, its meaning constructed, instead of discovered (Felstead, Jewson, & Walters, 2004). This raises questions about the relative advantages and disadvantages of different photo-research methods particularly how to choose the most *appropriate* method(s). While there is no one 'right way' to employ a photographic research method, the researcher's choice of method is undoubtedly influenced by the research questions, the context, as well as any additional underlying philosophical foundations (Ray & Smith, 2011).

1.7 Photo-Elicitation

The most widespread application of photography as a research method is photo-elicitation. Photo-elicitation means to 'insert a photograph into a research interview' (Harper, 2002, p. 1472) and was first employed by Collier (1957) as an alternative method to open-ended interviewing. Photo-elicitation presents a unique attribute in that it almost *instantly* meets the same objectives as a well-prepared open-ended interview (Lapenta, 2011). By asking participants to view and interpret photographs with the researcher, perhaps similar to viewing a personal family album, the estrangement and distance so often attributed to traditional interviews fizzles (Schwartz, 1989), which stereotypical clipboards and audio-recorders are often argued to create (Woodward, 2008). People naturally appear to have a stronger familiarity with photographs than with clipboards or audio-recorders. Photographs have developed to be an embedded part of daily visual culture (Woodward, 2008). Photographs can also trigger sensory experiences within participants, which can be of intuitive, interior, or aesthetic nature (Warren, 2005); and photo-elicitation *elicits* such experiences and higher level values, assumptions, beliefs and cultures of participants.

1.7.1 Participant Insights

Photo-elicitation enjoys a continuous and increasing application in research in anthropology and visual sociology, mainly due to its emphasis on an ethnographic focus and its redirection and repositioning of authority from researcher to participants (Hurworth, 2004; Parker, 2009). Photo-elicitation does not presume an underlying objectivity, but instead acknowledges the powers of social constructions and individuals' unique elicitations and personal narrative after reviewing a photograph (Harper, 2002). Photographs are not neutral evidence and contain subjective meaning instilled in their make and use; therefore, a photograph is a subjective

composition of observation, production, reproduction and display (Rose, 2000). Adding a photograph to the interview process provokes more than a response from participants (Hurworth, 2004) and 'acts as a medium for eliciting the actors' perceptions, memories, concerns, and social constructions' (Parker, 2009, p. 1115). Photographs therefore can acquire multiple and unpredictable meanings by participants (Lapenta, 2011) and photo-elicitation supports those critical explorations, which holds the potential to uncover very specific, local or indigenous knowledges for researchers (Packard, 2008). The 'polysemic quality of images' (Harper, 2002, p. 15) allows for different interpretations by observers based on their views, local knowledge and insights, as well as the exchange of personal meaning and values that the images and their content might hold for them (Collier & Collier, 1986).

1.7.2 Research Relationships

A strong feature of photo-elicitation remains as its ability to redefine the research relationship between the researcher and the participants. Harper (2002) suggested that photo-elicitation is a postmodern dialogue based on the authority of the subject, instead of that of the researcher. For participants, this overarching approach offers more autonomy in the research project and process and being able to add topics to the research agenda important to them (Lorenz & Kolb, 2009). Collier and Collier (1986, p. 105) argue that the images and the new communication situation, which these images create, 'invited people to take the lead in the inquiry, making full use of their expertise'. This can create a foundation of co-creation of knowledge and build alliances with participants that can span throughout the entire research process (Lapenta, 2011; Lorenz & Kolb, 2009). In essence, the photographs and their elicitation become a vehicle of engagement between researcher and participant; those engagements can create alliances, which can be invaluable to researchers and participants alike and allows researchers to be able to consult participants in different stages of the research process. At the same time, those alliances can create opportunities to bring participants' and communities' *real lives* into a research process. The awareness and understanding of participants' challenges from their perspective can influence policy-making efforts intended by the researcher, collaborations with other nonprofit organisations or governments, or other methods that can lead to actionable programs to address their concerns (Lorenz & Kolb, 2009).

Photo-elicitation as an overarching research approach has remained a polysemous phenomenon and different research methods have emerged with which researchers can elicit information with participants through the means of photos. The next section outlines different methods of photo-elicitation. Those methods somewhat overlap; however, each method has its own objectives, participants and role of photographer (Warren, 2005). Despite their extensive coverage in the literature, it is important to summarise the different methods briefly in their general understanding to isolate their different uses and approaches. We further want to

outline their advantages and disadvantages to a research project, as this will be a useful guide for researchers in choosing their appropriate method.

1.8 Photo-Elicitation Interviews

Photo-elicitation interviews (PEIs) use photographs in interviews to either guide interviews, stimulate memories from participants or instigate dialogue about a particular subject of interest (Van House, 2006; Warren, 2005). PEIs rest on a fundamental assumption that the meaning attributed to images, the emotions they arouse in an observer, and the subsequent information they elicit, allow for participant insights that are significantly different from to those obtained in verbal inquiry (Bignante, 2010). By using one or more photographs in an interview, participants have the opportunity to comment on them, which actively involves the participant in the co-creation of knowledge (Bignante, 2010; Woodward, 2008). PEIs are employed in research studies that aim to understand how *both* the participant and researchers understand the world and uncover different ways of knowing (Torre & Murphy, 2015). This is particularly advantageous for researchers who are interested in the feedback from their subjects and in a counter-intuitive method that reverses the emphasis of researcher and researched (Smith & Woodward, 1998). The photograph in PEIs is not a *medium* of 'truth' or 'reality', however, one of communication and a catalyst between the researcher and participant (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004) to 'uncover perceptions, memories, concerns and social constructions' (Parker, 2009, p. 1115). This is not limited to specific or material constructions, but to interpretations that symbolise philosophies, ideas, cultural or other intangible beliefs of life. Photographs in PEIs therefore serve a dual purpose: to enfold photographs and elicit interpretations and meaning to gain insight into an overall phenomenon or to answer specific research questions by researchers, and to provide a unique approach in conducting interviews.

