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Using 'the body' as an 'instrument of research': kimch'i and pavlova

Robyn Longhurst*, Elsie Ho and Lynda Johnston***

*Department of Geography, Tourism and Environmental Planning, University of Waikato, Hamilton, Aotearoa New Zealand

Email: robynl@waikato.ac.nz

**Migration Research Group, University of Waikato, Hamilton, Aotearoa New Zealand

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Often researchers position themselves in relation to race, age and gender, but the body is less often discussed as an actual 'instrument of research'. We aim to extend thinking on this point by reflecting on a project we conducted on migrant women and food in New Zealand. We present a vignette as an example of how we used our bodies as 'instruments of research' at a 'shared lunch' attended by new migrants from a range of different countries. At the lunch some combined on their plates spicy dishes such as kimch'i (fermented vegetables) and sweet dishes such as pavlova (a meringue dessert). For others this combination prompted feelings of disgust. We conclude that the body is a primary tool through which all interactions and emotions filter in accessing research subjects and their geographies.

Key words: *New Zealand, food, migrants, disgust, bodies, embodied knowing*

Introduction

In a progress report entitled 'Qualitative methods: touchy, feely, look-see?', Mike Crang questions 'whether methods often derided for being somehow soft and "touchy-feely" have in fact been rather limited in touching and feeling' (2003, 494). Crang continues that although geographers have over the past few years begun to include 'the body' in their research topics 'these ideas have had a muted impact in terms of thinking through qualitative research practice' (Crang 2003, 499). We agree with Crang that in much qualitative research the bodies of researchers tend to become a kind of 'ghostly absence' (2003, 499). Researchers sometimes position themselves in relation to race, age, gender and so on, but other aspects of body–space relations such as smells, tastes, gestures, reactions, clothing, glances and touches often slip away unnoticed and/or undocumented.

There is now an enormous amount of critical geographic scholarship on the body and the various ways in which bodies and spatiality are closely entwined (Probyn 2003) and yet it has taken some time for these arguments to extend into the realm of methods and methodology. Bodies are always located (Longhurst 2001; Nast and Pile 1998) and this includes in 'the field'. Bodies are also always interpellated by a range of ideological practices and this includes research practices. Researchers and participants perform different embodied subjectivities (sometimes contradictory) in different spaces. Bodies produce space and knowledge, and space and knowledge produce bodies. Being and knowing cannot be easily separated. There is less of a distinction between ontology and epistemology than might have earlier been assumed.

In this article we build on Crang's ideas on qualitative methods and the embodied subjectivities of both researchers and participants (not that these are always mutually exclusive categories) by reflecting

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on a project on 'migrant women and food' in Hamilton, Aotearoa New Zealand. We wanted to embark upon a project that allowed us to think not just about 'cultural diversity', but about 'culturally embodied difference'. We decided, therefore, to examine the lives of some migrant women through the lenses of food and eating. Focusing on food and eating (in both a metaphoric and real sense) has enabled us to understand in more depth what it means to embody cultural difference, but it has also enabled us to understand in more depth the process of research. The aim of this article then is to probe what it means to use 'the body' as 'an instrument of research' (Crang 2003) or as a tool to gain insights into research subjects and their geographies.

The article is divided into four sections. The first section reviews recent geographical research on qualitative research method/ologies. It also points to the importance of recent geographical research on emotions. Crang suggests that 'Rethinking notions of feeling' is a way of probing further the problematic 'issue of the dominance of certain forms of vision in the discipline' (2003, 494). The second section provides some background information on the research project on migrant women and food. The project began in 2006. We are currently 'writing up' research articles. It aimed to use the subject of food to understand further the relationship between identity, place and power relations for migrant women in Hamilton, New Zealand. Third, we focus on a specific research encounter that illustrates how the researcher's and participants' bodies were used as 'instruments of research'. The encounter was a 'shared lunch' at a migrant resource centre with new migrants (men and women) who were attending a course that aimed to assist them to find employment. The article concludes that geographers could benefit from paying more explicit attention to bodily performances when undertaking research. Recognising all our senses – tactile, olfactory, taste, auditory and visual (see Rodaway 1994) – has the potential to enrich understanding of body–space relationships.

