

FIELDWORK IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH (Lunn 2013)

CHAPTER 13

**UNSETTLING THE ETHICAL INTERVIEWER: EMOTIONS, PERSONALITY,
ETHICS AND THE INTERVIEW**

**EXPERIENCES FROM FIELDWORK ON ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
IN TANZANIA**

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‘I’m not happy with the migration situation. It is high time that the government move from socialism to capitalism. I blame socialism for these problems. I had a farm here. The leaders here told me to give the land to others... But if there was capitalism I could have had a big farm and I could be making money. So socialism and the government caused these problems... If people have money they could use solar power but it seems to be very costly. We can use coal but to use it, well it seems very flammable, so we should get experts to show us how. In 1959 it

did not rain for two years but one river never dried. So if this river never dries out how is it possible that we do not have electricity? The government should use the waterfalls for hydroelectric power.’

To be honest I am getting a bit fed up with his [the interviewee] quite arrogant attitude. I ask David (my research assistant and translator): ‘Why does he think they don’t have hydroelectric power then?’ David translates, and I sense he approves of the fact that I have finally interjected the rambling blame directed at the government, socialism, experts, (whoever!) as well as the suggestion of hydro-electricity which seems, to me, to be out of touch with local needs.

The man replies: ‘The main reason is because of bureaucracy, and possibly because we don’t have any MPs who are influential in the government from this area...’ And so it continues...

This extract from my interview notes above illustrates one instance of how, during a 45 minute interview with a male farmer in rural Tanzania, I developed a distinct feeling of dislike for the participant. I felt as if the interviewee had been patronizing and talking down to me, and that he was utilizing his position as an authority figure in the community in order to do so. In return, this made me feel frustrated, angry and, in many ways, ‘negative’ towards him. This attitude may not seem completely apparent in the words he spoke, yet I still had this distinct feeling based on what he said, how he said it, and how he related to me and David. Such an emotional reaction from the interviewer

may seem inappropriate, unscholarly and unethical. In this chapter I will examine this confluence of emotion, personality, ethics, and the interview.

The interview took place as part of a doctoral research project on local environmental education in Tanzania. A significant part of my fieldwork involved interviewing local residents across three field sites about their perceptions of local environmental problems, and the incident above came from an interview in one of these villages. As a rule, the residents of the village held what might be considered ‘traditional’ values, particularly in terms of gender roles, and as such men dominated decision-making in families. Older men in particular were highly respected, and tended to dictate the public affairs of the village.

Thus in my experience, older men assuming a domineering role was not uncommon, but I must add that the vast majority (if not all) of my interviews with older men in the village were very pleasant and insightful experiences. However, this particular instance was somehow different. This interview was in fact with two people: a man (aged 50--60) and his son (aged 20--30). At the outset, the older man talked over the younger and the latter ‘shut down’ for the remainder of the interview, deferring to his father, who appeared to have put him in his place. He then proceeded to discuss the environmental problems in the area but in such a way that appeared to ‘blame’ just about everyone but himself for these problems. His manner was very assertive; I felt as if he were delivering a lesson or a sermon to us. His ideas about what ‘should be done’ about these problems seemed to me somewhat ‘out of touch’ with village realities.

Not only did my negative emotions towards the man accumulate during the interview, but I also had a compelling sense that my research assistant (a local to the area but educated to university level) was experiencing a similarly negative series of emotions towards the man. This was later confirmed. On concluding the interview and walking back to our house, David stated that: ‘Yes, he is an arrogant man! He is somewhat a powerful man in this village so he can say these things. But I am not sure about his ideas, they seem crazy!’ We laughed about it. Our dislike for him was largely mutual. My sense of unease at my feelings of dislike was quelled for the time being by the sense of sharing these feelings with David.

