Qualitative Research Methods
**Assistant Prof. Aradhna Malik**
Vinod Gupta School of Management
Indian Institute of Technology - Kharagpur

Lecture 34
Analyzing Visual Data.

Welcome back to the NOC course titled qualitative research methods, my name is Aradhna Malik and I'm helping you with this course and in this lecture we are going to talk about visual methods in qualitative research, a very, very interesting topic, very close to my heart, an extremely informative as far as you know it gives the such a rich base of data to work with. So I will show you something very interesting through the course of this lecture alright.

(Refer Slide Time: 00:49)
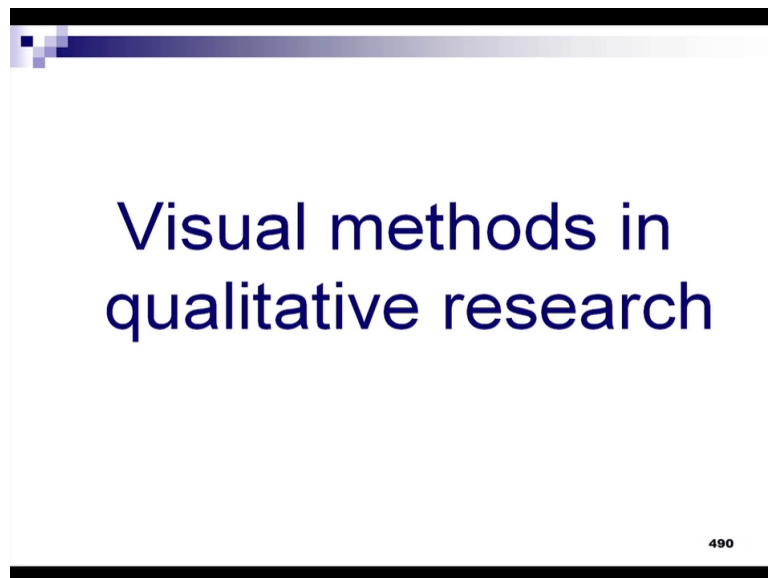
And when we talked about visual methods of qualitative research, we talked about various things now I am going to take you through some things that other people in other areas have collected in I will take you through some websites, so please stay with me.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:06)

Various categories visual research now this from a website that has been put up by, The Image and Identity Research Collective IIRC, McGill University, Canada. Let me show you that website have taken some material from their site and have citied with verbatim with due acknowledgement to the original website, thank you very much for giving us such crisp as such a to the point, such an informative wealth of information about visual research.

And I will just show you through this video in addition to other things, let me show you that website.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:58)

So it's here, so this is the image and identity research collective of McGill University that has been put up here and it's really very nice. It has a lot of different things here and I have taken a lot of information from here and I have a cited wherever possible.
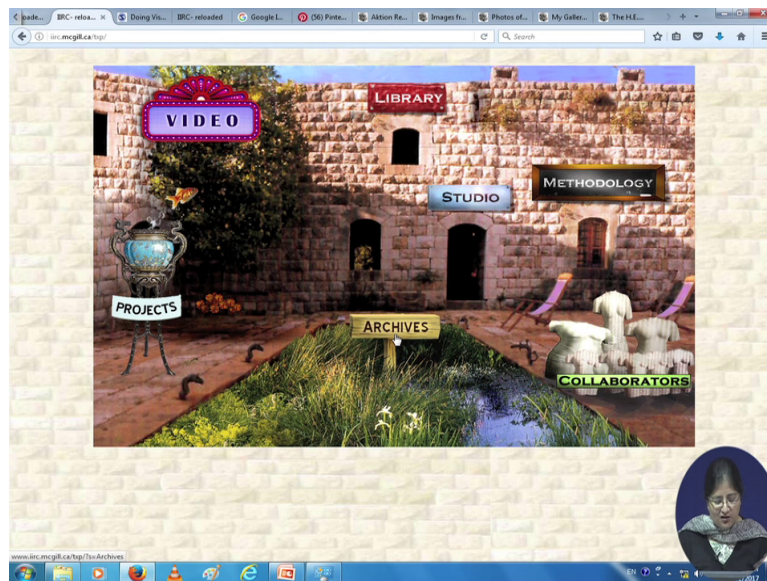
So alright, so this is where this is drawn from, now I will focus only in this class, I will focus only on explicitly visual methods.

So we go to arts based research first, what is art based research? The features of art based research are "Reflexivity: it connects to the self yet distances us from ourselves, acting as a mirror." Art based research specifically deals with a slice of life that is captured in and through art for the purpose of research, so we just take what we see and we present it on either film or photograph or through images and we can capture as rich information about the context as possible in a visual manner.

And we put it on some recordable medium, I will not going to you know over those, it could be paper, could be canvas, could be film, could be the digital format, but we record it somewhere. The features of this are reflexivity it connects to the self yet distances us from ourselves, acting as a mirror. So when we observe something, we become a part of what we are observing but in order to capture what we want to capture, we also distance ourselves.

And we take these decisions as to what to include? What to exclude? What to bring into the frame? What to put in the centre? What should be in the foreground? What should be in the background? Where should the light come from? How should we direct the viewers thought process? What do we want the person, who sees this artwork to see? What do we want them to focus on? How do we want to guide their eyes from one part of this visual document to another? So that is what reflexivity means.

And what do we want them to think after that "it can be used to capture the ineffable, the hard-to-put-into-words" many times it becomes very difficult to capture whatever we want to capture in words because words unlimited by what they can express by a vocabulary, by the understandability of the receiver etcetera. But a photograph is worth a thousand words, you know as they say so what we see it worth a thousand words.

It "is memorable, cannot be easily ignored, demands our sensorial, emotional and intellectual attention." Our senses are involved, we see it, we capture it, process it, in our minds. It "can be used to communicate more holistically simultaneously keeping the whole and the part in view" and "through visual detail and context, art shows why and how study of the one can resonate with the lives of many."