The photographs in PEIs can be taken or provided by the researcher or the participant. In PEIs, the researcher in general guides the interview process. An overarching definitive research relationship in PEIs is not possible, as each PEI will have different individuals involved in the process and different emphases (Woodward, 2008). For example, when photographs are taken by participants, this form of PEIs is called 'autodriving' (Bignante, 2010; Heisley & Levy, 1991; Hurworth, 2004), as the participant 'drives' and guides the researcher in the interview. Essentially, the camera in hand determines the relationship between researcher and participant in PEIs. The photographs taken in PEI always form a *point of departure*, instead of a point of arrival, in exploring the understanding and perceptions of participants (Bignante, 2010).

1.8.1 Advantages of Photo-Elicitation Interviews

Anthropologists and sociologists foremost praise PEIs for creating a platform for participants to share their stories. It offers a visual dimension for feelings, experiences and understandings of participants that cannot be observed otherwise (Richard & Lahman, 2015). As Bignante (2010, p. 11) notices, PEIs 'produce replies more closely linked to the informant's immediate social and emotional sphere'. This is due to its ability to access and facilitate a private research situation, which generates this social and emotional closeness (Bridger, 2013). PEIs have also been attributed to a non-threatening approach and a comfortable space, as participants express themselves through the photograph as a communication medium, reducing a perceived awkwardness by participants to be put on the spot (Bignante, 2010; Schulze, 2007). Participants can further fall back onto the photograph and direct eye contact with the researcher is not continuously required. Schulze (2007) has also noted the effectiveness of PEIs when working with focus groups and low literacy environments. The photographs can further act as metaphors of meaning, with participants referring to photographs metaphorically (for example, roads and dirt tracks being a metaphor of learners and teachers) and being able to continue in metaphoric language to accurately expressing themselves (Richard & Lahman, 2015).

Banks (2001) believes that PEIs allow people to access forgotten memories and seeing things in a new way. PEIs therefore challenge participants and allow them to reflect on their views, leading to new perspectives and interpretations (Hurworth, 2004) and the co-creation of new ones. This is not limited to individual interviews, but also to group interviews, in which collective memories, narratives and possible disagreements or differences can be accessed (Parker, 2009). PEIs, when used in a preliminary research phase, such as a pilot study instead of a main study, can further define and refine research objectives more clearly and adapt interviews accordingly (Bignante, 2010).

1.8.2 Disadvantages of Photo-Elicitation Interviews

Despite the growing use of PEIs in social research, the method itself remains interpreted in different ways, which causes it to be used and defined in different ways (Padgett, Smith, Derejko, Henwood, & Tiderington, 2013). As such, the nonstandardisation of this method presents challenges to researcher when using this method, for example, scoping out and determining the research boundaries, in terms of who is taking the photographs, who controls the interview, and based on that selecting appropriate analysis techniques. In addition, researchers have to critically ascertain the appropriateness of PEIs for their study. For instance, PEIs are not embedded in participatory or action-oriented agenda and are thus an unsuitable method, if the researcher's goal is community-based participatory action or policy changes. PEIs are also time- and resource-consuming for both researchers and participants.

Bignante (2010) advises researchers to only employ PEIs in situations when images can offer new validity, depth or opportunities to the study, or when participants are feeling comfortable with using cameras. Researchers need to deal with both preparations and practicalities, when intending to carry out PEIs. Allen (2009) found that in photo-elicitation research, participants would receive a camera and either not take any photos, or might not turn up for interviews. Torre and Murphy (2015) summarise a number of key logistical obstacles to PEIs, with participants losing cameras, limited areas and photo opportunities, missing key photo opportunities, and lack of usable pictures by participants to lack of practice. Ethical issues remain another concern, which can arise before, during or even after PEIs (Meo, 2010). Researchers have to ensure that participants are fully aware of how their taken images are used, how to overcome issues of consent and possible visual exploitation *by* participants (Torre & Murphy, 2015). A concluding factor to consider in PEI are the attributes and perceptions of participants towards a phenomena of interest. Not all information they provide is necessarily relevant, and information, which a participant provides, could prove irrelevant or even digress the research direction, creating additional challenges for the researcher (Bignante, 2010).

1.9 Reflexive Photography

Reflexive photography is a photo-elicitation technique, in which participant-generated photography is combined with semi-structured interviews (Covert & Koro-Ljungberg, 2015). Reflexive photography was inspired by the work of Paulo Freire, who with the aid of 'coded situations' (either photographs or sketches), invited participants to analyse their own situations (Schulze, 2007). What distinguishes reflexive photography is that it focuses on the individual–environment interaction (Harrington & Schibik, 2003). The method extends the notion of autodriving in PEIs and explicitly recognises that conversations around the participant-generated image generate research data, allowing both the participant and the researcher to be reflexive on their thoughts and feelings (Warren, 2005). Participants in this method *reflect* on their personal experiences and generate photographic images, which the participants themselves consider best evidence of their perceptions (Amerson & Livingston, 2014). The research topic and motivations are usually preset by researchers in this method (Rose, 2007); however, the participants themselves generate and select the photographs, which they wish to share with the researcher and bring these to either individual or group interviews (Amerson & Livingston, 2014). With the participants being able to reflect on their natural environment, researchers are able to generate more authentic data as they see the world through their eyes of their participants sharing their meaning and interpretation (Amerson & Livingston, 2014; Harper, 1988; Noland, 2006). Reflexive photography shares similar attributes with PEIs by its aims to invoke comments, memory and discussion (Schulze, 2007). It evokes feelings that 'leads the interview into the heart of the research…[giving] interviews immediate

character and help to keep them in focus' (Schulze, 2007, p. 540). Similar to PEIs, the photographs in reflexive photography form a starting point that enables researchers to collect interview data, from which codes and themes are developed, not from the photographs themselves. The goal of reflexive photography remains confined to data collection and interpretation (Wallace, 2015).