The uneasy feeling came back to haunt me. I began to wonder *why* I felt bad about the negative emotions I expressed towards the participant. My conclusion: I had broken the rules, the ethical standards by which researchers conducting their line of business in the Global South are supposed to abide by. My pre-fieldwork reading had suggested that in order to redress the power imbalances inherent in this situation, one must first of all be aware of one’s positionality vis-à-vis the ‘other’, then attempt to redress these imbalances of power through reciprocity, reflexivity and, where possible, through facilitating forms of empowerment. I (perhaps naïvely) interpreted these research ethics into a personal ethical and moral code of wishing to sympathize and positively respond to participants, perhaps to feel some form of solidarity with them. I wished to take a stance which aligned with the needs and aspirations of those that I would study.

At the time I dismissed delving deeper into deconstructing this episode, rejecting an analysis of the incident based, conceivably, on my lack of experience. It is only later

reflection and further reading which led me to consider how such emotional, personal encounters during interviews may in fact deconstruct the ethical and moral imperatives which are in some cases implicit, but in other cases explicit, within the development literature. My discomfort was partly emotional and personal, as much as it was entangled with relations of power.

ETHICS FOR DEVELOPMENT INTERVIEWS: POWER AND POSITIONALITY?

The contemporary literature on ethical approaches to development fieldwork, particularly concerning the act of interviewing participants, largely eschews considering how emotion and personality impact on the interview in favor of discussing the imbalance of power relations between the researchers and researched.

This concern for the imbalances of power, and the need to redress these imbalances through commitment to those who participate, has, for geographers, a lineage in both feminist and Marxist geography (Valentine 2005). Feminist scholars have highlighted how a researchers positionality (their gender, sexuality, race, nationality, age, economic status etc.) may influence the 'knowledge' produced in and through an interview (Scheyvens and Storey 2003, Scott *et al.* 2005, Momsen 2006), a claim which might be understood as part of a broader recognition in the social sciences that scholars are never 'neutral' or 'unbiased' (Moser 2008).

In development research these insights became prominent in the 1990s. England (1994), examining the 'endemic' exploitation in development fieldwork, questioned how the voices of 'others' could be incorporated into writing without colonizing them and reinforcing patterns of domination. At a similar time, post-development writers (such as Escobar 1995) illustrated how development discourses constructed by Western researchers served to legitimate Western experts, undermining the voices of local people. These critiques prompted a crisis of legitimacy for Western researchers, who were forced to reconsider their role in the research process and how they used particular methods, for fear of reinforcing and justifying unequal power relations which are arguably embedded within colonial histories (Scheyvens and Leslie 2000). Various approaches to tackling these problems have emerged, notably some Westerners withdrawing from research altogether, with others adopting a cultural relativist approach which privileges the knowledge and understandings of those from the Global South (Scheyvens and Storey 2003). Both positions have been critiqued, particularly for romanticizing those 'voices' from the Global South, and for justifying an abdication of responsibility for the Western researcher (Sidaway 1992, Scheyvens and Leslie 2000).

Most textbook guides for researchers in development studies have settled on one response, which is to adopt methodologies and ethics which promote reciprocal relationships and facilitate empowerment. These ideals were embodied in the participatory methods movement (see Chambers 1994a; 1994b; 1994c) and in action research, both of which encouraged a sense of partnership with participants (Cloke *et al.* 2000). For example, Brydon (2006: 26), in a chapter on 'ethical practice', characterizes the relationship between the researcher and researched by suggesting that 'the emphasis

is on collaboration, facilitation and participation’, however, others go further by describing the researchers stance as one of ‘committed involvement, rather than impartial detachment’ (Martin 2000, cited in Scheyvens *et al.* 2003a: 182). Several other authors, writing in key development research texts used commonly by research students, follow this same ethos (Laws *et al.* 2003, Leslie and Storey 2003, Harrison 2006, Momsen 2006, Willis 2006). Indeed, textbook research guides for human geographers also echo these sentiments. Valentine (1997), for example, highlights the importance of recognizing one’s positionality, of being reflexive, and of redressing power imbalances. Scheyvens and Leslie (2000) go so far as to suggest that the interview itself can encourage empowerment among marginalized women by promoting their self-esteem and affirming self-worth.