Method/ologies

Over the past few years there has emerged a rich array of work on qualitative method/ologies commonly used in geography. Authors have paid attention to focus groups and group interviews (Cameron 2000; Crang 2001; Longhurst 2003), autobiography and authoethnography (Butz 2001; Moss 2001), interviewing (Dunn 2000; England 2001), participant observation (Dowler 2001; Kearns 2000), reading texts (Forbes 2000) and working in different cultures (Smith 2003). Numerous edited books on research method/ologies have been published, including Melanie Limb and Claire Dwyer (2001) *Qualitative methodologies for geographers*, Pamela Shurmer-Smith (2002) *Doing cultural geography*, Ian Hay (2000) *Qualitative research methods in human geography*, Nicholas Clifford and Gill Valentine (2003) *Key methods in geography* and Pamela Moss (2001) *Placing autobiography in geography* and (2002) *Feminist geography in practice*. Some authored books such as Keith Hoggart *et al.* (2002) *Researching human geography* have also been published. Method/ology is currently a 'hot topic' in the discipline (for a review of work on qualitative method/ologies see Crang's reports in *Progress in Human Geography* (2002 2003 2005) and Davies and Dwyer (2007)). One could be tempted to think that there is little left to say about generating and analysing qualitative data and yet one important gap remains. There is still relatively little information on using the body as a tool in the research process. The work that has been carried out on this topic, however, is useful and worth reviewing.

Nearly a decade ago Heidi Nast drew on examples from her ethnographic research in Kano, Nigeria to rethink the notion of reflexivity arguing 'In metaphorical and material terms . . . [it] is about allowing our bodies to become places which "field" difference' (1998, 94). Nast built on Cindi Katz's (1994) idea that the geographical 'field' is not a discretely bounded area but rather defined through our research questions, through a politics of place, and through socio-spatial relations. Nast argues that the field is not only 'potentially everywhere and nowhere' but it is also 'every *body*' (1998, 111; italics in original). Similarly, in 2000 Felix Driver introduced a special issue on 'Field-work in geography' explaining the field is 'produced in situ through a variety of embodied spatial practices' (2000, 267). Hayden Lorimer and Nick Spedding (2002) encouraged contributors to a special issue on 'Putting philosophies of geography into practice' to include the seemingly mundane details about research. The issue aimed to examine 'aspects of disciplinary practice that tend to be portrayed as mundane or localised, but that represent the very routines of *what we do*' (Lorimer and Spedding 2002, 227; italics in original). John-David Dewsbury and Simon Naylor argue it is not easy to imagine the field 'without the performance of bodies and materialities to define its boundaries' (2002, 256).

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Several other geographers have also recognised the importance of the body to the field and the research process. Reflecting on her first-ever day of field research, Hester Parr (2001) explains she felt nervous – her 'stomach churned'. Similarly, Ben Malbon (1999) in the preface to his book *Clubbing*, describes carrying out participant observation in very embodied terms. He talks about a visit to The Tunnel Club in the summer of 1997 in London on a Saturday night and reports on what he wore, what he drank, who he met, the music he listened and danced to, the atmosphere at the Club as the night progressed and the journey home at 4.30 am. In a similar vein, Philip Crang (1994) draws on his embodied experiences of being a waiter at Smoky Joe's restaurant in southeast England. More recently Alison Bain and Catherine Nash (2006) reflected on what it means to embody research when they carried out ethnographic work at a queer bathhouse event in Toronto, Canada. They describe preparing their bodies to attend the bathhouse (deciding what to wear), positioning their bodies within the spaces of the bathhouse (deciding where to stand or sit) and interacting through their bodies during the event.