1.9.1 Advantages of Reflexive Photography

One of the key advantages is its empowering attribute. Respondents are able to articulate *their* emotions and feelings surrounding their socio-economic circumstances, as well as developing a strong sense of ownership around the photographs (Warren, 2005). Reflexive photography provides a means for participants to interpret their own lives and social context, increasing both their voice and authority over both images and interpretation (Lapenta, 2011). Those motivations provide fertile ground for participants to be involved in a study and depicting events as they see them, further reducing researcher bias when selecting images, as participants choose the images (Lapenta, 2011). The emphasis of reflexive photography for participants' to reflect on their thoughts and feelings also makes this method suitable to explore more 'invisible' social issues. Warren (2005) for example argues that invisible issues can be complex ethical and moral issues. Through reflexive photography, participants are able to anchor moral and affective constructs to the material photographs (Warren, 2005), which connects closely to the metaphoric power of photographs.

Finally, participants have reported a general enjoyment in participating in reflexive photography studies (see Hill, 2014). It promotes them to think deeper about the issues under the study, contemplating how to capture their ideas in images beforehand, and the meaning and the choosing of photographs. We therefore argue that this method is well suited, if the researcher perceives his or her intended participants to be enthusiastic and hands-on.

1.9.2 Disadvantages of Reflexive Photography

Some authors have commented on the time-intensity of reflexive photography (Schulze, 2007; Wallace, 2015). It can be exhausting for both researchers and participants to go through and talk about a large number of photographs. It is therefore advisable to agree with participants on a number of photographs to be selected for the interviews, with which both researcher and participant are comfortable.

Participants in reflexive photography have further commented on restrictions about photographing objects and events, most often due to access restrictions (Hill, 2014). There might also be a perceived awkwardness by participants to obtain written permission from their participants or when photographing illegal activities.

A final methodological disadvantage of reflexive photography lies in its very purpose of collecting and interpreting data. Though participants are involved to bring awareness or explanation to structural or social inequalities via reflexive photography, the method is not aimed to follow through with changes on either a political or other action-oriented level. Researchers must be cautious to not promise participants false hopes of change using this method. Other photo-research methods might be more suited to achieve this cause.

1.10 Interview Viz (Visualisation-Assisted Photo-Elicitation)

Another form of photo-elicitation is Interview Viz. This method also utilises participant-generated photographs, however, in larger quantities than the previous discussed photo-elicitation methods. In essence, this method uses a large number of images (hundreds and thousands) to ground interviews (Van House, 2006). This method so far has been used by Van House (2006) in her project with 70 participants to create photo-diaries and take photos that they find noteworthy. In Interview Viz, the photos are subsequently arranged by several different criteria (date and sharing participant) to stimulate memory and to instigate conversations about subjects (Van House, 2006).

1.10.1 Advantages of Interview Viz

A key advantage of Interview Viz is that the large number of photographs taken by participants allows for the discovery of patterns, which participants themselves might be unaware of (Van House, 2006). The sheer time commitment allows for visibility of temporal patterns, for example, strong periodic bursts of picture taking, average daily pictures taken and patterns of life chronicling (Van House, 2006). This provides rich material for researchers in follow-up interviews with the participants and participant activity, patterns of activity, memory lapses and other findings can be cooperatively explored with participants (Van House, 2006). This method is thus useful to any research inquiries where photo-diaries are employed.

1.10.2 Disadvantages of Interview Viz

One of the main drawbacks of Interview Viz appears to be its time-intensity; time commitments required by participants and researchers. Participants in this method are required to keep a photo-diary for a prolonged period of time and researchers

need to analyse hundreds, perhaps thousands of photographs. Van House (2006) study included 70 people keeping photo-diaries over a period of up to 10 months. The recruitment of enough participants for a study could pose a challenge for this method, as well as researchers' capabilities to organise and analyse photos effectively for interviews. The method itself so far has remained under-theorised and outside of Van House (2006) application and has not found resonance yet and it remains unclear, whether Interview Viz will prove itself as a viable photo-elicitation method.

1.11 PhotoVoice

Perhaps the most popular and widespread method of the use of photographs in research studies is PhotoVoice, or formerly known as Photo Novella (Close, 2007). PhotoVoice by Wang and Burris (1994) is a data collection method where participants are provided with cameras and control both the 'photo' and the 'voice' aspect of the research. The control of image-making and frame choice by participants with the camera in hand is independent from the researcher's choosing areas or objects of concern. While data collection in PhotoVoice can be attributed to similar to that in PEIs and Reflexive Photography, PhotoVoice is primarily motivated by bringing about social change and capacity building (Covert & Koro-Ljungberg, 2015; Padgett et al., 2013). As such, the method has been proclaimed as a strong means of empowerment in communities in the examination of social conditions, and in the influencing of policy-making to address structural inequities, including health care and mental health care, homelessness, youth population and issues, and rural and urban communities (Allen, 2012; Evans-Agnew & Rosemberg, 2016; Padgett et al., 2013; Plunkett, Leipert, & Ray, 2013).

Three distinct methodological directions of PhotoVoice emerged, namely phenomenological and grounded theory designs to understand and describe lived experiences, developing theories concerning experiences, and a participatory action research (PAR) approach seeking social change (Evans-Agnew & Rosemberg, 2016). The PAR component of PhotoVoice to date has remained the strongest utilisation, which aims to involve community stakeholders and going beyond exploring and understanding community needs and structural constraints, towards *promoting* social change and achieving identified needs through the use of photo-texts (Evans-Agnew & Rosemberg, 2016; Goessling & Doyle, 2009; Wang & Burris, 1994). PhotoVoice realised that language used by researchers in interviews often creates a mental frame or box, which forms the outer edges within which knowledge is constructed. The participant-driven photography in PhotoVoice decreases the influence and reliance on written words, which could decrease the depth and quality of data collected (Johnsen, May, & Cloke, 2008; Ryan & MacKinnon, 2016).

