The development and methodology

of

Political Protest and the Police: Young People in Brighton

A report on student demonstrations in Brighton,
24th and 30th November 2010

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For most readers of *Political Protest and the Police: Young People in Brighton. A report on student demonstrations in Brighton, 24th and 30th November 2010*, the findings were most important. Its dependence upon and interpretation of testimonies of different kinds may appear too obvious to require much commentary. However, the publication of the report generated a public debate about the methods and the ethics of research that is usually restricted to academic circles. The following pages provide practical details of how the research developed, its methodology and its ethical imperatives. There is also some reflection upon the reception of *Political Protest and the Police: Young People in Brighton* and the need for academic independence throughout the research process. Some of the matters raised here pertain to research methodologies generally as well as to those concerning political protest.

Outlining the project (December 2010)

It has become standard practice to outline the scope and intention of a research project at the outset. *Political Protest and the Police: Young People in Brighton* began by following this standard practice, which usually comprises the following:

1. Setting research questions
2. Defining the research context or research problem to which the research is addressed
3. Identifying research methods
4. Announcing how the research will be disseminated

Under the initial title, *Young People, Political Demonstrations and the Police: social responsibility and research,* points 1 to 4 were contained in letters to Sussex Police (8th December 2010, see Appendix 1) signed by a total of fifteen academics. The research question set out was: what was the experience of young people, 'university, college and school students' (see paragraph 4 of the 8th December letter) on the demonstrations of 24th and 30th November? The accounts of aggressive policing that circulated during and immediately after the demonstrations, including use of kettling, deployment of riot police, decisions to film children and reliance upon anti-social behaviour order legislation constituted the research problem (see paragraph 5): to what extent did police tactics in these respects affect students, including young students, who attended the two demonstrations? The research methods are set out in the last sentence of the same paragraph (paragraph 4): 'data collection, interpretation of testimony, ethics of researching human subjects, including the young, and the analysis of policy and practice of public bodies.' The final paragraph describes the dissemination process as well as indicates the intended audience for the research:

> We will, of course, inform you and any other relevant bodies, such as Brighton's Children's Service, local political representatives and community media organisations of any report or publication that results from our research

Importantly, key research relationships are described in the 8th December letter: academics at the Universities of Sussex and Brighton defined student communities who attended the 24th and 30th demonstrations as their research subjects and Sussex Police as among the recipients of the completed research. Although non-specialist language was used throughout the letter, key words such as ('participants' and 'observations', see paragraph 4) indicated the ethnographic methodology in place to undertake a case study of student protests: members of the research group acted as 'participant observers'; the Brighton demonstrations constituted their 'field work' and the demonstrators their 'informants' or 's ubjects'. The ethics of researching human subjects within an ethnographic study, shaped the conduct of the research until its completion.[1]

Data collection (December 2010-January 2011)

Sites of collection

From 8th December, two paper invitations to participate in the research were distributed via student networks in Brighton. They were handed out at a vigil on the eve of the parliamentary vote on education cuts on 8th December at the Clocktower (junction of West Street and North Street) and at a student demonstration that assembled at the Level on the day itself. The invites were posted on anti-cuts student websites and blogs. Since the demonstrations of 24th and 30th were the field of study, it was essential to use the same networks through which information about the demonstrations had been exchanged in order that our invitation reached those who had actually participated in these protests.

Student experiences: the open-ended invitation

One invitation was directed at student participants and another at adult witnesses (See Appendix 2 and 3). The tone of the invitations for students and adults varied very slightly but the key difference between them is that while the opening question to students was 'What happened to you?', adults were only asked about what they 'witnessed'. The second paragraph of the invitation addressed to adults read:

> We are seeking to use our skills as researchers based at the Universities of Brighton and Sussex to build up an accurate picture of young people's experiences on Wednesday 24th and Tuesday 30th November and are collecting accounts of student participants. It would also be very helpful to create a record of what was witnessed by adults present on the demonstrations.

Thus both invitations announced that the subjects of research were young people and this is also specified in the guidance for participating in the research. For example, students were asked:

> If you attended either demonstration, or both, we would like to invite you write down anything you think is important about your day. Just use your own words to express what happened to you on Wednesday 24th or Tuesday 30th: what you saw, what you heard, how you felt. If you can remember times and places, that is helpful but not essential.

