ROUTLEDGE ADVANCES IN RESEARCH METHODS

Social Science Research Ethics for a Globalizing World

Interdisciplinary and Cross-Cultural Perspectives

Edited by
Keerty Nakray, Margaret Alston and Kerri Whittenbury
Foreword by
His Holiness The Dalai Lama

ROUTLEDGE

Social Science Research Ethics for a Globalizing World

Research in the humanities and social sciences thrives on critical reflections that unfold with each research project, not only in terms of knowledge created but also in whether chosen methodologies served their purpose. Ethics forms the bulwark of any social science research methodology, and it requires continuous engagement and reengagement for the greater advancement of knowledge. Each chapter in this book will draw from the empirical knowledge created through intensive fieldwork and provide an account of ethical questions faced by the contributors, placing them in the context of contemporary debates surrounding the theory and practice of ethics. The chapters have been thematically organized into five sections: Feminist Ethics: Cross-Cultural Reflections and Its Implications for Change; Researching Physical and Sexual Violence in Nonacademic Settings: A Need for Ethical Protocols; Human Agency, Reciprocity, Participation and Activism: Meanings for Social Science Research Ethics; Emotions, Conflict and Dangerous Fields: Issues of "Safety" and Reflective Research; and Social Science Education: Training in Ethics or "Ethical Training" and "Ethical Publicizing." This interdisciplinary volume will interest students and researchers in academic and nonacademic settings in core disciplines of Anthropology, Sociology, Law, Political Science, International Relations, Geography, or interdisciplinary degrees in Development Studies, Health Studies, Public Health Policy, Social Policy, Health Policy, Psychology, Peace and Conflict Studies and Gender Studies.

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Foreword by His Holiness The Dalai Lama

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

First published 2016
by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

and by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Social science research ethics for a globalizing world : interdisciplinary and cross-cultural perspectives / edited by Keerty Nakray, Margaret Alston and Kerri Whittenbury.
pages cm. — (Routledge advances in research methods ; 16)
Includes index.
1. Social sciences—Research—Moral and ethical aspects. 2. Social sciences—Methodology—Moral and ethical aspects. I. Nakray, Keerty, editor. II. Alston, Margaret, editor. III. Whittenbury, Kerri, editor.
H62.S7247145 2016
174'.93—dc23 2015025792

ISBN: 978-0-415-71622-2 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-315-88002-0 (ebk)

Typeset in Sabon
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

This poem is a tribute to the women interviewed in this research. These women who display indomitable strength and resilience in spite of their difficult circumstances.

Million Lives Million Tears Million Laughter's

Life unfolds like sand dunes unfold in a desert
Life unfolds like tides expose some part of hidden sand in the beach
I set out to unfold the lives of others
These people who are separated from me in space
Yet we are connected by our humanity
They have compassion, which I learn to have
I am not positive like them
I learn from them
There is no greater reality than this moment between me and them
People don't happen by accidents
Existence of life is not an accident
Is there a life which looks like a perfect circle?
Is there one?
Show me one . . .
Then why is your life rejected
It is not a perfect circle
The body is immaterial
It is perishable
Why should somebody loathe you?
When your body is going to be the same dust as her and me . . .
When colour dissolves and becomes the dust of the same colour
When all reality is dust, then why loathe the other . . .
All life is a choice of existence before turning into dust

A poem dedicated to the HIV positive women who were a part of my PhD journey.

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Abbreviations

AAA	American Anthropological Association
BWD	Burmese Women Delhi
CBPR	Community-Based Participatory Research
CEM	*Centro Emergencia Mujer*
CIOMS	Council for International Organizations of the Medical Sciences
CNA	*Código de los Niños y Adolescentes*
CRR	Centre for Refugee Research
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
GBV	Gender-based violence
HSV	Swedish National Agency for Higher Education
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
INEI	*Instituto de Estadística e Informática*
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IRB	Institutional Review Board
IRNVAW	International Research Network on Violence Against Women
LMIC	Low- and middle-income countries
MIMP	*Ministerio de la Mujer y Poblaciones Vulnerables*
NGOs	Nongovernmental Organizations
NHMRC	Australian National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research
PAR	Participatory action research
PND	Postnatal depression
RCUK	Research Council United Kingdom
S.E.L.F.	*Santé pour les Enfants et Les Femmes* or Health for Children and Women
SACO	Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
STS	Secondary traumatic stress
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNSW	University of New South Wales
VAW	Violence against women
VT	Vicarious traumatization
WHO	World Health Organization
WLB	Women's League of Burma
WRC	Women's Refugee Committee

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Foreword

HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

This book contains a collection of social science research papers and reports focusing on ethics in an increasingly globalized world. What emerges from much of this research is that human beings today are facing a moral crisis because of a lack of real conviction in moral principles that would be a source of inner strength. What many today seem to have forgotten is that ethical conduct has a direct effect on individual happiness, the happiness of the family and the society in which we live.

In the past, ethics was the preserve of our religious traditions, but now that the influence of faith and family values has declined, responsibility falls upon the education system. In the interdependent and multifaith world in which we live, no one religion would be universally applicable. This is why scientists, educationists and others have concluded that there is a need to promote a secular ethics. India has a long tradition of secular thinking in which the views of not only all religious traditions but even those who espouse no religion are accorded respect. Having supported secular ethics for hundreds of years, it's now time for India to share them with the rest of the world. What we need to do is incorporate training in secular ethics into our modern education system.

Some people may think that ethical attitudes are not much needed in such areas as business or politics and other aspects of human affairs today. I strongly disagree. The quality of all our actions depends on our motivation. With a positive motivation that takes account of other people's interests as well as our own, our activities can help humanity; without such a motivation, our actions are likely to be detrimental. This is why warmheartedness, trust and compassion are so very important for humankind. Although it is difficult to bring about the inner change that gives rise to these qualities, I believe it is absolutely worthwhile to try.

I am sure many readers will join me in appreciating the efforts of the editors and all the contributors to this book for the dedication and depth of thought they have brought to a wide range of issues that are of concern today.

May 7, 2015

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Acknowledgments

We express our gratitude to all the contributors to this edited volume for their effort and commitment toward completion of this book. We also thank the team at Routledge, New York, especially Max Novick for his support.

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Social Science Research Ethics
An Introduction

Keerty Nakray, Margaret Alston and Kerri Whittenbury

Increasing globalization within the higher education sector in the social sciences has necessitated greater reflections on various dimensions of ethics involved in carrying out research in cross-cultural contexts within and across national boundaries. Emerging studies in the social sciences reflect increasing engagement by researchers with the social, cultural and economic contexts in which they carry out research and also the vulnerabilities of the people being researched and thereby the ethical and safety codes for the researchers themselves (see Lunn, 2014; Sriram et al., 2009; Israel and Hay, 2006; van den Hoonard, 2002; Lee-Treweek and Linkogle, 2000). Traditionally, fieldwork provided the grounds for rich discussion of the ethical dilemmas confronting researchers, but there has been an increasing departure from focusing only on fieldwork as an arena for ethical dilemmas. Marshall and Batten (2004) have highlighted that a wide range of issues that need to be addressed include: values and worldviews, definitions, research design, informed consent, entry into the field, confidentiality, approaches to data collection, participants' roles, ownership of data writing and representation and dissemination of results (see also Henn et al., 2010). In recent times, ethics has emerged as a widely debated area of social science research and is seen as forming the bulwark of research methodology (see Lunn, 2014; Sriram et al., 2009; Israel and Hay, 2006; van den Hoonard, 2002; Lee-Treweek and Linkogle, 2000). Growing awareness and critical reflections on the complexity of ethical questions among social science and humanities researchers has further enriched the debates on research ethics that unfold with each research project, not only in terms of the knowledge created but also whether the methodologies and methods used served their purpose.

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

This book contributes to growing debates in social science research ethics, specifically cross-cultural contexts in recent times (Lunn, 2014). Transcending disciplinary boundaries, the book examines common difficulties faced by researchers undertaking challenging research across the countries

discussed. This edited collection will aim to throw light on specific ethical issues that the contributors encountered while carrying out their respective research projects. Each chapter will draw from the empirical knowledge created through intensive fieldwork. The chapters will be thematically organized into five parts: feminist ethics: cross-cultural reflections and its implications for change; researching physical and sexual violence in nonacademic settings: a need for ethical protocols; human agency, reciprocity, participation and activism: meanings for social science research; emotions, conflict and dangerous fields: issues of 'safety' and reflective research and social science education: training in ethics or 'ethical training' and 'ethical publicizing.'

Chapter 1 will introduce the key debates in social science research ethics that form the foundation for this book. Part I, Feminist Ethics: Cross-Cultural Reflections and Its Implications for Change, comprises five chapters. Chapter 2, written by Keerty Nakray, engages with the difficulties of early career researchers in engaging with the 'ethics of impact' as isolated researchers embedded within institutional setups across borders that often replicate the wider prejudices of the society. It is within this context that the researcher describes her struggle to make an impact. Chapter 3 by Margaret Alston, Kerri Whittenbury and Alex Haynes engages with ethical questions faced by feminist researchers who are conducting research on the gendered impacts of climate change in Bangladesh as 'outsiders.' Climate change is indeed a global phenomenon with varying impacts on societies; however, any research on the social impacts does require a comprehension of the cultural nuances in existence before the processes of climate change set in and their impact. Chapter 4 written by Stina Powell and Seema Arora-Jonsson focuses on undertaking action research on women's leadership and the institutional dynamics in a university setting wherein gender equality is increasingly becoming a part of 'politically correct' administrative practice but is being obliterated from 'political praxis' in institutions of higher learning. In Chapter 5, Linda Murray engages with community-based research in public health inquiry into postpartum maternal depression in Vietnam, wherein she provides a nuanced account of how cross-cultural research can strengthen institutional capacities at the local level, as well as in host countries, and how collaborative partnerships can be established. Chapter 6 by Yandisa Sikweyiya, Elizabeth Dartnall and Rachel Jewkes is an ethnographic study that investigates the underlying reasons why women and men participate in gender-based violence research and how gender shapes participants' perceived risks and benefits, the psychological impact of discussing their victimization among female participants and the perpetration experiences of male participants.

The second part of the book is titled Researching Physical and Sexual Violence in Nonacademic Settings: A Need for Ethical Protocols. It includes chapters from researchers who have addressed ethical concerns while studying sexual violence and child abuse from the perspective of practitioners,

which has direct implications for policy thinking. Chapter 7 by Prisca Benelli examines the difficulty of studying physical and sexual violence by humanitarian agencies in situations of conflict and post-conflict. She clearly delineates the physical, legal, socioeconomic, psychological and cross-cultural risks that should inform research practice in difficult circumstances. In Chapter 8, Olga Bardales Mendoza addresses the difficulties of conducting research in countries such as Peru, which do not have clearly defined ethical protocols and discusses how this hinders the study of child abuse in this country.

The third part of the book, Human Agency, Reciprocity, Participation and Activism: Meanings for Social Science Research Ethics, comprises four chapters. Chapter 9 by Jan Breckenridge, Kerrie James and Paula Jops argues that participatory research should form the departure point for research agendas rather than being imposed from external agencies. They share their experience of conducting their research with Burmese refugees living in India in extremely marginalized conditions. In Chapter 10, Debojyoti Das explores the constraints that academic research poses to the 'participation' of researchers in communities afflicted by deep political and ethnic strife. In Chapter 11, Davina Gateley Said explores the difficulties of investigating refugees and operationalizing 'agency orientated research' in actual data collection methods and reporting. In Chapter 12, Mzikazi Nduna, Yandisa Skweyiya, Grace Khunou, Vuyani Pambo and Thandeka Mdletshe highlight the importance of training field workers in various issues related to negotiating consent and also other data collection challenges they encountered in studying fathers' absences in South Africa.

The fourth section of the book, titled Emotions, Conflict and Dangerous Fields: Issues of "Safety" and Reflective Research, includes two chapters. Chapter 13 engages with practical decisions made by Judith Verweijen to ensure the authenticity of the researcher in DR Congo, as well as the importance of placing research actors in the context of existing knowledge. Chapter 14 sees Li Xiuying and Liu Dongxu engaging with normative debates on physical, social, and emotional safety and its continuities and discontinuities from the gendered perspective for research conducted in Tibet (China) and Guangdong Province, China.

The fifth section of the book, Social Science Education: Training in Ethics or "Ethical Training" and "Ethical Publicizing," comprises three chapters. Chapter 15, "Ethics of Analysis and Publication in International Development" by Laura Camfield and Richard Palmer-Jones engages with the complexities of ethics, politics of evidence and policy thinking. Chapter 16, "Vicarious and Secondary Trauma in Interviews on Father Identity and Connections," by Mzikazi Nduna, Yandisa Skweyiya, Grace Khunou, Vuyani Pambo and Thandeka Mdletshe discusses the transfer of participants' observed distress and occurrence of vicarious trauma among field workers. Chapter 17, by Keerty Nakray, discusses the occurrence of vicarious trauma in the data analysis stages of transcribing and translation. In conclusion, this

book will aim to draw out the implications of the research discussed herein for higher education policies, as well as the need for researchers to prepare very carefully for their research prior to entering the field. In conclusion, this book will draw out the implications herein for researchers in both academic and non-academic settings.

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1 Social Science Research Ethics for a Globalizing World

A Critical Overview of Interdisciplinary and Cross-Cultural Perspectives

Keerty Nakray

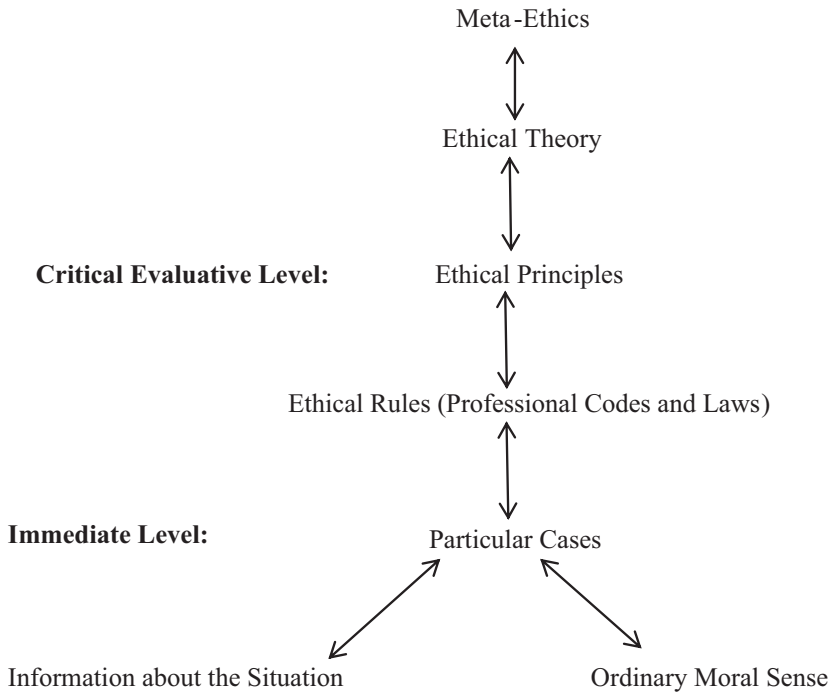
The word 'ethics' is derived from the Greek ethos, meaning a person's character or disposition, whereas the related term 'morality' is derived from the Latin *moralis*, meaning custom, manners or character (Kimmel, 2007: 5). In general, philosophers have drawn a distinction between morals in terms of concerns of right or wrong, ought or ought not, a good action or a bad one and the term 'ethical' as often used to refer to rules of behavior or conformity to a code or set of principles (Kimmel, 2007: 5). The systematic study of ethics is linked to ancient Greek civilization, and it included both the study of the underlying basis for shaping judgments in specific situations of what constitutes appropriate conduct and the essence of the judgments themselves (Preissle, 2008). Some scholars, however, prefer to use the term 'ethics' for the study of frameworks for judgment (e.g., consequentialism) and to use the terms 'morals' and 'morality' for specific injunctions (e.g., do no harm) (Preissle, 2008: 273). The distinction between 'ethics' and 'morality' is culture specific, as Europeans view it in terms of a binary opposition between "right and wrong, good and bad and doing the right thing and avoiding wrong action," whereas the Chinese see it as balancing complementary or competing forces, such as the Chinese yin and yang (Preissle, 2008: 273). Florence Kellner has eloquently marked out the distinction between the letter (codes) and the spirit (morality) and sees research as more about morality than ethics (2002: 32).

Ethics are conceptualized in multifaceted ways: (1) Descriptive ethics presents the empirical dimensions of social sciences, which address the actual behavior and the values that guide this behavior. (2) Normative ethics engages with fundamental questions on the behavior of people that could be categorized as 'good' or 'bad' behavior and the distinction between these two domains of ethics' 'is' and 'ought' sides of human behavior. (3) Metaethics engages with reasoning of moral decisions and the characteristic of moral conduct. (4) Applied ethics is based on normative ethics, which forms the basis for the resolution of moral questions. Social science research ethics is in the domain of applied ethics (see Kitchener 2000; Kitchner and Kitchner 2009).

In addition, Kitchener and Kitchener (2009) have developed a five-level model of ethics: the lowest level is of particular behavior (action) and

ordinary moral judgment. The second level is that of ethical rules that govern the decisions and actions, and this is where the critical evaluative level begins. The third level is ethical principles that include morals, rules and justification for their existence. The next level is that of ethical theory, which is the traditional normative ethics that defines worthwhile behavior. The fifth and final level is metaethics, which includes the meaning of ethics.

According to Preissle (2008), normative ethics form the basis for research ethics and it also, within its ambit, further incorporates justice-based ethics, duty-based or deontological ethics, consequence-based or utilitarian ethics and virtue-based ethics. Justice-based ethics is an assimilation of human rights and tenets of fairness to form the underlying framework related to the treatment of all human beings. It is guided by Aristotelean thought, that is that "equals should be treated equally and unequals unequally" (Velasquez et al., 1990). In modern societies, justice ethics is defined through statutory agreements. Duty-based or deontological ethics is based on rules, duties and obligations that humans have to their fellow humans, their communities and



Source: Kitchener and Kitchener (2009)

Figure 1.1 The Model of Ethical Decision Making

themselves regardless of the consequences. Aristotle developed virtue-based ethics almost two millennia ago. The basic questions at the center-point for virtue ethicists are, "How should I live?" "What is the good life?" and "What are proper family and social values?" This form of ethics is based on the disposition of individuals to choose virtuous action consciously and for the value it has and the feelings that are associated with that action, which are not limited to specific situations but govern the whole life of an individual (Athanassoulis, 2014). It requires that people intuitively act virtuously toward one another, typically with ideals of character, such as honesty and integrity, respectfulness, wisdom, justice and compassion (Preissle, 2008). The other form of normative ethics influential in research ethics is consequence or utilitarian ethics. Consequential ethics is decision making based on the anticipated outcomes of a choice. Utilitarianism, a kind of consequential ethics developed by British philosophers during the late 18th to mid-19th centuries, specifies the greatest good for the greatest number as the best ethical choice (Preissle, 2008). The ethic of care was developed by the psychologist Carol Gilligan and the philosopher Nel Noddings during the last quarter of the 20th century and directs qualitative researchers to conduct themselves toward others naturally and directly and to support relationships based on positive feelings and concern for each other (Gilligan, 2003).

CRITICAL DEBATES IN SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH ETHICS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The concept of 'consent' can be traced back to Egyptian civilization but also that of the Greeks and Romans. Documents have been found that show how the doctor's intervention had, to some extent at least, first to be approved by the patient. Plato (law IV) had already foreseen the problems, the procedures and the modes of information that are, in synthesis, at the root of the principles of the present formula of informed consent and correlated the practice of the information and consensus with the quality and social position of the patient (Mallardi, 2005). Similarly, the Hippocratic physician was concerned with his own outcomes in terms of treating patients successfully, with Christian religion adding the sacred dimensions of medicine (Mallardi, 2005).

The early origins of the ethics codes for research are usually traced to the period following the Second World War, as the Nazi's doctors had conducted medical experiments in concentration camps under the conditions of war and genocide that were brought to light during the Nuremberg war crime trials (see Table 1.1). The perils and horrors of the Nazi medical experimentation resulted in Western powers initiating and developing the Nuremberg Code, which brought forth the principle of 'do no harm,' which constitutes the bulwark of bioethics followed by medical practitioners. Along with

Table 1.1 The Nuremberg Code

1. The voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential. This means that the person involved should have legal capacity to give consent; should be so situated as to be able to exercise free power of choice, without the intervention of any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, overreaching, or other ulterior form of constraint or coercion; and should have sufficient knowledge and comprehension of the elements of the subject matter involved as to enable him to make an understanding and enlightened decision. This latter element requires that before the acceptance of an affirmative decision by the experimental subject there should be made known to him the nature, duration, and purpose of the experiment; the method and means by which it is to be conducted; all inconveniences and hazards reasonably to be expected; and the effects upon his health or person which may possibly come from his participation in the experiment. The duty and responsibility for ascertaining the quality of the consent rests upon each individual who initiates, directs or engages in the experiment. It is a personal duty and responsibility which may not be delegated to another with impunity.
2. The experiment should be such as to yield fruitful results for the good of society, unprocurable by other methods or means of study, and not random and unnecessary in nature.
3. The experiment should be so designed and based on the results of animal experimentation and knowledge of the natural history of the disease or other problem under study that the anticipated results will justify the performance of the experiment.
4. The experiment should be so conducted as to avoid all unnecessary physical and mental suffering and injury.
5. No experiment should be conducted where there is an a priori reason to believe that death or disabling injury will occur; except, perhaps, in those experiments where the experimental physicians also serve as subjects.
6. The degree of risk to be taken should never exceed that determined by the humanitarian importance of the problem to be solved by the experiment.
7. Proper preparations should be made and adequate facilities provided to protect the experimental subject against even remote possibilities of injury, disability, or death.
8. The experiment should be conducted only by scientifically qualified persons. The highest degree of skill and care should be required through all stages of the experiment of those who conduct or engage in the experiment.
9. During the course of the experiment the human subject should be at liberty to bring the experiment to an end if he has reached the physical or mental state where continuation of the experiment seems to him to be impossible.
10. During the course of the experiment the scientist in charge must be prepared to terminate the experiment at any stage, if he has probable cause to believe, in the exercise of the good faith, superior skill, and careful judgment required of him, that a continuation of the experiment is likely to result in injury, disability, or death to the experimental subject.

Source: (Shuster, 1997)

this Code, the World Medical Association's Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 1964) informed the basis of modern day bioethics. There are debates questioning the Nuremberg Code as the quintessential historical turning point in biomedical research. Prior to the establishment of the Nuremberg Code, public health officials had excused themselves by arguing that there were no explicit rules governing medical research on human beings in Germany during the war period and that research practices that were followed in Germany were not different from the Allied countries (Vollmann and Winau, 1996).

As early as 1891, the Prussian minister of the interior issued a directive to all prisons that tuberculin for the treatment of tuberculosis "must in no case be used against the patient's will" (Vollmann and Winau, 1996: 1445). Initial regulations had been outlined in detail by the Prussian minister for religious, educational and medical affairs in 1990. In 1898, Albert Neisser, discoverer of the gonococcus and professor of dermatology and venereology at the University of Breslau, injected cell-free serum from patients with syphilis into patients who were mostly working as prostitutes without their consent. Of these patients, some of them contracted syphilis, but Neisser argued that the vaccine did work and the women had contracted the disease as a result of their profession (Vollmann and Winau, 1996). Albert Moll, a psychiatrist in Berlin, documented six hundred cases of unethical nontherapeutic research on humans and emphasized the need for informed consent (Vollmann and Winau, 1996). Subsequently, in the year 1898, the public prosecutor investigated the case and Neisser was fined by the Royal Disciplinary Court, with the ruling emphasizing the importance of informed consent. In 1900, the minister for religious, educational and medical affairs issued a directive to all hospitals and clinics that all patients should be informed of the potential negative consequences of medical interventions, except in the cases of diagnosis, healing and immunization. Informed consent has been an axiom of post-World War II clinical research and practice. At the closing of the Nuremberg Medical Trial (NMT) on 19 August 1947, the presiding trial judge, Walter Beals, promulgated criteria for 'permissible medical experiments'; although he stressed that "certain types of medical experiments on human beings, when kept within reasonably well-defined bounds, conform to the ethics of the medical profession generally, these criteria were not invoked by the judges in reaching their verdict" (Weindling, 2001: 38). The judges viewed the Nazi experiments as crimes against humanity and as war crimes. In fact, eight of the 23 defendants were acquitted, indicating how complex it was to discriminate between war crimes and politically sanctioned racial atrocities, on the one hand, and legitimate scientific inquiry, on the other. Moreover, the prosecution was confronted by a broad range of human experiments, varying greatly in scientific sophistication—from the crude wounding of limbs, to comparative vaccine trials. The nature of clinical experiments carried out by scientists at the time could lead to serious aspersions being cast upon the moral and legal justification of jeopardizing

human lives for the sake of scientific advancement. Therefore, the Code played a vital role in assuaging concerns of human safety and ensured legal safeguards (Weindling, 2001).

The World Medical Association's (WMA) Declaration of Helsinki went a step further than the Nuremberg Code and was formally adopted by the General Assembly of the WMA in 1964. It introduced the concept of guardianship, which is for subjects who are not able to consent for themselves, such as children; the consent can be provided by their legal guardians Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS) in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), 2002. The Nuremberg Code (1949) and the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 1964) have set the international standards on scientific research across the world. The Declaration of Helsinki has been amended five times since its inception (Carlson et al., 2004). The latest amendment to the Declaration in Edinburgh (2000) stated: "Research investigators should be aware of the ethical, legal, regulatory requirements for research on subjects in their own countries as well as applicable international requirements. No national, ethical, legal or regulatory requirement should be allowed to reduce or eliminate any of the protections for human subjects set forth in this Declaration" (CIOMS WHO, 2002).

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) (1966) developed policies for the protection of human subjects based on the Nuremberg and Helsinki standards. All institutions receiving funding from NIH were required to establish Institutional Review Boards (IRBs). The IRBs comprise academic staff members within the university or college, one community representative and one non-scientist representative. It is the responsibility of the university based IRB to carry out appraisals of the proposal and take final decisions pertaining to rejection and approval on the projects. All medical and psychological research is expected to conform to these regulations with some minor exceptions made to social science disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, economics and political science, which follow more subject specific guidelines (see Ragin and Amoroso, 2011).

The Belmont Report (1978) was written by the US Department of Health, Education and Welfare (OHRP Archive Office for Human Research Protection, 1978), and it specifically outlined the following principles and applications: (i) Respect for Persons: Informed Consent, (ii) Beneficence: Assessment of Risks and Benefits and (iii) Justice: Fair Selection of Subjects. The report provided a preliminary basis for social science research ethics as it focused on biomedical and behavioral research and indicated the need for principles of ethical research for other forms of research. Unfortunately, there was little reflection on this point, and the principles of the Belmont Report were applied to social science research. This has resulted in situations where social science researchers are expected to follow principles

that might not cohere with their research design and often leads to ethical dilemmas.

The Belmont Report identified six norms to guide scientific research:

1. Use of a valid research design: Faulty research is not useful to anyone and is not only a waste of time and money, but also cannot be conceived of as being ethical in that it does not contribute to the well-being of the participants.
2. The researcher must be competent to conduct the research.
3. Consequences of the research must be identified: Procedures must respect privacy, ensure confidentiality, maximize benefits, and minimize risks.
4. The sample selection must be appropriate for the purposes of the study, representative of the population to benefit from the study, and sufficient in number.
5. The participants must agree to participate in the study through voluntary informed consent—that is, without threat or undue inducement (voluntary), knowing what a reasonable person in the same situation would want to know before giving consent (informed) and explicitly agreeing to participate (consent).
6. The researcher must inform the participants whether harm will be compensated. (Mertens, 2014: 15)

Few universities arbitrarily established separate IRBs for social scientists. This is not an optimal solution, as following good ethical practices is directly linked to sound research design and is an outcome of good grounding in social science research methods. The contradictions are evident in the first principle 'respect for persons' which does however take into account that all research participants such as children or those with developmental disabilities might not be able to provide consent. This requires that consent is sought from the legal guardian. The second principle of 'beneficence' includes an assessment of risks and benefits. The question of the social impacts or direct benefits of any research remains. The third principle 'justice' requires equal distribution of the benefits and burdens of the research. That is, research participants should gain direct benefits from the research, and there are five acceptable distribution methods:

(i) to each person an equal share
(ii) to each person according to individual need
(iii) to each person according to individual efforts
(iv) to each person according to the societal contribution
(v) to each person according to merit

(National Institutes of Health, 1974)

This requires that researchers make a sincere effort to ensure adequate representation of hard to access people. Research on certain topics, such as child sexual abuse or domestic violence, is difficult to address as it does require the participant revisiting tumultuous life events. The process by itself is inequitable. There are risks involved in undertaking research studies involving issues related to social justice, as this involves questioning the existing status quo of society and inevitably implies changing the power relations (which could imply firing of corrupt leaders or bringing more women into political governance) (Ragin and Amoroso, 2011).

The Nuremberg Code and the Declaration of Helsinki were drafted under the auspices of the American military tribunal, and British officials were involved covertly as they undertook investigations of the medical criminals and their victims (Hazelgrove, 2002). The Nuremberg Code had virtually no impact on the research community or on the medical elite in Britain. From the perspective of those who met at the Pasteur Institute in 1946 to discuss medical war crimes, it was intended to protect the reputation of Allied research against the taint of Nazism as well as to provide a guide for research; and although national and international medical bodies reportedly endorsed it, for leading researchers at the British Postgraduate Medical School and others, it had little relevance (Hazelgrove, 2002). Harvard professor and anesthesiologist Henry Beecher revealed the use of injection of live cancer cells into nonconsenting patients and the artificial induction of hepatitis into institutionalized children (Harkness et al., 2001) and Maurice Pappworth, a Liverpool born physician, conducted a private course for membership of the Royal College of Physicians (MRCP) to save the medical profession from discredit. The Royal College of Physicians took a reactive stance to Pappworth's concerns and left it to the discretion of the individual doctor to decide the levels of risks that the patients could be exposed to (Hazelgrove, 2002). In 1966, Beecher's article led to the implementation of federal rules governing the conduct of human experimentation in the United States, including a clear call for fully informed consent from research subjects. Henry Beecher was not in favor of institutionalizing formal rules or the creation of ethics review committees but rather argued in favor of the "presence of an intelligent, informed, conscientious, compassionate and responsible investigator offered the best protection for human research subjects" (Harkness et al., 2001: 366). Controversies in research ethics continue to persist and careful attention to ethics should be part of every scientist's approach to research (Hazelgrove, 2002).

History is replete with examples of public outcries against the pursuit of scientific knowledge carried out with scant concern for the well-being of all living things. Some other examples include the Tuskegee Syphilis Trials (1932–1972), Willowbrook Hepatatis Study (1963–1966), Mkultra Project (1953–1964), Milgram Experiment (1961–1962), Stanford Prison Experiment (1971) and Humphrey's Tearoom Trade (mid-1960s) (Ragin and Amoroso, 2011) (see Table 1.2).

Table 1.2 Case Studies of Ethical Failures in Scientific Research

Tuskegee Syphilis Trials**:** In the early 1930s, the trials were undertaken under the US Public Health Service (PHS), which began a study of the long-term effects of untreated syphilis. For the purposes of the study, 399 African-American men with syphilis from rural Alabama were enrolled without any consent or knowledge of being enrolled for the study. In 1947, when penicillin was **invented**, it was deliberately not provided to these men, and researchers continued with their research on long-term consequences. The findings of the study were published in several journals, and it was only in 1972 that a newspaper reporter exposed it to the wider public. The researchers had made conscious efforts to ensure that these research participants did not see a doctor outside of the study (Reverby, 2008). By this time, over two-thirds of the men had died from syphilis or syphilis-related complications. In 1997, President Bill Clinton apologized to the six remaining men from the study and to all African-Americans. Nearly forty years after the study ended and ten years after the formal apology, "Tuskegee" still reminds some Black Americans of the institutional racism deeply embedded in the health-care system and why medical research should be accountable (Reverby, 2008).

Willowbrook Hepatatis Study (1963–1966): The Willowbrook State School in Staten Island, New York, housed and cared for mentally disabled children. Dr. Saul Krugman from the New York University School of Medicine and his coworkers began conducting hepatitis studies there in 1955 and continued hepatitis studies there in 1955 and for more than 15 years. The children from the school were deliberately infected with hepatitis, as there was a tendency among the children admitted to the school, therefore if infected under medical supervision the intensity was likely to be less. The purposeful transmission of the disease was questioned not only on ethical grounds but also on legal grounds. The researchers had obtained consent from the parents of each child. Parents of children who participated early in the study gave consent after receiving information provided by Willowbrook orally and in writing. One of the key questions relates to appropriateness of parental consent when the children received no therapeutic benefit for his or her involvement.

Mkultra Project (1953–64): The Central Intelligence Agency's Project MKULTRA provided insights into CIA's misconduct into experimental drug administration and radiation exposure to unwitting subjects from 1953–64. The project aimed to protect the CIA operatives and employees from interrogation techniques and develop drugs and procedure to increase the efficacy of behavioral modification and interrogation technique on persons of interest to CIA. The project involved 80 institutions including 44 colleges or universities as well as hospitals, prisons and pharmaceutical companies (Horrock 1977). Then CIA Director Richard Helms destroyed all the files of the project in 1974 (Price 2007).

Milgram Experiment (1961–62): Milgram, a psychologist, studied people's obedience to authority. The research participants were paid volunteers who were informed that the experiment was a learning experiment. They were informed that the primary motive of the study was to examine obedience to authority, as it could potentially bias the participants. The participants were

(*Continued*)

Table 1.2 (*Continued*)

asked to administer electric shocks to another person with an increasing voltages (up to 450 volts) if the person does not provide the correct answers to a question. In the initial experiments 65 percent of the participants were willing to deliver the final and highest level of shock as s/he had been instructed by a figure in authority. The victim was in another room and answered the question through a signal box. The victim was not visible in this experiment. In the subsequent experiments, participants were subjected to other conditions such as listening to the cries of the victim or moving the experiment site out of Yale. Participants reacted varied some of them begged not to deliver shocks and some of them experienced psychological strain perhaps because of their defiance and their unwillingness to complete the experiment or the pain they believed they had previously administered.

Stanford Prison Experiment 1971: Social Psychologist Philip Zimbardo undertook a study to examine the effects of taking on the role of prisoners or prison guards on individuals. The Stanford University students were taken as paid volunteers to be prisoners. The participants were informed that they could quit the study at any point however they will have to forfeit their payment. They were informed that there could be some violation of civil rights and privacy while they are in the makeshift prison. The nine students who had been randomly selected were arrested from their homes by actual Palo Alto police officers and were subjected to the arrest procedures of at the local police station and taken to the prison in the basement of their campus building. They were subjected to humiliating procedures which includes harassment and abuse through tactics such as randomly privileging few over others or waking them in the night and punishments for contraventions. The experiment was stopped on day 6 of the eight days that it was meant to be carried out when prisoners reported sadistic treatment to a visiting researcher. Other researchers who had visited experiment did not express any dissent to the treatment meted to the students.

Humphrey's Tearoom Trade (mid-1960s): Laud Humphreys (1970/1975) presents the results of his mid-1960s dissertation research on men who met in public restrooms for casual sexual encounters. He gained access to these men by agreeing to be a "watch queen"; that is, a voyeur who would inform the men if police arrived. Humphreys recorded the license plates of men he had watched over and also obtained their addresses through police department contacts. Furthermore, he visited their homes pretending to undertake a market research project. Humphreys study is highly criticized, as more than half of the men had closeted their homosexuality.

Source: (Ragin and Amoroso, 2011)

Social Science Research Paradigm and Ethics: Contemporary Debates

The last three examples in Table 1.2 demonstrate some of the difficult ethical questions posed and grappled with in social science research. It is counter-intuitive to delineate research ethics from broader theoretical and empirical

debates in social sciences. Ethical decision making is more important than arbitrarily following rigidly defined ethical protocols (Hill et al., 1995). Neither is there a binary division between the researchers and researched, as researcher's goals, vision and ways of 'cognitively structuring' inevitably give form to research. Ethical decision making depends on researchers being critically conscious of their own principles, values and commitment to social justice (Hill et al., 1995). Darley (1980: 15) makes the point with gusto, reminding us that if we do not do ethical research, "we leave those who are attempting social change the prey of hucksters who are willing to put forth undocumented claims based on inadequate evidence" (cited from Israel and Hay, 2006: 2). Early on, Guba and Lincoln (1989) developed a framework for the ethical practice of qualitative research based on a revised understanding of the researcher-researched relationship. To this end, they put forth their criteria for rigor as trustworthiness and authenticity, including balance or fairness (inclusive representation of stakeholders in the process of the research), ontological authenticity (make respondents aware of their constructions of reality), educative authenticity (educate others of the realities experienced by all stakeholder groups), catalytic authenticity (enable stakeholders to take action on their own behalf) and tactical authenticity (training participants how to act on their own behalf) (cited from Mertens, 2014: 18).

Table 1.3 depicts the complex evolution of social science research ethics from traditions of social science debates based on the epistemology, ontology, axiology, methodology and methods. Early origins of social science philosophy can be traced back to the empiricism of the French and Scottish Enlightenments. David Hume aspired to study human differences by establishing basic laws that govern the elements of the human mind, which could explain with some precision human problems as natural phenomena (Bristow, 2010). In this context, thinkers from Plato (428–327 BCE) to Leibnitz (Gottfried Wilhelm Baron von Leibniz, 1646–1716) promoted rationalism that is a school of thought that believes that our concepts and knowledge can be achieved beyond the sense experience. The three theses that form the bulwark of rationalism include: a) The Intuition/Deduction Thesis proposes that certain hypothesis can be known through intuition, whereas others have to be deduced through valid arguments. (b) The Innate Knowledge Thesis supposes the existence of innate knowledge of propositions as a priori, that is, independent of experience and some of these propositions might come into consciousness through experiences but do not create new knowledge. (c) The Innate Concept Thesis as some claim is subsumed within the innate knowledge; that is, a particular instance of knowledge can be innate only if concepts that comprise that proposition are innate. The competing epistemology was empiricism; that is, all knowledge is a posteriori dependent upon sense experience (Markie, 2004). For empiricists, such as John Locke (1632–1704), human beings are born tabula rasa, that is, with a 'clean slate.' What we come to know is the result of our experience written

Table 1.3 Paradigms: Epistemology, Ontology, Methodology and Methods in Social Science Research

Paradigm/ Theory		Criteria	Form of Theory	Type of Narration	Values and Ethical Protocols
Positivism	**Ontology:** Naïve Realism, Realism. There is a "real," objective reality that is knowable. **Epistemology:** Dualistic/Objectivist. The researcher can, and should, avoid any bias or influence on the outcome. Results, if done well, are true. **Methodology:** Quantitative methods based on hypothesis testing. Largely aimed at experiments or analysis of data. Methods: Quantitative analysis of survey or data.	Internal and external validity. Reliability and objectivity.	Logical-deductive.	Scientific-report-aimed explanation, prediction and control.	Extrinsic to the research design titled toward researcher's goals rather than participant interests. Informed consent from research participants, protection of identity of participants and restricted access.
Post-positivism	**Ontology:** Critical Realism—real reality but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible. There is a "real," objective reality, but humans cannot know it for sure. **Epistemology:** Modified Objectivist. The goal is objectivity, but pure objectivity is impossible. Results are "probably" true.	Internal and external validity. Reliability and objectivity.	Logical-deducive.	Hypotheses tested through could-be facts or laws	Extrinsic to the research project. Informed consent and confidentiality.

	Methodology: Includes both qualitative and quantitative methods. Seeks reduction of bias through qualitative validity techniques (e.g., triangulation)				
Constructivist	**Ontology:** Relativist.Local and specific constructed and co-constructed realities. All truth is "constructed" by humans and situated within a historical moment and social context. Multiple meanings exist of perhaps the same data. **Epistemology:** Transactional/ subjectivist-created findings. Researcher and participants are linked in constructing knowledge together. **Methodology:** Hermeneutical/ Dialectic **Methods:** Generally qualitative, research through dialogue.	Trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, confirmability.	Substantive-formal.	Interpretative case studies, ethnographic fiction.	Intrinsic to the research design aimed toward encouraging participation. Critical ethics or participatory ethics.
Critical Theory	**Ontology:** Historical Realism. Virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values crystallized over time. Reality can be understood but only as constructed historically and connected to power.	Historical situatedness and erosion of ignorance.	Structural theory based in understand-ing of power relations	Qualitative Reports that include reflective accounts of undertaking research.	Intrinsic to the research design aimed at mutual learning experience.

(*Continued*)

Table 1.3 (*Continued*)

Paradigm/ Theory		Criteria	Form of Theory	Type of Narration	Values and Ethical Protocols
	Epistemology: Transactional/ subjectivist, value-mediated findings. Knowledge is mediated reflectively through the perspective of the researcher. **Methodology:** Dialogic/ Dialectical **Methods:** Focused on investigator/ participant dialogue, uncovering subjugated knowledge and linking it to social critique				
Advocacy/ Participatory	**Ontology:** Varied **Epistemology:** The distinction between researcher and researched breaks down. Insider knowledge highly valued. **Methods:** Works with individuals on empowerment and issues that matter to them. Tends toward social, cultural or political change using any appropriate method.	Catalysts to bring about social change.	Conscientization based toward individual and community realization of oppression.	Communication of participatory research to the stakeholders.	Participation and dispersal of research findings are intrinsic to such research.
Pragmatism	**Ontology:** Varied. Pragmatists may be less interested in what "truth" is and more interested in "what works."	Bring forth knowledge that could contribute to social change.	Awareness raising.	Communication with stakeholders.	Ethics of impact making.

Epistemology: Accepts many different viewpoints and works to reconcile those perspectives through pluralistic means.

Methods: Focuses on a real-world problem, by whatever methods are most appropriate, and tends toward changes in practice.

Source: (Creswell, 2009; Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 193–97; 198–99; Lather, 1992)

on that slate (Bernard, 2006). Hume's (1711–1776) skepticism, based on empiricist philosophy of knowledge, forms the basis of principles of modern science. That is, we have to make improvements in existing knowledge, we are moving toward truth but we can never reach a point to claim absolute truth (Bernard, 2006). Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) questioned division between a priori *truths* and a posteriori *truths*, he proposed the powerful idea that a priori *truths* exist but our perception of truth is based on our minds' capabilities to organize sensory experience (Bernard, 2006).

The philosophical principles that formed the basis for scientific revolution in the 17th century propelled a greater interest in the application of these principles toward understanding social problems. The leading French thinker August Comte, founder of sociology, initiated the idea of a positivist approach to social sciences. Subsequently, Comte was followed by another influential French scholar Emile Durkheim (1858–1917), whose epoch-making work *Suicide* emphasized the role of social facts in shaping everyday human behavior. Their leading counterparts in Germany, such as G. F. W. Hegel (1770–1831), focused on dialectical views on varied social processes, relationships, conflicts and contradictions (Ritzer and Goodman, 2004). On the contrary, Karl Marx focused solely on the dialectics of economic relations, whereas Max Weber introduced *verstehen* in the context of study of society, and he understood human motivations as being the result of a complex juxtaposition of varied forces, including religion, capitalism, bureaucracy and industrialism. Foucault provided a radical departure from these perspectives, focusing on power as emerging from various sources to shape the experiences of the modern human being. Feminist thinking led to paradigm shifts in the social sciences, which was otherwise dominated by white, middle-class thinkers who did little to capture women's experiences. The purpose of feminist research is to present women's everyday life experiences as valuable sources of knowledge toward understanding power hierarchies in the society (Campbell and Wasco, 2000: 783).

Social science research is based on the paradigm that is defined by social science philosophy and consists of ethics (axiology), epistemological, ontological and methodological assumptions that guide and direct thinking and action (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). In his book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn (1962) defined "paradigm as a term related closely to normal science" (p.10). It implies that people committed to research based on shared paradigms follow the same rules and standards for scientific practice that are based on previous observations and principles that have helped solve problems in a particular discipline and facilitate further research in terms of definition of problems and hypothesis formulation and the identification of the most suitable empirical research techniques (Corbetta, 2003).

Ethics is a part of the research paradigm that asks fundamental questions of morality and value of a particular research project to the individual researcher and the society (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Table 1.3 describes

the intrinsic relationship between epistemology, ontology, axiology (values and ethics), methodology and methods. Ontology or "theories of reality" (Lincoln, 2005: 230) and interrogates "what is reality," that is, our comprehension of reality and how to we perceive the world around us (Letherby, 2003; Walter, 2013: 14). Epistemology refers to the theory of knowledge and ways of knowing. It is largely unwritten rules of what can be known, what can be legitmate knowledge and who can be the knower (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Letherby, 2003). Epistemology and ontology reflect on whether we are following rationalism or empiricism or if we have adopted the positivist approach to social science inquiry (Bernard, 2006). Methodology is defined based on epistemology and ontology, whereby methods of inquiry are described and analyzed and possible challenges and outcomes are predicted. Methods refer to techniques through which data is collected and analyzed, for example: interviews, focus group discussions and discourse analysis. Axiology refers to the theory of values; as social science researchers, we have to question our value systems, and the value systems of our institutions shape our research approach.

Ethics defines justness of research to the participants and its value to the society. In addition, specific ethical nuances emerge in the context of research paradigms that have been adopted by the researchers. Positivism is based on the collection of data from samples that are subjected to tests of reliability and validity, mathematical analysis and inference drawing. Positivist research could entail both the collection of large-scale primary data or analysis of secondary data. The creation of large-scale databases facilitates several research projects with varying hypothesis and questions. Anonymity and confidentiality are of primary concerns and also data should be archived carefully to prevent wrongful interpretation of the data in the future. The post-positivists have rejected the assumptions of the positivists about what constitutes the truth, instead believing in the nebulous, complex and unpredictable nature of the social world and thus challenging the notion of 'good science' and in doing so attempting to open up alternate possibilities for knowing (O'Leary, 2007). Usually, post-positivist research involves studying disadvantaged groups, wherein participation is seen as an antidote to the unequal power relationships between the researchers and research participants (Parry et al., 2001).

In the 18th century, Wilhelm Dilthey added to the foundations of interpretivism by arguing that *verstehen* (understanding) was the goal of social science research and that the proper topic of social science research was the lived experiences of humans. He was reacting against contemporary ideas that the social sciences should emulate the positivist methods of the natural sciences because humans could be treated as complex machines. For him, natural reality was not the same as social reality, and that meant that different methods of research were needed to study social reality (Willis, 2007). Constructivism and interpretivism focuses on the construction of meaning by the research participants of the social world. It includes the hermeneutic

circle that is—"constructions of variety of individuals—deliberately chosen so as to uncover widely variable viewpoints are elicited, challenged and exposed to information and new, more sophisticated ways of interpretation, untile some level of consensus is reached" (Guba and Lincoln: 180–81). It uses the relativist ontological position; that is, understanding reality that is constructed intersubjectively through experiential and social learning and transactional epistemology assumes that there is no seperation between what we know and what we are. That is, the researcher and the participants are inevitably a part of the same social reality and dialogue should be the basis for seeking truth. Some of the ethical questions engage with meaning and value of this research to the target population; seek to take a departure from existing knowledge and deeply interogate if research changes us as people (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). This paradigm has questioned the notion of "value neutrality," wherein internal and external validity have been replaced by terms such as 'trustworthiness' and 'authenticity.' It also builds on antifoundation arguments, while promoting a critical mode of inquiry to the nature of social oppression, which can rarely be depicted through single-layered texts and thereby linking research to praxis of social change (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Critical ethnography adds another layer to the social science research, which is defined by researcher's engagement with political movements to expose social injustice. Researchers state their politics clearly and work toward social change along with engagement with the reflexive practice of deep introspection about their own positionality. This is vital to show that we as researchers stand apart from the power structures that exist around our research participants (Lapan, Quartaroli and Riemer, 2011). This form of research often raises concerns about academic validity as it traverses boundaries of academia.

Critical social science in its scope consists of feminist, postcolonial and even postmodern challenges to oppressive power, as well as the various interpretations of critical theory and critical pedagogies that are radically democratic, multilogical and publicly, centrally concerned with human suffering and oppression. Being critical requires a radical ethics, an ethics that is always/already concerned about power and oppression, even as it avoids constructing power as a new truth (Cannella and Lincoln, 2011: 81). In their groundbreaking book *Real Social Science: Applied Phronesis*, Flyvbjerg, Landman and Schram questioned the possibility of social sciences on the lines of natural sciences. They have viewed social science enquiry as a site of contestations that involves human consciousness, volition, power and reflexivity and attempts to build generalizable, predictive models such as those for the natural world are misplaced and even futile (Flyvbjerg et al., 2012: 1). In this context, ethical research assumes new meaning that is one wherein researchers follow the ethics of care toward their participants and also to themselves through self-reflective research practice (Gibbs et al., 2007).

Research Training in "Ethics": Interdisciplinary and Cross-Cultural Practices

In the context of cross-cultural research, critical research ethics has come into prominence as it questions social contexts in which research is carried out is not merely focused on research participants to prevent further subjectification (Sikes, 2013). Growing criticisms of rigidly defined ethical protocols emerges from its original basis in positivism, wherein it was assumed that information could be elicited from participants with little consideration to their social contexts (Holliday, 2013). Often students from non-Western cultures perceive ethical procedures as non-negotiable, which is not actually the case. Ethical procedures evolve with research, with ingenuity of the researchers and participants (Moosa, 2013). Therefore, cross-cultural research often entails a dialogue between the researcher's objectivity to achieve academic outcomes against demands of local cultures. This relationship of subjectivities with a pinch of 'objectivity' is a raison d'etre for the hybridity of universal ethical standards and local ethical environments (Shamim and Qureshi, 2013).

Most universities in developed economies have adopted the new ethics paradigms in the form of an Institutional Review Board with a set of centralized policies, bureaucratic procedures and processes that place limitations on academic freedom to explore the field freely (Boden et al., 2009; Israel and Hay, 2006). However, much of the focus of these boards has been reduced to focusing on harm reduction to the research participants rather than the ethical responsibilities of researchers (Kellehear, 1993). The traditional impersonal and objective ethical model assumed the separation of the researcher and the researched, but the new fieldwork being practiced suggests less distance or detachment between the researchers and the researched and a new ethics or moral imperative that is not yet codified (De Laine, 2000: 4). Similarly, John Johnson and David Altheide (2002: 61) state that "the contemporary focus on 'research ethics' is really about issues other than research ethics" and that " 'Ethics' has [. . .] collapsed into discourses of institutional control." Ethics are peripheral in research training and usually the thrust of such training is on cleanly laid out methods that are followed with a few practice sessions on databases and selected computer software. Textbooks on fieldwork almost exclusively focus on gaining entry, establishing rapport, building trust and so on, but critics have identified the step-by-step plan or process as far too simplistic, because fieldwork appears as a series of resolvable problems when in fact this is not the reality. Each step in fieldwork is affected by the development of interpersonal contingencies in the setting. Being in the subject's world means being surrounded by real-life contingencies as an enduring problem of fieldwork (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997: 68–9). Contingencies make the researcher vulnerable and may cause personal stress. The conditions of fieldwork (paradoxes,

ambiguities and dilemmas) that are qualitative by way of contrast to quantitative research inquiry (positivistic-oriented and impersonal) and put the researcher in direct contact with people to form various types of relationships (power, personal and social) make fieldwork inherently problematic (Fabian, 1991). Ethical and moral dilemmas are an occupational hazard of fieldwork that the researcher cannot plan for, but nonetheless, these must be addressed on the spot, by drawing on values, ideals, ethical codes, moral and professional standards, intuition and emotions. Researchers require sensitivity, authenticity, integrity and maturity, perhaps more than in previous moments of social science, because people are put in contact with others in more intimate ways (Lincoln, 1995). With regard to sensitive issues, Alty and Rodham (1998) provide three options: 1. Plan another project entirely. 2. Proceed with caution. 3. Publish and be damned.

Qualitative researchers are further constrained as they might not have the same opportunities as quantitative researchers in research training, as qualitative research tends to have greater variations owing to the nature of research projects, motivating factors underlying these projects and questions surrounding the emotional and personal trajectories of the researchers. Advanced qualitative research, such as doctoral research, is further impacted by power equations between postgraduate students and their supervisors, as students are dependent on their supervisors for all the preparations for the research. Unless made aware of their moral and ethical responsibilities, students might not actively seek to carry out their research consciously, and the questions of ethics can be subsumed in the bureaucratic structure. This can work against researchers assuming a high moral and ethical stance (De Laine, 2000: 10). Hammersley (2009) has argued against presence of ethical standards in social sciences, as it imposes arbitrary conditions on research, which does not necessarily lead to qualitative improvements in the insights generated from the study. The key to change, then, is to acknowledge that when the ethics review process takes qualitative research seriously, the whole research enterprise will stand to benefit (van den Hoonard, 2008).

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Part I

Feminist Ethics: Cross-Cultural Reflections and Its Implications for Change

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2 Gender and HIV/AIDS in India

Critical Reflections on the Feminist Research Ethics of "Making an Impact"

Keerty Nakray

INTRODUCTION

Recent emphasis within the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) on making an impact and shaping policies might be worthwhile in the current political and economic environment of the developed world, but it also draws attention to wider contexts that need to be taken into consideration that can enable researchers to engage in the 'ethics of impact making' (Economic and Social Research Council, 2014). Research Councils UK (RCUK) defines "research impact as a demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy." It has further identified two types of research impact (a) Academic Impact is the demonstrable contribution that excellent social and economic research makes to scientific advances, across and within disciplines, including significant advances in understanding, method, theory and application; (b) Economic and Societal Impact is the demonstrable contribution that excellent social and economic research makes to society and the economy, of benefit to individuals, organizations and nations (Economic and Social Research Council, 2014). The evaluation of research impact is not a straightforward task and neither is the relationship between research evidence and policy and service development linear (Shortall, 2013a; 2013b; 2013c). Equally difficult is to discern the role of individual research, and the evaluation of impact is fraught with challenges (Economic and Social Research Council, 2014). The 'ethics of impact making' has been integral to feminist research ethics of transformation and questioning of the hierarchical nature of social institutions.

As this chapter will highlight, the process of impact making is embedded in power relations within institutions and the social location of the researcher undertaking a particular research project. However, research participants often take part in research projects in the hope that their lives at the margin will be transformed. Bearing this in mind, feminist researchers should find ways to become a part of the transformative agenda. The defining characteristic of feminist epistemology and praxis is based on commitment to structural change in political and social institutions. Such research often runs counter to the mainstream goals of academic institutions, which

maintain the status quo of power relations in the society. Research in general is viewed as being transgressive in patriarchal institutions, wherein all researchers might have to walk an extra mile to engage with the 'ethics of impact making.'

This chapter is based on reflections emerging from in-depth interviews conducted with HIV-positive women in the Indian cities of Chennai, Mumbai, and New Delhi and the semirural Thane district as a part of my doctoral study. Despite hailing from extremely deprived communities and leading lives marked by stark social stigma, economic deprivation and emotional isolation, the women were keen to take part in my research. They shared their experiences spontaneously, and one of the reasons that they participated in the research study was to be a part of social change. That is, they did not want other women to go through similar experiences. The diligence and commitment displayed by the women did have a lasting impact on me and demonstrated the high levels of resilience among women. I shared a cultural identity with the participants so that made easy to establish an empathetic relationship but also at points during the research process, I felt that we developed common consciousness owing to similar experiences of living in Indian society, albeit within a different social class. Most importantly, I felt that the research participants and I wanted to become social change agents for other women and for our future generations. To address the issues emerging from research experiences, the chapter is divided into four sections: First, this research will map out theoretical debates around Bourdieu's habitus and feminist research ethics and how feminists have tried to address the issue of making an 'impact.' Secondly, it will draw from in-depth interviews with women on their reasons for participating in this research and my research diary where I recorded my own transformation to a political feminist clearly aware of my own 'real politick' after engaging with 'feminist' research for twelve years. Thirdly, it will address the question of making an impact from a feminist perspective, especially in a developing economy such as India where ethical protocols are less defined and less adhered to. I conclude that feminist research is definitely about research that makes a difference to women; however, it should not be measured through selected indicators but rather should be about meaningful engagement, the political agenda and questioning of dominant modes of thinking in less developed countries.

CONCEPTUAL DEBATES IN CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST ETHICS AND REAL-WORLD DYNAMICS

Pierre Bourdieu provides a microtheory of social power (Moi, 1991). Its relevance to feminists stems from his ability to transform the everyday drudgery of women's lives into valuable sociology (Moi, 1991). As a researcher,

for me Bourdieu's habitus provides a much-needed framework to comprehend the structural conditions that allow or impede the expression of feminist research. Pierre Bourdieu's habitus and his notion of symbolic violence depict the invisible hierarchies in academic settings, and his feminist analysis further deepens complexities of power, with his most important contribution being to the understanding of the obliteration of women from public recognition. For me, the true struggle for the feminist movement is in the context of symbolic violence as the status of women across the world is visibly improving over time but resistance to women's participation in public life remains through more institutionalized forms of discrimination. In *Questions de Sociologie* (1980) (cited from Moi, 1991: 1021–2) Bourdieu wrote "there must be stakes, and people ready to play the game, equipped with the habitus which enables them to know and recognize the immanent laws of the game, the states and so on . . . In some ways, *habitus* may be compared to what educationalists have called the silent curriculum": those norms and values that are inculcated through the very forms of classroom interactions rather than through any explicit teaching project."

In the context of my research, Bourdieu provides insights into my dichotomous 'insider-outsider' status in mainstream academic institutions largely located in patriarchal contexts. My identity as a first generation nonwhite feminist academic played a vital role in shaping how my research could have found recognition and space in academic institutions both in the West and in my home country. On the surface, feminist ethics is about political action, as I discovered through my own struggle that the social location of the researcher plays a vital role in shaping how the research is recognized in wider academic circles. Feminist researchers cannot extricate themselves from the broader context of the institutions in which they are located and the ways in which power dynamics play out in them. Based on the juxtaposition of feminist thinking against Bourdieu's habitus, I highlight that the silent curriculum dominates academic research. Real challenges of recognition and participation remain pertinent for feminists even today if they lack the requisite habitus.

Bourdieu defines *habitus* as:

> The product of history, produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with the schemes engendered by history. The system of dispositions—a past which survives in the present and tends to perpetuate itself into the future by making itself present in practices structured according to its principles, an internal law relaying the continuous exercise of the law of external necessities (irreducible to immediate conjectural constraints)—is the principle of the continuity and regularity which objectivism discerns in the social world without being able to give them a rational basis.
>
> (Bourdieu, 2010: 82)

Society is classified based on divisions of sex, age or position, which shape and reproduce power relationships

> by securing the misrecognition and hence the recognition, of the arbitrariness on which they are based: in the extreme case that is to say, when there is a quasi-perfect correspondence between the objective order and the subjective principles of organization (as in ancient societies) the natural and social world appears as self-evident. This experience we shall call *doxa*, so as to distinguish it from an orthodox or heterodox belief implying awareness and recognition of the possibility of different or antagonistic beliefs. (Bourdieu, 2010: 164)

It is only when the dominated have the material and symbolic means of rejecting the definition of the real that is imposed on them through logical structures reproducing the social structures (i.e. the state of the power relations) and of lifting the (institutionalized or internalized) censorships that it implies, i.e. when social classifications become the object and instrument of class struggle, that the arbitrary principles of the prevailing classifications can appear as such. It thereby becomes necessary to undertake the work of conscious systematization and express rationalization, which marks the passage from *doxa* to orthodoxy (Bourdieu, 2010: 169). If it be true that symbolic violence is the gentle, hidden form that violence takes when overt violence is impossible, it is understandable that symbolic forms of domination should have progressively withered away as objective mechanisms came to be constituted, which, in rendering superfluous the work of euphemization, tended to produce the 'disenchanted' dispositions their development demanded (Bourdieu, 2010: 196).

With respect to gender relations, Bourdieu writes

> if it is true that the principle of the perpetuation of this relationship of domination does not truly reside (or, at least not principally) in one of the most visible sites in which it is exercised and in other words, within the domestic sphere, on which some feminist debate has concentrated its attention but in agencies such as the school or the state, sites where principles of domination that go on to be exercised within even the most private universe are developed and imposed, then a vast field of action is opened up for feminist struggles, which are thus called upon to take a distinctive and decisive place within political struggle against *all* forms of domination. (2001: 4)

As discussed previously, I find Bourdieu's perspectives valuable in the context of discussions on feminist research ethics, as these discussions highlight that feminist researchers cannot extricate themselves from the murkiness of power relations in academia, and feminist researchers are often themselves constrained by habitus. Feminist research ethics emerges from feminist

epistemology, which refers to 'theories of knowledge production,' that is, how we understand the social world, whereas methodology refers to actual techniques of data collection (Fonow and Cook, 1991). The potential of knowledge to liberate humans from religious orthodoxy and feudalism formed the basis for the European Enlightenment. Similarly, feminist thinking indicates that knowledge holds the promise for liberating women from traditional orthodoxies of society (Preissle, 2007). On the contrary, the preeminence given to scientific methods by early sociologists was questioned by feminists (see introduction in this volume) along with the presuppositions of 'value-free' social sciences, which actually forms the foundation of sociology as a discipline, feminists are in general critical of research that could be "hygienic" (Kelly et. al., 1994). Feminist research aims to generate knowledge that is based on the lives of women in their own terms and, most importantly, creates theory that reflects experiential knowledge and language of women (DuBois, 1983). The fundamental consideration for feminist epistemology is that existing gender relations are unequal (Skeggs, 1994). Feminists are not only concerned with the outcomes of their research but also the means and processes utilized to reach these goals (Olsen, 1980). Research has commonly been viewed as a reflection of unequal power relations between privileged academics and marginalized women. Therefore, the emphasis on more participative methods has been of importance to feminist research. Equally important to the essence of feminist research is the juxtaposition of 'theory and practice' (i.e. praxis). In addition, to political commitment, the realization of one's own potential for change is significant (Kelly, 1988). Feminist research challenges the rigid boundaries of academia, which usually keeps women's voices outside; bringing these voices within the fold of academia is viewed as a challenge to the puritanism of 'positivist' research and largely as a challenge to the patriarchal worldview (Kelly, 1988). From a feminist perspective, researchers' choice of topic and methods are inherently politically motivated and shaped by feminist values, which transgress academic boundaries (Kelly, 1988). The political nature of feminist research has resulted in greater questioning of methods of studying women's experiences, which includes theoretical paradigms, aims and objectives, research problems, nature of questions asked and the researcher's location vis-à-vis the participants and the theoretical undertones and objectives of the research and its wider contributions (Letherby, 2003). Increasing, criticisms from nonwhite feminists led to greater representation of women from diverse races and ethnicities, ages, disabilities and also the relationship between white and third world women was problematized (Stanley and Wise, 1993).

Initial questioning of the dominance of positivism in sociology was led by Ann Oakley (1974), who felt that the methods in sociology were 'sexist' and reflective of the attitudes of the founding fathers of the disciplines who did not address gender issues. She hit the nail on the head when she said that "a way of seeing is a way of not seeing" (Oakley, 1974: 27). The

marginalization of women in academic scholarship is embedded in their oppression in the outside world as Stanley and Wise (1993) write: [I]ncluding women's 'world' in academic work would lead to the concerted reordering of established beliefs and perspectives, and also to a greater understanding of the many different stratifications which exist within society.

Feminists are also more threatened in academic settings, as one of the cornerstones of feminist research is 'reflexivity,' which refers to the capabilities of researchers to use their own experiences to deepen the understanding of study participants' lives (Sultana, 2007).

Furthermore, feminist researchers are often expected to be more aware of their conceptual baggage (Kirby and McKenna, 1989), which implies greater possibilities of self-discovery through the process of research. Another distinguishing feature of feminist research identified by Stanley and Wise (1993: 37) includes going beyond the 'muckraking.' That is, feminists do not stop with the analysis of institutional sexism or stop at 'corrective research,' which is largely descriptive and fills in the gaps in existing knowledge. But feminists often engage with 'movement orientated' research, wherein academic research directly strengthens the work of the feminists and is also led by women who have been a part of the feminist struggle.

FEMINIST RESEARCH ETHICS AND PRAXIS: A VIEW FROM THE FIELD

Gender studies alongside pertinent issues of poverty and underdevelopment have been the thrust of my research education since my undergraduate days. My fieldwork experiences further strengthened my theoretical lessons in gender and development. My commitment to gender studies culminated in my doctoral study, wherein I conducted a feminist analysis of HIV/AIDS policies in India. The choice of this topic was related to my experiences of working as a social worker with children in marginalized situations. What struck me while I visited families where either of the parents had died due to HIV/AIDS was the devastating impact the disease had on children and how little the government did for those families. Once I drafted the research proposal after completing one year of research training, I submitted it to the school research committee. During the research committee's examination of the proposal, I was asked several pertinent questions, which probably prepared me better for fieldwork than classroom lectures and assignments. One of the important questions asked concerned my own position as an 'insider-outsider' researcher. That is, I hailed from a white-collar academic institution and I was asked what the implications of my position would be in terms of power relationships with women who live in the margins of society. My response in my research was that I was an insider, as I shared the same cultural identity, albeit there were variations in class and social privilege in terms of opportunity to pursue higher education. I was

confident about my ability to establish relationships with my research participants in spite of the differences in power. However, I felt disconcerted by the idea of me being an intruder in the lives of the women and the threat I could pose to them. I felt that the point of safety of the women participants was pertinent and important, as I felt my research training in India never questioned the issues of participants' safety. I deeply appreciated this respect for participants, which I learned in a Northern Irish university. During my examination, I was informed about the importance of physical touch while working with HIV-positive patients. Therefore, while conducting the interviews, I did make an effort to touch the HIV-positive women, and I would not have done so if I had not been informed about the same. Another point that I felt was not considered, was the question of the safety of researchers themselves in terms of their vulnerability to vicarious trauma (see Chapter 17, this volume). Besides these vulnerabilities for early career researchers, there is little preparedness in terms of how we can in our unique circumstances contribute to the existing knowledge base relating to the society. As an international student, my future situation was precarious, as I might or might not have the same support networks to get published in highly competitive journals or find a way to discuss the findings of my research.

I embarked on fieldwork in the Indian cities of New Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai and the semirural Thane district. The study entailed interviews with women living with HIV/AIDS and policy informants working in governmental and nongovernmental organizations. Illicit sexual relationships are the causal factors for the contraction of HIV/AIDS, and due to this, HIV/AIDS patients are highly stigmatized in Indian society. This stigma is evident in the everyday life of the women, as many of them revealed that they would not share their seropositive status with their employers or family members. Government public health policies did very little to address the socioeconomic marginalization of women living with HIV/AIDS in terms of providing social policy support, such as income or housing support or education grants for their children. Policies largely followed global public health discourses, which hinged on the gendered position of 'whore-Madonna' of women with HIV/AIDS. That is, women were largely viewed as vectors of HIV/AIDS to men as prostitutes or as mothers transmitting the disease to their children. The policies were dominated by discourses of blame against women and did very little to mitigate the stigma against women. There was little consideration of women who had contracted the illness in monogamous marriages and a complete obliteration of discussion of the social exclusion and poverty suffered by women. Most importantly, the policy discourses neglected emerging global evidence on how gender-based violence and the lack of economic entitlements left women extremely vulnerable in sexually abusive marriages where men often engaged in multiple sexual relationships and the dominant patriarchal norms demanded chastity and monogamy from women (Nakray, 2013).

While interviewing the women, questions of confidentiality and privacy were paramount. All the interviews were conducted in support group offices to ensure that the women's identities were concealed. Reading out the informed consent sheets in the local languages of Marathi and Hindi played a very important role in building the confidence of the women participating in the research study, as the consent sheet clearly stated that their identities would be concealed. In addition to recording the interviews, I also maintained a research diary. As my research progressed, I heard stories of rape, marital violence, murder threats, falling in love and emotional losses after the death of a partner. My academic training in research methods did not prepare me for listening to such difficult experiences. While a researcher hears a personal, private narrative that may not have been previously disclosed, the interviewee may experience the action of disclosure as a revelation, prompting a new understanding of past events. In turn, this has led social scientists to consider ways in which this sort of the qualitative interview setting can be seen to parallel the therapeutic encounter (Birch and Miller, 2000: 189–90). For example, Leena, one of the participants in my study, told me:

> I was returning at 8.30 pm in the evening from the medicine shop. I had gone to the shopto get medicines for my husband. I was walking on an isolated street when four men came out of the car and pushed me on a street corner and raped me in turns and then fled away. After the incident I wentto the hospital and the nurses in the hospital enquired about what happened? My clothes were torn. I kept quiet as I did not want anyone to know about the rape incident.

Within a short period of time, I was privy to intimate details of the lives of my participants that they had never articulated before; and in most of the interviews, women took the lead and spoke about their life circumstances. It was a deeply emotional process for me as a researcher, because the relationships had gone beyond the research contract, and it also forced me out of my researcher identity to look deeply at my own gendered identity within the society. I had grown up in Indian society, critically aware of my own gendered marginalization despite my white-collar, middle-class upbringing.