Art is, especially when is used for research, it is expected to be a representation of many, we take a slice of life, we say these people live like this, this phenomenon happened like this and and I will just come to something very, very e well researched and something that I have been quite deeply interested in it. I will just show you okay.
(Refer Slide Time: 05:27)

Arts Based Research: Features (Contd.)
(The Image and Identity Research Collective (IIRC), McGill University, Canada)

- "Through metaphor and symbol, can carry theory elegantly and eloquently"
- "Makes the ordinary seem extraordinary— Provokes, innovates, and breaks through common resistance, forcing us to consider new ways of seeing or doing things"
- "Involves embodiment and provokes embodied responses"
- "Can be more accessible than most forms of academic discourse"
- "Makes the personal social and the private public"

493

Some more features, "through metaphor and symbol, can carry theory elegantly and eloquently", makes the ordinary seem extraordinary it provokes, it innovates, and breaks through common resistance, forcing us to consider new ways of seeing or doing things", it "involves embodiment and provokes embodied responses", it "can be more accessible and most forms of academics discourse" are its better on the eyes than words on a piece of paper.

Many times you told me, maam you go slide after slides and you tell us you read what's on the slide and you try to explain this to us, so yes sometimes it can get tedious for the brain to capture, but when you see things in front of your eyes it becomes easier to get information from there, at the same time it also opens it up to multiple interpretations which can be difficult to replicate okay, it "makes the personal social and the private public."

(Refer Slide Time: 06:24)
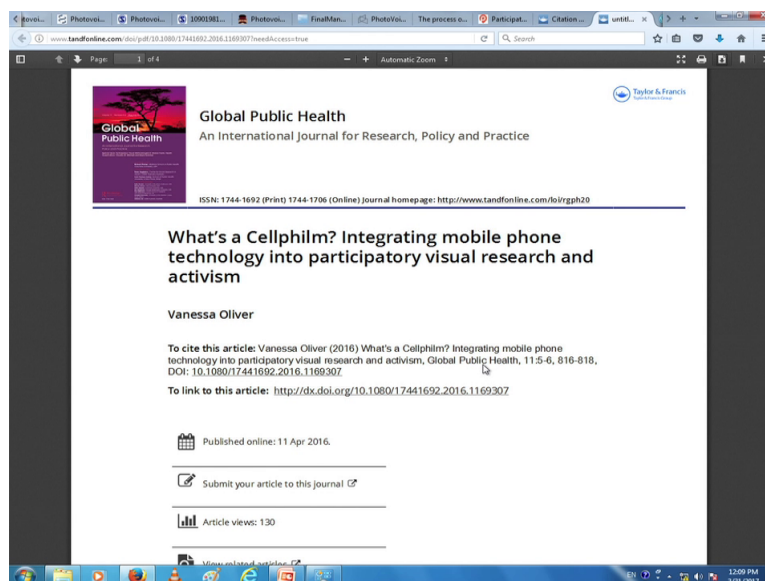
Some methods of art based research are Cellphilm, Cellphilm is a new concept that combines cell phone and film and there is a paper on this by Vanessa Oliver.

(Refer Slide Time: 06:46)

Let me show that paper to you because we have access to the to the database through our, this is a paper by Vanessa Oliver, that is published in the in Global Public Health, which is an international journal for research policy and practice and Oliver has described what is Cellphilm is? and this journal is published by Taylor and Francis and the title of the paper is what Cellphilm integrating mobile phone film, mobile phone Technology into participatory visual Research and activism, so very nice account what a Cellphilm?

If you can get access to it, please do I am not sure if I am allowed to share this on a public forum, anyway. So this is what a Cellphilm is? Then the international Cellphilm festival in Montreal is also been conducted.

(Refer Slide Time: 07:37)
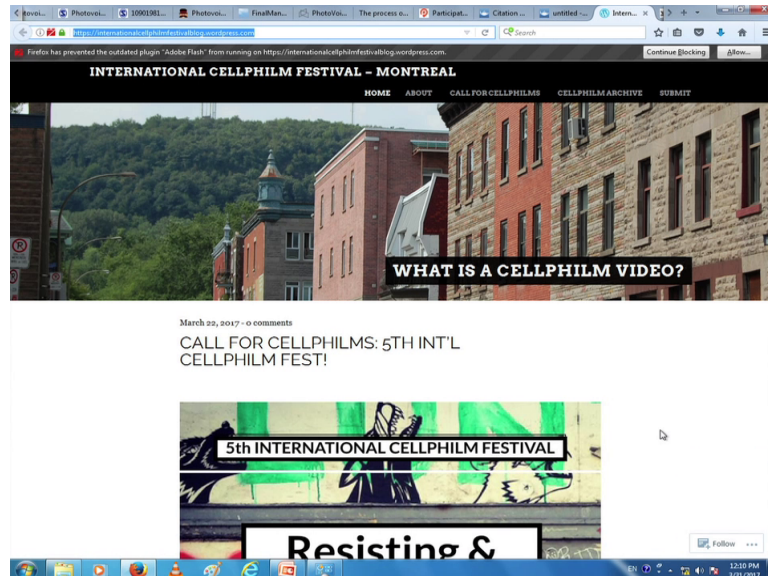
 I think I only have the website open for you, to save on time let me see, I think I have that you can see that a lot of things you know is mentioned here, but what Cellphilm's are you can maybe go through, the Archives and see how Cellphilm are actually evolving as a new technology of capturing of visually capturing, qualitative data, so that's very nice and you can actually go through archives, alright, so that about Cellphilm.

It is connecting, it's what we do all the time these days, we watch videos on our cell phones and that can act as a rich as a method of collecting data, when I ask my students to go out into the field and do surveys and talk to people in this and I asked him to make videos, and they say no problem maam, we can do it right here, right now, taking out their cell phones all kinds sizes, shapes, varieties, get your things and say this is happening, that, so very interesting.