Clearly we are not the first to think about the ways in which bodies – comportment, eating, facial expressions, speech acts – 'matter' in research encounters. In addition to the geographers mentioned above, many anthropologists have engaged with this issue. A useful example can be seen in Don Kulick and Margaret Willson's (1995) edited collection *Taboo*, which focuses on the ethnographer and sexuality in anthropological fieldwork. There is, however, still plenty of scope for more sustained reflection on the ways in which our own and others' bodily performances are written into projects. This can be a challenging task. Eric Laurier and Chris Philo ask 'Is the encounter at the heart of fieldwork ultimately unspeakable?' (2006, 353). Fully understanding and representing ourselves as researchers, the researched and the research context is difficult, maybe even impossible. However, Dewsbury and Naylor suggest that one way of getting at how bodies are 'agents that . . . negotiate the world' (2002, 257) is to consider emotion – an area that is fast gaining attention in the discipline of geography.

Joyce Davidson and Christine Milligan (2004, 524) claim that geographers are starting to feel a 'welling up'. This emerging interest in emotional geographies has brought an increased recognition that bodies are lived and experienced through emotions (Anderson and Smith 2001; Laurier and Parr 2000). This work builds on the substantial contributions of embodied geographies. This is perhaps not surprising given that 'our first and foremost, most immediate and intimately *felt* geography is the body, the site of emotional experience and expression *par excellence*' (Davidson and Milligan 2004, 524; italics in original). Emotions are not just tied to the body, however; they are also bound up with wider structures and processes (Bondi 2005; Thein 2005). The consideration of emotions seems crucial in any attempt to understand how 'lives are lived and societies made' (Anderson and Smith 2001, 7). Different places and bodies are imbued with different emotional and affective geographies (Tolia-Kelly 2006). To neglect feelings and emotions, therefore, is to exclude key relations through which places and bodies become meaningful. It is important to consider the emotional processes of *doing* research and of *being* researchers.

The project

Food and eating (in both a metaphoric and real sense) are useful lenses through which to examine the impacts of transnational migration (Ashley *et al.* 2004; Kershen 2002; Watson and Caldwell 2005). After all, it is not just what we eat that makes us who we are, it is also *where* we eat (Bell and Valentine 1997; Cook and Harrison 2003 2007). Food can help people feel at home, it can prompt them to miss home, it can be a bridge to a new home and it can provoke racism (Narayan 1995; Oum 2005). The aim of our research was to use the subject of food to understand further the relationship between identity, place and power relations for migrant women (including refugees, international students and temporary workers).

The research aimed to help fill a gap in the migration and feminist socio-cultural geographical literature by developing new knowledge about the experiences of migrant women in New Zealand. Food in many cultures is important to women, since it is often women who are primarily responsible for purchasing, preparing and cooking food for families on a daily basis (Burns 2004). We focused mainly on the meaning of food prepared and consumed at home (Kneafsey and Cox 2002; Law 2001). The burgeoning of ethnic food purveyors and restaurants is an important social and economic phenomenon in many countries, but in this research we were interested in the roles played by food in women's

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domestic lives and spaces (Salih 2003; Valentine 1999). It is these hidden, private geographies of women and food that have, to this point, remained largely unexamined in New Zealand and yet it is migrant women (and children and young people) who often have the greatest need for health, education and social services. This article, however, focuses not on the research 'outcomes', which are still being prepared, but on the methodological process used in the project.

We thought long and hard about what kind of method/ology would be most appropriate for this project. This research was informed by feminist, poststructuralist, geographical theory on 'the body' and we wanted methods that sat comfortably with this theoretical perspective. Finally we devised a research programme that involved in the first instance seeking guidance from a range of 'service providers' including Refugee Resettlement, and Home Tutors (who visit migrant women in their homes in order to assist them with learning English). Next we set up visits with 11 migrant women in their homes in Hamilton in order to talk with them, and/or assist with the preparation and cooking of food that is significant to them in some way.

