From Mitigation to Negotiation: Ethics and the Geographic Imagination in Aotearoa/New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to broaden the debate around research ethics in New Zealand geography beyond the current discussions of 'ethics as mitigation'. We argue that geographers need to focus more attention on the 'ethics of negotiation' associated with each stage of the research process. We suggest that our geographical imaginations should be extended to embrace dialogic relationships with active research subjects through more innovative and participatory methodologies.

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Well developed ethical imaginations offer autonomy, professional responsibility and the freedom to make our worlds better places (Hay, 1998: 26).

Recently in this journal Iain Hay (1998) has argued for the importance of ethics to any vigorous and socially engaged research programme. As he writes (Ibid., 22) "there exist a number of important and valid arguments for behaving ethically in geographic research." Hay's paper is part of a wider movement within human geography in Aotearoa/New Zealand that is seeking to assert the central importance of ethics to the research practices of human geographers. In this vein Robin Kearns, Richard Le Heron and Anna Romaniuk (1998) have discussed how ethics can be incorporated into undergraduate human geography syllabuses, Robert McClean, Lawerence Berg and Mike Roche (1997) explore the ethics of bi-cultural research, an issue also addressed by Isabel Dyck and Kearns (1995), while Roche and Juliana Mansvelt (1996) have examined the difficulties of undertaking ethically oriented research in New Zealand's current 'Public Good' funding environment (see also Kearns, 1997; Le Heron, 1992; Rennie, 1993; Tearki, 1992; Walsh, 1992). Human geographers' interest in research ethics has clearly evolved a long way from that described by Bruce Mitchell and Dianne Draper (1982 in Hay, 1998: 21) when a request from the New Zealand Association of Scientists for submissions about the place of research ethics in geographic research received not a single response

This concern for research ethics after years of relative disinterest is in large part the product of two events. The first is bound up with general debates within the national polity of Aotearoa/New Zealand, the second has its origins in international developments within the social sciences and human geography.

1. The National Debate. In New Zealand during the 1980s and early 1990s a series of scandals placed a question mark over research involving human research subjects. Most prominent amongst these scandals was that uncovered by the journalist Sandra Coney (1988) in her book *The Unfortunate Experiment.* Coney documented how research undertaken at the National Women's Hospital had seriously endangered and in some cases led to the premature death of

a number of patients at the Hospital. Although subsequent evidence suggested that the impact of the research on its participants was less spectacular than Coney had claimed, the National Women's scandal and the public outrage that accompanied it led to the introduction or re-examination of existing ethical codes in most of the country's universities and research institutes. No longer was the researcher to be implicitly trusted to look after the best interests of her or his research subjects. Instead, all research was to involve a process of (generally written) informed consent.

2. *The Academic Debate*. Parallel to the debate sparked by Coney, internationally within the social sciences and human geography there has been a general questioning of researchers' relations with their research subjects. Where modernist, predominantly (although not exclusively) quantitatively oriented, social scientific research was confident in its ability to understand and to simultaneously offer ways to refashion the social world, critiques from cultural, feminist, post-colonial, and post-structuralist scholars have placed this confidence into question (see Bauman, 1987; Marcus and Fischer, 1986; Rose, 1993; Gregory, 1995). These critics argue that all social research is bound up within complex networks of power/knowledge. Researchers must therefore be aware throughout the research process of the ways in which their research process is implicated in existing structures of domination.