The contexts in which women contracted HIV/AIDS were clearly gendered, as is evident from Seema's experience, a 33-year-old widow. She had a difficult relationship with her natal family. She was forced to get married to her cousin, even though she was in love with another man. She did not receive any support from her family and was forced to live with him.

> I got infected in the year 2002. My husband would drink a lot and would force relationship on me. I told my family members that he is suffering from such an illness. They would tell me that you do not like your husband, and why are you living off his earnings, then?

Women's lack of familial support is further exacerbated by the missing or already inefficient and highly biased social welfare systems. Noorin, age 26, who was a resident of Mumbai, narrated her first experience with a male counselor in one of the state-run hospitals in Mumbai when she was diagnosed with HIV/AIDS for the first time.

> The counselor asked me how I contracted this illness. I told them, I do not stay with my husband and neither have I had sexual relationships with other men. He said, maybe you contracted this illness because you have sexual relationships with other men. They told me to reveal the truth Despite me denying any relationship with other men.

In spite of living in situations of extreme deprivation, there are different kinds of meaning systems women develop in the context of their suffering. Emotionally, there are many ways in which women cope, with one way being forgiveness. Veena, age 35, was from the Thane district, on the outskirts of Mumbai. She was not HIV-positive, but had been taking care of her husband for nine years. When asked if she was angry or upset with her husband, she responded:

> What is the point of getting angry at the husband? I do not talk about the past and I am concerned that he is able to live in spite of the illness. I am not going to give him more *tension* (stress) by asking. How did this illness happen?

Sujatha, age 38, was disabled, as both her legs were afflicted with polio, and she walked with great difficulty. She shared "I want to work for the people. If my knowledge makes a difference to the lives of people and if I can influence one, then it would be the same as Rs 10,000 to me. That is my aim in life." Similarly, Madhu shared:

> There are many women who do not have husbands and they have children who are positive. They have to work very hard for their children. I counsel them that the life is not so short, and do not think that there are very few days left. You still have life ahead of you and you should live with courage and confidence. I feel positive about myself as a result.

Shabana Patel, the support group leader of NTP Plus Thane, shared:

> One of the positive things that I would like to share is that even among the most positive women, no one has given up. Women have taken on the responsibility and have tried to fulfill it. We may call this a gift of god that women have taken up the challenges and have moved on. However, the pertinent need remains employment.

One of the other participants, Banshi, suffered from HIV/AIDS, blood cancer and uterine cancer. She had probably contracted HIV/AIDS through marital rape and had been threatened with murder by her husband and his family. One of her children had been poisoned by her brother-in-law. The question concerning the reason for this suffering was one I found extremely hard to address. Perhaps it was important for Banshi to tell her story in order to give voice to her suffering. She said: "I feel like making an advertisement on the TV to show the world what all has happened to me. I want to ask everyone—Why does she have so many difficulties? Why so many problems would come to this woman? Why?"

The women participating in my research did so for varied reasons, including seeking intimacy in lives that were otherwise socially excluded with limited interactions with family, neighbors and employers. For others, as evident from the narratives presented earlier, it was about being a 'change agent' and hoping that other women would not suffer from the same experiences. The women's support group leaders, such as Kaushalaya and Shabana Patel, had transcended their victim status and become inspirations for other women to live and stand up on their own.

When I wrote my academic diary every night after my fieldwork, I felt as though I shared a sense of oneness with the women at varying points in my life. Along with critical reflections on my conceptual baggage, I reflected on why women in such dire circumstances felt the need to participate in my academic study. Probably the reasons for women's participation in this study were varied. First, it was an opportunity to express their emotions and feelings in a conversation that was nonjudgmental in nature. My participants had very few opportunities like those, as their social relationships were severely constrained due to stigma and discrimination. Second, it was about political recognition, as it is evident that the participants in my study viewed themselves as agents in the process of social transformation. It is clear from the narratives of women like Sumitra, Shabana and Kaushalaya, even within their situations of marginalization, that they were seeking political recognition. As I mentioned before, in many respects I was a partial insider, as I am economically and socially relatively better off than the women living with HIV/AIDS. Yet, I could comprehend their situation because of my prior experience of working as a social worker with children in difficult circumstances and also other research experiences I have had in the development sector. Some women told me that because I was educated, I would be in a better position to understand them than their own family members or neighbors, who are less educated and often stigmatize them. Personally speaking, I did feel helpless in terms of providing any long-term solutions for the women. A researcher always has a part that is held back intellectually and yet has to be sympathetic toward the participants. Complete emotional numbness is counterproductive (Kleinman and Copp, 1993). As Mohanty (2003: 223) highlights, our emphasis should not only be on the micro politics of context, subjectivity and struggle but

also on the macro politics of the global economic and political systems and processes. The lived experiences of women are structured by national and global discourses. The immediate reality of the women was bleak and difficult but one had to transcend immediate situations of suffering and use it to become a stepping-stone for change.

The narratives discussed in this chapter give a glimpse into the lives of the women I interviewed, where it is clear that their experiences of marginalization and exclusion were deeply rooted in prevailing patriarchal norms of the society. Most importantly, several moments in those interviews pushed me to transcend academic boundaries, to link my 'personal autobiography' to the lives of the women. As a woman growing up in a highly patriarchal Indian society, I did not have the freedom of social mobility and curbs were imposed on me through a complex system of sanctions and reprimands in family, school and workplace. It was inevitable that, despite class differences, I could understand compassionately the struggle that the women were undergoing. Feminist research practice encourages the practice of active listening, which is a fully engaged practice that involves not only taking in information via speech, written words or signs but also actively processing it and allowing that information to affect you, baffle you, haunt you, make you uncomfortable and take you on unexpected detours, away from abstract, bloodless and professionalized questions about people's knowledge and experiences that have been disavowed, overlooked and forgotten (Gordon cited in DeVault and Gross, 2011: 216).

The ethical dilemma I faced after completing my interviewing was how to make the voices of the women visible and audible to the people who make policies and programs. Unfortunately, the process proved to be tedious and difficult. As Henn et al. (2006) have highlighted, the question of ethics does not cease once fieldwork is completed and ethical aspects should be embedded in each and every stage of research rather than being confined to the methodology chapter of research projects. Other early career researchers (such as Das, Li and Liu) writing in this volume further demonstrate the difficulties of undertaking difficult and sensitive research projects. One of the subtle hopes of young academics is to transcend rigid academic boundaries and explore issues and concerns that are close to their 'personal autobiographies.' These personal motivations are often not enough to create an impact, as researchers are themselves embedded in institutions that shape their capabilities to create an impact. I had to clear an examination before embarking on my fieldwork in India. One of the questions asked of me during the examination was related to the power differentials between me as a privileged white-collar researcher from India studying in a UK institution interviewing women living on the margins of Indian society. I replied that I shared the same cultural values, even though our socioeconomic backgrounds might be different. It was a pertinent question and as I ventured into the field, I was concerned about my capability to carry out such a sensitive study. The same examiner had pointed out the importance of touch for people living with

HIV/AIDS, which is one of the reasons that I could instantly connect with the women. Most research is learned in the field and while undertaking various aspects of research processes. As reported in Chapter 17, I engaged more deeply with the question of vicarious trauma and how my research impacted me emotionally. However, another difficult challenge I faced was to make an impact with my research knowing very well that many women participate in these projects with a hope that their experiences could possibly propel some form of change. It is difficult to establish a linear process of change between social science research and policy change (Shortall, 2013a; 2013b; 2013c). However, every research project or researcher carries a possibility of being a change agent. Usually PhD researchers who are a part of research teams are better endowed with grants for dispersal of findings. I found it difficult to create change. After completing my PhD, I did manage to publish an edited book titled *Gender-Based Violence and Public Health: International Perspectives on Budgets and Policies* in January 2013 (Nakray, 2013). Following the completion of this book, I gained employment in an academic institution in India. The struggles continue as I grapple with various demands. On the one hand, academic institutions demand high-quality publications, and on the other hand, they place heavy teaching demands on professors. Opportunities to engage with the 'ethics of impact making' were difficult to find. However, I started engaging with my students who felt strongly about gender issues, helped them set up a blog (http://cwlscblog.wix.com/cwlscblog) and undertook field visits with them. I continue to engage with community-based organizations that are working on gender-based violence, and I hope to initiate a project on gender and health that addresses the question of the social marginalization of women and its relationship to their health and well-being. All of these activities are viewed as an addition to existing academic responsibilities and are often seen as rocking rigid definitions of 'academic research.'

Both as a PhD researcher and as an early career academic, I have found myself innocuously transgressing patriarchal boundaries. A feminist research project itself is seen as a threat to existing power relations in academic research. In most parts of the world, men dominate in academia—despite the feminist movement with all its success, 'feminist studies' still lies in the margins of academia. What Moi (1991) rightfully calls the 'silent curriculum' continues to maintain the hegemony. In addition to one's gendered identity, Crenshaw's intersectionality question 'who are you?' suggests that your race, ethnicity, age and gender still matters in academia. In India, gender divides are institutionalized and feminist voices are feeble, and we continue to struggle greatly for political recognition.

Throughout my struggles, I feel that feminist research is seen as a threat to patriarchal dominance in academia. Bourdieu has rightly pointed out that women's oppression is not only created in the domestic sphere of the family but that other institutions in society play a vital role in maintaining the continuum and sustaining these inequalities through more and more subtle means. Feminist research inevitably runs counter to the ethos of mainstream academic institutions. Due to my experiences, I have deeply

interrogated why sensitive research on gender is marked by political intolerance in academia. At these points of reflexivity, I realized I will continue to face resistance to such work in a deeply patriarchal society and it is my own 'gendered identity' that propels my commitment to undertake difficult and challenging research, which can potentially inform policy thinking. In these struggles, I have discovered through my real politics of feminism that the answer lies in making visible the oppression of other marginalized women.

In addition to my acute awareness of my feminist location, Bourdieu's habitus provides me with an important conceptual device to construe how one's social location plays out in academia. As a first-generation academic, this entry was difficult, as I did not have the symbolic capital that seems to play a vital role in gaining entry points into elite academic circles and having one's voice heard. As Hale (1991: 121) writes,

> feminist dilemmas in fieldwork are as much ethical and personal as academic and political, they gnaw at our core, challenging our integrity, our work and at times, the *raison d'etre* of our projects. Feminist fieldwork is dangerous emotionally as the power dimension is most pronounced in such research wherein the fieldwork process can potentially unravel difficult identity crises or even threaten the social equanimity of researchers. This is often inevitable as feminist researchers are not only concerned with collecting data but also with how research can bring about progressive social change.

In addition, Sprague writes,

> it is important to use another tactic that of one's own anger to figure out what is missing in our knowledge. All we need to do is take three basic steps: ask passionately, analyze critically and answer empoweringly. Asking passionately will ensure and sustain our commitment to the work. Analyzing critically will instil confidence in its quality and generalizability. Answering empoweringly will empower others as we empower ourselves. By remaking ourselves, we can make an important contribution to remaking our world into a just, peaceful, and sustainable place. And that is my invitation to you. (Sprague, 2005: 200)

The women I interviewed taught me lessons about being resilient in the face of difficulties. I owe answers to them, and I continue with the feminist struggle for myself and for the future generations.[1]

NOTE

1. This study was carried out with a grant from the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work, Queen's University, Belfast. I am grateful to Professors Mike Tomlinson, Denis O'Hearn, Paddy Hillyard and Karen McElrath for their academic support.

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3 Lessons from the Field
Cross-Cultural Gender Research

Margaret Alston, Kerri Whittenbury and Alex Haynes

Twenty-first century global challenges reveal the need for social research across a range of cultures and regions, exposing researchers to complex epistemological, methodological and ethical issues. In our research on the gendered impacts of climate change in Bangladesh, we worked with an extensive team, including university researchers from Australia and Bangladesh, Oxfam colleagues in Australia and Great Britain and in-country nongovernment organization partners. In this chapter, we discuss epistemological, methodological and ethical challenges generated by this work. Issues addressed include gender, power, reflexivity, postcolonialism, positionality and representation as factors that are critical to social researchers' engagement in cross-cultural settings; methodological and logistical challenges; and ethical issues, including self-determination, beneficence, nonmaleficence and justice. We draw links between our work in Bangladesh and previous research in Australia. Despite the challenges, we argue that cross-cultural research is essential to global understanding of and actions for climate change.

Climate change together with a rising population base, increasing food and water insecurity and political instability in many parts of the globe, is creating a 'perfect storm' of almost insurmountable challenges. Global efforts to understand these phenomena have centered on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports (IPCC, 1990; 1995; 2001; 2007). Whereas these have largely focused on technological and scientific analysis of climate changes, there is growing awareness of the social and health impacts (see McMichael, Woodruff and Hales, 2006) and developing knowledge of the gendered impacts (Dankelman, 2010; Enarson, 2006, 2009; Neumayer and Pluemper, 2007). Regions and populations across diverse areas are differentially affected, often with the most vulnerable countries, and populations within those countries, being the least able to address the causes and effects.

Because regions affected by climate change do not necessarily reflect national borders, how we extend our understanding of how climate change impacts people and communities is largely dependent on undertaking cross-cultural research. This will aid global understanding of the

full implications of climate events and ensure that transnational strategic initiatives can be more effectively targeted to meet socially just ends. Yet undertaking this research, and particularly gender-sensitive work, in diverse cultural settings has significant epistemological, methodological and ethical challenges.

In this chapter, we discuss cross-cultural research drawing on our study of the gendered impacts of climate change undertaken in Bangladesh, a country that is especially vulnerable to climate events, with a largely rural population, a significant number of whom live in extreme poverty. Our research is particularly focused on assessing the differential impacts on women and men, with an emphasis on ensuring that women's narratives are prominent. It is not the purpose of this chapter to discuss our findings—these will be published elsewhere. Rather, our aim is to reflect on the dilemmas for feminist researchers undertaking cross-cultural research in diverse cultural contexts and exposing for scrutiny gender and power differentials inherent in the research process (see Chapters 14 and 17 in this volume). In particular, the conceptualization of the researcher as a nonintrusive observer is open to significant challenge and the need for reflexivity is self-evident. We discuss gender, power, postcolonialism, positionality and representation as critical factors in cross-cultural research as well as methodological and ethical issues that have emerged in our project.

Despite extensive experience undertaking social research in Australia, this project exposes a multiplicity of intersecting challenges. This chapter allows us to analyze and detail these factors that can confront and paralyze research teams and participants without adequate preparation and reflection. Our motivation in writing is to ensure research outcomes add constructively to the growing knowledge base and that they do not reduce or mask the experiences of people facing climate challenges—particularly in situations where suffering is evident.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

The writers have conducted qualitative gender research on climate change impacts in our home country of Australia. We are therefore conscious of the significant gendered differences in experiences during and after a disaster, affected by resource ownership and control, conventional gender-role expectations, power relations and intimate relationship stress. In undertaking our project in Bangladesh, we are building on this knowledge to better understand gendered nuances in this highly marginalized landscape. In our previous work, we have used qualitative research methods, including in-depth interviews and focus groups with women and men and we bring extensive experience in data collection, analysis and interpretation. Further, this previous experience has exposed us to significant emotions experienced by Australian people affected by difficult climatic circumstances.

This exposure challenges us to adopt a reflexive approach to our research. By this we mean a position of critical self-awareness (Doyle, 2013), consciously reflecting on our role in the research relationship; our values, biases and perceptions; and how we as researchers influence the situation we are studying. Reflexivity is central to qualitative research, demanding of us a thoughtful appraisal of our participation, an understanding of the nuances of conversation and a way of ameliorating power imbalances in the research relationship (Doyle, 2013). In the context of a different culture, reflexivity and, hence, more equitable relationships can be much harder to achieve because of significant power imbalances between the research team and the participants and, for the Australian researchers at least, our inability to attend to nuanced conversation and narrative.

This leads to further reflection on the nature of the feminist project in cross-cultural studies. We are conscious of what Ozkanc-Pan (2012: 574) refers to as "the intersections of postcolonial critiques on 'Western' representations of the 'Rest' and in particular assumptions of Western feminist researchers that they can speak about 'Third World woman' as an undifferentiated subject of Western academia." In the rush to understand gender differences in vulnerable countries, are we favoring an undifferentiated subject? If so, how do we challenge ourselves to be comprehensive of diversity of experiences? If we cannot, should we be there at all?

In research undertaken in one's own cultural context, researchers are often virtually invisible. That is, they blend in as part of the society under review and have an innate understanding of the social issues being studied and the sociopolitical environment in which they are occurring. In cross-cultural research, researchers are rarely invisible, their cultural backgrounds are exposed and their interventions in the field highly scrutinized. As Einarsdóttir (2006) notes, this visibility influences every step of the research process and thus the outcomes. This may not always be a disadvantage, as it makes the process of reflexivity more evident and necessary and provides an additional cultural lens through which the data is being filtered.

Artiles et al. (2008) suggest that outsider researchers should view their projects as situated cultural practice. That is, the outsiders are a part of the research because the researchers are themselves cultural beings who bring differing understandings of cultural practices that enable a more critical analysis of assumed cultural mores within the area under study. It may be that as outsider researchers we are able to scrutinize and analyze the layered situations under study, the sociopolitical context in which they occur and the factors that create inequalities and complexities. In Bangladesh, gender inequalities are very evident in a sociopolitical context where women have limited rights to own property, can expect arranged marriages at a young age, are subject to dowry assessments and are vulnerable to violence. Our analysis necessarily incorporates an understanding of this complex society, shaping as it does the gendered consequences of our primary issue—climate events. Thus we analyze the impacts of climate change on women and men in a cultural context where women are already marginalized.

In addressing this question, there is a very real danger of assuming a postcolonial appraisal of third world experiences and of casting all women as the third world archetypal woman noted by Ozkanc-Pan (2012). This has the capacity to intensify power imbalances in the process, corrupt the purpose of genuine feminist inquiry and may do little to address the needs and rights of women affected by climate events. It is therefore essential that we approach such research with a more self-conscious reflexive understanding of our situated knowledge (Haraway, 1988) and our positioning of ourselves and our participants in the project team, in the field, in any negotiations with national and local partners as well as during ongoing analysis in order to avoid misrepresenting and simplifying narratives and developing theory on the basis of false assumptions (Ozkanc-Pan, 2012). In particular, there is a need to question our privileged position in the research process, the significant effort being expended both to help us to the research sites and in organizing our participants and the willingness of the many women and men who took part in interviews and focus groups to alert us to the impact of climate change on their lives and futures.

Reflecting on this positionality has guided the way we undertake the project. We are never outside the research, constantly shaping, interpreting and theorizing the situation of women and men affected by climate events. This feminist epistemological positioning helps shape the methodological choices we make to achieve the research aims. However, caution dictates that we approach this carefully so as not to misrepresent or brush over the nuances of language and narrative. As we discuss in this chapter, self-conscious reflexivity can only achieve so much when we are critically reliant on others to assist us with the logistics of a very complex project. We therefore must address the questions raised by Ozkanc-Ban (2012): for whom are we producing knowledge and what are the consequences of our knowledge construction? This raises the issue of the complex methodological challenges.

METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

Being an outsider enhances the rigor and usefulness of research by forcing attention to methodological issues and to critical reflection on the process (Salway et al., 2011). Salway et al. (2011) argue that cross-cultural research also demands greater attention to what we mean by 'knowledge' generation, forcing us as researchers to examine methodological issues more critically and generate potential solutions or strategies for what are essentially significantly challenging situations. As feminist researchers, we have chosen to undertake qualitative research despite the logistical complexities, because we believe it is an appropriate way to bring particularly women's narratives to global understanding of climate change impacts.

For this reason, Mander and Cheung (2006) note that cross-cultural awareness should be addressed during planning stages to minimize

challenges in the field. This includes linguistic challenges that heavily impact the processes and outcomes of the research. Our research plan necessarily includes attention to critical logistical issues associated with travel, interpreting and meeting and interview spaces in isolated villages, as well as weather patterns and collaborative relationships with partner organizations familiar with the areas chosen by them as research sites. We believe that one of the strengths of this project is that it necessarily involves a culturally diverse team that includes collaborators, interpreters, logistical managers, transcribers, translators and community leaders who act as cultural informants. Mixed culture research teams add significant strength to the research process, because of the diversity of backgrounds each member brings to the project and to the analysis. They also allow team members to share cultural understandings and to gain a deeper awareness of the issues (Sullivan and Cotton, 2010). Our project could not have proceeded without in-country team members to direct and guide the project and to recruit sample participants. In undertaking this research, we acknowledge also the significant capacity building that has occurred for all partners and individuals engaged in this project. This has been one of the significant outcomes of this cross-cultural project.

Nevertheless, a culturally diverse team requires us to ensure that egalitarianism is transparent and that collaborative strategies are developed among team members (Bell et al., 2004; Sullivan and Cotton, 2010). A mixed gender composition adds a rich and complex mix to the team dynamics. How knowledge develops in the complex process of data collection is highly dependent on relationships, power dynamics and interpretations of data, and this process requires critical reflection on culture and representation. Yet because everything is new and nothing is assumed, there is potential for those of us who are outsiders to more clearly see and analyze the various layers of societal structures from local to global. Nonetheless, this also creates ethical challenges in a country where many women are extremely marginalized.

ETHICAL CHALLENGES

In this project, our ethical considerations are guided in our research efforts by five principles overarching social research (see for example Hardwick and Worsley, 2011 and Alston and Bowles, 2012). These principles are:

Autonomy/self-determination (this includes informed consent and confidentiality)
Nonmaleficence (not doing harm)
Beneficence (doing good)
Justice (are the purposes of the project just?)
Positive contribution to knowledge

We also draw on Banks's (2012) discussion of social work ethics in different cultural settings. She notes that a narrative or cases-based approach to ethics particularly through the use of stories and narratives leads to heightened 'moral perception' (8). In our project, many women and men in the villages we visited took extraordinary care to tell their stories in order to make sense of their experiences of climate disaster. This project gave a compelling space for stories and experiences to be discussed, recorded and compared. In this sense, it has made a positive contribution to knowledge and was and is beneficent. Not doing harm and doing good imply that the research will benefit those taking part and that the outcomes will lead to socially just initiatives and a positive contribution to knowledge. This creates complex challenges for social researchers who have a strong desire to intervene in situations of poverty and distress and want change to happen quickly. Koulouriotis (2011) notes these challenges when discussing the desire of researchers to honor and respect participants' voices and the perceived limitations of university research ethics boards to address adequately their concerns when working in cross-cultural situations.

Autonomy and self-determination imply that participants have given informed consent and that their right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality is protected. It implies also that we will not disrupt people's lives nor use deception. Not doing harm and, conversely, doing good implies that the research will benefit those taking part and that the outcomes will lead to socially just initiatives and a positive contribution to knowledge. These factors are uppermost in our minds as we reflect on the research and study the emerging data and pushes us to take the research outcomes one step further into advocacy and policy advice.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

Our research has been undertaken in partnership with Oxfam and involves three very isolated rural regions of Bangladesh—areas that are subject to differing climate change impacts and diverse social challenges. The two southern areas are exposed to cyclones, storm and tidal surges and inundation from king tides. One of these areas also experiences harsh microclimate effects from salt water ponds used for shrimp cultivation. The northern area is subject to drought, riverbank erosion and significant changes in flow and direction. In each area, we negotiated significant ethical challenges associated with being outsiders coming to 'research' the social impacts of climate events. This Western notion of the social researcher as an observer and recorder of life is soon destabilized by the complexity of being privileged outsiders watching a catastrophe unfold. It also exposes the logistics inherent in such a complex study, the conflicting issues emerging from the expectations of Western university ethics committees and the complicated emotional experience of being a human being observing others in distress.

The central research aim of our project is to assess the gendered impacts of climate variability with a particular focus on slow-onset change and climate events and on the experiences, vulnerability and agency of women in order to determine appropriate and practical ways to address the issues.

In 2008, Monash University began a collaborative partnership with one of Australia's premier nongovernment organizations, Oxfam Australia. In 2010, the partnership extended its activities into joint research projects with the support of an anonymous donor. This collaborative partnership was developed chiefly because Oxfam wished to establish a more solid evidence base for the effectiveness of development efforts and to capture and share innovative knowledge from a diversity of their global projects. The donor was also keen to ensure that the project produced positive changes and addressed human rights.

By combining our strengths, Monash and Oxfam seek to increase significantly their impact on global poverty and health through catalyzing change in the aid and development sector. The aim of the partnership fits with the values of the social work researchers who formed the Monash contributors to the project. The aim is to develop new knowledge and to improve and extend good practice to enable positive social change. The research project in Bangladesh is meeting these aims by collecting data and advancing knowledge on the gendered impacts of climate variability. This project provides insights to improve Oxfam's impact and approach to good practice on the ground, particularly as it relates to gender justice, women's leadership, violence against women and livelihood work related to climate variability and events. The sharing of findings also serves to support advocacy activities in Bangladesh and Australia and, at a broader level, influence the practice of aid organizations in the sector, build alliances for advocacy and influence policy in countries under study as well as in the global setting.

Building an effective working relationship between the organizations has been central to fulfilling the aims of the project. Monash University and Oxfam Australia are very different organizations with very diverse cultures and missions. In addition, Oxfam Australia and Oxfam Great Britain (the Bangladesh in-country organization) have differing organizational and work practices, responding to cultural norms in different contexts. Team members from both organizations see the potential of the combined organizational strengths and believe that the combined capacity of the two organizations can produce a major impact.

The project began with efforts to establish a strong working partnership with clear roles, responsibilities and communication. This was articulated and documented but only became tangible when tested and developed through project scoping, planning and activities. Our research questions were agreed on and field sites discussed with Oxfam Australia and Oxfam Great Britain, which necessarily involved also discussing these with potential local partners in the regional sites chosen. Given the complexity of working with rural communities in Bangladesh and the desire to build capacity through

Oxfam GB, existing partner network sites and partners were selected based on a range of different criteria and through much discussion. The research required sites with different demographic and socioeconomic contexts; types of interventions and program support from Oxfam GB, geographical land use characteristics and livelihood strategies; types of climate events, disaster preparation and recovery strategies; and types of local partner organizations (different priorities, scale and ways of working).

In determining the final sites, we were guided by Oxfam GB, their extensive knowledge of rural Bangladesh and their working relationships with local partners. The local partners included Jagonari in the Barguna District, GUK in the Gaibanda District and Shushilan in the Satkira District. A detailed literature review formed part of the initial partner collaboration and included a sociopolitical analysis, a gendered analysis, understandings of climate variability and context information relating to the three fieldwork sites. During the initial planning for the fieldwork, we were aware that a number of research assistants would be required to undertake the interviews and focus groups in the local language, Bengali. This required a degree of relevant experience in conducting fieldwork in similar locations around sensitive topics. Given the complexity of transcribing and translating the data and maintaining quality and accuracy, the research team determined a formal institution would be the best place for this work. Through a select tender process following Oxfam GB's procurement guidelines, Dhaka University's School of Anthropology was chosen to undertake fieldwork data collection and supervise transcription and translation of data. A formal agreement between Oxfam GB and the University of Dhaka was signed and four master's students and a supervisor were recruited and employed.

Work in Australia during this time was focused on gaining ethics approval from Monash University. The project team also developed focus group and interview guides and a comprehensive training package. The key in-country partners were formally briefed—first through written material on the project and second by way of a two-day training session in Dhaka before the first field visit. Oxfam GB and Monash University staff jointly delivered the training in Bangladesh to local partners involved in the research and the Dhaka University research assistants. The training was bilingual, as there was varied competency and confidence with English within the group. We explored some fundamental and difficult concepts around human rights, gender equality, women's rights and violence and conducted workshops on qualitative interview and focus group methods (see Chapter 5, this volume; Chapter 9, this volume).

Whereas the three primary fieldwork sites (districts) for the fieldwork had been selected earlier, the specific villages within those sites were jointly decided on during the training and planning session. Once the local partners and researchers understood the intent and focus of the research more clearly, we were able to discuss specific characteristics of different villages and areas and their associated logistical challenges to finalize the specific

sites (villages). In addition to several key informant interviews in Dhaka, data collection in the three selected districts in Bangladesh included key informant interviews with union and district level officials; education, health and community workers; staff from the local community-based organization; focus group discussions with local community volunteer groups, young women, older women and older men and occupation type groups; and individual interviews with community members, both men and women.

The first fieldwork site was an opportunity for the research team to reflect on the sociopolitical context, assess the cross-cultural factors shaping our research; understand the particular limitations of the methodology and to test the focus group questions and semistructured interview format. Extensive discussion and debriefing was undertaken during and at the end of every day. This enabled the team to reflect on the cross-cultural issues, to debrief on the nature of outsider research, to discuss ethical issues arising from the research, to refine the participant selection process and to go over logistical factors associated with travel, language and cultural differences.

Because of the aims of the broader partnership, we have identified and capitalized on opportunities for dissemination, communication and advocacy throughout the first stages of the project and have shared analysis and learnings from this project as we proceed. We have also been very mindful of capacity building opportunities and reflecting on ways our work can address the ethical implications of cross-cultural research and making a difference in people's lives as outsider researchers (Chapter 9, this volume).

Data has been translated by our in-country research assistants and transcribed by a Bangladeshi transcription service. This process reveals how little control we have over the emergent data and further causes reflection on the several people who may have helped shape the words, meanings and interpretations before we receive the transcripts. As Wong and Poon (2010) remind us, translation and transcription are not neutral processes. The way Bangladeshi colleagues interpret the narratives is highly influenced by cultural meanings and contradictions and "mediated by power," a process that renders the translators "far from innocent" (Wong and Poon, 2010: 152,153).

REFLECTION ON PRACTICALITIES OF CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH

This is a complex project that draws together a number of organizations—two universities (Monash and Dhaka), two Oxfam affiliates (Australia and Great Britain) based in different countries, three local community-based organizations (Bangladesh) and various logistical support people. A number of disciplines are represented, including anthropology, social work, rural sociology, gender and development studies, journalism and architecture. Expertise in the group includes academics and development practitioners, strategic planners, community development workers, agricultural specialists

and newspaper reporters. Bringing such a diverse team together requires significant teamwork and leadership, as well as goodwill and an ability to be flexible, inclusive and attentive. The success of this interdisciplinary cross-cultural team in working together highlights the importance of clear roles and responsibilities and effective communication. It also enables significant individual and organization learning opportunities.

As experienced researchers, one factor for which we were inadequately prepared was our reliance on others. We necessarily needed to rely on local partners to identify suitable locations for fieldwork (given our criteria) and to advise on and organize appropriate forms of travel and local partner field staff in remote locations to help recruit participants (again based on our criteria) and to be aware of essential safety, food, water, shelter requirements of the research team.

There were a number of practical issues that arose during the planning and implementation stages that reflect the difficulties of cross-cultural research—the most critical being language and meaning. The research questions and fieldwork guides were initially formulated in English and then translated into Bangla. During the training, it became clear how important it is to use appropriate words for the context and subject. This may mean there is not a direct translation but that the subtlety needs to be captured in framing and translating the questions. We also found it necessary to check regional dialects and common terms so participants would be able to relate directly to the questions being asked and feel comfortable answering with their own expressions and local terms. This was discussed in daily debriefing sessions during data collection.

Developing a meaningful budget for presentation to the funding body is also critical and requires at times significant leaps of faith. Estimating costs in a different cultural context is problematic, as there are many unknowns that reflect the isolation of the area and the level of dependence on partner organizations. For example, we were unsure what an appropriate payment for services and/or participation was. We were very dependent on the views of the local partners as to what to provide for participants, and this contrasted with our original assessment.

Another issue was timing. The fieldwork in Bangladesh needed to be carefully planned to meet local organizations' needs, weather conditions and participant livelihood activities (for example, downtime at the end of fishing or harvesting). There was some cultural dissonance around these issues, as local partners were very eager to assist and did not necessarily fully explain why something was going to be difficult.

A further issue for the project team in the field was ensuring the safety and security of all team members at all times. The field site team included two Monash researchers, two Oxfam GB members, the supervisor and four students from Dhaka University and at least one representative of the local partner organization. The extent of hazards and risks are often unknown and cannot necessarily be planned around. It was often the case that we dealt with logistical complications in the field to ensure that team members

were as safe as possible in the circumstances. This did not necessarily reflect what we would expect in our own country, but the limited forms of transport available, poor state of some roads, variable local conditions, availability of basic and essential services, variation in weather conditions and access to sites all pose potential risks. These issues cannot be entirely planned for, however, it is essential that team members are vigilant at all times and are instructed on their own and their team members' safety.

For example, cultural mores dictate that a foreign woman would be ill-advised to travel alone through Bangladesh, and even in the company of local people can be quite limited in ways she can travel and places she can stay or visit. There were also limited or no toilet facilities and team members were often required to spend entire days without access to sanitary facilities. This created a situation where we needed to quickly establish rapport and trusting relationships with those we were working with and on whom we were relying. This ensured that our partners clearly understood our research and practical priorities and gave us confidence in their assessment of what is appropriate and necessary. This supports Sullivan and Cotton's (2010) notion of the strength of cross-cultural teams. We found that a healthy mutual respect and openness to discuss key decisions were critical to the success of our project.

This research project has required flexibility across all stages and all levels due to the complexity of relationships, difficulties with language and understanding of context and cultural differences. An example occurred around participant selection in Gaibandha, our first fieldwork district. The local partners selected participants and chose people (within the specified categories) who they thought would be comfortable with the process and would have a particular perspective on our research. During the evening debriefing, the research assistants reflected on the impression that they were getting standard responses—participants were telling them things they thought they wanted to hear. When this was discussed with the local partner, the rationale for their selection became evident, and the next day the research team selected their own participants by randomly asking people while moving around the village. This again presented some challenges and the third day a combination of approaches was used to good effect.

The same can be said for changes made to the focus groups. Initially we planned six focus groups in each village—young women, middle-aged women, older women and the same age breakdown for men. After the first day, the team determined that middle- and older-aged women were essentially providing similar information and insights but that younger women were having distinctly different conversations and raising new issues. The three focus groups with women were recast as one combined group (middle aged/older) and one young women group. The older men were providing detailed insight into weather and climate patterns, changes to agriculture and production, livelihood strategies and out-migration. After the first day, we consolidated the men into two groups—older men and one other occupationally focused group dependent on the industry in the local area—fishing or farming.

This research project has already provided a range of learning and development opportunities for individuals from all organizations and to a lesser extent institutional learning. Because of the qualitative nature of the research, we have experienced the environment firsthand and in the process gaining significant insights into the context and climate conditions, the impact on the environment and the daily life and adaptations of the people who are the focus of our work. Being engaged in on-the-ground sampling, research and training, sharing knowledge and providing support to local workers and building capacity among local partners to support students and researchers has enriched and expanded the Monash Oxfam team's experience.

Relationship development has been one of the strengths of the project. Being engaged in on-the-ground sampling, research and training, sharing knowledge, providing support to local workers and building capacity among local partners to support students and researchers has enriched and expanded the Monash Oxfam team's experience. The relationship with the University of Dhaka has enabled significant additional activities. This has included an idea-sharing workshop in Dhaka on our return from Gaibandha. More than 30 senior government, academic and INGO/NGO people joined Monash University, Oxfam GB and our collaborators from Dhaka University to discuss the project, the approach we were taking, our initial impressions of the data and to offer ideas, suggestions and commentary on how the project might add to existing research, knowledge gaps and advocacy potential. This workshop provided Monash University researchers with greater understanding of the theoretical gaps in gender and climate change as seen by in-country experts and policy makers and provided some key reflections on how this project can be positioned. The second idea-sharing workshop was held in Dhaka at the end of the data collection period and was attended by over 60 people. This allowed us the opportunity to present preliminary findings. A third was held with representatives of women's agencies, ministries and activists.

Whereas the project has provided a long-term relationship between individual staff members of both organizations, broader opportunities exist that can strengthen group, department or institutional knowledge and connection. The Monash research team has collaborated on an international Oxfam Sense Making exercise that involved Monash researchers assessing Oxfam documents and producing a report on gender principles. This has added further international development/INGO context to our understanding and facilitated robust discussions on gender justice, its intersections with other change goals and the impacts of Oxfam's work in this area.

MAKING LINKS WITH AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH

This project allows us to compare and contrast the gendered experiences of climate change in a different cultural context. There are common gendered threads between communities and individuals affected by climate events in

vastly different settings. With rising food and water security comes increasing poverty and rising debt, and this has led to the need for alternative income sources—often involving out-migration for work. In Australia, it is most likely to be women working off the farm, whereas in Bangladesh, it is men who are more likely to migrate for at least part of the year. In both societies, there is a loss of young people who move away for work or education. In Bangladesh, many young rural women go to Dhaka to work in garment factories. The common feature across the two societies is a lack of local work opportunities and a rise in involuntary separation of families.

Climate uncertainty also causes health problems, including most commonly anxiety- and stress-related illnesses leading to conflict and relationship breakdown. This in turn has led to a rise in gender-based violence in both societies and a low level of service support for those who are victims of violence. In Bangladesh, health consequences also result from unsafe water and lack of sanitation and, for women, a precarious access to reproductive health services is made more tenuous during climate events and in the post-disaster stages.

In each society, we see evidence of community decline in areas affected by climate events and a loss of social capital, a breakdown of networks of support and declining resilience. Common issues for women affected by climate events in each society include their greater vulnerability to violence, a rise in care and household expectations at the same time as they are working elsewhere and undertaking community work. Bangladeshi women are more likely to be food insecure, to have problematic access to safe drinking water and to be more constrained by cultural norms. Young Bangladeshi girls are more likely to experience early marriage, often at a very young age, and are often subject to dowry disputes and potential violence as a result.

Women are more vulnerable in disaster situations both in the impacts on their health and welfare and in their greater vulnerability to violence. In both societies, women have low levels of input to decision-making bodies and are less likely to receive critical information on disaster strategies, potential threats and early warnings. Women in both societies are less likely to be the recipients of aid, this being dispersed in both countries to farm / land owners. One very common thread in both societies is the deep spiritual hurt women experience at the loss of their gardens—that deeply personal space where they once found peace. This loss is a very deeply felt hurt. What is surprising is not that we found gendered differences in each society, but that there are similarities in these experiences across cultures.

CONCLUSION

Cross-cultural research exposes significant epistemological, methodological and ethical challenges. Epistemological factors include the potential for unequal power relations, avoiding a postcolonial/elitist positioning, the

need to reflect on the way we represent ourselves and our participants, how we interpret our data and how we shape knowledge and understanding of a particular issue. Methodological factors include how we gather data to address the questions we are asking and the practicalities of the methods. For feminist qualitative research, this poses particular challenges in accessing the field for long periods and negotiating through the significant practical challenges. Ethical challenges are encapsulated in the principles of doing no harm, ensuring self-determination and taking a just approach. Our project in Bangladesh typically reveals the complexities of these challenges associated with working in cross-cultural, cross-organizational teams on significant global issues. We argue that the production of knowledge is aided by reflexivity and attending to unequal power relations. Whereas we are far from innocent in the political realities of research and knowledge generation, and we do not claim we can overcome power relations and interpretative difficulties, rather we 'negotiate these limitations' (Jenco, 2007: 743).

Our aim has been to bring the voices of the marginalized but critically affected to the developing global climate change knowledge base and to expose that climate change experiences are deeply gendered. What is surprising is that these gendered experiences are similar across cultural boundaries, differentiated by cultural context and levels of poverty and climate event. In undertaking our research, we are facilitating strategic action and enhancing understanding of the complexity of climate change impacts. Global challenges will accelerate our need to undertake cross-cultural research. It is imperative that we come to terms with the epistemological, methodological and ethical challenges inherent in this global project, in the process exposing suffering and inequality and developing strategies to enhance global justice.

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4 The Ethics of Political Correctness

Stina Powell and Seema Arora-Jonsson

In 2010, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) was granted funds to run a gender equality project by a governmental committee for gender equality in higher education. The project aimed to bring about long-term change and a gender-equal environment for students. University strategies and policies supported this goal, and the project was welcomed by the university leadership. Project activities targeted university teachers and communicators and consisted of courses and workshops to develop skills and knowledge about gender and norm critical perspectives. For the university, carrying out activities related to gender equality was important. It was the ethically right thing to do.

'Gender equality' is an important part of Swedish policies and important for the country's self-image. A specific understanding of what gender equality is meant to be forms the bedrock of most policy and gender equality projects. In this paper, we study the ethics and some of the implications of this political correctness in the university project described earlier, both at the level of the university promoting the project and the project members working on it. How ethical is this political correctness? The political correctness created an opening for the project but also contributed to its boundaries. It provided openings because it was agreed that gender inequality in the university needed to be acted upon. At the same time, the politically correct gender equality that framed the project also proved to be its limitation.

In this paper, we reflect on the unfolding of the project and the ethical judgments made by the participants about gender equality. We examine the power of overarching understandings of gender equality in Sweden within the project and how that framed the ethics of the process that both provided opportunities to bring about change in existing routines but also closed off other spaces.

The paper is a result of a dialogue between us, Stina and Seema, about the gender equality project at our university. Stina was the project leader and had a team of people working with her. Seema joined as part of a reference group once the project was underway and also took on the position of Stina's advisor for her PhD based on this intervention. We are both women in our early 40s and work at a social science department in a life

sciences university. Stina is Swedish and at the start of the project worked with outreach and education at the department. Seema is from India and up until recently, she was one of two solitary researchers working on gender and environmental issues at the university. We share a mutual concern about gender perspectives on education and research and a concern for 'gender equality' that we discuss in the chapter. In this chapter that we wrote together, Seema's role has been to question and urge Stina to reflect on her involvement in the project. Stina has mulled over and again about her role in the project, the ethics of trying to 'change' one's organization and of struggling with her normative positions on gender equality. What did Stina mean when she spoke of equality, what did the university leadership and the course participants think it was? And how did that shape the project?

In this paper, we begin by outlining the theoretical basis for our discussion on the ethics of political correctness. We then present the larger context of gender equality in Sweden and the increased visibility of the question of 'gender' within the Swedish academy at the present time. Following this, we present the case study, the gender equality project at the university, of which Stina was one of the driving forces—from the writing of the application for financial support to running courses on gender and education that formed the substance of the project. We go on to look critically at the design of the project itself, its normative assumptions, ideas for change and its silences. We end the paper by thinking through the project and Stina's work in light of our analysis.

The main material for this chapter consists of observations made by Stina during the course run during the project, minutes from project meetings, policy and education and strategy documents published by the university (SLU, 2009–2012; 2013–2016) and SLU's annual reports (1994–2011). Notes on participant observation at the course include 48 hours of transcribed notes. Material from an earlier study (Powell, 2008) serves as background information on the university.

THE ETHICS OF GENDER EQUALITY AND CHANGE

Deconstructing Nordic equality discourses, feminist scholar Honkanen shows how they become sites where a language around women and men are produced and where power is constantly negotiated in relation to 'man' and 'woman' (2008: 212) (see Chapter 3, this volume). Arguing that Nordic gender equality reproduces the white, middle-class heterosexual woman, she prods her readers to ask what this discourse leaves unsaid. She writes, "We need a genealogical awareness of our academic representational practices . . . We have to realize the genealogical impacts of the practices of research" (2008: 206) (see Chapter 15, this volume). Honkanen shows that the production of a two-sex discourse based in a heterosexual dichotomy also groups the other in homogenous categories such 'lesbians' and 'ethnic

minorities.' She asks, "How could feminists be constructive about the paradox they face: Being produced by the very discursive power that we resist?" (2008: 207).

Keeping this in mind, we examine if the project organizers may have been producing oppressive categorizations in their work. The gender equality project entailed categorizing groups of people to justify having it at all. What were the representational politics of group identities created in the course of the project, especially that of the 'female students' who, using Honkanen's words, "self-evidently 'awaited' political representation" through the course organized by the project. We study how "the researcher can prescribe various exclusive meanings to equality without acknowledging the political stakes of her own practice." We need to keep in mind that, "The production of knowledge that we are occupied with is an ethical practice, and ethics is what politics relies on our sense of good and evil" (ibid., 206–10).

Being an ethical researcher is, however, not as simple as following already set up ethical regulations (see also Chapter 10, this volume; Chapter 15, this volume; Chapter 3, this volume). In their study on anorexia, Halse and Honey (2005) wanted to include girls who had been diagnosed with anorexia but did not themselves agree with the diagnosis. This posed an ethical dilemma. The fact that some girls did not agree with the categorization 'anorexic' was itself of interest for the research that sought to understand the complexities of anorexia. This could not be accommodated by the ethical rules that demanded a clear category of anorexic girls in the proposal.

The ethical dilemma turned on whether the researchers should follow the ethics committee guidelines and label the girls anorexic without their agreement to ensure their participation in the study. Or did respect for the person, also an important ethical rule, come first and the girls should be left out of the study to avoid the possible harm of categorizing them as anorexic against their will? (Halse and Honey, 2005). A similar dilemma recurs in the gender equality project. Certain groups that were seen to benefit from the project were unknowingly subjectified. Characteristics were assigned to them that then became a 'truth' and a problem that needed expert attention.

Scholars such as Douglas argue that ethical principles are used by the powerful to control what research can be carried out and what research cannot be carried out. The very aim of research is to challenge these powerful structures (1976: 31). In a similar vein, Neuman states that social research is "a critical process of inquiry that goes beyond surface illusions to uncover the real structures in the material world in order to help people change conditions and build a better world for themselves" (2006: 95).

Highlighting the danger in this approach, Warwick warns that researchers need to follow strict codes of conduct to make sure that individual rights of the researched are secured, that they always override the right of 'science' (1983: 58). The focus of much feminist research has been on giving voice and agency to 'others' to speak and act for themselves. Unfortunately, as Halse and Honey note, the way research ethics are organized today silences

individuals and social groups by deciding on who they are in advance, without asking them. It assumes the "knowability of the 'other,' " which then resides dangerously close to relativism or solipsism (2005: 2155–8).

Scholars have sought to go beyond this dilemma and have advocated participatory research as, for example, Seema's research where the women in the villages she worked it were involved in thinking through the research questions and the design of the process (see Arora-Jonsson, 2008; Bergelin et al., 2008 for accounts of the research process by the academic researcher and the village co-researchers from their different perspectives). However, this did not necessarily include all the others who also formed the subject of the analysis. In research where the point is to 'understand the world in order to change it,' emancipatory goals are not entirely unproblematic from an ethical point of view.

Through the gender equality project, Stina hoped to bring about change by interacting and bringing up issues of concern and raising awareness about gender. The question that became pertinent as we wrote this chapter was who was the project trying to do justice to? Whose view of a better world were the project organizers pursuing? We show how the project risked a lack of complexity of views due to the pressures of needing to categorize subjects, even when the hope was to avoid just that. On the other hand, how did the project leader's position as a young white woman, not yet a researcher (an essential marker of status within the university), affect the choices taken and determine the course of action?

We take a somewhat broad view of ethics in trying to answer some of the questions we have raised in this section. First, we seek to understand the ethics of 'gender equality' in the Swedish context, that while recognizing a wrong (inequality) from a right (equality), the discourse on gender equality poses limits to what may be possible. Alaimo and Hekman critique how ethical principles seem to override ethical practices, and they suggest a shift in focus. They argue that ethical principles "unfold in time and take place in particular contexts, invite the recognition of and response to expected as well as unexpected material phenomena" (2008: 7–8). The ethical principles that underpinned gender equality in this project took shape in particular ways in the university setting. We thus begin the next section by studying the larger context of Swedish gender equality that shaped the project. Second, while we discern their resonance in official university policies, we also reflect on its effects on the participants of the project, especially Stina, and the shape that the project eventually took.

GENDER EQUALITY AND THE SWEDISH ACADEMY

The Swedish academy has only 18 percent female professors and differences between disciplines are large. Technical and mathematical disciplines have 10 percent, whereas the humanities and religion have 32 percent female

professors. Similarly, male students choose technical programs whereas female students choose programs leading to professions in care and education (HSV, 2008: 76, 89). The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education (HSV) argues for gender equality in higher education by saying, "Gender equality is about giving women and men the same opportunities and freedom to choose education and profession. Gender equality is also about quality. The fundamental idea with quality is that the values, experiences, views, and living conditions of both sexes should guide the norms and patterns of the organization and the ways in which processes in education and research should take place. Quality can also mean society's need to take into account the competence of both sexes to reach the highest possible level of research" (HSV, 2008: 7).

Breaking with stereotypical education choices are regarded as tasks for both the government and universities (Swedish Ministry of Agriculture, 2007). In 2009, the Swedish government formed a special delegation to come to terms with problems related to gender equality in higher education. Academic organizations could apply and get funding for projects. In addition, a number of publications were commissioned and funded by the delegation of which the report Hans Excellens (His Excellency) garnered much attention, especially among gender researchers. It showed that government funding of Excellence Centers in research was based on an assumption of gender neutrality where sex was not supposed to matter. In practice, male networks and assumptions about who constitutes an 'Excellent Researcher' led to male-headed research teams getting huge funds and female-headed groups missing out (Sandström et al., 2010).

In 2005, a report revealed that it was not only direct discrimination that prevented gender equality in academia but in fact what did not happen: not getting cited or invited to committees and conferences or not thought about in promotions (Husu, 2005). Wahl's research on organizations has been influential in Swedish research on academic careers. She argues that leadership in Sweden is coined as masculine and women get discriminated in academic settings (1997: 246). Another Swedish study of 33,674 individuals with degrees in higher education showed men leaping far ahead of women on the academic ladder. The author argues that the reasons for this are "leaking pipes." Women drop out of academia to go elsewhere due to discrimination in recruitment processes and due to larger administrative burdens that allows them less time for academic careers. Men have double the chances of becoming professors compared to women (Dryler, 2006: 80–2).

Fürst Hörte and Isaksson claim that one reason Swedish universities are not doing more about gender inequalities is the misconception that Sweden is already a gender-equal country (2008: 47). Assumptions about women and men and their essential differences stand in the way of women's academic careers. One common assumption is that women tend to prioritize family instead of their academic careers and therefore become unsuitable for the demands of an academic career (Berg et al., 2012). In a study by a

Swedish union (SACO, The Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations) in 2007, men also stated they prioritize family instead of their careers if they had to choose between the two (2007: 31). This does not seem to have had the same effect on men's chances for an academic career as it has for women.

These reports, evaluations and research on gender equality in Sweden over the last decades show that gender equality in the academy is very much on the agenda, even though the reports themselves present a rather dismal scenario. The political correctness of gender equality makes it appear that challenging inequalities is on the agenda. Pledges of gender equality in official policies and documents may also be seen as an effect of the right thing to say, of agreeing with the ideals of Swedish gender equality deeply embedded in 'Swedish' identity. This identity also tends to color reports. Experiences of white heterosexual Swedish men and women structure many reports. Those who do not fit into this mold, whether due to ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation or any other diverging traits are left out of the picture. Additionally, the reports are mainly in Swedish and inaccessible to many non-Swedish speaking students and teachers.

Such studies laid the groundwork for the group working with the gender equality project and were important for Stina in identifying the framework in which she worked. We now take a closer look at the way gender equality is described and talked about in SLU's policies and strategy papers and also in the annual reports.

WORKING TOWARD GENDER EQUALITY AT SLU

The goal for gender equality in the university annual reports between 1994–2012 is to increase the number of women in the organization. In the late 1990s, SLU got funding from the government to increase the number of female professors. There appeared to be a more active approach to gender equality at SLU in the late '90s. Measures during this period included projects such as Woman in the Organization, a leadership program to increase the number of women leaders at the university and a mentorship program for younger researchers (1994–95, 47). The 1995–96 report states that it was important for a natural science university to show that an academic career is possible for women. Every annual report between 1994–2012 stressed that the university has a problem with gender imbalances in the education programs. The following statement recurs in two reports:

> As in recent years, there is a gender imbalance in certain education programs, in the Veterinary Nurse Program to which no male student has been admitted in several years. In the Forestry Engineering program the situation is the opposite, with only a few female students. (2000: 12; 2001: 11)

A study done at the Forestry Faculty[1] in 2011 that included a survey and interviews with former students (1969–2006), shows that the number of women are still small, although increasing. The authors of this study believe that to increase the number of women in forestry, the focus cannot be, as in earlier years, on "change the women who do not apply." Rather, a closer look needs to be taken at forest organizations to ask why they do not attract more women or why the women who do join tend to drop out (Lidestav et al., 2011: 31).

It is believed that gender balanced groups are beneficial for, "The positive effects a mixed student population has for the communicative climate in the group" (SLU, 2000: 12; 2001: 11). Students are said to experience the gender imbalance as negative for their study environment (SLU, 2000: 12; 2001: 11). Short-term measures in forestry sciences when women were guaranteed a place and affirmative action for male applicants to the veterinary program have not changed the overall balance in the education programs over the years (SLU, 1994–2012).

In 2004, 243 women at SLU took part in a survey where one of the questions asked was if they were interested in taking on leadership positions. Seventy-nine percent said yes. Seventy-six percent said they wanted to become professors (SLU, 2004: 36). This indicates that there was no lack of potential female professors or leaders at SLU. Nevertheless, few women applied for promotion to professorship after that (SLU, 2005: 34). The solution was to conduct performance reviews.[2] This approach suggests that the assumption was that women were not prone to value their achievements the same as men and hence did not apply.

The 2000 report indicates an increase of female PhD students from 50 to 56 percent in the past three years and assumes that, "This should, in the long run, increase the recruitment base for higher positions" (2000: 54). In 2005, new aspects come into the report. Besides the focus on gender balance in education and research, gender equality is framed as the ability to take care of both women's and men's experiences and knowledge. It is stated that there is a need for more knowledge about gender equality and gender that should take place through education (SLU, 2005: 35).

In four annual reports (2000–2004), the same sentence recurs, "SLU is a university with emphasis on the natural sciences. Therefore it is very heartening that the education programs of SLU attract women" (e.g., SLU, 2004: 13). The assumption is that it is unusual for women to be interested in natural science. There is also an assumption in the reports that an equal number of women and men is the same as gender equality.

In an *Evaluation of the Quality and Impact at SLU in 2009* conducted and published by external reviewers, there was stress on increasing gender equality measures due to the skewed gender imbalances at the university. The report states, "There is an obvious gender imbalance at senior levels. We could not elucidate causes for this serious imbalance, but we hypothesize that it is due to the funding instability for faculty [. . .] Recruitment should

be based on excellence and not gender, but there are excellent women out there"(von Bothmer et al., 2009: 40). It was in the background of this larger national as well as university context that the gender equality project led by Stina was set up at the university.

THE GENDER EQUALITY PROJECT

As a result of disparate initiatives within the university to bring up issues on gender at the university, a desk study was carried out by Stina to map out what had been and what was being done related to gender perspectives in education and research at SLU, as well as gender equality measures that had been taken over the years. The mapping (Powell, 2008) had little to report except for the research and education being carried out by two people, one of whom was Seema, and an Equal Opportunities Unit to take care of gender equality as one of its areas but which was not well funded. The report proposed an action plan covering all areas of responsibility of the university research, education, outreach and administration.

By 2010, none of the recommendations from the list had been implemented. It was at that time that the opportunity to apply for governmental funding for gender equality projects in higher education mentioned earlier came up. A representative each from the veterinary and natural resource and agriculture faculties, the human resources officer responsible for equal opportunities and Stina came together again to discuss an application. Ideas about how to make the university a more gender-equal place to work and study were shared. Stina was asked to take on the position as project leader. The pro-vice-chancellor[3] in charge of education supported the write up of the application.

The application was approved by the funders in the autumn of 2010. Based on the findings of Stina's 2008 study, the initial suggestion for the project was to provide gender skills development for the university leadership. Stina and the others in the group were convinced by research and studies of gender equality in organizations that the leadership had to be the driving force if change was to take place. This suggestion was turned down by the pro-VC who argued that it would be difficult to get the leadership in one place at the same time for a course. The second suggestion from the representative of the veterinary faculty to focus on university teachers gained the pro-VC's approval. That became the focus of the project.

Eventually, the gender equality project consisted of three parts: A workshop series for the staff at the university communication unit. The second part, the main part of the project, forms the core of the empirical material for this chapter. It was a course in gender and norm critical pedagogy for university teachers. The idea was to have gender and norm critical perspectives on the communicators and teachers' work in order to develop ways of being sensitive and aware of gender in the way the university reaches out

to students. For the communication unit, one of the workshops included an exercise where the information material from SLU was analyzed to discuss the implicit norms guiding their work.

The third component of the project was research on the process of the project, which became Stina's PhD work. The research component of the project was added by Stina. When she sent the first draft, the pro-VC suggested that the research study did not need to be included. Stina kept it there nonetheless, and the report went into the final version without further comments about it. Her plan was to be able to not only take the role of project leader but also to be given a chance to reflect on what happened. The difference between being project leader and being a researcher was that Stina had the mandate to analyze and reflect on the project and the course of events. There had been a shift in power dynamics that was maybe not initially intended or expected, which we will come back to further along in the chapter.

THE COURSE ON GENDER EQUALITY

As the planning phase of the project started, a small operative group was created. It consisted of Stina, a representative from the veterinary faculty, the director of the Centre for Gender Research at Uppsala University and a researcher from the Gender Centre. The researcher suggested norm critical pedagogy as a possible way to structure the course for university teachers. Eventually, a reference group was created to consult when the team wanted advice. It consisted of three student representatives, teachers, one representative of the leadership of the university, the head of the Division of Student Affairs and Learning Development[4] and Seema and one other researcher.

The activities related to the way the call was formulated, and the team had to relate their activities to a list of topics that the funders had identified in the call: "mechanisms that counteract development toward gender equality, research education, education programs or education areas which are coined by strong gender imbalances. The subcategories to be addressed included working against gender stereotypical education choices, inequalities in higher academic positions and inequalities in academic careers (Application form DJ 2010). There was also the possibility to add your own subcategory, and the SLU team added knowledge development in gender pedagogy for teachers.

Four course components were drawn up that included lectures on gender equality and academia, gender and norm critical approaches to teaching, classroom dynamics and gender perspectives on natural science education and research. These components were developed in meetings with course participants, students, leadership representatives, education[5] and Equal Opportunities committees[6] and others who in different ways were engaged in education at the university. The team also conducted informal surveys,

focus group interviews and interviews with students (two each) and teachers (eight). The aim was to develop a project that was relevant to the students and the teachers at the university.

Stina believed that there were certain things that needed to be changed in order to open up for gender perspectives to be introduced as relevant at the university. In the proposal, she wrote about the need for long-term change, a safe study and work environment. It was an unthreatening way to describe a project that dealt with gender relations that at its core is about relations of power and privilege. There was nevertheless a desire to bring about change toward more gender-equal conditions for students. The focus on norm critical pedagogy was to allow a challenge to the status quo, to identify norms and to be open to see and question oneself as a teacher, researcher or student (Kumashiro, 2000). It felt new and challenging and it was being done in other universities. The project team thought it would be perfect to introduce this to university teachers. They invited external speakers for the course to make sure that they had good lecturers and interesting content that would challenge perceptions and allow new ideas to flow.

AND SOME OF THE RESPONSES TO IT

When Stina conducted the survey with the students, she told them that the university had received funding for a gender equality project and for that to be relevant for their experiences, she needed to know their thoughts. The responses to the surveys conducted by the team were varied. Some students argued that gender was irrelevant for them, because they worked within the natural sciences and did not really see any connection. In an earlier mini-survey with heads of departments, Stina had asked them about gender perspectives on teaching and education and about gender equality in their departments. While there were statements about the irrelevance of gender, on the whole, the political correctness of gender was evident.

The course itself was a positive experience for the project team and the participants. Fifty-five university teachers participated in the course over a period of six months. They claimed that the course had been rewarding for them. But they felt unable to work with these issues unless they had specially funded time to think about them or the funding to engage in gender and norm critical work. At the conclusion of the project, the leadership was clear that the university did not have funding to continue with such a course. The argument that it was equally costly not to have a university that worked actively with issues of discrimination and inequality did not strike a chord. It was clear that the project had been possible because there was a group that pushed for it, not necessarily because the university saw it as imperative. It was supported because it would have not been politically correct to dismiss those efforts and there was funding from outside.

THE SUBSTANCE OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

The funding from the government provided the university with the opportunity to take an initiative for gender equality that would also be rewarded in the national setting. Arguments about the need for gender equality were used in various official university documents, as well as in interviews, surveys, during meetings and course activities without much thought given to what gender equality really meant, why it was important and if it always is "a good thing?" In the proposal Stina wrote, "without gender equality we risk missing out on people who would be a great resource in their professions" and "it is important that the study environment is supportive and safe for both women and men and that they are equipped with knowledge and strategies that ensures that they can have a career on equal terms" and lastly "by educating the teachers in gender sensitive pedagogy, the study environment can be improved so that the diversity in the student group results in a respectful attitude towards one another and in the way the education is carried out" (Application to Delegation for Gender Equality in Higher Education 2010, SLU). These arguments were not critically discussed within the project.

Studies of gender equality work in organizations had convinced Stina that she needed the support of the leadership to make the project a success. She wanted their approval. Whereas members of the leadership sometimes shared teaching experiences where gender had been relevant, they were reluctant to get involved in their positions as administrators. When asked to promote the course by sending out a letter to the teachers, they refused, claiming that such a letter might just have the opposite effect on teachers. In an interview, a university employee provided a clue to this reluctance. When asked why there was so little attention paid to gender inequalities at the university, the person speculated that there might be some sort of fear at the leadership level in bringing up "irrelevant issues on the agenda, or if it rather is that they can't justify why they would do it . . . bring it that high up on the agenda . . ."

In a workshop organized by a project funded by the government's Delegation for Gender Equality in Higher Education,[7] the VC of the university stated that one reason why women lag behind in academic careers is that they start families between 30–40 years old. In response to a comment by a student at the workshop that she found it difficult to know the career paths available at the university after she had finished her PhD, the VC pointed out that, "It is all on the web for those interested enough to find it." As Magnusson et al. argue, this has to do with gender equality becoming an issue of administrative practice (2008). Gender equality is not spoken about in terms of redistribution of power and privileges, and it is not discussed in terms of dominating norms in the organization. At another meeting with representatives of the four Equal Opportunities committees, a member

argued that once women have families, they are not interested in an academic career. This can be related to Jennifer de Vries's work in an Australian university. She points to increasing talk on choice when it comes to gender equality—the fact that it is the choice of the women to decide whether they want to pursue a career. De Vries argues that this masks structural constraints within the structure the choice is made (2010: 10).

Similarly in a discussion with the teachers who took part in the courses, there were references to a lack of self-confidence among the female students in the university. Although it was meant in the spirit of trying to change that, these assumptions exist in the same frame of thought where the onus is once again put on the young women responsible for their lives, regardless of structural constraints.

AND ITS LIMITS

Stina was convinced before the project started that this university, as all others, did not provide equal opportunities for women and men and that assumptions about women and men and their assumed differences mattered a great deal for the possibilities for a career in the university. The project team acted in the opening provided by political correctness surrounding gender equality, used that language and the knowledge that this was the "ethically right thing to do" for the university. This became a dilemma when Stina moved into the position of a researcher, as she realized that she reproduced some of the essentialist dualisms she thought she was out to question.

Starting from Above: A Subjectification

Based on past reports, work from within the academy and her own understanding of gender equality, Stina and her colleagues believed they knew what the leadership, the teachers and the university needed—pedagogical training and more knowledge on gender. There was little contact with the students themselves. Earlier reports confirmed that women in the male-dominated forestry sciences experienced discrimination, and she also believed that this was true of the female-dominated veterinary sciences. Thinking through her short, although intense, relationship with the students, Stina felt that if she could redo the project, she would spend much more time speaking to them. She felt that the students that she did speak to felt relieved to get to speak about discrimination at the university (see also Chapter 2 in this volume). With the discontinuation of the project, Stina was left with a strong sense of not doing right by them. By asking them questions and listening to them, she had in a sense promised that things would change. Discussions with the teachers during the course about girls' low self-confidence also tended to reinforce images of this group that was homogenized and subjectified

(c.f. Halse and Honey, 2005) into the ethnic Swedish, middle-class, female student body. Although talking about them, the course did not start from their experiences of discrimination, thus they were assigned the status of discriminated young, white women with little self-confidence. Any differences within the group were elided.

This understanding then echoed notions of a compulsory heterosexuality and of sex/gender as a more foundational social relation than race/ethnicity, class or sexuality. Much like Liinason's argument about institutionalized gender knowledge within the Swedish academy, this focus on the 'girls' at SLU, "reinforced the image of the nation through a strict focus on white, heterosexual women." This was as she writes, "the success story of feminism where power was presented as something that we, feminists/women, did not produce ourselves, but were exposed to." Liinason writes that what troubled her "was the fact that even though the critique was expressed in the lectures and the class-room, it was not expressed in reference to ourselves, our own practices, our own constructions and narrations of feminism. And this, I realize, is something that we do not talk about" (2010: 39).

In this conception of gender equality, "other social relations like race/ethnicity, sexuality, and class are treated as additive to an already gendered and hetero/sexed body" (Liinason, 2010: 39). With a growing focus on internationalization and the growing number of foreign students within the campus, questions of ethnicity, 'race' and language are rife at the university. In a survey conducted by two administrators who took the gender equality course as their course assignment, they found that it was the question of 'race' rather than sex or gender that was the elephant in the room that no one dared to acknowledge (Carlbrand and Tälleklint, 2012). Unlike gender, however, it was an uncomfortable question, and discussing racist practices was certainly not politically correct.

The Straitjacket of a Course

The decision that the project would work through a course both enabled the project but also set firm limits. A course at the university is the archetype for how knowledge is shared and was thus acceptable within regular university functioning. The aim was that through educating teachers in gender sensitive pedagogy, the situation for students would be improved. However, bringing about change through a course was not so simple. To teach people something was not the same as effecting change. Stina realized that knowledge does not just easily transfer to change behavior and attitudes. Her view at the start of the project was that the knowledge and awareness about gender equality was so very basic that the activities first must be awareness raising about gender discrimination and that analyses of other differences would come later. This position created an ethical dilemma for Stina as she looked back at the course. She used the political correctness and the right rhetoric to make space for the project, but she also reinforced dualisms of

women and men that could later open the project to critique by others who could show that such was not always the case.

Egalitarianism and emancipatory goals became muddy waters. Drawing on feminist ideas of challenging gender norms, the project had aimed for both. But as Ahmed writes, "We cannot . . . lose sight of who is defining 'emancipatory values' for whom, if we are to recognize the mediation of ethics by politics" (1998, 55). Thinking back, Stina felt that just because *she* was convinced that the organization needed to challenge its gendered norms, it did not mean that it needed to be done in the way she deemed important. And just because she happened to be convinced that the organization was discriminating against women, it did not mean that everyone experienced this in the same way and agreed on how it needed to be dealt with. She was convinced that if only people knew more about gender and how it plays out in our everyday relationships, they would *understand*. As a gender expert, 'she' know better and more than 'them.'

GENDER EXPERTISE

Although politically correct, working with gender equality had a low status at the university. By letting Stina do it, there was no real challenge to the power structures in the organization. She believed that for the university it was an effective way of showing that they were doing something about gender equality. She did not have any mandate to make changes, other than making sure that the project became relevant and interesting for the participants. In an interview, a university employee remarked that there was a tendency in the organization to delegate these types of questions (such as gender or other forms of discrimination) to others who brought them up. It was the 'virtue' of the gender position in Sweden (Arora-Jonsson, 2013: 178) and her zeal for gender equality that made Stina eligible to lead a project without the normal accouterments required in a university setting—a PhD. But this also put her in a competitive position with other experts meant to be working with these issues. The course created ambivalence vis-à-vis the unit that normally conducted such courses at the university. In an early meeting during the planning phase of the project, they warned about having such a course, because they felt that mentioning gender puts people off and that they already did include gender in their courses. They told the project team that they should count themselves lucky if they got any participants, joking that it was best that they did not get any short-haired lesbian lecturers. By not making an effort to include their 'gender expert' in the project, relying instead on outside researchers and taking on the mantle of a gender expert herself, Stina alienated the others. For Stina, it seemed to become a competition of who cared more about gender equality. 'Her' course ran parallel to the others. This meant that rather than involving themselves in the project, which was an education course for teachers, members of the unit did not engage with the course.

DISCUSSION

The political correctness and consensus-oriented approach to gender equality moves around in a safe space where it is easy to agree on its importance and necessity. Framing the project differently, looking closer at sexist assumptions in the university and asking questions about the role of the leadership might have made it more difficult to get the project approved. However, the political correctness clearly set limits to what they could do within such a frame. Whereas the project spoke of change, its organization through conventional activities such as the course at the university helped to depoliticize its agenda. In its language, it also fit in well with what Liinason and Honkanen term the national or dominant heterosexual agenda, where ideas about men and women take precedence, whereas others are ignored. It fit in well with ideas in the university reports about gender harmony and the conviction that a fair gender balance was important for a good atmosphere and that it enabled communication between the students.