Hamilton is New Zealand's fourth largest city and has a population of approximately 130 000. The city's population has been transformed over the past 10 years, especially by immigration of new residents from 'non-traditional' source countries such as countries in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. In 2006 Hamilton's population was approximately made up of Pākehā or European (65.3%), Māori (19.9%), Asian (10.6%), Pacific peoples (4.2%) and Middle Eastern, Latin American and African (1.5%).[1] There are many 'ethnic restaurants' in the city, including Mexican, Thai, Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Middle Eastern and Italian. Participants in our study came from a range of countries, including South Africa, Singapore, Mexico, Korea, India, Iraq, Somalia, Japan, Indonesia, Thailand and Hong Kong. They ranged in age from approximately mid-20s to 60s. Due to space constraints it is not possible to talk about the method/ology of the project in its entirety here. Instead, we focus on just one experience that in memory stood out as helping us to crystallise some thoughts about using the body as an 'instrument of research'. The experience was a 'shared lunch' with a group of approximately 15 new migrants (the group included men) who were enrolled in a course designed to help them find employment in New Zealand.

Sharing lunch: disgust and desire

The lunch was held at the Waikato Migrant Resource Centre (WMRC) in Hamilton, New Zealand. Only one of us (Robyn), accompanied by a research assistant, was able to attend the lunch. Several staff from WMRC also ate with the group. Students, the tutor and staff from WMRC came from a range of countries including England, Iraq, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Vietnam, Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Russia, Madagascar and New Zealand. Robyn and research assistant Annika came from New Zealand (Pākehā or white European) and Germany (white European) respectively. Each of us took along a dish from our own country. On arrival our dishes were taken by one of the students – a Korean woman – who placed them on a large oblong table. The tutor – a New Zealand woman of Dutch ancestry – advised the students that the dishes needed to be divided into savoury and sweet. The Korean students seemed uncertain as to why this was the case but attempted to segregate the 'mains' and 'desserts'. Dishes brought along to share at the lunch included various rice and clear noodle dishes, boiled eggs soaked in tea, meat balls, spicy sheep stomach, kimch'i (Korean fermented seasonal vegetable dish), dumplings, and a moist bread dish amongst other things. There was also pavlova (meringue dessert named after the ballet dancer Anna Pavlova – both New Zealand and Australia claim the dessert as their own), a German-style cake, brandy snaps filled with cream, and cheesecake. Coke was available and drunk from glass coffee mugs (as can be seen in Plate 1). Guests collected a crockery plate from a stack of dinner plates that sat at one end of the table and helped themselves to a buffet-style lunch. Some guests at lunch ate with chopsticks, others with a knife and fork.

The researcher (Robyn) placed a small amount of food from each of the dishes on her plate. Some dishes such as noodles and dumplings were familiar, but others such as spicy sheep stomach were not. She was not keen to try the spicy sheep stomach, but felt somewhat obliged, given the nature of the research project, to move beyond her 'food comfort zone'. She was aware that some of the diners were watching her choose her food. After taking a little bit of everything, Robyn sat down beside the tutor, a WMRC staff member, and across from several trainees. She noted that the tutor also had some spicy sheep stomach on her plate and asked her if she had tried it yet. The tutor replied 'oh, is that what that is? No,

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Plate 1 Shared lunch with new migrants at the Waikato Migrant Resource Centre, Hamilton, New Zealand
Source: Photograph by Robyn Longhurst

I haven't tried it and I don't think I want to.' She then asked a trainee across from her if she would please take it off her plate. The trainee obliged, putting it on her own plate. The tutor continued to eat her meal, praising many of the dishes for their tastiness.

Robyn found most of the food on her plate to be delicious, although a couple of the dishes were not to her liking. The kimch'i was 'hotter' than she would usually eat, but it was 'tolerable'. The sheep stomach was chewy and swallowing it made her feel nauseous. When asked by a WMRC staff member if she liked it, she said she liked the spicy taste but was not accustomed to the texture. He replied that the dish was 'tough' and had not been cooked long enough. A completely honest answer to the WMRC staff member's question might have been 'no and it makes me feel sick', but as a guest at the lunch this response seemed inappropriate and rude. It felt like there was a risk that such a blunt response might be interpreted as 'no and you make me feel sick', as though there might be some unspoken and unexplained slippage between the food and the people at the lunch who had bought along the food. Robyn, after each mouthful of sheep stomach, took a mouthful of coke. The taste and texture of the coke was familiar and helped quell the churning in her stomach and lump in her throat. She finished her small serving of sheep stomach and then moved on to eating other foods that she found more appetising. Some people at the lunch did leave food on their plate, but Robyn felt that her plate was under scrutiny from other diners. It seemed important to some of the migrants at the lunch that she liked the food.