This interest in ethics is to be welcomed. Nonetheless, while the reflection on ethics over the past decade has deepened our understanding of the research process, the language with which this discussion has unfolded has in some respects been unnecessarily constrictive. Much of the debate around ethics within human geography in Aotearoa/New Zealand has focussed on the mitigation of harm rather than a broader discussion of how we negotiate ethics throughout the research process. Clearly an ethics of harm mitigation should have a central place in any discussion of research ethics involving human subjects – the case of the National Women's Hospital clearly demonstrates this. We do, as Hay (1998) and others stress (see Kearns et al., 1998; Le Heron, 1992), need to consider carefully the impacts our research has both on the individuals and groups being studied and on society in general. However, a broader consideration of how ethics are negotiated through research can help open new horizons of possibility for research practice. By stressing that our research subjects are active, creative, sensate people, ethics should encourage us to think about ways of explicitly re-framing research as a negotiated and dialogical process. If this turn to the dialogical is suggested in many of the articles already mentioned, there is nonetheless a need to examine in more detail what such a re-framing might mean in terms of the research we undertake and the methodologies we employ for that research. In what follows, we want to provide two brief practical examples of how focusing on an ethics of dialogue and negotiation can re-shape our approach to the research process. In offering these two examples we hope to add to and extend the on-going debate about human geography research ethics in Aotearoa/New Zealand, but we also hope to encourage other researchers to consider how thinking about ethics can enliven and widen our geographical imaginations and research horizons.

Two research projects: dialogue, framing and research

To illustrate our argument, we want to draw on our research projects: Alan's research with restaurant, café and bar users in an inner-city suburb of Auckland and Sara's with an iwi in a sparsely populated rural district around Taihape. Alan's work is ethnographically inspired, but it is also self-consciously rooted in the more established geographical traditions such as time-geography. It seeks to examine the everyday practices and imaginaries through which Aucklanders interpret and make sense of the public and quasi-public spaces of their city. Sara's research is informed by feminist, participatory and Kaupapa Maori research, and investigates relationships between place, identity and 'social cohesion' with a central North Island iwi using participatory community video. In the following sections, we want to explore how thinking about ethics has been integral to the way we have gone about doing our research. In particular, we examine two aspects of our research processes - dialogue and framing - to stimulate the development of more ethically sophisticated methodologies and imaginations within future New Zealand geographies.

Alan's project

"Bad week for walking to work – too busy trying to organise things for apartment.

Went to SPQR [a café/bar] with Kadri, Mark, Shelley and Taine from work.

- very laid back waiter with Versace sunglasses.

Took a photo of ivy up distressed concrete wall with rusty gates. Good atmosphere and weather was very pleasant for nearly 1st day of winter." Diary entry of Annabel, early forties, trainee attorney, Friday late May 1999.

Ponsonby Road is a vibrant commercial strip immediately to the west of Auckland's CBD. If it is defined by anything, it is the chaotic and inchoate jumble of buildings - neo-classical Victorian, Edwardian, warehouse modern, art-deco, neo-colonial - slouched along its mile long length. It is the cultural heart of Auckland's restaurant and cafe scene, with over 70 eating and drinking establishments.

Ponsonby Road is an interesting social space for a number of reasons. Traditionally Pakeha New Zealand has been defined by a limited, intensely masculine, Calvinistic, public culture (see Phillips, 1987; Fairburn, 1989; Eldred-Grigg, 1987). This culture was and remains intensely anti-urban, seeing the city as corrupt and emasculating. Over the past 25 years, and most strikingly in the 1990s, however, the country's larger cities have seen the development of a strong, self-consciously urban, public culture. The evolution of this new urban public culture marks a shift in the way a significant

proportion of people in Aotearoa/New Zealand make sense of their world. This shift is evident in a whole number of areas – in accepted notions of masculinity and femininity, in an openness – indeed - obsession with difference, whether it be sexual, ethnic or simply lifestyle based, in an increased confidence that Aotearoa/New Zealand (or Aoteaora New Zealand's larger cities at least) are part of a wider cosmopolitan community. This is a culture that has been built in significant ways through places like the cafés, restaurants and bars along Ponsonby Road.

This is an urban public culture in which Annabel, the diary writer quoted at the start of this section, is very much at home. She uses Ponsonby Road and other sites like it to meet and catch up with friends, as a neutral place to gossip and discuss work with her colleagues (as she does at SPQR), and as a place simply to unwind, socialise, and enjoy good food and a good ambience. Trivial though these activities may sound, Annabel's access to and hassle free use of the hospitality spaces along Ponsonby Road and of the Road itself forms a fundamental part of her sense of belonging to and being part of a wider community of Aucklanders.