Participatory video is another one, that is another method of arts based research, these are videos especially created by participants to explicate the dialogue or decision making process and let me show you some examples here I hope you enjoy this lecture much more and the previous lectures which will mostly theoretical in nature, this is participatory with you okay.

(Refer Slide Time: 09:02)
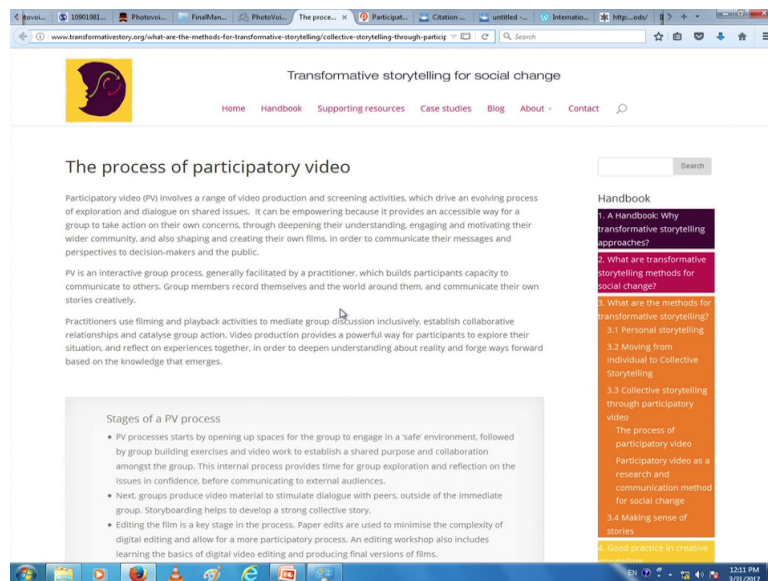
So the process of participatory video is very nicely listed on this website called transformative story telling for social change and the process is explained here, I wish I had time to go into each of these things but I don't, so I am just giving you something very briefly and I hope you will go through it and do things on your own.

(Refer Slide Time: 09:22)

But then you know you with this is very participants record their lives as participants and then analyze it later very interesting and you know this is a little bit more on what participatory video is and how it can be made.

Then we also have photo voice, which is another method which is involves capturing specific social events through photographic techniques to highlight the concerns raised in those events, and this technique was described and used and developed by Wang and Burris, 1997,

it is published in a paper by Wand and Burris, 1997, and in this technique specifically focus on specific aspects of we don't capture everything and then try to make sense of it.

We highlight what we want to get out of a specific social situation, we take pictures and will let the pictures speak for themselves and again here I will show you these different resources there is this paper by Wang and Burris, that I want to show you.

(Refer Slide Time: 10:35)
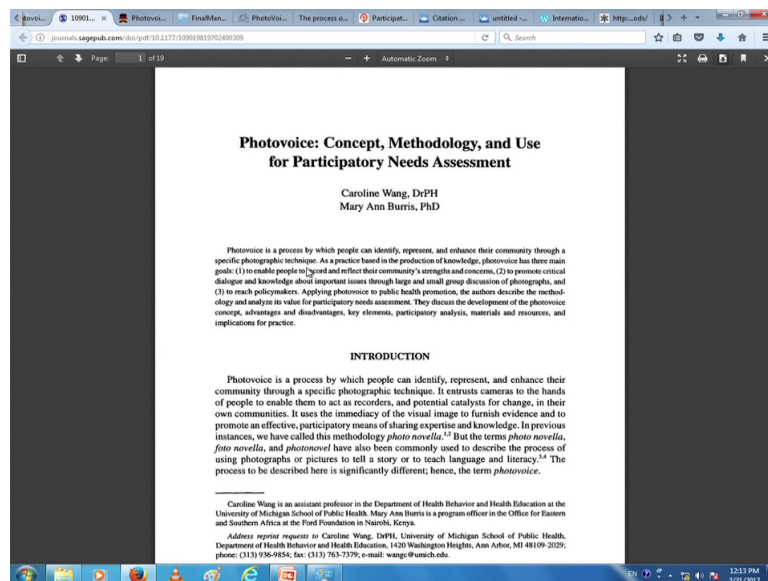
So photo voice concept methodology and used for participatory needs assessment, this is the paper and it was published in a journal called health education and behavior volume 24 issue 3 and so maybe if you have access to this paper, you know more about this technique and there is also this website that shows you how photo voice technique can be used.