At least half of the group at the lunch, especially those from Asia, placed both savoury and sweet food on their plates together. Others ate savoury food first and then placed sweet food on the same plate despite the fact that most plates contained the residue from dishes such as sheep stomach and kimch'i. Robyn, Annika, the tutor and a couple of other staff members from WMRC used a 'clean' plate for dessert. For some, mainly but not entirely from European countries, mixing savoury, non-sweet and spicy foods with dessert crossed a cultural line engendering feelings of unease and disgust. It was not so much what was said about combining particular foods (after all, WMRC is a space that welcomes and indeed promotes cultural difference and people at the lunch were affirming of the food rather than critical) but about body language. Maybe because Robyn felt some discomfort with combining the non-sweet and sweet dishes she became attuned to others' reactions, such as a crinkling of the nose, a

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screwing up of the face and turning away from the plate. While dishes such as kimch'i or pavlova may be 'acceptable', or even considered delicious, by themselves or with other savoury/spicy/sweet foods, for some when combined they became 'matter out of place' (Douglas 1966, 35) and invoked disgust.

This story about combining kimch'i and pavlova in one sense is symbolic. It represents Koreans and other migrants coming to New Zealand and bringing their highly valued and complex food traditions with them (see Walraven (2002) on kimch'i, Korean identity and globalisation and Tam (2002) on bringing Hong Kong style Yumcha to Australia). Food from 'home' (or as close as one can get) becomes part of day-to-day life in a new place. Foods and the cultural practices that surround them in the 'homeland' do not remain neatly intact but merge with food and the cultural practices in the 'host country'. To put it metaphorically, kimch'i and pavlova are combined.

At the shared lunch, kimch'i and pavlova were literally combined on the plates of at least half of the guests. While some at lunch didn't see this as unusual (and may even have found it to be a tasty combination) others, including Robyn, were repelled by the idea of combining the two dishes. This vignette about combining kimch'i and pavlova illustrates very 'real' bodily reactions can come from deep within during the research process. When sharing food and drink with research participants, one wants to be 'agreeable', have a healthy regard for a range of cuisines, be open to cultural difference and 'cosmopolitan' (see Hannerz 1990), but pretending to like food raises the spectre of insincerity. Clearly there are ethical issues that need unravelling here, but there are also issues about using the body as an 'instrument of research'.

Eating sheep stomach, and others combining sheep stomach, noodles, boiled eggs, kimch'i and pavlova together engendered in Robyn feelings of unease, disgust, possibly even abjection. Donovan (2007) notes that it can be the idea, smell, taste or even texture of some foods that can prompt feelings of abjection. Some common examples include seaweed, insects, tapioca, cow tongue, testicles, octopus, gizzards, sheep brains, pig trotters, chicken feet, necks and giblets (see Donovan 2007; de Garine 2001). Julia Kristeva (1982) discusses three broad categories of abjection. One of these is abjection toward food and thus toward bodily incorporation. The social significance of the abject is that it functions to constitute the 'proper' social body, one that conforms to but does not exceed in any way cultural expectations (see Grosz 1994, 193). In Aotearoa New Zealand, the 'proper' social body separates the main course from dessert.

It did not feel appropriate to discuss these issues at the shared lunch itself, but in subsequent cooking sessions and interviews with migrant women we took the opportunity, in the more intimate setting of migrant women's homes, to talk about Robyn's experiences at the shared lunch. In particular, we promoted conversation about combining savoury and sweet dishes and the way in which this might engender disgust in some people. We discussed cultural differences around separating meals into courses and the possibility that the trainees at the lunch did not want to make more dirty dishes by using two plates (something that we hadn't previously considered). Some of the migrant women also talked about what food made their stomachs churn. Many did not like vegemite (a dark brown savoury spread made of yeast extract) that many 'kiwis' and Australians enjoy spread on sandwiches, toast and cracker biscuits.