In summary, these texts advocate three points to the development researcher. First, that the key relationship in the interview is one of (unequal) power. Second, by examining positionality we can encourage greater reflexivity and ‘reveal’ these power relations, as well as contextualize our interpretations (Moser 2008). Third, I would argue these texts assume that the ‘good’ development researcher will wish to ‘overcome’ these inequalities through enacting empowering processes with participants with the aim of stimulating social action (Scheyvens *et al.* 2003a) and to follow ‘the moral imperative to do no harm and hopefully to do good’ (Momsen 2006: 47). Whilst I do not disagree with this ethos in a general sense, it makes an analysis of my interview experience cited above rather difficult, as these texts assume ‘we’ (development researchers) somehow align morally and ethically *with* our participants.

My reading of these texts is that they tend to emphasize the ‘positive’ relationships which *should* be established with participants. Emotional content of interviews, for example, or clashes in personality, tend to be acknowledged only in passing. Willis (2006: 144) admits that ‘there is no right way to conduct interviews’. Others, such as Harrison (2006: 63) accept that ‘what is said by those being interviewed may conflict with the researcher’s own views’, and goes on to highlight that ‘neither expert nor locals are always right, or always wrong’. Valentine (1997) and Laws *et al.* (2003) are more explicit: in interviews, participants may express homophobic, racist, or sexist views which may grate against the interviewers (assumed) morals and ethics. However, these authors sit on the fence in terms of providing an analysis of what the researcher should do in such cases; they merely recognize that such scenarios exist. Such accounts *hint* at the emotional and the personal dimensions emerging in interviews, but do not attempt to analyze how the personalities and emotions of the researcher and researched might, in fact, play a role. Leslie and Storey (2003) frame the emotional content of fieldwork in the Global South as ‘culture shock’, which suggests a need for ‘cultural sensitivity’ on the part of the researcher, who should be ‘non-judgmental’. Momsen (2006) mentions that there may be ‘barriers to mutual understanding’, but again it is unclear if these are general (cultural misunderstandings) or personal, individual or emotional. Whilst many of these texts therefore suggest that ‘there is no perfect formula, no absolutely “right” way of doing things’ (Brydon 2006: 29), the sentiment sits uneasily alongside the ‘correct’ ethics implied in discussions of power and positionality.

I deliberately cite (mostly) development research textbooks above because it is likely that these are where many aspiring and inexperienced researchers gain their knowledge

of how to conduct methods ‘ethically’. Whilst I do not ‘blame’ these texts for my naïvety in entering the field, they appear to lack the critical tools to analyze negative emotional encounters with interviewees. Even more nuanced understandings of power, for example, by recognizing the ways in which interviewees also have power within the interview process (Cloke *et al.* 2000, Scheyvens and Storey 2003, Harrison 2006); or understanding that ‘criticism of “others”... can be both relevant and helpful’ (Scheyvens and Storey 2003: 8), does little to advance our grasp of the emotional content of interviews. The analysis here is still on understanding power. Writing which has challenged romanticized notions of ‘community’ in the Global South, such as Guijit and Shah’s (1998) *The Myth of Community*, or those who critique the inherent validity of ‘local knowledges’ (Briggs 2005, Smith 2011), perhaps goes some way to deconstructing the communitarian ethics of participatory development. Yet these insights have had little impact on the contemporary ethics of development research.

My concern is that these ethics, commendable though the ideas are, have become normative in development research. Whilst the development researcher is no longer seen as ‘neutral’, they are instead to aspire to something as equally unattainable: a person who is morally and ethically good at all times. This extract from the Developing Areas Research Group’s Ethical Guidelines provides an example:

Members of DARG should endeavour to incorporate the following broad principles in their work in and on the developing world: honesty, integrity, sensitivity, equality, reciprocity, reflectivity, morality, contextuality, non-discriminatory, fairness, awareness, openness, altruism, justice, trust, respect,

commitment... DARG members should thus endeavour to use the research process as a means of reducing these inequalities wherever possible and practicable.