(Refer Slide Time: 11:07)
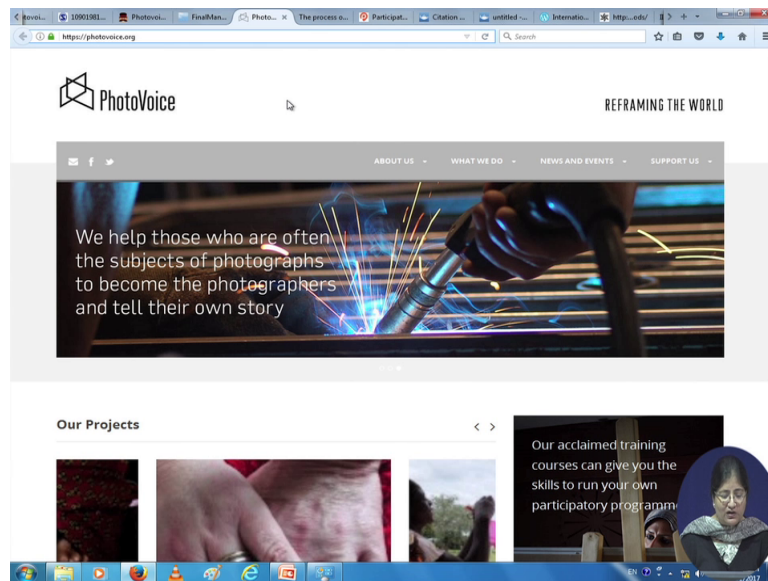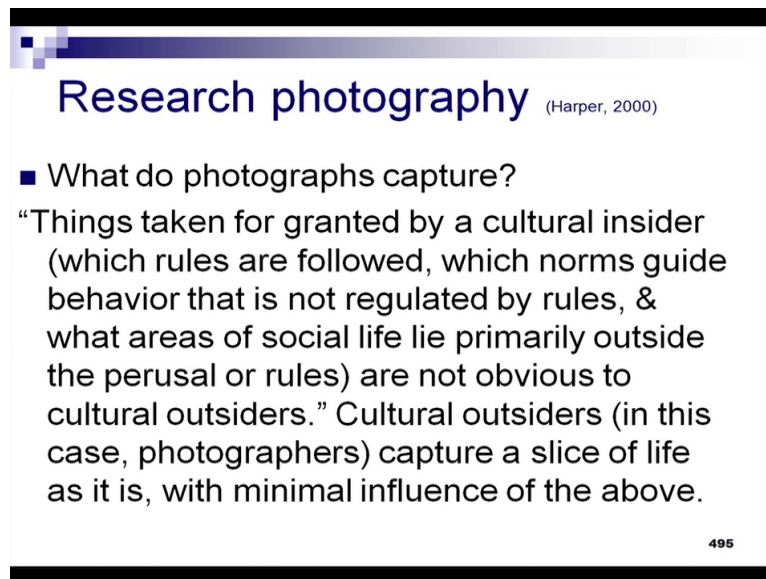
And there is a website called photovoice.org that describes how or a that shows you photo voice in action, so what has photo voice you know the applications of photo voice and there is a manual of photo voice that has been put up the link here.

(Refer Slide Time: 11:28)
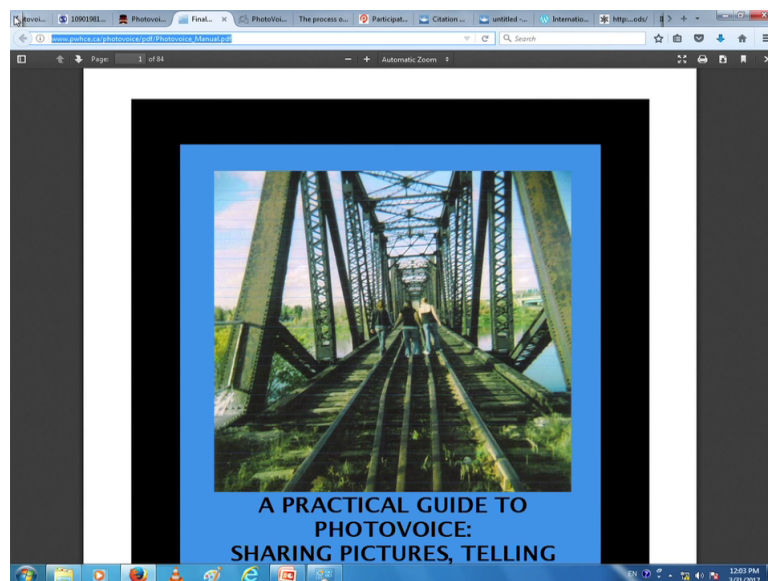
Let me see if I can get a practical guide to photo sharing pictures telling stories and changing communities, this is freely available on the internet the link has been posted in your slide, so maybe you can go through it and get some more information about what photo voice is and how it can be used and this is photo voice in the field, so these are some of the techniques.

Now there is another thing that I will describe for you in greater detail which is, research photography and this is from a paper by Harper in the handbook of qualitative research methods and the handbook of qualitative research. Now research photography is a specific and it is a form of art based research, but then there is a term call research photography and photography research. Research photography is photography with the specific aim of carrying out research.

And what the photographs capture? They take "things taken for granted by a cultural insider which rules are followed, which norms guide behavior that is not guided regulated by rules, and what areas of social life lie primarily outside the perusal or rules are not obvious to cultural outsiders." So cultural outsiders in this case, photographers capture a slice of life as it is, with minimal influence of the above.

Minimum knowledge of what has led to the slice of life, they are capturing, then they take it and then they analyze it, in the light of what they you know and then they present it for analysis and they say maybe this is a representative section that is research photography.

(Refer Slide Time: 13:02)

Photography Research

- http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/images/index.html

Photography research is analyzing photographs that were taken and finding out. Research photography involved taking pictures with a specific purpose in mind, I want to capture this, and this, and this, and this, and this, may be ordinary life and see what happened, research, photography research is you take a bunch of photographs, you collect all the photographs and then see patterns emerging.

And a worldwide project using photography research is the Holocaust research project, very, very painful event, all of us know, you know over six million Jews were brutally killed and in the Holocaust and it was a very, very painful event, but then this is something that I have personal interest and I have studied not about it I will just show you this website and show you in various things exist.

(Refer Slide Time: 14:01)
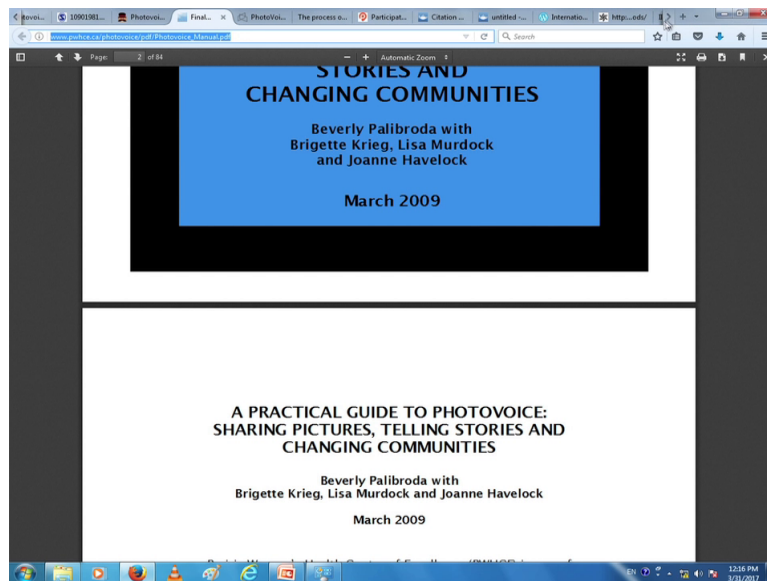
Now sorry various things have been put up on the net and this is very interesting issue here let's see when you put this up you sorry, you pull this up, you see various photographs here, this is on Pinterest you have to maybe login to become a member. Then there is this Holocaust research project, where you have various photographs from the Holocaust, you know so actual pictures that were taken at the time of the Holocaust.

