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Can you feel the difference? Emotions as an analytical lens

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Abstract. Against the background of emotional geographies, I analyse negotiations of belonging and experiences of difference. Emotions serve as the analytical lens through which these negotiations and experiences are analysed. Based on this notion, I will analyse migrants' accounts with respect to their emotional qualities and spatial articulations. In particular, I will focus on emotional accounts, such as childhood stories and other biographical stories, which are spatially situated. The emotional focus serves thereby as a lens to capture migrants' identification with the social norms and values inscribed and mediated through these spaces. These emotional accounts help us to understand complex stories about social positioning along different axes of difference, complex ways of identification, and resistance to social role models.

1 Introduction

Questions of difference and sameness are often articulated in very emotional ways. We find examples for this emotional quality in political debates on foreigners – for instance the debates in Switzerland regarding the last successful referendum against "mass immigration", 9 February 2014 – or on the micro-level of daily encounters. The article focuses on the latter: the negotiations of difference and how they are experienced in the context of daily encounters. As these negotiations are experienced in emotional terms, I propose to use emotions as an analytical lens to further our understanding of questions of difference as, for instance, they are conceptualised in the notion of intersectionality.

Emotions as the intimate link between the social and the concrete physical world that is experienced have lately received increasing attention in fields such as emotional geography (Anderson and Smith, 2001; Davidson and Bondi, 2004; Thrift, 2004; Davidson et al., 2008; Schurr, 2013). To take emotions seriously as a geographer means "to understand emotion – experientially and conceptually – in terms of its socio*spatial* mediation and articulation rather than as entirely interiorised subjective mental states" (Bondi et al., 2005:3). Emotions are, in this sense, more about what happens between people and space than about how we feel as single persons inside ourselves. In other words, from a geographical perspective, I am interested in what emotions – though articulated as personal and internal feelings – tell me about how people interact with other people and with(in) space. The interactions I will be looking at deal with how people negotiate questions of social difference and in particular intersecting differences as framed in the concept of intersectionality. Emotions give deep meaning to these negotiations and highlight the importance of certain experiences over others. They also act as a sort of signal by marking moments, interactions, and incidents that are particularly relevant for the people who feel these emotions. Emotions therefore become an analytical tool to point out specific moments of identification and resistance that are of importance to the individuals studied.

Questions of belonging, articulated through notions of difference and sameness, are themselves emotional issues as they tackle the core of a person – his or her identity. Essential elements of the definition of identity include those groups to which a person ascribes and how a person defines her or his forms of belonging. However, questions of belonging are always coupled with questions of access to social resources: negotiating difference and defining belonging are therefore dramatic processes of inclusion and exclusion.

For instance, research on intersectionality has dealt with these questions of multiple and intersecting negotiations of

difference that position individuals in a complex field of inclusion and exclusion (Lobo, 2010; Nightingale, 2011). One of the first thorough articles in geography about intersectionality was an engagement of Gill Valentine (2007) with spatial aspects of the concept. She noted that "geography has much to offer to the wider social sciences to take on intersectionality through its appreciation of the significance of space in these processes of subject formation" (p. 18). In her paper, she describes different stories of a D/deaf woman and analyses the intersection of various categories of difference in complex ways and in different places. The places are not merely a social setting where these stories happen but also the places where she feels excluded or accepted because of the specific intersectionality. The interactional doing gender and doing difference (West and Zimmermann, 1987; West and Fenstermaker, 1995) are thereby placed into a very specific spatial and social context.

The work of Valentine provides a valuable starting point to think about space and how it can help us in analysing questions of gender and of intersectionality. Her aim is a "rematerialisation and resocialisation of human geography: a return to focusing on sociospatial inequalities and the insecurities they breed and to trying to understand the complex and intersecting ways in which power operates" (Valentine, 2008:335). Intersectional approaches have been used in various fields of geography, and in particular they have also been linked to the places and spaces in which questions of identity and belonging and access to resources are negotiated (see e.g. Mollett and Fariah, 2013, for examples in feminist political ecology and Brown, 2011, for examples in the field of sexuality studies).