1.11.1 Advantages of PhotoVoice

The strength of employing PhotoVoice in a research project is that it places the participant (the researched) behind the camera, indicating a moving-away from reliance on researcher-generated images (Johnsen et al., 2008). Johnsen, May and Cloke (2008) argue that the popularity of PhotoVoice has been initially attributed to the dissatisfaction of researcher-generated images of studies of 'exotic' and 'others', which instead of generating authentic photo-data, had been accused of perpetuating stereotypes. It is argued that PhotoVoice transforms photographs into a strong resource for participants to tell their own story through images created by them that retain a strong sense of personal and social context (Latham, 2004). For example, Radley, Hodgetts and Cullen (2005) study used PhotoVoice to provide insights into the world from the perspective of homeless people in London. Providing the participants with cameras gave the researchers authentic and very differently emphasised insights into homelessness. Those insights ranged from perspectives of avoidance and estrangement, to perspectives of embracing being 'strange' in order to live in the city, and towards participants' rejection of their 'homelessness' label altogether (Radley, Hodgetts, & Cullen, 2005). PhotoVoice fundamentally allows participants through the camera and their images to shed outside or self-imposed labels or perceptions bestowed upon them, and use this opportunity to reinterpret their own conditions and perspective. In another example, Yoshihama (2016) PhotoVoice project of the Great Eastern Japan Disasters, including earthquakes, tsunamis and the Fukushima nuclear accident, which struck northern Japan in 2011, revealed that the photographs taken by participants through PhotoVoice strongly differed to those shown across mainstream media outlets. Instead of destroyed buildings and bridges, the participants' photographs showed 'affection for their land, people, and community…interrogating the societal responses that they consider damaging to the nature/habitat, and in turn articulate visions for the future' (Yoshihama, 2016, p. 12).

PhotoVoice provides a more balanced relationship between researcher and researched, in which the latter are able to construct images and articulate meaning (Johnsen et al., 2008). Wang and Burris (1997, p. 381) attributed the acronym VOICE to the central issue of empowerment, standing for 'Voicing our Individual and Collective Experience', summarising both the ability and right to be heard. This characteristic of PhotoVoice can serve as a strong empowerment tool to recruit participants for a research project. Empowerment is the *shift* of power, the redefining and re-establishing of relationships and power differences in the access to resources (Baum, MacDougall, & Smith, 2006). Although the power relationship between researcher and researched will rarely be completely level, the participants in PhotoVoice *act* as researchers (Allen, 2016). Therefore, in PhotoVoice, individual or community members remain central in maintaining research agendas through their active participation (Johnston, 2016); they establish themselves as 'more powerful agents' (Baum et al., 2006, p. 855).

The potency of PhotoVoice is not only in its picture-voice but also in the dialogical interpretation of them (Plunkett et al., 2013). The dialogical nature of PhotoVoice allows both researcher and participant to offer interpretations to the taken images in subsequent interviews, a process which allows both parties to deepen their understanding and consciousness for the phenomenon of interest alike (Plunkett et al., 2013). With PhotoVoice, researchers also have the opportunity to further inquire to phenomena of interest, which can be helpful in the analysis of data (Plunkett et al., 2013). For example, sensitive social, cultural and contextual factors regarding images can be discussed with participants to elicit data pertaining to particular pictures (Plunkett et al., 2013). Wang, Yi, Tao, and Carovano (1998) attributed the SHOWeD acronym to this characteristic of PhotoVoice, asking: What do you *S*ee here? What's really *H*appening? How does this relate to *O*ur lives? *W*hy does this problem or this strength exist? What can we *D*o about this? In effect, PhotoVoice brings the participants' *intentionality* to the fore, issues important to *them*, and what *they* consider important or not (Johnsen et al., 2008). It is therefore well suited for researchers, who wish to employ a more 'hands-off' approach to their research project (Allen, 2016).

1.11.2 Disadvantages of PhotoVoice

Despite the broad acceptance of PhotoVoice among the visual research community, the method is not without its problems. While PhotoVoice overall talks about participant empowerment, Allen (2016) argues that PhotoVoice can, in fact, be disempowering to participants. For example, in Allen (2016) study of young Black middle-class male youth culture, the problem he faced was helping students understand that their photographs and their opinions mattered, in contrast to students' opinions that their photos had little value or were unimportant. He summarises that the social justice enthusiasm of the researcher is critical to counter this perception of disempowerment, as well the issue of stereotypical self-representation (Allen, 2016). The effect of 'cultural silence' sometimes produced by participants can develop into an *internalisation* of media discourses, in which the participants ultimately 'view themselves and their peers through the same lens' (Keene & Padilla, 2014; quoted in Byrne, Daykin, & Coad, 2016). Allen (2016) argues that PhotoVoice in his study, despite its empowering intentions, did not ensure that dominant discourses of power and domination were successfully challenged. This dilemma in PhotoVoice might pertain to studies of similar nature, especially working with marginalised or ostracised communities, which would have a strong predisposition to self-stereotyping.