(DARG 2009: 1)

Understanding ethical guidelines as a prescriptive code has been critiqued (Kearns *et al.* 1998, Valentine 2005). Given my own experience, I feel that such moral standards embodied in the DARG ethical guidelines are, for an ‘ordinary human being’, mostly unattainable, particularly when ‘doing an interview’. Perhaps more interestingly, the broad principles they describe are in many ways personal, traits of personality, and entangled also with experience and emotion. None of the principles listed above have absolute, universal standards; they are indeed highly subjective. Yet, disconcertingly, much of the research development texts avoid an analysis of the personal aspect of ethics. This is a significant concern for interviewing as a method, as it is, perhaps more so than other forms of research methods, an intimate and highly personal encounter.

EMOTIONS AND PERSONALITY IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Despite this apparent lack of analysis of the emotional and personal content of the interview, particularly in key research textbooks, there is a small but emerging interest in exposing the ‘emotional’ aspects of interviewing and fieldwork in development geography. Meth and McClymont (2009), for example, give a vivid account of the emotions expressed during interviews in a study of men’s experiences of violence in South Africa. One incident, in which a respondent discloses their HIV status, exposes

both the respondent's emotions, and the mixed emotions of the interviewers. While the interviewee reveals a positive emotional experience (unloading emotional 'baggage'), unfortunately we do not learn much of the interviewer's feelings when faced with these 'painful realities.' Similarly, Meth and Malaza (2003) express both their own and their participants emotional distress when researching violence with South African women (see also Brooks, Day and Skinner in this volume on the emotional impact of interviews).

Outside of direct emotional experiences in the interview, others have reflected on emotion whilst conducting research in the Global South. Molony and Hammett (2007) describe emotional relationships with research assistants, both positive (becoming friends) and negative (confrontations), although they stop short of describing their own feelings in such situations. Scheyvens *et al.* (2003b) and Cupples and Kindon (2003) both discuss sex and sexuality in the field. Scheyvens *et al.* (2003b) argue that there must be more 'openness' about sex and sexuality, but also articulate concerns about sexual attraction to participants, and the discussion progresses little beyond this statement. Cupples and Kindon (2003: 212) do go further, describing a relationship with a local man and how this involvement altered (positively) their emotional encounters with research participants, suggesting that: 'The field is a site in which our personal and professional roles and relationships converge'. Routledge (2002) offers a particularly lively example of feelings of excitement as he breaks into a hotel in Goa. Routledge is helpfully self-critical of his research 'performance', particularly of the 'uneasy pleasure' he derives from interviewing individuals whilst masquerading as a tour operator. However, he too falls short of a full discussion of emotion and personality, instead

examining the questions that arise over his positionality when, in fact, it is apparent that Routledge's personality has much to do with his performance. Not every white male academic from the Global North is prepared to masquerade as a tour operator in India and crawl under wire fences.

These examples suggest that the emotional impacts interviews can have on participants and the interviewer are important (; Meth and Malaza 2003, Meth and McClymont 2009). Whilst it is unfortunate that Molony and Hammett (2007: 296) conclude that 'emotional considerations clouded rational academic judgments and serve only to distract from the research process', others acknowledge that 'emotions can clearly shape the research process quite explicitly' (Meth and Malaza 2003). Whilst Moser (2008: 386) suggests that 'there is a silence regarding how we as individual researchers behave and interact with research subjects, who also have a range of social skills and emotional abilities', I would disagree. The above accounts *do* break the 'silence' of discussing emotional and personal content, if only in particular ways, yet, perhaps as my own experience of not fully explicable negative feelings towards an interviewee reveal, emotions and personality in the interview remain under examined.

ANALYSING NEGATIVE EMOTIONS AND PERSONALITY IN INTERVIEWS

Thus far I have deliberately drawn from research in the Global South. There is, however, an emerging body of literature from the wider field of human geography which seeks to analyze emotion and personality (rather than positionality and power). It is this

literature which I feel offers the most promise for pushing towards an understanding of emotion and personality in the context of the interview.