According to Honkanen,

> the language of equality necessitates the two sex-model . . . the language of equality becomes preferable for middle class white heterosexual western women . . . for whom it provides spaces of empowerment. It provides jobs for women with 'gender skills,' it provides teaching-jobs, it provides scholarships, and it provides salaries. There is a machinery producing this language in a wide range of societal arenas . . . there are laws that ordain this use of language. (2008: 214)

Apart from creating dissonance between the 'gender experts,' this bureaucratization was also evident in the teachers' who believed there was little they could do without allocated funding and time.

What then are the ethics of the political correctness of Swedish gender equality? Consequentiality is an important aspect of ethics of research. Hekman and Alimio argue that ethics is not only to follow the ethical guidelines but to think ethically about the implications your research might have for individuals, for society and for yourself as a researcher (2008). Gender equality is considered a common good but who is it really good for?

In the project, Stina drew on a genealogy of Swedish gender studies with its binary focus on men and women (c.f. Honkanen, 2008; Liinason, 2010) that became apparent as the course progressed. Although well aware of intersecting axes of power, the structure of the course reproduced oppressive categorizations that homogenized some while it excluded others. Stina's position as an expert gave her a political stake in the process, and she went to lengths to establish good relations with the administrative leadership and follow prescriptions.

The course focused on the group of middle-class, white, young Swedish women, not unlike Stina, a group she felt she understood or knew about. Yet, whereas the aim was to make the situation better for them, the course

itself did not give them a voice. Instead, a group of gender experts and teachers talked about how they could improve the situation for *them*. So whereas gender pedagogy opened up a space for the teachers to think about their work, it also silenced others who were meant to be on the receiving end. It also excluded any others who did not fit into this categorization.

Nevertheless, while reproducing wider politically correct discourses and being the token gender project at the university, the course did make it possible to discuss gender and power for the teachers for a little while. Importantly, it made clear the importance of going beyond the ethics of being politically correct.

NOTES

1. The university has four faculties that would be the equivalent of schools or colleges.
2. *Medarbetarsamtal*.
3. SLU has four pro-vice-chancellors: the deputy VC and the pro-VC for education, for cooperation, for environmental monitoring and assessment.
4. A unit that provides administrative support for student and courses in pedagogy for university teachers.
5. The education committee is chaired by the pro-VC for education and consists of the vice deans of all faculties as well as a student representative. They take decisions on all undergraduate education within the university.
6. Each of the four faculties has an Equal Opportunities committee.
7. This project focused on doctoral students and travelled around to Swedish universities to discuss gender equality in doctoral education. It was carried out by the Swedish National Union of Students (Sveriges förenade studentkårer).

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5 Exploring Maternal Mental Health in Central Vietnam through Community-Based Participatory Research

Linda Murray

Public health research is increasingly occurring through international collaborations that seek to address globally significant health issues, such as those outlined in the Millennium Development Goals. This creates a range of opportunities for innovation and partnership, yet also presents new ethical challenges. Globalization has affected the way epidemiological research and public health programs in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) are conducted in several ways. International research collaborations are more practicable due to faster communication between partners, the emergence of global-country networks and increasingly porous national borders (Hill, 2011). Since the end of the Cold War, such collaborations have proliferated, as traditional partnerships between bilateral donors in LMIC were joined by partnerships with private enterprise and civil society groups (Dodd and Hill, 2007). At the local level, this has created an "unstructured plurality" in preventive and community health governance involving numerous stakeholders who are diverse in terms of scope and impact (Fidler, 2007). Between 1990 and 2000, a 450 percent increase was reported in the number of international NGOs aiming to improve serious social, environmental and health problems in LMIC (Dahan et al., 2010). Thus research approaches seeking to accommodate community interest and ascertain local need are an essential part of many international health collaborations.

Before the 1980s, epidemiology generally relied on positivist methods to identify the social and environmental associations with disease patterns within populations (Baum, MacDougall and Smith, 2006; Minkler, 2004). However, the translation of these findings for policy change and public health advocacy were commonly seen as the responsibility of others (Leung, Yen and Minkler, 2004). Since the 1990s, a growing demand has arisen for engaging civil society and community groups in research concerning their health (Baum, MacDougall and Smith, 2006). Hence, social epidemiology now incorporates methods stemming from alternative social research developed from the 1940s–1970s, which focus on collaboration, participation and joint ownership of the knowledge produced (Israel, 2005; Liamputtong, 2008). Within public health, the term community-based participatory research (CBPR) is increasingly being used to describe such approaches (Oakes and Kaufman, 2006). According to Leung, Yen and Minkler. (2004),

"CBPR compliments the accent placed by many other 'new epidemiologies' on understanding and preventing disease in a historical, political, economic, cultural and social context" (500).

This chapter describes how a CBPR approach was used to explore postnatal depression in a central Vietnamese province. The research was conducted as part of a six-year international collaboration between an Australian University and four Vietnamese partner institutions to enhance academic capacity in public health teaching and research (Dunne, 2012). The benefits of using a CBPR approach in international research collaborations, as well as the ethical challenges of this approach, will be outlined.

COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

CBPR is not a specific methodology per se, but rather an approach to conducting research that intentionally evaluates the roles and power dynamics of the researcher and participants, the means of knowledge creation and who determines what is considered 'useful' knowledge (Fals-Borda and Rahman, 1991; Konning and Martin, 1996). CBPR aims to involve partners from a community, geographically or otherwise defined, in the research process as a whole. Using this approach, researchers and communities share the goal of generating information that can be translated into action for positive social change (Israel, 2005). In public health, approaches such as CBPR increase the rigor of descriptive epidemiology due to their focus on the collective acquisition of serious, reliable knowledge to elucidate health disparities (Israel, 2005; Minkler and Wallerstein, 2003). As Trostle (2005) states, "People working within the framework of community-controlled epidemiology could argue that community participation in disease surveillance increases the relevance and quality of that science" (161).

CBPR is historically linked to "participatory" research methods used in adult education and social anthropology and community development (Reason, 1994; Tandon and Farrell, 2008). In America and Europe, these methods emphasized engaging the people affected by a problem in determining actions for its solution through an iterative cycle of information gathering and reflection (Baum, MacDougall and Smith, 2006; Leung, Yen and Minkler, 2004). In LMIC and the global south, methods such as "participatory action research" emerged from postcolonialist theory and the work of educationalists such as Paulo Friere and in the antipodes, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Minkler and Wallerstein, 2003; Smith, 1999; Tandon and Farrell, 2008). These traditions identify the colonizing nature of traditional research methods by revealing how they further empower researchers and institutions representing dominant cultures, while using less powerful groups as 'subjects' (Smith, 1999). In reaction to this, approaches such as CBPR are premised on "breaking the monopoly over knowledge production by universities, not as anti-intellectualism, but rather in recognition of the different sets of interests and power relations to which researchers and the communities they study

The Nine Principles of CBPR (from Israel, 2005)

1. CBPR research recognizes community as a unit of identity
2. CBPR builds on strengths and resources within the community
3. CBPR facilitates a collaborative, equitable partnership in all phases of research, involving an empowering and power-sharing process that attends to social inequalities
4. CBPR promotes co-learning and capacity building among all partners
5. CBPR integrates and achieves a balance between knowledge generation and intervention for the mutual benefit of all partners
6. CBPR focuses on the local relevance of Public Health problems and ecological perspectives that attend to the multiple determinants of health
7. CBPR involves systems development through a cyclical and iterative process
8. CBPR disseminates results to all partners and involves them in the wider dissemination process
9. CBPR involves a long-term process and commitment to sustainability

Figure 5.1 The Nine Principles of CBPR

are linked" (Leung, Yen and Minkler, 2004: 501). Proponents of CBPR have outlined nine core principles, which define and guide projects identified as CBPR (Israel, 2005; Liamputtong, 2008; Minkler and Wallerstein, 2003; Oakes and Kaufman, 2006). These are outlined in Figure 5.1:

The overarching principles of CBPR were addressed throughout the research described in this chapter. The study took place within the context of a bilateral university collaboration (QUT and Hue University of Medicine and Pharmacy), which has a long-term commitment to improving public health systems in Vietnam through developing university curriculum and teaching in public health (Dunne, 2012). A reflexive, multistaged process meant that provincial- and commune-level health workers were involved with the project since its inception and the research focus was continuously refined. Health workers not only identified research questions and generated data, but also undertook qualitative data analysis in order to identify themes for a larger quantitative survey. The results of this research were disseminated in social epidemiology workshops for academics and health service providers in Hue, Vietnam, as well as community events, such as the Hue Science Festival (2010 and 2012), which is part of Hue City's biannual festival.

ETHICAL CHALLENGES OF CBPR PROJECTS IN INTERNATIONAL SETTINGS

Whereas the values of a CBPR approach are appealing, and there are benefits to using this approach within international collaborations, there are

also ethical challenges that must be considered. These include the nature of participation between partners, community representation and research accountability to international institutions. These issues are discussed further in the following section.

DEFINING "PARTICIPATION" BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS

"Participation is a delicate matter. It is clearly not possible to simply enter a community and announce that we are all going to participate" (Reason, 1994: 271).

According to its theoretical principles, CBPR is ideally instigated by the community of people it is claimed to benefit, who have identified the research problem themselves. However, in reality, participatory research is often initiated or defined by external stakeholders who must adhere to the requirements of funding bodies, international organizations or academic courses (Israel, 2005; Whyte, 1991). Reason (1994) asserts that much community action would not occur without the initiative of someone with the time and skills to focus on a particular issue, who is often a researcher or outsider. In such cases, the personal and professional pressures on key decision makers in CPBR projects requires careful examination. For academics under pressure to produce a large output of refereed publications, conducting research using a thorough CBPR approach may be unpredictable and time consuming (Baum, MacDougall and Smith, 2006). Such pressures can be similar for nongovernment organizations seeking to substantiate the outcomes of funded projects. Therefore, as Flicker et al. (2007) state, "it can be difficult to strike an appropriate balance between what needs to get done and the means" (482).

Established theories of citizen participation assert that as community participation and ownership increases, less power is given to one authoritative party (Arnstein, 1969; Kumar, 2002). However, the more 'participatory' the process, the more time consuming it will also be. This can place an unreasonable burden on people who are already overcommitted, and if not carefully managed, can shift from participation to exploitation (Minkler, 2004). Given the time and effort required by community members to be a part of such programs, there is an ethical imperative to ensure equitable honoraria are agreed upon before the project and any volunteerism is clearly defined (Flicker et al., 2007).

In terms of scientific reporting, rather than simply labeling a process as 'participatory,' or making subjective judgments about the 'validity' of collaboration, it is more rigorous to simply describe what was done, when and by whom (Liamputtong and Ezzy, 2005; Minkler and Wallerstein, 2003). For example, whereas participatory techniques are used with 'grassroots' style community groups in many countries, Scott, Miller and Lloyd (2006) note that in Vietnam such groups rarely exist. Rather, in Vietnam,

participatory research most often occurs in situations where there is 'buy in' from larger international projects aiming to cooperatively work on social issues with government organizations through official state channels. This was also the case with this study, where official collaboration occurred between an Australian and Vietnamese University. Community engagement and access to participants also occurred through district and commune health services. Hence, 'community' was defined as the population living in geographic administrative boundaries (communes) rather than a self-identified group.

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION AND DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE

The democratizing of access to the knowledge produced by research is a key component of CBPR. However, how and when this happens can also be a cause of tension for communities and researchers. It has been noted that CBPR can be used as a convenient term for involving community members in data collection but then their input does not continue in data analysis and knowledge dissemination (Leung, Yen and Minkler, 2004). Also, if the topic is sensitive, communities may not want all research findings publicly disclosed if they are likely to cause stigmatization or conflict within segments of the community (Minkler, 2004; Flicker et al., 2007). Therefore, a clear plan for how the results will be reviewed for dissemination should be articulated from the early stages of the project.

RESEARCH ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

Whereas ethics approval is mandatory for all but the most low-risk research in high-income countries, there are extra considerations that may be required for international collaborations. First, ethics approval should be gained from both the researcher's home institution as well as a committee from the country where the research is conducted (Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 1999). Whereas procedures such as obtaining informed consent may be sufficient for committees in both countries, the Nuffield council reveals it is also important to assess whether voluntariness can truly be ensured in situations where people have limited access to health resources and may perceive the research as being an extension of health services (Bastida et al., 2010). Also, if the leading research teams are based at a university in another country, how realistic is it that a participant could access avenues for recourse if they have questions or are unsatisfied about research conduct. For this reason, the Australian National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (NHMRC, 2013) includes a section specifically for overseas research that

requires the identification of local research contacts as well as the Australian institution.

STUDY BACKGROUND AND AIMS

Postnatal depression (PND) can have a profound impact on the lives of women and the well-being of families and is linked to poorer infant health and nutrition outcomes (Fisher, Cabral de Mello, and Izutsu, 2009; Harpham et al., 2005; Rahman et al., 2008). Social factors associated with poor maternal mental health in LMIC include gender-based violence, poverty, social isolation and poor family relationships (Fisher et al., 2012). It is well established that large proportions of women suffering from mental health disorders in LMIC receive no treatment because of a low societal priority regarding mental health, limited access to health services and social stigma (Eaton et al., 2011; Kleinman, 2009). A recent systematic review in LMIC reported an average prevalence of 19.8 percent for common postnatal mental disorders (Fisher et al., 2012). Two studies of postnatal women in Vietnam estimate that approximately one-third of women experience a common mental disorder (33 percent in the South and 29.9 percent in the North) (Fisher et al., 2004; Fisher et al., 2010).

There is considerable cultural variation in how PND is discussed and what is believed to influence its course. Cultural idioms of distress are encoded with social and moral values, and how new mothers signify depressive experiences to others will affect pathways to treatment (Kleinman, 2009). Qualitative reports from health professionals in Vietnam have explained PND as predominantly somato-social in nature and reveal that psychiatric treatment and care is seldom sought or recommended (Niemi et al., 2010).

This study aimed to investigate Vietnamese health professionals' beliefs about the causes and social determinants of postnatal depression and to describe existing pathways to care, support and treatment using a CBPR approach. The findings of this qualitative study informed a larger quantitative survey investigating the sociocultural variables associated with postnatal depression and well-being in central Vietnam.

STUDY SETTING

The study was conducted in Thua Thien Hue Province, Central Vietnam. Hue City, the provincial capital, has a population of more than three hundred thousand people, and the province has a population of approximately one million (Thua Thien Hue Province, 2011). Hue City is a center of education and tourism, and the rest of the province generates income primarily from agriculture (Doan, 2002). Around 88 percent of women in Vietnam have high levels of access to skilled attendants at birth, and Hue

City has a tertiary level maternity hospital (Fisher, et al., 2010; World Health Organization [WHO], 2008). There is also a network of district and commune health centers that provide primary and secondary maternal health services.

European-influenced psychiatry and psychiatric institutions were established in the early 1900s in Vietnam by French colonists (Nguyen, 2003). Clinical psychiatry and neurology were included in the medical curriculum in Hanoi from the 1950s, and in the South from 1977, which coincided with the advent of Socialist political ideals (Phan and Silove, 1999). Inpatient psychiatric units are available in most provinces, and a national mental health program provides free medications for people suffering schizophrenia and epilepsy through commune health centers (Vuong et al., 2011). Vietnam also has a professionalized discipline of traditional medicine based on Chinese medicine and indigenous Vietnamese healing systems. Practitioners in this sector generally complete a master's in traditional medicine after an undergraduate medical degree, and there are public traditional medicine hospitals throughout Vietnam (Doan, 2002).

Participants

A total of 29 health professionals (12 in focus group discussions and 17 in individual in-depth interviews) were recruited through purposive sampling. For the focus groups, 12 maternal and child health professionals were recruited from three commune health centers within ten kilometers of Hue City, and one tertiary level provincial hospital. Semistructured interviews were conducted with 17 health professionals who were purposely chosen because of their expertise in maternal mental health. Participant characteristics are described in Table 5.1:

Methodology Focus Group Discussions: Concept Mapping

Twelve health professionals (two groups of six participants) undertook focus group discussions (FGDs) guided by the participatory concept mapping method developed by Trochim and Linton (1986). Concept mapping is a structured mixed-method group process that both subjectively describes the topic of interest and quantifies the strength of conceptual relationships (Trochim and Kane, 2005). Concept mapping requires a diverse group of people to contribute equally in order to generate a visual conceptual framework (concept map) depicting the group's ideas (Rabinowitz, 2009; Trochim and Kane, 2005). This method was chosen because it required participants to be involved in both data generation and analysis (Kumar, 2002).

The group process was facilitated by two Vietnamese colleagues over two three-hour workshops. Concept mapping requires a minimum of ten participants to generate comprehensive data; however, groups of more than eight become difficult to facilitate (Southern et al., 2002). Hence, two groups of

Table 5.1 Study Participants

In-depth Interviews		
Occupation	**Number**	**Gender (M/F**
Psychiatrists	Three	2/1
Obstetrics/Gynecology Specialists	Five	3/2
Psychologists	One	0/1
Pediatricians	One	0/1
Nursing/Midwifery Educators	Two	0/2
Traditional Medicine Practitioners	Five	3/2
Focus Group Discussions		
Occupation	**Number**	**Gender (M/F)**
Midwives, Hospital based	Six	0/6
Midwives, Commune Health Stations	Three	0/3
Primary Care Doctors, Commune Health Stations	Three	1/2

six were recruited and all participants attended both sessions. Trochim's concept mapping process requires four steps:

1. **Brainstorming:** Participants were given a definition of PND (see appendix) and asked to make a list of statements conceptually related to it as a group. At the end of the first workshop, the materials were translated into English and statements were checked with both bilingual facilitators to ensure accuracy.
2. **Sorting:** Individual participants then received a set of all brainstormed statements printed on cards and were asked to individually sort them into piles "in a way that made sense to them."
3. **Rating:** Each participant was then asked to rate each statement on a Likert scale from one "least likely to cause PND" to five "most likely to cause PND."
4. **Verification:** "Concept maps" were generated by analysis software, Concept Systems. The focus groups then met again to review the concept maps and decide if they were valid representations of their previous work. Notes were taken during the discussion about the interpretation of maps, which were incorporated into the final analysis.

In-Depth Interviews

Seventeen semistructured in-depth interviews were also conducted with individual health professionals. Interviews lasted for 30–60 minutes and were simultaneously translated by a Vietnamese colleague and recorded

with an MP3 player with permission. Participants were interviewed at their place of work or at Hue University. The semistructured interview guide included questions about what causes PND, how a woman can prevent PND, pathways to treatment and details of treatments provided for sufferers of PND. Interviews were transcribed verbatim in English, and samples of the transcripts were cross-checked against the audio recordings by an independent translator, as recommended by Liamputtong (2008) and Brislin (1990).

ANALYSIS

The primary data used for analysis was full English transcripts from all interviews. The principal researcher undertook a directed content analysis informed a posteriori by Arthur Kleinman's explanatory models of illness. Kleinman's theory outlines a number of domains to explore health beliefs such as the cause, nature, course and treatments of an illness, and what that illness means to the sufferer (Kleinman, 1978). Nvivo 8 software was used for data management. To ensure robust analysis, the data was reviewed iteratively until it was thoroughly familiar, and field notes taken during interviews and FGDs were also consulted. The translation and cultural relevance of the resultant themes were verified by a third, bilingual Vietnamese researcher to enhance evaluative rigor (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Ethics

Ethics approval was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee at Queensland University of Technology, Australia and the Scientific Committee at Hue University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Vietnam. Consent was obtained from all mothers prior to participation. The details of local project contacts were given in case participants had questions regarding the study or required free follow-up or debriefing.

RESULTS

Content analysis of in-depth interviews and the focus group concept mapping exercises resulted in the following themes being described:

NATURE OF PND

In in-depth interviews, biomedically trained professionals referred to ICD10 diagnostic criteria and described symptoms of PND such as sadness, fatigue, anxiety, suicidal ideation, psychosis, loss of interest in everything including

the baby, loss of appetite, not talking to or contacting others, angry outbursts and, less commonly, beating their children or shaking the baby. It was explained that medical staff usually only saw severe cases of depression, often including suicidal ideation or acts or psychotic symptoms. Therapeutic transactions between women with mild or moderate cases of PND and biomedicine were reported as rare. Mental health professionals such as psychiatrists and psychologists also thought it would be difficult for general health professionals to recognize cases to refer:

> In the community we don't have the family medicine doctor to take care of that and the nurses and doctors in the commune health centre, they don't have time to take care of the people with the symptoms of depression, so mainly the family, and if . . . the woman just has some symptoms such as they feel sad, and they don't want to eat much, they, the family, think that it's normal. (Psychiatrist)

Traditional medicine practitioners did not mention 'postnatal depression' per se but said they often treated women with complaints of exhaustion and sleeplessness more severe than to be expected postnatally, as well as irritability, anxiety and appetite changes.

Causes of PND

Participants with a biomedical background identified pain, infection, hormonal changes, the stress of delivery and a history of mental illness as possible causes of PND. Because no screening is undertaken in primary care, participants indicated it would be hard to substantiate a prior history of mental illness in women who presented postpartum.

Traditional medicine practitioners explained that a loss of blood and fluids in childbirth renders the woman's body susceptible to cold and weakness. Postpartum, a loss of vital energy was attributed to symptoms of PND. The theory of 'qi' describes how vital energy and different elements within the body must be balanced, and a loss of balance will result in ill health:

> Because after the women have delivery they are very weak and become cold . . . and they have lost lots of energy and lots of blood, lots of things. And these [treatments] are to help provide them with the energy and the blood. (Traditional Medicine Practitioner)

In Vietnam, postpartum confinement practices are based on this traditional theory and are commonly followed by most women. Such practices focus on maintaining warmth and avoiding wind in order to avoid health consequences in old age. Practices include complete rest in a room with the windows and doors closed, lying over heat, placing cotton wool in ears, not bathing, reading or watching TV and massage with oil. These traditions

were often enforced and supported by female relatives, who also cooked special foods following delivery:

> They stay in the dark, bed on the fire, and they put on the skin, many things . . . like turmeric. They want to be beautiful after the baby because when they have the baby they will become fat, their skin will not be good . . . they put something on it to make the skin lighter. (Obstetrician)

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON PND

During FGDs, participants suggested that social factors were highly influential in triggering the onset of PND. Through the structured focus group process, participants brainstormed 46 statements (Table 5.2), which were then sorted into a concept map with eight clusters (Figure 5.1). Each 'point' on

Table 5.2 Focus Group Statements Grouped by Cluster

Cluster	Statements
1. Economics	2 Worry about losing employment (applies to professionals)
	11 Lost opportunities for promotion (e.g., after third child)
	1 Economic difficulty
	9 Loss of income post delivery
	10 Sufficient financial resources
	4 Less time for social activities
2. Family Aspects	25 Informational support from relatives and family
	44 Happy/harmonious family
	21 Supportive husband
	22 Gender of the baby is the one they desired
3. Society and Friendship	26 Support from the reproductive health program
	40 Good atmosphere
	43 Help of the neighborhood
	46 Support from mother's friends
4. Mother's Emotions and Worry	34 Single mother
	31 Husband very concerned about the gender of the baby
	5 Gender of the baby the parents don't want
	33 Gender of the baby the mother didn't want
	39 Disappointment because the gender is different from the ultrasound
	10 Lack of confidence about their place in the community (e.g., after third child)
	3 Worry about physical appearance after delivery

(*Continued*)

Table 5.2 (*Continued*)

Cluster	Statements
5. Negative Stressors	14 Husband isn't loyal
	38 Grandparents don't accept the baby and send it to an orphanage
	30 Husband is rude, drinks and goes out a lot
	13 Lack of care, concern and help from relatives
	35 A family member has recently died
	45 The family observes traditional customs the mother doesn't want to follow
6. Baby's Health	6 Stillbirth
	15 The baby has a congenital disability
	18 Poor health of the baby
	32 Baby difficult to nurse
	17 Worry about enough milk for the baby
	42 Healthy baby
	24 The baby is feeding well
7. Mother's Health	19 The mother has a history of mental illness
	8 Obstetric complications (e.g., postpartum hemorrhage)
	37 Cesarean wound infection
	12 Other physical disease during pregnancy and delivery
	36 Pain and fatigue after delivery
	7 Pain during delivery
8. Protective Factors	16 Sleeplessness due to the baby
	28 Regular diet
	29 Sufficient relaxation, wakes up late
	27 Physical activity for avoiding stress
	41 Mother doesn't smoke or drink coffee or alcohol
	23 The mother has enough time to take care of the baby

the map represents a discreet statement. A multidimensional scaling analysis conducted using Concept Systems™ software determined where each statement appeared spatially on the map. The statements were grouped into clusters, which are represented as the enclosed polygon-shaped boundaries on the map (Gol and Cook, 2004). Statements appearing close together and contained within a cluster were conceptualized by participants as thematically closer than statements in adjacent clusters. The names given to each cluster were decided by participant consensus in the group interpretation sessions.

Figure 5.2 depicts a cluster-rating map, where average participant ratings are overlaid on the cluster polygons (Trochim and Kane, 2005). This illustrates how the eight clusters were rated in terms of being most likely to cause PND in FGDs. The layers on the cluster-rating maps depict the relative average rating on a 5 point Likert scale (1 = least likely to 5 = most likely to cause PND) (Gol and Cook, 2004; Kane and Trochim, 2007). The

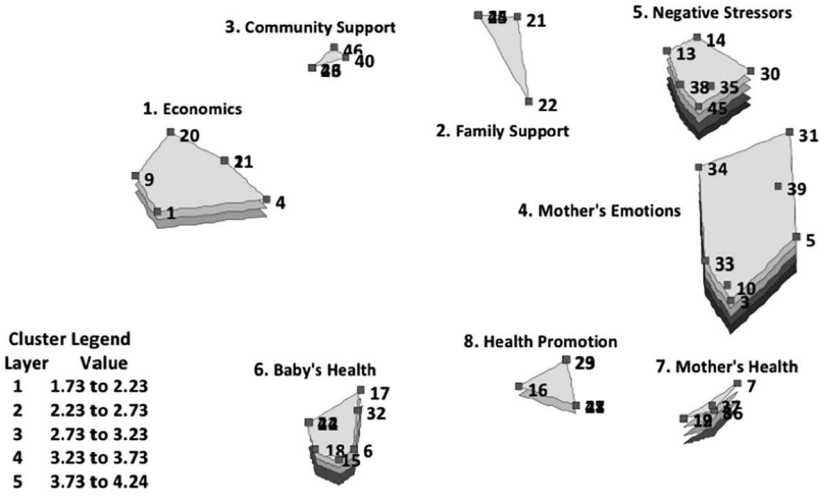

Figure 5.2 Cluster Concept Map

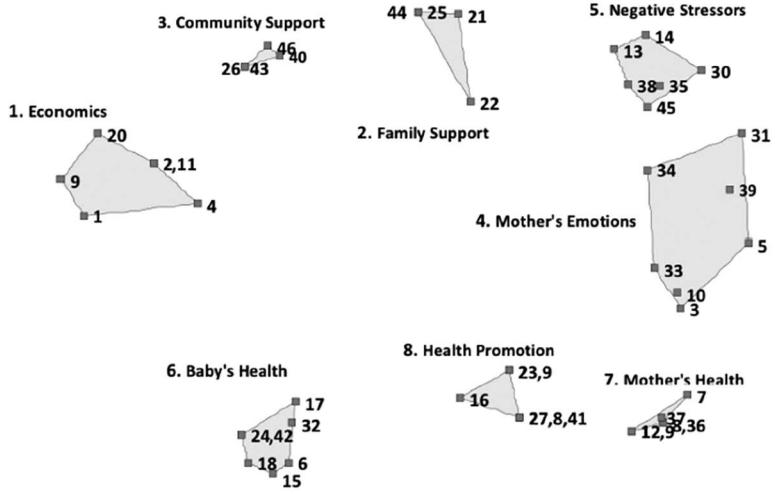

Figure 5.3 Cluster-Rating Map—Clusters Most Likely to be Risk Factors for PND

more layers attached to a cluster, the more participants rated the statements in the cluster highly in terms of their relative importance as a cause of PND.

The "most likely to cause PND" map clearly shows that the clusters "negative stressors," and "mother's emotions" were identified by participants as the strongest risk factors for PND with average ratings of 3.73 to 4.24. These two clusters contained statements about familial conflict, infant

gender and the woman's place within the community. The clusters "mother's health" and "baby's health" were also considered to have a strong influence, with average ratings of 3.23 to 3.75. "Economics" had an average rating of 2.73 to 3.23, and hence it was not considered as being as influential in causing PND as the other clusters identified. The themes in the highly rated clusters were explored further in FGD interpretation and in-depth interviews and are explained in the following text.

FAMILIAL CONFLICT

Participants stated that while support from extended family was greatly appreciated during the postpartum period, if conflict occurred between family members (in particular, mothers-in-law and husbands), this could influence postnatal mental health. It was reported that most postpartum women stayed with their own mothers after the birth for emotional comfort, as opposed to with their husbands:

> The behaviour of the family can affect the emotions of the mother. There are traditional customs that are followed such as going back to their own mother's house after delivery, and if they do this it makes them feel free to express themselves because they can ask their own mother to help them or cook them food. (Pediatrician)

Participants described cases of conflict where women had felt bullied or criticized by their mothers-in-law. For example, one clinician recalled the case of a woman with suicidal ideation who said her mother-in-law and sister-in-law claimed she didn't love the baby. Problems with family could be intensified by the power dynamics of the relationship, as new mothers were generally deferential to older relatives.

> When we have babies we think if women don't keep warm or go to work too soon when we get older we will have some diseases like a stomach ache or headache . . . the mother tells the daughter and everybody does that yeah. But now, the daughter . . . knows it's not necessary but I have to do that or my mother will not be happy. (Nurse Educator)

'DISAPPOINTMENT' AND INFANT GENDER

Many participants equated PND with a 'natural disappointment' related to the gender of the child. The issues surrounding infant gender were considered one of the most important risk factors for PND. In the focus group exercise, four out of six statements in the highly rated cluster "mother's emotions," were about infant gender. Most participants mentioned that giving birth to

a girl, especially if a boy was expected from an ultrasound, could result in difficulties in the relationship between her husband and extended family. The gender of the child was closely related to relationships with family, particularly parents-in-law, as it was seen as a duty to produce a male heir:

> I think there are some other factors that might contribute to the onset of the postpartum depression is the change of the life of the patient after delivery, for example the position of the mother, the woman in the family . . . if the patient gives a boy it will be appreciated by the other members in the family, and if you give a girl, a daughter, they will be, they are . . . are not well appreciated by them, especially the mother-in-law. (Psychiatrist)
>
> In some cases in the hospital she had seen some women when they give birth the gender is not welcomed . . . the husband's behavior maybe is very bad and the [woman] got beaten. (Obstetrician)

The link between infant gender and PND was explained as stemming from traditional Confucian notions of son preference. Participants explained this was because families felt a need to have a son to take care of the family and support the elderly and to observe family anniversaries and ancestor veneration:

> That is something very old from the old generation, like they want to have a boy baby . . . until now they still have like that because when they have just a son it will keep along their generation, their family but if it's a girl they will get married and change the last name [of the child] will be a daughter for another family. (Nurse Educator)

Disappointment surrounding the gender of the newborn was heightened by Vietnam's two-child policy, which increases the pressure to have a son within two live births. One participant noted that even after around four decades of gender equity programs in Vietnam, son preference persists, particularly in rural areas. How son preference affects notions of an ideal family composition was also considered an important influence on the mother's mental health. "When a mother has two children and the second is a girl, I'm sure they will have at least some minor [mental health] problem" (Obstetrician). Parity is a social stressor in Vietnam due to the national reproductive health policy recommending a maximum of two children per couple. Having a third child not only creates an economic burden by having more children to raise, it can also result in parents losing opportunities for promotion in the government sector:

> If you are a state employee then having more than two children will affect your chances of promotion, however if you are a free worker its difficult for the government to control the number of children someone

> has. For example for a farmer, they have to pay a fine when they apply for the birth certificate. (Obstetrician)

It could also result in loss of social standing. One statement in the concept mapping exercise referred to a "lack of confidence about their place in the community [after having a third child]," which was placed in the cluster regarding infant gender.

Socioeconomic Influences

"The economics in Hue is an issue for the woman after delivery because they worry about the condition of the baby and do they have the ability to take care for them . . . until they grow up" (Pediatrician). Participants all stated that economic conditions could contribute to PND. An urban-rural socioeconomic divide in Thua Thien Hue Province was described by most interviewees, who recognized that women in agrarian districts experienced much more poverty than those in Hue City. Some participants also made reference to the fact that government employees receive four months paid maternity leave, which is not available to other workers or farmers. Socioeconomic status is also important with regard to health care seeking because health transactions such as primary care services and pharmaceuticals require payment for access and may be prohibitive for low-income women.

Pathways of Health Care Seeking and Modes of Treatment

Unsurprisingly, treatments for the symptoms of PND were described using either biomedical or traditional medicine frameworks depending on the background of the practitioner. Mental health professionals referred to treatment with antidepressants and inpatient care for the most severe cases. Traditional medicine practitioners described treatments such as acupuncture, as well as prescribing herbal preparations for different emotional problems:

> Quy tỹ thang (herbal preparation). So with this, it has three functions, the first is to make the woman stronger, the second one is to make the mind, to relax the mind/reduce anxiety, the last one is to have better sleep. (Traditional Medicine Practitioner)

Breastfeeding problems were described as a major source of anxiety and feelings of depression for new mothers and traditional medicine practitioners reported seeing such problems on a weekly basis. Galactagogues (tonics to promote breast milk supply) and tonics for cleansing the liver and restoring energy were described as treatments for these issues:

> The most common problem of the women who come here is a shortage of breast milk . . . For problems with the ducts deep in the breast, that may make the breast hard and bigger and stop the milk flow, they

> use the dandelion. They mash it and the women drink the tea and put it onto the breast and it may help the situation get better. (Traditional Medicine Practitioner)

Many of the statements identified in the "baby's health" cluster in the concept mapping exercise referred to feeding problems. One participant described this relationship as follows: "If they have stress, if the baby isn't eating, they will mirror this themselves" (Psychologist).

BARRIERS AFFECTING HELP SEEKING

All participants agreed that if women had depressive symptoms, they would first seek advice from family members and then respected community members before turning to formal health services. Many participants noted that a new mother's sense of familial duty would stop her from revealing her feelings of depression, especially outside of the family, as this may cause family and community members to criticize her ability as a mother:

> With Vietnamese women, they think the duty of the mother is to live with that, live with the baby, cry with everything the baby has, it's her duty so and she will ask for help from her family not from other people . . . She won't get help from the doctor or somebody because it's like a duty, like a mother's duty and everybody is the same so she can't ask another. (Nurse Educator)
>
> I think some patients with the, ummm how to say, moderate depressive episodes, they may be neglected by the doctor there, and they say that oh maybe the patient has some psychological problem with the child or with the family, or they are disappointed about the gender of the child, and they say that that is the natural psychological reaction. They will be discharged from the community health centre and they will go back to live with the family without proper management. (Psychologist)

It appears that the strong emphasis on family care and support and the stigma attached to psychiatric services prohibit most women with PND from accessing biomedical treatment. Negative community perceptions about psychiatry prevent families and mothers from seeking care unless all other channels of support are exhausted. Some participants stated that mental illness was equated with psychotic symptoms rather than mood disturbances, such as PND. Hence, women with symptoms such as sleeplessness and appetite changes, who do not conceptualize such symptoms as part of a depressive episode, may use other treatment pathways, such as traditional medicine practitioners:

> Because they can't get rid of the stigma from the psychiatric level, you know, they don't want to be considered as a mental patient or a

> psychiatric patient, they have . . . a burden with a child or something like that and now the patient has become very weak and they need some tonic remedy, you know and this is the reason why they don't want to go and see a psychiatrist. First, because of their lack of understanding and second for them because the stigma, so the traditional healer is a good option for them, (it is) more acceptable. For the patient and the family also. (Psychiatrist)

DISCUSSION: BENEFITS OF A CBPR APPROACH FOR THIS PROJECT

Despite the risks outlined earlier in this chapter, a CBPR approach brought many benefits to this study. Whereas participation occurred in different ways throughout the progression of the research, health professionals and stakeholders from Hue were involved in each step. The research topic was identified as an area requiring study by senior academics at Hue University. The qualitative research described here involved community health professionals working with the researcher to explore the social issues surrounding PND in Hue. In particular, the concept mapping exercise allowed health workers to analyze as well as generate data and prioritize which issues were most important to study. This was intentional in order to promote the CBPR principles of co-generating local knowledge and creating change through education and involvement (Fals-Borda and Rahman, 1991). The knowledge generated from the project has also been disseminated at educational and community events, and some provincial health staff are now conducting their own further research on the topic.

A CBPR approach gave confidence in the completeness of the analysis and also identified novel avenues of inquiry that would have been missed if a more traditional methodology was used (King, 2010). At first only interviews with health professionals in biomedical specialties were planned, although once the significant role of traditional medicine in Vietnam became apparent, more interviews were sought. It also highlighted that despite evidence of a high prevalence of perinatal mental health disorders in Vietnam, sufferers of such disorders remain largely hidden and rarely access help (Fisher et al., 2012; Niemi et al., 2010). Mental health is currently a low priority health issue in Vietnam and treatments are only really available for the most severe cases requiring inpatient care (Vuong et al., 2011). Also, little is available in terms of health promotion and community education regarding mental health issues (Van der Ham et al., 2011). Israel (2005) states that the goal of CBPR is to contribute to science as well as integrate with interventions and policies aimed at improving health. Therefore, CBPR research of maternal mental health in such contexts can raise awareness of social inequalities for sufferers of PND (Niemi et al., 2010). In this study, such social inequalities included the issue of son preference and family reactions to the infant were highlighted. Son preference is documented in other qualitative research in

Vietnam and has also been identified as a social determinant of perinatal mental health disorders in other contexts where there is a broad societal preference for sons (Fisher et al., 2012; Niemi et al., 2010).

Public health research is an important component of international efforts to address global health challenges and monitor burden of disease. CBPR is one approach that can be used in order to try and democratize public health research in the context of international collaborations. In this example from central Vietnam, a CBPR framework strengthened the research process by increasing the depth of understanding about the social and cultural context of postnatal depression and by promoting local involvement and ownership. However, whereas such an approach has practical and ethical benefits for both researchers and participants, certain risks, which are not routinely articulated in ethics approval processes, must be mitigated. Considering the ethical challenges inherent in CBPR when projects are planned can improve both the quality of the research and the relationships between international collaborators.

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Appendix: Group Focus Statement

Table 5.A.1 Group Focus Statement

Definition of Postnatal Depression	Common Symptoms of Postnatal Depression
Postnatal depression is the name given to depression that a woman experiences after the birth of a baby. It starts or continues after two weeks postpartum and lasts for any period up to one year. (Cox, et al., 1987)	Crying, irritability, exhaustion, low self-esteem, headache, palpitations, excessive anxiety and/or sadness often focused around the baby, negative feelings toward the baby, poor concentration, lack of interest in usual activities, sleep disturbances not related to the baby, appetite disturbances and weight loss, suicidal ideation and thoughts of infanticide. (Cox, et al., 1987; Brockington, 1996)

6 Gender and Ethics

Exploring the Role Gender Plays in How People Perceive and Experience Research Participation

Yandisa Sikweyiya, Elizabeth Dartnall and Rachel Jewkes[1]

INTRODUCTION

Epidemiological research on gender-based violence (GBV) has increased globally over the past three decades. South Africa has been a setting for a great deal of this work (see Jewkes et al., 2006; 2010; Mathews, Jewkes and Abrahams, 2011; Wood and Jewkes, 1997). This substantial growth in GBV research has not been matched by exploration of the ethical implications of such research (Fontes, 2004). Notwithstanding this, GBV research is recognized to bring with it particular areas of concern. These include, research participants having strong emotional responses (e.g., distress and sadness) to sensitive questions (Johnson and Benight, 2003); the potential for breach of confidentiality and the resultant adverse consequences (Fontes, 2004); and the risk of being labeled and stigmatized by participating in research on particular health issues, including GBV (CIOMS, 2002; Dickson-Swift, James and Liamputtong, 2008).

Studies on interpersonal violence and trauma often ask participants to recall and talk about their adverse experiences (Ellsberg et al., 2000; Fontes, 2004; Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005; Wood, Lambert and Jewkes, 2007). Asking people to share their trauma experiences for research may cause them distress and generate a need for emotional and other support (Ellsberg and Heise, 2002; Jewkes and Wagman, 2007; Jewkes et al., 2000).

Few studies are available globally on the magnitude of and nature of risks inherent in GBV research for the research participant. This gap is worrisome considering the amount of research that has been conducted in the area of GBV over the years (Fontes, 2004) and, surprising, as most IRBs and many researchers view research on violence against women as an unusually sensitive area of investigation, with the potential to harm participants in ways that is different from many other forms of research with human subjects (Jewkes and Wagman, 2007).

Very few studies have explored the reasons why men and women enroll in research and their experiences of participating in studies that ask about their experiences of perpetrating and/or being victims of GBV (Edwards et al., 2009). There are likely to be gender differences in how women and

men experience research participation in GBV studies (Fontes, 2004) and the risks they take by participating in such studies. The risks associated with participating in GBV research can be high for both men and women, but these risks manifest differently for men and women (Lavery et al., 2007). For example, women in abusive relationships may be at an increased risk of suffering violent reprisal from male partners for participating in GBV studies without the man's approval, and GBV research possesses the potential to make worse an already violent situation (Ellsberg et al., 2001; Jewkes and Wagman, 2007; see also Chapter 5, this volume). Much of the literature cited on the impact of researching GBV on research participants is based on researchers' reflections and experiences in conducting GBV studies with women. While these papers are useful guides for researchers who plan to conduct GBV research with women, empirical studies to estimate the magnitude and nature of potential physical risk are lacking (Fontes, 2004; Jewkes and Wagman, 2007), and research on men's perceptions of risk of participating in research on GBV and rape perpetration from low- and middle-income countries is even more scarce. The few published empirical studies from Africa on this issue suggest that women and adolescent girls perceive an increased risk in participating in GBV research (Ajuwon and Adegbite, 2008, Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2012). These studies also found that both women and men express fears of reprisal, emotional discomfort and stigma after participating in studies on GBV (Ajuwon and Adegbite, 2008; Jewkes et al., 2012; Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2012; Sikweyiya, Jewkes and Morrell, 2007). Research is needed to find out why people still agree to participate (Osamor and Kass, 2012) in GBV studies in light of these fears.

Available literature indicates that there is an array of complex factors that influence why people enroll in research (Braunack-Mayer, 2002; Hallowell et al., 2010). Motives for research participation reported in the literature include: a strong desire and willingness to help other people who have or may have the same health condition they have in future; to contribute to furthering medical knowledge or research; to benefit family, friends or future generations; to obtain personal information or increased understanding about the result of a research experiment, condition or drug; and/or to do something worthwhile (Ellis et al., 2001; Funch and Marshall, 1981; Hallowell et al., 2010; Hamilton et al., 2006; Jefferson et al., 2011; McCann, Campbell and Entwistle, 2010; Sharp et al., 2006).

Some people say they participate in research purely for the benefit of others, without expecting monetary or material reward for doing so (see Hamilton et al., 2006; Rosenbaum et al., 2005; Viens, 2001). However, pure altruism as a motive for research participation is not frequently reported in studies, rather there is evidence from a number of studies suggesting that there is often an overlap between altruistic and individual benefit motives reported by participants (McCann, Campbell and Entwistle, 2010). Several studies on this issue note that a large number of participants reported both altruistic and personal benefit as reasons for study participation, e.g., in

addition to helping others they also agreed to participate in order to get clinical treatment or drugs for an illness (e.g., cancer or HIV) they have, to obtain a higher standard of care than the one locally available, to have their views or opinions on a particular matter heard, among other reasons (Kneipp, Lutz and Means, 2009; Paradis, Phelan and Brinich, 2010; Slack et al., 2004; Viens, 2001).

The limitation of many of these studies is that these concepts, and the differences or overlap between them, are often not well defined, making it difficult to interpret the findings (McCann, Campbell and Entwistle, 2010). Moreover, nearly all of the studies cited earlier were done from a clinical trials perspective. We know less about motivations for participation in observational and epidemiological studies. Addressing this gap is important, particularly as researchers are increasingly using community-based designs to study GBV (Abrahams et al., 2006; Dunkle et al., 2004; Jewkes et al., 2006; Jewkes et al., 2010). A better understanding of why people participate in such studies may help in enhancing the recruitment and retention of participants (Braunack-Mayer, 2002; McCann, Campbell and Entwistle, 2010; Rosenbaum et al., 2005) and strengthen our understanding of the attitudes people have of research, generally, and their expectations of research participation. In turn, this can inform researchers on how to respond to the potential challenges presented by these factors (Jefferson et al., 2011) and broaden our knowledge and understanding of the ethical challenges of involving women and men in GBV research (Fontes, 2004; Sharp et al., 2006).

GOAL OF THE CHAPTER

In this chapter, we explore adult South African women's and men's motivations for participating in GBV research, the role gender plays in participants' perceptions of risks and benefits in partaking in the studies, the perceived psychological impact of answering sensitive questions and adverse experiences of research participation. Furthermore, we highlight the implications of our findings for research ethics guidelines and researchers who do GBV work.

Method

The data were derived from an ethnographic, qualitative study that spanned six months and was conducted in two sections of a large South African township called Soshanguve. The study involved a total of 48 in-depth semistructured interviews with 29 women and 19 men. Of the 48 in-depth interviews, 22 (10 women and 11 men plus one additional male interview) were conducted with participants who had recently participated in a province-wide survey on GBV prevalence (see Machisa et al., 2011). The

remaining 26 interviews were conducted with 19 women and 7 men who were all potential participants in the GBV survey described earlier but had not been enrolled in the survey at the time of the interviews. In addition to these interviews, the first author conducted participant observation and unstructured conversational interviews with members of the community. For three months during the study, the first author lived full time in the community. His field notes form part of the data reported in this chapter.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study was approved for ethics by the South African Medical Research Council's Ethics Committee and the University of Witwatersrand's Faculty of Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee. Before each interview, the study purpose and anticipated risks and benefits were explained to the prospective participant. All participants signed a consent form and consent was revisited continuously throughout the interview. Interviews were conducted in a private place where audio privacy could be ensured. All in-depth interviews were digitally recorded with the permission of the participants. The conversational, unstructured interviews were not digitally recorded; rather, the first author documented these as notes in his diary in the evenings when he returned to his room. Information provided by the participants during the interviews was held in strict confidence. Each completed interview was uploaded into the first author's personal computer for storage and deleted from the digital recorder to maintain confidentiality. During the transcription of audio recordings, the names of the informants and other information that could identify them were removed and replaced with pseudonyms. No financial incentive was given to participants for taking part in this study.

Data Analysis

Interviews done in isiXhosa were transcribed verbatim and translated into English by the first author. Those interviews recorded in seTswana were translated and transcribed by a seTswana speaking person who was hired for this purpose. Upon the completion of the transcription process, transcripts were cleaned and prepared for data analysis. The data was analyzed inductively using a grounded theory analysis approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

First, the transcripts were repeatedly read and the text grouped according to themes from the interview guide. Open codes were then used to identify the data. These codes were then discussed by the research team until an agreement was reached as to which codes fit together best to form categories. Concepts and theory for these constructs were constructed by establishing connections between the codes and categories after which the main category was identified. What the data meant was then explored and the

findings were compared with the existing literature and conclusions made (Dahlgren, Emmelin and Winkvist, 2004; Silverman, 2002).

Findings and Discussion

Participants Perceptions of Research Participation

When participants were asked how they felt about their participation in the survey on GBV, all but one expressed positive feelings, with many reporting to have appreciated the opportunity to participate in the survey (see also Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2012, Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2013). This finding is analogous to the findings reported by Kuyper and associates in the United States where the majority of the young people (aged 14–26) who were asked about their sexual experiences, including negative ones, reported positive experiences from study participation, even though some of them had also reported distress over being asked certain questions (Kuyper et al., 2012).

In our study, among those who participated in the GBV survey, most said their survey experience was positive, as it had given them a chance to talk about issues they do not normally talk about. Thato and Vuyile's narratives are illustrative:

> Some [questions] really got me thinking, because those are not the things that we normally think about most of the time . . . and in most black communities we never talk about these [sex, GBV, relationships] things, they are mostly a forbidden subject to us. To talk about them, it actually makes you think. (Thato)
>
> For me it [survey participation] was very important. It was like after the interview I even realized things that I did not know about myself. It gave me a chance to say the things I would not say to anybody else, and those I have never said to anyone before. And I'm sort of thankful for that. (Vuyile)

Motivations for Research Participation

Of the 26 participants who had not yet participated in the GBV survey, 22 said that they would participate in research but would do so with the expectation that they would benefit in some way, either financially by being offered a job or by being helped with some social need. Nomusa, one of the pre-survey participants, spoke about a previous study done in the community that had incentivized people by giving money for their participation. She felt that this led to expectations among community members that research participation would come with some form of benefit. She explained:

> You know there was a HIV/AIDS research happening in the community, and if I remember correctly people were told to go and get tested and that they will get R150. True they got it and so people thought that with every research conducted they will get something.

> That is why most people when they participate they want something or should be promised something. (Nomusa)

Like Nomusa, most participants said they would expect to personally benefit from their research participation, with some also saying they would like their community to benefit, as described by Nthabiseng: "I thought that with the research I'll be able to get help, or it will help other people who are suffering" (Nthabiseng). Older participants, those who had financial difficulties or were currently sick were more likely than others to expect an immediate and individual benefit from research participation. In contrast, younger participants with previous research participation or those who had some tertiary education were less likely to report expecting direct personal benefit from research participation than those with no prior research participation. The expectation to benefit individually was held irrespective of gender, and is likely to be linked to the socioeconomic challenges that are prevalent in the research setting (Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2013).

Altruism

Altruism has been reported as a motivation for participation in many clinical trials (Kost et al., 2011; McCann et al., 2010); however, these data mainly come from the developed Western countries (Osamor and Kass, 2012; Zammar et al., 2010). There is little information on altruism as a research motive coming from non-Western countries, even though some authors have highlighted the significance of altruistic motives for research participation (Kost et al., 2011; McCann, Campbell and Entwistle, 2010) and of better understanding these motives (Osamor and Kass, 2012).

In our study, many participants, at first glance, report altruistic motives for their research participation. For example, in the following extract, Manqoba's reason for volunteering his information in the research seems altruistic as it suggests he may have primarily been motivated by the desire to help other people. He explained: "The information that I have given you, you will take it and store it somewhere and maybe you will help someone with it." A similar reason was given by James as he mentioned that his motive for participating in research was: "because what I am saying in a research, tomorrow will help other people." Similarly, of the group of participants who had not yet participated in the GBV survey, nearly half of them reported reasons that could be interpreted as selfless and with the intention to benefit others. However, a complex overlap between altruism and self-interest motives was observed, and this included participants who were primarily motivated by altruism (see also Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2013). Most participants who said their motives were altruistic also reported expectations of personal gain from their participation in research as illustrated by Kelebogile.

> That interview really made me strong; I now know that I will be remembered for my contribution. I also know that there are people

> who think of me. And maybe one day, I will get help. That hope is still alive, as I knew that you were coming as a researcher, I had no problem accepting you and giving us time for us to talk, you see. (Kelebogile)

These findings on the complexity of altruism are reflected in the literature where there is a lack of definitional clarity on the concept and no consensus on what is meant by altruism as a human behavior (see Braunack-Mayer, 2002; Costello, 2001; Funch and Marshall, 1981; Hoffman, 2011; Kost et al., 2011; Rogers, 1997; Thompson, 2006). The complexity regarding the concept of human altruism is brought about by the difficulty to ascertain whether, when people act to help others, they are primarily and purely motivated by the desire to help without anticipating reciprocity or benefits to themselves (Costello, 2001). People may be pressured or coerced to act altruistically by the expectations of their families, friends and community (Hoffman, 2011). As found in our study, this may occur because potential or actual research participants believe that they 'have to' or 'need to' enroll as it is something that is desirable to do or expected of them by researchers and others (see also Hoffman, 2011).

Multiple factors are likely therefore to influence a person's decision on whether or not to participate in research studies. Such factors include socio-economic needs, education level, previous research exposure and other social factors that pertain to an individual's situation, circumstance and context. These factors could also act to moderate people's expectations in research participation. Researchers should be aware that people may enroll in studies with certain expectations. The seriousness of such expectations by participants, and perhaps the threat they possess concerning the integrity of the research, is best illustrated again by Kelebogile:

> By telling him [survey interviewer] heavy [personal] stuff I'm hoping that I will get help. But when I don't get help that would trouble me, you see. Because now I have told you my secret, and after telling you my secret I don't get help. It is like I have wasted my time. With sensitive things, I don't mind telling you about them. But my expectation is that when I tell you, I must get help. When I don't get help, it creates regrets that I have told him this and I am not getting help . . . I wish I had not told him.

Kelebogile's narrative highlights misgivings research participants may have when their expectations around their participation in research are not met. At the beginning of a study, researchers should therefore hold discussions on expectations and what can or cannot be expected from being part of a research study with all potential research participants.

Psychological and Emotional Impact of Survey Participation

There is limited literature reporting empirical data on the impact of violence- and trauma-focused studies on the psychological health of respondents

(Rojas and Kinder, 2007; Savell, Kinder and Young, 2006). In our study, both positive and negative emotional responses were reported. Some participants reported distress as a result of talking about painful and traumatic experiences. As described by Thato:

> No I would say it is the relationship issue with my girlfriend; those things are sensitive to me . . . I don't know because I have been hurt a lot in life and I don't want go back there (laughing), it actually brings bad memories.

Slightly more women than men reported distress. Women who had experienced relatively major adversities in their lives (e.g., rape, death of a loved one) reported that the survey triggered flashbacks to these experiences, causing them sadness and pain at the time (Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2012). Similarly, some men who were HIV positive, who had perpetrated partner violence or who had a drug addiction problem mentioned that the survey made them reflect on those painful experiences. For example, Kelebogile, who was HIV positive, reported that being asked about his HIV status in the survey caused him uneasiness. He explained:

> The thing that made me feel bad, that I talked about in that interview was my sickness. That is the thing that caused me heartache . . . Generally I am happy, but the times I think about my condition, my heart becomes painful you see. (Kelebogile)

In the psychology literature, evidence has been presented showing that asking research participants, in particular those with traumatic and adversarial histories, about such experiences may cause them to have feelings of pain and distress at the time of interview (Johnson and Benight, 2003; Kuyper et al., 2012; Nduna and Jewkes, 2010). Notwithstanding this evidence, however, in our study, we observed that emotional reactions or distress related to survey questions by those who reported it seem to be time limited and not overwhelming or harmful. For instance, the participants who reported that they had been saddened or pained by reflecting on some experiences asked in the survey also said that such emotions quickly faded post-survey.

Moreover, none of the participants reported to have needed professional help to deal with such emotions. Research-related distress seems to have occurred immediately after the survey, and it may be that participants had rationalized that feeling sad during and immediately after the survey was normal, as they had recently discussed an unpleasant personal experience (Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2012). Jorm, Kelly and Morgan (2007) reported similar findings in their systematic review of evidence on long-term effects of research participation on participants. These authors concluded that there appears to be little evidence to show of any long-term harm to participants, even if research is investigating traumatic experience (Jorm, Kelly and Morgan, 2007).

We also found that while some participants had a negative emotional reaction to some survey questions, many of them viewed the survey positively (Griffin et al., 2003; Newman, Walker, and Gefland, 1999; Walker et al., 1997). Interestingly, participants, particularly women participants, who reported having had traumatic histories or life-threatening experiences said that the survey provided them with a rare opportunity to talk about their adverse experiences, an interaction they found cathartic and beneficial (Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2012). This particular impact of research on the women in our study may be because voices of women in South Africa are often suppressed, and women, particularly in intimate relationships, are not given the space to express how they feel. Gqola (2007) argues that this is related to gender and power issues and roles within relationships. As such, the women in our study may have valued the opportunity to be heard by someone they perceived as a willing, nonjudgmental and an empathetic listener (Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2013). Campbell (2002) supports this notion and postulates that because many women disclose for the first time their violence victimization experiences in research studies, such an experience makes them value research participation.

The findings presented in this chapter are important for the emerging field of ethics of GBV research as they highlight the importance of using empirical evidence when discussing potential harms of asking people questions about their sexuality, trauma and interpersonal violence histories. We found no evidence to suggest that asking people about their traumatic and violence histories, in a research context, put such individuals in more than minimal risk for psychological harm. This finding is supported by studies reported elsewhere (Black et al., 2006; Edwards et al., 2009; Jorm, Kelly and Morgan, 2007). We argue that it is important to distinguish between sadness or pain and being psychologically damaged in the research context as the former seems not to equate to the latter, as often assumed (Jorm, Kelly and Morgan, 2007).

WHAT TYPES OF QUESTIONS CAUSE DISCOMFORT AND WHY?

In our study, in terms of which specific questions caused this discomfort, some participants said it was difficult to talk about the experiences they deemed painful, degrading and traumatic, and they were particularly concerned about the potential negative ramifications of disclosing the abuse. Gender differences were noted among the participants who said this. For women, having children out of wedlock and while still young, number of lifetime sexual partners, intimate relationships, sexual abuse and/or spousal abuse would be embarrassing and difficult to talk about in a research context. Tshidi explains why she would find it difficult to discuss partner abuse:

> Most of the time, people do not like to talk about it (partner abuse). You might find that my husband beats me every day but I try to

> hide it because I don't want other people to know about it. I would be scared to tell you because I don't know you. I would just think that no this one wants to have my husband arrested, why is he asking me such questions. So I would just say, no we are fine at home, our relationship is perfect while it might be that I have a serious problem. But I'll be scared that you are writing this or with this thing of yours (digital recorder), you are recording it and after that you take it to the police station and thereafter police officers come and arrest him. You see, because of that, I would be scared to tell you the truth.

Some participants also reported that disclosing abuse, either as a perpetrator or as a victim, in a research interview pushed them to identify themselves as either a victim or a perpetrator. These participants were not comfortable with having to assume these identities (Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2013). Similarly, a study conducted with South African university students found that younger women with abuse histories rejected the identity of being victims by resisting to acknowledge their experiences as abuse (Marais, 2009).

Conversely, a specific subset of men in our study found certain questions particularly sensitive. Their discomfort was brought about by a fear of being judged harshly or labeled negatively by the researchers (Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2012). This subset included men who reported violent acts, such as perpetrating intimate partner violence, who had previously engaged in criminal acts or who were HIV positive (Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2012). Talking about these issues may have invited these men to confront and evaluate their own violent behaviors or to think about their illnesses giving rise to discomfort (Hearn, 1998; Sikweyiya, Jewkes and Morrell, 2007; Ybarra et al., 2009).

Gender Analysis on Perceptions and Experiences of Risks

As discussed in the introduction, there is a general view in the literature that women have an increased risk of suffering physical harm when participating in research as compared to men. Fontes (2004), Ellsberg et al. (2001), Jewkes et al. (2000) and Jewkes and Wagman (2007) using mostly anecdotal evidence, argue that this risk is greater for women specifically for research on GBV. Our study data supports this view. The risks perceived by the women in our study of participating in community-based studies differ markedly from those perceived by men (Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2012). For example, whereas breach of confidentiality was viewed as a major risk by both men and women, gender differences were noted, whereby some women feared retaliatory violence from third parties after participating in the survey. Busisiwe's narrative highlights this:

> Yes I had [been worried], I asked myself why would this woman [survey interviewer] come and interview me, if something nasty

> could come out as she was asking about everything, what would happen? But I just told myself that I'll see at the end what happens.

Some women shared the purpose of the research with their abusive partners and reported negative and threatening responses as a result (see also Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2012). Mirriam talks about the threatening response she received from her intimate partner when she disclosed that the survey included questions on partner abuse:

> I only told him [boyfriend] that . . . that day when they did the interview. He asked me why they asked me if he'd ever hit me, did I want them [sexually] or what, and I said don't talk like that. He asked whether they wanted people to get kicked out of their homes or what.

However, we noted a contrast with women who said they were in gender-equitable relationships and not experiencing intimate partner violence. These women said that they told their intimate partners about participating in the survey and had freely discussed the content of the survey and, at that time, experienced no violence or threats (Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2012).

When men were asked about what concerns they had post-survey participation, no men reported fearing physical harm from their partners as a result of participating in the survey (Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2012). A key concern for men was the potential damage that would result if the personal and sensitive information they shared in the interview became known by others outside the research team. They feared ridicule, shame, stigma and social embarrassment if a breach of confidentiality occurred (Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2012). These findings highlight gender differences in perceived risks of violent reprisal from others because of research participation.

The gender analysis presented in this chapter contributes unique and new evidence. We have presented findings that suggest that in nonviolent relationships, research participation in GBV studies is unlikely to induce violence (Jewkes et al., 2012; Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2013). We argue that the dynamics and nature of intimate relationships, whether they are abusive or not, may determine whether women are physically beaten because of their participation in studies. Furthermore, we have shown that men interviewed in this study did not perceive a risk of retaliatory violence and face little or no risk of being beaten by their partners for participating in research (Jewkes et al., 2012; Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2012; Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2013). We also argue that GBV research poses no more than minimal risk for participants. However, in light of evidence that some women feared and reported menacing reactions from their partners, including being physically beaten, special measures need to be put in place to ensure women are protected from such violence.

Implications for Researchers and Ethical Guidelines

The World Health Organization's Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Research on Domestic Violence Against Women (WHO, 2001) strongly recommend that the risk of physical violence to women as a result of taking part in studies should be considered when planning studies on GBV. Supporting data for this recommendation is presented in this chapter. We have shown that some women fear that they could be harmed by third parties and others were threatened by male intimate partners when the latter became aware of the former's participation in or the subject matter of the research. These findings have significant implications for community-based research conducted in this setting and similar settings elsewhere. As such, based on these findings, we support the WHO (2001) recommendation that the actual focus of a GBV survey should be concealed at the community level, told only to participating women and that women participants should be advised not to disclose the focus of GBV in the survey.

Furthermore, we argue that, in this setting and others similar to it, this recommendation protects a particularly vulnerable subgroup of women, i.e. those in abusive or potentially abusive relationships, from potential physical harm (see Jewkes and Wagman, 2007). In addition, we argue that concealing the focus of the subject matter, in particular for studies that investigate sensitive topics, should be a practice in all community-based research that involves women, as it is currently not well understood what might trigger reprisal (from third parties) and under what circumstances.

Breach of confidentiality was a major concern for both men and women in our study. International and local research ethics guidelines emphasize the importance of ensuring confidentiality of the information provided by research participants (CIOMS, 2002; SAMRC, 2001). In our study, participants reported being worried that the information that they reported in the study might be told to others, thereby compromising their safety and dignity in the community. Thus we argue that maintaining confidentiality in research is an effective measure of protecting and maximizing the safety of the participants. The principle of confidentiality should be observed in all stages of research, including when gathering the data and in its analysis and when reporting the findings. In another paper (Sikweyiya, Jewkes and Dartnall, 2013), we recommend using Audio Computer-Assisted Self -Interview (ACASI) when conducting sensitive research, including research on GBV, as it "removes the need for face-to-face reporting of shameful acts, and reduces the chances of others ever being able to connect the reported information to the participants" (Sikweyiya, Jewkes and Dartnall, 2013). During data analysis, measures should be taken to ensure the confidentiality of participants' information. These measures may include removing all the information that could potentially identify participants in the interview transcripts or questionnaires prior to commencing with analysis and replacing participants' names with pseudonyms or codes. Lastly, research ethics guidelines

recommended that the findings should be presented in such a way that the identities of those who participated in the study were protected and that a concerted effort was made by researchers to avoid presenting findings that might negatively stigmatize or discriminate the researched population (see SAMRC, 2001).

CONCLUSION

In summary, the research findings indicate that participation in GBV research is perceived positively by research participants and that while some participants may have strong emotional reactions to topics discussed during the research, such reactions are time limited and not emotionally or psychologically damaging (see also Chapter 17, this volume). We have demonstrated the complexity and multiplicity of reasons people report for taking part in studies and described a number of factors that may influence and or mitigate people's reasons for participation. In line with this, we presented a nuanced and problematized discussion on the concept of altruism as a motive for research participation by demonstrating that decision making about research participation in research is mostly a balanced and conditional process where people assess the potential individual benefits to themselves, alongside the contribution to others and the potential risks to themselves.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank the participants who shared their time, reflections and experiences, which enabled this analysis. The first author acknowledges Fogarty International Center, National Institutes of Health, for the training he received on research ethics through the South African Research Ethics Training Initiative (SARETI).

NOTE

1. **Competing interest**: the authors declare no competing interests.
   Author Contributions:
   YS: conceptualized and managed the study, collected the data, contributed to data coding, analysis and interpretation of findings and writing of the chapter.
   ED: contributed to data coding, analysis and interpretation of findings and writing of the chapter.
   RJ: conceptualized and supervised the study, contributed to data coding, analysis and interpretation of findings and writing of the chapter.

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Part II

Researching Physical and Sexual Violence in Nonacademic Settings: A Need for Ethical Protocols

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7 The Challenges, Best Practices and Pitfalls of Research on Physical and Sexual Violence Conducted by Humanitarian Actors in Emergencies

A Comparison

Prisca Benelli

INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence has been documented as a feature of conflicts around the world for centuries. While rape exists even in stable, prosperous societies, it often becomes even more of an issue in conflict and post-conflict settings, where both the rule of law and the societal order crumble. It has been argued that "the nature of warfare is changing, in ways that increasingly endanger women and girls" (Ward and Marsh, 2006, 3; Manjoo and McRaith, 2011), although this view has sometimes been contested and problematized (Harrington, 2010). There are innumerable documented cases of conflicts in which rape is used on a systemic scale as a weapon used to achieve very specific purposes. Resolution 1820 (2008) by the United Nation Security Council notes that "women and girls are particularly targeted by the use of sexual violence, including as a tactic of war to humiliate, dominate, instill fear in, disperse and/or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or ethnic group." Rape and sexual violence can also be targeted against men and boys for the same reasons, although probably to a lesser extent.[1] Such systematic use of acts of sexual violence includes the use of sexual assault, rape, forced pregnancy, forced prostitution, sexual torture and sexual slavery (Vlachova and Biason, 2005), which are often perpetrated to humiliate individuals and communities in order to demoralize them (Vlachova and Biason, 2005) or forcibly displace them (Pruitt, 2012). The goal of humiliating the victims and the communities to which they belong is reflected in the type of rape committed, so that, for instance, gang rape is estimated to account for 90 percent of all rapes in war (Vlachova and Biason, 2005). Other terms that are often used to describe many of these same kinds of acts are gender-based violence (GBV), sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and violence against women (VAW) (WHO, 2007). The first two terms are used interchangeably in this paper; the latter is however rejected, because it masks the fact that men and boys are victims of sexual violence, too.

Significance of GBV Research in Conflict Settings

Given the severity of these crimes, in the last decade, plenty of researchers (see for instance Josse, 2010; Kay Cohen et al., 2012; Wood, 2006) have devoted their attention to the study and documentation of sexual violence in conflict settings. However, if we consider research not only the product of academia but rather any "systematic investigation to establish facts, principles or generalizable knowledge" (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 1998), then we have to acknowledge that much of the research on rape and sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict societies is conducted by humanitarian agencies and human rights organizations (Clay, 2011).

The findings of such research provide valuable evidence for policy makers, planners and advocates to address these crucial public health problems, and it also represents the basis to design and evaluate assistance programs. This type of research facilitates and at times makes it possible "to [1] describe the living situations, [2] assess the needs of the victims of the emergency situations, and [3] to monitor and evaluate interventions so as to provide adequate and safe care to victims of emergency situations" (Mfutso-Bengo, Masiye and Muula, 2008). The first outcome, the description of the living situation, allows for advocacy to be conducted and hence protective measures taken. For instance, data from studies on SGBV has led to the development of new legislation to protect women from domestic violence in Uganda and to the development of new legislation that criminalizes forced sex in marriage in Kenya (Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization, 2011).

The second outcome, the assessment of the needs of the victims, is crucial for humanitarian agencies to plan the intervention and budget the resources necessary to provide assistance to the victims of SGBV. For instance, by recording and analyzing data on the extent of the injuries resulting from sexual violence and on the assistance provided, the Ugandese health organization Aynet was able to introduce change in programming, increasing the budget to surgically treat reproductive- and sexual-related injuries (Benelli, Mazurana and Walker, 2012).

An example of the third outcome, the monitoring and evaluation of aid programs, is a recent study that allowed the International Rescue Committee to assess the impact of psychological support to survivors of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), finding that trauma symptoms decreased roughly twice as much among survivors who received group therapy compared to those who only received individual counseling (Bass et al., 2013) and hence adjusting their programs accordingly.