The aim of this paper is to analyse these questions through the lens of emotions. Therefore, I propose to draw more strongly on work inspired by the research of feminist geographers and, on the one hand, to include notions of the body as the physical and material element of an individual and, on the other hand, to search for articulations of this body – such as emotions. These emotions tell us something about how we feel about being somewhere. And as the notion of being "in place" or "out of place" (Cresswell, 1996) rightly points out, this emotion is linked to a perception of social rules and norms and therefore results in a negotiation of social positioning as well as identification and resistance to it. This results in situating differences – through the notion of intersectionality – in the concrete places where interactions and daily encounters take place: the "rematerialisation" Valentine asks for. The conceptual frame is then used to analyse negotiations of sameness and difference among childhood stories of second-generation Spaniards in Switzerland.

The paper addresses first how intersectionality has been conceptualised and analysed with reference to the body. Thereby I focus, on the one hand, on the material quality of the body that links these discussions to space and, on the other hand, on its sensual quality that links it to emotions. Second, I relate these discussions to a geographical perspective on social space to sketch a conceptual frame for the analysis of the empirical material that follows. Based on vignettes from a project on transnational social spaces of second-generation Spaniards in Switzerland, I develop my analysis of emotional accounts of and about intersectionality. The analysis exemplifies how an emotional lens as a heuristic tool can help us to apprehend and make sense of relevant experiences of difference and negotiations of belonging.

2 Intersectionality and the body

Studies on intersectionality have come a long way since Crenshaw (1989) introduced the notion of intersecting axes of social difference as a concept to explain the multiple and interconnected discrimination of the Afro-American women she was defending in court. The concept has been translated into other disciplines and thematic contexts, and it has been combined and developed further in the course of these translations. One of these translations and combinations concerns the body with its material as well as emotional qualities. Though these qualities seem distinct at the outset, they are linked to each other as the following discussion shows.

The body has been an important focus of feminist research and has been of much concern in particular in feminist geographies. One of the concerns of these debates has been to introduce the body as an additional scale in geographical analysis (Longhurst, 1995; McDowell and Sharpe, 1997). There are at least two different paths through which the scale debate comes into the analysis of intersectionality. On the one hand, concepts such as the "gendered geographies of power" by Mahler and Pessar (2001) have inspired scholars to include and combine various scales in their analysis. Such gendered geographies include the notion of scale that directs the analysis to a multiscalar perspective that ranges from the body to the family, community, and state (Mountz, 2010; Pain et al., 2010; Smith, 2012). In the context of migration studies, McIlwain (2010) studies migrant machismo of Latin American migrants in London from the perspective of the household, labour market, and state. Smith (2011) points at the various scales of resistance that are inherent when marriage across religious communities is prohibited and at the power feelings such as love have in challenging geopolitics. These studies are based on the notion that the body is an important place of struggle and resistance.

On the other hand, there is the attempt to include the concept of intersectionality into a project of social theory and broaden its scope (Bürkner, 2012). There the scales are rather understood as a level of social interaction, representation, and social structure (i.e. the micro-, meso-, and macro-level) (Winker and Degele, 2009; Kerner, 2009). These approaches are inspired by theoretical perspectives that bridge the actor–structure divide and develop the analysis of intersectionality into a project of social analysis instead of individual cases. Instead of focusing on the single person in which the various

axes of difference intersect, these approaches draw a more complex picture of institutions that reify differences, norms, and values that are discursively produced and reproduced as well as actors that negotiate their roles in a strongly structured context.