Method

Annabel was one of 28 regular users of Ponsonby Road's restaurants/cafes/bars whom I recruited as part of a research project exploring the social practices, patterns of sociality and gendered relationships that make up Aotearoa/New Zealand's new urban culture. What I wished to gain was a sense of the texture of people's everyday use of the hospitality spaces along Ponsonby Road, and how this usage was related to other elements of people's relationship to their urban environment.

I asked each of my 28 recruits to write a diary of one week out and about in Auckland. For the diary, I asked them to take note of where and when they went out, with whom they went and/or met, and what they did. These questions were intended to generate a basic outline of their weekly routine. I also asked my diarists to write down their impressions and experiences of the places they went to. To aid them in this, they were provided with a small disposable camera to take photos of the places they visited or anything else they found interesting. After completion of the diary, an in-depth interview lasting from one and a half to three hours was carried out. The interview covered a range of biographical detail, whilst also going over each entry in the diary allowing the diarist to elaborate and further specify what they had written and photographed. Borrowing from the work of Zimmerman and Wieder (1977), I call this approach the Diary-Photo Diary-Interview Method (DPDIM).

Apart from seeking to gain a basic sense of the diarists' weekly time-space budgets, I decided to use written and photographic diaries because I wished to draw on my research subjects' own narrative resources as much as possible. The aim of the diaries and interviews was to encourage the respondents to produce a kind of reportage - a mixture of conversation, photos, and text - a personal and stylised account of one week in the diarists' lives. Framed with care and properly negotiated, such an account should preserve a sense of the creativity of their social interaction, whilst also maintaining a sense how this creativity is worked within the realities of everyday routines and performative norms.[1] However, if the decision to use diaries and diary-interviews was based in large part on a theoretical concern for the creativeness and improvised nature of everyday social practices, the use of DPDIM and my negotiation of its use with my research subjects was also structured by an ethical dimension. If social researchers are to take seriously the fact that the social world is made by productive, reflexive agents, then researchers must also strive to develop and employ research methods that acknowledge and respect this productiveness.

Dialogue, ethics, and trust

What do I mean by this? In most of the discussions of research ethics mentioned in the introduction to this article, emphasis is placed on how ethical considerations run through every stage of the research process. Undertaking ethically attuned research does not simply mean ensuring that ethical issues are considered in the design of a research project. Ethical research requires an on-going appreciation of how ethical problems infuse every stage of the research process (see in particular Le Heron 1992; Kearns et al 1998; Hay 1998). Such a framing is helpful in pointing out the dynamic and through-going importance of the ethical within the research process. However, the implicit focus common in published work to date on issues of harm mitigation, and on the power relations between the researcher and research subject, has led debate away from consideration of how thinking about ethics can also draw researchers into closer, more mutually negotiated relationships, with their research subjects. Thinking about how I might respect the individual creativity and complexity of my diarists without being too invasive, or demanding, lead me to consider ways of generating a structure of mutuality within the research relationship built around a sense of trust and mutual vulnerability (see Latham, 1999b; Benjamin, 1988). Thus, more than a straightforward methodology and data source, the respondent diaries and subsequent dairy-interviews also became a site of ethical negotiation and dialogue. This negotiation and dialogue was generated through two sources:

1) A shared project. A significant degree of personal commitment was important to the diarists producing pieces of work that were analytically useful. However, the diary was also meant to allow the diarists an opportunity to think about and reflect on their own day-to-day routines independently of the aims of the research project. Thus, to foster commitment, a significant amount of time was given to explaining the aims of the research project, and the diary writing process. Simultaneously, the diary writing process was designed to allow the diarists the freedom to adopt the form and style of expression with which they were most happy with. The result was that the individual diarists adopted a wide range of styles in undertaking their diaries. Annabel, as can be seen from the excerpt at the start of this

section, adopted a style that was brief and to the point and which left much space for elaboration in the diary-interview. Although this was the most common format, other diarists wrote much more detailed and intimate accounts. Julia a journalist by profession wrote very detailed and long diary entries that included careful explanations of background to what she was doing. In a quite different manner, Paul a real estate agent in his late 30s with a sense of the absurd gave many of his entries a surreal edge (see Latham, 2001a).