The fact that emotions, and recounts of them in academic writing, appear at the margins of development geography, should perhaps not be a surprise. As both Bondi (2005) and Laurier and Parr (2000) argue, emotion has been pushed to the margins of Western thought and practice, positioned as anti-rational since the Enlightenment. Yet there are a number of scholars who have begun to analyze the emotional geographies of research relationships in practice. I have already mentioned Meth and Malaza (2003) and Meth and McClymont (2009) as some of the very few in development geography who do, but equally important are works by Bondi (2005), Laurier and Parr (2000), Widdowfield (2000), and Burman and Chantler (2004), all of whom have contributed to a developing understanding of emotions as relational. Laurier and Parr (2000: 98) offer a useful conceptualization:

Emotions can be understood as complex manifestations of corporeal and psychological aspects of human beings which are simultaneously felt and performed as relations between self and world. And in this context, interviewing can be ideally conceived as a ritualized, yet intersubjective encounter which reveals something of such relations and how they are spatially constituted.

This suggests that emotions can, and should, be analyzed and understood relationally. Bondi (2005) also conceptualizes emotions as intrinsically relational, interpersonal and intersubjective, and draws on psychotherapy and emotional geographies to do so. Whilst

I cannot claim to be a scholar of either of those fields, I wish to signpost both of these approaches as useful for offering a way in which to deconstruct contemporary development research ethics.

Understandings of emotional experiences from psychotherapy approaches suggest that any encounter (e.g. the interview) is intrinsically transpersonal, inspired relationally and contextually (Bondi 2005). Whilst a research interview is not a psychotherapeutic encounter, it has similarities: a small number of people discuss issues in depth in an 'intersubjective' encounter (Laurier and Parr 2000). I acknowledged and described my emotions earlier in relation to an individual interviewee. However, working with a psychotherapeutic conceptualization, I could draw from my own interpretations something of that 'betweenness' which constituted the relationship.

For example, I might interpret my negative emotions towards the interviewee as interrelated with his own negative emotional state. These negative feelings may have been directed towards me, or may, judging by his responses, have been fixed on the Tanzanian government, or others he considered to blame for environmental problems. This is not to say that *his* negativity directly caused my own, instead there was a shared negativity in the encounter, one perhaps feeding off the other and vice versa. My distinct feeling, during the interview, that David also was experiencing negative emotions towards the interviewee, assisted in a kind of co-production of the negative relationship which we forged with the man. If I were to stretch this analysis further, I might add that my relationship with David was not always one of agreement and friendship (we had some minor disagreements), and perhaps both of us, willing to share

in an emotional encounter, encouraged this collective negativity in order to generate a stronger mutuality between us, aware as we were with the tensions in our relationship. Observing the younger man being ‘put in his place’ early in the interview made me frustrated, and conceivably established my judgment of the older interviewee, such that I had (pre-emptively) initiated a negative relationship with the older respondent based on my sympathy and sense of injustice for the younger man.

Of course, I am not a psychotherapist, but this fragmentary examination perhaps explains how negativity may be reinforced and generated both personally and transpersonally (Bondi 2005). This emotional negativity may not necessarily need to be characterized as ‘bad’, as contemporary interview ethics might suggest. My frustration led me to ask a fairly impertinent question, yet this question stimulated further discussion on another point (the respondent’s frustration at a lack of political representation). The interview did not ‘fail’ because I began to dislike the interviewee and challenged him. It generated interesting responses, and, as an unintended outcome, a moment of bonding between myself and David. As Meth and Malaza (2003: 156) describe: ‘emotion can be regarded as a ‘research resource’ in that feelings such as anger can indeed inform scholarship’.

However, this analysis does not seem quite enough to explain my post-interview niggling doubts about my actions and feelings: my fear that I had ‘broken the rules’ of the interview ethics I aspired to. Laurier and Parr (2000) use the Freudian term *unheimlich* to describe how, in proximity to difference, one can feel ‘unsettled’, notably when confronted with a threat to what is known about the self or body. If applied to

analysis of emotion, rather than one of positionality or power relations, this experience of difference, for me, may have been the occurrence of an emotional encounter which was a threat to my own self-positioning as the ‘ethical’ researcher. By judging the interviewees ideas ‘out of touch’, and by feeling negativity towards what he said and how he said it, I encountered an emotional state which was ‘other’ to the expectations I had of myself as the ‘ethical interviewer’.