Both perspectives, the more geographical and the more sociological one, strive to complicate the picture and contextualise intersectionality further. Another attempt to contextualise intersectionality has resulted in focusing on the concrete and specific location where negotiations take place. Combining the notion of location with a multiscalar perspective, Antonsich (2010) claims that "the interrelation between the 'here' and 'there' of belonging has been largely investigated, [but] no studies are available which explore the 'here' in all its multiple scales and in their connections" (p. 653). The claim of locating the analysis in the "here and now" (Richter and Büchler, 2013) of social interaction is answered by studies that place, for instance, the constitution and narration of British migrant masculinities in the domestic space of their homes in Dubai (Walsh, 2011) or studies that analyse the transnational masculinities of Singaporean husbands in situ (Cheng, 2012).

Locating intersectionality in concrete places allows the analysis to focus on the situatedness of interactions, the persons involved, and their bodily presence. From such a perspective, the body is not merely another category of difference as in Winker and Degele's four structural categories (class, gender, race, and body) (2009:38). Rather, it is the mediating "thing" between the individual and the social world. This "recorporealisation" (Nash, 2010) takes the body and its materiality to the centre of the analysis and links individuals to the material context in which their negotiations take place. As Valentine points out, "[T]he stories through which specific identities emerge for a particular individual do not occur in a vacuum; rather, identities are highly contingent and situated accomplishments. In other words, space and identities are co-implicated" (Valentine, 2007:19). From the appreciation of space in the process of subject formation, Valentine concludes that intersectionality and the positioning of the subject along different axes of difference need to be localised and contextualised in specific places. Intersectionality therefore becomes a contextualised negotiation that is situated in space and mediated through the body.

Analysing intersectionality as "lived experience" as Valentine proposes (Valentine, 2007; Valentine and Sadgrove, 2012) points towards the aspect that an intersectional identity is not just acted out but also experienced, i.e. suffered, enjoyed, rejected, and embraced; in short, it is felt and sensed in emotional terms. Locating intersectionality in the body and accessing thereby the emotional aspects of the lived experience is, nevertheless, an empirical approach that needs further developing. There are only few examples of locating belonging in its spatial context and analysing the emotional implications of negotiations of belonging (see e.g. the edited volume of *Emotion, Space and Society*: Wood and Waite, 2011). Approaching questions of belonging and social inequality as well as questions of inclusion and exclusion through the lens of emotions seems a promising perspective to reconstruct people's experience of inequality and injustice.

3 The geography of emotional negotiations

Before turning to the lived experiences of Spanish second-generation migrants and their negotiations of difference and sameness, I need to frame my analysis by outlining the underlying conceptual notions that link space, body, and emotions. With reference to the notions developed by Sara Ahmed, emotions are about the "surface of bodies" (Ahmed, 2004a, b). They are about what happens between us and other objects and how the contact with objects "touches" our body at the surface. This means that emotions are about neither what happens in a subject nor what is in the social; they are about this thin line of contact. Importantly, emotions are socially shaped in the way that they are structured by past histories. In other words, emotional articulations are mediated through socialisation. As Ahmed explains: "It is not that the bear *is* fearsome, 'on its own', as it were. It is fearsome *to* someone or somebody. So fear is not in the child [that encounters the bear], let alone in the bear, but is a matter of how child and bear come into contact. This contact is shaped by past histories of contact, unavailable in the present, which allow the bear to be apprehended as fearsome (Ahmed, 2004b:7)."

Ahmed's notion of emotions as being about the surface of bodies links to the work developed in emotional geographies (Anderson and Smith, 2001; Davidson and Milligan, 2004; Conradson and McKay, 2007), where emotions are conceptualised as embodied feelings about acting and interacting in space. In earlier contributions with Bettina Büchler (Büchler and Richter, 2010; Richter and Büchler, 2013), I noted that "any analysis needs to be grounded in a concrete here and now, for it is in the space–time of the here and now that social differentiation is being produced, and where we are at the same time confronted with those differentiations as always already amalgamated" (Richter and Büchler, 2013:49). We proposed to look at gender and intersectionality in what we called the "here and now", meaning that place is the locus where social action takes place and is, in turn, contextualised in the specific social structure, norms, and values inscribed into this place.