2) Negotiation and talk. The conversation between diarists and researcher began when I approached them to participate in the study and continued throughout the course of their involvement. This on-going talk between us helped to maintain the diarist's commitment to the diary process. It was this talk that opened up a space to negotiate what the diarist was doing, what he/she should write about or photograph, how he/she might do so, and the areas he/she did not want drawn into the research project. What was significant about this negotiation was that it not only influenced the way people went about writing their diaries, but it also actively shaped the way I, as a researcher, went about framing my research problematic. For example, when talking to Annabel about what I was seeking to do with my research and what she should do with her diary and camera, she placed a great deal of emphasis on the freedom opened up to women by the tremendous growth of cafés and café-bars in Auckland. For her, this was absolutely central to understanding cafés and what went on in them.

Up to that point I had largely resisted focussing too closely on gender. It seemed an area in which I lacked the necessary expertise and which demanded a degree of self-interrogation that I was nervous about undertaking. Annabel (in conjunction with a number of other diarists) convinced me that I needed (indeed had something of an obligation) to give gender a much more central role in my accounts of Ponsonby Road and Auckland's new urban culture. In a similar way, Paul's surreal diary forced me to consider more closely just how much creativity and freedom I was offering to diarists. If I had had only his diary I doubt whether I would have had much idea how to start making sense of what Paul had written. But talking through the diary with Paul opened me up to the possibilities and *usefulness* of more unconventional approaches to writing a diary than those used by most of my diarists. As Geraldine Pratt (2000: 639) has suggested, to offer research subjects more autonomy of expression within the research process simultaneously pushes us to reconsider exactly what does and does not "count as evidence."

Now, at an ethical level this notion of the researcher research-subject relationship fashioned through mutual action and agency has a number of important dimensions. I want to briefly highlight two of these, dialogue and interpretation:

1) Dialogue. I have already emphasised the importance of negotiation. Negotiation is about dialogue, but it is important to stress that dialogue does not necessarily mean agreement, or not immediately. The negotiation both of the participation of the research-subject and the interpretation of the diary and photos produced during the diary-interview was often worked through disagreements and misunderstandings. These are not 'glitches' to be ironed out and ignored. They are in fact part of the very texture of any kind of dialogue. Indeed, the production of what John Shotter (1993) has called a joint understanding of the research-subject's account of their week requires the work of disagreement and misunderstanding, if it is actually to be a *genuinely* joint understanding. I see this negotiation as part of an ethics of recognition. However, it again demands responsibility and care from the researcher in guiding the research relationship and insuring that the boundaries of disagreement are not pushed too far and that a space for dialogue remains open.[2] In a slightly different key, thinking about dialogue also requires that we acknowledge that in many instances research subjects cannot provide accounts that sound 'complete', 'polished', or indeed 'interesting'. Not only must researchers resist pushing too vigorously to compel their research subjects to provide ones that are. There is also a need to recognise that incompleteness, indeterminacy and even inarticulateness are important elements of both dialogue and everyday social action.

2) Interpretation. As I outlined earlier, underpinning the idea that mutuality is important within the diary and diary-interview process is the notion that individuals (and thus research subjects) are productive. They are involved in making and interpreting the world of which they are part. Taking this seriously requires not only that an ethos of mutuality is maintained while interacting directly with research subjects, but also while working through the collected interview transcripts, diaries and photos. Interpreting gathered data should work through a continued sense of empathy with the research subject – an empathy that recognises that we have only a partial, perhaps quite ephemeral account, to tell. Our research narratives should work to preserve the individual complexity both of the events recounted by our research subjects and of the subject being written about. This does not mean that theoretical explanations should be pushed to the background, but it does suggest the need to work in a different theoretical key to that which most human geographers are used to. One that in Margaret Strathern's (in Thrift, 2000b: 1) felicitous phrasing works to a "certain brand of empiricism, making the data so presented apparently outrun the theoretical effort to comprehend it."