The photography-in-participation, a unique feature of the PhotoVoice method, raises a number of important ethical issues. A number of researchers have raised different ethical concerns of participation in PhotoVoice designs, especially privacy, image ownership, photo selection, presentation, and publication, the researcher's influence over the photographs' subject matter and advocacy

(Evans-Agnew & Rosemberg, 2016, p. 3). Mitchell, de Lange and Nguyen (2016) also raise issues on the ethics of exclusion with participants with disabilities in relation to PhotoVoice. We discuss this issue in greater detail in Chap. 3. The two issues we want to raise here are the extent of the involvement of participants in the dissemination and analysing process, and the ethics that governs participants using PhotoVoice in the research process. From a dissemination and analysis point of view, it remains undetermined as to the decision and extent of involvement of participants in the analysis process in a PhotoVoice project (Evans-Agnew & Rosemberg, 2016). Evans-Agnew and Rosemberg (2016) review of 21 studies using PhotoVoice found that in only half of them, the participants' voice influenced its coding and the selection of photo-text exhibits at local events. Earlier findings by Catalani & Minkler (2010) show an 85% involvement of participants in PhotoVoice studies. These findings suggest that engaging participants' voices in the analysis process appears to becoming more secondary to the study and call for researchers utilising PhotoVoice to rethink their analysis approach and privileging the voices of participants. The issue of co-authorship with research participants remains also completely unexplored (Evans-Agnew & Rosemberg, 2016).

From an ethical standpoint, there has been little discussion on the ethical guidelines for participants in PhotoVoice. As participants are effectively co-researchers, they should be conversant to some degree about ethical guidelines. However, how participants apply ethical principles have so far been inadequately examined and understood, for example, how do participants approach subjects, ask for signed consent, what dictates their choices for pictures and how do they handle ethical threats in their fieldwork experience? (Hannes & Parylo, 2014). Hannes and Parylo (2014) study found that an introductory ethics session to inform participants with potential ethical issues proves beneficial, yet such a strict application of ethical guidelines has found avoidance behaviours and circumvention behaviours among participants, which can unintentionally have negative impacts on the study phenomenon. Fundamentally, the ethical challenges of outside researchers need to be addressed, beginning with *who* truly represents a community of interest (Minkler, 2004). These dynamics require 'constant negotiation of ideas, values, identities and interests among all who participate' (Yoshihama & Carr, 2002, p. 99). Unfortunately, this significant aspect of PhotoVoice has remained inadequately understood and emphasised, and a well-fit balance between project and principles could navigate this difficult terrain.

A final critical concern to the use of PhotoVoice is in relation to its PAR nature and commitment to social action. What is still not understood is to what extent social action plans are committed to and how to enact social action plans with PhotoVoice. Johnston (2016) argues that attempts of social change and outcomes of PhotoVoice projects are seldom documented. This raises important issues as what actual meaning the research holds for participants and what if there are no resultant practical political or social changes for them (Johnston, 2016). Some authors have raised the notion that PhotoVoice can raise false hopes for change, unless the method is tied to political or public outcomes (Tanjasiri, Lew, Kuratani, Wong, & Fu, 2011). Tanjasiri, Lew, Kuratani, Wong, & Fu (2011) argue that the success of

PhotoVoice is dependent on follow-up actions like sharing images with local policy makers to support campaigns. Harley (2012) argues that very few PhotoVoice studies evaluated the long-term impact on individuals and communities. Overall, PhotoVoice as a research method is criticised to lack a view of the 'bigger picture' of both inequalities and resourced required to enact changes (Harley, 2012). Higgins (2016, p. 671) concludes that 'PhotoVoice projects are still largely by and for the researchers'. It is important for researchers, who are committed to PhotoVoice projects, to create stepping stones for communities to follow through and continue their initiative, which they have started with the research. Otherwise, the method risks falling into disbelief and could provide false hope for participants, resulting in a stronger negative predisposition than when they started the program (Strack, Magill, & McDonagh, 2004, p. 57).

1.12 Portraiture

It might surprise the reader to find portraiture as a photographic research method in this chapter. The methodology of portraiture was first introduced by Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) in an effort to blend social science research doctrines with aesthetic inquiry. Portraiture as a research method demonstrates a certain commitment from researchers to participants in its aim to contextualise the depictions of individuals and events, 'seeking to forefront the perspectives, voices, and experience…of the portraitist and the subject' (Dixson et al., 2005, p. 18). It therefore is provocative in that it challenges institutionalised norms of participant anonymity and presents a different perspective on the nature of 'voice' in photo-research (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983). Portraiture is also innovative in that it emphasises interpretation of reality from both the researcher's experiences and the subject's portrayal of their experiences (Waterhouse, 2007).

The strongest feature of the portraiture method is its inherent *search of goodness*, which forms a unique 'counterpoint to the dominant chorus of social scientists, whose focus has largely centred on the identification and documentation of social problems' (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. xvi). Social research has historically concentrated more on the negative aspects or inequalities of people in their environment, denying both resilience and fortitudes that people have managed living in less than favourable circumstances (Cope, Jones, & Hendricks, 2015). Portraiture research aims to depict those examples of success, looking for strengths in the sites they encounter and how challenges are addressed by participants (Chapman, 2005), representing the essence of social science research through a subjective, empathetic and critical lens (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983), which is often overshadowed in the overall research process (Cope et al., 2015). With this approach, the portraitist listens to authentic stories as they are perceived by participants and retelling them by an almost 'folkloric' style of narrative (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), providing a great point of departure for researchers to engage in counter-narrative to negativity (Ngunjiri, 2007) that blends research, art, questions

and settings throughout the portraits (Cope et al., 2015). This blending method captures a snapshot of essential features and interpersonal experiences of participants, excelling as a powerful form of description capturing the participant's 'life world' (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005). A final irony is that the more one moves to uncover unique characteristics of a place or a person in the portrait, the more one is able to discover the universal (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

1.12.1 Advantages of Portraiture

Portraiture positions itself as a research method, which inherently focuses on goodness and highlighting the positive perspectives of a person or phenomenon, presenting an overall framework of strengths, instead of shortcomings (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983). This is particularly useful for social research, as one may gain more from examining and understanding successes than failures (Seligman, 1991). The 'Goodness' of portraiture also has empowering features (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1986) and has found strong application in critical race theory (CRT) in its desire to counter stereotypes of people of colour (Chapman, 2005). Portraiture and CRT work especially well in tandem, as both 'advance and highlight the sustaining features of cultures and communities that are rarely promotes' (Chapman, 2005, p. 31).

