

Engaging affect: reflexivity upon relational practices of (co)becoming during fieldwork

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Abstract

Knowledge production is iterative and emerges not only from the formal process of elaborating and writing about the study findings, but in everyday practices – impacting both the researcher and participants. Building on the affective and emotional exchanges I experienced during my PhD fieldwork, I explore the impact of these interactions in my own process of (co)becoming with the environment. I will unpack my reflexivity on how engaging affect through more-than-representational methods helped the participants and I to co-create safe spaces for deep listening and bodily practices of care. Among the feelings of cordiality and relatability, doing cross-cultural research also affected my self-perception regarding my ethnicity, and I embodied an awareness of how the individual's performance of subjectivities and social identities is embedded in power relations. My discussion shows how fieldwork was an experiential space to both explore participants' experiences, and to enact affective experiences of nearness and farness among us.

Keywords: feminist fieldwork; more-than-representational methods; affective encounters; ethics of care; reverse cross-cultural research

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