Clearly, much more could be said about each of the issues raised above. However, what I would like to stress is how thinking about dialogue and negotiation – both as an ethic and a methodological aid – has made for better, more interesting, accounts of what a place like Ponsonby Road is about. This is a product of both how the process of negotiation and dialogue with my diarists forced me to interrogate more closely the aims of the research project and the wider range of accounts (diaries, photos, interviews, and so forth) it prompted me to explore (see Latham, 2001a; 2001b; 2001c).

Some readers might respond to the account above with the question, How is this any different than existing interview

based methods? The answer is that in certain senses it is not. Most accounts of interviews and related qualitative methodologies stress the need to build up a rapport with research subjects, the need to be alert to misunderstandings and the importance of clarifying points of mutual misunderstanding. The point is that through framing research ethics as dialogical and negotiated (as well as also involving issues of mitigation) it is possible to gain a more dynamic appreciation of the possibilities of such research methods. As we will see also with Sara's research, ethics should not be viewed primarily as a barrier or a constraint. Viewed from the right angle, thinking through ethics can be challenging, productive and a source of methodological innovation.

Sara's project

The Rangitikei

Most people (if they know of it at all) associate the Rangitikei district with its central township Taihape 'The Gumboot Capital of New Zealand', or with its tourism branding as the country's 'Destination River Region'. The district spans State Highway 1 between Waiouru and Bulls and had a population of 16,000 or so in 1996 (Statistics New Zealand, 1997). It is characterised by mixed hill farming, dramatic river gorges and mudstone cliffs. Since the restructuring of the1980s, residents have experienced a rationalisation of services, removal of agricultural subsidies, amalgamation of farm blocks and depopulation from smaller settlements. They continue to face relatively high unemployment rates and many rely on seasonal work. In a sense, the Rangitikei is typical of the rural decline documented throughout much of New Zealand over the last 20 years.

Ngaati Hauiti is one of the iwi in the district. They, along with the other iwi and seasonal Maori labourers from other parts of the country, constitute 24.5 percent of the district's population. The rest of the district's population consists of European/Pakeha (73.8 percent); Asian (0.6 percent) and Pacific Island (0.1 percent) (Statistics New Zealand, 1997). Ngaati Hauiti's rights in the district are derived from their ancestor Hauiti and before him, Tamatea Pokai Whenua and Matangi. Today, the iwi's rohe (area of influence) covers a wide area and along its borders, influence is shared with neighbouring hapu (sub-tribe) and iwi (Te Ruunanga o Ngaati Hauiti, 1996:6-7).[3]

Since the re-establishment of the marae at Rata in 1983, the iwi have been active in efforts to rebuild their resource base. They have established two kohanga reo (Maori language nests) at Rata and Utiku, which have acted as a platform for more recent activities. They have instituted a ruunanga (governing body) which has sponsored a number of working parties on Treaty claims, the environment and whakapapa (geneology). The ruunanga also publishes a regular newsletter and supports a range of social and educational activities (Historical Timeline of Iwi Development produced at a research meeting, 27/11/99). The educational activities have been designed to engage iwi members with the histories of their immediate cultural landscape. Such activities have been aimed at increasing iwi members' understandings of their whakapapa (geneology), whanaungatanga (connection, social cohesion), kotahitanga (unity, collectivity), waahi tapu (sacred places) and kaitiakitanga (guardianship of the environment). They draw on the iwi's ongoing academic and archival research, and its collection of oral histories and photographic records.

With the proliferation of geographic research examining the politics of place and identity formation (see Jackson and Penrose, 1993; Keith and Pile, 1993; Massey and Jess, 1995; McDowell, 1999), I wanted to gain an insight into the processes of cultural revival occurring in this iwi. I was particularly interested to understand how discourses of place and identity were being used, by whom and for what purposes, and how these concepts were related to the practice and development of 'social cohesion'. The interest in 'social cohesion' was inspired by the work of the Department of Internal Affairs on "Building Stronger Communities" (DIA, 1996) and the interest in the linkages between social capital, economic growth and community development in New Zealand (Robinson, 1999). It seemed to me that Ngaati Hauiti provided an important case study linking place, identity and 'social cohesion' in a way that emphasised positive change and regeneration rather than the negativity found in many studies of rural communities elsewhere in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Anderson, 1996; Gilling, 1997; Levett and Pomeroy, 1997).