This ‘unsettlement’ from ethical standards, which arguably encourage the interviewer to become ethically super-human, may not, necessarily, be a bad thing. An engagement with the unsettling nature of emotional encounters with those in the Global South may allow the interviewer to become *less* than the idealized ‘empowerment facilitator’: instead, they are a human being who forms emotional relationships (however fleeting) with interviewees. Like Burman and Chantler (2004), I am not an ‘emotional expert’, so make no claims that my analysis here is in fact fitting with wider conceptualizations of emotion. What I am hoping to offer is a way of conceptualizing emotion such that it is not ‘abnormal’ to the process of interviewing in the context of the Global South. As Laurier and Parr (2000) argue, suppression of feeling may ironically end up repressing the experience of socially diverse emotions and the normative rules that produce emotional performances. As such, the experience and attempt at analysis of emotion during interviewing in the Global South may offer insight not only of the interviewer, but also of the interviewees and the context in which they live.

However, I remain uncertain as to whether transpersonal emotional accounts are enough on their own. Much of my negativity was worryingly inexplicable, as I had encounters

with similar individuals which did not feel so emotionally charged. The emotional analysis thus far may, unfortunately, read like a 'rationalization' of my emotional negativity in the interview. It is here that, as Moser (2008) suggests, emotional analysis and personality go hand-in-hand. Moser argues that personality may, in some cases, be more important than positionality in the interview. She suggests that her own sociability and extrovert personality were essential for her fieldwork in Indonesia, whilst she witnessed other researchers, whose personalities were more introverted, struggling despite the fact that they had more 'in common' with participants, based on their ethnic and cultural background.

Although I had many successful interviews in which I was able to build a sense of emotional rapport with interviewees, I was clearly not capable of performing this role at all times. Indeed, it is apparent from the extracts of the interview that there was an 'edginess' to my personality which surfaced during its course. I disagree with Moser's (2008: 386) conclusion that 'the solution here is not to attempt to change one's personality to fit a fieldwork situation but to engage in fieldwork which utilizes one's strengths'. This is unhelpful for those with little experience, and suggests that certain emotional intelligences cannot be 'learnt'. The incident I describe exposed some of the more negative aspects of my personality, yet this was only one performance of personality (see also Bryant in this volume on suppressing personality during ethnographic fieldwork). Indeed, in many (if not most) other interviews, I drew, I hope, on a more empathic, personable side of my character.

Drawing from studies in psychology, Moser further illustrates that integrated approaches to personality situate the individual within social, cultural and historical contexts, but at the same time these approaches do not reject the possibility that universal, cross-cultural truths exist about human personality. Indeed, some personality traits may in fact vary little across cultures (Moser 2008). I would argue that the focus of interview ethics on positionality and power may serve to entrench the differences between the interviewer and participant. Attending to personality serves instead to emphasize some of the commonalities of human experience and emotion. Just as positive aspects of personality may be of significance for the success of research (Meth and McClymont 2009), so might the negative aspects of human personality be equally important points of commonality and departure between individual human beings, and therefore, of significance for analysis in the context of an interview encounter. Indeed, the shared experience of negativity between myself and my research assistant towards our interviewee perhaps says something about a common facet of human personality; the ability to find the ideas of ‘others’ both arrogant and preposterous, despite the fact that these ‘others’ may be significantly disadvantaged and marginalized when compared to oneself. I am not arguing that this is ‘good’, but I am accepting that such a feeling is possible within my own personality and emotional range.

TOWARDS NEW INTERVIEW ETHICS?

I have attempted to draw on my own experience of negative emotions during an interview with a respondent in Tanzania to highlight what I see as some of the key

problems with existing interview ethics. My analysis is necessarily fragmentary and incomplete; I do not make claims to be a scholar of emotions or personality, but I do wish to highlight both fields as offering potential for allowing current and future researchers to move beyond thinking of interview ethics in the Global South as being just about positionality and power.

