

***Gender, Place and Culture* Dissertation Précis**

Notes for authors of Dissertation Précis

Gender, Place and Culture welcomes submissions that are précis of recently defended dissertation.

Gender, Place and Culture welcomes submissions of doctoral dissertation précis. Dissertation Précis are original pieces of writing of no more than 1500 words (including references) that summarize a recently defended dissertation. The précis we seek are in direct contrast to the abstracts submitted with the dissertation. We request that authors write a different piece summarizing the dissertation in a way that highlights the contributions to feminist geography.

Submissions will be considered on a competitive basis. Please submit dissertation précis through ScholarOne. As part of the submission, the abstract accompanying the dissertation needs to be included alongside the newly written précis. Please cut and paste it in the “Abstract” box in the first step of the submission console. We also request as part of the submission, a set of five to seven key words. Please no endnotes or footnotes as part of the text. Each précis will undergo a vetting process by an Editor.

Précis from the current year and the previous year are considered on an ongoing basis. For example, in 2017, both 2016 and 2017 dissertations will be considered. In 2018, dissertations from 2017 and 2018 will be considered. And so on. Successful submissions will join the queue for publication.

The following is an example of a précis written specifically for the journal. Please use it as a model for submission. Acknowledgements are optional.

Challenging the masculinist framing of disaster research

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Adams-Hutcheson, Gail. 2014. “Stories of relocation to the Waikato: Spaces of emotion and affect in the 2010/2011 Canterbury earthquakes, Aotearoa New Zealand.” PhD diss., University of Waikato.

Keywords: Affect; Disasters; Emotion; Feminist Geographies; Gender; Relocation

As a touchstone for feminist research, the personal is political sits at the heart of my PhD thesis. The research project began in October 2011, as communities in and around

Christchurch (Canterbury) were coping with the impact of both a 7.1 magnitude earthquake 4 September 2010 and a more devastating (to life and architecture) 6.3 magnitude earthquake on 22 February 2011, including thousands of aftershocks (see Wilson 2013). Although I had initially planned to go to Christchurch to research how such a devastating event affected individual households, my feminist politics told me that I should not go. I was not comfortable flying into Christchurch ‘from the outside’ with no direct personal connection to the city nor the disaster. Thus I shifted the focus of the research away from communities in Canterbury toward households relocated to an area where I live, the Waikato region of the North island of Aotearoa New Zealand. Scholars are slowly beginning to acknowledge the powerful politics of (not) seeing disasters as an opportune research possibility (Brun 2009; Gaillard and Gomez 2015; Lund 2012), and I consider this a core strength of a feminist project.

I draw on feminist geographies to inform and extend a number of interdisciplinary areas. The emotional and affectual impacts of disasters are profound and yet remain relatively unexamined in disaster literature. Emotion and affect are embedded in the experiences of people who survive a disaster in a multitude of ways. By drawing on emotional geographies, bodies that move, bodies that are moved emotionally and bodies that have the potential to move others are of central concern. The thesis maps out an ontology of relocation, a disaster space that is frequently overlooked. Relocation is a valid and important response to disaster, it also has huge emotional impacts on survivors. For example, Loren states that,

When I say I couldn't get to my son and I was terrified and I was crying and I didn't know if my son was okay – I mean there were power lines down and silt [from liquefaction] with raw sewerage up to my waist in parts – it was a nightmare. I don't think people understand, they don't realise it's not over quickly – it's not like you move away and everything's okay [Interview 2 February 2012].

My doctoral research examines the experiences of 34 people who lived in 18 households and one individual in a disability care centre, who relocated to the Waikato region

following the 2010/2011 Canterbury earthquakes and aftershocks. Methodologically unique, this research triangulated more conventional processes of research, such as semi-structured interviews, focus groups and discourse analysis, with active engagement and emotions. Feminist-inspired methods included participant sensing (Duffy et al. 2011) that uses the body as a research tool (Longhurst, Ho and Johnston 2008) for encountering affect (Hutcheson 2013) along with the creation of a support group called *Cantabrians in Waikato* (Adams-Hutcheson 2014). These methods were part of a wider feminist politics of care that framed my approach which allowed participants to become active and supported throughout the thesis production.

Feminist geographies are threaded throughout the conceptual and empirical aspects of the thesis in order to highlight the emotional lives of earthquake survivors. First, the thesis offers a sustained critique of hegemonic masculinist framing of disasters and the quantitative outputs of such research. These ideas link closely to the work of gender and disaster scholars Elaine Enarson, Alice Fothergill, Lori Peek and Betty-Ann Morrow, but push ideas further to include bodies, intimate encounters and life experiences. Second, and inspired by the work of Donna Haraway (1991), ideas about situated knowledge which have their roots in feminist critiques of science, now also critically inform research across feminist geography (see Letherby 2003; McDowell 1992; Ogborn et al. 2014; Rose 1993,1997; Shurmer-Smith 2002). This approach allows further thinking about the politics of conducting research with disaster survivors, including fleshy bodies and messy emotions, and the way in which this challenges western binary assumptions and unravels the masculinity of the academy (Adams-Hutcheson and Longhurst 2017).

For more than two decades feminist geographers have acclaimed the importance of the body to geographical analyses, yet in the main, embodied knowledges remain marginalised in disaster scholarship. While I was analysing the post-disaster outpouring of

academic articles about Canterbury earthquakes, I began to wonder where the stories, the voices and the experiences of survivors might be located. People's voices were missing or effectively silenced in the explosion of publications on resilience and disaster management models. I tried to make these silences heard and linked them to the politics of research, that scientific and rationalised/masculinised data are frequently promoted over the more individualised, and thus, feminised, micro-scale of human experience. Feminist geographers have questioned the exclusion of emotion from the domains of rationality and masculinity, and deconstruct key binaries such as mind/body, rational/emotional and self/other (Bondi 2005; McDowell 1999; Longhurst 2001; Women and Geography Study Group 1997).

Three key findings were elucidated, answering the research question, how and in what ways are emotion and affect enmeshed within the experiences of Cantabrians who have chosen to relocate to the Waikato. First, using Sara Ahmed's (2004) ideas on collective emotionality, I underscore how respondents desired to be proximate to others both in the post-disaster cityscapes of Christchurch and in the relocated city of Hamilton. I emphasised how the disaster experience hooks into and remains within bodies, pushing the boundaries of trauma geographies (Adams-Hutcheson forthcoming). Second, the research analysed how feelings and moods were far more complex and entangled than anticipated, sometimes deployed strategically, sometimes laid bare. Although relocation was desired and initiated by participants, they often felt a deep sense of guilt and ambivalence. Ambivalence was prevalent in all interviews, Alexis mentions that,

It's [relocation] like being wrenched away from everything you know, our house was smashed, unliveable, we didn't know anyone up here [Waikato] but I moved for the kids. The kids are safe now and my relief at that is profound. But, we left behind everything, family, work, friends, yeah, everything. And it became very clear to me that the kids and I are alone in our grief and alone in our loss and that still really hurts [Interview 7 October 2011].

Third, the work also considered how the built environment impinged on accounts of respondents. The role of memory was used to sketch city life in both Canterbury and

Waikato. Favourite places, key sites and architecture tether memory to place and allow descriptions of both place attachment and place severance to be described. Yet overall, I placed most importance on the specific needs of participants and the feminist politics of giving voice to their experiences. Incorporating people into disaster analyses means adding the often gritty and confronting emotions of people who witness catastrophic events and feminist geography is crucial to taking us there.

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