Participatory community video

Given the ethical concerns in Aotearoa/New Zealand associated with cultural safety in the context of research with Maaori and my own commitment to feminist and participatory research, the approach developed to work with Ngaati Hauiti involved the integration of praxis from feminist participatory action research (Maguire, 1987; Farrow et al., 1995), participatory rural appraisal (Chambers, 1993; Guijt and Kaul Shah, 1998) and Kaupapa Maaori research (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Formal ethics approval from the university was gained after the partnership and its process had been agreed with Ngaati Hauiti.[4]

Participatory community video was adopted as the central research method for three main reasons. Firstly, members of the iwi had identified a desire to learn video production skills for tribal history purposes and the mutual exchange of skills and knowledge established a strong reciprocal basis to the relationship. Secondly, participatory community video offered opportunities to contest the circuit and prestige of what is considered to be 'normal' research and media praxis (Wayne, 1997), and thirdly, participatory community video was an interactive means of engaging iwi members in discussions about "processes of identity construction" (Halleck and Magnan, 1993: 157).

The collaborative process involved myself, Geoff Hume-Cook (an ethnographic audio-visual specialist) and Benjamin

Hyslop (an MA student) with a fluctuating group of between seven and fifteen members of Ngaati Hauiti. We undertook a formal welcome onto Ngaati Hauiti's marae and, over eight months, negotiated the framing of the research and its outputs with members of a Working Party.[5] Negotiating the framing specifically involved "decisions about its parameters, about what is in the foreground, what is in the background, and what shadings or complexities exist within the frame" (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999:153). We then trained a Community Video Research Team in video production and community research methods, and worked with them to further refine the project's specific parameters in line with the advice of the Working Party and their own local priorities and interests. They also decided on the research sites and worked with me to analyse research outcomes.

Specifically, we undertook two major research activities. Firstly, with the support of Geoff and myself, the Community Video Research Team researched, designed, shot and edited a short video on significant places in the rohe (territorial area of influence) and set it to one of their waiata (song). This involved them travelling to different locations within the area and working with one of their kuia (respected older woman) to develop and shoot their ideas. Secondly, they developed a set of semi-structured interview questions with me, and then arranged and carried out video-interviews with fourteen iwi members living in one small place-based community in the rohe. The interviews focused on learning about people's relationships to their specific township, the wider rohe and their community ties and activities. Where possible in these interviews, members of the iwi team were the primary interviewers and/or videographers with Geoff and myself acting as co-interviewer/videographers.

Framing, ethics and epistemology

While all of the details of the project could be discussed in relation to the ethics involved, what I want to do here is focus on its framing. We chose to invest considerable time and resources in this stage of the project's development, for as Thomas Curtis (member of Ngaati Hauiti's Working Party) said: "When you start projects like this, how you start, it is important, because that means how you are going to continue, so you start building that relationship straight away" (22/8/98, pers. comm.)

How we started our relationships was critical to the future success of the project and involved regular meetings between members of the Working Party, the Community Video Research Team, Geoff, Ben and myself in the Rangitikei at the marae, or one of the Kohanga Reo. These meetings shared the explicit purpose of clarifying our relationships and negotiating our epistemological perspectives – how we constructed and defined what we considered to be valid knowledge (Johnston et al., 2000: 226-29) – so that the research could proceed ethically with the agreement and commitment of all.[6]

For example, the following interaction illustrates one of the negotiations that took place between myself and three members of the Working Party (Thomas Curtis, Rewa Potaka and Kirsty Woods) about the constitution of the research team and the framing of the research:

> Sara: So do we then ask for people from all over the rohe to come together to form [a research group of] about ten people who meet at Utiku, at the primary school as a central point, or do we say we want about ten people who live in Utiku township who will do the activities and research that will take into account the broader rohe ...?
>
> Rewa: My thoughts on that Sara are that there are people here at Rata who have, I think, a deeper knowledge in whakapapa terms and in research terms about the land than there are in Utiku. Would you agree with that?
>
> Thomas: You probably know better than me, but I would have thought what we are looking for in terms of people, the people criteria might override where the people might live. You might find that there are some people in Utiku, and some people in Rata and some people in Ohingaiti and it's not that far that they can't travel, but maybe some of the research needs to be done in Utiku, or we meet in Utiku as a focal point.
>
> Rewa: In fact, it is such an important consideration that I would think that the prime consideration [is] the interrelatedness of Ngaati Hauiti to their land in its entirety, and I know that you said we need a tight focus, but I don't know that we can give it a tighter focus really.
>
> Thomas: No, no.
>
> Kirsty: But, that could certainly be a starting point, couldn't it?
> (Working Party meeting, Rata Marae, 22/8/98)

Such interactions were commonplace throughout all meetings at all stages of the process.

In most meetings, I facilitated group discussions to enable us to reach consensus. In some, where important decisions had to be made about how to translate our perspectives into culturally appropriate practice, I incorporated participatory exercises to enable iwi members to visually represent their ideas and to define the parameters of the project according to their priorities. In all cases, I observed and listened as much as possible and consciously proceeded carefully and respectfully at a pace that allowed trust to be built, and Maaori cultural preferences, practices and aspirations (Bishop and Glynn, 1999:169) to be negotiated. This meant adjusting my timeframe and expectations and modifying participatory activities to be appropriate to local conditions. In addition, all meetings were video taped (with everyone's permission) to produce a detailed record of our negotiations for future reference by anyone involved in the project.

These participatory processes and explicit attention to the project's framing produced a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Institute of Geography, VUW, Geoff's company Encantado Communications Ltd., and Te Ruunanga o Ngaati Hauiti (on behalf of all iwi members). It acts as the central responsibility structure of the project (McClean et al., 1997:12; Spivak, 1996:293) and clearly addresses the relations of power and rights within the research process as well as the central question of whose reality

might gain dominance and legitimacy throughout the research process.[7] It also embodies power-sharing within the research process as advocated by Maori, feminist and other post-positivist researchers (Bishop and Glynn, 1999:178).[8]

By working in this open and participatory way with an explicit attention to the project's framing, a strong research partnership developed through which a meaningful and relevant research focus and process (kaupapa) were established. For example, Working Party member Thomas Curtis reflected: "If you're on the right kaupapa, then things will start happening, [...] I think that's what we found when we got ourselves the right kaupapa [...] it happened (23/6/01, pers.comm.). Taking time to focus on the ethics of framing avoided confusion or disagreements later on during the research, and helped to establish a significant degree of mutual trust and ownership, as Joyce Potaka (one member of the Community Video Research Team) commented: "It was a totally cooperative effort. It helped bring my heart and mind together" (23/6/01, pers.comm.). The process also acknowledged the understanding that "research ethics for Maaori communities extend far beyond issues of individual consent and confidentiality" (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999: 119) in its incorporation of negotiation and discussion at various tribal levels. For example, Neville Lomax (a ruunanga member) commented: "While this project was initiated and driven most of the time by the [Potaka] Whanau Trust, in fact it was signed off, and debated and discussed by our Ruunanga and approved" (23/6/01, pers.comm.).

By adopting more participatory processes and an ethics of negotiation throughout the project, and particularly at the time of its framing, we were able to engage with the beliefs and expectations of Ngaati Hauiti as active subjects or 'co-researchers' (Hay, 1998:64). The result was a kaupapa for the project which was embedded in locally-negotiated moral imaginations and sensitivities and which produced meaningful geographic knowledge through a culturally appropriate negotiated approach to research ethics.

Conclusion

> [As human geographers] we have yet ... to put much of our theoretical talk into research practices. Our talk may be that of poststructuralists, postcolonialists, or social constructivists, but our practice continues to be that of colonising humanists (Geraldine Pratt, 2000: 639).