At the same time, such research raises important ethical and methodological challenges, as "the physical safety and psychological well-being of both the respondents and the research team can be put in jeopardy if

adequate precautions are not taken" (Pan American Health Organization/ World Health Organization, 2011). Such ethical questions are particularly important given the fact that "as of today, the humanitarian community does not have a system that allows for the effective and safe collection, storage, analysis and sharing of GBV-related data" (GBV Information Management Global Team n.d.). Besides the physical and the psychological ones, there are other types of risks that the survivors and researchers of violence face, including legal, socioeconomical and cross-cultural ones. All research practices have the potential to aggravate these risks as well as to minimize them, as discussed in greater length further in the chapter (see also Chapter 17, this volume; Chapter 3, this volume; Chapter 12, this volume).

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter explores the ethical issues stemming from researching physical and sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict societies, focusing in particular on the way in which the aid community addresses such challenges in ethical protocols and practices by confronting and contrasting the praxis of some humanitarian organizations with those that research institutions have developed over time (Smyth and Robinson, 2001). This seems particularly relevant because humanitarian agencies (Clay, 2011) and human rights organizations are generally not bound by any standardized and institutionalized protocols on research ethics.

This chapter argues that, whereas the humanitarian guiding principles within which the aid community operates are sufficient as a broad ethical framework for research activities, there is nevertheless the need to spell out through specific guidelines the various ways in which risks can be minimized. Marmo usefully introduces a theoretical distinction between research ethics on a macro and a micro level, noticing how at times they can be in tension, one with the other (Marmo, 2013). While humanitarian organizations certainly operate within an ethical framework at a macro level, they may simultaneously pay insufficient attention to ethics at the micro level, when conducting research directly with the study subjects. The presence of specific guidelines, trainings and procedures—such as that of informed consent—represents a guarantee that careful attention will be paid to the design of appropriate data collection mechanisms. Leaving it broad and vague means leaving it to the single individual—and to an individual who is, usually, already overwhelmed, not specialized in research and under severe time pressures.

The chapter first describes the study methods; it then introduces the main risks that have been generally recognized as potentially stemming from doing research with survivors of sexual and physical violence in conflict and post-conflict settings and spells out the way these risks can be either aggravated or minimized by research practices; it then explores the differences and similarities between the research ethical frameworks and praxis

of academic institutions and that of relief and human rights organizations. In doing so, it shows how the behavior of aid organizations and the attention they pay to ethical concerns can be situated on a spectrum, with some organizations being highly attentive and others almost disinterested in the aspect. The article thus ends with some conclusions and implications for policy.

Study Methods

This chapter uses data from existing literature as well as interviews with key informants to examine the ethical and research protocols of the main humanitarian aid agencies—or the lack thereof—and the challenges that operators on the ground face. The interviews initially were meant to include two different sets of key informants involved in research in conflict settings, expatriates and local humanitarian staff involved in the collection and/or analysis of sensitive data. However, different local employees, once contacted for interviews, expressed severe discomfort in presenting their views. Mostly, they appeared to perceive that the fact of being unaware of existing guidelines could be seen as a 'flaw' imputable to them rather than to the organization. Others said they preferred not to discuss the issue, possibly fearing that a critique to the organization could jeopardize their job security. As a result, these interviews were not completed nor included, and the chapter only relies on the 11 expatriate humanitarian aid workers who agreed to be interviewed. The author also weaved in her own experience as an aid worker involved in the collection and analysis of such data. Finally, an academic humanitarian expert involved in research on physical and sexual violence was interviewed. All the research participants were assured of confidentiality, informed consent and data protection. They were allowed to review the quotes attributed to them for accuracy, as well as to decide how to be cited. Interestingly enough, many decided to use the highest possible level of anonymity, having not only their names but also their organizations' names anonymized. Furthermore, guidelines published by the United Nations (UN) and international nongovernmental organizations (NGO) on data collection and assessment methods during crisis and conflict were reviewed, with a specific focus on those guidelines discussing the collection of sensitive data on physical and sexual violence.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: RISKS, CHALLENGES AND RESEARCH PRACTICES

As noted in the introduction, SGBV in conflict and post-conflict areas can take many forms, including "rape, slavery, forced impregnation/miscarriages, kidnapping/trafficking, forced nudity, and disease transmission"

(Manjoo and McRaith, 2011; see also WHO, 2007); rape and sexual abuse are nonetheless believed to be among the most common. Rape in conflict settings is often violent and brutal, frequently involving gang rape and rape with foreign objects, such as sticks or gun barrels, hence often resulting in serious medical consequences, such as fistula. These different forms of GBV in conflict and post-conflict settings are perpetrated by a number of diverse actors, including state militaries, non-state armed groups, community members, relatives and spouses and even the peacekeeping forces (Manjoo and McRaith, 2011).

Besides the harm directly inflicted by the sexual violence, GBV survivors often face a series of negative consequences when identified as such. Hence the disclosure of their status, including to researchers, can pose additional burdens on the victims and even put them in danger. It is generally believed that the prevalence of sexual violence is underreported almost everywhere in the world, as survivors—even in industrialized countries with a strong rule of law—face potentially harmful social, physical, psychological and/or legal repercussions when disclosing their experience. In a complex emergency, these risks are magnified by structural conditions of instability, insecurity, breakdown of law and order and widespread disruption of community and family support systems (Albala-Bertrand, 2000). The following subsections briefly describe these different types of risks and spells out the ways in which research practices can either aggravate or minimize them. Table 7.1 summarizes the content of the section.

Table 7.1 Research Risks and Challenges and Responses

Risks	Challenges	Research Practices	Responses
Physical risks	Possible retaliation of the perpetrators against respondents and researchers for speaking up.	• (Lack of) informed consent; • Confidentiality; • Data storage; • Anonymization of data.	• Use different methods to collect data; • Check the background of local researchers or abstain from using local interpreters; • Select respondents from communities with lower risk;

(*Continued*)

Table 7.1 (*Continued*)

Risks	Challenges	Research Practices	Responses
Legal risks	• Possible retaliation of government against respondents and researchers for speaking up using legal means; • Possible existence of laws criminalizing extramarital sex and failing to distinguish it from rape	• (Lack of) informed consent; • Confidentiality; • Data storage; • Anonymization of data.	• Ensure anonymity of data; • Check the background of local researchers or abstain from using local interpreters.
Socioeconomical risks	• Possible stigmatization of individuals identified as SGBV survivors; • Possible economic consequences of stigmatization.	• (Lack of) informed consent; • Confidentiality.	• Ensure anonymity of data and make increased confidentiality a priority; • Avoid hiring researchers from within the community
Psychological risks	• Possible retraumatization of respondents; • Possible vicarious trauma for researchers.	• (Lack of) adequate skills of the researchers; • (Lack of) support mechanisms in place.	• Provide counseling or other forms of support; • Ensure the personnel conducting interviews are trained.
Cross-cultural risks	• Power imbalances between researchers and research subjects skewing informed consent; • Possible misunderstanding of data collected; • Possible misinterpretation, and underestimation, of risks.	• Research teams dominated by non-local researchers.	• More inclusive research teams; • Carefully explain risks and benefits.

Physical Risks

The risk of physical harm—including its most extreme form, death—is always present in conflict settings, but it may be heightened for anyone who reports a crime (see Chapter 14, this volume). Hence, the practice of interviewing SGBV survivors exposes both the respondents and the interviewers to the risk of angering the perpetrators, thus increasing the likelihood of retaliation (see Chapter 6, this volume).

Using data for advocacy is even more challenging than using data for assistance, as advocacy (a) does not benefit the victim directly but only in the best scenario indirectly, while (b) it implies the need to report the data collected either to the perpetrators or to the public opinion.

Both the survivors and the local employees of aid organizations can be exposed to the risk of retaliation for speaking up or for researching human rights violations; the risk also exists for international researchers but generally to a lesser extent. Retaliation for speaking up is particularly an issue in those cases in which the survivor can still be easily reached by the perpetrators of violence, the most common instances of which are the case of domestic rape and of rape by security forces (regular or irregular) who are still in control of the area where the survivors and/or the researchers are located. Furthermore, reprisal may be also directed against the relatives of those involved in the research as an indirect way of punishing them (World Health Organization, 2007).

The risk of physical harm could be aggravated by certain research practices that jeopardize the anonymity of the respondents. These practices include (a) employing as research personnel individuals who may breach confidentiality;[2] (b) conducting the interview in public settings, such as crowded places; (c) collecting and storing the data in places that irregular armed groups can easily raid or where the government has the authority to force the organization to relinquish the data (for an example of this, see Pantuliano, Jaspars and Basu Ray, 2009); (d) paying insufficient attention to the anonymization of the data when publishing it in open fora (for an example of possible fora where data are shared, see Benelli et al., 2011; Chapter 6, this volume); (e) a second category of practices that may aggravate physical risks is related to the location of the research; for the researchers, this includes the practice of hiring as interpreters and research assistants personnel who live in the same area in which the violations are being perpetrated, hence leaving them and their families vulnerable to reprisal; and (f) for the general research population, this includes conducting research in sites that are still potentially controlled by those who perpetrated the violence in the first place.

The risk of physical violence as a reprisal for disclosing episodes of SGBV cannot be fully eliminated; there are, however, a number of ways in which these risks could be addressed in ethical protocols of organizations,

including (1) recruiting local personnel from different regions, or at least communities, than those where the research is being carried out; (2) using only international personnel;[3] (3) paying attention to the settings in which the interview takes place; (4) storing data only in encrypted electronic format rather than on paper; and (5) selecting as sites for research areas that are no longer under the control of the perpetrators. The WHO guidelines provide an excellent list of recommendations in this regard.

Legal Risks

In many complex humanitarian emergencies, there are severe legal risks affecting the survivors of violence who disclose their experiences. In many countries, adultery is a crime and rape, unless proven otherwise, is equated to adultery. In Sudan, for instance, the country's criminal law requires there to be four male witnesses in order to prove that the alleged rape was not consensual sex (Tajeldin et al., 2010). As a result, reporting a rape may put a survivor at risk of being later prosecuted for the crime of *zina* (illegal sexual intercourse outside marriage), which is punished with one hundred lashes for unmarried women and death by stoning for married ones (Fricke, 2007). And, in a grotesquely ironic twist, victims of rape in Darfur used to be denied post-trauma medical assistance unless they agreed to report the rape by completing a form by the Ministry of Justice, thus accepting the risk of being later persecuted for *zina* (Fricke, 2007).

Legal risks exist not only for victims who disclose the crimes perpetrated against them. There are, unfortunately, many instances of SGBV researchers being accused by the government of the country for their documentation work. The government, perceiving the data collection work as a direct critique, especially if governmental forces are committing the rapes, may use legal measures to retaliate against the individuals or the organizations collecting such information. For instance, in Burundi in 2010, the government revoked the work permit of a researcher from the organization Human Rights Watch, claiming that a report on political violence published by the organization was "biased" and that the researcher demonstrated "attitudes that are harmful to government institutions" (Human Rights Watch, 2012). Similarly, in 2009, the government of Sudan expelled 13 international NGOs and revoked the licenses of three national ones, causing the loss of employment of 7,610 aid workers—308 internationals and 7,302 nationals—claiming that they were involved in collaboration with the ICC investigation in Darfur crimes (Pantuliano, Jaspars and Basu Ray, 2009).

Many of the research practices listed as potentially aggravating physical risks also apply to legal risks: in particular, all the practices that could jeopardize the anonymity of the respondents may expose them to legal risks, especially if the government has a potential interest in preventing SGBV to be exposed; hence, the same ways discussed earlier to ensure the protection of data can be successfully employed to minimize legal risks as well. On

the contrary, given the fact that the jurisdiction of the government is over the entire national territory, the only way to minimize legal risks by carefully selecting the location of the research would be to conduct retrospective research among refugees who fled from their countries of origin where the violence was perpetrated.

Socioeconomical Risks

Stigmatization is a very real risk for rape survivors everywhere in the world. In traditional and conservative societies, however, the risk of stigmatization can be even higher (Physicians for Human Rights, 2009). Furthermore, the consequences may extend well beyond the social sphere, as being treated as outcasts often has a cascading effect on the survivors' capacity to make ends meet. An example of the socioeconomic consequences of being identified as a SGBV survivor is 'spousal abandonment'; this was, for instance, described as prevalent in the Democratic Republic of Congo, with the result that, "without the economic support and protection traditionally provided by men in DRC, women become exceptionally vulnerable" (Bartels et al., 2010: 44).

Once again, a key harmful research practice remains the insufficient safeguard of the anonymity of the respondents; hence, it is of the uttermost importance to ensure that the research personnel maintains the confidentiality of the information gathered and that the research itself does not only reach survivors of violence but rather inquires about SGBV as part of a larger set of research issues of a more 'neutral' character that involves a heterogeneous research population. For instance, a recent study by the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative that investigated the outcomes of sexual violence–related pregnancies in the Democratic Republic of Congo did so as part of a general study named S.E.L.F. (*Santé pour les Enfants et Les Femmes* or Health for Children and Women) for precisely this reason.[4]

Psychological Risks

Psychological risks, like other types of risk, can affect both the survivors and the researcher, although differently. In the case of survivors retelling their stories, particularly if in front of a large audience, the experience of describing in detail the experience of rape may be retraumatizing. For instance, a study showed how in Rwanda the women who shared their experience as SGBV survivors by testifying in the *gacaca*, the village tribunals, experienced traumatization and ill-health as a result (Brounéus, 2008; 2010; see also Chapter 6, this volume). The experience may have negative effects on aid workers as well. Lisa McCann and Laurie-Ann Pearlman coined the term 'vicarious traumatization' in 1990 to specifically describe the experience of psychotherapists working with trauma survivors (McCann and Pearlman, 1990; Chapter 17, this volume). Since then, the term has been

extended to discuss a potential type of mental disruption that affects various categories of persons who work with trauma survivors, including humanitarian aid workers (see Shah, Garland and Katz, 2007; Chapter 12, this volume). Among the research practices that may maximize such risks there is (a) the use of enumerators, interpreters and interviewers who are not trained or experienced; as well as (b) not providing any psychological support to research subjects and investigators. On the contrary, investing in trainings for the research personnel and offering psychosocial support to the respondents and to the staff has the potential to minimize psychological harm.

Cross-Cultural Risks

Finally, on a more systemic level, since the researchers in the majority of cases come from a very different sociocultural background vis-à-vis the researched population, the very understanding of 'who is vulnerable,' 'to which risks' and 'in what ways' may be skewed, because the situation may, in fact, be framed and understood in very different ways by participants and researchers. This can lead researchers to underestimate, to a greater or lesser degree, the risk at the point of recruitment, informed consent and data gathering, analysis and dissemination (Henwood et al., 2008; Sriram et al., 2009).

As noted by Marmo, "the relationship established between the researcher and the research subject also offers an array of cross-cultural post-colonial issues, where the researcher dominates the subject, and is seen as belonging to an ethnically or socially privileged group." (Marmo, 2013). This has the potential to influence both the validity and interpretation of the findings (Said, 1979), the trustworthiness of the information collected (Adler and Adler, 2001) and in what is possibly more relevant to our analysis of the ethics of research—the way in which informed consent is obtained.

Concerning the latter issue, a first challenge may be that, even if researchers seek informed consent, they do so assuming full equivalence between the participants' understandings of risks and that of the researchers themselves (Henwood et al., 2008). A second challenge around the issue of informed consent is the risk of underplaying the significance of power imbalances in shaping it. This is summarized by Hugman and her colleagues (2011: 8), who refer to their own experiences and remark how:

> When entering difficult camp situations as white/Western researchers, we have observed that people are so desperate for any form of assistance that they appear to agree to requests for participation in the hope that we might be able to assist them in some tangible way.

Jiang et al. (2006, 5) suggest as a possible solution to minimize such cross-cultural risks the use of a more inclusive research team. Even in this case, nonetheless, it is important to be mindful to the social and cultural

differences between local team members and interviewees. Often the local employees of relief organizations, for instance, come from the educated elite, whose ethnicity, caste, or socioeconomic status may be very different from that of the research population. Concerning informed consent, a possible way to minimize these ethical concerns is to be extremely straightforward and clear on all aspects of the research, reiterating that it is not tied to the provision of relief and that even those who refuse to participate in the research will benefit from relief activities, if any. This, however, can only make the conversation a bit more balanced, without ever getting rid of the power differentials and the issues stemming from it.

DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES IN THE ETHICAL RESEARCH MEASURES OF ACADEMIC AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The risks highlighted so far and the possibility for research practices to either aggravate or minimize them exists irrespectively of the institutional affiliation of the researchers. Nevertheless, the ethical approaches of academic institution and humanitarian organization react differently to these concerns. Hence, this section compares and contrasts the way in which academic institutions and humanitarian and human rights organizations approach ethics; whereas the following section delves into the differences within relief organizations.

Ethics in Academia

Based on the growing awareness of the myriad of potential risks stemming from research, institutions have created ethical protocols to protect human subjects of research from physical or psychological harm. Such protocols revolve around three primary principles:

1) **Respect for Persons,** the ethical requirements that individuals should be treated as autonomous agents, while protecting those persons with diminished autonomy;
2) **Beneficence**, the obligation to ensure the well-being of the people involved in research by (1) following the 'do not harm' principle and (2) maximizing possible benefits while minimizing possible harms; and
3) **Justice**, the duty to distribute benefits and burdens fairly. (The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979)

Academic and medical research bodies have furthermore established formal Institutional Review Boards (IRB)—also known as Ethical Review

Boards (ERB)—to oversee the respect of the protocols in actual investigations. Since their establishment, these committees—either appointed within a research institution or independently operating—review, monitor, and approve (or disapprove) any proposed medical or behavioral research study. Often, IRBs conduct some form of risk-benefit analysis to determine whether or not research should be done.

The history of how IRB came into being is well known to all those who had to pass the IRB certification exam.[5] Between the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, responding in part to ethical flaws in research conducted at that period (see for instance Milgram 1976; Humpreys, 1975), Western research as well as governments instituted internal ethical boards to oversee ethics in research. Government in particular requested the presence and approval of such committees in order to disburse grants to research bodies. Criticisms have long been raised against these procedures: IRBs have been criticized, for instance, for being too lax and not sufficiently independent from the institutions that host them (Lemmens and Freedman, 2000). Furthermore, especially in relation to cross-cultural research, IRB protocols have been criticized for their rigidity, for being excessively burdensome and bureaucratic, for being narrowly focused on protecting the integrity and name of the institution they represent rather than on promoting good research and so on and so forth (Sriram et al., 2009). Many authors discussing field research in difficult settings, for instance, claim that IRBs are not adequately responding to the realities of life in such context and rather rely on Western assumptions and (mis)representations (Israel. 2004; Sriram et al., 2009). Smith (2005: 96) remarks that "research ethics is often much more about institutional and professional regulations and codes of conduct than it is about the needs, aspirations, or worldviews of 'marginalized and vulnerable' communities."

Regardless of their flaws and merits, protocols and review boards tend to represent the end-all manner for academic institutions to address ethical concerns. For instance, whereas universities and their sponsors require researchers to submit their research protocols to IRB, they do not require scholars in social sciences to undergo specific trainings specifically designed to impart them particular skills, such as active listening. Even in the case of courses on qualitative research—which, again, are not an IRB requirement—it is up to the instructor to decide whether or not to include these skills in the curriculum.

Ethics in Humanitarian Organizations

Research institutions have as their primary goal the advancement of knowledge; in this sense, whereas social science research is generally connected to policy and/or advocacy and to improving the lives of its subjects, it is always indirectly so. Humanitarian aid, on the contrary, is precisely the practice of

saving lives and alleviating suffering. It is usually related to an emergency response, whether in the case of a natural or man-made disaster.

The humanitarian sector, with an estimated global worth of around $18 billion a year (Development Initiatives, 2009) and about three hundred thousand employees, (Stoddard, Harmer and Di Domenico, 2009) is a very important player in the arena of research in conflict settings, including on SGBV. Generally, data are collected and analyzed during the assessment phase of crisis and conflict, as well as during the monitoring and evaluation of programs. Data can be collected either as a one-time activity, in the case of program assessments and human rights documentation, or it can be routinely repeated or ongoing, for instance, in the context of providing and/or monitoring services for survivors. When data collection is formally defined as research, depending on the laws of the country in which the organization is operating, it may be required to obtain approval by some national ethics review body. If these are absent, or if the collection of data is not considered part of research but of operations, then it is up to the organization.

Even the standard ethical protocols discussed in relation to research institutions draw a boundary between research, on the one hand, and practice, on the other, requiring only research to undergo review. The distinction between the two is always blurred, because both often occur together, and this is probably the case also for humanitarian research on SGBV; because the data are gathered with assistance in mind, they are often perceived as part of programming rather than a separate activity.[6] Hence, humanitarian research is generally assimilated to humanitarian work, which is guided by a series of principles, including humanity, or the respect for the individual; impartiality, or the prioritization of assistance on the basis of needs and needs only; and neutrality, or the refusal to take sides. Such principles are stated, among other documents, in *The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief (RC/NGO Code)* and in the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/182 (UN, 2008). All of these documents are, however, simply self-regulatory rather than binding and enforced by external actors.

Furthermore, since the publication, in 1999, of the hugely influential book, *Do No Harm*, by the American scholar Mary Anderson (1999), the aid enterprise has been paying increasing attention to the consequences, intended or unintended, of its actions. The *do no harm* framework is thus widely referred to, and guidelines for humanitarian actors often recommend weighing costs and benefits of interventions and actions.

Below, in Table 7.2, there is an example of a how actions should be planned based on considerations on the likelihood of unintended consequences.

In a sense, therefore, ethical considerations permeate *every phase and aspect* of humanitarian action. Nonetheless, organizations vary in respect to the degree of attention they pay to the micro level ethics of research. These differences are explored in the next section.

Table 7.2 Risk-Benefit Analysis[7]

Likelihood	Impact/Consequences				
	Insignificant	**Minor**	**Moderate**	**Important**	**Major**
Almost certain					
Likely					
Possible					
Unlikely					
Rare					

THE EXISTING APPROACHES WITHIN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO ETHICAL CHALLENGES

Based on the interviews conducted, it emerged that there is a great degree of variation among organizations concerning the way in which they handle the ethics of research with survivors of violence and the way they institutionalize it. We identified a few different dimensions in which an organization could be incorporating ethical considerations into its research activities; on the basis of the interviews conducted, we refined our list to include the following:

a Written guidelines, either drafted by the organization or external, but referred in documents by the organization;
b Training on ethics for employees of the organization;
c A set of mechanisms of support for employees of the organization; and
d The institutional culture around SGBV research ethic; this may be emanating from the "top" (headquarter)-down or it may be present only at field level.

These five issues can be more or less comprehensive in terms of the types of risks identified previously (physical, legal, psychological, cultural and socioeconomical).

Organizations may have a very detailed protocol on how to handle survivors of violence of human rights violations. The protocol need not to be specific to the organization, although for many it is. For instance, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC)[8] normally refers to the guidelines drafted by the World Health Organization (WHO) on *Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Researching, Documenting and Monitoring Sexual Violence in Emergencies* (World Health Organization, 2007), whereas the International Rescue Committee (IRC) refers to its own guidelines.[9]

As noted in Table 7.3, the guidelines may be more or less comprehensive in regard to the different types of risk described. So, for instance, the WHO guidelines, that represent a sort of gold standard in the field, include a series

Table 7.3 Matrix of Possible Ethical Behaviors Protocols in SGBV Research

	PHYSICAL		LEGAL		PSYCHOL.		SOCIAL	CROSS-CULT.			
	survivors	researchers	survivors	Researchers	survivors	researchers	survivors	Interaction between survivors and research.
guidelines								
training								
mechanisms								
institutional culture								

of recommendations that are concerned with the different dimensions of risk discussed. For instance, recommendation 4, "*Safety*," details in a series of paragraphs the ways in which the physical risks for respondents and researchers should be minimized:

> Safety and security considerations apply not just to participants, but extend to all those involved in the data collection activity, including the members of the information collection team and the wider community (World Health Organization, 2007: 14).

Other recommendations cover psychological support (i.e., recommendation 3, referrals), socioeconomical ones (i.e., recommendation 1, risks and benefits, and recommendation 5, confidentiality).

Organizations may also include more or less extensive training for both expatriate and local staff on research ethics and related skills. This is the case of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the oldest existing humanitarian organization, as well as the case of Amnesty International, probably the most prominent human rights NGO. Both organizations require their expatriate staff to undergo a week or more of training at headquarter level, during which ethical considerations are incorporated and interviewing skills are practiced through a series of role plays with abundant feedback for the players; these trainings make sure to include things that to many would seem to be 'common sense,' such as looking at the respondent in the eyes, not making the interview sound like an interrogation and so on and so forth.[10] Many agencies are consciously trying to train their personnel on research methods, but the high turnover of staff makes this particularly challenging.[11]

Organizations may also have specific mechanisms in place specifically to handle some of the risks discussed so far. Mechanisms are here broadly defined as rules, procedures, forms and modules, the presence of certain types of personnel, certain types of benefits, etcetera. Examples are the praxis of providing psychological debriefing, the requirements to fill consent forms, as well as software for data encryption and protection in order to ensure the safe storage of data.

Peace Brigades International,[12] an international human rights organization, has, for instance, very sophisticated technological systems to ensure the safe storage of confidential data on the computers they use, even in the case of theft of the computers.

ICRC, as institutionalized procedure, also hires exclusively international personnel to conduct sensitive interviews. This has the double aim of protecting the respondent from the risk of the interpreter "leaking" their information to the community, as well as avoiding the risk of retaliation on local translators and their families.[13] Psychological support for the personnel of the organization is another example of mechanisms that may be in place and is discussed at greater length under the next section on 'institutional culture.'

A final issue to be examined is the 'organizational culture.' Guidelines, trainings and even mechanisms may, as a matter of fact, be either reflected by the organizational culture or de facto contradicted by it. It is also possible for an attentive organizational culture to supply to the lack of policies. The provision of psychological support is an excellent example of the different degrees to which a certain culture may or may not mirror and augment the policies. All the organizations examined in our sample had some form of psychological support in place. For some, however, this means simply that full psychological coverage is included in the medical insurance provided by the organization to its international personnel. The conditions of psychological well-being, however, are never really investigated.[14]

Other organizations, instead, briefly run through a debriefing for its personnel at the end of a mission but without excessive investigation.[15] Yet some others make conscious attempts to assess the mental health of their employees by encouraging the provision of counseling for local employees and even having mechanisms to automatically assess it. The ICRC, for instance, has a team, based at the headquarters, which is tasked to go on a mission to provide psychosocial support and to debrief both expats and locals after significant traumatic experiences.[16]

As noted, it is also possible for an attentive organizational culture to supply the lack of policies.

So many of the respondents who noted that their organizations had not much in place in terms of policies and guidelines also recounted how things got different with a change of leadership at the field level: it is fully possible, it seems, for a prepared and motivated individual to make a difference by introducing trainings and spreading the awareness of the guidelines. Two respondents recounted this same experience of change produced from within by a new hire. In one case, however, the change seemed to be welcomed by the organization,[17] whereas in the other it seems that the change was much more superficial and overall resisted.[18]

On the basis of these axes, there is a spectrum of behaviors, among organizations, in regard to the degree to which ethical consideration regarding research and management of sexual violence survivors are incorporated.[19] On one end of the spectrum, there are organizations for which ethical considerations are at the forefront of any research activities. The personnel of these organizations can normally point to the *guidelines* the organizations follow when researching SGBV; these guidelines are also covered in trainings. Again, there is some variability in terms of trainings on the basis of their length, type, on the quality of the trainers, and on whether the training is offered to the international personnel only or to the local as well. At the 'highly attentive' end of the spectrum, organizations also have specific *mechanisms* in place, such as those described earlier. Finally, what distinguishes organization approaches is the *culture* within which these behaviors are taking place. Again, at the 'attentive' end of the spectrum, organizations mirror the content guidelines and trainings with an organizational culture that truly promotes these values and procedures rather than treating

them as items to quickly check off. The respondents described two possible modalities of such an organizational 'culture': in some cases, the culture was described as emanating from headquarters and 'percolating' down to the different country missions. In other cases, the culture was located more directly at the country/field level, and it was unknown to the respondents whether it was mirroring the one at headquarters level.

This research initially assumed that an institutional, top-down (i.e., led from headquarters to each single country mission) would ensure greater attention and consistency. This was found to be the case for many of the respondents interviewed, who noted that when the culture was not emanating from the center but rather present at field level, "it was really up to who was in charge at the moment"[20] as the key figure for the organization in the country, and thus it was "inconsistent" and "personality driven."[21]

Yet, according to one respondent working for the Danish Refugee Council in Lebanon, the organization intentionally has very little direction from headquarters in order to leave each country mission to adapt to local programs and context. According to the respondent, this approach, rather than making the organization 'personality driven' makes it flexible and thus in the end equally, if not more, ethically, aware than an organization in which the culture of 'research ethic' is mandated from above.

The Danish Refugee Council headquarters, however, is extremely helpful in providing trainings, consultants and whatever else is requested from below. Furthermore, whenever a new employee is recruited to work on SGBV, previous experiences with it are considered mandatory.[22] On the other hand of the spectrum, you have organizations that provide nothing: no guidance, no training, no mechanisms and, it goes without saying, either no culture of research ethics or at best a bottom-up, 'personality-driven' attention to the issue. Among the interviews conducted, only two organizations could be described as falling in this end of the spectrum. The following quote well describes the feeling that one of their former employees felt while working without much guidance on how to handle her work, yet feeling well aware of the problems in her work:

> not training people on how to handle survivors of such horrible experiences, not reflecting on how to manage the data is a form of dehumanizing. It's dehumanizing both the refugees and the employees, it becomes a numbers game and you end removing humanity from the interview and from the process. My organization had been working in this sector for over 20 years and still did not felt the need to create a policy on how to handle interviews and put it in place. (. . .) I had pity, I had empathy, but humanity, in the sense of trying to deliver best possible service? I am not sure we were doing that"[23]

Most of the organizations examined in this study, however, fall somewhere in between these two ends. Some, for instance, have guidelines but are still struggling to make the ethical concern become a routine part of

their operations. They are attempting to do so by introducing trainings, partnering with other organizations that have greater expertise or hiring staff with specific experience on the matter. Other organizations have been working on producing guidelines and at the same time making the whole approach to SGBV research more professional and ethical. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), for instance, has been making significant processes over the course of the last few years in order to move from a 'gender as a cross-cutting approach' in its programming—where SGBV was dealt with—toward the creation of a dedicated SGBV program department, introducing ad hoc guidelines and building up on the many positive experiences from different theaters of operation. Organizations 'in the middle of the spectrum' are there for a variety of reasons; from the limited interviews conducted, it seems that in some cases organizations are on the middle-negative end of the spectrum for structural reasons, such as the fact of being smaller organizations, with limited resources and significant challenges in attracting and retaining qualified staff.[24] Yet, in other cases, the reasons are more contingent; for instance, in the case of NRC, the reason seems to be an operational shift from having SGBV as a component of the NRC program of Information, Counseling and Legal Aid (ICLA) to separating ICLA from SGBV. This organizational choice finds its justification in the need to dedicate to the latter the necessary attention and professionalism required for such a sensitive and complicated area of intervention.[25] Finally, for some organizations, it simply seems that organizational inertia is the reason for the lack of attention to the issue.

There are many reasons to be optimistic. According to Dyan Mazurana, research director for Gender, Youth, and Community at the Feinstein International Center and one of the editors of the WHO's *Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Researching, Documenting and Monitoring Sexual Violence in Emergencies*,[26] there has been an appreciable evolution over the last decade in terms of the attention that agencies pay to ethical considerations in their research and assessment work, both in terms of general awareness of risks, of attention to psychological considerations and in support of the organization personnel. The most notable examples in this sense are the institution of an ethical review board by the humanitarian organization *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF) in 2001, the launch of the GBV Information Management System (GBVIMS) initiative by a consortium of UN agencies and NGOs in 2006; the publication of the recommendations on SGBV research ethics by the World Health Organization in 2007; the publication of ethics principles for research and evaluation and guidance by the British Department for International Development (DFID), one of the main funders of humanitarian and development aid on a global level in 2011, (DFID, 2011a; 2011b); the Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC) initiative by UNICEF's Office of Research; and a consortium of other organizations and universities[27] at the end of 2013. Other organizations are adopting similar approaches, and another significant example is the work of Save the Children UK, which is currently finalizing the creation

of an independent review board to approve, challenge or veto any research project by the organization.

In 2001, MSF instituted an independent ethics review board to ensure that the increasing amount of operational and clinical research it undertakes is scientifically valid and ethical (Schopper et al., 2009). This ethics board does not yet cover investigations involving qualitative research methods—including a study of sexual violence in which information was collected from affected women—because they are not considered research by MSF, although an expansion of the board mandate in this sense is being considered (Schopper et al., 2009).

Next, in 2006, a number of organizations launched the GBVIMS initiative to promote the effective and safe collection, storage, analysis and sharing of GBV-related data, providing, inter alia, guidelines and information on all of the ethical and safety issues that must be considered before sharing data and enabling service providers to "safely and ethically collect, store, analyze and share data on reported incidents of gender-based violence." This new data management system is now present in 15 countries and continues to be rolled out more broadly (GBV Information Management System, n.d.). Finally, in 2007, the World Health Organization (WHO) published its set of *Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Researching, Documenting and Monitoring Sexual Violence in Emergencies* for the humanitarian community (WHO, 2007).

Similarly, increasing attention and awareness from the part of aid agencies on the need to improve the praxis around the collection, storage, analysis and use of SGBV data can be witnessed by the discussions that are happening around this issue: in 2011, the Pan American Health Organization and the World Health Organization organized a symposium on the matter; the same year, an article appeared on *Monday Development*, the largest US-based magazine for aid practitioners, discussing a series of core principles that service providers and coordinating agencies should adhere to in relation to SGBV research ethics (Crabtee, 2011b); and the British government's aid agency, DFID, issued ethics principles and guidelines on research. While no specific procedure is required for the organizations funded, it is nonetheless stated that "all research and evaluation conducted or funded by DFID (wholly or partially) is expected to uphold these Principles" (DFID, 2011a: 1). This shows that a lot is improving, while at the same time a lot still needs to be done. Another promising initiative among the recent ones, finally, is the attempt by Save the Children UK to establish an independent ethical review board of external experts to review its research proposals, with the power of vetoing those considered unsuitable due to ethical concerns.[28]

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND CONCLUSIONS

Humanitarian actors that operate in conflict and post-conflict societies often face a difficult choice. Research is crucial in ensuring that vulnerabilities,

threats and needs are best understood and responded to, and research on physical and sexual violence is particularly valuable in raising awareness and ensuring that policies and programs aimed at addressing the problem are tailored to the realities on the ground. Aid actors often enjoy greater freedom in data collection and yet are not bound by IRB rules and at times are not fully prepared to collect such data. It is true that the risk-benefit analysis and the respect of the people interviewed is (expected to be) embedded in the larger code of conduct of the organizations. However, field research is a sensitive issue that requires skills as well as ethical sensitivity (Reed, 2002).

The chapter demonstrates that the assumption that humanitarian organizations, given the fact that their primary purpose is to "provide assistance" and help people, will think of all possible unintended consequences of research and take the appropriate precautions is unfounded. It also illuminates some examples of practices that aid organizations routinely adopt and that could be proficiently applied in the realm of academia.

The academic and the humanitarian research communities have quite a lot to learn from each other. The positive experiences in the human rights and humanitarian practitioners' community show how IRB and academic practices could be improved, for instance, by offering (and even making it mandatory) training on active listening and similar techniques. In addition, the psychological support that the most 'virtuous' organizations offer to their researchers is another positive instance that the academic world could consider.

While many Western academic institutions have mental health services in place for their personnel and students, these mechanisms generally require the active seeking of the individual. Introducing a mandatory debriefing for those researchers actively involved in SGBV research (or other traumatic types of research), modeled on that in place for the personnel of some of the humanitarian organizations discussed in this chapter, could prove both feasible and extremely beneficial.

However, for the humanitarian community, there is a lot to be learned from the experience of ethical research in academia. A mechanism such as the one IRB represents is an additional cost for research, both in terms of their structure and in terms of the delays they inevitably cause. This trade-off may seem problematic for organizations who have limited resources to provide assistance and who have to act quickly in order to respond to the pressing needs of the affected population. But policies and mechanisms need not to be too burdensome and may have a far-reaching impact. The example of the ethical board of MSF is a case in point.

Policy wise, the biggest finding of this comparison between academia and humanitarian organizations, however, is the fact that, in the end, what worked in making research institutions really safeguard their human subjects was the introduction of grants conditional upon the approval of the IRB. Rather than waiting for all organizations to achieve a good level of ethical awareness, change could be accelerated by governments in their

capacity as humanitarian donors, making the disbursement of funds be conditional on having guidelines, policies and mechanisms in place.

NOTES

1. Because the stigma and shame resulting from rape are even higher for men and boys, it is even harder to quantify the number of rapes against males.
2. In Darfur, in 2009, where the author was working, instances were recorded where the peacekeeping mission employed, as female translators to conduct interviews with the villagers about SGBV, members of the same ethnic groups that were responsible for the violence, generating discomfort in the respondents and potentially endangering them.
3. This praxis is followed by the International Committee of the Red Cross for their most sensitive form of data collection. See further in the paper.
4. Susan Bartels (principal investigator), personal communication
5. Research ethics have been governed by individual conscience and professional codes of conduct for centuries. The Nuremberg Code, developed for the Nuremberg Military Tribunal as standards by which to judge the human experimentation conducted by the Nazis, possibly represents the first well known attempt at institutionalizing and formalizing the ethics of medical research. The code contained principles such as the essentiality of "the voluntary consent of the human subject" and the proportionality between risks and benefits. Similar principles were then included in the *Declaration of Helsinki: Recommendations Guiding Medical Doctors in Biomedical Research Involving Human Subjects* that the World Medical Association adopted in 1964. For a detailed exploration of the history human subjects research and the human subjects protection system in the United States, see, for instance Maloney, Dennis M. *Protection of Human Research Subjects: A Practical Guide to Federal Laws and Regulations*. New York: Plenum Press, 1984. Rothman, David J. *Strangers at the Bedside: A History of How Law and Bioethics Transformed Medical Decision Making*. New York: Basic Books, 1991.
6. The ethical principles of the so-called Belmont report, however, state that "the term 'practice' refers to interventions that are designed solely to enhance the well-being of an *individual* patient or client and that have a reasonable expectation of success" (the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research 1979, Italic added).
7. The Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS) and ECB Project, The Good Enough Guide To Needs Assessment Draft 1.0 January 2013.
8. Valentina Stivanello, Protection Coordinator, DRC Lebanon, interview, March 3, 2013.
9. Anonymous, former IRC researcher and former American Refugee Committee Livelihood Coordinator in Thailand, interview, March 18, 2013.
10. Campaigner, large human rights organization, interview, March 26, 2013 and anonymous Protection Coordinator, ICRC, interview, March 24 2013.
12. Former Peace Brigades International volunteer, personal communication.
13. ICRC Coordinator, personal communication.
14. Anonymous, Resettlement Support Africa, interview, March 28 2013.
15. Campaigner, large human rights organization, interview, March 26, 2013.
16. Anonymous, Protection Coordinator, ICRC, interview, March 24, 2013.
17. Anonymous, former IRC researcher and former American Refugee Committee Livelihood Coordinator in Thailand, interview, March 18, 2013.

18. Anonymous, former IRC researcher and former American Refugee Committee Livelihood Coordinator in Thailand, interview, March 18, 2013.
19. It is important to remember that the scope of this study was merely exploratory. Thus this section does not attempt to rank organizations on the basis of their behavior. The organizations sampled are not the full universe of organizations present, and, although a conscious attempt was made to include some of the largest actors in the field, the list is by no means comprehensive. Because of this, an attempt has been made not to list who is good and who is bad. Variation is simply discussed to show what is being done, what can be done and where there is margin for improvement.
20. Anonymous, former IRC researcher and former American Refugee Committee (ARC) Livelihood Coordinator in Thailand, interview, March 18, 2013. The comment was particularly referring to her experience with ARC.
21. Anonymous, Resettlement Support Africa, interview, March 28 2013.
22. Valentina Stivanello, Protection Coordinator, DRC Lebanon, interview, March 3, 2013.
23. Anonymous respondent, interview, March 13, 2013.
24. Anonymous, former IRC researcher and former American Refugee Committee (ARC) Livelihood Coordinator in Thailand, interview, March 18, 2013. The comment was particularly referring to her experience with ARC.
25. Anna Cervi, Norwegian Refugee Council, interview, March 24, 2013.
26. Dyan Mazurana, Feinstein Center, interview, March 20, 2013.
27. Childwatch International Research Network; the Centre for Children and Young People at Southern Cross University, Australia; and the Children's Issues Centre at the University of Otago, New Zealand.
28. The author is personally involved, as a Save the Children employee, in this initiative.

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8 Ethical Issues in a Research on Mistreatment, Sexual Abuse and Rape of Children in Peru

Olga Bardales Mendoza

INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this chapter is to highlight the importance of ethical protocols in the development of research and policy on the sensitive issues related to the maltreatment, sexual abuse and rape of children. Children in Peru, as in other parts of the world, suffer from various forms of violence, and this study emphasizes the need to protect the rights of children through evidence-based research that follows scientifically established ethical protocols. Based on a nationally conducted study by a leading research unit of the government of Peru, the study highlights the importance for ethical protocols in nonacademic settings where national policies are conceptualized, formulated and evaluated (Bardales and Huallpa, 2005; see also Chapter 7, this volume). Previous studies on child maltreatment, abuse and rape paid little attention to ethical concerns and their impact on the quality of data collected. Therefore it is not an overstatement to say that this study is a pioneering attempt in Peru, as currently there are no such studies (see *Instituto de Estadística e Informática*, 2000; Save the Children, 2004). This study was carried out in three districts of Peru with children ranging in age from 9 to 17 years old using quantitative methodology. One of the critical concerns in relation to undertaking research in the field of investigating child maltreatment and sexual abuse is related to the lack of ethical protocols to regulate such research and ensure the physical and emotional safety of vulnerable groups, such as children and youth. Achío Tacsan (2006) indicated that systematic reviews did not incorporate research considerations into their studies and the lack of clearly defined protocols seriously impeded researchers in undertaking research in this field, as there is little knowledge of ethical considerations relating to the sensitivities involved in researching children and the principles of studying abuse and maltreatment. Our research team studied the prior research conducted on child abuse in Peru, especially the methodology, to gain an understanding of ethical oversights of the studies and thereby to develop the foundation for a study aiming not only to get good quality data but also to uphold children's rights in the course of the study. This chapter is relevant according to the Secretary-General's Special

Representative on Violence against Children, Marta Santos Pais, who stated, addressing the press: "Millions of children around the globe suffer daily from violence, exploitation and abuse. Ignored by statistics and neglected by policy action they are silent victims, excluded from the public debate" (UN News, 2013).

Broadly, this chapter views child abuse as an explicit violation of the human rights of children as specified in various legal instruments internationally. In this broader context, the chapter highlights the specific principles of ethics that have been applied in the earlier mentioned study. These include: (a) Humanistic Attitude (b) Risk Assessment (c) Concerns of Privacy in terms of physical spaces of conducting interviews (d) Confidentiality and Anonymity (e) Interviewer Training and Attitudes (f) Informed Consent of Children (g) Support for Children and the Research Team. In order to achieve its aims and objectives, the chapter has been organized in the following manner: The first section provides an overview of definitions of child maltreatment, sexual abuse and rape. The second section analyses the legal framework both internationally and in Peru and also draws on the existing evidence on the prevalence of child maltreatment, sexual abuse and rape in Peru. This forms the basis of critical scientific evidence, which often informs program managers, politicians and administrators while drafting and implementing policies. Finally, it will draw on critical reflections upon the main ethical concerns that emerged while collecting primary data in Peru on child maltreatment, abuse and rape. This will facilitate the further development of processes and procedures in research to address sensitive topics, much needed in developing economies where often laws and policies are poorly conceptualized and implemented. The improvement in the collection of evidence can potentially influence policy interventions in the field.

Overview of Definitions and Legislative Developments about Child Maltreatment, Abuse and Rape

Maur de Boer-Buquicchio, deputy general secretary of the Counsel of Europe, in 2006 stated, "Children are not mini-human beings with mini-human rights. But as long as adults continue to regard them as such, violence against children will persist" (Pinheiro, 2006). Academic research is very much embedded in various power hierarchies in society, which impedes the development of ethically sound research (see Chapter 2, this volume; Chapter 3, this volume; Chapter 4, this volume). Commonly, evidence-based policy and research does not form the basis for policy interventions on child abuse, maltreatment and rape in developing economies and instead policy is often driven by political rhetoric. It raises many concerns for children's well-being in these countries. Most importantly, these studies are directed and designed by adults who impose their views and perceptions of abuse and develop policies based on these perceptions. It raised several concerns related to the impediments and also resistance to the development of accurate information

on children by researchers with far-reaching consequences on society. The prevalence of various forms of violence against children is directly linked to their marginalized power position in relation to adults. Therefore, policies to address child abuse cannot be simplistically addressed socially but require a well-coordinated medical, psychiatric, legal and social response from professionals based in this sector.

This understanding of child-centered research formed the foundation of our research design, which included meetings with stakeholders such as teachers and officials of child protection agencies who had closely worked with children. They supported the research in terms of giving us recommendations in relation to the research protocol and our actions during the fieldwork. Other surveys (see *Instituto de Estadística e Informática* [INEI], 2000; Save the Children, 2004) have not involved such collaborative coordination meetings, and this was a substantial difference between our study and these others. This is especially important as we were a governmental organization undertaking this survey for the specific purpose of formulating policies and laws.

This study focused on a paradigmatic shift away from an adult centric understanding of abuse toward putting children's agency center stage in our research. At the onset, we were clear that children are social agents and active human beings, whose rights were recognized by various national legal frameworks and by international declarations. For this reason, we took the opportunity and the decision to initiate this first study in Peru directed toward children and not toward adults, as others had been. Unlike other studies, we wanted to revalue children's emotional and cognitive capabilities and their roles as active agents to report and recover from the various forms of violence they suffer in life. This is especially difficult in a social context in which violence against children is treated as normal and as a private concern of the family. In this study, the children had the opportunity to talk freely in the absence of their parents and to articulate their experiences of violence.

Child maltreatment is often referred to as child abuse and neglect and includes all forms of physical and emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, development or dignity. It includes five subtypes that can be distinguished—physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and negligent treatment, emotional abuse and exploitation (World Health Organisation, 2013). Similarly, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention has stated, "Child maltreatment includes all types of abuse and neglect of a child under the age of 18 by a parent, caregiver, or another person in a custodial role (e.g., clergy, coach and teacher). There are four common types of abuse: (a) Physical Abuse (b) Sexual Abuse (c) Emotional Abuse (d) Neglect. The main thrust has been to understand the risk factors of child maltreatment and adopt a preventive approach." (2013). In addition, there are physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect and commercial or other exploitation, which results in actual or potential harm to the child's

health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Exposure to intimate partner violence is also sometimes included as a form of child maltreatment. In spite of being recognized as a global problem that leaves indelible impacts across the life course of an individual, there are no accurate and reliable estimates of the prevalence of child maltreatment. It is a difficult problem to study due to societal constructions of stigma and also social acceptance of child abuse. Estimates vary from country to country based on the definitions of child maltreatment used; the type of child maltreatment studied; the coverage and quality of official statistics; and the coverage and quality of surveys that request self-reports from victims, parents or caregivers (World Health Organisation, 2014).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), part I, article 1 states: "[. . .] a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child majority is attained earlier" (United Nations, 1989). The Peruvian government has formulated the third National Plan of Action for Childhood and Adolescence for the period 2012–2021. The Plan established six guiding principles: (i) Paramount interest of children, (ii) Equality of opportunities, iii) Children as subjects of rights (iv) Progressive self-determination (v) Participation, and vi) The family as fundamental institution for the development of human beings (*Ministerio de la Mujer y Poblaciones Vulnerables* [MIMP], 2012). Article 13 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) states, "the child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers either orally in writing or in print, in form of art or through any other media of the child's choice."

In September 1990, Peru ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and it became a part of the national law in accordance with the Article 55 of the Constitution. Peru strengthened the authority of the Convention with the approval of *el Código de los Niños y Adolescentes* [CNA] (the Children's and Adolescents' Code), which incorporated all of the principles of the Convention in 1992; and as a result of these developments, Peru established and improved a child protection system established by CNA. The new Children's and Adolescents' Code (2000) aimed to resolve the contradictions in the law and incorporated the subsequent amendments and other legislation (Yale Law School, 2005). The other key legislations pertaining to child protection includes the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence and the Law. The protection system called the National System of Integral Attention to Children and Adolescents, which is run by the Ministry of Women and Social Development and includes the Comprehensive National Program for the Welfare of Families, the National Program against Domestic and Sexual Violence and the Children's Bureau. Offices of the Defense of the Child and Adolescent provide legal representation and advice as well as social services. Though the Children's and Adolescent's Code

provides for child protective proceedings to take place in Family Courts, the US Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor reports that most are resolved out of court by the 1,312 Offices of the Defense of the Child and Adolescent throughout the country (Yale Law School, 2005)..

Judges in Peru must "listen to the views of the child and take into account those of the adolescent," in child protective proceedings. Children also have the right to legal representation and advice, provided by the Offices of the Defense of the Child and Adolescent, but legislation does not explicitly state that the wishes of the child must be conveyed by the representative. Children who have been sexually abused are required to have legal representation. Albeit there have been legislative developments, the country is still recovering from widespread corruption that was endemic in the 1990s, which led to massive deterioration of the country's infrastructure and poor implementation of rule of law and excessive violation of human rights. Peruvians were terrorized by the Guerrilla groups, which terrorized both civilians and government officials. Due to a lack of education or a child's illegitimacy, several parents do not register their children at birth and these undocumented children do not have access to social services. The results are obvious over 50 percent of the population, including 60 percent of children, is living in poverty with continuing problems of malnourishment and child labor (Yale Law School, 2005).

Article 1 of the Peruvian Legislative Framework (Preliminary Part) of the Code of Children and Adolescents (2000) considers a child to be a human being from its conception to below the age of twelve years old and an adolescent from twelve to eighteen years old. Article 121 of the Peruvian Penal Code regards any grave mistreatment by family members as amenable to legal action. It states:

> one that causes serious harm to the body or health of other will be punished by a deprivation of liberty of no less than three and no more than eight years. Serious injury includes: (1) that which puts the life of the victim in imminent danger. (2) that which mutilates a part or principal organ of the body or which makes that part or organ unable to function normally, which causes a person to be incapacitated for work purposes, which causes a disability or permanent psychological anomaly, or which permanently and seriously disfigures. (3) that which inflicts any other type of damage to bodily integrity or physical or mental health of a person that requires thirty or more days of treatment or rest, according to medical prescription. When the victim dies as a consequence of the injury and the agent could have prevented this result, the sentence will be no less than five but not more than ten. (Code of Children and Adolescents, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 2000)

In the Peruvian Code of Children and Adolescents (2000), preliminary title, article II declares that children and adolescents are subjects with rights,

liberties and specific protection. Article III indicates the importance of equality of opportunities and that there be no discrimination against children and adolescents without distinction of sex; and article IX, declares the paramount interest of children, which all institutions and social services have to respect. In its first part, article IX deals with the civil rights of children and adolescents who have the right to opine freely on issues that affect them. Finally, article X indicates that children and adolescents have the right to express themselves in different ways.

The National Action Plan for Infants and Adolescents (2012–2021), viewed physical and humiliating punishment as an incorrect behavior that is directed toward disciplining or modifying children's behavior but could cause physical and emotional pain to them and also infancy mistreatment:

> all action or omission, intentional or not, that it causes real or potential damage in their development, survival and dignity in the boy, girl and adolescent in a relation of responsibility, confidence and power. This action or omission could be committed by institutions or whole society and it supposes an infringement of children´s and adolescent´s rights.

Similarly, the World Health Organization (2013) states that "the child maltreatment, sometimes is referred to as child abuse and neglect, includes all forms of physical and emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, development or dignity." These estimates are based on definitions of the child maltreatment or sexual abuse used; the type of child maltreatment studied; the coverage and quality of official statistics; and the coverage and quality of surveys that request self-reports from victims, parents or caregivers.

International studies reveal that,

> approximately 20 percent of women and 5–10 percent of men report being sexually abused as children, while 25–50 percent of all children report being physically abused. Additionally, many children are subject to emotional abuse (sometimes-referred to as psychological abuse) and to neglect. Every year, there is an estimated 31000 homicide deaths in children under the age of 15. This number underestimates the true extent of the problem, as a significant proportion of deaths due to child maltreatment are incorrectly attributed to falls, burns, drowning and other causes. In armed conflict and refugee settings, girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, exploitation and abuse by combatants, security forces, members of their communities, aid workers and others. (WHO, 2013)

This indicates that not only has the culture hidden these facts, but also that the practice of crime reporting are nebulous. Often the underestimation of

child maltreatment figures are attributed to poorly designed research projects with little consideration of ethical protocols. Researchers themselves are biased culturally to acknowledge the presence of child abuse in their societies (Larrain and Bascuñán, 2008; Lazo and Pérez, 2006; Save the Children, 2004). Regardless, the Peruvian government has been strenghtening this legal framework.

In 2006, the government of Peru amended Article 173, Paragraph 3 of the Peruvian Criminal Code in an effort to protect young people from sexual abuse and violence. Although its intention was to take a tough stance against sexual abuse committed against a minor by an adult, the law also criminalized all sexual activity among adolescents between 14 and 18 years old, regardless of consent. In addition, it stipulated 20 years of imprisonment for people violating the law (International Planned Parenthood Federation, 2013). However, this law has further exacerbated the fear among young people of seeking help from medical facilities, as teenage pregnancy is now viewed as evidence of criminal activity and could lead to punitive action against them (International Planned Parenthood Federation, 2013).

Ethical Protocols on Studying Child Maltreatment: International and National Perspectives

The World Health Organization (WHO) developed ethical protocols for studying gender-based violence and child maltreatment. These protocols were a result of developments broadly in the field of biomedical research since World War II (see Introduction, this volume) as a result of several atrocities committed on vulnerable populations. Until 1980s, one of the primary concerns is that much of ethics is orientated to clinical trials or pharmacological experiments and guidelines not have been aimed at social science research (see Chapter 1, this volume).

The Nuremberg Code (1946) emphasized voluntary consent and the social responsibility of researchers in terms of averting risks to human beings and animals. Furthermore, it emphasized the social value of research and that it should be undertaken by individuals who have been appropriately trained to undertake research and are aware of their ethical obligations. The Declaration of Helsinki was adopted in 1964 and was further amended in 2008. These principles were applicable to medical research and yet some dimensions are also applicable to the social sciences in terms of safeguarding the physical and emotional well-being of participants. This is important, as often there are considerable power differentials between the researchers who often occupy privileged locations in their societies, often in academic or research councils or other government bodies, and research participants who may be members of powerless groups. Therefore, protecting integrity, right to self-determination, privacy and confidentiality of personal information should be ensured, especially in the written form or in a form that easily communicates to the research participants their rights. *The*

Belmont Report (1979) emphasized respect for persons (individuals treated as autonomous persons with diminished autonomy are entitled to protection), beneficence (do no harm and maximize possible benefits and minimize possible harms) and justice. The three elements of the informed consent form identified were as follows: (a) information, comprehension and voluntariness; (b) risk and benefits assessment; and (c) selection of subjects. In 1970, the World Health Organization (WHO) entrusted the Council for International Organizations of the Medical Sciences (CIOMS) with the task of developing principles of ethics that would lead medical research in undertaking biomedical and behavioral research. This task was successfully completed in 1982 with the *International Guidelines: Ethics for Biomedical Research with Human Beings*. In 1991 the WHO published *International Guidelines for Ethics: Review of Epidemiological Research* and in 1993 *International Guidelines for Biomedical Research with Human Beings*. The last review of the guidelines in 1993 resulted in the 2002 ethical guidelines with 21 guidelines clearly identified and laid out.

The broader debates on ethics lead us into the specific ethical concerns related to studying gender-based violence and child abuse. The World Health Organization's (WHO) *Putting Women First: Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Research on Domestic Violence against Women* (2001) was an outcome of the groundbreaking, WHO-led multicountry study on women's health and violence. Another important development is entitled *Researching Violence Against Women: A Practical Guide for Researchers and Activists* that was published in 2005 (Ellsberg and Heise, 2005). This manual drew attention to the collective experiences and insights of many individuals and most notably the members of the International Research Network on Violence Against Women (IRNVAW), an ad hoc group of researchers and activists who meet periodically to share experiences regarding research on violence (World Health Organization, 2001; World Health Organization, 2005).

A wide range of documents has addressed the well-being of children during the research process. *The Belmont Report* indicated that research with children is worthwhile, as it brings direct and indirect benefits to the children based on the principle of justice. The International Ethical Guidelines for Bio-Medical Research Involved Human Subjects (CIOMS, 1993) applied across the world for clinical trials in its guideline 5 clearly specifies that children cannot be involved with research which can be carried out with adults and also such research should be aimed to generate optimum knowledge that could benefit children at minimal risks to them.

Ellsberg et al. (2005) elaborated on research ethics for research on violence and much of this is applicable for ensuring the well-being of families and children. It further indicates the lack of consensus on research ethics related to researching child maltreatment. This is primarily due to mandatory reporting of child abuse to statutory child protection. Several countries do not have such agencies or protection workers who are actually trained to undertake such studies. Often the World Health Organization (WHO)

omits questions on child abuse in their questionnaires on child well-being due to specific sensitivities of the issue. But also, one cannot overlook the fact that child abuse research is often constrained due to excessive thrust on violence against women.

Based on these conceptual debates, this primary study carried out in Peru raises some important questions around research ethics on studying child abuse in the context of developing economies. This was a pioneering study, as it aimed to collect data on child abuse for the first time in Peru. Before 2004, no such data existed and often was collected based on the information provided by the parents with reference to their children and their way of punishing their children in their role as parents. This type of information seriously impedes the development of insights into the various forms of violence perpetrated against children, and there is always a fundamental problem in the underreporting of violence. Also, the Peruvian Demographic and Health Survey (2000) had one module on violence as a part of its general survey unlike our study, which was solely dedicated to studying child abuse. The Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations carried out this study in 2005 in three districts: San Martín de Porres (coast), Cusco (highland) and Iquitos (jungle). This study attempted to carry out interviews with children and listen to their voices. We were clear about the sensitive nature of the study and especially the vulnerability of children who might be experiencing maltreatment. We designed the research to especially address methodological constraints in interviewing children experiencing maltreatment and also we ensured that the study met the thresholds of human rights. The training and selection were carefully carried out as we considered the researchers as important instruments of research, not just the questionnaire or the survey instrument.

This study was necessary as the potential benefits in terms of development of policy interventions outweighed the potential risks to the participants, especially if such risks were addressed in the research design. The firsthand accounts of children in situations of abuse can actually lead the way for evidence-based planning of laws and policies. Such a study will set precedence for other researchers to undertake their studies in consonance with principles of good research, which can make a substantial contribution to the society.

Humanistic Approach

Researchers undertaking studies on child maltreatment need to bear in mind the social, legal and economic realities and, most importantly, the emotional implications of their studies on the well-being of children. Ethics should not be viewed as a bag of legal codes trying to regulate researchers but rather the main concern should be to develop a compassionate and empathetic approach toward the children who are suffering. These should be translated into processes and procedures followed in the study (see Chapter 6, this volume; Chapter 12, this volume). One of our primary concerns was

to select researchers with prior experience working with children. Through the training sessions, we evaluated capabilities, personal characteristics and attitudes while interviewing children or young people. We also evaluated the responses of the researchers toward violence, their personal experiences and attitudes toward children while approaching them for an interview. These activities facilitated the primary selection of researchers and who could possibly conduct the sensitive research appropriately.

Risk Assessment

At the onset of conceptualization of the research projects, the various risks associated with such projects should be evaluated based on systematic study of previous research in the field. The concerns of working with minors should be clearly understood and planned for and design should include protective mechanisms for the children. Usually, prior prevalence studies have to include interviews conducted with children in their homes and require consent from their parents. There is always a possibility of their parents and relatives being the potential perpetrators of abuse, and following the interviews, there is a possibility of the violence worsening. We realized the constraints of conducting interviews in the home; we decided to carry out this research in schools. However, conducting a study in schools exposed children to the possibility of social stigma in schools that could result from children been selected into the study. We tried to ensure safeguards in the study: (1) We educated the teachers that the study was on relationships and health of the children and (2) The students in the school were informed that the participants for the study were carefully and randomly selected for individual (interview) and/or group activities (talk or workshop on prevention and social abilities). We had planned for situations where children could potentially inform us about possible cases of severe maltreatment in terms of establishing direct referral services with child protection agencies. The establishment of the referral services ensured that we could carry specialized evaluations, interviews with victims of abuse and also offer treatment, if necessary. We were conscious that in spite of these safety measures, children are extremely vulnerable while recollecting memories of abuse or reconceptualizing their experiences as abuse, which might otherwise not have been seen by them as abuse, no matter how unpleasant that experience was. We were also concerned about possibilities of *double victimization*, and we were ready to report the offenses against children to the support services referred to as *Centro Emergencia Mujer* and this included making available a wide range of legal, social and psychological support. As researchers, we should be aware of our responsibilities, as we cannot offer any form of long-term direct services to the research participants. Researchers are equally obliged to the various laws in the jurisdiction of Peru, along with other human rights and criminal law considerations. The most paramount concern in any research on children should prioritize the rights of children

over research. In comparison to our survey the ENDES survey in Peru, did not ask children, who were the research subjects in schools about violence against them primarily due to lack of awareness about sensitive ethical concerns. They preferred to study the information on children through their parents. We carried out our study with children and therefore experience and results were very satisfactory in terms of quality of data and research experience. We carried out our study with children and therefore the experience and results were very satisfactory in terms of quality of data and research experience.

Concerns of Privacy in Spaces for Conducting Interviewing

We considered schools as relatively safer places for research as compared to homes for this research so that the children's expressions of their emotions were uninhibited. In addition, we had to undertake activities to address the potential possibilities among the staff in schools of stigmatizing children (We discussed with teachers the general goals and methodology of the study and distributed folded sheets on different issues on health child.). Two sets of activities were selected: one was for children who were responding to our survey and the other for children who were not a part of the study but were in the class. A group of children was selected in each class; it depended on the number of the sample, the proportion of girls and boys in each class and on the age (9–11 and 12–17 years old). We took into consideration that most schools do not have spare private offices to undertake interviews, so we took into consideration the timetables of schools so that the interviews could be conducted in privacy. With these limitations, we had to ensure that the children's right to privacy were not impinged on by our research process.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Each child who was interviewed in this research was assured confidentiality. Our research team had to critically reflect on the question of if a case of sexual abuse was reported, would we report it to child protection agencies or would we keep quiet about it and simply proceed with our research. Most researchers faced with circumstances in which a child might reveal abuse might only view it as research material in Peru. However, we did go a step further in terms of establishing direct linkages with child protection services, which could offer services to the children, in order to respect the paramount interest of the children. There are situations where the confidentiality can be broken, for example, the code of ethics of psychologists clearly establishes that confidentiality can be broken if the personal safety or the life of the client is under risk. On the other hand, most importantly, maltreatment and sexual abuse of children is a criminal offense, and as citizens we have an obligation to report these cases to the child protection officers. The interviews were anonymous, and at the onset, the children were informed that

if there was any reporting of any grave violence or sexual abuse then there could be a possibility of seeking support from *Centro Emergencia Mujer*. If a child did report violence, then we explained to the child at the end of the interview that it was important to report the matter in order to find support and help. In Peru, the only service specialized in family violence (include violence against children) is *Centro Emergencia Mujer*. For this reason, we did link with them, but regarding other studies, such as ENDES or Save the Children, we were not aware if such cases had been reported, as it was not explicitly stated in their reports.

Interviewer Training and Attributes

Largely, the interviewers who undertook this study had experience with working with children and not only the technical expertise of working on sensitive issues, such as abuse. Most importantly, our primary concern was the humanistic and compassionate approach of the researchers toward children, which was supplemented with the capabilities to apply the techniques of data collection and analysis. These researchers were trained in different issues, such as familial violence, gender and sexual abuse, child rights, various laws related to maltreatment and sexual abuse and awareness of various networks of services available for children in the community and also techniques of communication. These researchers had also reflected on their personal experiences of violence and their attitudes toward children and were also trained to deal with difficult situations. All trainers had one week of training, which included dimensions of reporting if a child indicated violence and also diary evaluations.

Informed Consent of Children

In this study, direct informed consent was sought from children unlike in other studies where parents were informed about the purpose of the study. We were concerned about the possibility of parents being the potential aggressors and therefore a conscious decision was made to avoid the parents. We had verbal informed consent and not written consent, as we made it a point to explain all the concerns related to their well-being and sought to resolve their doubts regarding the research. They were informed of their rights to withdraw from the study and also the possibility of being referred to child protection services if required. The consent for participation was documented by the researcher, who signed their ethical commitment. The problem with the studies before was that they needed to have the parents' consent, following the medical traditions on informed consent, and it was impossible; whereas we had to evaluate many considerations in the children before taking a decision of inform consent directly from them, such as their rights, the risks associated with the parent's consent, the psychological capacities and abilities of communication.

Support for Children and the Researcher's Team

Centro Emergencia Mujer (CEM) is a national service that provides legal advice, social evaluation and psychological support in cases of family violence, including violence against child. The children were informed of the possibilities of being referred to the child protection authorities if they reported abuse. In addition to the concerns of the children's well-being, we were also concerned of the researchers' well-being. We struggled each day to provide researchers' with the space to discuss their everyday experiences of research and talking to the children. This was an important exercise, because it permitted us know how the different children's stories affected our interviewers and also to share feelings and thinking on the violence situation so we could protect the mental health of the interviewers and the quality of data.

METHODOLOGY

The population under study was children from 9 to 11 years old and teens from 12 to 17 years old in urban schools in three districts in Peru: San Martín de Porres, Cusco and Iquitos. The study was descriptive and correlational through a survey applied in schools; the sample was probabilistic and three stages for district and group age and for sex were by quotes. The final size of the sample was 1855, for children 925 interviews (309, San Martín de Porres; 308, Cusco; and 308, Iquitos) and for teens 930 interviews (311, San Martín de Porres; 309, Cusco; and 310, Iquitos).We consulted national experts on the issue and methodology; finally, the survey was conducted.

- Socio demographic characteristics: questions related to age, school, family arrangement, labor activities and free activities.
- Psychological and physical maltreatment in home and school: questions on the event of psychological and physical maltreatment in home and school; the specific kind of violence suffered; and the aggressors.
- Sexual abuse: questions on the event of sexual in home, school and other places; the specific kind of violence suffered; and the aggressors.
- Knowledge on child's rights: rights that they know and their opinion on situations that infringe on their rights.
- Social support for victims: to whom do they talk to about the violent situation, knowledge on support and protective services?

In this fieldwork, we needed to coordinate with local educational authorities, principals and teachers from the schools selected; all the children participating in the study were requested to provide for informed consent. The limitations were that data could only be collected with students, because the research was in the schools because the main aggressors were in the home,

and we needed to avoid future risks for the children. There were also problems finding the best private place for interviews in the schools.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

Our survey was based on the principles of ethics, and when we compared it to other similar studies such as the Demographic and Health National Survey (DHS) (INEI, 2000) or Save the Children study (2002), we felt that our research outcomes were much better, because it was a survey that paid careful attention to ethical protocols. The Demographic and Health National Survey (DHS) reported 41 percent of reported cases of physical aggression; however, our study estimated 60 to 70 percent of the children interviewed had faced physical aggression. We had designed two different questionnaires for the survey: one was for children (9 to 11 years) and another was for teens (12 to 17 years). The questions focused on (a) maltreatment at home and (b) at school.

a. Results among Children

The total number of respondents in the age group of 9–11 years was 925 respondents of which 461 were girls and 464 were boys. Almost 66 percent of the children reported psychological violence and these instances were higher among boys (6 out of 10 children interviewed). Psychological violence refers to insults, constant criticism, taunts and telling children that

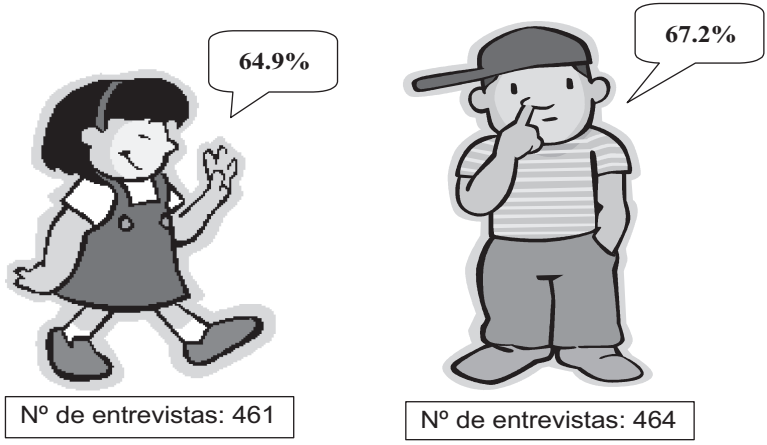
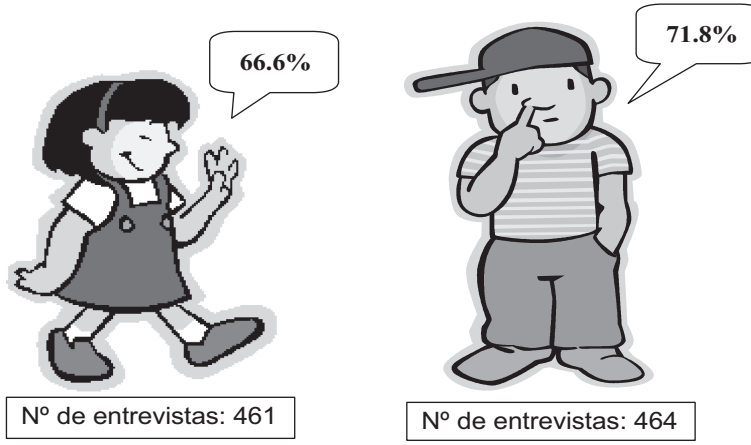


Figure 8.1 Prevalence of psychological violence in children



Fuente: Encuesta sobre la Salud Emocional de Niñas y Niños Escolarizados, 2004.