Whilst initial words are repeated to adults, they were not asked about their own experiences but what they observed to have happened to young people:

> If you attended either demonstration, or both, we would like to invite you write down anything you think is important about your day. Please just use your own words to describe what you saw or heard on Wednesday 24th or Tuesday 30th: if you can remember times and places or can estimate numbers of students or police that will be helpful as is recollections of reactions of young people and your observations of the effect of policing strategies upon them.

It is must be emphasised that, apart from the announcement of the focus of research, the guidance for participation was kept to an absolute minimum. A written testimony was requested but no specific questions were put. The type of participation was limited but the content and form was not. The invitation to students and adult witnesses contained no leading words such as 'kettling' or 'violence' and the guidance for writing comprises: 'write down anything you think is important about your day' with the encouragement to 'use your own words'. No number of words, pages or other suggestions about length were made.

The open invitation, designed to enable those being researched, both students and adult witnesses, to determine the content and form of their testimony, that is to say, to relate whatever struck them as most significant and to do so in their own writing style at length or briefly, was taken up in the spirit in which it was intended. The collected testimony varies according to the various experiences of the demonstration. Each contains at least one location that is particularly important to the student or adult witness; the incidents that occurred in that place, Bartholmew Square or St Peter's Church, for example, take centre stage in their testimony and can be considered as influencing, quite profoundly, their experience of the demonstrations. But these locations are not the same for all demonstrators. This is particularly clear with younger writers who immediately direct attention to the different places that became, for them, the turning point in the demonstration or the summary of their experience. Adult witnesses, who may be more accustomed to the forms of reporting events in everyday life, from conversations to media coverage, wrote accounts that had a recognisable narrative structure: they tended to open their testimony by locating themselves in relation to the rest of the demonstration (when they arrived or where they were) that was then followed by details relating to a key location or locations and closed with a note about why and when they left. Theirs are linear narratives that adopt the circumspection of a narrator, whether a novelist or journalist, about directly stating an opinion. Younger writers, perhaps influenced by school assessments that require them to conclude an essay with their own views, gave them at this end point of their account.

Both student and adult witness testimonies are presented in *Political Protest and the Police: Young People in Brighton* with minimal editing. The principle of enabling people to relate what is important to them has to be upheld in the reporting of research by an absence of editorial control. Nothing is removed from testimony of the younger writers; their writing is quoted in full and in sequence. Their writing is cited in different parts of the report but the whole of their account is included and the order in which it is written is not altered. Adult witness testimony is differently treated; a small number of entire accounts were not included in *Political Protest and the Police*. Of the twenty testimonies collected,

three were accounts of the kettling and arrests that took place on a UK Uncut protest in Brighton city centre on 4th December against waiving of taxes for high street retail companies, including Vodafone and Top Shop. Another one wrote about kettling on on the 9th December student demonstration in London. The open invitation to write has this drawback: those who offer testimony really do write what they want and this may not fall with the geographical or temporal remit of the research.

The invitation also outlined the ethical process of research involving human subjects: the process should be consensual and participants anonymised. This was explained to adult witnesses in the following way:

> As should be expected, this research will be conducted according to ethical practice. If you are happy to record your observations, they will only be published with your written consent and with all names anonymised.

For students, the guarantee of anonymity was pivotal. The identification of young people who had attended the 24th and 30th demonstrations was already a matter of controversy and Sussex Police had also warned that they would be making further arrests following the 24th and 30th demonstrations. Indeed, an arrest took place on the 9th demonstration when student invitations were distributed. Fear and mistrust of any authority, the school from which students had walked out to attend the demonstrations, the police who had been involved in surveillance of their protest, the universities to which students felt they had no access, could have been obstacles to writing. The attempt to reassure students that the words of individuals would be used to describe and analyse a collective experience was phrased like this:

> We do not need know your names. We realise that students on the 24th and 30th November were filmed by the police or asked to give their names but did not wish to be recorded in this way. We would never publish or pass on names of children or adults without consent under any circumstances. It is simply not ethical to do so. Your age and whether you attend school, college or university will be useful for us as we try to understand the experience of different groups of students but that is all we need.