In some respects I am writing about this experience for new researchers who may be, as I was, naïve about what they may encounter in the intimate, intersubjective world of the interview. My naïvety was founded partially on a reading of contemporary ethical standards, which I feel, in their present form, set an unattainable standard for myself as an inexperienced PhD researcher. The revelation for me may only be that disadvantaged, poor and marginalized communities in the Global South are comprised entirely of human beings with whom researchers will have human, emotional relations. This may sound obvious, but working from the ethics of many contemporary research textbooks left me with the impression that encounters with the people I wanted to work with would tend my emotions towards a willingness to sympathize, reciprocate, and commit to forms of solidarity with those I interviewed, to work towards the lofty goal of facilitating empowerment, to redress the inequalities of our relative positions of power.

Yet I often found myself relating to individuals in a different way, through relational encounters suffused with emotion, and which drew on my personality as much as it did their own. My prescribed positionality and relative power-position was superseded by my personality and emotions. It is only from reading beyond the consensus on research ethics found commonly in development research textbooks that I have begun to find an

adequate way to conceptualize and analyze the significance of these emotional states. Indeed, if ‘feeling and thinking are two sides of the same coin’ (Bondi 2005: 444), then we should be thinking of the interview as an emotional space as much as it is a ‘thinking space’.

As Moser (2008) and Burman and Chantler (2004) advise, our understanding of personalities and emotional abilities will always be fragmented, partial, impressionistic and anecdotal, but this does not mean they are ‘unknowable’, nor, I would add, therefore less relevant than considerations of power and positionality. Yet ‘knowing’ these emotions in the development interview requires a deconstruction of the gold standard of development research ethics. Doing away with prescriptive codes of ethics is part of the battle here, particularly those which necessitate ‘for academics to be *with* resisting others as well as *for* them’ (Routledge 2002: 478). Whilst such commitments may be appropriate at a very broad level, such as dedication towards decreasing inequalities, or being personally relevant *for* particular political, ethical or moral causes, such prescriptive assumptions about the nature of all researchers working in the Global South break down at the individual, interpersonal level. Assuming that one will inherently feel sympathy, commitment, trust and respect (DARG 2009) towards an individual purely because of their positionality and situation of relative power denies that emotional and interpersonal relations which will emerge during the interview may inspire feeling of quite the opposite. Such ethics are, in a sense, de-humanizing, positing individuals as positionalities, rather than individual human beings.

Whilst this kind of very personal discussion can tend towards narcissism, Meth and Malaza (2003) insist that an important aspect of discussing emotions is to provide support for other researchers, perhaps just as important as providing a further aspect of analysis for research results. Public discussions of the emotional and personal attributes of interviewing will also further reduce the potential for honesty to be read by others as vulnerability and poor research performance (Cloke *et al.* 2000), and instead begin to conceptualize emotion and personality as a normal part of the research encounter. Sharing emotional research experiences in a meaningful manner is perhaps the first step towards a relational, personal ethic of doing research in the Global South.

RECOMMENDED READING

Bondi, L. (2005) ‘Making connections and thinking through emotions: between geography and psychotherapy’, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, NS 30: 433--448.

Although this paper is not focused on research in the Global South, it offers considerable insight into how to conceptualize the emotional and personal content of interviews and other research encounters.

Cloke, P., Cooke, P., Cursons, J., Milbourne, P. and Widdowfield, R. (2000) ‘Ethics, reflexivity and research: encounters with homeless people’, *Ethics, Place and Environment*, 3 (2): 133--154.

Again not in a 'Global South' setting, but invaluable for the frank and honest approach the authors take towards writing about their feelings and emotions when conducting interviews with homeless people.

Meth, P. and McClymont, K. (2009) 'Researching men: the politics and possibilities of a qualitative mixed-method approach', *Social and Cultural Geography*, 10 (8): 909--925.

Highly recommended for the accounts of interviewing and conducting mixed methods on men's experience of violence in South Africa. The paper is revealing of the complex emotional encounters which researchers might face when interviewing, particularly on sensitive topics.

Moser, S. (2008) 'Personality: a new positionality?', *Area*, 40 (3): 383--392.

Whilst I do not agree with some of the conclusions of this piece, the discussion of personality and positionality is excellent, and provides a solid foundation from which to begin analyzing how one's personality may impact on research in the Global South.

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