Figure 8.2 Prevalence of physical violence in children

other children are better than them. The instances of physical maltreatment were also a matter of concern as 69.2 percent children reported (almost 7 out 10 children).

The instances of physical maltreatment were also a matter of concern as 69.2 percent children reported (almost 7 out 10 children).

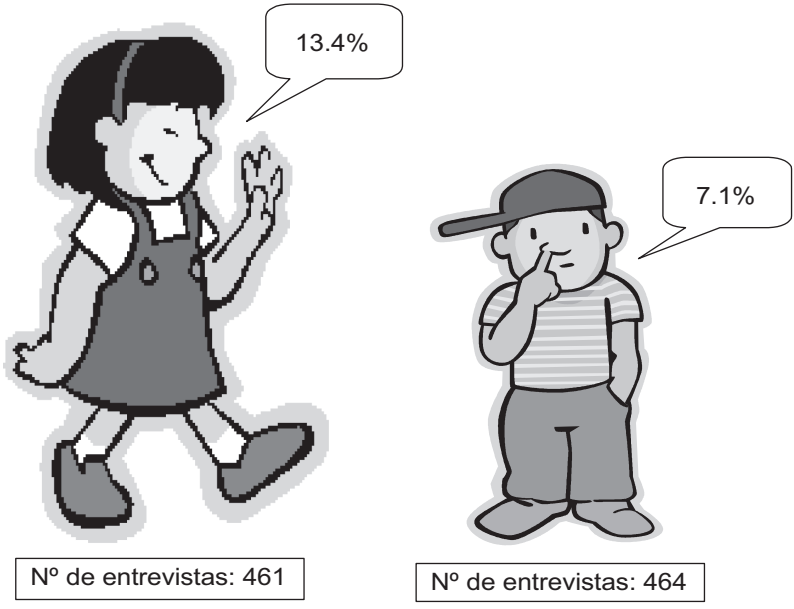
Physical violence included hitting with hands and other objects, pulling hair, slaps, pinches, shoves and throwing cold water. Four out of ten children reported suffering from bruises and scars. The main aggressors were mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters and uncles.

Sexual abuse was reported by 10.3 percent of the children, of these, 1 out of 2 boys. Girls reported more sexual violence. Another important finding was that only 3 out of 100 cases of child victims actually reported to the relevant authorities.

b. Adolescents

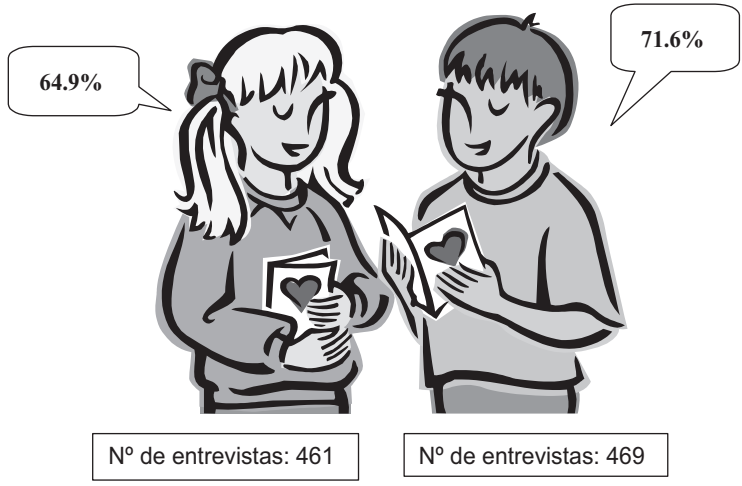
Among the adolescents, there were 930 respondents (461 girls and 469 boys), and the results showed that 71.6 percent (that is, 7 out of 10 adolescents) had suffered psychological violence; and this percentage is higher among boys than girls.

The physical maltreatment includes shouts, insults and telling them that other adolescents were better than them. Physical maltreatment was reported by 59.9 percent, that is, 6 out of 10 adolescents, and this is higher among males than females. Physical maltreatment included hitting with whips, pulling hairs and ears, slapping and kicking. The perpetrators of this crime include mothers, fathers, sister, brother and uncle.



Fuente: Encuesta sobre la Salud Emocional de Niñas y Niños Escolarizados, 2004.

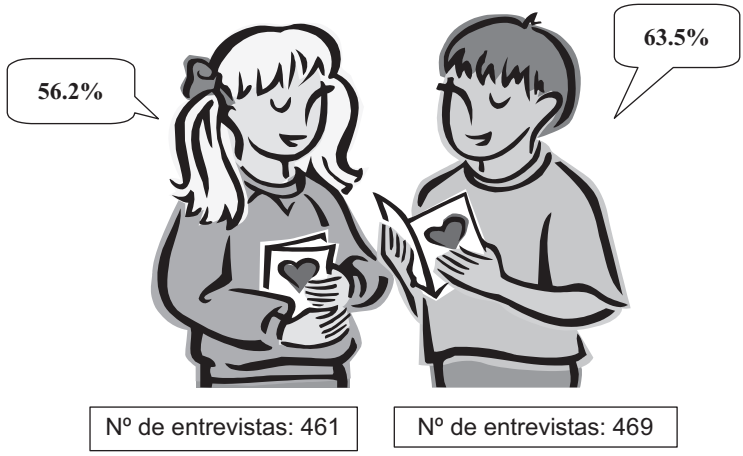
Figure 8.3 Prevalence of sexual violence in children



Fuente: Encuesta sobre la Salud Emocional de Adolescentes Escolarizados, 2004.

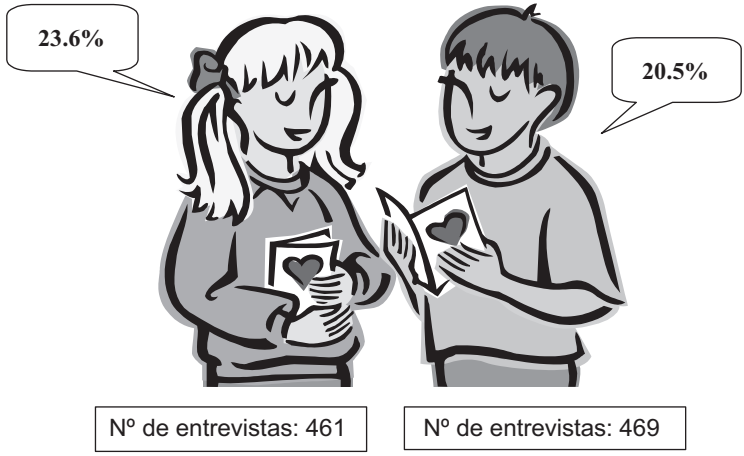
Figure 8.4 Prevalence of psychological violence in teens

Sexual abuse was reported by 22 percent, that is, 2 out of 10. Girls reported the major bulk of sexual abuse, which includes forced kisses, obscene proposals, sexual touching, attempts of rape, rape and threats for sexual refusal. Only 6 percent of these adolescents reported this violence to relevant authorities.



Fuente: Encuesta sobre la Salud Emocional de Adolescentes Escolarizados, 2004.

Figure 8.5 Prevalence of physical violence in teens



Fuente: Encuesta sobre la Salud Emocional de Adolescentes Escolarizados, 2004.

Figure 8.6 Prevalence of sexual violence in teens

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

To study children is a difficult and sensitive issue, especially if it involves the study of familial violence. There should be careful consideration of ethical protocols as it concerns the well-being of children. Such policies can also influence national policies on children and lead to the development of services, as this study led to the development of a national hotline for children in 2007 under the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations, because the children's report to authorities was very low, so the telephone way could be an opportunity for reporting the violence. Our team was technically qualified to undertake a sensitive study like this one. We had agreed on various international guidelines that would ensure children's welfare and avert risks associated with such studies. This study informs other researchers about good practices in research and should be further discussed and dispersed.

The results of our dedicated study had percentages significantly higher in comparison to others studies (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática; Save the Children, 2002), almost 20 points difference due to our ethical treatment that improved the data; and we can see not only the tip of the iceberg but also almost all of the iceberg. We consider that in the moment of the study, the children felt comfortable with the opportunity to talk with someone about a hard issue, and some interviewers told us that the children wanted the team to come back again.

We are convinced that researchers must change their paradigm about children as totally dependent; we need to assume a vision of children as active subjects with rights to participate in different activities in society. Also, the researcher must make the interests of the children paramount and act according to the current legal framework. Many studies show percentages on maltreatment and sexual abuse in children, but we can find differences between them when the study works with a dedicated survey, as our study did; it permitted us to have a better quality of data to show us percentages higher in child maltreatment as we suppose happens in reality. The validity of our results is demonstrated when compared with other similar studies; for example, in Belize, 80 percent of the children interviewed in schools said they did not feel loved by their mothers, and in Jamaica, 98 percent of children aged 11 and 12 affirmed that they had been verbally abused by an adult, generally their parent (UNICEF, 2009).

Respect to ethical considerations made it possible not only to listen to the voices of the children but also provided an opportunity to support them through public services. According our outcomes, we can conclude that a study with clearly defined ethical protocols and objectives will generate better results than a study that does not explicitly include protocols in its processes and procedures. Most importantly, training and clear commitment to ethics and human rights results in better treatment of research participants.

These ethical protocols play a vital role in harnessing the capabilities of the research team to undertake sensitive research on child abuse in the most compassionate manner.

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Part III

Human Agency, Reciprocity, Participation and Activism: Meanings for Social Science Research Ethics

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9 "Rights, Relationship and Reciprocity"

Ethical Research Practice with Refugee Women from Burma in New Delhi, India

Jan Breckenridge, Kerrie James and Paula Jops

INTRODUCTION

By legal definition, refugees have fled their homes and are unable to return to their countries of origin because they have either experienced or hold a well-founded fear of persecution (UNHCR, 2007). Evidence suggests that individuals who are displaced and seek asylum have witnessed or experienced unspeakable traumatic events and may be affected by ongoing physical health difficulties and psychological disorders, such as post-traumatic stress disorder and other related conditions (Breslau, 2004; Schweitzer and Steel, 2008). Even when located in a refugee camp or urban environment in a country of first asylum while awaiting either determination of their refugee status, resettlement or return, asylum seekers[1] and refugees may continue to be 'unsafe' and face continuing dangers and disadvantage (Hugman, Pittaway and Bartolomei, 2011). It is without doubt that refugees, asylum seekers and those who have experienced forced migration[2]are among the most disenfranchised and vulnerable individuals and communities. Recognition of this profound vulnerability has encouraged researchers from a range of disciplines to explicitly focus their research on contributing to the goals of social justice and affirming human rights and dignity (Foster-Fishman, Nowell, Deacon, Nievar, and McCann, 2005).

Within this expanding literature, there is emerging agreement that research involving refugees necessitates consideration of particular conceptual, methodological and ethical issues (for example, Birman, 2005; Ho and Pavlish, 2011; Pittaway, Bartolomei and Hugman, 2010). Liamputtong (2007) more aptly describes these issues as moral and ethical 'challenges,' all of which must be faced if researchers are to implement as a baseline principle to 'do no harm,' to traumatized and disenfranchised refugees and communities through their participation in the research process (Hugman, Pittaway and Bartolomei, 2011). Inherent challenges with research within this cohort include the need to consider different cultural and political perceptions of what constitutes ethical engagement with vulnerable groups (Birman, 2005); determining participant autonomy, voluntary participation and informed

consent (Barilan, 2011; Block, Warr, Grant and Riggs, 2012); ensuring that methodologies used comprehensively and accurately capture participant experience (Liamputtong, 2007; Nowell et al., 2006); maintaining confidentiality to protect participants from identification and further danger (Hugman, Pittaway and Bartolomei, 2011); and explicitly considering differences in power between researcher and 'the researched' and notions of reciprocity in the research process (Pittaway, Bartolomei and Shaw, 2004).

Jacobsen and Landau (2003) pose what they perceive to be an even more fundamental challenge to all research in this area. They describe a 'dual imperative' to make research meaningful to the 'researched' and to balance this goal with an associated professional responsibility that meets the highest scientific standards. The tensions in balancing these seemingly opposing goals are familiar to all three authors. Our research jointly spans a rage of gendered violence contexts where participants are disenfranchised and research aims to explore the experiences of individuals and communities in support of social justice goals (for example, Breckenridge and James, 2012; Breckenridge, Salter and Shaw, 2012). Rather than simply rehashing debates regarding the scientific rigor of qualitative as opposed to quantitative methodologies, this chapter will focus on three concepts that we propose should arguably underpin all research with vulnerable groups, regardless of the chosen methodology—rights, relationship and reciprocity. These concepts provide an ethical framework for the presentation of two case studies describing projects undertaken with asylum seekers and refugees from Chin State in Burma (Myanmar)[3]living in New Delhi.[4] The first case study illustrates how research opportunities may emerge within the context of community engagement. In this project, we used the documentation of training workshops as a source of data. To this point, workshops have been provided on a range of topics requested by the refugee groups and have included advocacy, human rights, domestic violence, counseling, community organization management and young women's leadership.[5]

The second case study is a current doctoral research project exploring how urban refugee women manage risk and how coping and livelihood strategies can be strengthened. Using a participatory action research (PAR) framework, this study assesses the livelihood environment of refugee women from Burma in New Delhi, India, and maps the social, cultural and structural processes that inhibit or enable access to safe livelihoods.[6]

UNDERSTANDING RIGHTS, RELATIONSHIP AND RECIPROCITY

Actively forging ethical, collaborative partnerships is a fundamental moral premise of any research engagement with vulnerable populations. We argue that ethical research partnerships are necessarily underpinned by three fundamental principles—rights, relationship and reciprocity. These principles are neither monolithic nor sequenced in a linear or fixed progression.

Together they provide useful reference points for the researcher to consider and renegotiate throughout the research collaboration. Succinctly, all three principles are interrelated and recursively relate to one another prior to, throughout and subsequent to the research process.

Rights

In Australia, minimum standards for ethical research practice are defined in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, which nominates that human research should be informed by "core values of respect, research merit and integrity, justice and beneficence" (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2007: 11). This statement implies that research participation should be at best a beneficial experience for participants. In addition, researchers may be required to apply for institutional ethics approvals and their own professional behavior may be subject to a code of ethics (for example, the Australian Association of Social Work Code of Ethics 2010). In the literature, there is an accompanying strong and consistent rhetoric requiring research to translate these ethical values and principles into research practice. The question remains, however, as to whether ethical codes and statements designed to protect individual research participants can fully encompass the needs of disenfranchised and vulnerable groups and communities whose basic human rights have been violated. Ife (2012) acknowledges that research engagement with vulnerable groups should be guided by ethical protocols and considerations. However, he suggests that the 'other side of the same coin' is a commitment to human rights that enables researchers to embark on an active process of constructing a discursive morality in order to continuously work out the meaning of human rights in a particular context (2012: 176). We argue that a human rights perspective enables that discursive morality to be constructed—no one written statement of ethical principles can therefore suffice, which means that researchers have to continuously work out the meaning of what constitutes ethical research and human rights in a particular context. Any research project has the potential to further disenfranchise vulnerable groups by casting them as 'other' and positioning the researcher as the sole manager of expert knowledge. Issues such as who and how a research focus is decided, gaining informed consent, understanding different cultural expectations and interpretations all need to be considered in an ongoing, intentional process.

Relationship

A well-designed and ethically implemented qualitative research process necessarily attends to the relationship between the researcher and participants to ensure the process of collaboration is genuine and meaningful. This includes the various ways in which narratives can be sensitively gathered and how participants may be left in the aftermath of research findings. Research that

attends to relationship necessarily privileges the 'voices' and lived experiences of those researched. To best facilitate this, the research process must be equally if not more important than the research outcomes. Participatory research processes whereby participants cooperatively choose and drive the research agenda should be the departure point. The importance of trust, transparency and mutuality in the collaborative research relationship may be particularly important to research participants or 'coresearchers' who are in vulnerable circumstances (Perlesz and Brown, 2005). Further, Jacobsen and Landau (2003) suggest that the kind of engagement and relationship necessary for trust, transparency and mutuality might also entail risks for participants. Researchers have to manage emerging dilemmas and conflicts in a way that does not harm participants but might involve limit setting and ongoing clarification of roles and expectations. For example, managing boundaries and invitations for hospitality and ongoing friendship, avoiding being seen as condoning illegal activities, avoiding supporting particular groups and factions over others and even how to *exit* the research site need to be carefully managed.

Reciprocity

Hugman, Pittaway and Bartolomei pointedly note, that "even positively seeking to 'do no harm' can become a well-meant but empty aspiration if refugees are put at further risk by the very process of the research" (2011: 1272). These same authors provide compelling examples of research participants' reports of feeling as if researchers come and "steal [our] stories" and that refugees frequently "never get anything back" in return for their participation (2011: 1277). Acknowledging that there can be different cultural expectations of relationships, including the research relationship, is a component of informed consent. Ensuring that the research relationship involves reciprocity or giving back to the vulnerable community is a crucial component of collaborative research partnerships. Deciding on how and what to give back is a shared process between refugee participants and the researchers.

The subsequent discussion will focus on two case studies that illustrate how these principles were implemented in different research processes and how the principles assisted the researchers to manage ethical dilemmas. Prior to this, a brief description of the political environment and shared research site in New Delhi is provided to contextualize the presentation of the two case studies.

UNDERSTANDING THE POLITICAL CONTEXT AND RESEARCH SITE: ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES FROM BURMA IN NEW DELHI

India has not ratified the 1951 United Nations and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees (Refugees International, 2009). Therefore, refugees

in India have no legal status; however, the Indian government does have an ad hoc agreement with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) to maintain an office in New Delhi to register asylum seekers and to provide some degree of services to refugees living there (Refugees International, 2009: 2). According to the Women's Refugee Committee (WRC), "New Delhi is home to more than 21,000 persons of concern to the UNHCR [. . .] 15,269 refugees and 6,092 asylum seekers (2011: 1)." Breaking the numbers down further, it is estimated that there are 10,758 Afghanis, 9,109 Burmese (primarily Chin) and much smaller populations of Somalis, Iraqis, Eritreans, Ethiopians, Congolese, Sudanese, Iranians, Pakistanis and Palestinians (WRC, 2011: 1). The scope of activities undertaken by UNHCR to alleviate poverty is limited due to the fact that refugees have only recently gained the right to apply for work permits and they are competing for resources with a local population where 40 percent live below the poverty line (UNHCR, 2012). The UNHCR's ability to offer protection space is further limited because India lacks a national legal framework for refugees.

The case studies presented in this chapter were either a part of the work of the Centre for Refugee Research (CRR) at the University of New South Wales, (UNSW), Australia (case study 1), or were influenced by it (case study 2). The CRR works closely with asylum seekers and refugees in a number of countries and has supported refugees from Burma in India, Thailand and Malaysia since 2002. The CRR conducts participatory research within these communities in the context of community projects and training activities. From 2002 to 2013, women's groups from Burma requested the CRR to provide training in a range of areas, including human rights, gender-related violence, domestic violence, counseling, advocacy, women's leadership, the management of community-based organizations and income generation.[7] This collaboration commenced in 2002 when the Women's League of Burma (WLB) commissioned the CRR to assist them to document the widespread use of rape by the military within Burma. This led to the CRR providing training to the refugees on the Thai-Burma Border and to collaborate with Burmese Women Delhi (BWD) to provide training to refugees from Burma in Delhi.[8]

The case studies discussed in this chapter focus on asylum seekers and refugees from Burma, mostly, but not exclusively, those from Chin State in the North West of Burma who are now living in New Delhi. Many people from Burma flee persecution in Chin State and cross the border into India to make the journey to Delhi where they can apply for refugee status with UNHCR. Currently, around 5,600 of the 9,109 Burmese asylum seekers in New Delhi have been granted refugee status (Chin Refugee Committee, 2011: 22). Although they have escaped religious and ethnic persecution, torture, rape, murder of family members and the torching of their villages, refugees who find themselves in New Delhi face ongoing hardships. Frequently the targets of abuse and discrimination, refugees face hostility and competition from locals, struggle to survive on subsistence wages (if they have employment), rely on others (church communities or other families)

for food or shelter, endure poor health and often feel unable to utilize available health services. Sexual harassment and abuse of refugee women, girls and, often, boys, is endemic and protection from the local authorities is sporadic at best (Refugees International, 2009). Refugees from Burma, particularly women, struggle to make a livelihood, and their employment opportunities are limited. Moreover, like many refugees and asylum seekers elsewhere, many of these women live in a suspended state of fear and hopelessness while waiting for durable solutions.

CASE STUDY 1: EXPLORING THE INTERSECTIONS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND RESEARCH WITH REFUGEE WOMEN IN NEW DELHI

Frequently, research undertaken with disenfranchised groups, such as refugee communities, can be equally categorized as either a community engagement project or research. In part, this reflects the necessity of developing ongoing relationships and engaging constructively with vulnerable individuals and communities in order to do no (*further*) harm and pursue social justice goals. Case study 1 illustrates the management of ethical dilemmas and concerns that may emerge in relation to the intersections of community engagement and research.

Under the auspices of the Centre for Refugee Research (CRR), counseling and skills acquisition workshops were provided to refugees from Burma in New Delhi each year from 2008 to 2013. While the primary focus of these workshops was training, the women involved also wanted their stories to be told and actively supported the gathering of information and data during these workshops and the use of this information for other purposes, such as lobbying and research (Counselling Workshop Reports, 2008–2009). In this sense, workshop processes constituted the qualitative research data and hence the research process sat alongside the counseling training, which had an explicit aim of developing participants' skills to help them to better survive their circumstances. Capturing participants' narratives had an overt political agenda, including contributing to the development of research and advocacy aims and to enrich commissioned reports, publications and advocacy materials with 'lived' experiences. Research goals were integral to training activities and guided the broader agenda of enhancing the lives of participants. In this sense, the counseling workshops had an explicit goal of beneficence.

The research with this refugee community was based on participatory action methods and involved a number of key processes outlined in more detail by Pittaway and Bartolomei (2003, 2004, 2005), Pittaway, Bartolomei and Shaw (2004) and Pittaway, Bartolomei, and Rees (2007).

The key principles of this approach were as follows;

1. Refugees were viewed as partners in the research, not simply participants. This meant that the "scope of the research, who will take part,

what will be done with the data and findings, and so on, are all negotiated with refugee groups and individuals rather than set in advance by researchers" (Hugman, Bartolomei and Pittaway, 2011: 662).
2. The training was constructed as 'participatory action research,' which ensured that the participants drove the process and that researchers were accountable to participants.
3. The research was reciprocal in that researchers actively 'gave back' through the training and reports. Each party brought something to the table, the relationship was balanced and the power of researchers/trainers lessened through mutual give and take.
4. Informed consent was an ongoing process, not something that happened only at the outset. This ensured as much as possible that participants understood what was happening and why; they knew what to expect and were clear about what was being offered (Hugman, Bartolomei and Pittaway, 2011).

Consistent with these principles was the fact that the counseling workshops originated from refugee women themselves, who in 2007 expressed concerns to the CRR about domestic violence within the community. Women leaders requested counseling skills training to prepare them to respond to women in distress.

> I want to learn counseling so I can work with people, I am working now, but would like to do more. Want to learn more. I want to explain to the other that when the problem arises, not to hate, but how to react to that problem.

Since 2008, approximately 200 women and 60 men have participated in counseling training with separate workshops for men. In each workshop, participants explored the problems they and others in the community faced and were assisted to better understand a range of issues, including trauma from rape and sexual assault, mental illness, trauma, domestic violence and substance abuse. During workshops, participants disclosed personal stories, shared concerns about others and developed skills to respond effectively to people in distress. The following sections explore ethical concerns that emerged during and subsequent to the workshops and the ways in which the principles of rights, relationship and reciprocity provided a framework to work toward resolving such dilemmas.

RIGHTS

The counseling workshops implicitly and explicitly strove to address participants' human rights and used the human rights framework to understand personal and family problems. Workshop processes of confidentiality, respect for each other's opinions, listening and respecting differences and

giving constructive feedback operationalized the right to be treated with dignity. Problems were often analyzed in relation to human rights abuses, resulting in participants having a sense of entitlement to the right to be safe, to have access to friends and family, to be respected and to have access to education. Learning about human rights "turns beggars into claimants" (Frankovits quoted in Pittaway, Bartolomei and Hugman, 2010: 243). For instance, the right to live a life free from violence framed the discussion on gender-based violence. Through sharing stories that illustrated the absence of rights, participants identified key problem areas and generated possible solutions (Pittaway et al., 2010). For instance, a participant shared the story of her sister who had been raped by her landlord. In the conversation that followed, participants analyzed the situation, discussing the human rights violation the sister experienced. Others would share similar stories. Participants would role-play counseling the sister, and they would give each other feedback. The group would then explore other responses that might help the sister and situate the issue of abuse by landlords alongside related experiences of exploitation and abuse. The following story typifies the risks that refugee women face living in Delhi:

> My name is Niang. I am 22 years old. My father is a Pastor. On 28 November 2010, after the church service, I and my father, decided to go to the market. It was already 10:30 pm. Our house was not located far from the church so I went home to get some shopping bags from our house. On my way, three local men accosted me. One grabbed me by my bottom and another of them grabbed my breasts. I was so angry. I fought back and pushed the men away. They in turn proceeded to beat me. They hit me until I was bruised and battered on my hands and feet. (Chin Refugee Committee, 2011)

Many of the changes and solutions that have been implemented in Delhi were initially voiced within these workshops. For instance, participants identified groups of people who were the most vulnerable. This assisted UNHCR with recommending people in urgent need of resettlement. In one year, participants identified widows and widowers with children as needing priority consideration. Other improvements included changes to the income support scheme to target those most vulnerable, improving the safety of children in public schools through developing relationships with sympathetic principals and developing a list of 'safe' landlords who would not abuse or exploit refugees.

> Here we have one problem; of course we would like to help the family. Of course we could try to find them a job, but most of them can't find them a job. For financial support, we can't help, we don't have money. In such way, how do we solve the problem? (Participant, Counseling Training)

RELATIONSHIPS

A number of processes went into developing trust between participants themselves and between the workshop leader and participants. The steps taken to build trust included ensuring informed consent, establishing confidentiality, honoring refugees' self-determination and the leaders committing to resource the group over the longer term.

Informed Consent

Many writers have articulated concerns about 'informed consent' in working with vulnerable populations. In relation to qualitative research in refugee communities, the processes used in obtaining 'informed consent' should be "relevant, appropriate, effective and easily seen as such by everyone who is involved" (Hugman, Bartolomei and Pittaway, 2011: 661). Accordingly, the CRR has developed a 'relational approach' to obtaining informed consent with refugees and other vulnerable groups (Hugman et al., 2011: 664). In this approach, the outcomes of research are "fed back to the groups, either through further meetings or by way of group representatives, for member checking and additional analysis" (665). However, when a group consents to a research process, it does not necessarily mean that all individuals in that group have done so or that individuals necessarily understand the implications of what is being discussed. Therefore, ongoing checking with participants about their consent to have their stories documented became part of the counseling research and training process.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality agreements were negotiated at the commencement of each counseling workshop. In order for participants to disclose issues and problems, they needed to feel safe within the group. Early in each workshop, participants reflected on times when confidentiality had been breached and the negative effects of trust being betrayed in that way. All participants were asked to promise to keep stories and views disclosed during group activities confidential. Trainers promised to not use participants' stories without permission and that material produced from workshops would be sent back to participants for checking (James, 2012; Pittaway et al., 2004). The confidentiality agreements (the group to each other and the trainers to the group) were written on large sheets of paper and pasted on a wall for all to sign.

Self-Determination

As refugees know their problems, strengths and possible solutions best, the aim in counseling workshops was for participants to identify the areas of focus and to advise on culturally appropriate interventions and strategies.

While learning counseling skills, participants were encouraged to use responses that they found to be encouraging, helpful and spiritually congruent. Sometimes what was identified was different from usual Western styles of counseling that emphasize empathy, questioning and giving ideas or information. For instance, some participants preferred to use prayer or massage to respond to another's distress. Through group discussion, participants developed a range of possible responses combining new skills and traditional healing practices. Again, the identification of helpful strategies and responses in the workshops functioned as a form of data collection and were used to directly influence the development of best practices within communities and enrich discussion through scholarly publications and policy documents.

Not everyone was drawn to the training because they wanted help for themselves or others. Some would come because they were desperate for any training or any activity. Others were motivated because of the offer of two good meals a day and a small stipend to cover costs. However, we left it up to the leaders of the women's organizations to invite participants who then decided themselves the degree to which they wanted to participate. The trainer's role was to create a safe enough environment that would engage and motivate people. Structuring the training and developing group norms of acceptance, encouragement and support usually resulted in enthusiastic participation, even from people who were initially suspicious or skeptical (James, 2012).

RECIPROCITY

The principle of reciprocity means that researchers/trainers contribute back to the groups that they work with. The CRR's approach to participatory action research is 'reciprocal' in that it emphasizes that refugees determine the research agenda, partner in research activities and are given tangible products as an outcome of the research in the form of training, training materials and advocacy materials. It is "based on the notion of exchange [. . .] It seeks to create relationships between researchers and participants in which these is a more equal exchange of ideas and of the benefits to be gained by being involved in the research project" (Hugman, Pittaway and Bartolomei, 2011: 1279). From the outset, the communities from Burma requested training, which, combined with research, worked synergistically to improve outcomes. The purpose of the research was to produce/collect data or information to enhance the lives of the refugees through more effective advocacy, increased protection and enhanced livelihoods. With the issues and stories documented in refugees' own voices, the CRR developed DVDs and reports showing drawings and pictures of the living conditions and risks. These advocacy tools were often presented to UNHCR and governments in Geneva and led to increased attention being given to urban refugees through the development of UNHCR's Urban Refugee Policy.

However, individual researchers may still feel the pressure to think about personal acts of reciprocity. It is difficult to be unaffected by the sheer scale of the poverty and living conditions of these refugees in New Delhi. Almost as if to orient researchers to the research site, refugee leaders sometimes organized visits to families living in the most desperate situations, and CRR researchers donated small sums of money to these families. However, it became increasingly difficult to support only a few, and it was decided that instead of providing assistance directly, it would be more beneficial to support refugees' community-based organizations with funds to assist vulnerable people. This at least enabled us to engage in targeted fund raising to support the women's organizations to develop ways to enhance their own responses to those most vulnerable. Finally, reciprocity is conveyed through acts of giving. Participants informed us that what was important was that we listened to their stories and conveyed them to others. They told us it helped them to know that we cared enough to come back each year and try to make a difference.

In the next case study, we explore a more traditionally recognized research activity—doctoral research. While some of the themes, dilemmas and strategies are consistent with those just discussed in case study 1, the research goals, methodology and process (conducting individual interview) raises different challenges.

CASE STUDY 2: NEGOTIATING SURVIVAL: A GROUNDED THEORETICAL STUDY EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES OF URBAN REFUGEE WOMEN IN NEW DELHI, INDIA WHO ENGAGE IN 'RISKY LIVELIHOODS'

Introduction: The Research Context

When engaging with vulnerable or at-risk populations, developing an ethical framework necessarily takes priority in the planning and implementation of any research project. In particular, formal research inquiries, such as postgraduate doctoral projects, are obliged to comply with rigorous ethics processes from their tertiary institutions, funding bodies or both. However, an additional layer of thought is required when research participants are from marginalized and disenfranchised communities. Exploring what actions constitute ethical behavior has been a crucial and ongoing consideration throughout the implementation of this doctoral research as participants have fled traumatic events (e.g., sexual violence, religious persecution and severe discrimination) in their homeland of Burma and faced interminable hardship in their new surroundings in New Delhi, India.

In this project, participatory action research (PAR) methods and strategies were used to assess the livelihood environment of refugee women and to explore the social, cultural and legislative processes that inhibit risk or enable access to safe livelihoods. It is anticipated that the findings of this study will be used to meaningfully guide future economic initiatives and/

or livelihood programs for refugee women, including built-in elements to mitigate risk.

The definition of a 'livelihood' is multifaceted; no clear concept has emerged thus far (De Vriese, 2006: 1). For the purpose of this study, the definition used has been widely accepted by international NGOs and various United Nations agencies:

> A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living. A sustainable livelihood allows one to cope with and to recover from stress and shocks, to maintain or enhance capabilities and assets to provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation. (De Vriese, 2006: 1)

While the job market in New Delhi was vibrant, with plenty of opportunities in the informal sector, refugees from Chin State in Burma were competing with the local (and also impoverished) Indian population for jobs, and it was reported that Indian migrants were willing to work longer hours for less pay (Women's Refugee Commission [WRC], 2011: 1). These labor practices resulted in a livelihood environment that was often exploitive and dangerous. Refugees were at further disadvantage because many came from an uneducated, agrarian background in Chin State, and their skills were not easily transferable (WRC, 2011: 2). As a result, most women worked in factories, sold small goods on the street or worked as housemaids for local families, all scenarios that involved great personal risk.

The urban environment of New Delhi made the pursuit of livelihoods unsafe, particularly for people without work rights. Refugees in India do not hold the right to work legally. Recently, the government of India said they will allow refugees to apply for work permits, but this policy has yet to be implemented. Despite this recent legal reform, most refugees continue to find jobs in the black market (e.g., no fixed hours and no work contract) involving work in factories, domestic service or selling small goods on the street. During the interview phase of the study, it emerged that all jobs undertaken by participants involved some degree of personal risk; however, problems or complaints were typically not addressed, because such actions could result in negative repercussions to the individual and/or his or her family from one's employer. A woman might lose the only work available. Further, in urban refugee settings, once employment opportunities were lost, remaining survival options, such as leaving the country or relying on social networks, were limited (Jaspars and O'Callaghan, 2010: 2).

RIGHTS

As required for all funded and postgraduate doctoral research, this project received full approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)

of the University of New South Wales (HREC Approval HC12280). Compliance with ethical protocols and panels demonstrates the usual and accepted adherence to a strict code of ethics designed to ensure that the rights of those we engage within the research process are upheld with dignity and respect. However, this doctoral research process is underpinned by Article 23.1 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* for which the right to work, for nationals and refugees, is a right recognized according to Articles 17, 18 and 19 of the 1951 Geneva Convention (UNHCR, 2007: 1). Therefore, refugees should be allowed to pursue a livelihood that is safe and sustainable; one that will eventually lead to self-reliance. Whereas as researchers we may choose to adhere to a human rights perspective, we also need to maintain realistic expectations when working with disenfranchised groups and within the political and cultural parameters of a foreign environment. In this case, a belief in the principle of the 'right to work' may not translate into safe and sustainable employment.

RELATIONSHIPS

Throughout this study, every effort was made to ensure the dignity and well-being of the research participants. An explicit goal of the research process was to work in a way that was empowering and not exploitative of individual participants or the community as a whole. During previous visits to New Delhi, and through participation in workshops with the community, the CRR (including the doctoral student) had developed a partnership with a highly regarded and visible, local community organization made up of refugee women from Burma. The Burmese Women Delhi (BWD) provided intervention and support to women within this community who were victims of violence. They did this through the provisions of psychosocial support and advocacy, and they often directed women to the limited legal resources that were available in the community or referred them for counseling. The development of a constructive and trusting relationship with the BWD over time certainly facilitated researcher access to this research site. In addition, the researcher consulted with UNHCR, which supported the aims of the project.

The support of UNHCR, of key individuals in the community and a strategically important community group such as the BWD contributed to the feasibility of the project in a number of ways. The support of BWD was vital, as the group was a source of unlimited local insight and knowledge, and the members were trusted advocates within the community of refugees from Burma. Moreover, the participatory nature of this research encouraged the active engagement of community members in investigating topics that were of most concern to themselves and their families. This project was conceptually developed after extensive and direct consultation with key informants and the refugee women themselves over two field visits

in 2010 and 2011. It emerged through community consultations that the community wanted this research, as a lack of livelihood created barriers to meeting many needs, including health, education, safe accommodation and, ultimately, individual autonomy. The initial aim of the doctoral study was to explore 'survival sex[9]" as a livelihood; however, in individual interviews, women did not acknowledge or discuss whether or not they, personally, had engaged in survival sex—arguably the riskiest of all livelihoods. The researcher refrained from directing or prompting participants to discuss this topic, because it would have been sensitive or difficult to disclose. However, participants and informants did acknowledge that some women engaged in survival sex in lieu of paying for food, shelter, medicines, etc. But as the project relied on maintaining a constructive relationship between the 'researcher and the researched' and an ongoing process of collaboration with the community, the researcher chose to expand the focus to cover any livelihood that involved personal risk, as it was discovered that all livelihoods in this community involved a certain amount of risk.

The involvement and direct assistance of the BWD in the research process was critical to the project's success. For example, members of BWD provided counseling to anyone who became distressed during an interview. They also committed to providing counseling at the completion of the project on an as-needed basis. Despite their limited resources, BWD also allowed the interviews to be held in the group's office (in reality, one member's room). The participants felt secure traveling to that location, as it did not draw any unwanted attention from local people, and it was comfortable for both participants and researcher.

Ensuring participants' emotional well-being was also important to maintaining the relationship between researcher and the community. Participants had fled traumatic events in Burma, and they continued to face unfathomable hardship in New Delhi. Their physical and mental well-being was of utmost importance. Given the powerlessness that refugees' experience, it was important to design a research process that ensured voluntary participation. The possible contribution of the research was clearly explained to participants before each interview and focus group. No data was collected without the consent of each participant, and they were informed that they could end the interview and withdraw from the research at any time. At the beginning of each interview or group discussion, the researcher verbally summarized the purpose of the study and gave a detailed explanation of how confidentiality would be maintained.

In this project, it was particularly important for individuals' safety that the researcher not identify participants in written documents or reports. During focus group discussions, participants were also asked to keep confidential information others disclosed by not discussing it with others outside of the group. The interpreter, who was fluent in English and two Chin dialects, was recruited through BWD, and she was a recognized and trusted member of the Burmese community. Her presence at the interview provided

an additional level of security for the participants. Before the interviews began, we briefed her and the members of BWD on the importance of confidentiality. They had all participated previously in a number of research studies and human rights workshops where sensitive information had been disclosed; therefore, they were familiar with and agreed to adhere to a strict code of silence. It was agreed that, in the event that new or particularly severe human rights abuses were uncovered, the researcher would notify the UNHCR on the condition that the person disclosing the information gave their consent.

RECIPROCITY

From the commencement of the research relationship, an open dialogue was established with participants to discuss the aims of the study and to deconstruct what reciprocity might mean in this research context. Researchers frequently assume that reciprocity means providing a minimum stipend to cover costs incurred in time and travel only. This was the case in this project: participants were given financial remuneration of Rs300 (US $5.50) for their participation. This amount covered transport to and from the interviews and the lost daily wage. Compensation was given at the completion of each interview; it was not discussed beforehand, as we did not want this to influence or even indirectly coerce participation because of participant's financial needs. However, stipends such as this may be tokenistic and not really capture the spirit of collaboration and reciprocity, which needs to be intricately interwoven with relationship.

In this project, reciprocity was negotiated to include the comprehensive dissemination of findings in different arenas. Every woman interviewed requested that that her story be heard and shared with others. This was their most adamant request. It was agreed that all findings would be disseminated in academic publications in an effort to reach a wider audience. Content of reports or articles would be given to BWD prior to publication, who, in turn, would give feedback and share material with the participants. This project provided an opportunity for marginalized and silenced women to share their life stories and the ongoing struggles they faced as a result of being displaced. We explained that, whereas we were not in the position to influence resettlement outcomes, we would share our findings with UNHCR and advocate on their behalf.

It was often overwhelming to consider reciprocity on a larger scale—particularly when each individual participant's needs were great. In this context, an ongoing and active relationship was maintained with BWD and so opportunities for reciprocity did not have to be linked to a one-off piece of research. Reciprocity postdoctoral project has involved setting up a fundraising platform for BWD. This is an ongoing commitment to raising money on behalf of the community. It is intended that the money raised will

be used for an emergency medical fund for the community and for training courses (e.g., language courses and nursing training). The researcher has committed to facilitating grant proposals for small projects identified by the women. We are cognizant of the fact, that, as privileged Westerners, we get to leave the research site and go back to our comfortable homes. We never forget that; and because of this, we remain committed to working with our partners in a way that is empowering and unremitting.

LESSONS LEARNED

This chapter demonstrates that ethical research partnerships are helpfully underpinned by three fundamental principles—rights, relationship and reciprocity. These three interconnected principles were used as a reference point throughout each research process and are particularly well suited to working with vulnerable and disenfranchised groups. Ethical codes and statements were designed to protect individual research participants as required by usual ethics procedures and protocols. However, it is important to recognize that they may fall short of protecting the needs of individuals and groups who come from different cultural contexts. The three principles of rights, relationship and reciprocity complemented our carefully crafted ethical codes and were invaluable prior to, throughout and subsequent to the research process. Moreover, they were adaptable to a foreign research environment and enabled our projects to be collaborative, participatory and driven by a shared commitment to a human rights perspective.

Each of the case studies presented in this chapter describe how rights, relationship and reciprocity were incorporated into our engagement with refugees in New Delhi, India. An important component of any collaborative engagement or participatory research process is reflection. Important lessons and key considerations were learned that would influence our future planning, a selection of which appears in the following section.

In relation to case study 1:

- To minimize power differentials, the researcher/trainer facilitated participants' to tell their own stories. But we were never 100 percent confident that confidentiality was not breached, especially when dealing with a large number of participants with preexisting relationships and loyalties. However, by spending time working through the meaning of confidentiality and its importance in relationships and the often-devastating impacts of people breaking confidentiality, we did what we could to make the workshops a safe place for disclosure.
- Relying on interpreters to translate always involved the possibility that the message sent was not necessarily the message received. We learned to be vigilant about double-checking meaning especially if we noticed signs that participants were confused or unsure.

- As Westerners visiting refugee communities desperate for help, people often asked us for financial assistance or for us to bring their case to the attention of UNHCR. Whereas we responded carefully to such requests, making referrals and bringing protection issues to the attention of UNHCR, researchers and trainers did not provide financial assistance directly to individuals or make promises of individual advocacy. Whereas we often felt sad and helpless when we could not hand out money to individuals or make promises to help with resettlement, we learned that it is important that the contributions of researchers and trainers from developed countries go toward enhancing refugee communities' capacity to develop their own sustainable solutions.

In relation to case study 2:

- Expanding on the last point in case study 1, having realized early on that sporadic donations could not fundamentally change the livelihood environment, as money given to an individual was at best, a 'Band-Aid' lacking any assurance of longer-term gains, we recognized that what that community needed was community-driven, sustainable, small-scale, income-generation projects that were feasible in the local context.
- Whereas we had committed to reciprocity and to relationship, we were left feeling that what we had done was not enough and could probably never be enough. For instance, participants desperately wanted us to disseminate their stories and commit to sharing them with our academic peers, which we did and will continue to do. However, we learned that these steps were not sufficient in themselves but the beginning of a process of advocacy that needed our sustained commitment.
- Whereas we intended that our research be participatory, we never knew for sure if the research aims and questions absolutely reflected the issues that were of most importance to the community. We recognized that we had our own agendas in undertaking both case studies, agendas that reflected personal research interests and desires for professional development. In the case of this doctoral study, the end result will be the award of a PhD. We could argue that the research was participatory and reciprocal, but the question remains, who benefited most in the end?

Arguably, rights, relationships and reciprocity are core principles, which should underpin all research and other engagements with vulnerable individuals and disenfranchised groups and communities. For us they operated as signposts, providing guidance in complex and often messy situations, enabling us to constantly ensure that our research and training projects were focused on meeting the needs of this refugee community to the greatest extent possible. To recognize and reflect on the difficulties of undertaking

collaborative work and research with disenfranchised groups such as refugee communities is not meant to deter other researchers from engaging in these same activities. Rather, our intent is to offer an ethical framework for research with vulnerable individuals and communities in order to do no (*further*) harm and pursue social justice goals.

NOTES

1. According to UNHCR, "An asylum-seeker is an individual who says he/she is a refugee, but whose claim has not yet been definitely evaluated. In countries with individualized procedures, an asylum-seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he/she has submitted it. Not every asylum-seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every refugee is initially an asylum-seeker." (UNHCR 2007).
2. For ease of reference, this chapter will use the generic term 'refugee' to cover asylum seekers who have not been granted refugee status unless it is important to distinguish the different circumstances of each group.
3. Refugees from Chin State elect to continue to refer to their country as 'Burma' and reject the new name of 'Myanmar'. In this chapter, we follow suite, respecting refugees' rights to this act of protest.
4. Many of These people hold an unlikely but strongly held expectation of resettlement in a country other than India. This is unlikely because resettlement countries have reduced their intake of refugees from Burma since the recent opening up of that country.
5. Kerrie James conducted counselling workshops on behalf of the Centre for Refugee Research (CRR) at the University of New South Wales, which allowed her access to the refugees' stories.
6. Paula Jops is a doctoral candidate in the School of Social Sciences at the UNSW and is supervised by Jan Breckenridge
7. The CRR is a research Centre within the University of NSW, funded through grants and consultancies. The CRR aims to empower refugee communities and enhance the range of protections for women and girls. It conducts research into issues relevant to refugees and provides training to refugee communities. It aims to investigate the conditions of refugees in countries of first asylum, identify gaps, develop protection protocols and support innovative laws (for further detail see http://www.crr.unsw.edu.au/). In New Delhi, India, the CRR is currently involved with refugee communities from Burma, Somalia and Afghanistan.
8. The first New Delhi workshop was commissioned by the UNCHR and occurred in 2005. Since then the CRR has worked directly with WLB and BWD in New Delhi with the ongoing support from UNHCR.
9. "Survival sex' is where sex is exchanged for survival needs: food, shelter or protection are examples

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10 Dangers in Fieldwork

Research Ethics and the Predicament of Self-Harm in Anthropological Research

Debojyoti Das

Fieldwork is the keystone to ethnography, laying the foundation for thick anthropological description. Anthropological fieldwork stands out from other social science research in that intimate fieldwork experience becomes the ethnographer's primary source of knowledge. In this paper, I explore methodological and ethical dilemmas confronted in a fieldwork situation in which violence featured prominently. The issue arose from working among people who have been exposed to state violence—invariably presented as counterviolence (including counterinsurgency)—and who have engaged in 'ethno-politics' and 'ethno-nationalistic' struggles with the nation state but also from the risk of harm and of putting oneself in danger as a researcher. In any context, gaining trust and establishing rapport are crucial to sustaining fieldwork over a sufficient length of time to learn the intricacies of people's lives. Yet in such perilous field sites, participants (interlocutors who become our primary source of knowledge) often suspect the researcher's identity and motivations. Equally, anthropologists with a professional responsibility to work with the study community by establishing rapport and goodwill may find themselves insecure because of identities and affiliations they develop with informants in the field.

The paper will discuss the moral and ethical dilemmas of conducting fieldwork in a social context where everyday violence and suspicion features predominantly. In this context, methodological practice such as reflectivity, informed consent, fieldworker's responsibility, rapport and reciprocity need to be considered to engage with the ethics of fieldwork. In ethnographic (qualitative) fieldwork, the question of a researcher's subject position becomes fundamental as he or she is expected to engage, be immersed and at the same time be objective and neutral. It becomes even more difficult in dangerous field sites where the researcher's well-being is constantly at risk. The fieldworker is mandated to generate 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) and in this process is obliged to spend time with his respondents, friends, interlocutors-informants in a way that goes beyond conventional data collection in qualitative research practice. In the process of recording data, the fieldworker encounters anxiety, dilemmas and undeclared challenges. A range of ethical issues emerges as one moves with the set goals

of fieldwork as they cannot be considered during planning and permission stage.

Simultaneously, there was another set of ethical dilemmas that I encountered while doing fieldwork in Nagaland and using survey, interview data collection and ethnographic methods in the same context, sometimes in a very controlling position (recruiting subjects, distributing surveys, conducting interviews at a specific time and place). And sometimes I occupied the very opposite data collection position, with little or no control over the research context, attempting to blend in and be as unobtrusive as possible in order to better explore the taken for familiarity of local routines, procedures and assumptions. I did not find these rapid shifts in subject position of research easy, especially in a risky fieldwork context. In unfamiliar settings, which carry an element of threat, the subject position of the controlling researcher seems far more secured and reassuring.

THE VIOLENT ENCOUNTER

Let me begin my narrative with the violent encounter. It was on 11 June 2009, after spending 12 months in the field, that I was exposed to a violent event that remains an important mark of my fieldwork. After arriving in my study village, Leangkangru in Tuensang district (the village name is spelled in the government records as Leangkanger, whereas Yimchungers call it Leangkangru). I had settled in with Nikon's family, who were politically influential in the village. My host's nephew and his sons assisted me with my household survey, which focused on livelihoods, household consumption patterns, land use and land relations. I used questionnaires to carry out a baseline household survey in the village as part of my fieldwork. In this household survey I covered 106 households out of 140.

My study was not about violence (at least not in the conventional sense) but focused on the effects of development projects. The road connecting Leangkangru to the district headquarters (Tuensang town) was maintained by local contractors. Although it was risky to travel on such mountain roads during peak monsoon season with boulders and mud slides cutting off the vital road links, I had planned to visit Shillong, the capital town of Meghalaya, my hometown, and intended to return to my field site on the eleventh of June (see also Chapter 14, this volume). Also, my host from Leangkangru was in Kohima visiting his political party and superior development work for the village and his farm. I had decided to meet up with my host at Dimapur on my return journey and then travel with him back to Tuensang.

On the ninth of May, I reached Dimapur. The same day we traveled through the rugged mountain highways of Kohima and Mokokchung onward to his leader's plantation near Shamatur subdivisional headquarters in Tuensang district. Before leaving, my host and his leader's parents prayed for our well-being by holding the Bible in their hands. Every journey into

the wilderness of Tuensang district entailed not only the physical danger of landslides but also the practical threat of being ambushed.

As we reached Tuensang town after much struggle through the monsoon rains, it was already dark. Leangkangru still lay 73 kilometers away. That morning when I had reached Dimapur, the driver informed me that his boss had left, this turned out to be a miscommunication but perhaps intentional. I later learned in the field that our journey had been kept secret, known only to the host family and us. The track bumpy road had already made me drowsy; after traveling for over 270 kilometers and ten hours, I was falling asleep. As we were running out of fuel, refueling was urgent in the Tuensang town but, as it was Sunday, the sole petrol pump was closed. Earlier, on our way from Mokokchung, a drunken man had suddenly appeared on the road, waving at us to stop. Our driver averted an accident by accelerating sharply and driving past him. Now, as our vehicle left the petrol station, it was swirling around corners. Half asleep, suddenly I saw our car being stopped by two unidentified armed men. The one on the left was carrying a revolver, and the one man on the right was carrying an assault rifle, pointed at the vehicle. The vehicle immediately stopped with a violent jerk that threw us from our seats. Within minutes, one of the armed men had taken control of the vehicle. They had already smashed the headlights, so everything was happening in darkness. Before I could say a word, our driver was bleeding from his forehead where he had been smashed with a pistol butt. My host, who was trying to intervene at this point, was dragged out of the front seat. In the meantime, a group of armed guards had entered the vehicle from the rear and ransacked my belongings. The militants were shouting, "Don't you respect us as soldiers? We are in civilian dress, you don't respect us. You will have to pay for it with your blood." The driver pleaded for mercy, but he could not escape. In the meantime, the assailants were holding my host by his collar; the man, in his midfifties, already had developed a swollen forehead. I was the only person who remained untouched at that point.

In the midst of the violence, I heard one armed guard speak to me from behind, "Run, run, before you are beaten up too. Run for your life." I called to the driver, and we started running in the darkness. I had a dim torch in my hand that I had fortunately taken out of my bag before the event. After running for around ten minutes on the dark road, I called a college teacher who lived nearby, whom I had contacted earlier when the vehicle was being refueled. We rang the police but to no avail. Soon I received a frantic call from my host. He tried to convince me that the situation was now settled, and we would soon be on our way to Leangkangru, so long as we came back to the spot where the incident had happened or else the situation could get worse. I immediately informed his children in Tuensang town and they came to the teacher's hut, shocked and horrified. As the driver and I, together with the host's children rushed to the site of the incident, most of the people left, including the college teacher, who appealed to me not to go, as the situation was too dangerous. But I had little choice. I felt it was morally incorrect to

leave my host alone with the assailants when he was calling for help. The driver was very reluctant to come, as he was too fearful of being killed, but I convinced him. Moving through the darkness toward the scene of the incident, we realized that the armed guards had blocked the road. But soon I saw my host coming down the road with a loin cloth across his face drenched in blood. He identified us as his associates. The next moment we were taken captive and escorted to an unidentified place, separated from the host's children. Threatened and ordered to disperse from the spot, the towns people politely agreed to leave without confrontation.

I had no idea where my field notes, my camera and laptop were. They had been thrown out of the vehicle. Even the vehicle was declared missing. All mobile phones were snatched from us and switched off. We were at once disconnected from the outside world. The dialogue that followed was emotionally charged. The town commander at times exploded, narrating his hard life as a rebel leader hounded by the military. Pointing at me, he denounced me as an Indian: "Your government has repressed our aspiration for self-rule." He also accused my host of misunderstanding them. "The Naga army has been cursed to be *musafir* (wanderers) in the forest and jungle of Saramati Mountain." But by this time, the paramilitary forces had been tipped off and they reached the spot and rescued all the captives. In the days that followed, there were intense negotiations between the assailants and my host, who was an important political figure in the area. Scores of villagers, party workers and town sympathizers came to see him to express their support and sympathy. Party workers argued that the assailants should be punished by the tribal council, invoking the tribal council rules, which contained specific provisions to punish assailants who harm civilians from their own tribe. However, my host's party leader was adamant that a situation of conflict should be avoided and proposed a compromise, which he announced, holding the Bible, as a "compromise of forgiveness" as "Jesus did to his enemies." Party colleagues and town sympathizers described his stance and posture as acts of cowardice, conceding to the power of the guilty.

During those days, several tribal council meetings were held in the town. People accused the public leader of bowing down before the pressure of the puny underground town commander. The punishment imposed by the tribal council on the perpetrators had not yet been enforced. My host replied, bringing out the Bible from his bag, "I am doing it in the name of the holy god." He seemed convincing enough, but this moral stance also had a political purpose in deflecting the many people who said, "He is our next MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], how can he bow down to such people who depend on him and beg him for money when they are in need?" Yet his position was a clever act of disguise. The retreat would hold the community together.

For my host's party leader, this was a position he had to take in order to secure his political future: a lot was at stake, his farm, the whole political

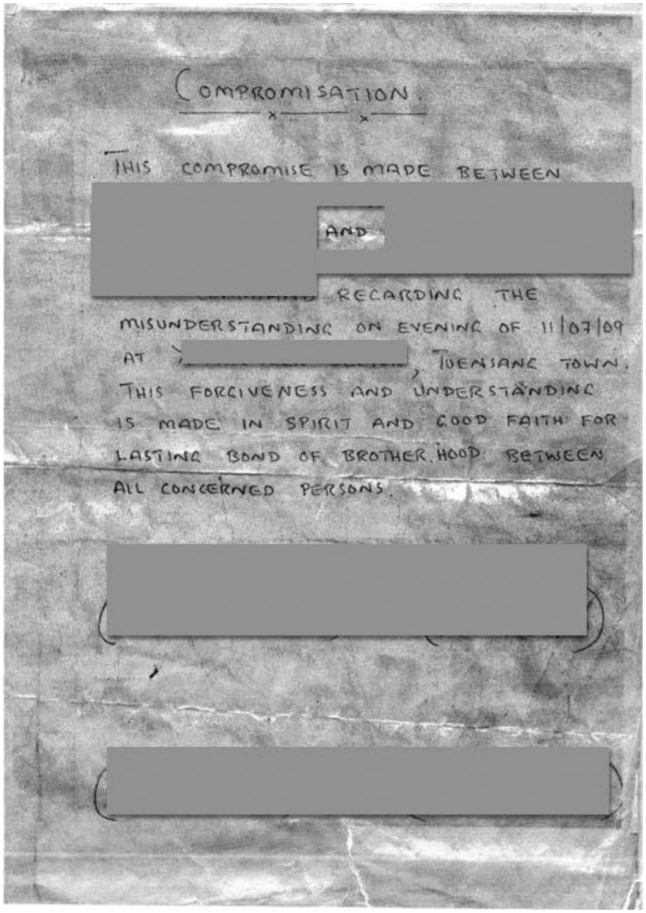

Figure 10.1 The Compromise Document (Original photograph taken by the author)

constituency and a wide electorate, whom he could not possibly take on as opposition or see as fractured by antagonized factions. In our later conversations, I came to realize the importance of this compromise. The calm we maintained during the hostage crisis not only minimized the dangers of confrontation but also saved our lives. A compromise letter was signed between the two parties for reconciliation (see Figure 10.1).

IMMEDIATE REFLECTIONS

Reflecting on the event, there were few inferences that I could draw from it. In the immediate aftermath, I was more preoccupied by ethical and moral questions. One of my host's children asked me why I had initially run away

when his father was beaten up by the town commander. I had no simple answer. In the days following, we again became good friends, but the question still haunted me: Did I betray my informants? The intensity of the violence demanded quick action. However, many things were unclear. Why did they take their own community member hostage when they constantly stated that, "We Nagas are one?" What were the issues of conflict that led to this attack? Was the plot preplanned? What were their motives? While we were being held, we were listening to the town commander's narrative of his struggles, but the situation was too dangerous to have any meaningful dialogue with the assailants. As there was no possibility of taking down the exchanges between us and the town commander, I felt a lost opportunity of recording an interesting dialogue in captivity. Reflecting back afterward on what had happened that night, I felt I had no control over the production of ethnography. As Nilan (2002) has emphasized, in fieldwork, the question of control over the recording and production of data causes much anxiety for the qualitative ethnographic field-worker in an 'exceptional setting' where emotional detachment, objectivity and control over the production of data are difficult to achieve. In the violent encounter that night, the government forces did not apprehend the culprits; rather, they acted as a go-between. Interestingly, nothing appeared in the local newspaper about the event. Every piece of information was concealed from the outside world. It helped in building confidentiality, as I also kept the incident confidential and did not share it with anybody. I thus acted as a good ethnographer in the entire research exercise, strictly following my research protocol and ethical guidelines. After returning back from the field, I only shared it with my research committee, who expressed their empathy and worries about conducting fieldwork in such a precarious field.

AFTER THE EVENT: DISTORTION OR ENLIGHTENMENT?

Nilan has written that, although when working in unfamiliar and dangerous fields, it is tempting to "identify the most emotionally intense moments in fieldwork research as the preeminent moments of data collection [. . .] [in fact] it is often impossible to collect really informative and useful data at such times," emphasizing, rather, that "it is often data collected after the event or in quieter moments which turn out to be the most evocative, in the end" (Nilan, 2002: 383). In some ways, this was also my own experience. Like her, I found that it "was really everything I found out afterwards about the events which produced the most satisfying explanatory account of the phenomenon" (Nilan, 2002: 383).

In the days that followed, I was determined to go back to Leangkangru, despite my fears, to continue with my research on farming. My field notes and laptop were recovered by the police. I was encouraged by the support extended by the villagers, who told me that the compromise letter would

act as a safety valve, ensuring my security. Over the years, the village had become an important site of political activity. Roads, jobs and contracts came to the villagers just before elections. Political intermediaries in the village selected the individuals who would be beneficiaries of government programs. The life of the villagers was dependent on development schemes and projects. Since 2002, the passing of Nagaland Communitisation of Essential Services Act, all state development programs and projects had been administered at the local level.

My post-incident fieldwork unfolded the patronage nexus that the villagers had developed with project officials and that project officials in turn maintained not only with political parties in power but also with the underground groups. When interests clashed between rural elites and opposition political parties, violence was the inevitable outcome. However, I was to discover that the role of underground factions in this scene went beyond the violence of hostage taking. It was embedded in the fabric of accounting for development monies.

My decision to return to fieldwork in the village after the hostage incident was thus crucial to my understanding. It turned out to be the most productive period in the end. While initially the 'hostage crises' seemed obviously not linked to my immediate research activity—an eruption of violence—I came to see how it was embedded in the day-to-day violence produced in those borderlands. Also, my perception of the relation between the violence of underground factions and development became completely inverted. When I first started my project, I was of course aware that the period of ceasefire and transnational development aid was intimately linked. Without the ceasefire, there could be no aid and, equally, the aid was presented as bringing peace through development to an area understood since colonial times as an 'underdeveloped,' 'backward' and 'rebel-infested' frontier state.

VIOLENCE AND ITS INTERPRETATION

In recent years, there has been an upsurge of anthropological studies addressing the question of violence. However, as Ghassem-Fachandi explains, the central concern has been with violent situations as the object of study rather than the methodological and ethical issues posed for the researcher; in fact, "they usually avoid incorporating into analyses their own personal encounters with violence in the field" (Ghassem-Fachandi, 2009: 4). However, there has been increasingly rigorous introspection on the methodological and philosophical concerns of fieldwork in unstable places. The issue first appeared in an unpublished, but much discussed, paper on "Occupational Safety and Health in Anthropology" in 1986, where Nancy Howell flagged the need to discuss the issue of personal dangers involved in doing research. Howell's appeal for a practical piece of research that would produce a comprehensive survey of occupational safety and health hazard was

quickly accepted by the American Anthropological Association (AAA), and an expanded version of her paper was published in 1990 as an AAA special report titled *Surviving Fieldwork*. Evaluating over 80 separate dangers, the paper locates violent ethnographic encounters in the context of sunburn, robbery, venereal disease, stinging ants, frostbite, arrest, malaria and military attack. But it did provide some compelling data on aspects of human hazard that were very difficult to quantify—suspicion of espionage, acute conflict and political turmoil (Howell, 1990).

Since then the debate on fieldwork dilemmas in hazardous and perilous environments has developed far beyond occupational health and safety. Kovats-Bernat explains the expansion of the issues recognized:

> As we continue to conduct research in increasingly hostile and dangerous regions, the very real possibility of our victimization in the field presents a challenge not just to the practicalities of personal safety but also to the ethnographic methods and ethics that we are retrofitting for use in cultures in which ordinary interrelations and social institutions are overshadowed by unrest, instability, and fear. Even exposure to low-intensity repression or harassment over the course of research threatens to adversely affect the ways in which we approach the field and interpret social phenomena within it. (2002: 208)

Thus the further problem that arises is epistemological, a methodological concern with "how the status of field hazards affects the ethnographer's observations and data analysis" (Kovats-Bernat, 2002: 208). Violent encounters not only threaten ethnographers' physical integrity but also potentially damage the integrity of their inquiries. As Feldman puts it,

> Violence never stands in a relation of pure externality to the consciousness of the researcher. One experiences it through the moment of crisis and strife and internalizes it and expresses it afterward from memory. The inability to extricate oneself from what one studies is fundamental in such experience, where the moral and physical integrity of the ethnographer is put at risk. Yet, at the same time, such extraction remains a necessary moment in order to arrive at some degree of objectification. (1995: 228)

Further, in witnessing violence, the ethnographer becomes a part of what is being studied and therefore complicit in the further unfolding of the event.

Against such negative effects on understanding, it has also been argued that "the subjective experience of violence brings about, or allows for, an insight about the realities in a particular place" (Ghassem-Fachandi, 2009: 4–5). It made me aware of the political economy and the rationale of violence and how it is closely linked to the way the state and civil society have

historically been placed in opposition to each other in the Naga Hills with intense friction, conflict, domination and subjugation of local aspiration.

At the same time, I became very aware of how violence is translated by people who have previous experience as perpetrators but who now have become key narrators and interpreters of such encounters to the ethnographer. As Ghassem-Fachandi writes:

> The subjective experience of violence is peculiar in that it tends to overwhelm other daily experience. Violence humiliates, the victim is humiliated by being reduced to an object; the witness by being reduced to impotent bystander and the perpetrator, in retrospect, by an inability to ever adequately redress the violence perpetrated. Or, in turn, all the participants are humiliated because it is frequently difficult to delineate clearly between victims, bystander, perpetrator or analyst. (2009: 5)

There is also a special difficulty in writing about violence, in "objectifying that which has been consumed, harmed, or destroyed, that which is no longer there except in absences, traces, wounds and ruins" (Ghassem-Fachandi, 2009: 5, describing Borneman's essay in the edited collection). The violence experienced can often lead to powerful textual expressions of experience, at times narratives that verge on a "cathartic babel" (Ghassem-Fachandi, 2009: 6), reflecting multiple points of interpretation.

The questions that surfaced on reflection of my fieldwork are: How do anthropologists cope with the narrowly defined research ethics in 'abnormal,' dangerous field sites? Can we simply 'retrofit' (as Kovats-Bernat put it earlier), the existing methods and ethics? What are the moral dilemmas that confront anthropological research in such uncertain fields? And what kind of methodological and ethical issues emerge from the practice of research collecting fieldwork data in chaotic and dangerous situations? My position on ethics centers on the field-worker who enters the field for his ethnographic work. The ethics of 'self-harm' has quite different implications than the conventionally understood professional ethics of protecting the interests and welfare of interviewees or the study community. I will proceed with these questions and explore the ethical and epistemological risks that anthropological research encounters.

Ghassem-Fachandi observes, "Rarely are anthropologists as field researchers prepared for the violent event that unfolds around them, much less for the ethical effects they have on them afterwards" (2005: 5). While doing coursework in anthropology, I was introduced to research ethics. The research methodology course was tailored to train students on ethical issues, research methods and methodological guidelines to conduct fieldwork. The guidelines and frameworks of fieldwork were quite silent on questions of violence, insecurity and the practical day-to-day encounter of researchers with their subjects in insecure field situations. It was often presumed to be

'common sense' to choose research areas and topics that would not invite danger. In my own case, I had not apprehended the severity of my fieldwork situation, as I was convinced that life would be 'normal' in the decade-long ceasefire zone.[1] I embarked on fieldwork in June 2008 after an initial short visit to Nagaland in 2007 before joining SOAS as a graduate student in anthropology. While I was overwhelmed by the dangers that I had experienced during the short visit to Nagaland in 2007, it seemed to me more of an adventure.

ISSUE OF PUBLISHING AND TAKING A STANCE

As a pure scientific observer, I was taught to be 'emotionless,' 'unbiased,' 'unsympathetic,' and to be committed to an objective scientific inquiry. But the practice of detached observer obscured my research and made my ethnography less reflective. The temptation to become an activist was always present in me. I thought of reporting the incident to the press, organizing villagers to file a Right to Information (RTI) petition against the district officials and the man involved in siphoning wages from beneficiaries (see also Chapter 14, this volume).

As a good anthropologist, I never reported it to the press. I was at least empathetic to the situation by not writing on the crisis that people faced as a rebel and factional tussle in which poor farmers paid the price. In the violent event that evening, a Bihari mason lost his limb, as he was shot in his leg minutes before we were stopped and assaulted. Incidentally, I later discovered from interaction with him that he was working in my host party leader's native village and was involved as a construction worker in the church.

Although I partially seem to fulfill the ethical requirements of my ethnography by being neutral to the situation, the question of taking sides was palpable. I was questioned by my conscience. My fears became real one day when I met a Kheimungen tribe lawyer in Tuensang town. He had invited me to his subdivision, Thunuk, the most backward area, he claimed, in Tuensang. His main intention was to persuade me independently to report on the suffering and marginality of his tribe in relation to the advanced districts in the state. As Frances Henry notes from her fieldwork in Trinidad, "this answer was not satisfactory to some people, in fact when I refused to write and expose the situation, one person accused me of being an CIA agent in disguise" (Henry, 1966: 553). For my part, I was questioned by my Kheimungen friend concerning the relevance my research when I cannot independently report on the facts of borderland communities neglected by state and local elites. I made a sorry excuse that my focus of attention was the Yimchunger and that it was too late to conduct fresh fieldwork on the Kheimungen. If I had reported on those issues, which were close to my heart, I would have faced similar sanctions returning back home as many past

anthropologists have faced[2] in their research by entering conflict torn areas and nearly costing them their research (see particularly Bourgois, 1991).

