

Research Ethics and Conflict Related Sexual Violence - Interdisciplinary Workshop

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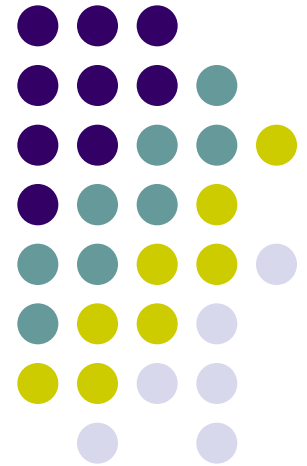
Ethical and Methodological Issues: Research on Conflict and Post-Conflict Sexual Violence and Torture in Africa



Trinity College, Dublin
13th May 2014

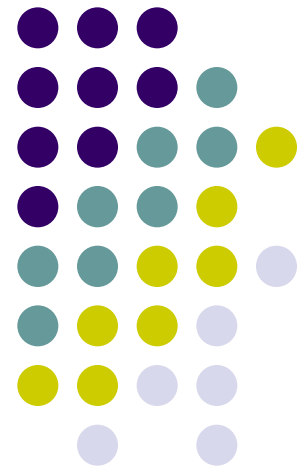
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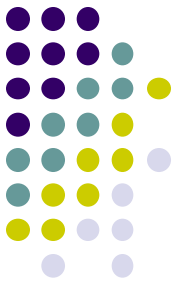


Question guiding presentation

How can we sensitively address the ethical and methodological issues that arise whilst carrying out research on sexual violence and torture in conflict and post-conflict settings?



Format of Presentation



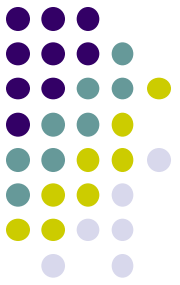
1. Context

**2. Ethical and Methodological Issues of
Research: Uganda, Liberia and eastern DRC**

3. Ethical framework and strategies

4. Summary





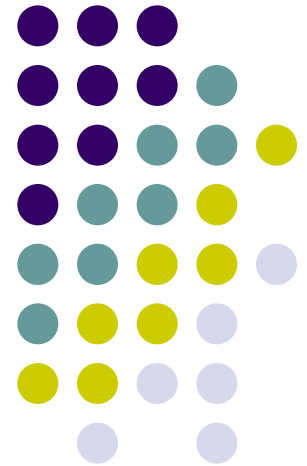
Context

- **Clinical Psychologist/Associate Member of African Studies Centre.**
- **Applied research, training and consultancies.**
- **Focus on conflict and post-conflict human rights abuses: health and justice responses for survivors in Africa and UK.**

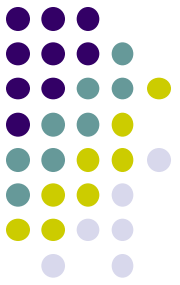


Research in Uganda

- Assisted to establish MSc. in Clinical Psychology, Makerere University.
- African Psycare Research Organisation, APRO, established.
- ESRC-funded PhD research (1999-2005)
“A Gendered Analysis of the Experiences of Ugandan Women War Survivors”

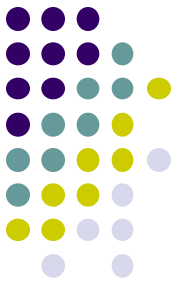


Ethical and Methodological Issues of PhD Research



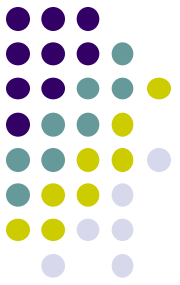
- **Collaboration with Isis-WICCE and community-based organisations.**
- **Feminist/participatory/action methods.**
- **Reflexivity.**
- **Sensitivity: gender, power & culture.**
- **Recruiting participants and safety.**
- **Negotiating ‘my position.’**

Ethical and Methodological Issues of PhD Research



- Working with interpreters.
- Payment for participants.
- Identity and representing participants.
- Equalising power relationships.
- Informed consent.
- Use of focus groups and empowerment.
- Political context.

“Governance of Sexual Violence in northern Uganda” (Liebling & Baker, 2010)

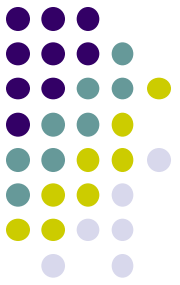


- Human rights abuses ongoing.
- Kitgum Women’s Peace Initiative.
- Stigma, shame and fear.
- Number of participants.
- Dissemination.
- ‘Giving back’ to communities.