(Refer Slide Time: 14:31)
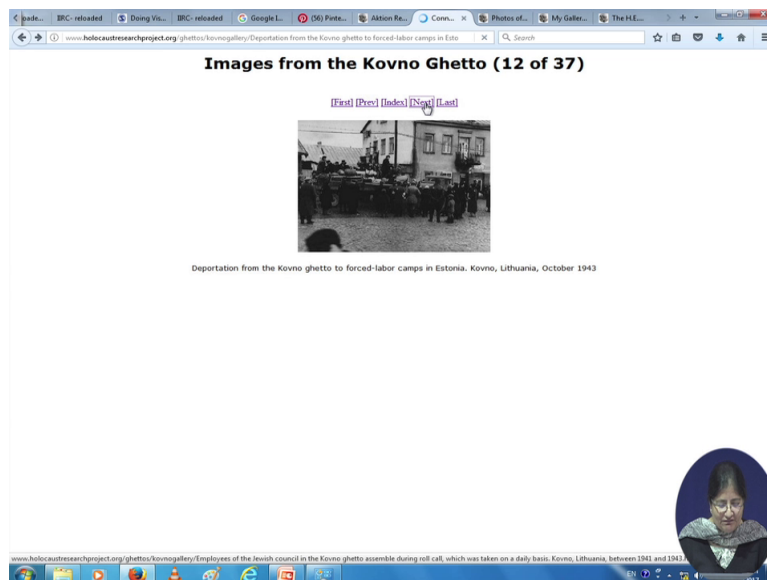
And this is images from the Kovno Ghetto, see, what do you see? You see lot of children's playing in the snow, these are children from the Jewish kindergarten, Kovono, Lithuania.

(Refer Slide Time: 14:48)

An impoverished ghetto resident sells bread on the black market. Kovno, Lithuania, between 1941 and 1943

And this is a bread seller and impoverished Ghetto resident sell bread on the black market.

(Refer Slide Time: 14:53)

An elderly woman carrying a purse stands among bundles of personal possessions in a public square of the Kovno ghetto
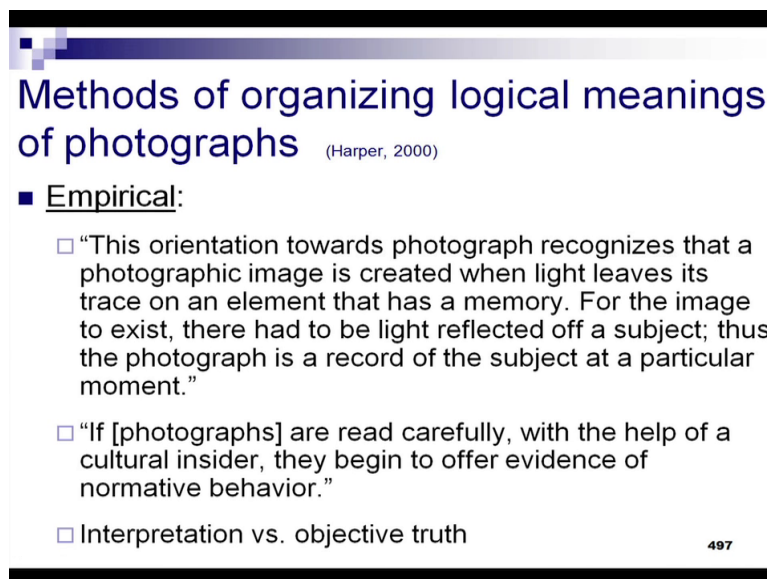
And elderly woman carrying a purse stands among bundles of personal possessions in a public square of the Kovno Ghetto. So there are various images here and then you piece all these images and save this is what happened historical, you know when this is happening his historians, what trying to capture all this so that they could publish history books, no everybody was fighting for their life's.

The pictures that were taken either by the soldiers or you know by the people implementing the Nazi decision or by the residence and these photographs somehow were preserved or by the residence of the Ghettos or by journalist, all of these have been collected after the event

has passed, after the large-scale massacre of people and now history is being pieced together by way of these pictures in addition to documents and other things.

So that is photography research, it's interesting it can be very painful and it is in retrospect, they are not, this pictures were not taken with the explicit intention of conducting research, research is coming out of these pictures, so that is the difference here you can go through it on your own, there is lot of information here and the computer is very slow so please give me a second, okay, alright.