Political neutrality opens up the dilemma of ethics and the risk of being naïve and emotionally detached from political questions and moral ethics. By not reporting it to the media, I was undermining the daily stories of violence that have become a part of everyday life in the frontier district. I maintained a personal detachment from the inner workings of local politics and factionalism. Henry, in her study on Trinidadian factory unions states,

> The situation of being caught between two rival factions is certainly not a new one for the anthropologist; but when this occurs in the political arena and involves the policies and legislative program of the government of the country, these problems take on a new and sometimes threatening significance. (Henry, 1966: 554)

In my case study, these conflicts were directly linked to state development programs and grants that were connected to questions of livelihood of poor farmers and village daily wage earners, where money was siphoned off by bureaucrats, politicians, church actors and factional stakeholders. People who resisted irregularities in the state's development programs, such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, were targeted and victimized by the interest groups. By reporting these events, I could have potentially sent alarm bells to the people who took me hostage and further endanger my stay in the field.

WORKING IN A CONTEXT OF VIOLENCE

I entered the field at a time of a decade-old ceasefire. During my fourteen months of fieldwork in different villages in Nagaland, both the military and the factional rebel groups were regular parts of the landscape. During my stay in the village, the local underground groups made two reconnaissance visits, each time sending demand notes to the village headmen to supply food grain to sustain the marching party. This was in turn followed by the appearance of the Assam Rifles *jawans* (soldiers) with their commanding officers who visited the headmen's houses to gather information about the movements of the militants. I also recorded stories of violent clashes in the past between the government forces and the rebel groups. In 1993, the village was turned into a battleground as a fight broke out between the government forces and the rebels who had taken shelter in the village. The village headman's son took me around the village to show me the bullet punctures in the electric post that symbolized the violent encounter (refer to Figure 10.2). Following that encounter, the rebel leaders, suspecting the village leaders of having leaked the information about their presence to the military, surrounded the village elders and insulted them by exposing their

Figure 10.2 AK-47 Bullet Marks on Village Lamp Post (Original photograph taken by the author, 2009)

bottoms—to which the village elders replied that insulting the elders was hardly the way to attain freedom. The underground people then denounced the elders as government agents. Such exchanges were the stuff of gossip; the real scene was often exaggerated to rumors and terror stories.

The village itself was on the brink of a split between the Baptist majority and a Catholic minority. For many, to convert to what they, following Protestant practice, would qualify as 'Roman' Catholicism was a 'sin,' undesirable in the true Baptist spirit. In fact, the first Catholic Church, set up in the village a few years earlier, had to be dismantled under pressure from the public and the Baptist Association. Today the village is divided between a Catholic *khel* (ward) and three Baptist *khel*.[3] Conducting ethnography in such a sensitive environment demanded reflective awareness and sensitivity toward the different positions of others. In their private talks, the Baptist pastor would complain about the town parish, whereas the Catholic priest would highlight the lack of accountability of the Baptist associations. Doing fieldwork under such circumstances was difficult. I chose to live with the powerful, and the most respected families in the village. The choice, although it obviously carried certain disadvantages, was practical and made sense. I developed a good rapport with the village headman's son, who was a respected citizen of the village. On numerous encounters, he made me understand the local complexities of land relations and farming. He accompanied me on many of my visits. Whereas access to these households was easy, they would not talk much in front of the village headman's son or relatives. Whereas there were no caste hierarchies as such, poor families found it difficult to narrate stories in front of village elders who were members of the

Village Council. I could only gain access to their narratives when I started visiting those households independently. In this complex ethnic and political setting, negotiating access always came with a price.

My friendship with the president of the Leangkangru Village Citizen's Union, a body established by the Baptist Church in the 1970s, was crucial, as he extended patronage with the village people from all ranks. I also attended the village Sunday services and participated in the church programs. In this way, I was slowly exposed to the inner workings of the church, which generated trust among the community. After a couple of months, the village women's leader—a church member—one day smilingly remarked, "You have now become a member of our Yimchunger family." My associations with powerful figures, important in local networks of patronage, was helpful in reducing my level of personal risk within the village, as I was always assured by the leaders that nobody would dare to harm me. However, as the village was internally polarized, I soon realized that alliance with a single faction group would hinder my own work. My field coworkers were church deacons, the village headman's son, a former Naga National Council (NNC) worker and the president of the Village Citizens' Union. I also developed friendships with members of the village student union. Associating with these different people and establishing correspondence with different pressure groups minimized the risk of hostility or ill feeling with any of the households in the village, as well as providing balance and counteracting the potential for bias.

However, establishing associations and rapport with villagers who had divergent interests and social identities involved maintaining a measure of balance and also presented methodological challenges. In his famous essay, "Behind Many Masks" (1972), Berreman describes the problems of conducting ethnographic research in a community of conflicting interests, religions, cultures and lifestyles: "even in small and isolated Sirkanda, social heterogeneity loomed as a major obstacle to my rapport and my understanding, just as it does to people's relationship to one another" (Berreman, 1972: vi–vii). "People's relationship to one another" having been analyzed by Goffman (1959) in terms of the "means by which people seek to control the impressions others receive of them" (Berreman, 1972: 146). Berreman argued that this social integrationist, specifically 'dramaturgical,' approach may also be applied to the relationship between the ethnographer and 'subjects'; in other words, 'impression management' is of methodological, as well as substantive, relevance. How does the ethnographer "convey a desired representation of oneself, especially in the difficult situations where "acceptance by one element of the community does not imply acceptance by the whole community and it frequently, in fact, precludes it" (1972: xxii). The challenge I faced was to create and manage the 'impression' I made on my host and interviewees who were split on denominational and clan lines. Often they feared my presence would send warnings to people who would then misjudge my intentions.

ENCOUNTER AND SUSPICION: ESTABLISHING FIELD-WORKERS' IDENTITIES

As an anthropologist studying agriculture, I was eyewitness to many cultural events in the field, attending festivals, living with farmers in their fields and with their families, participating in Sunday Bible service in the village church, visiting the village headmen's house and, on several occasions, I was hosted by local politicians, church pastors, village headmen and tribal council leaders. People with whom I interacted were often welcoming, frequently suspicious and at times intimidating.

During my stay among the Yimchungers, I was often questioned about my purpose in being there and also what good it could do for them. My answer was that I wanted to write a PhD thesis about their agriculture and social lives and that it probably would do them no good, from the point of view of the people being studied; no researcher comes to the field as a complete stranger. The past history of outsiders creates a space into which the 'newcomer' is received, a background against which he or she must negotiate his or her fieldwork identity. My position as an outsider/nontribal/(non) Western anthropologist raised different suspicions in different individuals, from the police to the villagers who became my friends and guides in the field. The police officers felt that I was intruding into protected spaces of the Nagas. The local people sometimes identified me as a journalist (possibly a spy, possibly a mouthpiece for their causes) and at other times as a trespasser collecting information about valuable medicinal species and crops that would lead to the stealing of local wealth. Even so, while people were pleased to share information with a person from a foreign university, there was also rumor mongering about why a person would travel such a long distance just to know about them.

In its most violent form, the 'outsider identity' has been remembered in people's minds through the atrocities carried out by the British and Indian armed forces. Whereas the British punitive expeditions to punish former transfrontier Naga headhunters and slave takers were a part of collective memory, the actions of the Indian Army, in many ways reminiscent of those of the British, were still living memories for many. My physical features, resembling Aryan (North Indian) traits, often disappointed villagers, who memorialized the dead and remembered the crimes committed by the Indian armed forces in the 1950s in Naga villages. The decades following Indian independence saw violent resistance and deployment of the military to quell Naga nationalist sentiments. There was also a long history of misrepresentation to overcome. As one of my respondents expressed it, "Outsiders come and misrepresent our culture, tradition and write whatever they like and wish to write."[4] His claim seemed reasonable to me; indeed, most contemporary writings on the Nagas by Indian writers, including academics, have been based on secondary research and without much fieldwork.[5] The writings are often from a nationalistic perspective. There is also the

older heritage of colonial ethnographic work carried out by generations of administrator-anthropologists in the Naga Hills, such as J. H. Hutton and J. P. Mills the most prolific among colonial civil servants[6] whose ethnographies are today charged with misrepresenting Naga culture, customs and traditions. Abraham Lotha (2007: 7) not only documents their innumerable errors based on cultural presumptions about 'the savage other' but describes how, after a public declaration by the Lotha elders (hoho), many amendments were made in the latest edition of Mills's monograph *The Lotha Nagas* published by the Directorate of Art and Culture, Government of Nagaland. Similarly, other scholars have faced fines imposed on them by the community for misrepresenting local culture and custom. Some researchers merely had to provide a feast for the whole village, whereas others had to offer animals and sacrifice.[7] These worries also haunted my research.

In the village where I conducted my fieldwork, I was for a long time unaware of a more recent breach of trust. Two German anthropologists had earlier visited the village on a short trip to document a man who had been identified as a 'Tiger Man' for their photo-book project. 'Tiger Man' spirit possession (Lycanthropy) among the Yimchunger Naga had already interested foreign anthropologists in the region (for examples, see Hutton, 1920) and had been widely publicized by Christoph von Fürer- Haimendorf, after his 1936–37 fieldwork year in Naga Hills, in a text published in 1939 in a London newspaper. When I interviewed the 'Tiger Man' and his family in my study village, they were very upset that they had never been sent a copy of the book by those German scholars. They also demanded that I should send them my photographs and not be a betrayer like the previous academic visitors. Such breaches of trust by past researchers cast my integrity in doubt (see also Chapter 1, this volume).

In one encounter, again a tour operator, this time from an Angami village in Kohima, explained to me that outsiders "come and steal our 'bio diversity' [. . .] we should stop these bio-pirates. They seldom get permission from the village authorities before entering the village and do whatever they want." He was referring to the new economic opportunity provided by bird watching[8] in the village nature conservation site that had become a contested resource of interest for tour operators and guides from the village and outside who were the obvious beneficiaries of the 'Green Village' project in Khonoma. A few years earlier, an Australian anthropologist had conducted his fieldwork in one of my initial field sites, Khonoma village. He had been hosted by a respected villager in Khonoma and had carried out a GPS (Global Positioning System) survey in the village to map its vegetation and resources (particularly land use), which the villagers did not like. When he left the village, people started complaining about his presence. There were rumors about the secrecy surrounding his fieldwork. Some of the respondents I interviewed claimed that he never shared his information. However, he never disclosed his research findings to the villagers who had hosted him and given him all the logistical support for his anthropological

and ecological research. The researcher had said that, as a matter of policy and ethics, he could not disclose his findings. The majority of the villagers (except the people who had been his hosts) denounced him as a 'pirate' of local knowledge. However, he was supported under a transnational conservation and livelihood program and enjoyed the goodwill of the Village Council.

In the era of ceasefire, Naga customs and tradition are being reinvented by the documentation of Naga folklore and oral tradition and their visualization in coffee-table books. The Ministry of Tourism (government of India) and the Department of Art and Culture (Nagaland government) jointly host annual programs in December to celebrate diversity in Naga culture. The annual event, known as the Hornbill Festival, attracts international tourists as the government promotes its brand of cultural tourism celebrating 'unity and diversity' (see Figures 10.3 and 10.4).

A few months before I arrived in Tuensang, a team of German and Swiss researchers had been welcomed with offerings of Naga shawls in the Upper Konyak village bordering Burma. At the end of their stay, the villagers who had given the shawls demanded a huge payment of money for them. This disappointed the local tour operator and his clients. The research-cum-tour trip ended in disaster, and the German team of young researchers had to return home without achieving their goal of documenting Naga culture.

This encounter makes explicit the interesting questions of reciprocity, gift and exchange in play in the research encounter. In fact, this theme was already implicit in some of the encounters noted earlier, for example, the 'Tiger Man.' A sense of reciprocity is crucial in building rapport with interlocutors. Often the lack of reciprocity on the part of the researcher destroys

Figure 10.3 A Public Servant Being Guarded during the Hornbill Festival, December 2008 (Original photograph taken by the author)

Figure 10.4 Journalist Photographing Folk Dancers during the Hornbill Festival, December 2008 (Original photograph taken by the author)

goodwill and leads to unsuccessful fieldwork. Thus reframed, the issues are not so much misrepresentation but theft or, jointly, misappropriation. Colonial ethnographers, such as Fürer-Haimendorf, enjoyed full liberty to capture the image of 'colonial subjects' as nude, fragile bodies. Indeed, he then published his fieldwork images in the popular press in a series of articles between 1937 and 1960 in the *Illustrated London News*.[9] However, the power dynamics have changed over the years, with the very nature of anthropologists' relations with the field and the subject position of the ethnographer doing fieldwork now questioned.

Evidently, some past ethnographers of Nagaland have taken a casual approach to the ethical requirements of anthropological research, posing superiority of expertise and as official 'trustees' of Naga culture. Today, in light of limited access to the field and the strict security check imposed on fieldwork, researchers have resorted to fast-track, often piecemeal, visual ethnography that has produced shallow ethnographic detail and a historical representation of Nagas through media, such as underresearched, glossy coffee-table books sold in travel bookstores that are often unintelligible to the anthropological research fraternity.

REFLECTIONS ON FIELDWORK AND ETHICS

To many of my colleagues, friends and relatives, going to Nagaland appeared to be an act of bravery, adventure or foolishness. While this attitude was

largely the result of the media-based impression of Naga people, for that matter people of northeast India in mainland India, I was more intrigued by what Naga friends and well-wishers told me about eastern Nagaland, the location of my study area. They saw it as a misadventure given my status as an outsider, someone who had come from London to do research on the 'colonial' unadministered Nagas. These were the 'wild spaces' where people still practiced *jhum* cultivation, wore little clothing and were less civilized. They advised me to conduct ethnography in a nearby village close to Kohima town from where I could commute easily. Van Schendel, who worked among the Mru tribes of the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh writes, "It is not only westerners and Bengalis who have read the nakedness of the Mru as a sign of primitivity; Chittagong hill people belonging to other groups have done it too" (2002: 951). The parallels with the advanced Naga speaking of their Eastern brothers are striking.

Given its emotive reverberations, surviving fieldwork is the most important task in perilous and intimidating settings. For this reason, fieldworkers working in violent field sites need to possess a sensibility about the field, practical knowledge of the ground reality, what Nancy Scheper-Hughes calls "anthropology-with one's feet on the ground," "phenomenologically grounded anthropology" (1992: 4). Then, as Campbell writes, "violence changes the experience of fieldwork and raises new concerns about ethics, research methods and the anthropologist's relationship with the fieldworkers" (2011: 9). The point is acknowledging the checkered nature of ethical practice in anthropology and the changing relationship between anthropologists and their informants. It is simply not acceptable to ignore past unethical practice, or to claim that our research does not raise ethical issues (perhaps our inability to see the wider picture leaves us blind or indifferent to important moral issues) or to assert the high moral ground and condemn those who also assert the high moral ground but do not accept our positions and arguments. It would be dangerous and utter falsehood to think that there are definite answers to any of these ethical moral questions. We need to think about them in both practical and theoretical terms.

Over the last decades, there has been some rigorous introspection about the methodological and philosophical concerns of fieldwork in unstable places from Nancy Scheper Hughes (1992) to Antonius Robben and Caroline Nordstrom's examination of 'fieldwork under fire' (1995). What we must think about more critically, however, is how we deal with 'violence' in the field alongside ethical issues without undermining our obligation toward society (see Chapter 7, this volume). These may seem certainly value loaded. Nonetheless, if anthropology as a discipline is to progress in the 21st century, it should address these issues. The literature currently published on fieldwork practice also demands fresh insight into violent and extraordinary field sites situations. However, I find it difficult to find out who can be seen as responsible for such violent encounters involving the anthropologist in

person. This brings us to the question of a potential ethics of 'putting oneself in danger' that is rarely discussed in anthropological ethics, which is, though, more explicit on issues concerning security and confidentiality of our informants.

My knowledge of violence and terror became clearer after the fearful encounter that I narrated earlier. Extended fieldwork experience therefore becomes critical in producing a valuable qualitative data set substantive for research. Ethnographers working in dangerous fields are pressed with the challenge of innovating new strategies for their well-being while at the same time continuing to identify and explain the unique social interrelations that arise amid crisis and strife. In my own fourteen-month stay in Nagaland, I engaged with the problems and steered my way through them, at times adopting alternative routes and tools of rapport building with my respondents that were quite unconventional in nature.

In the 1960s, anthropologists began to respond to the crisis in the discipline created by the post-World War II emergence of new nations from old colonies. Anthropologists increasingly breached research ethics, working as spies or being used as spies by the state in anthropological research (Nash, 1976: 225). In the contemporary context, this has included anthropologists working at home (in their own countries) studying ethno-nationalism, subnationalism and separatist movements in indigenous cultures. These roles have been particularly challenging as they have put anthropologists to work with complex societies and to deal with politically explosive questions that require acumen and skills that are distinct from just studying 'others' cultures.' Negotiating with these complexities helped me in successfully performing my fieldwork. Also, I would like to add that the everyday talk of violence was reflective of the politics of violence and helped me understand how violence was indistinguishable from the texture of people's day-to-day lives. The end result is a reflective memory that has helped me to understand and, at least partly, articulate the dangers and complexities involved in fieldwork under violent circumstances (see also Chapter 13, this volume).

NOTES

1. During my fieldwork, there were three major political underground factions operating in the area. Two factions of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (1) a faction led by ThuingalehMuivah and IsaakChisiSwu, the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak–Muivah) (NSCN–IM), (2) a different faction, the National Socialist Council of Nagalim–Khaplang (NSCN–K) and (3) Federal Naga Army (FGN), as well as many other groups, such as the Naga National Council (NNC) and also self-styled individual claimants who occasionally appeared in the village claiming allegiance to one of these groups. The government of India has separate ceasefire agreements with each of the main groups, the first having been made in 1997with the NSCN–IM. These agreements have been renewed periodically.

2. Philip Bourgois, while doing his fieldwork in El Salvador, became partisan with his research community to an extent that he started publishing the fieldwork encounter of counter insurgency to American print media, reporting from the field. On returning back to the university from fieldwork he was questioned by the University Department to have breached anthropological research ethics and code of conduct set by American Anthropological Association on many counts. As he writes,

   > significantly, had I not gone to the media with my testimony of human rights violation, anthropological ethics would not have been violated in a serious manner? It would have remained a personal story between my committee and myself as an unsuccessful and reckless preliminary fieldwork exploration that had been decided against as too dangerous. By remaining silent I would not have violated anyone's rights to privacy nor have threatened my colleagues access to the field, nor offended my host country government.' (Bourgois 2007, 295)

3. The Baptist and the Catholic *khels* lie some 2.5 kilometers apart from each other. The Baptists *khels* form the main village, whereas the Catholic *khels* is located away from the main settlement close to Shamatur Town.
4. Interview with Anumgla in Khonoma village, February 2009.
5. A classic example of this kind of insensitive, journalistic writing is D. R. Mankekar's *On the Slippery Slope in Nagaland* (1967) and a recent one by Jonathan Glancey, *Nagaland: A Journey to India's Forgotten Frontier* (2011). There are dozens of other books that have misrepresented Naga's aspirations and the resistance movement and made life difficult for people who are genuinely committed to fieldwork and telling the story of the Naga resistance movement and the cultural politics of violence in Nagaland.
6. J. H. Hutton conducted his trans Dikou tour into the territory of Kalyo-Kengyo (Kheimungen) and other Naga tribes in the unadministered territory in 1923 with his botanist friend Kingdon-Ward recording the details of his tours and visits to Yimchunger villages, two of which were subsequently published as *Diaries of Two Tours in the Unadministered Area East of the Naga Hills* (1929). Following him, J. P. Mills, the deputy commissioner of Naga Hills district and a prolific writer on the Nagas, conducted a punitive expedition in 1936, on which Fürer-Haimendorf accompanied him.
7. In 2007, a Naga PhD student from the Nagaland University had to provide a feast to his study village respondents for misrepresenting their culture. His writing cost him both intellectually and financially. This incident was narrated to me by his friend, a local lecturer in Kohima College. It is quite unfortunate that I could never meet the research scholar to get firsthand information of his fieldwork, as he passed away while I was doing my fieldwork.
8. Nagaland is part of a global biodiversity hotspot as well as an Eastern Himalaya Endemic Bird Area. Bird watching and ecotourism associated with it has become very popular in Khonoma village and Fakim Wildlife Sanctuary. Tour operators from mainland India liaise with local villagers and travel agents in Kohima and Dimapur to organize such trips. During my fieldwork stay in Khomoma village, I was eyewitness to two bird watching groups who came from Europe with a local tour operator and one from Goa.
9. The *Illustrated London News*, a mid-Victorian journal, provided readers with rare images of the Nagas along with other tribes of North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) and central India among whom Fürer-Haimendorf conducted his fieldwork. See PPMS 19, Box. 42. SOAS Archives, Fürer-Haimendorf collection.

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11 Transforming the Lens of Vulnerability

Human Agency as an Ethical Consideration in Research with Refugees

Davina Gateley Said

INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, refugee movements and their causes continue to proliferate at unprecedented levels. In 2012, the highest numbers since 1994 were recorded with over 45.2 million displaced persons globally, including 15.4 million refugees (UNHCR, 2013). It was early in the last century that the term 'refugee' became entwined with statelessness and those who are "forced to seek in some other territory refuge" (Hope Simpson, 1938: 609). The definition of refugee is taken from the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (UNHCR, 1951). The concept of refugee still resonates (Voutira and Doná, 2007), as it offers important insights, especially in regard to institutional and bureaucratic power on the lives of refugees in an era marked by transnational social transformations (Zetter, 2007).

Western states control patterns of forced migration through the politicization of the concept 'refugee,' which is now interpreted as a prized status over a right (Zetter, 2007). Within policy rhetoric, recognized refugees are seen as 'deserving,' whereas asylum seekers and other forced migrants are identified as 'undeserving' (Sales, 2002). Asylum debates in Europe are twisted for political gains and confuse public opinion, with asylum seeker now synonymous with illegality (Mulvey, 2010). Moreover, obstacles and deterrent measures, such as detentions, restrictions on rights to work, education and welfare, as well as complicated visa processes, have increased in Western countries (Matthews, 2008). Conversely, advocacy debates and humanitarian discourses depict refugees as dependent and vulnerable (Judge, 2010), as passive victims of circumstance or helpless recipients of relief aid or welfare (Essed at al., 2004).

Hence, the imperative remains for research dedicated to prevailing global injustices that cause refugee movements, particularly focusing on the exile experience. There is a dominant assumption within academic research pertaining to refugees that is routed in a discourse of vulnerability. In the United Kingdom, for example, refugees are identified as a problematic and

vulnerable group (Clark-Kazak, 2009), with research predominantly needs based or psychosocial and medical, pathologizing trauma and vulnerability (Newbigging and Thomas, 2011; Warr, 2010). This chapter attempts to transform the lens of vulnerability by introducing ethical mechanisms that might be employed during qualitative research studies; and although its focus is on refugees, they might also be applied to other groups participating in research studies. It requires researchers to be reflexive to the microdimensions of research and move beyond technical aspects of ethical guidelines, thus transcending the dominant assumptions pertaining to 'vulnerability' research. It is proposed that this be achieved by paying attention to iterative informed consent, reciprocity, issues of trust and 'mistrust' and, finally, through humanity. Fundamentally, a new starting point might be human agency and the freedom an individual has to act on behalf of what is important to him or her: "people have to be [. . .] actively involved—given the opportunity—in shaping their own destiny" (Sen, 1999: 53). This is a principle that is equally applicable to participants engaging in social science research studies.

A FINE BALANCE: REFUGEE STUDIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH ETHICS

Social science research studies aim to analyze social and political phenomena, and researchers generally position academic rigor at the forefront. One area where rigor is sought is in relation to methodological choices. To gain legitimacy within academia, it is imperative that methodological choices can be defended vis-à-vis the aims of the investigation, "no matter how ingenious or important an idea [. . .] if the study is badly designed, it is worthless" (Field and Hole, 2003: 54). Invariably, researchers will focus attention upon these necessary methodological aspects informed by their respective disciplines, with ethical considerations accepted as mere bureaucratic procedure (Hugman, Bartolomei and Pittaway, 2011). Nevertheless, a distinction has been made between 'procedural ethics' related to gaining permissions through ethics committees and 'ethics in practice,' which is the response to daily events throughout the research process. 'Ethics in practice' requires that researchers remain vigilant and reflexive to context specific, microethical dimensions of social research and be "alert to and prepared for ways of dealing with the ethical tensions that arise" (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004: 278).

The United Kingdom's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) defines research ethics as, "the moral principles guiding research, from its inception through to completion and publication of results and beyond" (ESRC, 2012: 40). Within the context of research with refugees, conventional guidelines have been identified as incapable of addressing challenges that might develop (Block et al. 2013; Ellis et al., 2007). Consequently, ethics has

been debated at length and in-depth in refugee studies and the imperative to ensure the highest standard, with bespoke ethical guidelines emerging (RSC, 2007). Bloch (1999, 2007) finds that traditional research methods must be adapted in order to suit the specificities of refugee research, even more so when looking at cross-cultural contexts. Multiple challenges can range from research design, informed consent, access, confidentiality, research ownership, representation and dissemination, type of data collection, as well as values and world views (Marshall and Batten, 2003). Within sensitive political environments marked by insecurity and violence, issues of trust and benefit, confidentiality, power and consent and potential harm to participants and even researchers are all the more contested (Zwi et al., 2006).

Refugee research has sought to delineate itself within the social sciences in two fundamental ways. First, it is both multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary: multidisciplinary as a field although interdisciplinary in its approach (Voutira and Doná, 2007). Research on issues relating to refugees denotes that a multidisciplinary approach is utilized and reflects the "multi-faceted nature of what one could call the refugee world, which is beyond the expertise of any one discipline" (Colson, 2007: 322). The rise of refugee research correlates to the 'massive uprooting' of the 20th century and includes disciplines as broad as law, anthropology, economics, sociology and international relations (Colson, 2007). Given the many differing disciplines involved, there is also no fixed methodology, with both quantitative and qualitative methods employed (Bloch, 2007; Jacobsen and Landau, 2003).

The second debate regarding ethics in refugee research focuses on the moral imperative when working in highly politicized social contests and whether such research can ever be value-free (Schweitzer and Steel, 2008). A dual imperative has been identified, whereby academics conducting research in the context of humanitarian upheavals must produce research that is both, "academically sound and policy relevant" (Jacobsen and Landau, 2003, 185). Academics have an obligation to influence policy: "I cannot see any justification for conducting research into situations of extreme human suffering if one does not have the alleviation of suffering as an explicit objective of one's research" (Bakewell, 2008, 434). Critiques argue that this can lead to 'advocacy research,' where the line between advocacy and sound empiricism becomes blurred (Gilbert, 1997). Moreover, the focus on policy relevance has resulted in some studies prioritizing concepts employed by policy makers and practitioners, thus privileging the policy makers' worldviews (Bakewell, 2008). Nonetheless, even where refugee research has been criticized for being influenced by policy, in turn, such studies also have the power to influence policy and pubic thinking and a balance should be sought. If academics wish to "influence the real world for the good, we need a better understanding both of the power relations in which our knowledge production is set and of the ways ideas travel" (Van Hear, 2012, 20).

Of relevance is the positioning of the researcher and that divorcing, "power, domination, politics, values, knowledge and social relations" from

the research process is impossible (Bloch, 2007: 231). In essence, this debate centers on positivism and debates regarding whether social research studies occur in a vacuum. Many researchers renounce positivism, viewing refugees as participants rather than research 'objects,' 'subjects' or 'informants' and that as researchers, we also influence the social world and in turn the research we produce (Harrell-Bond and Voutira, 2007; Temple and Moran, 2011). Some have commented that to treat people as research 'objects' used as a means to a research end, denies them their humanity (Hugman, Bartolomei and Pittaway, 2011). Positivist research with refugees has been critiqued as being unethical because it ignores the link between power and knowledge, which could stunt the ability for researchers to engage with discussions relating to abuses of power—a main cause of displacement in the world today (Zetter, 2007). Indeed, the barometer might be set for studies focusing on refugee issues to sustain humanity in research, which is "arguably essential for informing ethical and accountable policy decisions" (Rodgers, 2004, 21).

History can inform us in regard to the current state of the social sciences, with refugee research carving out an orientation by reconciling disciplines that were previously split during the 'great fragmentation' at the end of the 19th century (Sayer, 2011, 217). This split has been observed to be fateful, leading to conceptual shortcomings when looking at social and political phenomena and ignoring the fact that, "the world of humankind constitutes a manifold, a totality of interconnected processes, and inquiries that disassemble this totality into bits and then fail to reassemble it falsify reality" (Wolf, 1997, 3).

Refugee research is equally attempting to reengage with issues of humanity within social research endeavors. The methodological and theoretical division of morality and science had its origins in the 17th century though, "The idea of *one* basis for life and another for *science* is from the very outset a lie" (Marx, 1844 cited in Sayer, 2011, 18). One may argue that refugee research studies may be attempting to aspire to the standard set by Wolf (1988) that academia should, "invent new ways of thinking about the heterogeneity and transformative nature of human arrangements, and to do so scientifically and humanistically at the same time" (760). The ways in which researchers engage with participants might be better informed through a lens that interprets human beings as "moral beings, derived from the capacity to reason" (Hugman, Bartolomei and Pittaway, 2011, 658) who can "engage in critical reflection" (Nussbaum, 2007, 13).

MOVING BEYOND VULNERABILITY IN REFUGEE RESEARCH

Refugees' exile experiences are epitomized by a distinct lack of control (Norton and Cohen, 2000; Robinson and Segrott, 2002) and a "brutal stripping bare of individual life" (Agier, 2008, 2). A predominance of research

on refugees emphasizes vulnerabilities without accounting for individual strengths, resilience or human agency. This chapter attempts to adopt the recent call for researchers to apply a more nuanced understanding regarding what vulnerability means to differing people in varying contexts and relationships (Clark, 2007). Vulnerability is shifting, dynamic and compatible with agency, "vulnerability does not preclude agency and similarly where [. . .] people show agency, one cannot assume that they are not vulnerable" (O'Higgins, 2012, 85). Moreover, autonomy and vulnerability are being interpreted as flexible concepts, not mutually exclusive, that alter according to context and are relational in nature (Clark, 2007; Rogers et al., 2012), thus not relying on binary assumptions related to vulnerable *or* resilient and active *or* passive (O'Higgins, 2012).

The central premise of this chapter is taken from Mackenzie, McDowell and Pittaway (2007), who have called upon researchers to adapt the Hippocratic oath, 'first do no harm,' and move beyond harm minimization as the standard in research ethics. They find that people "who are subject to oppression or abuse, or whose social and political environments are highly restrictive, may nevertheless be able to express their autonomous agency in some aspects of their lives" (Mackenzie, McDowell and Pittaway, 2007, 310). Research with groups that are considered vulnerable must bear in mind the potential risks and possible harms. However, the constant focus upon vulnerabilities and the dearth in recognition of resilience and strengths serves to disempower vulnerable groups and individuals who may already be exploited (Zwi et al., 2006). Research on these groups is essential to inform interventions and increase access to necessary services; but by focusing only on vulnerabilities narrows the research lens, thus viewing refugees as victims (Ellis et al., 2007). A central criticism is that researchers are pathologizing refugees as needy, rather than analyzing structural and social constraints (Temple and Moran, 2011).

One issue discussed in research ethics and refugees questions the extent to which an individual can autonomously decide to participate in research, without the researcher generalizing in regards to a refugee's capacity to make such a voluntary decision. (Ellis et al., 2007). An area that has been given considerable attention is the consent process, which in the conventional sense assumes that individuals participating in research are autonomous and that power relations with researchers are equal (Mackenzie, McDowell and Pittaway, 2007). Consent also implies that cultural norms are the same and does not account for differences in educational background and language (Ellis et al., 2007), experiences of oppression, gender and immigration status (Bloch, 2007). A suggested way forward is theoretically underpinned by relational autonomy (Mackenzie and Stoljar, 2000), a reinterpretation of autonomy from a feminist and social justice orientated perspective. Many theories of autonomy point to a person's capacity to critically reflect regarding preferences and desires, and "by exercising such a capacity, persons [. . .] give meaning and coherence to their lives, and take responsibility for the kind of person they are" (Dworkin, 1988, 20). Autonomy occurs when

behavior is freely enacted and when such actions are fully endorsed by the actor. As such, people are most autonomous when they can act in accordance with their own true interests, values and desires (Chirkov et al., 2003). Relational autonomy views people as being socially embedded with an individual's identity shaped by intersecting social determinants, such as class, race, ethnicity and gender. Actors are seen within their social and historical contexts and autonomy is a characteristic of agents who are also emotional, creative, desiring, feeling, as well as rational persons. Self-determination is recognized as an essential value and is critical in order to flourish (Mackenzie, McDowell and Pittaway, 2007).

CASE STUDY

This chapter draws from the practical experience of a qualitative doctoral study conducted in London, UK, focusing on male and female refugees aged 18–29. It explored how refugee young people become agents of their lives and how institutional support fostered their autonomous choices, enhancing their education and employment opportunities. It paid attention to whether they were empowered to make decisions and act on those decisions in such critical areas of their lives (Burchardt and Holder, 2012). Fieldwork was conducted in a large UK charitable organization supporting refugees with integration, as well as a smaller charity working for refugee young people. Although not informed by policy, there was a policy dimension, given that the first organization operated a government-funded social policy intervention supporting refugee integration.

Ethical guidelines used during the research adhered to those laid out by the Refugee Studies Centre's (2007) ethical guidelines when conducting research on forced migration. Further, it was also guided by the standard set by the aforementioned studies in order to move beyond 'do no harm' (Block et al., 2013; Hugman, Bartolomei and Pittaway, 2011; Mackenzie, McDowell and Pittaway, 2007). These studies applied participatory action research (PAR), which was not used in the study referred to in this chapter. However, it adapted the model suggested where the resilience and autonomy of research participants was recognized and respected, taking the view that refugees are themselves experts of their own lives (Hynes, 2003). Four specific aspects were incorporated before, during and after the fieldwork, which, although they placed more demands on the researcher, ensured that ethical considerations such as respect, humanity and autonomous decision making remained central.

Iterative and Relational Informed Consent

As defined by Mackenzie, McDowell and Pittaway (2007), an iterative model of consent based upon relational autonomy entails that the consent process should be fundamentally rethought with research relationships

reconfigured. The aim of this model of consent is such that an ethical relationship is developed between participants and researchers responsive to the concerns, values and needs of participants and "ethical agreements can best be secured through a process of negotiation, which aims to develop a shared understanding of what is involved at all stages of the research process" (Mackenzie, McDowell and Pittaway, 2007, 434).

A first area of consent is in regard to how research participants are contacted and asked to participate in studies. In this study, individuals were asked directly by their employment advisors in the first organization and in the in the second organization, the researcher asked the refugee young people directly. It was more advantageous for the researcher to ask individuals face-to-face in the smaller, second organization, as many of the refugee young people knew the researcher as a volunteer. However, asking for participation through gatekeepers, as in the first, larger organization, had some pitfalls. A major downside is that it can impact the confidentiality of the research participants and may result in gatekeeper bias (Bloch, 1999, 2007; Hynes, 2003). In this study, it would have been impossible to contact participants without the facilitation of the gatekeeper in such a large organization. However, after consideration, it was seen as an acceptable means given that the participants already had an established and trusting relationship with their employment advisor, the gatekeeper. That there were a number of individuals who did not attend the research interviews was also taken as a sign that participants neither felt obliged nor coerced to attend.

Secondly, language proficiency of refugee research participants needs to be considered in order to gain consent. In this study, it was possible for the researcher to conduct interviews in English. Written consent was deemed appropriate, and it was asked for before the interview, with additional verbal consent sought post-interview. Full disclosure was provided regarding research aims, funding, dissemination and how the interview data would be analyzed. The contact details of the researcher were provided alongside that of the research supervisors and funders. Participants were given the time necessary to read through information and consent sheets and verbal explanations were given by the researcher where necessary. It was reiterated to participants that they did not have to answer questions they did not want to answer and that they could exit the interview at any time. All participants chose their own anonymous pseudonyms so they could recognize themselves in any publications. This process took an average time of 20 minutes per interviewee; and although this meant interviewing time was lost, it was an essential part of the process of consent.

Finally, continuing contact with participants is also a central component of iterative consent. Participant e-mails were taken so audio recordings could be sent to individuals. Thereafter, they were asked once again if they wished to amend, correct or entirely withdraw from the research after listening to their own interview recording. In addition, they were informed that they could withdraw from the research up until publication. Follow-up meetings were also offered, although no participants accepted, even when

e-mail reminders were sent. Because the researcher was volunteering in one of the organizations, this also meant that regular contact with some of the participants was maintained and discussions relating to the research and any concerns in regard to participation, such as anonymity, could be voiced.

Reciprocity as Equality and Exchange

The notion of 'reciprocity' is defined as a process of exchange aiming to establish as well as maintain equality. It involves building equality in relationships through explicitly addressing power imbalances. Exchange entails the 'substance' of what is exchanged, including the impact of exchange. Transparency on behalf of the researcher is essential and is a cyclical and ongoing process (Maiter et al., 2008). For example, the interview can be observed as a dialogue where human connection intensifies and a conscientious researcher might attempt to understand what participants require and provide support post-interview, where possible (Maiter et al., 2008). In this study, after the interview, a debrief occurred where participants were asked if they had felt comfortable during the interview, and they were given the opportunity to ask the researcher questions. Where applicable, advice was provided regarding any issues that arose during the interview that the researcher had relevant knowledge about. For example, a main area where this occurred was in relation to issues of social isolation, and some of the young people were given the details of organizations that specialized in refugee youth support.

Dissemination is also a key part of research exchange (Maiter et al., 2008), and participants were contacted on a regular basis with updates on research progress, such as conference presentations or publications. Finally, the researcher volunteered part-time in the second, smaller organization from the beginning of the research until after the project was completed. It was made clear to members that the researcher was an academic and a clear line was drawn between when data for research was being collected and when voluntary activities were being conducted. The line between volunteer and academic should always be carefully trod by researchers (Hynes, 2003) and the accompanying implications regarding insider/outsider research dealt with. However, volunteering allowed for exchange to become more pronounced, in that the researcher was able to share knowledge to build the capacity of individuals and the organization. Ultimately, equality was difficult to fully establish given the inherent power imbalances, yet showing awareness and openly discussing these imbalances had a positive impact and was welcomed by participants.

Trust and 'Mistrust'

Trust is an integral part of research with refugees (Bloch, 1999) and is understood as "being able to have confidence in a person or thing"; and although it is context specific, it is generally a universal notion (Hynes, 2003, 1). On a

number of levels, the refugee experience creates 'mistrust,' and it is essential that trust be established between participants and the researcher. One aspect that facilitates this process is the transmission of trust from one individual to another. For example, the transmission of trust from employees and volunteers of the charitable organizations to the refugee service users. However, this may not always be possible, as some research has found that upon arrival in the United Kingdom, refugees may not trust anyone, including charity staff (Hynes, 2003). In turn, it is crucial that refugee organizations trust researchers, as establishing trust with gatekeepers is central to gaining access.

In this study, trust was tentatively established with both organizations through ongoing meetings with senior staff in the first, larger organization and through volunteering in the smaller, second organization. The refugee young people trusted the gatekeeper in the first organization, hence this trust was extended to the researcher through the gatekeeper's referral. The second means, volunteering, was by far the most successful, given that it was through voluntary activities that participants grew to trust the researcher and allowed the researcher to access participants who would not normally have agreed to be involved in the study.

Central to trust is continuing trustworthiness in relation to researchers promising to send updates, publications and maintain confidentiality. Empty promises have the potential to seriously undermine academic research more broadly, especially where breaches of confidentiality occur (Hugman, Bartolomei and Pittaway, 2011). Through keeping in regular contact with participants via e-mail, or in person where feasible, and updating them on research progress was one way that ongoing trustworthiness was ensured.

An added dimension of trust is that researchers are trusted to be sensitive to the organizational dynamics and structural constraints under which staff operates in busy, charitable organizations (Bloch, 2007). Therefore, in this study, the researcher was sensitive, reflexive and aware as to how much time was taken from organizational staff, volunteers and also refugees themselves, and in turn, this aided the deepening of mutual trust.

A final aspect is how much researchers can trust the information that participants have imparted during interviews. First, given that all participants wished to stay in contact with the researcher until after the project ended was taken as an indication that participants were honest with their information. Second, some of the information that was divulged was not entirely legitimate, as in the case where participants disclosed possible illegal activities (i.e., means of entering the United Kingdom). Third, much of the information divulged was mirrored in other research on similar issues (Robinson and Segrott, 2002), which enforces research findings. Finally, many participants voiced criticisms concerning academic researchers generally, the UK asylum determination system and the support they received from other charities (Dyregrov, Dyregrov and Raundalen, 2000). Such criticisms may not have been voiced if participants did not trust the researcher to treat such knowledge accordingly.

Humanity, Empathy and Humor

A prestudy was conducted in order to find out as much as possible about the research population (Bloch, 2007). The prestudy was conducted prior to the commencement of fieldwork and took the form of observations of an asylum-seeker day center in a London-based charity, as well as numerous meetings with experts, participation at refugee events and regular contact with refugees themselves. The researcher also had considerable previous experience of working and volunteering on refugee issues in London, as well as in refugee camps internationally, resulting in a significant amount of prior sensitizing knowledge (Witzel and Reiter, 2012). A first outcome of the prestudy led to the conclusion that the research interviews should be conducted with humanity, empathy and humor. Social scientists must choose their ethical terms carefully, otherwise there is the danger of misdescribing objects, as concepts can easily become muddled—such as compassion becoming pity (Sayer, 2011). Nussbaum (1997) observes one of the capacities for humanity as narrative imagination, the ability to be able to empathize and place oneself in the position of another. She challenges the "concept of compassion as pity, describing it as 'victimhood' [. . .] moral social judgments of compassion need to be based on a notion that the 'other' who suffers has agency and is only a temporary victim of circumstances" (Arnot, Pinson and Candappa, 2009, 254).

Dyregrov, Dyregrov and Raundalen (2000) found that interviewers who are empathetic, kind, warm, knowledgeable and understanding were most appreciated by refugee research participants. In addition, they found that interviewers who displayed humanity and a nonjudgmental and interested attitude were most commended by the refugee participants. Hence, during interviews, feminist principles were applied, such as using empathy and mutual respect, (England, 1994) aiming to reach a plateau where humanity might emerge. This was attempted through creating a welcoming environment with open body language and physical contact at the beginning and end of the interviews (where culturally appropriate), as well as confirmatory and enthusiastic interaction during discussions, although avoiding leading or directing the responses of interviewees. Humor was also used before, during and after the interviews with laughter encouraged (Robinson and Segrott, 2002). Humor proved to be a central area that assisted more in-depth discussion regarding experiences of the young people. At times there were moments where interview subjects switched to the more serious, but the majority of participants felt at ease mainly due to the fact that they could control the tone of the interview through laughter. Another essential contributor to the ambiance of interviews was the physical location of the interviews. All interviewees were given the choice of where they would like to be interviewed to ensure that they were in the location where they felt most comfortable and relaxed.

A second outcome of the prestudy was an assessment in regard to what data was central for the study and what might be discovered in alternative

sources of information, such as existing research, therefore taking up less time of refugees, staff and volunteers. Given the ample existing research concerning the exile experiences of refugees, another result of the prestudy was that it was deemed unnecessary to ask participants about their previous, possibly difficult experiences. Rather, the first question asked in the interview was open-ended concerning participants' experiences since arriving in the United Kingdom. This provided the opportunity for participants to set the agenda of the interview regarding subjects that were most important to them, including, but not explicitly relating to, their past experiences.

The interviews in the study consisted of problem-centered interviews (Witzel and Reiter, 2012), a qualitative interviewing method that combines narrative and semistructured styles. Centrally, it allows researchers to focus on agency and structural elements during interviewing and analysis. 'Problem-centering' is the identification of socially relevant problems that the overall research question aims to address. It has an "underlying image of humanity [. . .] that considers people as self-reflective and capable of acting and communicating" (Witzel and Reiter, 2012, 8). However, this method had to be adapted to suit research with refugees, as some of the techniques suggested were too confrontational. All the interviewees were 'recognized' refugees and thus had been through the asylum determination process in the United Kingdom, entailing interviews by the UK Home Office to assess their asylum claims. The researcher had experience being present in such interviews in the capacity of 'legal representative' previous to the research. These interviews can be intrusive, impersonal and questioning follows lines of interrogation to deliberately confuse and confront asylum-seeker claims. Such interviews can be extremely upsetting and stressful and as such, academic research interviews might inadvertently replicate this format. Therefore, consideration should be given in order to adapt traditional interviewing methods to steer clear of creating a hostile interviewing environment. Finally, it should be noted that the refugee experience can involve conflict-related violence, and researchers should be aware not to position themselves as voyeurs when asking questions (Ellis et al., 2007).

CONCLUSION

Researchers have been called upon to move beyond simplistic assumptions about reactions to war and conflict, particularly surrounding trauma and vulnerability, instead taking a multifaceted approach (Boyden and de Berry, 2005). They should critically engage with concepts of vulnerability and be wary of how they "investigate and represent 'vulnerable' populations" (Stewart, 2005, 499). There is now emerging research that is multidimensional, with voice and participation placed centrally (Matthews, 2008; Norton and Cohen, 2000) where refugee young people are themselves using their own experiences through participatory action research projects to better

inform policy debates (Refugee Youth, 2010). These approaches attempt to alter the focus on vulnerability, advocating a view where refugees can have a degree of control over their own lives and environment, even if marginalized or disempowered (Hart and Tyrer, 2006). Such studies are challenging the 'hegemony of trauma' (Rutter, 2006), and rather than centering on trauma or needs, the focus is shifting to take strengths as a point of departure (Hopkins and Hill, 2010) with literature centrally positing the human agency of young people (Chase, 2010; O'Higgins, 2012). Such research has concluded that, although refugees have differing and multidimensional needs and very real problems, they also have strengths (Hopkins and Hill, 2010; Norton and Cohen, 2000).

This chapter has explored ways in which it might be possible for researchers to engage with research participants with respect, recognizing their capacities for human agency. It entails that researchers perform a delicate balancing act to ensure academic rigor, while recognizing humanity in ourselves and others with all that this might imply. As social scientists, we must allow a portion of our moral selves to dictate the direction of our research, including a commitment to the 'dual imperative' of having policy relevant research that is also academically rigorous. A further imperative might be added to transform the lens of vulnerability through promoting autonomy and capacities of research participants to the greatest extent possible (Block et al., 2013; Mackenzie, McDowell and Pittaway, 2007). We should constantly strive to improve upon ethical approaches and question how we, as researchers, engage with others throughout our academic journeys. This imperative is reiterated by Samia, a research participant and refugee from Somalia, who voiced her criticism of the way researchers view refugees.

> "How can you say that a person is a victim when they have been through so much? I am a survivor, I am not a victim. You are the one who is making me a victim. You put this label on me."

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12 Ethical Reflections in Qualitative Research on Father Absence from South Africa

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INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, research focusing on the phenomenon of father absence in South Africa has been growing. However, few of these studies interrogate the ethics of conducting research on this topic. Such research is needed to inform empirically based strategies to protect both respondents and researchers in future studies. There is currently a limited understanding of ethical concerns pertinent in this field. This chapter endeavors to share the ethical challenges we confronted in conducting qualitative research on father absence. We reflect on how we navigated fieldwork challenges in an attempt to enhance the physical and emotional safety and protection of field-workers. Thus this chapter is an exploration of what worked and what did not work as we undertook this study.

This study explored young people's experiences of growing up without a biological father. Father absence was the result of a variety of factors, which included death, migration and denied paternal responsibility, among others (Padi et al. forthcoming). For this study, we did not imagine that there could be more than one potential participant per household but there were, which may present an ethical dilemma. For instance, Respondent 1 may feel that when he or she consented to participate in the study he or she was not informed that a sibling may be interviewed and may thus have reconsidered or withdrawn their consent if he or she knew. The few papers documenting ethical challenges in South African community-based studies are from clinical trials and mainly raise concerns about randomization, placebo, retention and therapeutic misconception (Moodley, 2005; Slack et al., 2005; Strode et al., 2005), or from gender-based violence research, raising issues of researcher physical safety, research participants' strong negative emotional responses to research questions and risk and dilemmas encountered in confronting disclosure of incriminating evidence by a research participant (Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2011a, 2011b). Although these ethical questions are important concerns in other areas of research, they are not crucial in nonclinical, nontrial research with young people who have not experienced interpersonal violence or other trauma.

Due to South Africa's apartheid history, there has been limited research on undisclosed father identity, unknown and absent fathers in Black African communities. This is also due to unequal, racial and classist history of knowledge production in general (Mama, 1995). However, recently this research is increasingly surfacing (Denis and Ntsimane, 2006; Holborn, 2011; Khunou, 2008; Madhavan et al., 2008; Manyatshe, 2013; Nduna and Jewkes, 2011a, 2011b; Phaswana, 2003; Townsend et al., 2005). The concepts and the experiences that come with the phenomenon of absent, unknown and undisclosed fathers in Black African communities are described elsewhere (Padi et al., forthcoming).

METHOD

Study Site

The study was conducted in Mpumalanga and Northern Cape Provinces of South Africa. Study Site 1 was in the Gert Sibande District in Mpumalanga about 133 kilometers away from the city of Johannesburg—which is the largest city in South Africa. About 30 percent of the people in Mpumalanga province speak siSwati, with 26 percent speaking isiZulu, 10.3 percent isiNdebele, 10.2 percent Northern Sotho and 11.6 percent Xitsonga (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mpumalanga). The town where the study was based occupies 2,955 square kilometers, and in the 2001 census, it recorded a population of 221,739 people. Study Site 2 was in the Siyanda District of the Northern Cape some 788 kilometers away from Johannesburg. In terms of ethnicity and language, most people here identify as Colored, with some Xhosa and Setswana speaking who relocated from the Eastern Cape and from Kuruman, respectively (Uys and van Dulm, 2011). The term 'Colored' is used in this chapter to refer to a population group (people of mixed descent), while acknowledging that it is not necessarily accepted by all persons concerned (Stell, 2009). Though the Afrikaans language occupies a strong position and is unchallenged by English (Stell, 2009), the majority of the people here are bilingual and either speak Afrikaans and isiXhosa or Setswana (Uys and van Dulm, 2011).

The Research Team and Field-Workers

In scientific research, poorly planned and executed studies are viewed as unethical. They waste scarce resources and research participants' time and may pose unnecessary risks to those involved. As such, part of the ethical reviews of studies includes exploring whether the investigators are competent to carry out the study successfully and ethically. The first step we undertook when starting the current study was to assemble a competent multidisciplinary team. The lead researcher (MN) has training in psychology and a PhD in public health. The first coinvestigator (GK) has a PhD

in sociology. The second coinvestigator (YS) completed a PhD in public health research ethics. They are Black Africans with extensive experience in mixed-methods research and have worked in Black townships and rural villages throughout the country (Khunou, 2008; Nduna and Jewkes, 2011b; Nduna et al., 2011; Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2012).

An announcement for recruitment of field-workers was circulated through word of mouth, electronic advertisement at the university, local research and NGO networks and an advert in the local newspaper. Two field-workers, a male (VP) and a female (TM), were recruited to work in Site 1. They were students at the university and from Johannesburg. TM completed her honors in psychology, and VP completed a bachelor's degree. They shared some similarities with the study population: they were young—both aged 23 at the time, Black and grew up in a township. Field-workers recruited in Site 2 were Black African and educated up to grade 12. ZS was 27 and NEN was 22 years old. They spoke Afrikaans and isiXhosa as their first languages but were also proficient in Setswana. Their ability to speak these languages was important for conducting interviews in this site. An additional research assistant, TP, was based at the university and worked in both sites. TP, aged 23, spoke English, Setswana and Afrikaans. She is a bachelor's graduate and has honors in psychology.

As a research paradigm, qualitative research employs standard but complex and fluid methods and techniques to conduct empirical work. Such complexity dictates that adequate training of researchers should focus on the correct application of such methods. Such training is also important to maintain the ethics of competence. Prior to conducting data collection, field-workers were trained in ethics, data gathering, recruitment strategies, vicarious trauma and interviewing. Training continued throughout the fieldwork period as regular meetings between the principal investigator (PI) and field-workers were held.

Study Participants and Recruitment

Participants in this study were young people who resided in the local townships.[2] An information pamphlet written in simple English was developed to explain the study and distributed widely in the communities during our first visits. The study was further presented to stakeholders (i.e., schools, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), social workers, clinics and youth centers) in the districts. This ensured that while field-workers recruited young people, adults were aware of the existence of the study in their community. We collected 73 audio-recorded interviews from participants representing a mixture of high school learners, students at tertiary institutions and employed and unemployed youth. We received ethical clearance to recruit volunteers aged 14 and above, but one participant was 12 years old; approval for her participation in the study was given by her mother. Table 12.1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the participants:

Table 12.1 Summary Statistics of the Participants

	Site 1: Mpumalanga		Site 2: Northern cape	
	Females	**Males**	**Females**	**Males**
Age Average (Min–Max)	17 (15–24)	21 (17–34)	21 (12–39)	23 (18–29)
EDUCATION BACKGROUND				
Grade 12 and below	17	17	10	6
Tertiary Education	1	1		1
Unemployed	2	1	8	9
Employed		1		1

Data Collection

The qualitative research approach, given its unique use in typically under-researched phenomena, was suitable for investigating father absence in the sites chosen. Data collection was conducted during university term holidays over three weeks in Nov/Dec 2011 in Mpumalanga and in June/July 2012 in Northern Cape. During data collection, Site 1 field-workers were based in the local town. This allowed them to get a deeper understanding of the context. They were able to observe the everyday experiences of the participants through spending time with them, even when they were not conducting interviews; this form of participant observation coupled with detailed reflections of fieldwork experiences have contributed enormously to our interrogation and comprehension of the application of ethics.

The Interviews

Each field-worker conducted between 16 and 20 gender-matched, in-depth interviews with individual participants. As a data collection technique, face-to-face interviews were chosen to enhance participants' accountability and motivation to answer thoughtfully and precisely, as anonymity can sometimes compromise the quality of the data (Lelkes et al., 2012). Given that the narratives of absent fathers may contain sensitive information about gender-based violence, the interviews needed to be approached with sensitivity and care (Manyatshe, 2013; Nduna, submitted; Polela, 2011). Hence, we opted for gender-matched interviews, as they assist in dealing with gendered power dynamics in interviews and also strengthen data credibility, as they allow for more honest disclosure (Jewkes et al., 2006). To encourage free narratives, we used an interview schedule with exploratory, open-ended questions to guide the interview (Sands, 2004). All questions were asked in the participant's home language or in English where preferred. The interview opened with a general question about the reasons that prompted the

Table 12.2 Time Line, SAD PERSONS Scale and Referral

	Site 1: MP		Site 2: NC	
	Males	**Females**	**Males**	**Females**
Time Line Completed	17	20	17	16
Administered SAD PERSONS Scale	0	4	10	17
Eligible for Counseling	–	–	7	10
Actual Referral for Counseling	1	1	4	3

person to participate in the study. Depending on the participant's story, the following areas were probed further:

1. Whether the participant knows the putative father.
2. Whether the participant has tried to make contact with him and what was the outcome.
3. Whether they know or suspect someone was hiding some information and why do they think this person(s) is hiding information.
4. Whether they have any clue of the circumstances that led to them not knowing their father or not being told.
5. To describe what kind of relationships (if any) they have with the father.
6. To describe how they think not knowing their father affected them.

The time line technique was used collaboratively by the interviewer and the interviewee to aid participant recall and to represent critical events in their lives (see Berends, 2011). The SAD PERSONS Scale was selectively administered at the end of interviews with participants who displayed distress; this was used as a basis for recommending referrals for counseling (Patterson et al., 1983). The SAD PERSONS Scale is an assessment tool used to determine the risk of an individual for suicide (Patterson et al., 1983). This scale is locally used by trained lay counselors at the South African Depression and Anxiety Group as part of a first aid intervention for depression.[3] Data on the administration of the time line and the SAD PERSONS Scale is captured in Table 12.2:

DATA MANAGEMENT: TRANSLATION AND TRANSCRIPTION

Audio-recorded interviews from the Mpumalanga site were transcribed by the same field-workers who conducted the interviews with a little assistance from the research assistant (TP), who organized Site 2 data collection. The audio-recorded interviews from the Northern Cape site were transcribed by two Afrikaans-speaking White, bilingual graduate students

from the university who were independently contracted. We have no reason to believe that contracting translation compromised the data, as research shows that Afrikaans grammatical norms adhered to by White South African Afrikaners and Coloreds converge. Again, research shows that young Afrikaans-speaking Africans from the Siyanda District do stick to prescriptive standard Afrikaans in their speech (Stell, 2009). All transcripts were checked for consistency by an independent multilingual transcriber.

Personal Connections to the Research Topic

Qualitative researchers are sometimes stakeholders in their communities. Therefore, they are able to generate research topics by drawing from their personal experiences, relationships and observations of their social contexts. This allows for knowledge generation that is founded on more egalitarian power relations between the researchers and the researched. (Drisko, 2004; Lyons et al., 2011; Mama, 1995; Oktay, 2004). Mama (1995) refers to this as 'within-group research,' and consistent with other authors such as Lyons et al. (2011), Oktay (2004) and Drisko (2004), Mama argues that this should not be considered less scientific. However, some researchers fear that their work will be devalued and perceived as soft and subjective if it is connected to personal issues rather than being defined as "dispassionate and scientific" (Campbell, 2002; Padgett, 2004). Our approach emphasized looking inward and bringing the personal into the open. All members of the team, including the field-workers, shared some personal connections to the topic (see Chapter 16, this volume). To avoid bias and increase the study's credibility and trustworthiness, we held regular peer debriefing meetings with field-workers as well as presenting preliminary findings to varied audiences and receiving feedback that strengthened our interpretations of the findings.

About three weeks after completion of data collection in each site, and before transcription resumed, a meeting was held with the research team; the meetings were intended to facilitate feedback on fieldwork experiences. Interviewing each other about 'our own' experiences of conducting qualitative research is considered a useful technique for reflection (Lyons et al., 2011). With the permission of the field-workers, the meetings were audio recorded and transcribed; and data from those meetings contributed to this chapter. Quotations are also used with their permission. VP and TM are coauthors.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics approval for this study was granted by University of the Witwatersrand's Human Research Ethics Committee (Nonmedical). All participants signed a consent form for participation and the use of audio recording prior to the interviews. R50.00 (US $5.7 in 2012) was disbursed to all

participants as reimbursement for traveling costs to the interview. While monetary incentives may motivate volunteers to participate in research (Jewkes et al., 2012), we do not think this small amount unduly enticed volunteers (Emanuel, 2004; Grady, 2001). We consulted local social workers and told that we may refer participants who need counseling to their services. Referral forms were designed and used for this purpose. All participants' audio-recorded data have been deleted from the audio recorders and saved in a password-protected file in the PI's computer. Participants' names were changed in preparation for transcription and replaced with pseudonyms to protect their identities. Data remains the property of the university. No one else, apart from the research team, has access to it.

Findings and Discussion

This section discusses the themes that emerged in our interrogation of ethics and the fieldwork process. These themes are discussed in the following sequence: ethical and methodological challenges of interviewing participants who are relatives, interviewing participants who are related to the field-worker, and, finally, misconceptions about help or support and referral of participants and field-workers for psychosocial support.

Ethical Dilemma of Interviewing Participants who are Relatives

There are two types of relatives considered here: participants related to each other and a participant related to a field-worker. The phenomenon of unknown, undisclosed and absent fathers is prevalent in South Africa (although not well documented). Siblings or cousins in the same household may have different and yet unknown, absent fathers (Manyatshe, 2013; Nduna and Jewkes, 2011b; Nduna and Sikweyiya, 2013). As the study did not seek to interview household members but did not exclude anyone who met the recruitment criteria, we pondered whether it was ethical to interview siblings. The field-workers had not anticipated this until during one interview. VP (male, 23, site 1) said, "The last two participants I had were cousins, the second last two were family members who were also in the same position; they were kids who had no fathers and they were living in the maternal house." For TM (female, 23, site 1), there was a situation where, "the girls come from families where the mother also has other kids and the very same kids did not know their fathers. Like one of the girls had four brothers and all of them except for one did not know their fathers." TM said she asked the participant if "they speak about not knowing their fathers with their siblings," and she said they did not. This is not unusual, as silence in some families is observed around this matter (Jewkes et al., 2012; Manyatshe, 2013; Nduna and Jewkes, 2011a; Nduna and Sikweyiya, 2013). Recruitment of siblings as a prereview of study design was not

considered and hence not included in the original application for ethics approval. When siblings who shared a mother but had different absent fathers were interviewed, our sampling technique evolved and changed in response to the context in which the study was conducted. This suggests that researchers should build this possibility into future studies and consider it from an ethics point of view. A critical question is whether this necessitates that the first interviewee gives permission for the researcher to interview a sibling as interviewing him/her as well could offer valuable information for the study.

However, this may have implications for informed consent. For participants, being informed and agreeing that one's brother or sister may be interviewed in the same study is important. Failing to inform participants may constitute deception at the stage of recruitment and in giving consent. Such deception may lead to participants harboring feelings of regret when they realize that they were not fully informed about some of the procedures and processes of a study (Jewkes et al., 2012). Therefore, we argue that it may be prudent for the researcher to get Respondent 1's permission before enrolling his or her sibling. There are also implications for participants' safety, as findings from another study reports that sometimes participants were beaten up, in particular women, by their brothers for partaking in a community-based study (Jewkes et al., 2012). Another ethical implication relates to the right to privacy and confidentiality. In telling their stories, respondents reserve the right to include or exclude certain information. When siblings are interviewed, a situation may arise where Respondent 1 may worry about what Respondent 2 (sibling) may say in the interview that he or she chose to conceal. In the same breadth, Respondent 2, if aware of his or her sibling's earlier participation, may not know what to include or exclude in his or her story as he or she may speculate that the sibling has already said certain things. These scenarios have implications for data collected, as this may result in i) Respondent 2 either excluding information, thinking that the interviewer already knows thus compromising data or ii) Respondent 2 disclosing information under the assumption that the interviewer already knows from Respondent 1 and thereby inadvertently disclosing information that was perhaps reserved by his or her sibling (Respondent 1) and compromising his or her right to privacy.

With this ethical dilemma in mind, we recommend including a fact-finding question during recruitment to ascertain whether a prospective participant has a sibling whom they suspect may be eligible for inclusion in the study and if they would feel comfortable with the research enrolling him or her should they come forward to volunteer. Field-workers need to be trained in how to handle this so that they do not use the second interview as a way of verifying information shared by Respondent 1, as that could potentially close opportunities for Respondent 2 to say new things that would be valuable for the study.

Ethical Dilemma of Interviewing a Participant who is Related to the Interviewer

The field-worker is usually discouraged from interviewing people who are related to them. This is an ethical and methodological issue that needs to be considered by ethics committees and researchers. In community-based studies, the possibility of researchers interviewing their own relatives exists and is likely to be a permanent feature, as local researchers are increasingly conducting studies in their own postcolonial communities (Langa, 2010; Makiwane et al., 2012, Manyatshe, 2013; Nduna and Jewkes, 2012; Phaswana, 2003; Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2009; Sikweyiya et al., 2007). Furthermore, the need to match interviewee and participant by key demographic background characteristics such as language and culture necessitates that research teams recruit field-workers locally. Hiring local field-workers helps with ease of recruitment and gives an opportunity for job creation and experiential learning to unemployed youth.

We also recommend that during the interview, as doors open slowly to personal and private spaces, the researcher may realize that he or she may be related to the participant, and the researcher should renegotiate informed consent by alerting the participant to their relatedness. In this study, ZS (male, 27, site 2) offered during training that his brother met the recruitment criteria. NEN (female, 22, site 2) also offered that her cousin met the criteria, they were discouraged from conducting the interviews themselves, and TP (although female) was the only other trained field team member on site in the Northern Cape, so she conducted the interview with ZS's younger brother. Interviewing a participant related to the researcher or one of the team field-workers may have implications for the inclusion and exclusion of information that the participant may assume the researcher already knows. NEN (female, 22, site 2) interviewed her cousin's sister. In preparation for the interview, NEN said she "asked her for the fact that we are family, we are cousins will she have a problem talking to me or should I get someone else to talk with her then she said 'no' she doesn't have a problem talking to me cause I don't really know her that much." This was to establish informed consent and that the prospective participant was free to choose to participate. This experience teaches us that the consideration should not only be for the participant, because NEN said of her experience

> The fact that it's my cousin and she talked about things that I knew but she never talks about how she feels about certain people. I did feel sad when the participant talked about her great grandfather . . . I wanted to cry because he meant everything to us. (Female, 22, site 2)

In the narrative, the interviewer was also somehow implicated and felt that she was a role player in the story. This is similar to Kruger's reflections on her experiences of conducting fieldwork in her neighborhood. Kruger

explains that a difficulty in separating personal matters from the professional interview became apparent when she interviewed her family member and found that experience particularly difficult (Kruger, 2012).

Field-Worker Role Conflict and Misconceptions about Help or Support during Data Collection

Interviewers collecting data through in-depth interviews on sensitive topics are cautioned about participants' inaccurate expectations of possibilities of therapeutic benefits. This is called 'therapeutic misconceptions' and refers to participants' expectations of receiving immediate benefits of intervention to change their situation or personal circumstances (Waldrop, 2004). In response to participants' distress and encountering their poor living conditions and challenges, our field-workers experienced transference of distress, hopelessness and helplessness from their participants (see Chapter 16, this volume). TM said that she thought that some of the participants "would open up and they would tell what is going on in their lives . . . with the expectation that I will be able to help them solve their problems" (Female, 23, site 1). Therapeutic misconceptions may leave participants with misgivings and regrets about participating in the research and sharing their intimate information when they do not get what they expected. Therefore, it is critical that in studies of this nature, researchers should continuously remind the participants about the purpose of the research and emphasize that there are no personal benefits that may accrue to them because of their participation and that field-workers may not be trained to provide professional counseling. Addressing these issues early and adequately in research may help rid participants of such misconceptions about the research and prevent feelings of regrets. However, during the debriefing and feedback sessions, we sensed that the interviewers may have also harbored misconceptions about their role in terms of helping the respondents. A possibility that interviewers and ethics committees at times exert therapeutic misconceptions cannot be ruled out. Our question is, Could the ethics principle of providing referral in a study such as this one subtly communicate an expectation that research is to help participants with their problems? When TM felt she was touched by participants' stories but was unable to help, she said she experienced internal conflict, especially in saying to the interviewee, "everything is going to be fine" and yet not making promises (Female, 23, site 1). NEN wrote in her diary that

> My last interview for the day affected me badly. Firstly, to start with, the house that the person lives in is in a bad condition. There is no electricity, no stove, no paraffin and a bed without a mattress so that person sleeps on the base of a bed and most of the time she goes to sleep without food . . . it broke my heart to see a young person suffer like that

> without any financial support from elderly people. I felt like helping her at least to find one of her parents so that there could be a difference in her life after the interview. We went together to the tuck shop where she went to buy paraffin and something to cook and chips and sweets for her baby child. This child is dirty. She does not have clothes to wear. It really broke my heart I wish there was something I could do just to bring change in her life. (Female, 22, site 2)

A similar sentiment was reported in research on fatherhood and the maintenance system where the researcher found herself feeling inadequate in that she could not help her participants (Khunou, 2006). She however linked them up with NGOs providing relevant services. Although, emancipatory participatory research allows for such 'helping,' these ideas have not fully filtered through other research approaches.

Referral and Psychosocial Support for Participants

Negative emotional reactions to a discussion of absent and unknown fathers may be considered a risk for distress (Jewkes et al., 2012; Nduna and Jewkes, 2011a). Yet Waldrop (2004) argues that emotions are "a natural response to the discussion of an intense experience." Notwithstanding Waldrop's view, the experience of our field-workers was that, when strong emotions came up during the interviews, it resulted in an unpleasant situation for both the participant and the interviewer. This was judged by the emotional distress reportedly evident in participants during the interviews. Yet here we don't argue that such participants were depressed or that the experiences were deleterious; that would be hyperbole. Consent to continue with the interview should be reestablished when a participant shows extreme distress. Emotions of sadness and pain were seen in some respondents, and whether these warranted referrals for psychosocial help was a judgment call that the interviewer had to make through the use of the SAD PERSONS Scale (Chapter 16, this volume). TM and NEN shared that many of the girls cried a lot. In this setting, men are perceived to be brave and dispassionate; however, here VP and ZS found that

> [The] majority of the guys that I interviewed had crystal eyes. You could see that if I pushed them, their tears would fall. You could see that, they all tried to hold back their tears. I found a way to allow them to do that [contain themselves], because if I didn't they would stop sharing."
>
> VP went on to say that "When I started asking some of the questions, I could see most of the guys wanted to cry. I could see them fighting the tears, and they succeeded. Because I was becoming cold, I also became harsh in the sense that the only thing that I used to calm them down was the long pauses . . . I was not so compassionate.