Portraiture as a method further allows *both* researcher and participant to relate their own educational and life experiences to narrate the participants' stories (Cope et al., 2015). It is able to capture and visualise the essential 'contract' between sociology and photography (Roberts, 2011), but also creates a reflexivity by the researcher that permeates in every aspect in the research process (Waterhouse, 2007). This constant reflexivity allows researchers to include full details and a certain systemic of their methodology, which in turn creates resonance, credibility, and authenticity, strongly adding to the validity of this research method (Waterhouse, 2007) and its collected data.

In addition, since the researcher is completely involved in all the aspects of the process in portraiture, this research method provides an opportunity for researchers to portray their ideologies and the ways in which the researcher tells them (Dixson et al., 2005). Despite this being a key challenge to not lose oneself in one's own biases, assumptions and values, researchers stand to create stories that make subjects feel seen (Cope et al., 2015) and allowing researchers to enter a private sphere to the lives of participants, which they would otherwise not be able to access or permitted access to.

Finally, the inherent focus of a success story by the portraiture method also adds a positive contribution to the literature and is a welcome change to research that often concentrates on sad, rather than happy experiences (East, Jackson, O'Brien, & Peters, 2010). Not every social research intends to explore, discover or understand structural and human inequalities. This method is very well suited for studies that are inherently optimistic in nature, or aim to employ success studies to validate a certain approach or lifestyle by communities.

1.12.2 Disadvantages of Portraiture

One of the main disadvantages of portraiture as a method is that it finds itself in opposition with ethical guidelines with regard to protecting the identity of participants. One of the provisions of visual research ethics is that research participants remain anonymous. The intention of portraiture is that the presence, empathy and voice of participants are fully recognised. Visual ethics requirements by the researcher's guiding institutions might not allow for the full implementation of portraiture and could require researchers to adapt their methods to meet ethics requirements.

Another disadvantage of the portraiture method is in relation to its reliability and validity. Portraiture is weak in regards to showing a research audience the methodological procedure in capturing portraits. There is little to concluding a research, if researchers cannot show their audience that the procedures involved were reliable and conclusions were valid (Waterhouse 2007). 'Unpicking the tapestry' to test the rigour of this approach is difficult (Waterhouse, 2007, p. 280).

Finally, the researcher's complete integration in portraiture is both a source of strength and shortcoming. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) acknowledge that the researcher's perspective, experiences and identities play an important role in the research in that they inform the story and portrait they produce. We have discussed a persisting reflexivity in the portraiture method to counter biases, assumptions or values by the researcher. Though we cannot argue that this has a negative effect on the validity of studies employing this method, we argue that the much needed reflexivity in this method to counteract biases creates an inevitable *tension* in studies employing this method, requiring constant sharing of perspectives and understandings. This creates further tension of whether the portrait is being honest and unequivocally one person's work, while fully including the voice of the other within it (Waterhouse, 2007). Portraits never present a subject as a whole unified self and as such, portraits are fractured, multifaceted and shifting (Higgins, 2013). Researchers must be aware that 'every portrait, even in its simplest and the least staged, is a portrait of another' (Higgins, 2013, p. 9). In portraiture therefore, researchers should be aware of the *provisional* nature of the photograph, the forming of a 'pose' in what is being presented and what is being 'masked' by research participants (Roberts, 2011). Researchers should be especially aware and perhaps explain the photographic practice and social process of how the image was taken in their interpretations to (Roberts, 2011) demonstrate a 'sharpness' in awareness that supports the portrait's validity and its contribution to its broader cultural and social shaping or context.

1.13 What About Researcher-Generated Photographs?

The different photo-elicitation methods have presented very empowering and incorporating methods for most participants to create, guide and promote their stories. Those methods in tandem the right enthusiasm of photo-researchers do have strong capacity for quality data collection and insights. However, there appears to be a pattern in photo-research methods that predominantly relies on participants enfolding their experiences into images as co-researchers for data collection. This is perhaps due to an overemphasis in the belief of the authenticity and truthfulness of participant-generated photographs. However, given that images are a product of folding, which is grounded in a set of assumptions, premises and dispositions, the participants' recorded images arguably present only one side of a phenomenon. As Peters and Mergen (1977, p. 282) noted, 'bias of the visual document, like bias of the written word, reflects the individual's perspective'. John Berger in his book *Understanding a Photograph* (1968) has understood that the photographer, be it the *participant or researcher*, professional or amateur, chooses particular moments that he or she wishes to depict, as well as choosing what is absent and what are important components for understanding the meaning of the photograph.

The literature acknowledges that researchers in their studies are also able to take their own images, often known as researcher-generated images (Tinkler, 2014), or researcher-only photograph production (Ray & Smith, 2011), which are either shared with other team members, or presented to participants for elicitation interviews. Yet, this method is often limited to simple ideas of 'taking photographs' based on research questions with little follow-up in how and where to take photographs and under which circumstances. Ray and Smith (2011) present some brief considerations into researcher-generated photographs in whether to have a structured shooting script, time restrictions on images, as well as selecting key activities or places to photograph.