(Refer Slide Time: 16:25)

Now what happens when we try and sign meanings to photographs, the various methods of organizing logical meanings of photograph the first one: is empirical, "this orientation towards photograph recognizes that a photographic images created when light leaves its trace on an element that has a memory. For the image to exist, there had to be light reflected off a subject; thus the photograph is a record of the subject at a particular moment."
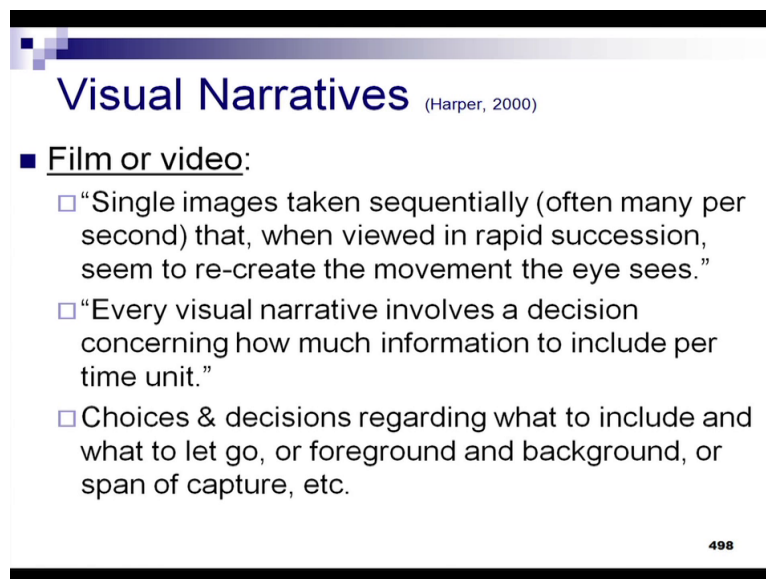
"If photographs are read carefully, with the help of a cultural insider, they begin to offer evidence of normative behavior," and there is interpretation vs objective truth. Now photographs are taken by people who may or may not be participants in a situation, we photograph others of course in this day and age of selfies there is no that's a whole different evolution of photographic research.

And we say okay this is on Facebook is collecting all these selfies and saying this is what your life is like in the past year, so this way of gathering in, preserving information is

evolving so fast, but then photographs are usually taken of a person in time and light leaves the surface and leaves an impression either on the video film or digital media on various media and so they need to be read with a cultural insider with a person who was part of that situation.

Who was doing what was being photographed, in order to understand what was done and then there is also this very, very, very intricate dance between interpretation and objective truth, what is interpretation? What is truth? Where do we draw the line? Okay.

(Refer Slide Time: 18:12)

Visual narratives, film or video, so visual narratives are you know it is a story that is constructed through "single images that are taken sequentially that when viewed in rapid succession seem to re-create the movement the eye sees." Now in this day and age, I don't know how many of you students have actually seen what films in olden days look like, a series of pictures that were taken very, very quickly I wish I had pulled it up to show it to you here, but you can see how filmmaking has evolved over time.

You know they were pictures and then we as children, we were taught how to make a series of pictures, that seems to be moving so and action, so you draw drawing like this and then this, and this, and then this and then this, then if you just flip through those pages it seems that the hand is moving like this, that is how motion pictures made.

So you take individual photographs while movement is taking place and play them in quick succession and so that is how films are made. Digitally we can do this much faster than the human eye able to see.

"Every visual narrative involves a decision concerning how much information to include, per time unit." How much information do we want in a particular unit of time and that decision has to be made, sometimes you know in olden, many years ago when we saw Bollywood movies, we would see people dancing in slow motion around trees and all of that, so how much time do you focus, in real life that doesn't happen.

But in films you would see this, you know, similarly some significant event in pictures, in movies was played in slow motion, with a lot of noise all of that and then in slow motion happened, so just to enhance the emphasis, how to decide what you want to focus on or what you want to repeat etcetera.

Then "choices and decisions regarding what to include and what to let go, or foreground and background, or span of capture etcetera." So all of these are concerned that come along with using film and video as a visual narrative as a tool for qualitative research.

(Refer Slide Time: 20:30)
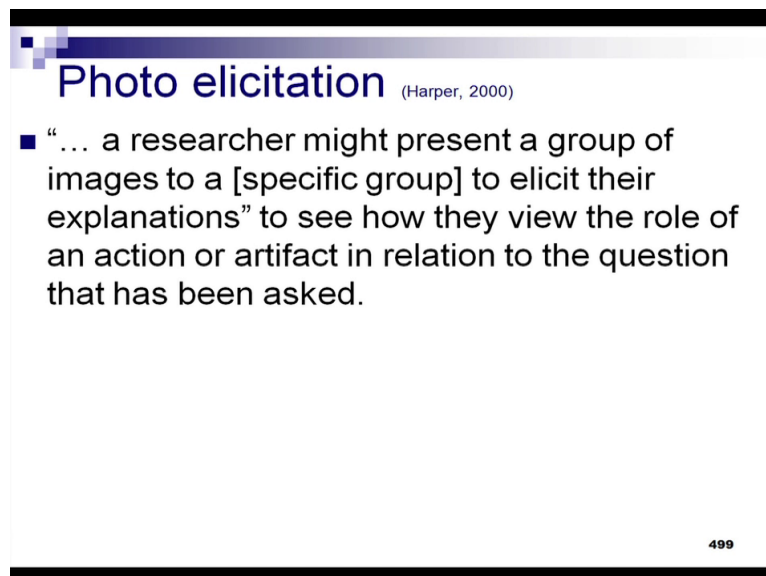
Photo elicitation: in photo elicitation is the technique in which "a researcher might present a group of images to a specific group of recipients or participants to elicit their explanations" to see how they view the role of an action or artifact in relation to the question that has been asked. So maybe you could show say a picture of a ghetto from the Holocaust to somebody

and say what do you see, what are people doing and you say they are relaxing, they are in these bunkers word and they are relaxing.

But if you know history you will say no, there is waiting for their turn to be incinerated, so I mean depends on what you see, what you feel, what kinds of emotions a photograph evokes in you with or without the knowledge of the context, in which the photo was taken and that technique is called photo elicitation.

(Refer Slide Time: 21:22)

Experience and image, this is another way of capturing visual data you know, the vantage point changes to the self, so you become a participant and then you photographing a phenomenon with the self as a participant in the phenomenon. It's also called a phenomenological mode. In this type of technique "photographs express the artistic, emotional, or experiential intent of the photo of the photographer."