The next extract shows this lack of compassion from the field-worker as he questioned the validity of the participant's distressed emotion. VP said about one of his participants

> There was a thirty-one-year-old whose father left him. You should actually see his face when he is explaining it. You wouldn't understand why he would be at the brink of crying, because surely he is old and he is over it. (Male, 23, site 1)

Emotional and painful responses are reported in similar studies from Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape provinces (Abolio, 2009; Nduna and Jewkes, 2011a). In the current study, we offered referrals to social workers for participants who displayed distress. In a study on distress in the Eastern Cape Province with participants who were similar in age and background to those of the current study, most were not in favor of taking up referral. Though no report is given of how many were eligible but refused the offer, it is reported that no one took the offer (Nduna and Jewkes, 2011a). A profound experience for VP was when "one kid insisted that I refer him to a social worker . . . He too, fought the emotions." It is not easy to speculate on why research participants may not want to be referred for counseling when a need is seen. All our field-workers seemed disinclined too, and their reasons could be first, that they did not share a belief in professional psychological counseling, which might be considered to be 'Western' and inappropriate for issues discussed here. Where this is the case, the interviewer may be dissuaded to motivate participants to seek counseling. Second, the interviewer may believe in professional counseling but may be discouraged from referring a participant when they know that such services are lacking in the townships. The field-worker might reason that he or she is 'making empty promises' of further help to a research participant when such services are not available locally or geographically and are financially inaccessible. This was true of Site 2 where the lead researcher was on-site during fieldwork. We encountered a participant who agreed to take a referral, but we looked for a psychologist for three days in vain. ZS suggested that the district psychologist, together with the team of social workers, "in that time . . . it was (months) with the school holidays so they were having programs every time outside they were not in the office" (Male, 27, site 2). That is, they were out conducting outreach programs in the communities for youth, hence they were not available. Three months after data collection, we called the Mpumalanga district social work supervisor, who had agreed for us to refer our participants to their facility for counseling. We were told that none of our research participants had been to the social worker's office to seek any kind of help.

Referral and Psychosocial Support for Field-Workers

The ethical responsibility to respond to distress emanating from the interviews extends to field-workers. In this study, field-workers were offered

external counseling to be paid for by the project and they declined it, saying they were 'good.' VP explained that the feedback meeting served the purpose for him because, "Talking about what I have gone through in a structured way, makes a difference. As opposed to me just going on and talking about how I feel" (Male, 23, site 1). When asked about why they felt that the meeting was better than going for professional counseling VP said that

> I think sitting here and you allowing me to talk about all those things, you take me there but at the same time you are driving me somewhere . . . as opposed to just taking me there and dumping me there. So I go into that counseling mode, I talk about my experience then I come out. (Male, 23, site 1)

He also made reference to the reward that he will get as a coauthor and said,

> and now that I'll be writing a paper, I feel that my experience was not in vain. I suffered (referring to collecting data) and something good came out of it . . . I don't think it really ever disappears; it comes out long after the experience. So I think for me, this setting [debriefing meeting] is adequate. (VP, Male, 23, site 1)

We asked the field-workers whether they think it would be helpful in similar studies in the future to write about their experiences at the end of each day's work, as a coping strategy. Indicating that he would not be in favor of this, VP said "in terms of the field, if I am asked to go account every day, it would become a chore. It would become part of the job" (Male, 23, site 1). ZS concurred with VP, but the female field-workers had kept and wrote in their diaries during fieldwork, although TM was not willing to share hers. We accessed NEN's, and with her permission, used some quotations from her reflections in this chapter. When we discussed the pros and cons of keeping a diary of events and emotional responses to fieldwork, it dawned on the team that writing in a field diary is a solitary exercise that involves 'going back' to the emotions of the day without others around. This may carry potential psychological damage to the field-workers if they have had strong emotional reactions to the interviews conducted on that day. We thus argue that this reflection strategy may be risky in sensitive studies where there is no 'on-site' psychological support readily available to the field-workers.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates how interviewing relatives can constitute a change in sampling design and the associated ethical dilemmas that this brings. The findings presented in this chapter have implications for informed consent, principle of privacy, participants' safety and data quality in studies on absent fathers. However, these issues may arise in other areas of research. For example, to protect participants, and enhance research validity and collect

rich and collaborating information, studies on HIV/AIDS, gender-based violence and orphanhood could carefully enroll more than one member of the family. However, this should be done in an ethically correct manner by making certain that both family members are aware of the other's participation in the study and have agreed to this.

In this chapter, we have shown that field-workers may also harbor misconceptions about help, a phenomenon that is thought to be bought into by participants. We further discussed the role and responses to referral for psychosocial support of both participants and field-workers. We conclude that close supervision is imperative to provide support to field-workers. Field-workers often come with little research experience and may be unable to deal with some of the methodological and ethical challenges discussed here. The findings presented in this chapter support those of previous studies that participants experience a journey of healing through research interaction (Abolio, 2009; Jewkes et al., 2012; Nduna and Jewkes, 2011b). Renegotiating consent in the event of evident emotional distress is the right thing to do; on the other hand, field-workers may be concerned about getting data. Perhaps it is important that there should be a research team member who works as a supervisor for the field-workers who is not the PI in order to relieve the field-workers of time and resources pressure that may be naturally exerted by the PIs competing interest: the authors declare no competing interests

Author's Contribution

MN: was responsible for putting together the study proposal, the research team, hiring field-workers and overseeing the execution of the project and played a leading role in the preparation of the manuscript.

YS and GK: both coinvestigators were responsible for the training of field-workers and provided supervision and mentoring. They all contributed in data coding, analysis and interpretation of findings and writing of the manuscript.

VP and TM: they were part of the study as field-workers. They conducted the interviews, participated in the feedback meetings and commented on draft manuscripts.

NOTES

1. Acknowledgments: We are grateful to the ICP2012 for the CHANGE Fellowship fund. This funding came from a grant from the Jacobs Foundation, the National Research Foundation of South Africa and IUPsyS. The second author acknowledges Fogarty International Center, National Institutes of Health for the training he received on research ethics through the South African Research Ethics Training Initiative. We thank the study participants for their input. We thank the other members of the research team, Tidimalo Padi, Motlalepule Nathane-Taulela and Priscilla Gerrand for their support in the execution of this study.

2. A 'township' in South Africa refers to an urban residential area that was created for black migrant laborers during the apartheid government. Townships are usually found beyond the town or city limits.
3. Personal communication, Cassey Chambers, e-mail, 12/13/2011. Check also http://www.capefearpsych.org/documents/SADPERSONS-suiciderisk.pdf

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Part IV

Emotions, Conflict and Dangerous Fields: Issues of "Safety" and Reflective Research

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13 Coping with the Barbarian Syndrome

The Challenges of Researching Civilian-Military Interaction "from Below" in the Eastern DR Congo

Judith Verweijen

INTRODUCTION: THE AFRICAN ARMED ACTOR AS EPITOME OF THE PRESENT-DAY BARBARIAN

The gun does not only make armed actors armed: it defines them, bestows an identity upon them and situates them in a narrative. In relation to war zones, the causal employment of this narrative usually centers around killing, rape and other atrocities, with the armed actor inevitably figuring not only as perpetrator but also as the locus of evil (Mamdani, 2007). This reflects the strong focus on human suffering, immediate causes and readily identifiable good and bad guys who characterizes mainstream knowledge production on war zones (Seaton, 2005). Thus the victimizer/victim dichotomy is made to seamlessly fit the military/civilian divide.

Whereas grappling with this dichotomous portrayal of armed versus non-armed actors presents a difficulty to any researcher studying civilian-military interaction in a war zone, it becomes even more of a challenge where narratives of violent conflict are strongly imbued with tropes of barbarism. This generally occurs when the theater is located in 'the Global South,' the discursive (re)production of which strongly draws upon imaginaries of primitivism and uncivilization (Escobar, 1994). In contrast to violence in 'the West,' which tends to be more readily identified as 'political,' violence in the 'underdeveloped' world is often depicted as caused by 'ancient tribal hatreds,' 'breakdowns of civilization' or 'the warrior ethos of primitive peoples' (Allen and Seaton, 1999; Richards, 1996). Arguably, the (seeming) depoliticization, delegitimization and criminalization of violent conflict in the post-Cold War and post-9/11 eras have only reinforced this tendency, causing armed actors globally to be primarily labeled as 'terrorists' or 'criminals,' if not already framed as 'barbarians' (Bhatia 2005; Duffield 2007).

One factor nourishing these processes is the dominance of the framings of violent conflict produced by the aid industry, in particular its humanitarian branch. This dominance is partly the product of its close, at times incestuous, relationship with the increasingly commodified news media (Benthall 1997; Cottle and Nolan 2007). The media-aid complex is instrumental in the (re)production of the discourses that construct 'the Global South' and

that inform and legitimize aid, military and other interventions that are ostensibly aimed at its 'repair.' Whatever rhetorical cloak these discourses assume, whether they are packaged, for instance, as old or 'new' humanitarianism, developmentalism or Security Sector Reform, their basic structures are largely similar to those of the 'development discourse' as analyzed by Arturo Escobar (1994). This discursive formation, which encompasses forms of knowledge, subjectivities and modes of power projection, strongly draws upon racist and technocratic modes of thinking. Thus it (re)produces regimes of representation that have homogenizing and objectifying effects and that transform 'the underdeveloped' into nonsubjects, stripped of (rational) agency.

The dominant narratives and representations of violence in 'the Global South' form a toxic burden for any scholar conducting field research in one of its war zones. This burden becomes even heavier when it concerns research in a country that has since its genesis been the apex of Western imaginings of African barbarism and chaos, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). As stated by Kevin Dunn (2003, 5), dominant understandings of events in the DRC continue to be rooted in "hundred-year-old racial stereotypes" that are part and parcel of colonially scripted images of African backwardness and primitivism. Not surprisingly, this applies a fortiori to representations of violence and its wielders, whether state or nonstate actors (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2008). The recent rise in international attention on the 'Congo rape epidemic' appears to have only reinforced such framings, because it has triggered the proliferation of images of the Congolese (armed) male as a lust-driven and bestial Other (Autesserre, 2012; Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2008, 2013).

It has been well established that these representations of violence and violent actors have deeply political underpinnings and consequences (Demmers, 2014; Duffield, 2007; Dunn, 2003). What has received less attention, by contrast, is how these discourses affect the (Western) ethnographer who is supposed to 'build rapport' with both these 'beasts' and those undeniably suffering at their hands. What specific methodological and personal difficulties does this discursive baggage create for the researcher? What impact does it have on his or her psyche and ways of conducting research? How does it shape the collection and interpretation of data, and what strategies do researchers develop to cope with this 'barbarian syndrome?' Another neglected aspect is the question of the effects of the new media revolution on the ways dominant discourses shape research. The present-day researcher no longer lives in an age where the mentioned media-aid complex has a near monopoly on the production and diffusion of representations of violent conflict. In the era of the new media and globalization, information is available through a variety of channels, and voices from 'the Global South' are circulated via blogs, Twitter and Facebook. Yet it remains unclear how this impacts on the grids of intelligibility of the (Western) researcher: Do the new media hamper or facilitate the arduous task of coping with the barbarian syndrome?

This chapter intends to address these questions, drawing on the experience of over thirteen months of ethnographic research on the everyday interaction between soldiers of the Congolese armed forces and civilians in the eastern DRC's restless Kivu provinces. In the first part of the chapter, I discuss a number of basic features of the Congolese army and the ways in which it has been portrayed and then briefly outline the research project. Subsequently, I attend to some of the main challenges encountered in the course of the field research: first, overcoming sensationalism and ethnographic seduction in relation to perpetrators and, second, dealing with the impact of dominant discourses, in particular those of human rights, on the gathering and interpretation of data. The next part discusses some of the strategies that I developed in my efforts to 'tame the beast' of the barbarian syndrome, specifically the efforts to expand my interpretative horizons and reflect on power effects. This part also addresses the question of how the new media impacted on these endeavors and reflects on how these media might affect our capacity to listen to the Other more generally.

CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN AN UNKNOWN YET PREDEFINED SPACE

The Congolese armed forces (FARDC, *Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo*) were created in 2003 out of a merger of the fighting forces of the belligerents of the Second Congo War (1998–2002). The merging process was plagued with difficulties, which was both a cause and a consequence of the ongoing violence in the eastern part of the country. Soon after its birth, it became clear that the FARDC strongly resembled previous incarnations of the Congolese armed forces in terms of its disorderliness, rapaciousness and predatory behavior vis-à-vis civilians. Furthermore, due to a variety of reasons, including its weak combat capacity and close ties to extra military networks, the FARDC became a sustaining factor in the continuing violence in the east (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen 2013).

Near-permanent military operations and the constant absorption of rebel fighters into the national army have caused military deployment to the Kivus to be massive. In 2010, the provinces counted (on paper) around 65,000 of the (again on paper) 150,000 troops of the FARDC.[1] Due to a near total lack of military infrastructure, including barracks, the far-out majority of FARDC troops live in civilian homes or makeshift camps in or near urban quarters or villages. Consequently, interactions between soldiers and civilians are frequent. The military's heavy involvement in revenue generation, including but not limited to extortion, further intensifies these contacts. Many soldiers and their families try to make ends meet through such activities as petty trade, market gardening or charcoal and palm oil production. This shared living and socioeconomic space with civilians has made it so that, in many zones, the FARDC is an integral part of social life. As a result,

everyday interactions between civilians and the military surpass the familiar narratives of rape, extortion and torture. Whereas abuses certainly occur at a large scale, civilians and the military also encounter each other in the capacity of buyers, sellers, creditors, debtors, patrons, clients, neighbors, tenants, lovers and friends (Verweijen, forthcoming).

Yet little is known about these everyday interactions and practices. In light of the paucity of empirically grounded academic research on the armed forces in the DRC,[2] mainstream media and the aid industry have a virtual monopoly on the production and diffusion of knowledge and images on the FARDC. However, the knowledge they produce tends to focus singularly on its large-scale involvement in either specific human rights violations (related to bodily harm) (e.g., Human Rights Watch, 2009) or the exploitation of what have been labeled 'conflict minerals' (e.g., Global Witness, 2009). These issues tend to be presented as compartmentalized domains, each with its own specific normative and solution-oriented narratives (Autesserre, 2012). Consequently, this knowledge is of limited use for the empirical study of the entire spectrum of civilian-military interactions and interdependencies. Another problem with the productions of the media-aid complex is that they are strongly grounded in representations of civilians as mere passive victims suffering at the hands of the military (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2013). This is at odds with my theoretical approach, which takes civilians' agency as its point of departure. Furthermore, the strong focus on immediate events and actors found in dominant narratives (Autesserre, 2012) hampers an analysis of the influence of social structures. However, the study of the structural features of social systems is a core component of my research, which draws on the theory of structuration (Giddens, 1984). Unfortunately, most of the knowledge made available through the social media suffers from the same limitations as the productions of the media-aid complex. There are no accounts authored by FARDC soldiers in the new media space, nor do there seem to be blogs presenting different narratives in relation to civilian-military interaction. Therefore, I started my research with little prior knowledge to build on.

As it promised to give an insight into both the microdynamics of civilian-military interaction and its macrodimensions, the main methodology chosen for my research was ethnography (cf. Burawoy, 1998). Given that structural influences are not always revealed in agents' discourses (Giddens, 1984), I decided to heavily rely on (participant) observation, complemented by semistructured group and individual interviews. Eventually, I conducted over thirteen months of field research between 2010 and 2012, divided into three phases of around four months each. The field research focused on three units of analysis: first, a number of army units were closely followed in order to analyze the internal workings of the military; second, patterns of civilian-military interaction were studied in a number of different locales with the aim of detecting the impact of differences in social and conflict dynamics; and third, various categories of economic operators

were contacted, such as small-scale traders and fishermen, in order to analyze how they cope with, contest and instrumentalize military presence (for a more detailed description see Verweijen, forthcoming). In the following, I will further zoom in on the challenges encountered when implementing this research strategy.

From Sensationalism to Ethnographic Seduction

Popular portrayals of African warfare, as driven by barbarism and savagery, have a profound impact on the mind-set of the researcher, in particular when she 'descends' for the first time into the 'underbelly of civilization.' They produce, perhaps inevitably, a deep feeling of excitement, the thrill of (promises of) the spectacle of violence and a rewarding new status of someone who has accomplished the self-glorifying rite of passage of 'having been there.' Are Westerners not preprogrammed to experience their baptism of fire in the 'land of black savages,' allowing them to act out their self-centered fantasies of adventure and heroism? (McClintock, 1995). Indeed, I could not escape sensations of thrill when talking for the first time to army officers known for having committed war crimes, when witnessing 'live' road block extortion or when traveling on a motorcycle on 'red axes' with elevated ambush risk. However, thrill is a bad guide in science: it blinds rather than enlightens, it distracts rather than helps focus. And excitement leads us to fall too easily into the exoticism trap—seeing only what appears as the bizarre, the deviant, the weird: the witchcraft practicing ex-Mai Mai officer,[3] the rapist in uniform, the extortionist at the roadblock, the greedy general-turned-businessman, in brief, the Other. But how can we resist the temptation of excitement and imagined heroism if the notion of a 'dangerous place' is the only mental template instantly available?

It was only through prolonged and repeated interaction with 'the Other' that the grip of the instant excitement of 'being there' started to loosen, opening up the prospects of stepping over the exoticism threshold. Yet, being confronted with the humanity that one finds at the other side of that threshold can be perplexing, especially when it concerns perpetrators of horrible abuses. To discover that the butcher, the rapist or the torturer can be highly friendly, eloquent, caring, gentle and intelligent individuals, that in fact perpetrators of horrendous abuses are 'people like everybody else,' sent shockwaves through my system. With the solid grounds of certain moral truths slipping away under my feet, I entered a morass of convoluted feelings and thoughts, in the depths of which lurked the realization that the perpetrator is actually not so different from ourselves (cf. Dauphinée, 2007).

While the exploding of the cast of the perpetrator was necessary to capture the moral fluidities and ambiguities that are a hallmark of war zones, it also opened up new dangers. Initially, it led me to become entangled in a type of 'de-demonization euphoria' that bubbled up, it seemed, as an antidote to the barbarian syndrome. The subsequent overwhelming and

ungraspable idea of feeling of a degree of sympathy for certain perpetrators, and the schizophrenia of having to reconcile this with an awareness of the acts they had committed, increased my susceptibility to 'ethnographic seduction' (Robben, 1995). As described by Antonius Robben (1995, 83–4), ethnographic seduction is the process whereby an ethnographer is 'led astray unawares' by interlocutors' efforts to make her or him adopt their interpretations, implying a loss of reflective detachment to the advantage of an electric sense of contact. Techniques of seduction, commonly geared toward achieving complicity, include rationalization, the manipulation of affect, playing with veiling/unveiling or appealing to expert knowledge. The full range of these techniques were applied by the FARDC officers that I had conversations with, a number of whom were suspected of involvement in atrocities. Whereas few of my interlocutors acknowledged being responsible for abuses themselves or, if so, refused to go into detail, the majority admitted that 'mistakes' had indeed occurred. Such acknowledgment was usually followed by explanations inscribed in narratives of rationalization and relativizing, like appeals to 'military logics,' such as strategy and tactics, logistical necessities and 'the fog of war.' When in the electric state of seduction, it becomes difficult to arm oneself against such arguments, as I discovered—often with a shock and sometimes long after the conversation—when confronted with differing interpretations and findings.

In sum, tropes of barbarism did not only impact on my field research directly by producing a seductive sensationalism, they also had a more indirect imprint in that they shaped the counterreactions to the initial effects that they provoked. The emotions unleashed by a partial overcoming of exoticism appeared to have rendered me less resistant to the lures of ethnographic seduction, thus further complicating the arduous quest for fragile 'truths.' What also hampered this quest, as will be explained in the following, was the impact of the simplifying categorizations and conceptualizations of dominant discourses on my grids of intelligibility, in particular those of the domain of human rights.

The Imprint of Dominant Discourses on Grids of Intelligibility

Any researcher working in a critical-realist paradigm (e.g., Sayer, 2000) struggles with the problem of developing a sense of 'the truth.' This problem presents itself in a particularly acute manner when the referents of knowledge are essentially contested, as is often the case in contexts of war. In this respect, Caroline Nordstrom (1997) speaks of the 'factx,' highlighting the 'x-factor' or the uncertainty and indefinability surrounding the information that the researcher obtains in war zones. The Kivus are no exception to this, characterized as they are by a burgeoning 'economy of truth-making' (Jackson, 2003, 195), the engine of which is *radio trottoir* (pavement radio) or the rumors machine. As elsewhere, Kivutians manufacture meaning in order to make sense of, but also manipulate, events. In such context, representations

can become the paramount field of battle, turning rumors into a powerful weapon of war.

One of the focal points of such battles for the factx is the identity of perpetrators of recurrent acts of banditry and other abuses. Many zones in the Kivus are plagued by frequent ambushes, violent robbery, assassinations and theft. In several of these sites, the largest share of such violent acts is ascribed, at least in the official statistics, to 'HUNI' or *hommes en uniforme non-autrement identifiés* (unidentified uniformed men). This creates space for 'blame games,' with different groups accusing different kinds of alleged perpetrators, such as Mai Mai militias, anonymous bandits, demobilized, 'local youth' or the FARDC (sometimes described as 'dressed up as rebels' or presented as 'deserters').

When encountering such divergent accounts, I experienced at first a strong tendency to almost outright reject the military's version of the factx. In the light of the power asymmetries between armed and nonarmed actors, and under the influence of dominant Manichean interpretations of the military/civilian divide, I had the impulse to assess civilians' observations as somehow always more reliable (cf. Robben, 1995). While it turned out that there are indeed good reasons to have a healthy dose of skepticism toward the FARDC's descriptions and interpretations of events, I found that civilians' accounts were not necessarily more reliable. In this respect, it is important to point out that the boundaries between the discursively constructed categories of 'military' and 'civilians' are shifting and may dissolve in certain contexts (Nordstrom, 1997). This can be explained by various factors, including the multiplicity of actors' forms of identification, the close interweaving of civilian and military lives in shared social webs and the specific modes of 'social navigation' (Vigh, 2009) that people in war zones commonly engage in, which prompts them to connect to multiple military and nonmilitary networks, in which they come to enact a variety of social roles (cf. Utas, 2005).

For example, in a certain area where parts of the population are closely linked to a Mai Mai group, it was observed how civilian collaborators and sympathizers of the militia copied the latter's exaggerated allegations of FARDC abuses (Verweijen, forthcoming). These exaggerations appeared to be part of a political strategy to discredit the government as well as the particular army unit deployed there, which contained many soldiers of a certain ethnic group portrayed as hostile. By showing the blurriness between civilian and military actors, especially where ethnicity takes precedence over other forms of identification, these observations opened my eyes to the necessity to constantly reflect upon the positionality of 'those researched upon,' whether military or civilians. However, such reflection was at times compounded by the strong imprint of human rights discourses on my grids of intelligibility.

Human rights reports are a specific genre that blend a 'politics of affect' (Härting, 2008) with a 'politics of truth,' by employing the universalizing

language of expert knowledge, interspersed with testimonies of victims. At its core, the discourse of human rights is a professional discourse, characterized by the labeling and categorization of its objects of knowledge, thereby homogenizing and objectifying them (cf. Duffield, 2007; Escobar, 1994). The taxonomies of human rights as employed in the DRC are based on categories of either 'victims' or the 'vulnerable,' such as 'internally displaced' or 'women and children' or of acts of violence, such as 'arbitrary and unlawful detention.' These etic labels, while perhaps useful as tools in judicial processes or advocacy, do not in any way capture the multiplicity, ambiguities and fluidity of the identities, meanings, narratives and ideas that float around in a real-life context.

Descriptions of military practices of arrest and detention provide good examples of these complexities. When describing how the FARDC would arrest and detain civilians, I initially often jotted down 'arbitrary arrests' in my field notes. Informed by human rights discourses, I presumed that civilians would automatically perceive these acts as 'arbitrary,' hence unjustified. However, I gradually came to learn that (illegal) arrests of civilians by the military were not in all cases seen as 'arbitrary.' When inquiring about their thoughts on this practice, some of my interlocutors told that the reasons for these arrests were a secret of the military, which they could not really know or that they had no knowledge of the law or of military matters and could therefore not tell. In another context, it was found that a certain arrest made by the military was denounced as unjustified by some but seen as legitimate by others. The dividing line was whether one supported the Mai Mai or not, for the detainee in question was a school principal known as the ideologue of the political branch of this armed group. In sum, I found that arrests that are 'arbitrary' from a strictly legal point of view are not always 'read' as such by local audiences and that this may have important consequences for evaluations of the FARDC's practices more generally.

Another complexity arising from viewing events through the prism of human rights discourses was related to the latter's blindness to civilian complicity in the production of military violence. As demonstrated by Stathis Kalyvas (2006), civilians often use political actors, including armed forces, to settle their own private conflicts, giving the production of a part of the violence during civil wars a joint civilian-military character. Indeed, I observed that people involved in disputes, whether around land, inheritance, mining concessions, debts, dowry, economic competition, love affairs or personal rivalries, would sometimes harness the military to 'solve' their problems. They would, for instance, denounce their competitors to the FARDC as collaborators of a certain armed group or solicit a violent intervention from the side of the military more directly, like by asking them to intimidate their opponent or appropriate wealth by force, often against payment (Verweijen, forthcoming). These findings were initially difficult to digest, since they destroyed the dominant narrative of civilian victimization, which is premised on the barbarism of the armed actor. The peristaltic movements of this digestion process made me once more sharply aware of the pressing

weight of barbarism tropes on my research. However, this awareness also cleared the way for the development of coping strategies.

TAMING OR FEEDING THE BEAST?

Undoubtedly, my initial susceptibility to the conceptualizations of human rights discourses had been strongly promoted by the fact that most of my ad hoc collaborators were from a Congolese human rights organization. Possibly, my inability to 'read' events in what was at first a largely unknown environment had prompted me to rely heavily on their framings. This had been reinforced by the intensity of interaction, because I was also hanging out with my collaborators when not visiting villages or military camps. It was only after developing wider and more diverse networks of contacts that I realized how much this social pattern had shrunk my interpretative horizons.

Many of the Congolese nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) headquartered in urban centers are staffed by relatively well-to-do and highly educated individuals, who share a certain mind-set and worldview. As elsewhere, these NGOs strongly frame their identities and activities in the idioms of the international aid industry on which they depend for material and symbolic resources (Chabal and Daloz, 1999). Consequently, Congolese NGOs often operate with the same taxonomies, labels, narratives and representations as those of 'outside interveners' (cf. Spivak, 2004). While these are locally appropriated and infused with different rationalities, representations and narratives, their forms often remain the same, creating an impression of familiarity among foreign researchers. Perhaps this is the irony of globalization, the fact that one gets served pieces of new reality on familiar plates, as the 'restaurant' where one goes to eat is a mere franchise of the one at home. This begs the question of the extent to which we, as researchers, can escape from this discursive recycling.

Reducing 'Interpretative Dependency'

An important pillar of my coping strategy was to learn Swahili. As Spivak (2004) reminds us, learning local languages is one of the few ways of setting oneself apart from self-styled 'international civil society.' While I certainly was still perceived as an outsider, being able to communicate in Swahili did change the way in which people reacted to me and allowed me to understand more of their worlds. A second strategy was to remain independent and to avoid becoming embedded in a single social network by means of diversifying social contacts and flexibly enlisting various research assistants in different zones. This, I hoped, would prevent my perceptions from being shaped by a single interpretative grid. Maintaining this diversity was facilitated by the 'roving' character of my research: as I intended to gather data in many different research sites and villages, I frequently traveled. Due to limited resources, the bad road conditions in large parts of the Kivus and,

ultimately also preference, I moved around mostly by minibus, motorcycle and on foot. Sharing the hardships of travel, such as being stuck in the mud, seeking shelter for a downpour or having to wait for hours after the umpteenth breakdown of the engine, turned out to be an effective way of reducing distance to my interlocutors. Furthermore, the roving nature of my research made it necessary to sleep over in military headquarters and private homes of anyone ranging from motorcycle taxi drivers to customary chiefs. This too helped me understand more of people's everyday lives and their frames of reference and narratives. It also prompted me to constantly reflect upon my positionality as a (privileged) researcher. This reflection was an integral part of another component of my coping strategies related to the identification and analysis of power effects.

Taking Stock of Power Effects

In her famous piece "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Gayatri Spivak (1988) calls for heightened self-reflexivity among those writing on the 'developing world.' The production of knowledge cannot be separated from the production of power, and the investigating subject is inescapably influenced by the discourses and interests of the various socioeconomic, geographical and institutional spheres he or she is embedded in. This calls for a scrupulous analysis of one's positionality and how it shapes knowledge production, including by means of identifying and tracing the genealogy of one's interpretative frameworks. Furthermore, it calls for a reflection on the power effects of both the 'information retrieval' in the field and the knowledge one produces, by studying the interests that it serves or harms. So what power effects does my research have and what discourses do I reproduce in my inevitable complicity with the interpretative frameworks and institutional interests that define me? Am I 'speaking for' someone, am I capable of 'letting speak' and what are my capacities for listening?

The enterprise of researching those framed as 'barbarians' is fraught with difficulties, for they do not make good subalterns. Even if we can let the armed actor speak, the chances he will be listened to are bleak, for by being a priori defined as a perpetrator, he is denied a voice. Depicting the armed actor as marginalized is equally problematic, for it is bound to give way to accusations of complicity and apologetics (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2013). The task of listening seems even more complex when dealing with state armed actors. While in the rebel one can always still recognize a 'freedom fighter,' the government soldier operating in an authoritarian regime is inevitably cast in the unsympathetic role of tool of oppression, which further reduces the chances that we can hear him speak.

This evokes the question of whether or not any effort to make the barbarian heard is doomed to end in an orgy of Othering. It is not unthinkable that my research will produce such effects, because it describes a military that does not work according to 'Western' templates and that has its own

logics. Although I have strove to make these logics visible on their own terms, they still remain somehow 'different.' Therefore, will my writings not simply confirm readings of deviance and failure? And will my portrayal of Congolese civilians as having agency vis-à-vis the military, and as occasionally instrumentalizing military power for their own purposes, not confirm stereotypes of the Congolese as opportunistic and unscrupulous? Even if I committed myself to the necessary but impossible task of trying to keep the barbarian out of my dissertation, will the reception of my work not simply reerect him in all his glory?

Perhaps this inventory is too dark. For one, it could be argued that it ignores the new possibilities for the production and diffusion of knowledge created by the new media. As argued by Bhatia (2005: 11): "Indeed, those labeled barbarians, savages, bandits, criminals, subversives and terrorists are increasingly able to 'speak' on the world stage, and many are listening." Are they?

Will the New Media Kill the Barbarian?

Whereas Bhatia acknowledges that the barbarians' words are not likely to reach the new media unmutilated, he nevertheless concurs that they can be made available by "an active search by the curious" (2005: 11). But how will 'the curious' read and interpret these words in the absence of contextual knowledge of 'elsewhere?' Does the cacophony of information and images swirling around in the present-day (new) media space make it not more likely that the consumer of this knowledge will digest it according to sedimented representations and narratives? To me, it appears that the accelerating pace of the production, diffusion, consumption and digestion of information is closing in on opportunities for the time-consuming processes of reflexivity and unlearning. If anything, information in the (new) media space is becoming more superficial, more ad hoc, shorter and hinges heavier on sound bites and images. How much scope is there for doubt, for questioning, for relativizing, for nuance in the space of even an extended tweet of 410 characters? Does the constant exposure to the iconic images of the Congolese child soldier or rape victim, unencumbered by much text or explanation, not drive barbarian narratives ever deeper into our minds?

It is certainly true that the new media revolution has made more information on African war zones available. There is a growing output of texts and images produced by the stream of journalists, aid workers, students, diplomats and tourists that frequent these 'forsaken places.' The ethnographer blogging from the field is no longer an exception. Additionally, the African Other too (at least the privileged Other) is now on Facebook, Twitter and blogs. Certainly, one could argue that this helps break the hegemony of the media-aid complex's production of knowledge and makes both other voices from 'the West' and new voices from 'the South' more readily available. However, it is an open question in how far this will translate into knowledge that is less informed by deeply rooted colonial discourses. For

one, the new media have created an ever larger stage for the display of the self-congratulatory portrayals of the brave Westerner weathering a storm of hazards and deprivation in the 'land of the barbarians.' The urge of 'having been there' gets all the bigger if the evidence can be immediately spread and the 'likes' instantly harvested. Hence, the mere increase in the quantity and variety of sources of knowledge does not automatically lead to a larger diversity in discourses. Moreover, as highlighted earlier, how information is read depends to a large extent on the perceptive grids of its consumers, meaning that narratives that deviate from the standard are not necessarily read and comprehended as such.

Another risk is that the new stream of information from or about 'the South' is uncritically taken as new 'truths,' given its veneer of 'authenticity' by being based on firsthand accounts and self-produced images. As demonstrated by postcolonial theorists, colonialism was a global process that informed the identities and images of colonizers and colonized alike (e.g., Mudimbe, 1988). In such a context, Spivak (1988) tells us, 'authenticity' is a chimera; nobody is located outside of power and dominant discourse. This applies all the more to those whose professional discourses are strongly inscribed in the ones that predominate in 'the West,' such as the Congolese human rights defenders mentioned earlier. Furthermore, a belief in the 'representativeness' or 'authenticity' of the knowledge in the new media space ignores the largely invisible processes of selection that determine who has access to it. As I observed during my field research, vast areas and broad layers of the population of the Kivus do not have access to the Internet. This observation made me realize that any analysis of the impact of the new media on the production of knowledge on 'the Global South' must reflect upon the question: 'Can the subaltern tweet?'

New media create new dominant representations and new forms of exclusion, although at a global level, they seem to largely reproduce the existing power complexes and forms of knowledge that surround the 'underdeveloped world' (Carmody, 2009; Thompson, 2004). My own research experiences confirm this: as a product of the era of the new media, I did not have the idea that the images I had seen or the blogs I had read before entering the field, none of which featured unmediated accounts of soldiers, had better prepared me for "the careful project of unlearning our privilege as our loss" (Spivak, 1990: 9). By contrast, whether produced by Congolese or other African or Western sources, they all presented the same simple and one-sided storylines in which the ambiguities and complexities surrounding civilian-military interaction had all but disappeared.

CONCLUSION

In the course of my field research on everyday interaction between the Congolese army and civilians in the Kivu provinces, I experienced how deeply

my perceptions and grids of intelligibility were influenced by tropes of barbarism and dominant discourses on development and human rights. This provoked a distracting sense of sensationalism, enhanced my susceptibility to ethnographic seduction and reduced my capability to establish the factx and grasp emic understandings. It was particularly puzzling to find that the civilian-military divide does not seamlessly fit rigid moral schemes of good and evil. This made me realize how much the figure of the barbarian allows us to cling to our comfortable position on the moral high ground, preventing us from making a free fall into the initially unsettling world of ambiguity, where moralities, narratives and identities are multiple, ill delineated and ever shifting.

I also found that the new media revolution, which is an important dimension of processes of globalization, had not helped me in any way with the identification and modification of my interpretative grids. Although the new media have perhaps broken the near monopoly of the media-aid complex in the production of narratives and images of African war zones, their potential to make us capable of listening seems limited. Thus there appear to be no shortcuts to the efforts of unlearning. Only long-term fieldwork and the time-consuming process of learning local languages seem to bear the potential for fostering a more ethical encounter with 'the Other' (see also Chapter 3, this volume), although they are by no means a guarantee that this will succeed.

NOTES

1. There is a notorious discrepancy between the amount of troops on the payroll and those on the ground. An identification exercise in 2011 reduced the amount of troops in the Kivus to around half the previously registered number. These data were obtained through interviews with international military experts in Bukavu and Goma in November 2011 and February 2012.
2. With the notable exception of the work of Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern, see e.g., Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2008; 2009; 2013.
3. The name Mai Mai refers to locally rooted militias that employ discourses of communal self-defense. These groups commonly engage in magical practices in order to obtain a sense of invincibility on the battlefield.

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14 Fieldwork and Safety in Social Science Research Ethics in China

A Comparative Gender Lens

Li Xiuying and Liu Dongxu

INTRODUCTION

Ethnography is the cornerstone of the discipline of anthropology. It marks the rites of passage for all graduate students of social and cultural anthropology in the process of becoming a real anthropologist. The essence of anthropological inquiry lies in fieldwork, as it trains the students into the normative traditions and professional practices of the subject (Gupta, and Ferguson, 1997: 1). The knowledge created through anthropological inquiry is largely embedded in the experiences and skills of the ethnographer. As Kim England (1994) Visweswaran (1994) and Gupta and Fergusson (1997) have clearly highlighted, an embodied self cannot be removed from the field site, and the boundaries between the researchers and the participants and communities are often blurred and our identities do impinge on the fieldwork that we undertake. One of the turning points for anthropological fieldwork was the publication of *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term* by Bronislaw Malinowski (Malinowski, 1989). The experience of the field-worker is central to anthropology, as the knowledge created is viewed as being entrenched. Personal experiences of Malinowski in the field became a key element of data collection (Grenersen, 2010). Most commonly, researcher's experiences are presented as a neatly laid out experience of arriving, establishing field contacts and departures. Field-worker as a journey in which the outsider comes to new places, makes himself known, experiences things and then leaves as a trusted friend is present as a main metaphor in the text itself (Grenersen, 2010: 176). Malinowski (1922; 1961: 25) wrote "to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realize his vision of his world"; however, departure from these standpoints came from Verrier Elwin, an Englishman who went to India, married into a tribe and became an Indian citizen. For these individuals, fieldwork was not a rite of passage or route to an academic union card, but rather the lived-reality of the field experience was the center of their intellectual and emotional missions as human beings. Elwin states,

> for me anthropology did not mean 'fieldwork': it meant my whole life. My method was to settle down among the people, live with them, share

> their life as far as an outsider could and generally do several books together . . . this meant that I did not depend merely on asking questions, but knowledge of the people gradually sank in until it was part of me. (Tedlock, 1991)

The anthropological critiques of colonialism and undermining the Western perspectives on non-Western cultures played important roles in shaping the growing critiques of representation. They also influenced the shift of presentation to field experiences as portraits to dynamic realities where the personal identities of researchers impinge on their research (Clifford and Marcus, 1986: 10–11). In the book *Innocent Anthropologists*, Nigel Barley (1983) illustrates two instances of fieldwork in Dowayo villages in Cameroon, Africa, wherein he describes the tediousness, disasters, diseases and hostility. The increasing use of 'I' within social science inquiry is bringing forth greater involvement of the researcher in the process of inquiry. Some of the recent books in the field, such as *Surviving Field Research: Working in Violence and Difficult Situations* (edited by Sriram et al., 2010) and, similarly, some of the other chapters in this volume, also highlight the political nature of social science research (see Chapter 10, this volume; Chapter 13, this volume). Nevertheless, this research remains very important in bringing forth the voices of the people who are otherwise marginalized and will not feature into mainstream discourses of the society (Reinharz, 1992).

All professional bodies such as the American Anthropological Association, Royal Anthropological Institute and the Social Research Association have a Safety Code of Practice (see Social Research Association Safety Code of Practice available from: http://the-sra.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/safety_code_of_practice.pdf) that specifies the safety codes for sensitive research, which includes the availability of easily accessible transport facilities, use of private taxis or cars, staying in appropriately priced hotels, conducting the research with the utmost consideration to local traditions and cultures and informing the local police and other authorities about the academic nature of the research. However, still researchers are caught unawares in the field in terms of both risks and learning experiences; one cannot do away with the intuitive nature of working with humans. Each research opens up a new learning experience, not just for researchers working on the project but also for the other researchers, cutting across the boundaries of geography and culture.

In this paper, we explore the gender dimensions of safety protocols based on the actual difficulties faced by the researchers while conducting their doctoral studies. The first study was undertaken by Li Xiuying on the grazing population in Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province, Northwest China, and the second study was undertaken by Liu Dongxu, which involved a survey of migrant workers of Yi ethnic group in Dongguan City, Guangdong Province, South East China. The chapter is organized into four main parts to discuss international advances in the theoretical understanding of ethnographic fieldwork in the context of China. The first part

provides an overview of global advances in anthropology toward understanding gender, risks, opportunities and fieldwork. The second part presents fieldwork risks based on gender based on the fieldwork of the two ethnographers. The third part elaborates on safety concerns of female researchers such as sexual harassment and romantic advances by research participants. It also highlights specific cultural taboos in host communities associated with women's participation in religious customs and rituals. In conclusion, the paper presents insights to further contribute to the rich traditions of Chinese anthropology.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL ADVANCES IN UNDERSTANDING GENDER, RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES AND FIELDWORK

Chinese anthropology is replete with tragic experiences of ethnographers. Two newly married anthropologists, Fei Xiaotong and Wang Tonghui, following their wedding in the summer of 1935 went to Guangxi Provincial government by invitation to study there. Unfortunately, while on his fieldtrip, Fei Xiaotong happened to enter into the local Yao people's 'tiger trap,' which had been pinned down under stones and woods, and his wife, Wang Tonghui, worked hard to removed him from the trap but he was already severely injured. Wang Tonghui had run for help that evening in the darkness, but her dead body was found in the torrential mountain stream (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2014).

Fieldwork is inherently confrontational in that it is the purposeful disruption of other people's lives. Indeed, anthropologists even speak of the 'violence' of fieldwork, even if the violence is symbolic (England, 1994: 249). In ethnographic studies, the researcher herself is the primary medium, the 'instrument' of research. This method draws on those resources of empathy, connection and concern that many feminists consider to be women's special strengths and which they argue should be germinal in feminist research (Stacey, 1988: 22). Ann Oakley has questioned the hierarchical, objectifying and falsely 'objective' stance of the neutral, impersonal interviewer as neither possible nor desirable, arguing that meaningful and feminist research depends instead on empathy and mutuality (Stacey, 1988). And I was reassured by Shulamit Reinharz's assertion that the problems of experiential fieldwork methodology "seem minor in comparison with the quality of relations that I develop with people involved in the study and the quality of the understanding that emerges from those relations" (Reinharz 1983: 185). In certain circumstances, fieldwork research offers particular research subjects practical and emotional support and a form of loving attention, comparatively nonjudgmental acceptance that they come to value deeply (Stacey, 1988). Feminist research studies the social conditions of women in a sexist, 'malestream' and patriarchal society (Stanley and Wise, 1993; Kralik and van Loon n.d.).

Generally, fieldwork is replete with difficulties, as reported by Howell, who surveyed 204 anthropologists about illnesses and accidents in the field, and the results are sobering. Through the 1980s, 100 percent of anthropologists who did fieldwork in South Asia reported being exposed to malaria and 40 percent contracting the disease. Eighty-seven percent of anthropologists who worked in Africa reported exposure and 31 percent reported having had malaria. Seventy percent of anthropologists who work in South Asia reported having had some liver disease. Among all anthropologists, 13 percent reported having had hepatitis A. I was hospitalized for six weeks for hepatitis A in 1968 and spent most of another year recovering. Glynn Issac died of hepatitis B at age 47 in 1985 after a long career of archaeological fieldwork in Africa. Typhoid fever is also common among anthropologists, as are amoebic dysentery, giardia, ascariasis, hookworm and other infectious diseases. Accidents have injured or killed many field-workers. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo was killed in a fall in the Philippines in 1981. Thomas Zwickler, a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania, was killed by a bus on a rural road in India in 1985. He was riding a bicycle when he was struck. Kim Hill was accidently hit by an arrow while out with an Ache hunting party in Paraguay in 1982 (Howell, 1990; Russell Bernard, 2011).

In addition to general risks, Golde (1986), in her edited book *Women in the Field* brings together women's experiences of gender on their field experiences. She writes:

> Femininity meets these criteria best precisely because response to it is likely to be clear and direct; all cultures, having two sexes can be expected to have developed attitudes about women, and in most non-literate cultures it is an unusual event to be visited by a woman who engages in activities not associated with usual women's roles (Golde, 1986: 3).

Masculinity plays out in the field. (Vanderbeck, 2005) through his discussion of his fieldwork with young people in a British voluntary organization, shares his experience of being critiqued on the grounds of masculinity by the young people. He writes:

> I also note my ambivalence about writing the gendered self into research, if this means that those who conform to hegemonic ideals will be validated in reaffirming these identities in print while others are asked to expose the ways in which they fail to do their gender "right."

The early career academics or PhD scholars are the most vulnerable during fieldwork. Social science fieldwork is often undertaken alone in an unknown terrain. PhD scholars undertake fieldwork only after the completion of the pre-fieldwork training; however, it does not always prepare the students for the rigors of fieldwork, especially if it is away from home. The range of feelings as experienced by 16 interviewees include: alone, ashamed,

bereaved, betrayed, depressed, desperate, disappointed, disturbed, embarrassed, fearful, frustrated, guilty, harassed, homeless, paranoid, regretful, silenced, stressed, trapped, uncomfortable, unprepared, unsupported and unwell (Scheyvens and Leslie, 2000).

UNDERSTANDING FIELD WORK RISKS IN CHINA: A COMPARATIVE GENDER LENS

Study 1 discussed in this chapter was undertaken by Dr. Dongxu Liu in the Dongguan City, Guangdong Province, South East China, and he stayed in the field site for thirteen months altogether. For the most part, Yi ethnic groups live in some mountainous regions in Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhon. Since the late 1990s, specifically after 2002, many of them began to move to the Zhujiang Delta region to work as migrant workers in factories. The population of such workers is approximately one hundred thousand. Unlike the resident communities, the Yi people display gregariousness, and they speak in Yi language and follow Yi customs in their everyday lives. It is often referred to as the 'invisible community.' Sensitive topics can be categorized into three tiers: (a) Common sensitive topics that are universally sensitive to all people in a particular region. For example: In China, topics related to Xinjiang or Tibet or Falungong regions are considered to be extremely sensitive; (b) Contextually sensitive topics include context specific issues, such as entering a village just after a major conflict and one should be cautious of local sensitivities; and (c) Individual sensitive topics include topics that might be regarded as sensitive by interviewees, such as a recent death of family members. Dongxu Liu's study on migrant workers of Yi ethnic group in Guangdong was considered to be sensitive by some local people. The reason being is that in the year 2008, a lot of underage workers of Yi ethnic group were cheated by the foreman and were also illegally trapped in the labor market in Dongguan, Guangdong. After these incidents were reported, the central government of China was highly vigilant of the foremen. During my field visit, there were concerns about the plausible implications of my research on them. Therefore, people were extremely cautious in my presence, and my research was severely impeded for this reason. I had to take into account my physical safety, as my research was viewed as potentially threatening to the local population. The local police, who were aware that my research was for the completion of my doctoral dissertation, warned me, and they suggested that I remain alert to avert any untoward incidents. During initial phases of my interviews with Yi people, they were comfortable talking to me about their work; however, when I tried to come to the core topic of migration, they were cautious and did not tell me anything important. As a PhD student, I was left dejected that my study was met with antagonism. But I persisted. I did not antagonize the Yi people; I joined them every day as they went to work and returned with them to

their homes. In the true essence, I felt that I was living the ethnographer's dream to become an insider in the lives of people rather than just being a distant observer. As a result of my persistence, I could see the attitudes of the Yi people changing toward me, and they started sharing intimate details of their lives. On the onset of this research, it seemed like a sensitive topic, but over a period of time it was no longer sensitive, and also my feelings were more positive.

Often researchers undertake research that might be regarded as controversial by local communities. In bipartisan situations, the researchers have to navigate carefully in terms of their contacts with each party as they might be viewed as siding with one party. Such perceptions can result in researchers having access only to one group, and they might miss out on the other side's perspectives on the conflict. This is antithetical to core principles of nonpartisanship usually upheld in anthropological research. In Dongxu Liu's study on the Yi ethnic group, which involved engaging with the Yi foreman organization was controversial, as on the surface, they claim to be representative of the Yi migrant workers, but the local government authorities and people perceive them to be exploiting the workers to the extent of usurping money from the workers and employing underage workers. It was a difficult dichotomy. As a researcher, I was committed to finding honest and true knowledge about the migrant's problems. Therefore, I was astute in my communication with the foremen and local authorities and tried to convince them of my neutrality toward the problem.

Historically, slavery has been a dominant form of the social system among the Yi ethnic groups for long periods of time. It is a deeply hierarchical ethnic group. The Yi people are divided into two groups, namely, Black Yi and White Yi. The Black Yi are the landlords and the slave owners of the old times, and the White Yi acted as slaves and populace. In the year 1956, the Chinese government abolished slavery, but slavery continues to be a part of the Yi people's community. This was apparent to me when I was a part of a dinner with Black and White Yi people where they were drinking together. Under the influence of alcohol, each group began to brag; that is when a wrangle between a Black Yi and a White Yi happened. None of the groups were willing to compromise, and the conflict escalated. One of the White Yi said casually that "a Black Yi is nothing better than others, just the same," and stood up to leave. Those words infuriated the Black Yi. He rushed out and battered the White Yi, who then died on-site due to severe injuries. This incident immediately caused a tense internal situation in the Yi ethnic group. It was a volatile situation, and my role in this context was to hold a third-party standpoint and maintain neutrality between the conflicting parties in my research.

The internal conflicts of Yi workers could escalate to large proportions, as they had a considerable population in the region. Especially their conflicts with factory authority or any other group of people could easily result in mass incident. In the view of the ground-level government agency personnel,

the Yi people brought to Zhujiang Delta plenty of labor force, and at the same time they brought more disruptions in terms of disputes, conflicts, blackmail and abductions. Several times I witnessed my fieldwork involved in incidents of disputes between the workers and the factory authorities when workers sustained industrial injuries. Often it resulted in mass actions, with several hundred persons involved; and during the escalation of these situations, the local government authorities would intervene and such incidents would generally be settled through negotiations between the three parties. Such incidents were complicated, and I as a researcher was keen to learn about the conflict resolutions in such situations. In these situations, the parties should clearly perceive nonpartisanship of the researcher to be able to trust him and to reveal their concerns. I explicitly communicated that I wanted the parties to reach a solution.

Anthropological fieldwork is truly a participative exercise, as the field-worker has to make a concerted effort to adapt to local circumstances. I learned that my attitude did have an influence on my interviewees' participation in my research. Therefore, researchers have to be proactive in communicating their acceptance and respect to local customs and perspectives. In addition, making local people aware of the researcher's neutrality is also vital to establishing trust in the community. The authors should be willing to give up talking about central controversial topics that might evoke anger or hurt in the local communities. As noted in several studies (see Chapter 12, this volume), often sensitive research topics do evoke vicarious trauma among researchers, especially if research topics are too close to their personal trajectories. Once actual fieldwork is completed in the case of doctoral students, if the outcomes are controversial in terms of challenging existing power relations in society, it might spell out greater troubles for researchers (see Chapter 2, this volume). It might incite questioning of the objectives of the research or established authorities might oppose and initiate revengeful actions. These actions can make early career researchers more vulnerable to emotional upheavals, but they also have a strong influence on doctorate candidates in their future academic careers. Therefore, researchers should also carefully consider the contents, the nature and the scope of readers of their research outcomes when writing the ethnography and keep the published outcomes within the limitation of acceptance of the public and the readers so as to avoid undesired troubles.

Study 2 described in this chapter was undertaken by Xiuying Li for the period of seven months between 2011 and 2012 in Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Qinghai Province, which is situated in the backlands of the Tibetan Plateau at the source of the Yellow River and in the southeast of Qinghai Province. The whole prefecture is an administrative branch office with the rank of a national ministerial department located between the Bayan Har Mountains and the Anyemaqen Mountains. The average elevation of the prefecture is over 4200 meters with an annual mean temperature of -4 degrees Celsius and the annual mean precipitation of 400–700 millimeters.

The climate bears the features of a typical continental plateau. Undertaking fieldwork in this region is replete with physical and social difficulties, and I was completely aware of those challenges. I prepared a detailed list of safety protocols that I needed to follow, which included detailed routes, liaisons and field activities, as well as possible matters I could encounter in the field settings. However, even with preparations, I did encounter several unanticipated circumstances that were threatening to my well-being.

I arrived at Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture after my share of delays owing to witnessing accidents and traffic jams. I was accommodated at the family home of Tibetan herdsmen who were kind to me and made me feel at home. One day as a regular family activity, I joined them in climbing mountains; and as we climbed the high mountains, which had steep slopes in the cold weather, I became dizzy due to the lack of oxygen in high altitudes. Even though I managed to complete the mountain climb, I was down with a cold, cough and fever the next day. It took me almost one week to recover; during this period, I could not undertake any fieldwork. Fortunately, I had taken enough medicine with me for a cold. After this illness, I continued to suffer from brief bouts of pain in my chest and suffocation. I continued with my fieldwork in high altitudes. The diagnosis indicated that I had severe altitude syndrome and bronchitis, which was the result of the flu I had suffered from before. On my return home, I reflected on my illness and that in becoming an insider ethnographer, I should have prepared even in terms of acclimatizing myself to the adverse weather conditions in the Tibetan Plateau. As anthropologists, we are trained to be sensitive to local customs and religion, but very little do we know about how weather conditions can be a hindering factor in undertaking good quality ethnography. The local people shape their everyday lives based on weather conditions, and I realized that I, as an ethnographer, need to prepare better to cope with weather conditions. In addition, the economic and social activities that are shaped by the local weather conditions influenced food habits of the host families and communities that were also different from what I was accustomed to. In the cold days of the year, the people of the grasslands consume products based on milk and meat and also highland barley and wheat. These are high-calorie foods so that people are able to work in very cold conditions. After my illness, in my host family, I could not consume my regular diet, which consisted of vegetables and fruits, as a result of which I suffered from severe diarrhea. The local people usually consume raw beef and meat, which they have dried in the sunlight. I was in a state of dilemma; as an ethnographer, I felt that it was essential that I consume the food that the local people traditionally ate to become an insider. The question of hygiene reoccurred in my mind, and my recurring illnesses made me extremely uncomfortable with the fact that I could not enjoy the food that my host family relished so much. It was challenging for me to communicate to my host family my inability to enjoy the same food that they enjoyed so much. During the course of my fieldwork, I interacted with another PhD student who was

studying folklore, who shared his experience of consuming alcohol with the local community, which further aggravated high altitude syndrome for him. He was subsequently hospitalized.

Another experience that I thought was threatening was an attack by Tibetan mastiffs while I was traveling with an interviewee on a motorcycle. On the Tibetan grasslands, it is common for people to have Tibetan mastiffs on their land as they guard herdsmen's tents, properties and herds. This is an unanticipated danger for a person who is an outsider to the Tibetan Plateau. One of my interviewees had agreed to take me to a grazing household far away from my place of residence, and I sat on his motorcycle. As we started moving, two big Tibetan mastiffs started following our bike and chased us with great speed. Several times I was quite close to be bitten by one of the mastiffs, which could have resulted in severe injury and infection. Even though my interviewee was trying his best to help, the circumstances were well beyond his control. We had driven very fast for a long time till we left the mastiffs well behind. The incident did leave me feeling very insecure around dogs in villages while I was conducting interviews.

In addition to the general risks of physical and emotional safety as a female researcher, I felt that gender relations did not cease to exist in the field setting. Gender is a sociological construct that shapes the experiences of female and male field-workers in the field. The safety concerns of males and females vary with the social-cultural gender roles they have in the mainstream society. The safety debates in anthropology have been dominated by the perspectives of the male researchers, it is difficult to find a female researchers' perspective. Barbara L. Paterson, David Gregory and Sally Thorne (1999) hold that it is not necessary to explore fieldwork safety issues from a gender perspective, as they pointed out in *A Protocol for Researcher Safety* that the experience of our research colleagues, both male and female, would attest that this is not strictly a gender issue; researchers of both genders have experienced threats to their safety by persons of either sex. However, in our opinion, when female researchers enter into the field as anthropologic doctorate candidates, they are more liable than male researchers to encounter safety problems. Seemingly, female doctorate candidates' status seems to be an advantage in that they can enter into the field more easily, and a girl alone is liable to get the sympathy of local people. A young female researcher is probably deemed to have no authority and impose no threat. When the local people talk about some sensitive topics, they may not keep away from the female doctorate candidates. But in comparison with males, in the fieldwork, female researchers' professional role is liable to be ignored by the interviewees. When female researchers do their research work together with male researchers, the male researchers will be regarded more highly. Furthermore, sometimes even a male interpreter may be deemed as more important than a female researcher. Therefore, due to their physical characteristics and their position in the social structure, female researchers doing fieldwork are more vulnerable to the following two sorts

of safety problems. Sexual harassment is commonly experienced by female field-workers. In their book *Female Researchers in Field*, Bih Herng-Dar and Xie Hui Juan state: "gender topic in fieldwork," the interviewees want to relate sexual harassment and sexual assault in the first place. What does the uniformity in this answer stand for? It seems that the interviewees are filling in the blanks with a standard answer (Bih Herng-Dar and Xie Hui Juan, 2005) (Bih Herng-Dar and Xie Hui Juan, 2005). The issue of sexual harassment has hardly been mentioned formally in academic class. The male supervisors hardly discuss this topic with their female students. When returning to university from the field, the female researchers hardly mention their sexual harassment encounters in the fieldwork on formal occasions. The topic of sexual harassment might be talked about while chatting with friends but has not been listed as one of the tips for fieldwork.

When I was undertaking fieldwork, the local youth followed very liberal sexual mores. When a girl reaches adolescence, her parents will set up a small tent for her beside the family's main tent and a single young man living nearby may go to the girl's place overnight. In general, the girl may keep a relationship with a single boy, and if they both feel suitable, they may get married, if not, they both will continue to look for their spouse. If the girl gets pregnant, she will raise the child by herself. This is a common form of love affair in the grazing region. From time to time I experienced advances from local boys to start a love affair; I refused to go out with them and told them that I had a boyfriend. During my fieldwork, I lived with a senior female interviewee's family in a big tent. There was no bed in the tent; we slept on the floor with blankets under us. At night, the rainwater seeped into the brim of the tent and soaked the ground. After a few nights, I felt chilly in my back and pain in my waist, and I proposed that I hoped to live in a tent furnished with a bed. Then the senior interviewee lodged me in her daughter's small tent. That night I was so tired that I went to sleep early. I vaguely heard someone saying something and the dog barking at night. When I awake the next morning, the sun was shining high, and the interviewee's daughter grinned to me and said, "You owe me a protection charge." The fact was that night, a few boys had come one after another, and they were all driven out by her with fierce words. I thought I was lucky. I dared not imagine what would have happened had a safety problem arose!

Another area of concern is the taboos that some cultures have regarding the participation of women in certain customs and rituals. Taboo refers to the prohibition on an action and thought in a certain culture or living context. Violation of taboo may bring destruction and turbulence to local society and may even result in injuries or deaths. Among all the taboos of the humankind, there is a fairly common taboo, namely, female taboo. Although the ranges and extents vary in different times and areas, female taboo widely exists as a system in different ethnical cultures of China. When I was in Tibet for fieldwork, the host family invited the living Buddha to their home to chant scriptures and pray. Before the living Buddha arrived,

I was going to help serve the food from the pot with my left hand because I'm left-handed. As a result, the interviewee and his family members were shocked and their faces paled. "How can you fill the bowl with your left hand?" A woman filling the bowl with her left hand is a violation of their taboo on the Golog grasslands. The local people think that this act can bring misfortune. The interviewee said that the living Buddha would dash the bowl down on the floor and leave if he saw that the bowl was filled with a woman's left hand. I was shocked when I heard this. Despite the fact that a taboo crisis was avoided with the immediate advice of the interviewee, the experience served as a warning to me. A female doctorate candidate told me that when she was making a religious anthropology survey, she visited a local temple. The interviewee hurriedly called her out when she was entering into the hall for worship of the Guarding God and told her that women are forbidden to enter the hall because women's uncleanness will sully the Guarding God. Women, during menstruation in particular, are forbidden to enter some certain religious locations in case of sullying the god. The 56 ethnic groups of China respectively have their women taboos. For example, in the Tibetan area, women are not allowed to keep their hair loose or they will be deemed as taking the hairstyle of witches. In the tents of grassland, the females are not allowed to stride across the male's clothes, women's clothes cannot be hung too high and people cannot walk under their clothes. In a tent, the left side is deemed to be superior and is for the male to sit; and the right side is inferior and is for the female. The females from the Naxi ethnic group are not allowed to talk or laugh at home unceremoniously. The other restrictions include: they should not set their bodies opposite to the kitchen range, they should not comb or wash their hair in public, and their clothes should not be hung in conspicuous places. Bai People, Bulang People and Dai People share similar taboos such as women's clothese should not be dried alongside men's clothes or hung high or in the yard (Ruxian 1986).

CRITICAL REFLECTIONS FOR FIELDWORK IN CHINA: CONCLUDING REMARKS

Based on the rich insights from Chinese anthropology, we share our reflections for all anthropologists who struggle in their fieldwork sites to bring out the deep knowledge of power relations in communities. We presented three categories of fieldwork risks, which include: physical and environmental risks, ethical and emotional risks and risks faced by women anthropologists. Ethnography is based on participant observation, which exposes lone doctoral candidates like us to several difficulties and dangers. Although the doctorate candidates in anthropology are trying to follow the professional safety protocols concerning 'etic' and 'emic,' the process of change from the outsider to the insider is full of a variety of severe challenges. Therefore, it is necessary for field-workers to face up to the correlation between fieldwork

and researchers' safety in social science areas, to pay close attention to the impact and significance of safety issue and to be fully prepared and precautious in making surveys.

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Part V

Social Science Education: Training in Ethics or "Ethical Training" and "Ethical Publicizing"

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15 Ethics of Analysis and Publication in International Development

Laura Camfield and
Richard Palmer-Jones

INTRODUCTION

The past decade has seen an increasing emphasis on ethical procedures for international development research, drawing heavily on medical models focused on the protection of subjects (for example, informants, vulnerable groups or those in conflict/post-disaster situations[1]). Despite this, other dimensions of research ethics seem to us to be relatively neglected, namely, obligations to society, funders and employers and peers (development practitioners, policymakers and researchers). These obligations include doing nontrivial, beneficent and high-quality research. As Iphofen (2009: slide 1) argues, "all research contains harm, since it is, to varying degrees, intrusive upon the lives of others. But that intrusion can and should be justified in terms of the benefits accruing—to individuals, communities and/or societies." Balancing benefits and harm requires an attention to process, i.e., conducting ethical and well-governed research, maintaining and sharing accounts of research practices that affect the conclusions that can be drawn from the data and the uses to which they can be put, managing moral obligations to and the expectations of different stakeholders and producing research outputs that are useful and properly disseminated (see British Sociological Association (BSA) guidelines, 2003). These obligations are emphasized in the Government Office for Science's (2007) Universal[2] Ethical Code for Scientists, with its catchwords 'respect, rigor and responsibility.' Whereas respect for subjects is covered by existing ethical guidelines, rigor and responsibility were previously generally considered matters for methodologists rather than ethicists (see Strathern, 2000: 279–304). They are particularly relevant to development research, however, because rigor is defined as "act[ing] with skill and care in all scientific work," something research in development is sometimes said to be lacking,[3] whereas responsibility covers "communicating results and intentions honestly and accurately, and understanding that your work or its outputs will have an impact on society in its broadest sense" (ibid:1), matters of considerable importance given the explicit policy mandate of development research.

In other work (Camfield and Palmer-Jones, 2013; Camfield, 2014), we have discussed the extent to which research in international development can be considered rigorous. In this chapter, we look at respect, rigor and responsibility, focusing on obligations to peers and to society. We look specifically at reanalysis of archived qualitative data, revisits to research sites and replication of influential economic analyses to highlight their potential contribution to increasing the rigor of development research. We also address the way development research is used and the often tenuous relationship between data and evidence and between research, policy, commentary and advocacy (Manski, 2011).

BACKGROUND

The chapter draws on work presented at a European Association of Development Research Institutes and Development Studies Association conference panel (2011) and a University of East Anglia seminar series in 2011–2012 (http://www.uea.ac.uk/dev/ethicalanalysis). The questions that motivated these events derived in part from concerns with reporting of quantitative work where errors in data production, processing or analysis are difficult to detect in the review process. These errors affect the use that other researchers, practitioners and policy makers can make of the findings. The concern with the quality of reporting is embodied in the growing, but not always popular, practice of replication of quantitative analyses (Hamermesh, 2007; Duvendack and Palmer-Jones, 2013). We return to questions of the rigor of quantitative research and the role of replication later in the chapter. However, similar questions apply to qualitative research because, whereas Golden (1995) acknowledges, qualitative analysis cannot be replicated in the same way as quantitative, the same level of transparency required for quantitative replication (e.g., deposit of data, rigorous methodological accounts) should apply to qualitative research. Without this, she claims that "field research is akin to religion: a private, esoteric communication, the results of which can only be trusted but never verified" (Golden, 1995: 482[4]). Golden also suggests, in relation to qualitative research, that "knowing in advance that one's field research may come under the scrutiny of one's colleagues is likely to induce greater care in the process of research" (ibid: 483). However, some qualitative researchers have argued that this requirement might reduce the quality of research by making researchers less willing to take risks in their research designs. For example, researchers may censor their field notes to prevent their work from looking bad because, as Silva explains, "academics build their careers on rational, neat and clean accounts" (2007: 4)[5] (see also Hammersley, 1997: 136; Broom et al., 2009). These accounts might "bear only a remote relationship to how the research was actually done, in the way that bureaucracies sometimes produce official records that have little direct relation to how they actually operate" (Hammersey, 1997: 136).

Within international development, the production of sanitized accounts can already be seen in the development of 'toolkits,' designed as much to justify the expenditure of public money on research as to inform users of their data or methods. The presentation of these toolkits reflects their purpose as an additional form of validation for the research findings rather than an opportunity for reflection and frank discussion with peers. As Silva (2007: 5.7) observes, "reflexivity of research processes is generally not lacking. Actually, it is very much because of reflexivity that particular accounts are made of research processes" (i.e., researchers are painfully aware of how their actions might be perceived by others).

FACILITATING REANALYSIS AND REPLICATION IN QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

The importance of accurate methodological accounts is brought to the fore by the growth in archiving of qualitative, as well as quantitative, research materials, albeit in the context of the Global North (see http://www.esds.ac.uk/qualidata/about/introduction.asp). The archiving of qualitative research materials of classic studies (http://www.esds.ac.uk/qualidata/pioneers/) and the Mass Observation archives (http://www.massobs.org.uk/index.htm) have provided resources for secondary analysts who have tried to imaginatively enter the context in which the data was generated (Savage, 2010). Irwin (2013) argues, using the example of the Timescapes archive (http://www.timescapes.leeds.ac.uk/archive/), that this has not been wholly successful. She maintains that for archived data to be usable, they need to be accompanied by an account that reflects openly on the challenges of data production and processing in so far as they might affect the validity of the authors' and others' future analyses (for example, inclusion of qualitative material in a systematic review of policy effectiveness). Considerable work has been done in this area by Qualidata, although as yet there are few international deposits. Given the large amount of qualitative data collected in developing countries by ESRC and Department For International Development (DFID)-funded researchers, this is likely to change.

Another way of interrogating qualitative research is through the revisit or restudy. Examples of restudies from developing countries include a UK Economic and Social Research Council funded restudy of Indian villages studied in the 1950s by Van Schendel's (1981) work in Bangladesh, Breman et al.'s (1997) edited collection from South and South-East Asia and Brerman's own work in Gujarat, India (Breman, 2007). Restudies can also create controversy, often due to 'interpretive overreach' on the part of the original researcher. For example, Derek Freeman attacked Margaret Mead for basing her critique of the treatment of young people's sexuality in North America on what transpired to be shaky evidence from Samoa, and Oscar Lewis critiqued Robert Redfield's attack on modernization theory,

highlighting alternative interpretations of the social and political structures in his Mexican field site.

So why would development researchers conduct restudies? As with replication, one purpose is to confirm or disconfirm original findings or, more broadly, to better understand the process by which they were constructed. However, restudies do not neatly correspond to such a verificationist categorization. Burawoy's (2003) fourfold typology of restudies identifies two types of 'constructivist' and two types of 'realist' restudies, while acknowledging that most studies will have elements of more than one. Constructivist restudies (types 1 and 2) assume the site being studied at two points in time does not change so differences are due to the different relation of the ethnographer to the site (type I) theory that the ethnographer brings to the site (type 2). An example of this is Weiner's (1976) feminist reconstruction of Malinowski's (1922) Argonauts of the Western Pacific, which highlighted the importance of mortuary ceremonies in cementing women's control over ancestral identity alongside Malinowski's celebration of the 'Kula ring.' The relevance of this example to development researchers is that it highlights the importance of the researcher's positionality and assumptions in determining what is seen and what is recorded. Realist restudies (types 3 and 4) study historical change. Type 3 revisits focus on internal processes in accounting for differences between authors, whereas type 4 emphasizes external forces. For example, Hutchinson (1996 in Buawoy, 2003) revisited Nuerland (now Southern Sudan), which was studied by Evans-Pritchard in the 1930s, explicitly to explore the impact of decolonization, war, Christianity and transnational capital on the lives of the Nuer.