In fact, we received no anonymous testimony. Those students who participated in the research did not take up the offer of presenting themselves under tags or pseudonyms but gave their real names when they wrote and these names were anonymised in the record of research as is standard practice.

Interpreting anonymised personal written testimony: a methodology

Giving testimony, one person relating events to another person, is form of communication embedded in everyday lives.[2] The invitation to write about 'what happened' on the student demonstrations of 24th and 30th November 2010 was, therefore, a readily understood request. Guidance and prompts that might shape and influence the requested information are not necessary when the request reproduces such an everyday practice. Testimony, especially that written in a person's own time and space rather than when and where the researcher is present is far less structured than

other types of data used in academic studies, such as information gathered from interviews, for example. Giving testimony is relatively free.

Relating events that disrupt everyday life, such as acts of violence, in this everyday manner is one of the most important ways in which people manage their lives. To give an account of a disruptive event, something that did occur but should not have done (such as a delayed train or a exploded bomb at train station or perhaps a fight in a playground or police officer's punch that lands in the face of a child) positions the person in relation to what occurred and enables reflection upon the roles and responsibilities of themselves and others. For these reasons, testimony is regarded as the 'vehicle' for seeking the truth and justice in the aftermath of violence[3]. From a road traffic accident to an international war or from the arrest of an individual political activist to the kettle of hundreds of demonstrating students, there is often both a desire to give matched by the an appeal to receive testimony.

The meaning of testimony for those who give and receive it has a vast academic literature that crosses several disciplinary boundaries.[4] The research and writing of *Political Protest and the Police: Young People in Brighton* is informed by this accumulated understanding of the significance of testimony as expression and evidence that may take a number of forms, such as verbal, visual or written, but directly draws upon methodologies concerned with written testimony, which is personal but has been anonymised, that is, the type of writing generated by the research under discussion here. The most sustained debates about the social value and historical significance, representativeness and authenticity of anonymised personal written testimony is associated with the contemporary Mass Observation Project, which since 1981 has invited people to 'write directly about their lives in the knowledge that what they send in [to Mass Observation] will be archived for posterity and used for social research'.[5] Many researchers who have worked with Mass Observation texts have contributed to its methodology by adapting the techniques of reading and representing people's writing employed within life history, social and cultural history, anthropology or ethnography. The methodology of *Political Protest and the Police: Young People in Brighton* was influenced by this accumulated understanding of the use of anonymised personal written testimony and, most importantly, applied the practices and principles developed by Dorothy Sheridan as Archivist of Mass Observation summarised as follows:

- an opened ended invitation to write
- an anonymised human subject
- the facilitation of writing that combines subjective expression and social analysis
- the generation of sources for qualitative research
- the establishment of a relationship of trust between researcher and researched

These practices and principles generate a body of writing that has particular strengths. It can enable a marginal or suppressed voice to be recorded; it can provide a mechanism through which lived experiences can be represented; it can reconstruct a narrative ignored by the mainstream media or has been deleted from official records.[6]

Personal testimony and real time digital records

Whilst researchers trained in the university sector have tended to gather data to form a sample or record that is then subjected to research, accessible digital technologies have now made it possible for people to create their own records of public events such as demonstrations. Written accounts and visual images posted or uploaded onto websites, message boards, blogs and social networking are part of a public record and cannot be disregarded by researchers. Such sites are increasingly incorporated into research in the university sector and, indeed, also used to disseminate research.

In the same way that we gathered personal testimony through utilising existing student networks in order to contact participants in the 24th and 30th November demonstrations, we also gathered real time digital records by collating the tweets, blogs, posts, image and film uploads created and distributed by participants or witnesses of the demonstration. Analysis of the how the internet is integrated into political life has become an important preoccupation of scholars working in the fields of sociology and politics, cultural studies and media studies. Much debate circulates around the question of capacity of the internet to increase political participation or, more radically, to enable political change.[7] Understanding the ways in which young people in Brighton created and recorded the demonstrations of 24th and 30th November through tweets, blogs, posts and uploads could contribute to the debate on this question. The focus of *Political Protest and the Police: Young People in Brighton*, however, is the experience of the demonstration rather than their deployment of digital technologies *per se*. For this study, what is inescapably important about the dependence upon social media to communicate political ideas and information is that it is indicative of its integration into the young people's experience of everyday life; it is a means of political expression because it is part of their culture.