Although it is now permissible, even desirable, within critical discourse to acknowledge something of ourselves and our political locatedness in the production of our research (as complex as this is – see Rose 1997), it is still only permissible to acknowledge and reflect on some things about ourselves – things we are supposed to unproblematically know and understand such as our gender, ethnicity and/or age. Many things remain off limits because they are too private, too 'inappropriate' or too messy to include our written research (Longhurst 2001). Feeling like gagging when we eat others' food is one of those things that is likely to get written out of the research and yet it is exactly the bodily reaction and emotion that needs to be written in.

Some might argue that things such as feelings of unease, disgust and abjection belong in the category of the everyday, prosaic and banal, since these are common experiences for most of us. Perhaps they do. But banal does not necessarily imply that something is intellectually unimportant. The banal should not be sidelined from research. In discussing our own bodies as researchers and our participants' bodies, we can begin to establish relationships. We situate ourselves not as autonomous, rational academics, but as people who sometimes experience irrational emotions including during the course of research. Emotions matter. This enables geographers to begin to talk from an embodied place, rather than from a place on high.

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Iris Young, drawing on the work of Joel Kovel (1984), argues that racism takes many forms. One form is a covert kind of racism that manifests itself as 'avoidances, aversion, and separations enacted by the privileged in relation to the oppressed' (Young 1990, 142). Kovel calls this 'aversive racism'. Aversive racism, he says, digs into the preoedipal psyche and seeks to construct some subjects as pure and others as defiled. Building on this thinking, Young claims that racism and other oppressions in contemporary society tend to be structured by these kinds of reactions of aversion. Alan Han argues that food consumption functions to create a distinction between 'raced-abject-Other bodies, and clean white eaters' (2007, 361).

In recognising our own reactions as researchers and as people with particular food traditions to the mixing of kimch'i and pavlova, we were able to use our bodies as an integral part of the research process. We were forced to recognise our own subject positions as Pākehā, white and European and our own feelings of unease, disgust, abjection and fear. Bodily reactions, gestures, physical presence, the smell of bodies, tone of voice and comportment all make a difference to the research process. Sensory perceptions and emotions provoke feelings of like and dislike, desire and fear, acceptance and oppression.

Kelvin Low (2005) used 'narrative interviews' to understand more about how people regard smell in their everyday life experiences. He asked a number of respondents in Singapore 'Tell me about your experiences of smell'. Low explains that one of the most prominent themes that emerged in the research was how 'social others', particularly racial groups such as 'Indian', 'Chinese' and 'Malay', were judged in accordance to their smell. For example, one of Low's respondents, Khaliza, explains:

> it's very hard for me to like differentiate between smell of Indian food and smell of Indians, because to me they are both moving into one. Usually the smell of Indians right, it's associated with their food isn't it? Like they eat of lot of curry. . . . So that's why they smell like that. Strong. How would I describe the place (the Tekka Centre in 'Little India' in Singapore)? Er . . . personally I . . . don't like it, because . . . it's really like . . . overwhelming . . . and they sell things which I don't fancy and . . . it stinks. To put it brutally, they are very smelly. I don't like it. (Low 2005, 410; ellipses in original)

Recognising and attempting to understand our research participants' and our own reactions to embodied difference is important. It propelled us to think more about our plural, shifting and deeply complex and contradictory feelings towards others. We do not mean that this would in some way be therapeutic (although it may well be), but rather that there is a political imperative in recognising the Other within the Self.