We insisted on the here and now as the place where social interaction takes place and where intersectionality is articulated. In formulating this notion we were following an argument developed by Gill Valentine when she looks back at her engagement as a geographer with feminist studies and feminist theory and conceptualises intersectionality as a "lived experience" (Valentine, 2007:15). What seems to be missing in our account as well as in Valentine's article is a link between the individual experience and the space where in-

tersectionality is lived. If we look at this lived experience as embodied emotions, as the accounts that follow suggest, then the experience becomes part of a corporeal geography.

Such a corporeal geography makes the everyday spaces where social norms are inscribed open to the experiences of bodies and their emotional articulations. Various studies have shown how place can become a mediating concept that establishes a connection between people, individual memories, symbolic meanings, or social values (Thrift, 2004; Kearney and Bradley, 2009; Ho, 2009). Such a physical engagement with the meaning of a specific place is based on the notion of corporeal social practices. "Our bodies and all our experiences and the meanings that animate our lives are based in active corporeal involvement in the world" (Simonsen, 2007:171). As Merleau-Ponty (1986) explains, the body is a relationship or mediation between the social world and the individual person; in other words, through the body every social practice is immediately spatialised, and it happens in space and is related to and through space.

It is therefore in and through space that we negotiate and perceive social differences. The places where social interaction take place, for instance, and where the following stories from my empirical material are situated recall social norms about what it means to belong to a group or to be different. The perception of these norms and the negotiations of difference and belonging are, as the stories exemplify, articulated in emotional terms. The emotions help us to understand how individuals make sense of these perceptions and how they understand a rationale behind the negotiations.

4 Negotiating difference and sameness: emotional accounts

Questions of sameness and difference are often discussed with reference to migrants and also constitute an important aspect of childhood stories I heard in the course of interviews I conducted with second-generation Spaniards in Switzerland.[1] The project was aimed at investigating the transnational social spaces of various groups – in particular, the relationship the children of Spanish migrants living in Switzerland have with the country of origin of their parents.

The research included 19 biographical interviews with second-generation Spaniards in Switzerland. The information gained in these first interviews was later deepened by a second interview and by interviews with members of their family and friends in Spain. The material used for this article is taken from the initial biographical interviews, during which I asked people to tell me their biography with reference to their relationship with Spain. In these interviews they recalled stories from their childhood and youth that were rich in emotional references that connected places, experiences, and stories to questions of identification (Richter, 2012; Richter and Nollert, 2014).

The three stories I picked to discuss how an emotional lens can further our understanding of experiencing difference and negotiating belonging were chosen because they are exemplary for the point I want to make here. Nevertheless, they are not exceptional, as other accounts evoked similar notions. At the same time, I picked examples where perceptions and negotiations of sameness and difference were prominent. There were also cases where these issues never gained momentum. The first story shows in particular how emotions demarcate an important moment in the account and how emotions can guide our analysis towards crucial parts of the material. The second story tells us something about how social differences are experienced and about how emotional these experiences are – even when recalled decades later. Finally, the third story deals with questions of belonging and how they are negotiated in a painful way.

4.1 Story 1: bewilderment

The first story is about bewilderment when sensing that one is not acting according to the rules of society and the expectations of the people around. Although it is a very simple story, it shows the subtle differences children experience when living in two worlds: two societies with slightly different – in this case, gendered – norms and values. Lara, 45 at the time of the interview, recalls a moment in her childhood when she was visiting relatives in Barcelona. She was a child of 5 years and was able to communicate in the language of her parents and their family in Spain. Accordingly, her story develops the importance of being part of the conversation:

> The big meals, that was something, it was completely normal to have at least six people at the table, and talk and explain about life abroad. Another childhood memory that pops into my mind is when I noticed man, woman, you know. Everybody got up after the meal, all the women, and they went to clear the table and wash the dishes, and the men they stayed at the table. And I was 5, so I already understood part of the conversation, bits and pieces, and I found this much more interesting than doing the dishes. My grandmother wanted to take me to the kitchen and my grandfather also told me to go. My father then said: "You know what, you just go now for maybe 10 minutes into the kitchen and then you come back to the conversation." I didn't know about this from Switzerland. When we used to invite people around then always both, my mother and my father, went into the kitchen or maybe they alternated.