As records of the demonstrations of 24th and 30th November that gave details of, for example, the numbers of students assembled at which point or when the police first formed the lines that establish a kettle, the tweets, posts and blogs were used to create timelines of locations and actions. However, even the briefest of tweets contained some kind of textual reaction to an physical action, even if this is simply to add adjectives such as describing shouting protestors as 'peaceful' in appearance or the behaviour the police as 'very harsh' in 'Guest''s submission to *The Argus'* live feed of 30th November 2010.[8] It could be argued, of course, that tweeting itself is textual reaction but the point to be made here is that digital communication could, and should, be considered as an 'online' text of no necessarily lesser significance in the attempt to understand experience of the demonstrations than an 'offline' text. Shani Orgad states that ' [r]ecognition of the complex relationship between online and offline has profound methodological implications.'[9] She identifies two 'critical junctures', 'designing an empirical research' and 'data analysis', when the online/offline relation must be carefully considered if not resolved. [10] Orgad does not argue that online and offline must be included in all internet research but she does suggest that wherever both are constitutive of the same culture, and student demonstrations are good examples of the inseparability of online and offline, both should be collated and analysed. *Political Protest and the Police: Young People in Brighton* is an example of the integration of online and offline sources in the research process and the presentation of research findings. It is an example of qualitative internet research in the way in which it is described by Shani Orgad: '"qualitative" to me implies

a commitment for an interpretive understanding of people's experiences of the Internet, and of the texts (in the broad sense) they create online and offline.'[11] Although, as noted above, *Political Protest and the Police* is not a study of the internet but of a demonstration in which the internet played a part, it practices a methodology of internet research that values the digital records (tweets, posts, blogs) created by internet users as online texts through which it is possible to understand experience. Moreover, the combination of ethnographic scope and textual interpretation proposed by Orgad for the analysis of online texts is applicable beyond the internet. Indeed, if the online text is accorded similar status to that of the offline text, such as the anonymised personal testimony of student and adult witnesses who participated in the demonstrations of 24th and 30th November, the methods applied to each ought be similar. Crucially, what Orgad describes as the commitment of qualitative internet research to the understanding of experience through interpretation of online texts closely corresponds to principles distilled from Dorothy Sheridan's work on the practices of everyday writing.

Another way of putting this simply to note that the discursive digital records created by demonstrations are considered as a form of personal testimony, often already anonymised and if not, names were not reproduced. Thus the report, *Political Protest and the Police: Young People in Brighton*, contains two types of anonymised personal testimony: the synchronous (gathered from internet sources) and the non-synchronous (collected by researchers). The correspondence between the two is particularly important. For example, in a number of the testimonies collected by researchers, the route to Hove Town Hall on the 30th November is punctuated by specific and general violent acts by the police (kettling and pushing, for example). The content of tweets, posts and blogs by participants at this point in the demonstration, that is, in the real time record of the journey along Western Road and Palmeira Square corresponds to these collected accounts. A similarity between the synchronous and non-synchronous and that between the different types of testimony written by different people in different contexts made it possible to assert the relevance and authenticity of each form.

Visual images, published and unpublished, were also considered as part of the record of the 24th and 30th demonstrations. They, too, were used to create timelines of locations and actions (it was, for example, possible to confirm the age of some participants because they were wearing school uniform or identify the location of a kettle by the names of the shops or shapes of the street architecture). Visual images also confirmed the correspondence between types of testimony (the pushing and punching of protestors on the route to Hove Town Hall, for example, is clearly discernible on YouTube video uploads).

A case study: *A Political Protest and the Police: Young People in Brighton. A report on student demonstrations in Brighton, 24th and 30th November 2010*

Political Protest and the Police: Young People in Brighton is a case study. Case studies are defined by the specificity of their focus: particular communities in particular geographical locations tend to be the subject of such a methodological approach.[12] The specific focus and particular subject of study generates a mass of detail allowing for an in-depth analysis. For example, *Political Protest and the Police* provides details of the appearance of protestors, the content of the placards they carry, the words that they chant, their social interactions and emotions as well as the estimates of numbers and

path of movement through Brighton. Case studies are often based on information gathered through ethnographic methods, including participant observation that generates and enables the collection of a textual record. This is the case here. Participant observation, where researchers are present the 'field' and are able to gather information from within the communities that they study permits them to make strong claims if not to know their research subjects, but to be able to translate their experiences with good understanding: accuracy combined with sensitivity. [13]