What do you want noticed? Where do you see yourself? How do you see yourself as part of what is being photographed? so you may not be in the picture, but then you could be moving with a camera in your hand, so you are a part of the event and you narrate thing and you say things and you represent same as part of the event that you are trying to describe.

Social construction of photography and visual sociology: "the social positions of the photographer and subject come into play when a photograph is made." "Making photographs defines identities, institutional relationships and histories." So we know the histories are described socially influence of expected gender roles, In real life would be expect to see routine photographs of a woman mechanic on the shop floor of a construction unit? Maybe, maybe not.
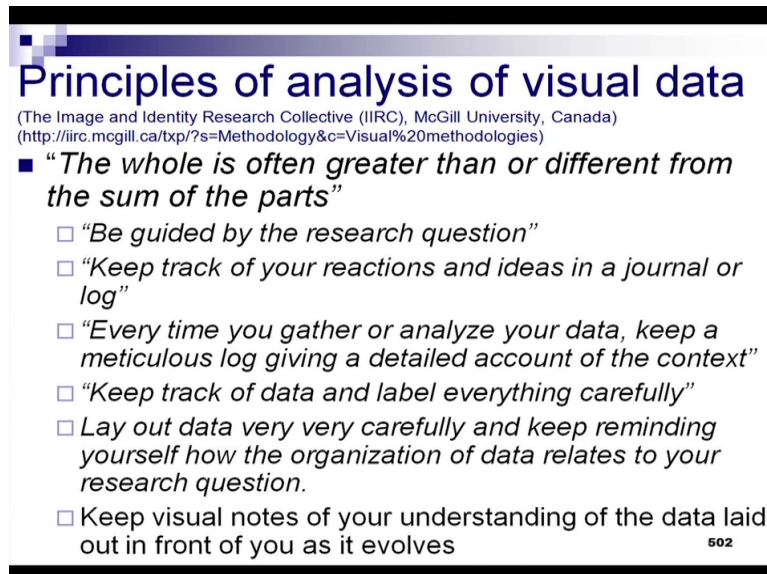
Would we expect to see in India this is slowly becoming a reality, we have women bus conductors now, in many states I believe Maharashtra was the first one to start lady bus conductor, so you know it was a rare site in reality or lady auto rickshaw drivers, women auto rickshaw drivers in Delhi and in other places in higher risk cities for example, that is a rare sight even now.

Say maybe twenty to thirty years ago my home state not have too many women drivers and so having a woman driver you know a larger vehicle was rare site, so would you like to see somebody you would, I mean you would associate various, various things, various aspects of social life to what you see, so that is again you know the expected gender roles come out, we take only those photographs that make logical sense to us, that makes social science to us, that make normative sense to us.

That is the photographers intent the photographers orientation is playing a part in what is being captured and what is being left out, what comes in the foreground, what goes on the in

the background, what kind of gender roles is the photographer explicating through, a describing through the photographs, okay.

(Refer Slide Time: 24:10)
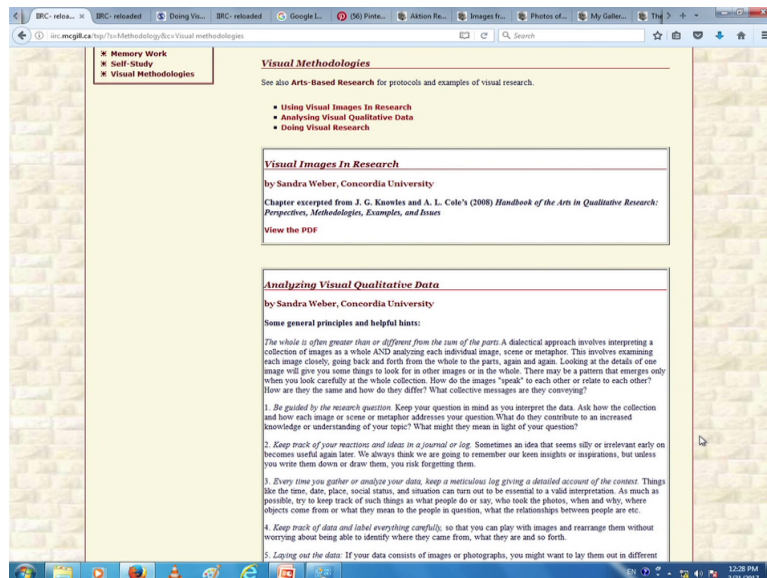
This is, this part is directly from the website and it's all in italics, it's all from the website, from this page of the website and I hope the website has no objection to it, but I have given it due credit, let me just show you I just brought everything for you. here,
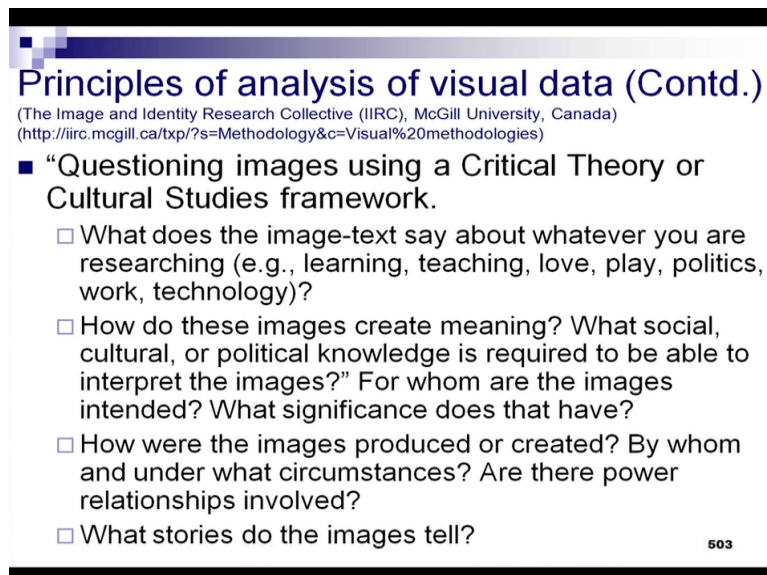
(Refer Slide Time: 25:15)

Visual images in research now this is a paper by Sandra Weber, Concordia University, how do you analyze this visual qualitative data, I've just summarized what Weber has presented on this website and I have put it on this slides, thank you very much to Sandra Weber for giving us this information here, "the whole is often greater than or different from the sum of the parts" and in this what one needs to be careful of is one should "be guided by the research

question," we guided by the research question. "Keep track of your reactions and ideas in a journal or log."