[1]The data presented in this paper were collected during the research project "Bridging Places Across Borders: Constitution, Maintenance and Meaning of Transnational Social Spaces" conducted by Janine Dahinden, Michael Nollert, Yvonne Riaño, Marina Richter, and Marc Tadorian. The research was financed by the Swiss National Science Foundation grant no. 124983.

The bewilderment Lara expresses in this short memory of her childhood deals with realising that what she would like to do (following the conversation of the adults) is not possible because of different ways of doing gender in the context of her parents' house in Switzerland and the context of her grandparents' home in Barcelona. My point is not to argue that Switzerland is a more egalitarian country regarding gender norms than Spain; rather, I want to point out how gender norms are articulated in two very specific contexts that are – among other aspects – also shaped by a generational divide (parents and grandparents), and how this generates a sense of not acting according to what is expected from Lara. In her story, she would rather follow the conversation than do the dishes. She articulates this as a question of interest – not of a gendered norm she is acting against. However, the behaviour of the grandparents shows that they think the table is not a place for a girl when the work of doing the dishes needs to be done. The father realises the conflict between Lara's interest and the gendered distribution of tasks and proposes a solution that includes both – one after the other.

It is the specific spatial context of the grandparents' home where gendered norms are enacted. And by enacting them, they are translated into corporeal practices that have a strong link with the material environment: staying at the table and listening to the conversation or leaving the table and doing the dishes in the kitchen; this is how the gendered norms of difference translate into the corporeal world. Acting according to gendered expectations becomes a bodily practice. And as a consequence, ignoring the gendered norms because of not knowing – as in Lara's case – leads to a sense of estrangement and bewilderment. She feels that something is wrong, but as a 5-year-old child, she cannot name it or react accordingly. Therefore, even though a rational understanding of norms and values is not possible because of her age, the emotions tell Lara that something is wrong, that her "body is out of place" (Ahmed, 2000) by staying at the table with the men.

4.2 Story 2: experiencing difference

Jose's childhood memory is linked to various ways of experiencing difference. When he tells the story, he is 42 years old. He remembers how he experienced the differences of nationality and class in the school environments of primary and secondary school when he was about 8 to 12 years old. He spent his childhood in one of the major cities of Switzerland in a neighbourhood with a mostly immigrant population; this was reflected in the children attending primary school. The secondary school in this particular case is the selective *Gymnasium* (which allows access to university). Only a small proportion of students gain admittance to these schools, and children usually have to attend a school outside of their neighbourhood.

> In primary school we were still among us. There were Italian kids, quite a lot, also a lot of Swiss kids; they were all, how shall I say, well, working class. We lived in the old part of town, in the 60s in the old part; this meant among Italians, and they were butchers, milkmen, or even, I remember, there were also prostitutes. And in primary school the difference was simply nationality, but the social differences were not so big. This was afterwards, in secondary school. One of my friends there, his father was a teacher; the father of another one was a doctor. We did alternate; every time when they were supposed to come to my place I invented something, such as a sickness or something else, so they could not come to my home. I just did not want this situation ... In primary school, I really didn't understand some things because I didn't still speak the language. But my friends ... they were all in the same social class. But the higher [in the school system] I got, the more I felt alienated from all sides. In secondary school, we were only boys, and also from the teachers, well, I experienced it as a *horrible* time. In particular, because of that background, they [the teachers] couldn't even remember my name; one always called me the green Spaniard there in the back [because of my green shirt].