In a recent article on the power relationships and ethics of research the British feminist human geographer Gillian Rose discussed how a research project she undertook based around interviews with community arts workers in Edinburgh had left her feeling increasingly uneasy about the ethical foundation of such research. She writes (Gregson and Rose, 2000: 449),

> although I enjoyed many of the interviews enormously and learnt a great deal from them, I was uneasy doing them and remain uncomfortable with them, still puzzled by them and uncertain of my own role in relation to them. As a research practice, they remain stubbornly recalcitrant to my interpretation, so much so that I am not planning any more interview-based work.

Rose's doubts about the ethics and practical validity of continuing to undertake interviews is a relatively rare and strong reaction to the challenges presented to the researcher by human geography's turn towards a reconsideration of ethics. In Aotearoa/New Zealand few human geographers have responded towards the challenges of thinking through research ethics in such a defensive way. Nonetheless, we do believe that a general focus on an ethics of mitigation may be one of the reasons that the methodological approaches employed by most human geographers working in Aotearoa/New Zealand have remained relatively conservative (although see Kearns, 1997).

Human geography in Aotearoa/New Zealand is by no means alone in this methodological conservatism (see Thrift ,2000; Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000; Latham, 2001a), and perhaps, given the complexity of thinking through how a consideration of research ethics affects established methodological approaches, this is unsurprising. Researchers have needed time to assimilate the impact of debates about ethics on their existing research practices. What we have sought to present here are examples of the ways in which ethics can aid us in more thoroughly re-framing the research process and indeed the very idea of what counts as research. We have also tried to show how this re-framing can involve relatively subtle shifts in how we undertake research and the techniques employed (as was the case in Alan's project), to quite radical re-definitions of the nature and framing of the research process (as in Sara's work with Ngaati Hauiti).

We are aware that some readers may feel somewhat dissatisfied by the relative brevity of the accounts we have offered. But we have offered our two accounts with the hope of encouraging more researchers to discuss and debate their experiences of negotiating ethics in geographic research. Human Geography in Aotearoa/New Zealand needs more articles that discuss how we can embrace negotiated-, dialogical-, relationships with our research subjects, and the possibilities and limits of such relationships. We are convinced that working to think beyond an ethics of mitigation through to an ethics of negotiation and dialogue offers an opportunity to generate a widened imaginative horizon for geographical research in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Our hope is that others will engage with us in making this possible new horizon real.

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Notes

[1] My own theoretical framing of everyday social practices is that such practices must be understood as *fundamentally* creative and productive (for more detail see Latham, 1999a; 1999b; 2001a; 2001b; Giddens, 1984; Thrift, 1996; 1999; 2000a).

[2] To use the language of object-relations theory, it requires that the researcher has the ability to hold the relationship in a state of mutual trust (see Benjamin, 1988; Latham, 1999a).

[3] In 1996, the environmental working party produced an environmental policy statement for use in the iwi's dealings with government agencies. (Kaupapa Taiao Environmental Policy Statement, Te Ruunanga o Ngaati Hauiti.)

[4] Interestingly, the university ethics committee overrode a decision made by members of Ngaati Hauiti that informed consent recorded orally on video, rather than written consent, was adequate to protect their member's knowledge.

[5] This process of encounter is documented in more detail elsewhere (Kindon, 2000).

[6] These meetings were guided by culturally specific ideas found in Kaupapa Maaori practices as described by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999:120):

1. Aroha ki te tangata (respect people);
2. Kanohi kitea (present yourself face to face);
3. Titiro, whakarongo ... korero (look, listen, ... speak);
4. Manaaki ki te tangata (share and host people, be generous);
5. Kia tupato (be cautious);
6. Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample over the mana of people); and
7. Kaua e mahaki (don't flaunt your knowledge).

[7] This document specifies the relationships between all parties involved in the research, the principles upon which our relationships are based, our rights and access to each other's information and the knowledge generated, as well as our rights associated with the presentation/publication of information arising from the project. Within the MoU, individual iwi members retained the right to veto the use of any personal information they provide for research and publication purposes.

[8] This process was not always easy considering I was the partner with the research funding and the one facing institutional pressures to publish.

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