I mean these are basic tips on how to do visual qualitative research using visual data as your data keep track of your reactions and ideas in a journal or log, "every time you gather or analyze your data, keep a meticulous log giving a detailed account of the context", "keep track of data and label everything carefully."

Layout your data very, very carefully and keep reminding yourself how the organization of data relates to your research question. Keep visual notes of your understanding of the data laid out in front of you as it evolves. So this is what one must to.
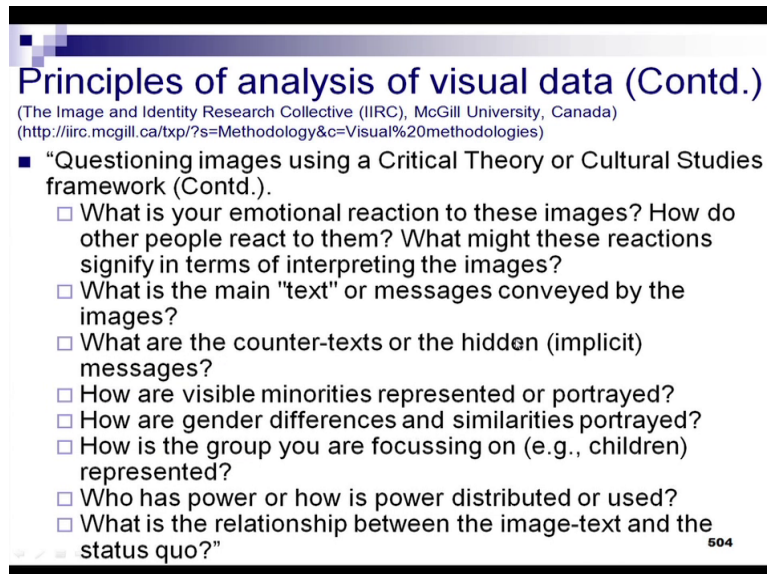
(Refer Slide Time: 27:05)

How do you question the images using a critical theory or cultural studies framework, we need to know for whom the images are intended, what significance does that have, there is a this is a checklist in I'm breathing it directly from here, you know this is directly from the website, what does the image text say about whatever you are researching, for example learning, teaching, love, play, politics, work technology? Etc.

How do these images create meaning? What social, cultural, or political knowledge is required to be able to interpret the meanings? For whom are the images intended? What significance does that have? For whom are these images intended? What significance does that have? How was the images produced are created by whom and under what

circumstances? Are there power relationships involved? What stories do they tell? Okay. So this is here some of the questions we ask.

Tthen we also ask what is your emotional reaction to these images? How do other people react to them? What might these reactions to signify in terms of interpreting the images? What is the main text or message conveyed by images? What are the counter-texts or the hidden implicit messages? How are visible minorities represented of portrayed?

How are gender differences and similarities portrayed? How is the group you are focusing on represented? Who has power or how is power distributed or used? What is the relationship between the image-text and the status quo? So we have various questions that we keep in mind, that when we are trying to analyze visual data using the critical theory paradigm. Okay.

How do photographs contribute to qualitative research? (Harper, 2000)

- "The photographs by themselves seem curiously detached, even quiet and subdued, yet they emerge from an adrenaline saturated experience."
- "Photography can produce data that enlarge our understanding of sociological processes, from the formation of one's own definition of the situation to the negotiation of actors with different machines."
- "Photographs record details that may engage viewers to reflect upon larger cultural realities."
- "Using photos as sequences allows us to see how social actions take place."

505

How do photographs contribute to qualitative research? Now you know we take this photography analyze them, but how are they contributing to qualitative research "the photographs by themselves seem curiously detached, even quiet and subdued, yet they emerge from an adrenaline saturated experience."

Experience that has led to the photograph being put or been captured is what really gives the photograph its meaning and that helps us the decide again the Vantage Point from which the photograph has been taken, what the photographs trying to highlight, what it is trying to subdue.

"Photography can produce data that enlarge our understanding of sociological processes, from the formation of one's own definition of the situation to the negotiations actors with different machine." "Photographs record details that may engage viewers to reflect upon larger cultural realities."

"Using photos as sequences allows us to see how social actions take place." So we use photographs insights into the life that we are trying to capture through a qualitative data collection or collection of data for the purposes of qualitative research.

(Refer Slide Time: 29:47)

The future of visual research (Harper, 2000)

- Organizations: e.g.
  http://societyforvisualanthropology.org/
- Technologies:
  - Photovoice
  - Cellphilm
  - …
- Increasing interest in studying the social applicability of research

506

The future of visual research, various organizations are looking at this, one of the most reputed organizations in the world is the society for visual anthropology and their website is listed here, they are doing great work. And the photographs find a role in the history in anthropology in case study research etc. The technologies that are evolving are photovoice and cellphilm etc. And there is increasing interest in studying the social applicability or research.

And Visual method coming very, very handy, now there is art work, that is researched, there is a know if there are ways of integrating quantitative and qualitative types of data and so the visual data that we collect contributes in a significant manner to the analysis of the data, that we or the analysis of a situation that we are looking at a problem that you are trying to solve.

It's a very interesting field have given you lots of tips and pointers and I hope you take them and you will conduct your research and you'll find more value in all these leads that have been given to you. That's all we have time for in this lecture thank you very much for listening and will continue with some more information on qualitative research in the next classes, thanks a lot.