Internet research has tended to rely upon ethnographic methodologies with specific studies of digital activism, for example, proceeding through case studies.[14] However, the dispersed nature of internet communities has meant that an ethnographic method developed through the site specific case study is being extended and the 'field' constituted across multiple sites[15] (such as city streets and home screens). *Political Protest and the Police: Young People in Brighton* tracks between the sites of streets and screens but recognises that these sites are often in the same space: those who participated in the demonstrations of the 24th and 30th November brought their mobile phones and cameras with them. For this reason and because there is a single local focus, the report may still be considered a 'place-bounded' ethnography and a traditional site specific case study.

Social responsibility, Research Ethics and Independent Research

Social responsibility and Research Ethics
The public announcements of the study *Political Protest and the Police: Young People in Brighton* (invitations and letters) indicated what the researchers understood to be their the social responsibility: to represent disenfranchised younger people who had participated in the student demonstrations of 24th and 30th November and to examine their experience. As soon as the announcement of research was made and certainly from the moment that the first testimony was received in days immediately following, this social responsibility also became an ethical duty to the subjects of research: they must be treated in accordance with their expectations shaped by the descriptions of research. Anonymity must be maintained and information collected in order to describe student experiences of being policed and cannot be used for another purpose. In order to properly adhere to ethical guidelines, research involving human subjects must be completed according to plan. The relationship of trust between researcher and researched established at the outset of the research remains central to its integrity and continues to be important beyond publication.

Research Ethics and Independent Research

Sussex Police attempted to influence the researching of student experiences of policing on 24th and 30th November demonstrations in Brighton from outset of the project. On 15th December 2010, a matter of days after the initial 8th December letter to Sussex Police announcing the research, one signatory, received a call from Chief Superintendent Graham Bartlett noting that 'if there was some research/evidence gathering going on the police would be interested to be a part of it', that a letter would follow shortly and he 'was also suggesting a meeting (perhaps in the new year).' Two letters, one addressed to Peter Squires, Professor of Criminology in the School of Applied Social Sciences,

University of Brighton and the other to Dr Paddy Maguire, Head of the School of Humanities at the University of Brighton, were received in early January 2011, dated BLAH (Appendix 4). It should be noted that Head of the School of Humanities, was not a signatory to the 8th December letter but line manager for seven signatories.

At this point, *Young People, Political Demonstrations and the Police: social responsibility and research,* was initially a collaboration the University of Sussex and the University of Brighton with Louise Purbrick, Lucy Robinson and Peter Squires involved in shaping the research. The approach by Sussex Police to one Professor and one Head of School to negotiate being included as a subject of research rather than a recipient of its findings was an important turning point. It had profound implications for the way in which collaboration could continue and the research be completed. The collaboration between the Universities continued with Tom Akehurst joining Lucy Robinson and Louise Purbrick to continued the research into student experiences of policing as set out in the initial 8th December letter. The development of research and research relationships with Peter Squires halted following a meeting between he and the Brighton Division Commander on 27th January 2011. A 'complete firewall between the two halves of the developing "research"' was created in Peter Squires words. Lynda Measer then began working with him on research that was directed towards Sussex Police's documentation of 24th and 30th November demonstrations and included the establishment a schedule of interviews with police officers.

The approach by Sussex Police to be included in a research project that focuses upon the effect of their tactics and actions raises both ethical and political issues. An email trail between researchers indicates something of the concern of researchers to protect the integrity of a project aimed at understanding the student experience of being policed on 24th and 30th November and to ensure its completion in a form that corresponded to the way in which it was described to participants. These concerns included:

- the research questions, research context and dissemination plans had been defined and described in public and should not be disregarded
- the responsibility to delivering the planned research
- the relationship of trust between researchers and the young subjects of research
- the importance of children's voices being heard in their own right
- the possibility that Sussex Police may try to influence the results of the research ahead of its dissemination

They were set out in letter form in an email sent from Louise Purbrick on 26th January 2011, which reads:

> Good luck with your meeting with the police, Peter. I'm sure it is proper to listen and be flexible and so on but I wanted just to confirm how we've described our project so far to participants and the police. We have said we are compiling an account of the student experience (out of a sense of responsibility as adults on a student protest) in both the letter to the police and invites to both adults and students (adults have not really focussed on themselves but on what happened to children). We've also promised to place our findings in the public domain for all, including the police. I've copied the relevant sections of our letter just for

reference. My experience of this type of community research is we have to do what we say (I think we could have something ready in weeks, maybe three or four from now with proofing and image reproduction, I'm working on how to print youtube footage, which I think will be very interesting). This means that we can't incorporate police as eyewitnesses, say, at this point. The school children who have written would not expect their words to be 'tested' against those of police officers, for example. Once we have reported the research can develop in any number of ways, of course, and researching the police is an obvious development.

I am probably being over-cautious (most of my community research is based in Northern Ireland) but it is possible that the police are seeking to influence a research project before it has disseminated its results. I know you have much more experience of police and research than me, Peter, so forgive my intervention if it is all too obvious to you (see Appendix 5)

To alter the plan of research because a senior Sussex Police officer requested that we do so would meant relinquishing the social responsibility towards those whose experiences we were attempting to represent, interpret and understand. The impetus of the research as expressed in the invitations to student protestors and adult witnesses was the observation of unequal relationship of power (both physical, judicial, administrative and political) between children and the police. The research that developed into *Political Protest and the Police: Young People in Brighton* sought examine individual experiences of students in order to piece together, with some accuracy, certainty and sensitivity, a collective experience thus enabling use to consider the wider effects of the policing powers at protests and over young protestors; it was not to create another forum for those who can and do exercise these powers to justify their use.

It is perhaps too obvious to point out that Sussex Police are part of an institution of the state. Not to proceed with a research plan as announced in 8th December letter, would have, quite rightly, have been understood as compromise with a state authority and an inability to withstand political pressure. Academic research, particularly in the arts and humanities, has developed as practice of criticism addressed to the normalisation of inequalities of representation, identity, value, access and rights and how such inequalities are perpetuated by the institutions of state and spaces of civil society that may lie outside them (but always just within their reach). Such scrutiny requires academic independence and not just as an abstract political principle; it is a practical matter, one of academic practice. To be told what to research and where to look for experiences or problems worthy of research inevitably circumscribes any conclusions. Thus independent research (and academic freedom) is premised not only on an conventional understanding of right to express what we believe to be true but upon right to determine what we do, how or who to research and thus what we have the right to know.

A critical reception: the debate about method

Human rights and defence lawyers, researchers in the humanities, anti-cuts campaigners, student groups and individual students, have welcomed the *Political Protest and the Police: Young People in Brighton*; Sussex Police have not. A day prior to its publication on 7th April 2011, Chief Superintendent Graham Bartlett, Brighton and Hove City Commander, gave the following statement to *The Guardian* newspaper:

> We take very seriously our legal and moral duties to carefully balance people's right to peacefully protest with our duty to protect the public. We are extremely disappointed that the same balance has not been applied to the undertaking of this research. Despite our early offer to participate, the research team has not even acknowledged it, let alone taken it up. We have serious reservations about the methodology and academic rigour, given its quick publication and the researchers' reluctance to engage with a key party to the events.[16]

Whilst criticism from Sussex Police could be easily answered (the academic rigour of the report was questioned before report was read, the research was not conducted quickly but carried out intensively carried over a period of four months, Sussex Police were in fact being researched by other University of Brighton academics and their notion of balance is not the standard of good research rather a strategy developed by mainstream news media that tends to uphold existing inequalities of political and cultural representation therefore simply expressing existing power relations), the terms of their dismissal on the basis of academic scholarship and, particularly, upon the question of methodology is worth considering. Similar criticisms were made in a longer statement published in the Brighton newspaper, *The Argus,* on the day, 8th April 2011, following publication of *Political Protest and the Police: Young People in Brighton*:

> our key disappointment is the lack of balance that appears to have been applied. We understand and respect the need for academic independence, but we have serious reservations about the its methodology and academic rigour, given its quick publication, lack of peer review and the researchers' reluctance to engage with a key party to the events.