Overall, there appears to be a lack of a comprehensive classification for researcher-generated photographs, with which researchers can embark on taking their own photographs to generate data, as well as the advantages of such an approach. Furthermore, the photographs themselves as *data sources* have been largely ignored (Chapman, Wu, & Zhu, 2016). So far, both participant- and researcher-generated images mainly serve as a channel for interview or other data, and seldom stand as data themselves. Instead of eliminating the effects of the researcher in their study (Freshwater & Rolfe, 2001), nor the effect of the photograph as data, we propose a researcher-driven photography approach called 'Snapshot' to add to the photographic research domain, which actively considers the view of the researcher in a study, founded on Kodak's idea of the snapshot and Henri Cartier-Bresson's idea of 'the decisive moment'.

1.14 A 'Snapshot' Approach to Researcher-Generated Photography

To date, there appear only vague and often fleeting references to researcher-generated photographs and even less so in published studies. In this section, we draw attention to a researcher-generated approach to photographic research that we call 'Snapshot'. We consciously choose the term 'approach' over 'method', as snapshot is nonspecific and can be translated into various methodological approaches.

A snapshot in its origins is a picture taken quickly and with a minimum of prearrangement (Coe & Gates, 1977). Snapshot photographs are characterised by a certain *spontaneity* of the occasion (Coe & Gates, 1977; Schroeder, 2012) and while prearrangements might not be evident, snapshots are achieved via, and sometimes even require considerable preparation. Historically, the term 'Snapshot' was constituted by Kodak and was one of two critical elements, along with 'photo album', built around photography, which actively encouraged people to capture important moments of their lives (Munir & Phillips, 2005). Snapshots in Kodak's eyes did not only serve as confirmations of family unity, but also as a preservation of otherwise fallible memories, or merely leisure photography (Munir & Phillips, 2005), snapshots quickly evolved to becoming 'the home version of history' (West, 2000). Historically, people who took snapshots were generally not trained or interested in photography, yet in its *ability* to create needed mementoes (Hirsch, 1992).

The time and spontaneity factor in snapshots is 'motivated by the simple wish to record and perpetuate…life and time' and has always placed people as the forefront of the principle subject (Coe & Gates, 1977, p. 9), which so inherently enjoys a strong focus in social research. A key aspect of snapshot photography is *authenticity* (Schroeder, 2012). Snapshots reveal a vision, which is not influenced by other models of representation; in fact, its detachment from traditional image-making values forms the foundation of the authenticity of snapshots (Hirsch, 1992). Its plain and unaffected attribute allows people, events and places to be recorded (Coe & Gates, 1977). Snapshots are photographs that are not artificially constructed in an elaborate photo studio, yet the lines between a snapshot and a 'good photography' are inconsistent, blurry and rather thin.

To use snapshot as an approach in photo-research, it is important to understand why people have turned to snapshots and moving the concept beyond 'what is' towards 'what for'. Snapshot does not come from a sensibility of pre-visualisation —thinking about and framing the photograph before taking it—however, an emphasis on the spontaneous relationship with the subject (Hirsch, 1992). The snapshot approach falls in line with Cartier-Bresson (1952) phrase of 'the decisive moment', which he defines as 'the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event, as well as the precise organization of forms which gave that event its proper expression'. In a research setting, we argue that the 'decisive moment' refers to a moment of a composition in the viewfinder of the camera, which tells the story just right and constitutes an important fragment in a

researcher's study. This can on the one hand be a single snapshot, for example Daniel Etter's photograph (see Sect. 1.1) that forms an important visual fragment of emotions felt by refugees, and on the other hand a series of photographs, which give more space for the attention to the subject and their surroundings than a single image could provide. A snapshot in a research setting captures a moment characterised by both private function and public meaning (Nickel, 2000); between the researcher's relationship with the subjects and its many interpretations.

The snapshot approach essentially places the camera into the researcher's hands to create memento about a phenomenon of interest or study. This happens on a spontaneous, unplanned level throughout the research process and allows researchers a serendipity to collect photographs without the inhibition of preset research boundaries and to simply see what is there and not be defined by fixed ideas about the phenomenon. It allows researcher to capture images from their point of view, a viewpoint no less valid than that of a participant. The lack of shooting script in a snapshot method also allows for diverse sociological explorations beyond a proposed study, and the discovery of new phenomena of interest. In the snapshot approach, the photographer tells the story and offers an implicit or explicit analysis of people, artefacts or activities in society.

There is also little reliance on formal schooling or specialist knowledge for the researcher or participant to express themselves and also ideal for people who are reluctant to express themselves verbal or in writing (Warren, 2005). Furthermore, the previously analysed photo-research methods to a large extent suggest a certain foundational control over *what* to photograph and *how* to do it. A snapshot approach presents an alternative to this control and encourages a certain lack of self-editorial control that is still able to produce photographs as intact and revealing as the researcher (or participant) intends it to be.

1.14.1 Advantages of the Snapshot Approach

A snapshot approach potentially balances photographic bias and a photographic singularity of research participants. Despite a participant's willingness to capture images on a topic given by the researcher, an internalised shame or self-stigma might prevent the participants to spatialise social or structural inequalities, which they might consciously or subconsciously try to hide. The snapshot method is able to surpass a fog of cultural silence to produce authentic insights of both scholarly value and striking images to initiate social change.

A second benefit from using the snapshot approach for researchers is the opportunity to explore a phenomenon of interest from a fresh and more etic (see Sect. 1.15) perspective. As researchers are often not pre-dispositioned to the research field, they are able to uncover new perspectives, observations and ideas, which have become routine for people in that environment and are ignored. We want to underline this with a practical example.

Fig. 1.2 'Chariot of Youth' © Sten Langmann (Reproduced with Permission)

The following picture, titled '*Chariot of Youth*' (Fig. 1.2), was taken in a district in Chennai, India, close to where we stayed during our field work. The image presents an elderly man, who is taking children from school in a paddle rickshaw. The photo was taken spontaneously on our way home and initially not regarded as an image of much scholarly value. When showing this image to our host family, they explained to us that they have seen this man for 25 years paddling the children to and from school. He has to do the work, as no social security exists in India for these workers. However, the point they were most curious about was that they have never noticed the man in the way we took his image, nor the happiness on his face and the daily role he fulfils. Our host family themselves said that often they miss those details in their daily surroundings, because it has become a constant and they are so used to seeing him daily, that no further attention is paid to him.