In this research, having invited participants to prepare and/or cook a meal that is significant to *them*, for *us*, meant we have all had to wrestle with the possible implications of refusing food or gagging when we attempt to eat that which we find offensive (see Han (2007) who examines the tensions between food as benign symbol of multiculturalism and as abjection). Disgust and abjection are not necessarily voluntary responses. Bodily reactions to certain (Other) foods and bodies are sometimes unconscious. Often we feel shame at our own feelings of disgust (Probyn 2000). Elspeth Probyn argues that it is important that we recognise our feelings of disgust and shame when confronting that which we perceive as Other because this might pave the way to understanding and acceptance.

While it may seem easier in some ways to use the body as 'an instrument of research' when carrying out work on food, we think it is possible and indeed desirable to do this for generating a range of different qualitative data. In the past we have each engaged in research on a range of topics including sun-tanning, gay pride parades, fat bodies, pregnancy, mothering, mental health of migrants and 'astronaut' families. In all these projects, bodily performances – our own bodies and our participants' bodies – that occurred during the course of research were significant in some ways and told us more than the transcribed interviews.

Conclusion

As this research project on migrant women and food unfolded, we found ourselves thinking more and more about our own bodies and our participants' bodies as 'instruments of research'. As we shared food with migrants we were forced to confront what it means to learn through our bodies. Sometimes we found our interviewees' culinary creations to be delicious, other times our bodies involuntarily gagged at smells and tastes that we were unaccustomed to. We are not claiming that we are uncovering some kind of truth that is grounded in our embodied experiences of this research, but we want to examine what embodied senses such as smell and

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taste can add to our understanding of relationships between people and places.

This research to date has taught us as much about our own embodied selves as it has about the participants. Perhaps the same can be said for all research, but in this case confronting our own feelings of disgust with certain foods, food combinations, and culinary practices when we prepared ourselves to not just figuratively but also literally ingest Otherness has caused some anxious moments. Any understanding of preparing, cooking and eating food, and what these things mean to us, is informed by and inseparable from our knowledge of its cultural construction and representation.

It is now well established that that the gendered nature of knowledge production and academic scholarship has privileged rational thought over 'irrational' emotionality (Bennett 2004; Longhurst 2001; Rose 1997). The marginalisation of emotion has been

> part of a gender politics of research in which detachment, objectivity and rationality have been valued, and implicitly masculinized, while engagement, subjectivity, passion and desire have been devalued, and frequently feminized. (Anderson and Smith 2001, 7)

The discipline of geography has tended to 'deny, avoid, suppress or downplay its emotional entanglements' (Bondi *et al.* 2005, 1). Yet clearly emotions affect the ways in which we perceive and react to people and places (Anderson and Smith 2001).

This research on migrant women and food has opened up us, as researchers, to a different kind of knowing, one which is based on a full range on senses rather than just on eyes or ears. The 'geography of disgust' that we at times experienced is a kind of unspeakable geography and yet it is very 'real'. Feelings of disgust at certain foods or food combinations are difficult to articulate in words. Our feelings made us question our own silences and constructions of Otherness. This research has been about much more than what is said. It has been about research as an embodied process.

Gail Davies and Claire Dwyer say 'it is hard, though perhaps not impossible, to imagine what a radically new form of qualitative research practice might look like' (2007, 257). We agree. The same suite of qualitative methods – such as interviews, focus groups and ethnographies – are still being used but there are changes in the way they are being conceptualised and executed. Davies and Dwyer (2007, 257) argue that related to this there are transformations in the way these methods are being employed to make claims to understanding and engaging with people and places. Increasingly, academic writing is articulating 'the preoccupations and passions of its authors' (Davidson *et al.* 2005, 11). Singular, clear, rational arguments are no longer the goal (see Law (2004) on 'mess in social science'). Like Isabel Dyck, we want to think more about embodied researchers 'whose interpretations tell a particular story of others' lives and embodiment' (2002, 235). Questions about embodiment, reflexivity, agency, performativity, emotion and affect are increasingly making their way on to geographers' and other social scientists' research agendas. We look forward to reading more about research as an embodied practice and about researchers using their bodies as 'instruments of research'.

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Note

1 The percentages for all ethnic groups added together can exceed 100 per cent, as individuals have been able to self-identify with more than one ethnic group in New Zealand's censuses since 1981.

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