This is a story about feelings of sameness and difference and how they are articulated along intersectional categories of difference such as nationality, migration, class, and gender. The memory Jose recalls here is a very emotional one as he even remembers secondary school as a "*horrible* time". The feeling of belonging he experienced during primary school is pushed aside by a feeling of complete alienation from schoolmates and teachers alike. The feeling seems to be reciprocated by the teacher who cannot even remember his name and refers to him according to his nationality and the colour of his shirt.

Social class acts as a unifying category in primary school: it bridges the differences between the various nationalities and even religion, as Jose mentions in another section of the interview, and represents a context that is spatially defined by the area in which he and his schoolmates were living and where he feels at home. It is the social context in which his family belongs, where his friends live, and where the primary school is located. Though he states that there were differences among the children at primary school, he remembers a strong "we" as he states when he says, "In primary school we were still among us". Until that point in his life, he seemed to have lived in the small world of his neighbourhood. All the children he knew were from there, and they formed a group (it is clear, however, that the "we" is later replaced with "I"). The group comprised different nationalities while remaining

unified by the notion of being not Swiss – or maybe perhaps being a migrant. He does not specify this further.

The stark contrast to secondary school is linked to a change in the social and spatial context. He visits a secondary school for children with good marks that leads later to high school and university, whereas his friends from primary school go to a secondary school that guides them towards vocational training and early entry into the labour market. Therefore, he has to leave the area where he grew up and commutes daily to another area in town where his secondary school is located. Changing places also implies a change in the social context of class and even religion. As the body changes place, the specific contextual interplay of intersectional negotiations changes. Suddenly he is the only foreigner in a class of Swiss boys. Though he never stresses nationality, it seems to coincide with another more important difference: the question of class. He is ashamed of his working-class home and starts to separate his life at school from his life at home as they represent different spheres. Suddenly he is different from everyone: he is from a working-class family, he is a different nationality, and he is Catholic – all the Swiss boys are Protestant. The emotional way of articulating this difference points towards his understanding of the situation. He is not only different but acknowledges also that he is an outsider and that the various differences outlined above alienate him significantly from the group of boys at school.

4.3 Story 3: difficulties of belonging

The last story is one about negotiating belonging to the world outside the migrant family and household. A relationship with a Swiss girl from a wealthy family, rooted in the traditional networks of the area and with a liberal background, contrasts with the world in which Alberto, 45 at the time of the interview, grew up. He recalled in an emotional account how bridging the gap between his girlfriend's world and his parents' world seemed impossible.

> It was also difficult to introduce this person [the girlfriend] in my family; this is strange if I think of it today. Now it would not be a problem, but at this time it was strange. For her, she was from a wealthy family, very liberal; for her it was not a problem. I could sleep there, that was no problem. And I enjoyed it very much there, but I also knew that [she] and my world would not fit together. I also could not imagine [marrying] her, because it just wasn't right, it didn't fit.

As a teenager, he feels that the worlds of his parents and the world of the wealthy and established family of his girlfriend are emotionally difficult to align. Being a member of the second generation also means potentially being part of two worlds that are distinguished by nationality, language, and socioeconomic differences. These various differences constitute the two worlds that seem for Alberto too far apart to be bridged.

I asked him whether he experienced the family of his girlfriend and his family as different worlds, and he answered as follows:

> Indeed, yes. And I also had feelings of being ashamed for, well, I felt ashamed for my father, sometimes when we sat in the train together. Maybe it is not feeling ashamed; maybe it is just a dislike to sit down at his side. It was just that I came from high school, from another world.

The feeling he describes here – being ashamed of his father – marks in emotional terms the distance he feels between the world of his father and that of his school. It is a typical scene for a teenager to feel emotionally distant from the world of his parents and articulate this distance in such strong emotions. At the same time, the worlds that seem appealing to him, such as school or the world of his girlfriend, represent a certain type of Swiss society and they imply being part of this society. Longing for these worlds also represents a longing to belong to this society. The longing for an inclusion into this part of Swiss society and a certain shame in belonging to a guest-worker family is an emotional ambivalence Alberto cannot deal with at this age.