1.14.2 Limitations of the Snapshot Approach

A snapshot approach is a proposition that has yet to be tested and moved beyond its theoretical conceptualisation. Researchers have to be cautious that despite a more free approach to a research study, that their focus is not lost and the research topics forgotten altogether. As Bolton, Pole and Mizen (2001, p. 506) argue, photographs that are to be perceived as data have to move beyond 'happy snaps' and 'been

created as part of a sociological investigation; the visual element has been part of an active process of seeking and hopefully reaching understanding, rather than merely illustrating findings arrived by other means'. Snapshot photography is further argued to be too ubiquitous, too unremarkable and too personal and tends to be discounted by scholars in the artistic and cultural field (Zuromskis, 2013). Snapshot is dependent on a good eye and *Verstaendnis* (German: understanding, see Chap. 4, Sect. 4.6) by the researcher, to be sensitive to their environment and to recognise and spatialise decisive moments in a photograph. Otherwise, the 'decisive moment' risks becoming a series of 'un-decisive moments' (Higgins, 2013) in the snapshot approach, affecting data quality and resulting in misinterpretations.

1.15 Combining Emic and Etic Approaches to Research Photography—Narratives and Counter-Narratives

Our analysis on research photography methods and approaches, both participant- and researcher-generated suggests that research photography has emic and etic qualities. The terms 'emic' and 'etic' here are borrowed from the field of anthropology (Pike, 1954). Pike's idea was to examine foreign languages and cultures analogously to the *phonemic* and *phonetic* systems of linguistic theory Phonemic refers to the classification of sounds according to their *internal function*, whereas phonetic looks at its *acoustic properties* (Gothóni, 2015).

An 'emic' standpoint therefore represents the view from the actors themselves (the researched), while an 'etic' viewpoint refers to those of outsiders (the researchers) (Gothóni, 2015). The problematics involved with these two overall research approaches are opposites in their very nature and Gothóni (2015, p. 29) argues that 'neither of the starting-points provides an appropriate approach per se'. However, He and van de Vijver (2017) argue that the differences between the two are often overrated and are more complementary than often assumed. We want to first theoretically lay out the benefits of combining emic and etic approaches and then translate the concepts to the discussed photo-research methods and provide guiding research questions that aid researchers in determining the most suitable approach for their study.

A strong argument for the combination of emic and etic contributions in a research project is that both can stimulate each other in the most intricate ways, and are partly able to counter one another's theoretical weaknesses (Morris, Leung, Ames, & Lickel, 1999). Both emic and etic explorations and insights allow for later refinements of one though the other, which resultantly forms a dual-perspective account of phenomena of interest (Morris et al., 1999). Fundamentally, emic constructs can have etic components and vice versa (He & van de Vijver, 2017). For example, as soon as one begins to compare one emic study in relation to another emic study, this research approach becomes an etic one (Gothóni, 2015). Most importantly, the wealth of detail and 'thick description' from an emic

standpoint, and the broad outlines and a reliable signal from the etic standpoint (Morris et al., 1999) allows for a 'methodology, which combines rigor and insight, verification and discovery, accuracy and empathy, replicability and human relevance' (Gothóni, 2015, p. 33).

Translating these theoretical concepts to the application and choice of photo-research methods for researchers, we argue that a combination of photo-elicitation methods and the snapshot approach would provide a suitable approach, in which both methods would complement and counter each other's weaknesses. Researchers creating insights and data themselves and collecting photographs by and eliciting insights from participants are able to both document valid principles themselves, as well as take into account the images and issues that participants themselves describe as meaningful and important. Researchers have the opportunity to generate narratives and counter-narratives, images and counter-images, transcending two absolute standpoints, but fold two standpoints in relation to each other. This fold of approaches brings relevance to the participant and the researcher.

This is not to say that researchers should always combine and aim utilise both methodological orienta equally, however, as Berreman (1966) says, to discover a *bridge of methods,* which brings relevance to both the interests of the participants and of the researcher, and to both the specialist and the scholar. Berreman (1966) further argues that these discovery procedures need to be made problematic—to be made the subject of inquiry and analysis. In photographic research, we would include, but not exclusively, how to select research participants, whose photographs to accept and whose to ignore, whom to believe, what to observe and what to photograph. We want to add here that researchers should yearn for scientific rigour, even in something as subjective as photographic research, however, must not succumb to scientific 'rigor mortis' (Berreman, 1966, p. 353).

1.16 Conclusion

Research photography in the social sciences has a long history but has yet to become fully developed as an accepted and commonly used method. As an introduction to the field, this chapter has shown that not only does it carry great potential but also that there is room for new conceptualisations of photographs as 'data' as well as new approaches to research photography. The idea of the 'fold' suggests that photographs not only have multiple meanings but also are multilayered and have connections to the social world in ways that have yet to be fully explored. While there are many methods available to research photographers, in this chapter, an additional 'snapshot' approach is proposed. When combined with the 'fold' this might provide new ways for using photographs for accessing complex social realities in ways that provide original theoretical and practical insights.

Researchers wanting to apply photographic research might want to ask these questions when deciding how they will go about their study

- Which approach provides an appropriate level of *detached*, yet respectful standpoint, from which scholarly study can be made using photographs?
- Which approach provides a sufficiently *engaged*, yet respectful and effective standpoint, from which an original and authentic insight can be achieved?
- Which approach is appropriate to the photographic researcher, in relation to their temperament, personality and cultural frame of reference, so that they are best able to capture images that contribute to a relevant, constructive and perceptive knowledge and understanding?

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