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Mukungu, Kate ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3403-8165 (2017) Acknowledging participants in research on activism to end violence against women in post conflict settings. In: University of Cumbria Interpersonal Violence Seminar Series, 6th December 2017, University of Cumbria. (Unpublished)

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Acknowledging Participants in Research on Activism to End Violence Against Women, in Post Conflict Settings

We All Can Do It!

Research Purpose

- Women's activism is a key influencer of policy and practice (Htun and Weldon 2012)
- Conceptualise women's activism in post conflict / divided societies
- Understand the impact of legacy of conflict and division on VAW activism and vice versa

Methodology

- Qualitative, feminist research
- Life history method
- 10 activists in each filed site – Namibia and Northern Ireland

Aims of Today

- To give a flavour of the research and emerging themes

- To motivate the case for rethinking the social science convention of distorting the identify all life history participants - where possible, offer choice

Part 1 - Interesting Themes

- The nature of post conflict division
- The idea of culture as a coloniser of women
- The activism being pursued

“Culture is a neglected pathway to women’s justice.”

Tamale (2008: 55)

Part 2 - Pseudoymity

- Pre interview, participants were asked to select a pseudonym

- Rosa – subjected to extensive public ridicule (Barcia, 2014) and support, as an activist for several decades. Why hide behind another name?

Pseudoymity

- Sarry – supported women to go public about their experiences of violence and abuse. Hiding her identity wouldn't feel right.

"how can you write about a person who does not exist?"

What to do?

Accepting Their Rationale

- The researcher was already aware of the need to carefully manage Rosa's data
- Both activists gave compelling reasons
- Remembered the unease, but acceptance, expressed by other participants

Other Research

- I wanted to accommodate participants wishes so researched to a revise ethical approach
- Grinyer (2009) – allowed choice because of distress experienced by participants
- Guenther (2009) – didn't allow choice based on concern it would harm participants

Problems with Pseudoymity

- Guenther (2009) concluded women could be recognised even with distorted names having put other research to the test
- When groups, places are involved, how do you effectively distort?
- Every datum can point to an identification

Process Consent

- Recommended by Smythe and Miller (2000)
- Check out every datum with every participant and pull content that does not meet with the participant's consent
- Not possible in this instance due to geography but of interest to researcher

The Outcome

- The Departmental Ethics Committee of the overseeing university approved variation in approach
- 5 out of 20 have chosen to use their own name
- Some Namibian participants need to be contacted

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