Restudies can provide new epistemological or methodological insights and an invaluable longitudinal perspective. For example, Henrietta Moore and Sarah Vaughan (in Burawoy, 2003) revisited Audrey Richard's field site in North Zambia fifty years later to address the question of whether Bemba society would break down when men migrated to the southern African mines, because the slash and burn agricultural system (citimene) needed men to cut down the trees. Richards had concluded that it would, and her conclusions were enthusiastically adopted by colonial administrators and local chiefs for their own reasons. Moore and Vaughan disagreed, with the benefit of fifty years of hindsight, and felt that the real threat to Bemba society came from the Zambian government's agrarian reforms, which promoted the labor-intensive cash crop maize. This diverted women's labor from subsistence farming and care of the most vulnerable, with predictable results. Their findings are a good example of a development truism that the impacts of interventions are often unintended, multidimensional and affect every member of the household, not just the target.

The quantitative equivalent to restudies is replication, where the data construction,[6] analysis and interpretations of the original researchers are 'revisited' for multiple purposes. The benefits of replication are clear in a context of increased adoption of medical models of evidence-based policy

in development, evidenced by promotion of randomized controlled trials (RCTs), systematic reviews, and meta-analysis.[7] However, despite the potential of replication as a means of answering these questions (for example, Duvendack and Palmer-Jones's (2012) challenge to the mythology of microfinance), there are few published replications. The reasons for this range from lack of incentives to undertake replications are due in part to the importance of 'original' journal publications in academic careers and reluctance to challenge professional peers or mainstream paradigms. Thus, in addition to their relative paucity, replication in economics is often characterized by combative and belligerent behavior by replicates and denigration of the motives and capabilities of replicators, which may contribute to their paucity.

It is useful to distinguish three broad types of replication of quantitative computational studies—pure replication or checking, statistical and scientific replication (Camfield and Palmer-Jones, 2013; Hamermesh, 2007). Pure replication checks that the computer code used on the estimation data set produces the tabulated results. Statistical replication includes alternative plausible variable construction, alternative estimation strategies and robustness tests, use of different econometric methods and/or software or alternative relevant data sets. Scientific replication tests the study against alternative hypotheses.

Pure replicability cannot be assured, as the practice of quantitative social science does not mandate it (see the calls by Dewald et al., 1986; Freese, 2007; Burman et al., 2010), and only a few journals require materials (estimation data and code), which enables ready audit (McCullough, 2009). Errors in computer code are not uncommon, and mandating the deposit of the minimum materials required for replication seems to have improved pure replicability (Glandon, 2010). Nevertheless, even pure replication is characterized as low value, undertaken by less talented researchers (as reported by Dewald et al., 1986, for example) and can attract considerable hostility (Duvendack and Palmer-Jones, 2013). Cantankerous controversies, such as those reported in Duvendack and Palmer-Jones, are not uncommon among economists, although there are also examples of less belligerent exchanges.

Pure replication without access to the relevant data and code or, in their absence, the cooperation of the original authors, can be an extraordinarily demanding task if the details of the original work are limited so that the original results cannot be readily produced. In these cases, discovering what was really done becomes a detective process that may fail to come to a conclusion (Duvendack and Palmer-Jones, 2013). Statistical and scientific replication allows the replicator more freedom because they do not have to reproduce the original results and may not attract the opprobrium that pure replication seems to engender in at least some economists. These are more likely to be characterized by economists as robustness tests or extensions, which are more legitimate and less threatening to the original authors, even though within the natural sciences these would be seen as replications.

Drawing on our own experience, we can show that at least some quantitative development studies cannot be purely replicated or, if they can, have flaws that are revealed through the replication process. For example, Jensen and Oster, 2009 (JO), claim to show that cable TV empowers women in rural India, but this work contains programming errors that remove one of the two empirical supports for their thesis. The other main argument of JO is considerably weakened by examination of the empowerment indexes and by finding that the claimed beneficial effects are restricted to women with education (Iversen and Palmer-Jones, 2013). Banerjee and Iyer, 2005, a prize-winning publication seen as supporting the claims of long-lasting adverse effects of institutions on later economic performance can be purely replicated. However, the main findings of this paper are based on a misclassification of the Central Provinces, which, when removed, negates the primary finding of their paper (Iversen, Palmer-Jones and Sen, 2013).

Our sample of studies may of course be biased in that the replication may have been motivated by visible flaws in the study. However, the types of problems identified in these and others in which we have been involved[8] may be far more widespread but undisclosed because of the limited 'market' for replications,[9] which we describe in the following section.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EVIDENCE AND POLICY

In the remainder of this chapter, we look at these issues in the context of evidence-based policy making (EBPM) within international development, specifically the translation of findings that may have a weak empirical or analytical base into 'evidence,' which plays an increasingly important role in development discourse and practice. Evidence-based medicine, which provides the model for EBPM, gained crucial impetus from Antman et al.'s (1992) comparison of experts' recommendations on myocardial infarction and the results of meta-analyses, which apparently showed how informal reviews and reliance on single studies led to the recommendation of ineffective treatments. However, Hammersley (2009:1) suggests that the argument made by Antman et al. and other proponents of evidence-based medicine is overstated. Doctors have always made use of evidence of different types, including experience and expert opinion: "the claims made for [evidence-based medicine] gave the impression that, previously, doctors had made their treatment decisions by consulting God or flipping a coin" (see also Chalmers et al., 2002). Antman et al.'s study was followed by the coining of the phrase 'evidence-based medicine' (EBM) and the establishment of the Cochrane Centre in 1992, building on work by Cochrane in the 1970s that focused on experimental evidence for the efficacy of interventions (Sackett and Wennberg, 1997). Following the wide uptake of EBM, for example, by the UK government's National Institute for Clinical Excellence, the Campbell Collaboration was established in 2000 to

conduct reviews of educational and social interventions, especially in the fields of social policy and criminology (see www.campbellcollaboration.org/background/index.php/). In the last few years, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) also adopted a medical model of evaluation and started a program of systematic reviews of policy interventions, in partnership with 3ie and AusAID (http://devpolicy.org/the-uks-ten-point-plan-for-better-aid/). The impetus for DFID's program was both global and local in that one of the first commitments of the UK coalition government was to 'evidence-based aid' which would be monitored by the Independent Commission on Aid Impact. This commitment was foreshadowed by the 'new managerialism' that emerged under the previous government (discussed later in this chapter), which entailed increasing use of contracting to private and civil society organizations and an expanding evaluation industry to evaluate the outcomes of these contracts. The commitment to evidence, while difficult to challenge[10]—who would not want policy to be based primarily on evidence—throws up a number of questions. First, what is evidence and who decides?[11] Second, how is evidence produced? Finally, does/can evidence from research inform policy, and is this always beneficial? We address these questions in the following text, starting with epistemology and concluding with examples drawn from international policy making.

In assessing the value of EBPM, the first question to address is what is evidence? Evidence is defined as "the available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2012). By definition, evidence is always 'of' or 'for' something and therefore specific to a particular question; it is also always a 'claim.' On its own, evidence cannot arbitrate questions of value and ethical and moral issues relating to how effects are distributed (Greenhalgh and Russell, 2009). It also cannot address unexpected consequences; the example Hammersley (2009) gives is that grouping secondary school pupils according to their perceived abilities not only depresses performance of those in the lower bands but also teaches students that there are fixed and stable differences in academic potential or intelligence.

Second, what is the relationship between research evidence and the other resources that policy makers draw on, such as their own and others' experience, intuition, judgment, tacit knowledge, etc.? The role of evidence can be limited because policy makers have to take into account considerations that are not specifically about whether or not a policy is likely to 'work,' e.g., whether they can persuade key stakeholders and how it will affect existing activities. It is certainly not the case—appealing though this idea is—that

> if we do enough research, we will abolish situations in which the available evidence is irrelevant, ambiguous, uncertain, or conflicting; that evidence from research is value-free and context-neutral; and that such evidence is of greater value than evidence from personal experience or opinion (Greenhalgh and Russell, 2009: 308).

The reason for this is that decision making in development, as in medicine, is not a purely technical exercise: "the role of phronesis, of experience, expertise and judgment, is as important in policymaking as it is in other forms of practice" (Hammersley, 2009: 8). To suggest otherwise devalues the tacit, embodied knowledge of practitioners (Pope, 2003).

Third, how does/can research inform policy?[12] Policy making is a complex and political task involving consideration of different framings of development problems, contextualization of relevant evidence to particular local circumstances, weighing this evidence-in-context against other evidence-in-context and deciding how resources can be fairly allocated. For this reason,

> a narrowly "evidence-based" framing of policymaking, which posits a linear and direct relationship between evidence and policy, may be inherently unable to explore the complex, context-dependent, and value-laden way in which competing options are negotiated by individuals and interest groups. (Greenhalgh and Russell, 2009: 304)

As can be seen in the examples that follow, policy making is a process of incremental decision making or 'muddling through,' which involves negotiation across multiple perspectives (Lindblom, 1959). By overstating the role of research evidence in solving what are essentially sociopolitical problems, i.e., taking an engineering approach to epistemology and the role of (social) science in political decision making, political programs become disguised as science.

Lambert (2009) situates EBPM within the new managerialism and audit culture studied by Power (1997), Strathern (2000) and Shore and Wright (1999) (e.g., Blair's 'new public management,' expressed in the *Modernising Government* white paper, Cabinet Office, 1999). She characterizes it as "a radical program of Weberian-style rationalization [which] has rapidly succeeded in displacing the traditional grounds of expert (medical) knowledge—clinical expertise—in favor of a new regime of truth whose legitimate currency is statistical evidence" (ibid: 17). Evidential hierarchies within development have been influenced by Guyatt et al.'s (2000:1293) hierarchy of evidence, which ranges downward from RCTs to 'unsystematic clinical observations,' despite the acknowledged shortcomings of RCTs (Petryna, 2009; Deaton, 2009). This hierarchy appears to reflect the extent to which evidence can be quantified (Sign, 2012) and does not include patients' experiences, values and preferences (Melamed et al., 2012). While there are discussions over how to incorporate qualitative and narrative evidence—the Cochrane Collaboration has a Qualitative Research Methods Group—these discussions are usually presented as a technical problem rather than an epistemological one. The exclusive focus on the quality/extent of the evidence in a systematic review may be misplaced as an understanding of the environment in which it will be used may be more important in judging its value (Boaz and Pawson, 2005). There is also potential for bias in the

collation and use of evidence, illustrated by Boaz and Pawson's (2005) comparison of five reviews of youth mentoring. They found confident assertions from reviewers based on ambiguous evidence, a common inclination to 'go beyond the evidence,' and contradictions between the conclusions of the reviews, despite near-identical data sets. The problem with these practices is that widely varying conclusions enable policy makers to pick and choose, creating 'policy-based evidence' rather than evidence-based policy. Despite the positivistic framing of systematic reviews, there is a subjective element through the use of reviewers' knowledge, judgment and skill. Hammersley (2009: 5) argues that it is impossible to make the process of review completely transparent as

> readers who do not already have expertise in the relevant area of research, and in literature reviewing, may have difficulty making good use of information about how a review was done . . . because what they lack is the tacit knowledge that is embodied in the activities of research and reviewing.

This may explain the fetishization of particular features of a study as an indicator of validity, such as whether or not there was a control group, which is neither sufficient, nor necessary, for validity, or in many cases possible.

A final point relates to the tendency to bring together fundamentally different types of programs in a single systematic review. For example, Gallo's (1978 in Boaz and Pawson) critique of the earliest meta-analysis of the efficacy of psychotherapeutic programs suggested that actual interventions were so dissimilar that 'apples and oranges' had been brought together in the calculation of the mean effect.[13] It is obviously problematic to apply this type of evidence, because what practitioners need to know is what types of programs will work with their particular clients. Reviews—and individual impact evaluations—therefore need to be sufficiently sophisticated to say "for whom, in what circumstances, in what respects, and at what costs are changes brought about?" (Boaz and Pawson, 2005: 191), rather than suggesting that "there is a gold-standard method . . . capable of providing unambiguous verdicts on programmes, and . . . deliver all-purpose policy advice' (ibid:177).

Within a development context, the progress of EBPM may be blocked by some of the obstacles identified in a recent review by the Overseas Development Institute (summarized in Jones, 2012). Jones suggests that previous efforts to improve evidence-based decision making failed because they tried to impose frameworks from other fields, paying insufficient attention to complex challenges faced by development policy makers and practitioners, such as high staff turnover and limited institutional memory. A more fundamental problem, which is not unique to development, is that decision-making models are often based on an ideal of the policy cycle that is irrelevant for complex and sometimes politically instigated work, driven by events, news

or domestic political agendas. Advocates of EBPM in development need to instead find constructive ways to work in the environment of adversarial politics (and academics), where unsuccessful work is seen as a major embarrassment with 'failures' rarely admitted or learned from (Pritchett, 2002). They also have to tackle the overriding incentive to 'get money out of the door,' with staff focused on ex-ante appraisal and releasing funds rather than ensuring that programs actually deliver change.

An insight into the political pressures on policy makers comes from Vincent Cable (2003) who described five limitations on the ability of decision makers to pursue an evidence-based approach: speed, superficiality, spin, secrecy and scientific ignorance. There are various implications of these: *speed* requires policy makers to process information quickly and make decisions without all the necessary information; the *superficiality* of their knowledge of the areas in which they are working mean that they are heavily dependent on advisers who are often lobbyists or advocates; *spin* requires them to respond to what is perceived to be the best measure, even if this is not supported by the evidence, and frame their responses in publicly acceptable and media friendly ways; and *scientific ignorance* refers to public (and perhaps their own) suspicion of scientists and inability to understand scientific evidence. These factors create a perverse incentive structure, which is described in Manski's (2011) discussion of policy making in an uncertain world. Manski (2011) suggests that the way research and policy making are structured encourages certitude, even where this is misplaced (see also Silver, 2012). For example, the scientific community rewards strong, novel findings, the public likes simple analyses, and pressure is consequently put on researchers to endorse assumptions that are far stronger than they can defend in order to draw strong conclusions (see also Behague and Storeng, 2008). As an illustration of this problem, Manski (2011: 4) recounts a

> perhaps apocryphal, but quite believable, story about an economist's attempt to describe his uncertainty about a forecast to President Lyndon B. Johnson. The economist presented his forecast as a likely range of values for the quantity under discussion. Johnson is said to have replied, "Ranges are for cattle. Give me a number."

Manski (2011) identifies six different ways of presenting evidence, which he labels 'conventional certitude' (predictions are accepted as true although this isn't necessarily the case), 'dueling certitudes' (different outcomes emerge under different sets of assumptions, for example, the calculation of poverty lines), 'conflating science and advocacy' (for example, the 2007 Lancet series on child development in developing countries), 'wishful extrapolation,' 'illogical certitude' and 'media overreach.' The first example of conventional certitude is the case of microfinance in developing countries, which is discussed in Duvendack and Palmer-Jones (2013). Encouragement of certitude may reflect an inflated idea of what tools such as econometrics,

meta-analysis and systematic reviews can do for policy makers, i.e., "that the review will somehow unmask the truth and shed direct light on a tangible policy decision" (Boaz and Pawson, 2005: 184). The idea that the evidence becomes the policy decision means that "when 'evidence-based' recommendations are propelled forth into the policy community, they often shed the qualifications and scope conditions that follow from the way synthesis has been achieved" (ibid:185).

Researchers are also required to make judgments that are not within their competence, for example, deciding whether a 'small but significant effect' is an argument for implementation or not. This requirement arises from what Behague (2009:37) describes as the imposition of "an increasingly codified moral code [which] stipulates . . . that researchers have an obligation to engage with policy, and conduct research in a way that is useful and accessible to clinicians and policy makers." This requirement is framed in moral terms even though "research structured specifically to be policy-relevant [is] often . . . used by governmental and nongovernmental institutions either as a way of justifying funding decisions, or as a way of confirming preexisting ideological and political positions" (Behague et al., 2009: 1545). We now support these points with examples from the work of Behague on global maternal health policy (Behague and Storeng, 2008, Behague et al., 2009) and Sumner and Harpham (2008) on child health, which document the perverse effect of putatively rigorous but contextually flawed evidence.

Behague et al. (2009) looked at EBPM in five developing countries to explain why it has had limited impact on maternal health policy development and implementation at national and subnational levels. She suggests that EBPM's emphasis on uniform methodologies works against disciplinary diversity or addressing context-specific problems and that it tends to be used as a form of regulation to align the goals of national governments and international stakeholders where "nationally-developed evidence-based policies hold little weight in countering the sways of global donor-driven policy interests, which are themselves legitimated by, rather than driven by, international research" (ibid: 1542). In the context of a "dogmatic and detrimental donor demand for experimental evidence"—what the authors call "rigorous answers to irrelevant questions"'—"being bold and diverting from experimental designs means opening oneself up to criticism and potentially losing publications, funds and political credibility" (Behague and Storeng, 2008: 647).

Factors shaping the use of evidence are discussed by Sumner and Harpham (2008), who compare the 'market' for evidence relating to child health in Andhra Pradesh and Vietnam, which they attribute to external pressure from donors on domestic policy makers. However, as Behague et al. (2009) also argue, this raises further questions about whose evidence counts, as there are competing 'hierarchies of evidence,' some of which relate to personal connections or to 'packaging and brand' rather than methodological rigor or local contextual knowledge (Sumner and Harpham: 728).

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the quality of development research is an ethical issue, and the increasing emphasis placed on research *evidence* requires increased reflection on current standards for research and perhaps also ways of holding researchers to account for the quality of their work. Epistemological and methodological problems cannot easily be detected or influenced through conventional processes, such as peer review, and many of the most influential documents are conference proceedings or working papers, as was the case with Reinhart and Rogoff. Researchers in other fields of policy relevant research propose their own strategies for ensuring rigor and reliability, such as data archiving, restudies and replication. Given the greater weight placed on quantitative evidence, we argue that replication is particularly important to improve our understanding of the confidence that might be placed in findings from econometric analyses and should be mandatory for analyses that influence or are claimed to support policy. Nevertheless, replication in economics remains a minority sport, and replicators are guided to pure rather than statistical or scientific replication. The incentives for economists to undertake replications are badly aligned with the social value of doing them (Dasgupta and David, 1994; Feigenbaum and Levy, 1993; Mirowski and Sklivas, 1991), even when data sets and code are freely available, as some funders and journals now require. There are also few incentives for consultants (even academic ones) to provide policy advice appropriately qualified by the uncertainty attached to it (Manski, 2011).

Replication, reanalysis and revisits speak to ethical professional practice, as well as to methodological modesty and the avoidance of hubris, which may not suit development researchers enjoying their moment in the (evidence-based policy) sun. It would be misleading, however, to finish this chapter without drawing attention to the possibility that increased emphasis on replication and restudy in the context of audit and accountability rather than mutual learning could have perverse effects, some of which have already been referred to. Audit, even with the intention of increasing rigor and transparency, is not always benign and could affect policy research in harmful ways as funders, researchers and the researched respond to greater demands for accountability (see, for example, chapters in Strathern, 2000).

NOTES

1. Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), 2010. American Anthropological Association (AAA), 2012; http://www.aaanet.org/stmts/ethstmnt.htm.
2. The code suggests that a shared set of values and responsibilities applies to "anyone whose work uses scientific methods, including social, natural, medical and veterinary sciences, engineering and mathematics" (ibid: 2).
3. For example, Pieterse, 2001: 4 in Mohan and Wilson, 2005, Lewis and Opoku-Mensah (2006), and Harriss-White and Harriss (2007:17).

4. See, for example, the fictions presented anthropology by Carlos Castaneda (Pels, 2000).
5. Censoring accounts of practice also prevents future researchers from gaining insights into method and the process of research from 'bad' (uncensored) practice (Savage, 2010). Gillies and Edwards (2011: 24) suggest that the original field notes deposited by Peter Townsend and Dennis Marsden in the ESRC's Qualidata archive "highlight the relative sterility of our contemporary fieldnotes which are routinely self censored" to avoid 'self exposure.' This means that the interpersonal context of the research cannot 'be factored into any analysis' (ibid).
6. It is of course perfectly possible to reproduce the original data in many cases by undertaking new surveys, RCTs and so on. However, this raises further issues, so we restrict our comments here to replications involving already existing data sets.
7. Not to mention major policy prescriptions, such as the current "austerity"; see Herndon et al. 2013.
8. Other failed replication studies by the authors include Palmer-Jones's (1993) demonstration that real wages of agricultural laborers in Bangladesh had been on an upward rather than a downward trend, as claimed by Boyce and Ravallion, 1991, and Iversen and Palmer-Jones', 2008, demonstration that the superior efficacy of female literates in securing superior wages for illiterates in the same household in Bangladesh, as claimed by Basu, Narayan, and Ravallion, 2002, did not survive replication.
9. There have been several prominent replications in development macroeconomics, particularly those of Burnside and Dollar's, 2000, claim that aid works only in the presence of appropriate institutions (see most recently Mekasha and Tarp, 2013; Doucouliagos and Paldam, 2013). These studies are characterised by more limited computation effort and more readily available data than is the case with the majority of microeconometric studies with which we are concerned; however, the fragility and contextual dependency of the maintained results speaks to the limitations of these types of analysis as bases for policy determination.
10. Nonetheless, Hammersley (2009: 9) observes that "the notion of evidence-based practice has not been supported by the sort of evidence on which it claims decisions ought to be made: there has been no demonstration that it 'works' better than alternatives."
11. Hammersley (2010: 4.6) helpfully distinguishes between 'data,' which is "collected or generated as a resource," and 'evidence', which refers to "what is eventually used as grounds for inference to research conclusions in publications."
12. See Flyvbjerg's (1998) case study of town planning in Denmark.
13. This practice persists today, despite the development of methods to identify the need for and appropriate conduct of subgroup analyses (e.g., Higgins 2003).

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16 Vicarious and Secondary Trauma in Interviews on Father Identity and Connections

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses issues around the occurrence of vicarious trauma based on empirically collected data reporting on field experiences. It highlights that participant's observed distress may transfer vicarious trauma to the field-worker. The chapter also describes signs of possible vicarious trauma experienced by field-workers and cautions about the potential impact of vicarious trauma on field-workers. These issues require serious consideration, especially in terms of development of adequate methods to provide support for researchers and research participants engaged in sensitive research.

The research that informed this chapter was conducted in South Africa to explore young people's experiences of growing up without a father. The primary research question was how young people deal with living without their fathers or not knowing them. Previous studies have suggested that for children who do not know their fathers, this can be a painful, distressing and stigmatizing situation, and so we had to approach the field with care (Phaswana, 2003; Meerum Terwogt et al., 2002). Children's true biological paternity can be hidden, and when spoken about, it can sometimes lead to conflicts within families (Nduna and Jewkes, 2012; Nduna and Jewkes; 2011b; Nduna and Sikweyiya, 2013; Manyatshe, 2013). There is an emerging body of work on undisclosed paternal identity and unknown and absent fathers in South Africa, mainly with young people and also with mothers and guardians of children to whom true biological identity has not been disclosed (Nduna and Jewkes, 2011b; Phaswana, 2003; Langa, 2010; Manyatshe, 2013; Nduna, submitted, Denis and Ntsimane, 2006; Nduna et al., 2011). These studies indicate sensitivity and the possibility of various traumas. However, we are not aware of any reflective work by researchers on how working on this field impacts them personally and professionally. For qualitative research on father identity and connections to be acknowledged as sensitive research, it is important to document the experiences of conducting such research. The father absence study referred to here provided us an opportunity to reflect on and document the emotional and psychological impacts of research on the field-workers (see also Chapter 14, this volume;

Chapter 17, this volume). More information on this study and on varied experiences of father absence is described elsewhere (Padi et al., accepted; Nduna et al., 2014; Gerrand and Nduna, submitted). This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the emotional responses by field-workers during the data collection process in two South African provinces.

Doing research on sensitive topics places researchers at risk of vicarious trauma, and there are a few papers suggesting the importance of exploring, empirically, the potential risk of vicarious trauma on field-workers (Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2011; Coles et al., 2010). A research topic may not be sensitive in and of its own right but in its application (Kuyper et al., 2012; DePrince and Freyd, 2004). The term 'sensitive research topic' is relative and may be understood differently in varied research contexts. Ethics review boards usually define research sensitivity in relation to the research participant or population. Vulnerable groups in research usually include young people, women, those who are poor and marginalized people (Waldrop, 2004). Some topics are considering sensitive given the impact they have on respondents and how they depict the image of a particular society (see Council for International Organizations of Medical Science, 2002 Guideline 8). The South African Medical Research Council Ethics (SAMRC) Book 1 asserts that categories of sensitive information are defined as,

> sexual attitudes, preferences or practices; use of addictive substances; illegal conduct; information that could damage an individual's financial standing, employability, or reputation; medical record information that could lead to stigmatization or discrimination; any information about an individual's psychological well-being or mental health. (South African Medical Research Council, 2001)

On the same note, Rosenbaum and Langhinrichsen-Rohling (2006) argue that topics such as intimate partner violence, child abuse, sexual violence, suicidal ideations and acts, drug abuse and various forms of sexual behavior can all be considered as sensitive topics because, by nature, they involve behaviors that are often highly personal and are sometimes stigmatized and illegal. Also, when research results could be used by authorities against the studied people, where respondents feel distressed or angry as a result of the research and or if it puts the researcher at risk of retaliation from the researched population, it could be considered 'sensitive.' Notwithstanding this, some researchers have explored in their studies whether participants viewed some topics as sensitive and whether responding to such questions was distressing (see Black et al., 2006; Kuyper et al., 2012; DePrince and Freyd, 2004). Research shows that some topics initially deemed sensitive and distressing were not viewed as such by the respondents, although participants may express emotional reactions, which are a natural response to the discussion of an intense experience (Jorm et al., 2007; Waldrop, 2004; Abolio, 2009).

Research-Related Vicarious Trauma

Several terms such as vicarious trauma, secondary traumatic stress, countertransference, compassionate fatigue and burnout are interchangeably used to depict the harmful psychological effects that result from working with people who have traumatic experiences or histories (Way et al., 2004; Vrklevski and Franklin, 2008; Sexton, 1999; Johnson and Benight, 2003; Kuyper et al., 2012). Coles et al. (2010) expands Pearlman and Saakvitne's (1995) definition of vicarious trauma to include a focus on researchers and state that vicarious trauma related to research on sensitive topics happens when the empathy felt by researchers and the intimacy experienced with a research subject creates a permeable link between the researcher and the research subject; consequently, the trauma experienced is transferred to the researcher. Vicarious trauma can be understood to be a cumulative process, whereby a researcher's inner experiences are negatively influenced through empathetic engagement with the participants' traumatic life experiences (Sabin-Farrell & Turpin, 2003). Although all sensitive research carries potential for vicarious trauma, not all researchers experience it. Researchers are at an increased risk of suffering vicarious trauma when they share personal traumatic histories with the research participant. Other experiences such as high workloads, less experience with doing the work and personal coping styles may influence risk for vicarious trauma. In order to protect researchers from emotional harm related to the conduct of research, it is important to identify, at the outset, potential for vicarious trauma and plan for it (Coughlin, 2006; Coles and Mudaly, 2010; Pross, 2006). Sensitizing researchers, training the research team on identifying signs of vicarious trauma and putting in place an intervention plan to deal with it are recommended ways of addressing vicarious trauma in research studies (Pross, 2006, Coles and Mudaly, 2010).

Method

Data informing this chapter was drawn from a study conducted in South Africa (SA). The study was conducted in two provinces: Mpumalanga Province (MP) and the Northern Cape Province (NCP).

Recruitment of Field-Workers

The research team for this study was multidisciplinary[3] and had previous qualitative research experience. Through contact among colleagues, a young man and woman were recruited for fieldwork in the Mpumalanga site. They were both Black senior university students, aged 23 and grew up in a township. A 'township' in South Africa refers to an urban residential area created for Black migrant laborers during apartheid (Statistics South Africa: Census, 2001, 2004). The female field-worker, referred to here as TM, had research

assistant experience. However, the male field-worker, referred to as VP, did not have previous research experience. Through a local nonprofit organization (NPO) and a newspaper advertisement, two field-workers were recruited in the Northern Cape Province, both had completed grade 12 and worked in the NPO sector. The male field-worker (aged 27) will be referred to as ZS, whereas the female field-worker (aged 22) will be referred to as NEN. ZS was studying toward an auxiliary social worker certificate at the time of the study. Additionally, the study had a research assistant, a young woman psychology graduate based at the university, referred to here as TP.

The fieldwork team was thoroughly prepared through three in-house training sessions spread over a month. The training covered the technical aspects of the study, namely, data gathering techniques; recruitment strategies; and ethics, including self-awareness in relation to the topic and sensitization on vicarious trauma. Self-awareness is regarded as an important ethical element in research interaction with participants (Waldrop, 2004). Thus our training signified this aspect.

Recruitment of Study Participants

An information pamphlet for the study was developed in an accessible language for the target communities. Furthermore, the study objectives were verbally presented to local high schools, NGOs, social workers, health professionals and youth centers in local languages. The information pamphlets were distributed widely to young people during the initial visits to the sites. Another detailed information sheet was made available to people interested in the study and those identified as stakeholders in the district. Detailed information about the study procedures was attached to the consent form that was signed by those who volunteered to partake in the interviews; eventually, 73 in-depth interviews were conducted for the study.

Data Collection

In MP, interviews were conducted over three weeks in November and December 2011. In the NC, interviews were conducted over two weeks in July 2012. Each field-worker conducted between 16 and 20 in-depth, one-on-one interviews with young women and men aged 12 to 39. Face-to-face interviews were chosen to enhance accountability and motivation to answer thoughtfully and precisely (Lelkes et al., 2012). Gender-matched interviews are common in sensitive studies that may include questioning about some aspects of sexuality (Potgieter et al., 2012). Available research shows that violence perpetrated against women features prominently in narratives of father absence (Nduna, submitted; Manyatshe, 2013), thus the interviews were gender-matched to prevent feelings of revictimization in women who may have experiences of the 'man' as a perpetrator (Jewkes et al., 2006). We used a semistructured interview schedule with open-ended

and few exploratory questions to guide the interviews and to encourage the collection of free narratives. Such an approach is in line with the appropriate way of collecting narrative data (Dahlgren et al., 2004; Hennink et al., 2011; Sands, 2004). The time line interview technique was also used to aid with probing and to help the respondents recall and represent events and experiences visually (Berends, 2011).

Ethical Considerations

The study was approved by the the University of the Witwatersrand Human Research Ethics Committee (Nonmedical). All participants signed informed consent forms to participate in audio-recorded, one-hour interviews. For convenience, the interviews were conducted at places as agreed with the participants, these included school premises, homes of the participants and of the field-workers. Participants received R50.00 (US $5.7 in 2012) each to cover expenses incurred. Anonymity could not be guaranteed in the study, as the interviews were face-to-face, but the data was treated with the utmost confidence. To maintain confidence, participant's names were replaced with pseudonyms. Only the original consent and recruitment database (for quality control) identified the real names of the participants. This was kept in safe storage by the principal investigator. We anticipated that some respondents may experience distress in telling their stories; as a result, social workers (in Mpumalanga) and a psychologist (in the Northern Cape) were consulted and prepared in case there were participants who needed counseling. The SAD PERSONS Scale was administered with participants who displayed distress to determine their need for referral (Patterson et al., 1983; personal communication; Cassey Chambers; e-mail, 12/13/2011). However, anecdotal evidence from the field indicates that psychological services for counseling, apart from HIV counseling, were nonexistent in the Mpumalanga site. Due to personal connections to the topic, the team anticipated that field-workers may experience vicarious trauma when listening to the stories of the respondents. In the qualitative research paradigm, having some personal connections and emotional attachment to the research topic can have a beneficial effect on the data collected, and this is not viewed as compromising the scientific credibility of qualitative studies (c.f. Lyons et al., 2011; Campbell, 2002; Padgett, 2004). We all went through a consistent reflective engagement of the team's beliefs, convictions and experiences; this was useful, as it allowed us to better understand the lens through which we interpret and understand our research experiences. We also engaged in regular peer debriefing meetings to provide oversight of the project and to be able to address traumatic experiences should they come up. Two weeks after completion of data collection, a peer debriefing meeting was held with each pair of field-workers. The purpose of these meetings was to interview the field-workers about their experiences of conducting the interviews. Such interrogations of the interview process are considered a useful technique for reflection (Lyons et al., 2011; Drisko, 2004; Hennink et al., 2011).These meetings were recorded, transcribed and

notes from the meeting, together with individual researchers' reflections on engaging with this research, are reported in this chapter. The field-workers read this chapter and approved the use of quotations.

Findings and Discussion

Given the personal identification field-workers had with the topic, their experiences in the field led to vicariously specific emotional and psychological experiences. This section of the chapter discusses the three themes that capture these experiences. The themes include: i) participants' observed distress and potential for vicarious trauma in field-workers, ii) signs of possible vicarious trauma experienced by field-workers and iii) the potential impact of vicarious trauma on fieldwork and the interviews.

Participants' Observed Distress and Potential for Vicarious Trauma in Field-Workers

We explored the personal emotional impact of the interviews on the field-workers. Through the research encounter, it is acknowledged that a participant could have first-time recognition of the trauma related to his or her experience or potentially reexperience it while telling the story (Waldrop, 2004; Abolio, 2009). This was true in this study, as TM said that she found it "very hard for me to see them [participants] crying." NEN also had similar experience. ZS said one participant that he interviewed "told me about something that . . . I could feel the pain with him." An observation that male participants almost cried was shared by VP, who said that some (male) participants, although they did not cry, "had crystal eyes at times." Painful emotional reactions to questions asked in the interviews were observed in both men and women participants. Similarly, transference of painful and stressing emotions and the negative effects of this to the field-workers was visible in their narratives. For example, frustration was evident in ZS's feedback to the research team that if he had a choice of two jobs with the same remuneration, he would have taken the other, because for him, doing the interviews was emotionally challenging. When a research participant has strong emotional responses to the research questions, it presents a challenge to field-workers. In this study, personal connections to the topic may have allowed for internalization of respondents' narratives and perhaps increased the possibility for transference of intense emotions to the field-worker. VP himself grew up with an absent father and said that doing the interviews raised political questions for him and made him angry at times. He said he believed that:

> whether it would prove to be true or not, it became very political. One way or the other it was migration related, the fathers could not afford, etc. When we start talking about money, we go into a lot of racial issues as well . . . It is very hard.

VP's remarks, supported by ZS, reflect on the economic and social impact of the apartheid system in South Africa and particularly how the migrant labor system contributed to family breakdowns and absent and unknown fathers in Black African communities. Migrant labor is a system of labor recruitment that gives short-term contracts to men who seek work at the local mining and construction sites. ZS, who also had a known but absent father to substantiate this claim used, his younger brother as an example. His younger brother's father was a cross-border migrant who had come to work in the town of Upington and left at the end of his contract back to Namibia, his country of origin, without a trace. When strong emotional responses were felt by the field-workers, they suggested that pausing helped them contain their emotions. ZS said that during an interview with one of his participants who cried a lot, he himself experienced a "black out," and he would ask the participant if they could take a break. ZS suggested that taking a break during the interview helped not only the respondent but allowed him time to regain his composure as well. A 'break' and talking about ones feelings for NEN was possible

> whenever I got home and I had this participant that they were crying I would always take my note book and write how I feel, if I have airtime I would call ZS or when we meet in the streets then I would talk to ZS if I don't get him I write all the things that I felt for that day after the whole interviews that I did . . . if I had an emotional interview then I will stop for a day if I had certain appointments except the one that I did that was emotional . . . I won't go exactly after this one to the next one . . . I will take maybe for an hour or an hour and half I will sit and write down how I feel after the interview.

Taking breaks during the interview, in between interviews and meeting with a colleague to talk seemed to help; this suggests that study teams investigating sensitive topics should consider creating space for these processes in their study time frames. Waldrop (2004) suggests that when painful emotional responses are evident during the interview, there should be renegotiation of consent to continue, as well as a modification of questions. NEN said she observed that with her respondents:

> when you go deeper into the father identity then you will see that no this person is looking down and she is crying then you will get those participant who are crying, when they are crying I will ask them if they want to have a moment to themselves or . . . continue but if they say they want to continue then I leave that father identity topic for the moment then I go, I ask her to tell me about her happy moments in her life then . . . as am continuing I will go back again to the father identity to go more deeper into the thing.

Research indicates that when participants cry, they do not necessarily wish to end the interview, even when offered an opportunity to do so (Nduna and Jewkes, 2012; Abolio, 2009; Manyatshe, 2013). All the field-workers reported that they played around with the questions and introduced light-hearted questions in order to allow a participant time to regain his or her composure and continue with the interview. It was not possible for the authors to gain insight into subsequent feelings that participants had after the interview; however, we know from similar studies that interviewees felt relieved after speaking in interviews and perceive such experiences as cathartic (Chapter 17, this volume; Campbell, 2002; Johnson and Benight, 2003; Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2012; Abolio, 2009; Nduna and Jewkes, 2011a; Ellsberg and Heise, 2002).

Signs of Possible Vicarious Trauma Experienced by Field-Workers

While symptoms of vicarious trauma may be difficult to recognize in a research context, they may include anger, anxiety, depression, sadness, exhaustion, lack of concentration, headaches, sleeplessness, increase in drug and alcohol use and withdrawal and social isolation (Pross, 2006). In the present study, some of these symptoms were experienced by the field-workers. VP said he observed his moods change during the fieldwork; he said that he would sometimes be "overly sensitive about things . . . I became very emotional . . . a lot of introspection was happening. I was asking myself a lot of questions." VP's experiences resonate with Waldrop's observations that interviews similar to these can invoke personal change in the researchers (Waldrop, 2004). VP defined his anger as 'constructive anger,' as it motivated him to do positive work on the phenomenon of fathers' absence in Black African communities. Subjectively observed change in the emotional state of field-workers was also experienced by TM. She said she felt unusual and "I was thinking that maybe I am being a very terrible person, because I don't usually lose it. However in the field, I found myself losing it a whole lot." By 'losing it' TM meant that she got irritable, edgy and angry. For ZS, the emotional strain of the interviews was distracting. He said,

> now this things that I have heard of and he is talking so I can't make notes, I can't, am not listening to the participant anymore so it was very difficult for me when it comes to something that is emotional and it affects, not affects me directly but I can feel the pain maybe of the participant then I will always ask him "(ne) can we stop a little bit" but I also need a break it's not that I want the break for him but I think "no (maan)" because I don't make notes I hear he is talking, I don't know what he is saying anymore so I'll always say let's stop a little bit.

The emotional strain as observed by ZS affected the research process and thus may have affected the quality of data collected. ZS also admitted that,

his "memory stuck at one place," and he switched off and lost concentration even though he could "hear he [participant] is talking, I don't know what he is saying anymore." Concentration and the ability to hear the participant are important skills in qualitative research and enable the collection of good quality data; when the interviewer is compromised, it has implications for the ability of the interviewer to probe. When the research team suggested to the field-workers that they could also go for counseling in order to deal with their emotions, they declined the offer.

Potential Impact of Vicarious Trauma on the Fieldwork

Given how the field-workers spoke of their participants' histories, it is evident that the personal connections they had to the topic clearly impacted them, as confirmed by communication breakdown, irritation, agitation and disagreeableness in the field linked to the emotional intensity of the interviews by TM and VP. To illustrate the seriousness of these challenges, TM suggested we find her a different teammate. TM summed her experiences thus: "it can be hard to come back from doing the interviews to be expected to be all happy and cheerful." The strained relationship reported by TM and VP during fieldwork suggests that conducting sensitive research may seriously affect the emotional or psychological well-being of those who do this work (Pross, 2006; Coles et al., 2010).

Transference of negative emotions and distress seemed to have had some implications on how field-workers conducted subsequent interviews. VP's reflections on how he coped and continued with the fieldwork was made possible by a conscious distancing, which he referred to as being 'cold' to the participants. He said:

> How I am using the word "cold" in that sense was because the only way I could carry on with those interviews was to withdraw . . . I suppose how I used the word "cold" was basically me fighting to hold myself back from going on this emotional rollercoaster that the interview was asking me to go to."

The strategy to not show their emotions so as to carry on with the interviews stoically was a challenge. ZS's comments succinctly demonstrate how this conflict was experienced:

> you know what the reason I can't cry [during the interview] it's because here I am a field worker conducting an interview with a participant and I wanted this participant to trust me but if the participant sees that am not stronger than him, he will not trust me you see so I have to take my emotions and hide them and be strong for the participant . . . but in a way I can feel that this thing is also eating me I couldn't focus anymore,"

That one's position as a field-worker was interpreted and understood as carrying the responsibility to be strong for the participant was also shared by NEN. She said "I was the one who is conducting the interview so I have to be the strong one even though I did get emotional but I can't show to the participant." These strategies to either be 'cold' or 'strong' and not 'show' corresponds with what is called neutralization of one's intense feelings (Waldrop, 2004). However, this neutralization was experienced as a paradox. VP said that being cold was synonymous with being insensitive but still,

> It was the only way I could manage to contain myself. If I broke down first, there would be a collapse in the interview . . . So that is how I became cold. I became cold because I had to do these interviews . . . I withdrew emotionally.

The field-workers recognized their part as research instruments and so felt compelled to keep composure during the interviews. For ZS and NEN, the motivation for their containment of emotions extended beyond the interview to their image in the community. For example, ZS said some of his participants "don't care because to them it's a story that the community knows . . . so if I cry then maybe the participant [might wonder] how come you are crying, why you cry?" and the participant may tell his friend that " he [ZS] came here and cried (Laughs)." NEN and ZS conducted the interviews in their own community, thus they were concerned that if they cried or showed emotions that would be news in the community and would mean they were weak.

Although there might be gaps in the details shared by the field-workers in the debriefing meeting, these reflections provide useful evidence, demonstrating how researchers may be emotionally engaged and impacted when researching sensitive topics. Evidence presented here entirely depended on field-workers' reflective accounts of their experiences of fieldwork and there is a possibility that field-workers may have not appropriately located the cause of their distress during fieldwork. As such, we may have missed signs and symptoms of vicarious trauma or attributed some of their responses to these interviews when there could have been external causes. Also, field-workers' reactions and what they shared could have been influenced by gender, as men and women recall emotions differently. It is also possible that field-workers may not have spoken about all of their experiences; for instance, we know that TM mentioned to the principal investigator that she was not in the right emotional space to share more, although she said the data collection affected her a lot. This was respected. We also acknowledge that given that the field-workers' contracts expired at the end of the fieldwork, we may have missed the long-term impact of conducting these interviews. Nevertheless, what we present here remains valuable, and researchers working in similar settings and or topics may learn from these experiences.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to share findings on possible vicarious trauma when researching father absence in South Africa. The findings presented here, although drawn from a specific locality can be used to understand field-worker's emotional responses to researching sensitive topics that may personally affect them. Findings presented here demonstrate that vicarious trauma can influence the way that researchers view their world, their sense of self and safety, spirituality, their professional identity, psychological needs and beliefs. The issue of race and migration that VP and ZS spoke about with passion is something that they could carry with them and needs to be addressed. Where similar sentiments exist, they might affect researchers professionally and personally. Reaction to one's strong emotional responses during fieldwork may not always be processed adequately, and so field-workers need more and closer emotional support. Reflecting back on our experience, the PI worked closely with the field-workers and may have been viewed, by field-workers, as overemphasizing the importance of getting the data at the expense of being patient with the field processes. Field-workers were paid for services rendered for a short period of data collection time, so consciousness of time and budgetary constraints may have pressured field-workers into finishing interviews and not risking 'underperforming'; that sort of work pressure could increase the risk of suffering vicarious trauma and burnout.

In our concern about reexposing the field-workers to the painful stories and fear about compromising participants' confidentiality, the team discussed the pros and cons of getting the taped interviews transcribed by the same field-workers or to contract that out. In order to protect participants' confidentiality, it is recommended that raw, unanalyzed data should not be given to people outside the research team. When this is done, the external transcriber should sign a confidentiality contract (Waldrop, 2004). On the other hand, when transcribing their own work, the interviewers are able to remember some nuances in the interview that may not have been recorded and include them. They are better placed to deal with poor recordings, as they can remember the narrator's story; they are able to handle variations in language dialect, as this is highly likely in the multilingual communities. The audio-taped interviews from site 1 were transcribed by the field-workers themselves, whereas the data from site 2 was outsourced. During transcriptions, we allowed the field-workers to take longer so as to not feel the pressure, as they indicated that it was not easy to re-listen to the stories again. In conclusion of this chapter, we suggest that researchers should go beyond what university ethics committees recommend and demand to appropriately safeguard the humanness of both researchers and participants. The protection of field-workers should be through detailed screening, training and an enhanced fieldwork support and supervision. Incorporating these factors in the design of sensitive studies may minimize vicarious trauma and thus enhance research output.

NOTES

1. Acknowledgments: We are grateful to the ICP2012 for the CHANGE Fellowship fund. This funding came from a grant from the Jacobs Foundation, the National Research Foundation of South Africa and IUPsyS. The second author acknowledges Fogarty International Center, National Institutes of Health for the training he received on research ethics through the South African Research Ethics Training Initiative. We thank the study participants for their input. We thank the other members of the research team, Tidimalo Padi, Motlalepule Nathane-Taulela and Priscilla Gerrand, for support in the execution of this study.
2. Competing interest: the authors declare no competing interests.

   The lead researchers, Mzikazi Nduna (MN), Grace Khunou (GK) and Yandisa Sikweyiya (YS), hold PhD degrees and have extensive qualitative research experience.

   Author's contribution:

   MN: was responsible for putting together the study proposal, raised funds and oversaw all aspects of the study: fieldwork, data analysis to preparation of manuscripts.

   YS and GK: responsible for the training of field-workers and provided supervision and mentoring. Contributed to data coding, analysis, interpretation of findings and write up.

   VP and TM: from study site, contributed to data collection, transcription and interpretation of findings.

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17 Vicarious Trauma and Safety Protocols for Sensitive Feminist Research

Reflections on the Research Process of Transcribing and Translating Interviews with HIV-Positive Women in India

Keerty Nakray

INTRODUCTION

The vicarious trauma (VT) was first conceptualized by McCann and Pearlman (1990: 133) to denote the psychological effects of working with traumatized persons. Subsequently, it has been defined as the transformation of the researcher's inner experience as a result of empathetic and/or repeated engagement with sexual violence survivors and their trauma material (Pearlman and Saakvitne, 1995: 31). Often vicarious trauma is referred to interchangeably with secondary traumatic stress (STS), but both are distinct from each other. Vicarious traumatization (VT) refers to harmful changes that occur in professional's views of themselves, others and the world, as a result of exposure to the graphic and/or traumatic materials of their clients (Baird and Kracen, 2006: 181). Secondary traumatic stress (STS) refers to a set of psychological symptoms that mimic post-traumatic stress disorder but are acquired through exposure to persons suffering the effects of trauma (Baird and Kracen, 2006: 181). Burnout is defined as "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment" (Maslach, 1982: 3) characterized by cynicism, psychological distress, feelings of dissatisfaction, impaired interpersonal functioning, emotional numbing and physiological problems (cited from Sprang, Clark, Whitt-Woosley, 2007: 260).

Vicarious trauma is associated with severe alterations in cognitive schemas of the researchers in several areas of everyday life. These include beliefs related to safety, trust, esteem, intimacy and control and each representing a psychological need (Baird and Kracen, 2006: 181). Some of the common responses include doubting or denial of the patient's reality, dissociation or numbing, minimization or avoidance of traumatic material, professional distancing or abandonment of the patient (Canfield, 2008: 82). Researchers can become fearful and also distrustful of people as they hear stories

of human cruelty that shake their beliefs in everyday life (Canfield, 2008). Trauma changes people's fundamental beliefs about the world, such as the world being reasonably fair and that bad things do not happen to good people. Such events often raise questions around the fundamental assumptions we have about life (Janoff-Bulman, 1989). Vicarious trauma has varying impacts on people depending on their personal characteristics and history, the research methods adopted for the study, their support systems and the context in which they do their research (Sexual Violence Research Initiative, 2006). The onus of coping with vicarious trauma lies with the researchers, as often researchers have to develop critical consciousness of their own vulnerability and apply coping mechanisms of sublimation, altruism and humor (Canfield, 2008). The organizational context plays a vital role in shaping the outcomes of the researchers without minimizing the stress caused by sensitive research; if researchers are encouraged to focus on positive outcomes, it is possible to minimize the distress (Barrington and Shakespeare-Finch, 2013). Often researchers or clinicians working on issues of child abuse or sexual violence are stigmatized, as the subject is shrouded in a culture of silence owing to societal taboos; as a result, aspersions could be raised on their personal history or professionalism (Canfield, 2008).

In the past, little attention has been paid to transcribing and translating in research training; and as this chapter illustrates, translating and transcribing are integral to the research process and could trigger vicarious trauma among researchers undertaking sensitive research, based on the experiences of the author. Vicarious trauma is well-documented among researchers working on socially sensitive research, such as sexual violence or child abuse (Kelly, 1988; Campbell, 2002; Letherby, 2000). Researchers have highlighted that transcribing can be an emotionally distressing process, as researchers listen to and type powerful and often distressing stories of research participants (Liamputtong, 2007: 89). The last decade saw a paradigm shift, with an increasing move away from viewing the translating and transcribing of qualitative interviews as purely a technical process (Temple and Edwards, 2002; Wilson and Revauger, 2001). Instead of theoretical soundness or technical accuracy of transcription and translation and literal or technical production of accurate transcripts, focus shifted to the meaning of words. Qualitative researchers are equally concerned with their social location, as it could potentially shape the interpretation and transcribing processes. This chapter aims to highlight the importance of vicarious trauma as a possible hindrance in the transcribing and translating. This chapter is organized into three sections: the first section provides insights into the key debates on interlinkages between the essence of feminism and feminist research, including subsections on translating and transcribing and also on the occurrence of vicarious trauma. The second section provides my main insights into the methodology of the study. The final section concludes with learning experiences for the researcher and its implications for the wider research practice.

VICARIOUS TRAUMA, TRANSLATING AND TRANSCRIBING: RESEARCHER VULNERABILITY

Socially sensitive research refers to studies in which there are potential social consequences or implications, either directly for the participants in the research or for the class of individuals represented by the research (Sieber and Stanley, 1988: 49). Qualitative research tends to be the domain of researchers working on issues that cannot be easily explicated through the positivist approach as a means of inquiry. This allows the perspectives of the socially excluded to be bought into the fold of academic thinking, as these perspectives are usually "silenced, othered and marginalized by the dominant social order" and, more importantly, "explain it to me—how, why, what's the process, what's the significance?" (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2005: 28). The epistemological, ontological and methodological premises of qualitative research facilitate the expression of experiences of marginalization that are shaped by those existing power relations that permeate all social institutions (Liamputtong, 2007). Existing institutional frameworks and ethical principles do not adequately address the vulnerability of researchers, both institutionally and also individually. It is commonly observed that researchers undertaking research on sensitive topics are more likely to face harassment or ostracism from their colleagues (Sieber and Stanley, 1988). Often this research is deemed as sensitive not only because "they are concerned with behavior that is intimate, discreditable, or incriminating" (Renzetti and Lee, 1993: ix) but also because the research reveals the fault lines of society, which leaves the social elite threatened. Therefore, researchers are often left vulnerable in this process, both physically and emotionally (see Chapter 10, this volume; Chapter 14, this volume). Based on a multifaceted understanding of power, Sieber and Stanley (1988: 5) state that "a sensitive topic is one that potentially poses for those involved a substantial threat, the emergence of which renders problematic for the researcher and/or the researched the collection, holding, and/or dissemination of research data."

Research is deemed as sensitive, Wellings et.al (2000: 256) suggest, "if it requires disclosure of behaviors or attitudes which would normally be kept private and personal, which might result in offence or lead to social censure or disapproval, and/or which might cause the respondent discomfort to express." In this sense, research into topics such as sexual conduct and preferences (gay men or lesbians, children as sex workers, the use of drugs and abuse, illegal activities and illness status—particularly stigmatized disorders, e.g., schizophrenia, bulimia, anorexia and HIV/AIDS), miscarriage and abortion, to name a few, may be included within the definition of sensitive research. Recent debates have rejected the positivist approach that is based on detachment between the researcher and the participant and instead has addressed the inevitability of ethical difficulties in fieldwork that partly emerge from the social location of the researcher (De Laine, 2000). Newer approaches have questioned the social value of sensitive research in

making a difference for the participants. As Lincoln (1995) explains, "the new 'activism' calls for social relationships that are intimate and close and requires researchers to demonstrate more authenticity, sensitivity, maturity and integrity than in previous moments of social science" (cited from De Laine, 2000: 2). Feminist and critical social science theories have expressed the need for more caring, sharing and nurturing relationships, with greater impetus placed upon emotionality, intuitiveness, intimacy, ethics and morality. The emotional impact that research has on the researcher is being recognized (De Laine, 2000).

Some researchers have gone so far as recognizing 'emotional labor' in social science research (Carroll, 2012). In these more recent works, sensitive research is inclusive of everybody in the research process: participants, interviewers, researchers and transcribers (Malacrida, 2007). The emotional labor is inevitable in relation to socially sensitive research, which is 'hard work' and can be 'sorrowful and difficult,' as it involves 'dealing with the participants' feelings about 'telling' and with feelings involved in the researcher by 'hearing' such accounts of appalling abuse (Melrose, 2002: 346). Researchers might share similar life experiences with the research participants and therefore might experience 'subjective distress,' which might be pain inducing for researchers undertaking research on sensitive topics (Melrose, 2002). Based on Hochschild's theory of emotional labor, Carroll (2012) indicates the need for explicit recognition of emotional labor as an integral part of social science research in which researchers' own experiences should be foregrounded, alongside strategies such as encouraging the use of reflexive journals by researchers. It is argued that this should be made integral to research training (Ortlipp, 2008). Despite major shifts in social science research, emotionality in the research process is still treated in opposition to rationality and professionalism and little is written about it, especially in the highly competitive world of academia where it poses a direct threat to the researcher. This affects novice researchers, with little understanding of the real politics of emotions, during the research process and its implications for them and their research (Wincup, 2001: 20). Especially when emotional distress can arise at unanticipated times during the research process (Hubbard et al., 2001).

University Institutional Review Boards do not usually sanction socially sensitive research projects, as they present complex ethical questions and demand nuanced analysis of the implications of findings. However, I argue that it is not feasible to reject socially sensitive research, as it has the potential to address pressing social issues and policy questions (Sieber and Stanley, 1988). Ignoring the ethical issues in sensitive research is not a responsible approach to science, and shying away from controversial topics simply because they are controversial is also an avoidance of responsibility (Sieber and Stanley, 1988: 55). No matter how hard we may try, it is difficult to predict the range of emotions that we may and will experience during our work. However, what should now be clear is that every research project

involves emotional work: at one and the same time, we have to deal with others' emotional reactions and confront our own feelings, be they negative or positive—social science research involves a balancing act. As researchers, we have to balance our desires and emotions with those of our research participants, which requires more than a little empathy, a not inconsiderable amount of intuition and skill and may involve some very hard choices (Hallowell et al., 2005: 40). Concerns around ethical issues are inevitable and emerge *ex post facto* (Fabian, 1991), which even the best planners cannot anticipate. However, sharing of field experiences can better prepare us to deal with emergent ethical difficulties.

The transgression of rigid academic boundaries is most visible in the work of feminists, who have brought forth the issues that the women's movement has addressed (Gilbert, 2001). In her work with women who have experienced infertility, miscarriage and child death, Gayle Letherby (2000: 103) lamented, "half way through the fieldwork I felt very low [. . .] The emotional involvement and emotional work involved in the fieldwork also led to emotional exhaustion." And when May, one of the participants, talked about her feelings when she failed to conceive a child as 'her time in the wilderness,' Letherby felt that this was also her own story and reported feeling complex emotions, including empathy, irritation and anger (Letherby, 2003). Similarly, Wincup (2001) writes of her research with inmates of women's prisons:

> my fieldwork took me away from the university for long periods of time and away from the support networks of supervisors and fellow students. I felt isolated as I battled with the emotional consequences of conducting research and my own anxieties about the effects of research on the participants. (24)

Emotions in the research process can consist of three interrelated components: emotional labor, wherein boundaries between researcher and participants become blurred as participants might expect direct help and often results in researchers reflecting on their personal histories and current circumstances (Hochschild, 1983 cited from Hubbard, Backett-Milburn and Kemmer, 2001); emotionally sensed knowledge, which engages with epistemology of emotion, which researchers can use to analyze their data and generate new insights through their intuitive understanding of the subject matter; and third, sociology of emotion, wherein researchers examine the presentation of emotions as a reflection of the social roles (Hubbard, Backett-Milburn and Kemmer, 2001: 122).

Not all emotions are negative. Denzin (1989, 70–71) has discussed the concept of epiphanies as those interactional moments that leave positive and negative marks on people's lives. These moments have the potential for creating transformational experiences for them. He argues that after a person experiences an epiphany, her or his life can never be the same. Therefore, he

points out that any event, transition or change that alters the course of life permanently is a turning point. This existential interpretative perspective that describes epiphanies is a useful approach when applied to the study of personal troubles and turning points or moments in the lives of interacting individuals, because it focuses on those life experiences that radically shape and alter the meanings that persons give themselves. Klouzal (2003:256) argues that attending to emotional pain can heighten the awareness of women's agency. Subjective responses tap into human agency and reflect the complexity and depth of people, a process that involves confronting personalities, values, emotions and relationships, as well as the ways that psychological needs go unmet. A woman's experience of illness contains her definition of the situation. Narratives about suffering are stories about women's struggles against conditions that threaten their dignity; gaining insight into the internal lives of actors allows an audience to develop a complex and empathic understanding of women's suffering. Such an approach also prompts the examination of the conditions and relations that threaten women's dignity, attachments, autonomy and self-fulfillment. Denzin (1992: 84) identifies four types of epiphanies: the *major upheaval*, which changes a life forever (e.g., a man murders his wife); the *cumulative*, which refers to the final buildup to a crisis in a person's life (e.g., a battered woman finally leaves home); the *illuminative moment*, in which the underlying existential structures of a relation or situation are revealed; the *relived moment*, wherein the person, after an event occurs, comes to define it in consequential terms (e.g., a widowed spouse gradually comes to feel free from a loved one's presence in their life). An epiphany occurs in problematic interactional sequences when the person confronts and experiences a crisis (cited from Dickson-Swift, James, and Liamputtong, 2008).

As discussed in the previous sections, researchers have discussed emotional upheavals and the experiences of epiphanies in the contexts of their research before. One of the research phases critically omitted, especially in cross-cultural research, is translating and transcribing. Usually the translator or the interpreter is rendered invisible within the research study. Some of the other common errors, include failure to pilot test interview questions in the participant's language, no description of the translator or interpreter's credentials, failure to acknowledge translation as a limitation of the study and inappropriate understanding that can be harvested from storytelling as data. "Transcription is not a mechanical event, but an important step in the process of 'meaning-making' and 'co-construction' of interpretative findings" (Poindexter, 2002: 75). Temple (2002) has specifically addressed how English-speaking researchers carry out research with people who either do not speak English or do not use it as their preferred language. Transcribing itself is a subtle and difficult craft learned through apprenticeship and experience and practiced improvisationally.

Feminist research provides researchers access to people's ideas, thoughts and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher.

Reinharz (1992, 35) writes "I sometimes had to remind myself that the woman's ability to retell a traumatic story meant she has already survived the worst of the pain." She also cites Becky Thompson's study on eating problems to discuss the stress that emerged from the interviews: "while I was transcribing each woman's words, I felt as if I were doing the interviews again: I could see the woman's face and her exclamation and pain" (Reinharz, 1992: 35). She further shared that she would fall asleep to escape the stress of transcribing interviews. Similarly, Kelly (1988: 12) speaks of her suppressed memories of losing her mother at the age of 12 resurfaced while interviewing and transcribing, she recalled five separate incidents of sexual assault or harassment from her childhood and adolescence. She realized why feminists have focused on defining and naming forms of violence, as much of the time women simply forget or cannot articulate what actually happened to them.

Rebecca Campbell (2002) has specifically provided insights into what it means to study rape as an emotionally engaged researcher. She interviewed 12 researchers in her team about their experiences of researching rape survivors. These interviews were thematically organized: (a) most emotionally difficult interview (b) emotions experienced throughout the project (c) how did we cope with the feelings (d) how these emotions shape the understanding of rape. Researchers had an opportunity to think about rape and what it means to them. Most of them shared feeling numb and not wanting to react, whereas some had outbursts like anger and crying. Although all researchers do not undergo emotional distress, some do, and we should acknowledge this emotional upheaval. There is a hierarchical relationship between thinking and feeling in the social sciences. This difference is created and maintained by teaching students to reject the role of the self, which includes rejecting emotionality (Campbell, 2002). Campbell's most important contribution to social research is to view emotions as vital to maintaining humanness as the central focus of our work without succumbing to demands of academia or practice. Emotions are central to knowledge, and rather than continuing to value their exclusion, perhaps the sciences would be better served through systematic investigation of how such subjective points of view inform the construction of knowledge (Campbell, 2002: 29). She also suggests that when we study emotionally difficult topics (like being

Table 17.1 Symptoms of Vicarious Trauma

Intrusive Reactions: Dreams/nightmares, flashbacks, obsessive thoughts, physiological reactions and other persistent reexperiencing of the traumatic event.
Avoidant Reactions: General numbing in responsiveness and avoidance (particularly of things related to the traumatic material).
Hyperarousal reactions: Hypervigilance and difficulty concentrating.

Source: (Morrison, 2007)

Table 17.2 Consequences of Vicarious Trauma

Mental Health: Anxiety, lowered self-esteem; depression; depersonalization; irritability; helplessness; diminished frustration tolerance; overwhelmed with emotions of anger, fear, grief, despair, shame and guilt; increased irritability; feelings of reduced accomplishment; procrastination; having no time or energy for self or others; increased feelings of cynicism, sadness or seriousness; increased sensitivity to violence; avoiding situations of danger; distrustful of people and the world; disruptions in interpersonal relationships; substance and caffeine abuse; personal neglect, such as poor diet; reduced physical activity; aggression; increased use of caffeine and other substances.
Physical consequences: Fatigue; insomnia; headaches; gastrointestinal disturbances; sexual problems; increased incidence of illness; increased risk of cardiovascular disease.
Social consequences: Withdrawal from social contact; decreased involvement with recipients; negative spillover from work to home.

Source: (Morrison, 2007)

a rape victim in her study), we need to have strategies to make the impact minimal for them before embarking on this type of research. This may prevent some emotional distress and hence harm on the part of the researchers (Campbell, 2002).

Reflections from Fieldwork Interviews with Women Living with HIV/AIDS in India

The absence of safety protocols to safeguard the emotional well-being of researchers requires serious reconsideration by academic institutions. As a PhD student, I had interviewed women living with HIV/AIDS in the Indian cities of Chennai, Mumbai and New Delhi, and in the semirural Thane district. I undertook fieldwork after completing the necessary research training in both quantitative and qualitative methods. During the oral examinations taken based on the proposal submitted to a panel of senior academics, I was asked pertinent questions related to my social location vis-à-vis the women I was interviewing. Since I was a privileged, white-collar researcher based in a developed country and the research participants were extremely socially stigmatized and marginalized, the power relations were obvious. I was asked how I would navigate through these power differentials and responded that the question of power was important. It is through seeking informed consent and respecting the privacy of the participants that power differentials may be quelled. However, most importantly I share the same cultural identity as the participants in my research, which makes it easier for them to communicate and share their experiences with me. I had a better education, so I could give them a listening ear, which they might not have had otherwise. This process of examination proved a turning point for me as I reflected

on my position in relation to the women and how I would negotiate the interviews with them. After getting the necessary ethical approval from the school ethics review board, I returned to my home country to undertake the fieldwork and contacted support groups for people living with HIV/AIDS to gain access to research participants. The interviews were successful, as women shared intimate details of their lives, including stories of marital violence, forced sex in intimate contexts, economic deprivation and social exclusion. One striking feature that emerged from the interviews was that in spite of living in difficult circumstances, the women still carried with them the hope of making a difference to other women so that they do not suffer from the same predicaments.

As rightly pointed out by some researchers, transcribing and translating can be very difficult periods toward the end of their research projects (Liamputtong, 2007). For me, translating and transcribing proved to be difficult, not only because of its cumbersome and tedious nature but also because I was reliving the moments I had shared with my research participants. I had come back to my university in the United Kingdom as an international student on a time-bound scholarship with intense pressure to complete my studies and return home. In addition, the absence of any awareness of the possibility of vicarious trauma or researcher trauma meant that I was left quite vulnerable, especially as I did not have the same support systems in a foreign country. When I was carefully listening to each word and each sentence of the recorded interviews, the various contours of women's lives started appearing to me; and those contours started merging into my life. I started drawing parallels between my life experiences and those of the women.

The organizational context in which research is carried out plays a vital role in shaping a researcher's ability to cope with vicarious trauma. I was in a highly competitive environment, wherein other colleagues did not want to share their research experiences. Ross correctly writes, "if a researcher shares negative experiences about her fieldwork she would be perceived as an academic failure and lacking the professional aptitude to cope with difficult circumstances" (2013). I was the only student working on issues of sexual violence, while other students were working on topics that might not necessarily involve the same levels of sensitivity. The support systems, such as a comfortable physical space or emotional support were clearly lacking and that contributed to vicarious trauma. As commonly noted by other researchers, supervisors are often too busy to engage with the specific sensitivities of their students; and this disconnect can be exacerbated, especially if they have never worked in the context of a developing economy, which is culturally different (Chapter 14, this volume). Women's narratives kept lingering with me, and I saw my personal circumstances as being similar to that of the women I interviewed. I was living alone, working toward completing my PhD with limited financial resources. At that point, if I had known of vicarious trauma, I would have been able to deal with my sudden bouts of bursting into tears and emotional exhaustion. It is difficult to share these

experiences with other friends who might not be engaging with such issues, especially if they come from a sociocultural milieu that is insulated from the precariousness of poor women's lives. Feminist research projects are carried out within the precincts of highly patriarchal institutions, wherein researchers like me exist in a marginalized position, and in such circumstances, one does have to wade through tough resistance to stories of women being told and heard. In such circumstances, it was easy to develop a negative attitude toward the indifference of people around one, but it did give me at least a better understanding of the depth of suffering undergone by women. Most importantly, I remembered that women had shared their stories with me with the hope that I would take their stories to the world. It was this hope that gave me the strength to continue.

After completing my PhD, I came across the literature on vicarious trauma; and in retrospect, I felt that had I known about it, I would have taken better care of myself, as I realized that one of the factors that triggered this was poor work-life balance. I worked relentlessly without breaks and with little exercise. I was in a constant dilemma about the trust that these women placed in me to communicate their stories and how I could make a difference. I was an ambitious and committed woman, but I did not have the strategies to take these stories forward at that point in time. As a full-fledged academic today, I feel deeply committed to addressing questions around the emotional safety of my students who are interested in undertaking fieldwork. But the difficulty of undertaking research on violence remains marred with challenges, as often such research is seen as challenging to the male bastions of academia. However, I am better aware of taking care of myself, and I continue to be committed to my research with women with a critical awareness of my own vulnerability.

In conclusion, my emotional upheavals have pushed me to develop an empathetic and compassionate approach toward my research participants. The ethical dilemmas confronting researchers undertaking sensitive research should be addressed through thorough research training, therapeutic interventions and self-awareness. The challenges faced during fieldwork should be viewed as opportunities for growth that promote greater individual development and the potential for social change (de Laine, 2000). A moment in fieldwork may be created to implement a more 'open' attitude toward what subjects expect of the researcher and how they experience the fieldworker. This could contribute to the establishment of fieldwork that is more moral (de Laine, 2000: 4).[1]

NOTE

1. The study was supported by School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work at Queen's University, Belfast. I am grateful to Professors Mike Tomlinson, Karen McElrath and Denis O'Hearn for their academic support.

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Conclusion

Keerty Nakray, Margaret Alston and Kerri Whittenbury

Each chapter in this book depicts fieldwork as a site of personal and professional contestation, but this process can also potentially make us more fully human as we push our own boundaries to become one with the suffering of others, share their triumphs and celebrate the indomitable human spirit to survive and live with hope. Ethics is a dynamic arena of enquiry that researchers should be willing to engage with through their research. Difficulties in research emerge due to existing power relationships in the societies being studied, and the potential for research topics to threaten these structural power relations are fraught with challenges. Therefore, researchers should anticipate difficulties in their path and work toward strengthening their capabilities through careful training, engaging closely with their peers and creating support networks with them. Researchers should be aware of their personal trajectories and how this influences their well-being in studying difficult topics. Nevertheless, we should never cease to engage with the critical thinking that forms the foundation for social change.

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