Leaving aside the question of what Sussex Police actually understand by the term 'peer review', the anonymous academic reporting process on unpublished and published work has never been a mechanism for weighing up the validity or accuracy of research but an attempt to measure its currency for academic audiences and academic markets. Although latterly it has been used to ensure that state funding follows research productivity, peer review is also now somewhat at odds with the demands to disseminate research directly to a public to ensure that it has an impact beyond the university. Nevertheless, peer review, whatever its relevance as a criticism and however it is actually understood, appears in Sussex Police's dismissal of the report because it is part of an academic vocabulary of which methodology is the more crucial term. The term methodology has travelled from appendices of monographs by university lecturers into the public sector via project management and its commercial evaluation. The terms of reference of an evaluation, often set to endorse or justify a specific and separately funded project, is called frequently called a methodology whereas the terms of reference are nothing more than the focus of research or subject of inquiry. It is possible that a notion of research methods has been muddled with research subjects but regardless of the meaning of methodology to Sussex Police its use indicates an attempt to undermine

the academic creditability of the research upon which *Political Protest and the Police: Young People in Brighton* was based because it did not involve them. Their complaint that researchers demonstrated a 'reluctance to engage' with them made in *The Guardian* on line and repeated in *The Argus* is the most significant remark. At the beginning of protests on 24th November, Chief Inspector Laurence Taylor tweeted: ' London demo seeing some disorder. Sussex protestors engaging with police and all is peaceful'.[17] The route covered in the first part of the demonstration, a one and half mile walk from a Sixth Form College to gardens in front of a Brighton University building was agreed between official protest organisers and Sussex Police. Engagement with the police is the method used to distinguish demonstrations and demonstrators that have police permission and those that take place without making any request to protest. Engagement is used to separate the good from the bad protestor; the good protestor who seeks to be allowed to demonstrate and accepts that the police may determine the terms of protest, including time, place, direction, dress, speech) and those that do not recognise that protest has limitations or reject these limitations and believe that a protest is not a protest if it can only take a prescribed form. The attempt by Sssex Police to dismiss the findings of *Political Protest and the Police: Young People in Brighton* because they found fault with its methodology is an extension of the logic of engagement. They have assumed powers to interfere in the practices of opposition, including academic research.

[1] R. F. Ellen (ed), *Ethnographic Research: A Guide to General Conduct*. Ed. R. F. Ellen, London: Academic Press, 1984; *Ethical Research Guidelines for Staff and Students, Faculty of Arts and Architecture, University of Brighton*
http://staffcentral.brighton.ac.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/staffcentral/doc007184.pdf (accessed 4.12.10). See also, Healing Through Remembering, *Ethical Principles – Storytelling and Narrative Work*, Belfast, Healing Through Remebering, 2009.
[2] Healing Through Remembering Storytelling Sub Group, 'What is Storytelling? In Gráinne Kelly, *Conference Report Storytelling is the Vehicle?* Belfast: Healing Through Remembering, 2005, p.12.
[3] Gráinne Kelly, *Conference Report Storytelling is the Vehicle?* Belfast: Healing Through Remembering, 2005.
[4] Giorgio Agamben, Remnants of Auschwitz: the Witness and the Archive, New York: Zine Books, 1999; Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004; Edward Said, *The World, the Text and the Critic*, London: Vintage, 1999.
[5] Mass Observation, 'The Mass Observation Project'
http://www.massobs.org.uk/mass_observation_project.html (accessed 17.7.11)
[6] Sheridan, Dorothy, Brian Street, and David Bloome. *Writing Ourselves: Mass Observation and Literacy Practices*. New Jersey: Hampton Press, 2000; Louise Purbrick, *The Wedding Present: Domestic Life Beyond Consumption, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007*, see especially, 'Methods: Mass Observation' pp.151-172.
[7] Joss Hands, *@ is for Activism: Dissent, Resistance and Rebellion in Digital Culture*, London: Pluto Press, 2010; Mary Joyce (ed) *Digital Activism Decoded: The New Mechanics of Change*, New York and Amsterdam: International Debate Educational Association, 2010; See also the use of indymedia as a method of data collection as well as a subject of academic investigation in Natalie Pitimson's doctoral research: http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2006/08/346759.html?c=on (accessed 1.2.11).
[8] 'Liveblog: Brighton Student Protests'
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