5 Can you feel the difference?

My aim was to analyse perceptions and negotiations of difference and belonging through the lens of emotions. The memories told by the interviewed persons represent moments that are meaningful for them precisely because they are linked emotionally to their background as children of migrants belonging to two different cultures, seeking to overcome differences and jump across social borders. It is not in vain that they recall these moments. For all of these memories are like archetypical moments that describe an important element of their being second-generation migrants.

The importance of these vignettes is revealed when looking at the biographies they are part of. The emotions that are linked to these stories show that they represent the essence of the person's biography. For instance, Lara builds in her biographical account a story of how she is, until today, always somehow different from others, and at the same time she has grown used to and is even proud of this characteristic. It is something she has been using for her work as a mediator who always remains partially outside and can therefore legitimately ask questions and act as a broker. She has learned to use the position as an outsider professionally and has been taught (in the vignette it is the father who proposes a solution) that differences do not need to be equalled but that they can be used to become part of two or more worlds at the same time.

Jose, for his part, tells me a story about how he built up a double life, one in the working-class environment of his

parents and the other in the intellectual environment of his Swiss friends and his university career. This led him also to weaken the ties he has with Spain through family and relatives and construct new relationships that are based on cultural interests such as literature and music. Though his relationship with Spain is also much inspired by the memories of his parents, he nevertheless built his own ties apart from the guest-worker milieu of his parents and their family in Spain. In a very telling passage, he describes how he was like a sponge in school, absorbing everything about this new world of culture he was entering. He later also made his connection to Spain through culture his profession by studying Spanish literature and becoming a Spanish teacher.

Alberto presented me with the most emotional account of all. His story is a constant longing for belonging to worlds he can only reach partially. Later he studied for a year in Barcelona, living a bohemian life, playing music on the street with two friends he meets there, sitting in cafés and writing a novel he never published. He studied Spanish and German literature. He explains this choice as the result of a dilemma: he was not able to make a decision in favour of one of the two languages. Presently he works as a teacher of German to foreigners.

The vignettes provided examples to discuss how experiences of difference are articulated in emotional terms and how these emotions are part of our bodily experience of the social world. They are "corporeal involvements" in our social world, following Simonsen's argument (2007:171). Alberto's account is the strongest example of corporeal involvement: it is the act of taking a seat next to his father on the train that makes him feel ashamed. The presence of his father and the possibility of people thinking that he might be connected to him create this strong feeling. The spatial distance or spatial proximity between two bodies produces, in Alberto's mind, a clash between two social worlds that seem to him incompatible. Social differences and questions of belonging are experienced bodily. Being excluded from a social world or a social group is not an abstract notion but an emotion that is felt; it is a corporeal experience.

Furthermore, these emotions are situated in a concrete "here and now" (Richter and Büchler, 2013:49) where the fine lines between social differences are represented and enacted. Lara has to go to the kitchen to behave properly as a girl and is later allowed back to the men's world at the table. Jose leaves a social world behind when he decides to attend a school outside his neighbourhood; socioeconomic difference is in this example strongly connected to the specific neighbourhood in the city. Alberto contrasts the world of his parents (his home) with the home of his girlfriend and school.

My argument has shown the value of using emotions heuristically as an analytical tool to point out moments in migrants' biographies that are crucial in the sense that they are key elements of the biographies. Looking at emotions helps to identify crucial moments in the data. Furthermore, the emotional lens points to moments when experiences of differences and negotiations of belonging are not only "lived experiences" (Valentine, 2007) but also embodied and therefore framed in emotional terms (Simonsen, 2007). Such a "recorporealisation" (Nash, 2010) provides the link to the material environment, which is simultaneously experienced as well as inscribed with meanings, norms, and values. In summary, emotions are worth studying because they provide a key to understanding how individuals understand their experiences of belonging and difference and how they make sense of it.

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