“Experiences of Trauma Counselling Services in Northern Uganda: Implications for Mental Health Policy and Legislation”

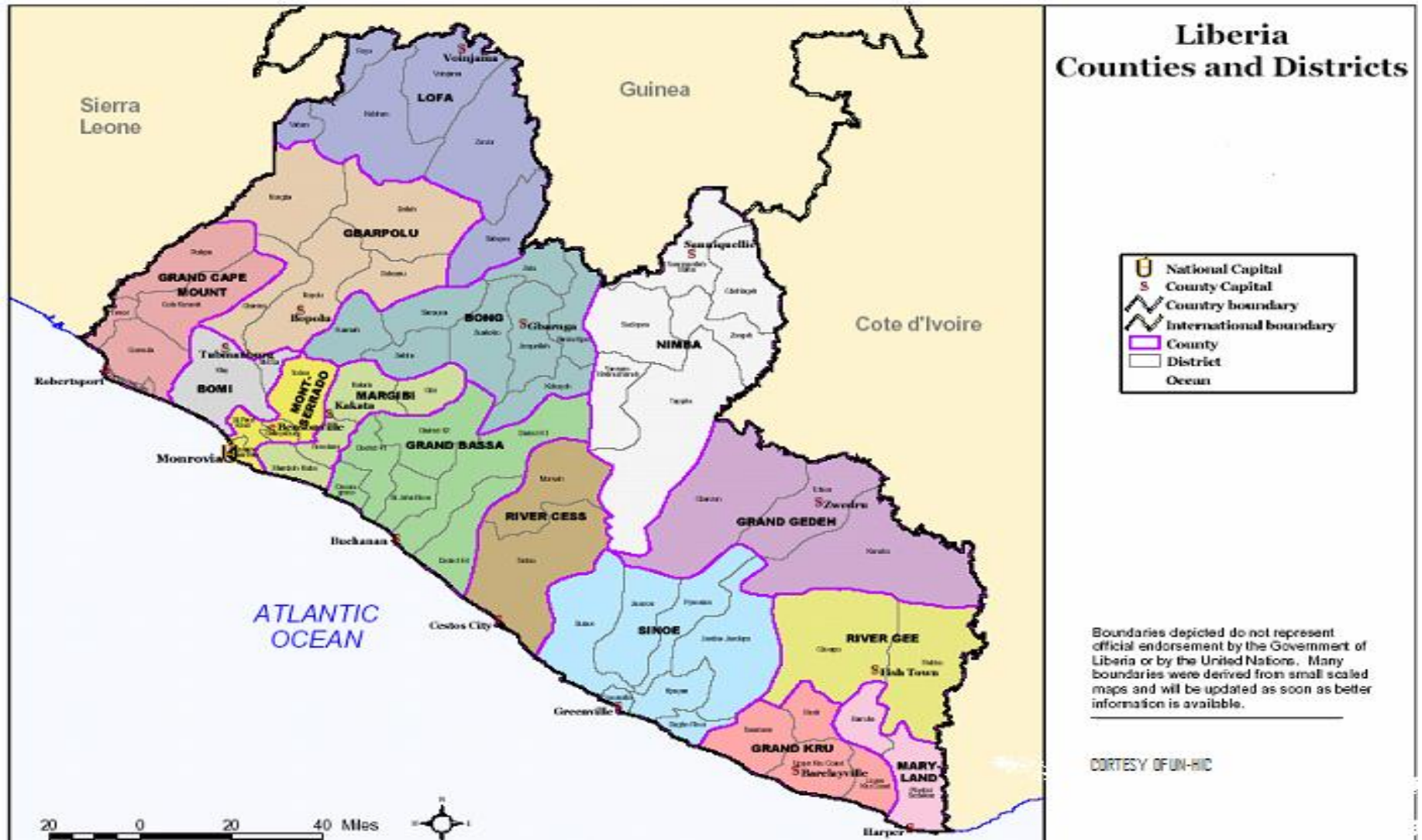
(Liebling & Davidson, 2013)



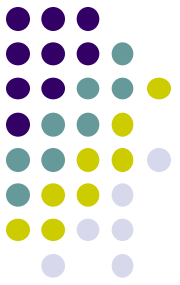
- **Ethics and research clearance.**
- **Conflicting roles.**
- **Individual interviews and methodology.**
- **Care of researchers and interpreters.**
- **Expectations of organisations.**
- **Relationship building and time-scale.**
- **Dissemination.**



Research in Liberia



Research in Liberia

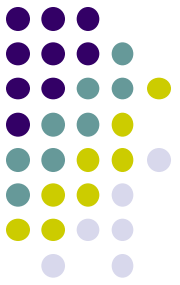


- Research reviewer and policy documents.
- Training in Harper: increase capacity for medical and psychological support.
- Medical Intervention (2009).

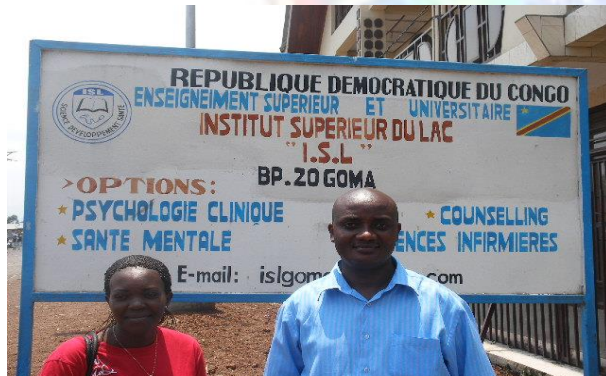


“Health and Justice Responses for Women and Girls Bearing Children from Rape: Case study of Goma, eastern DRC”

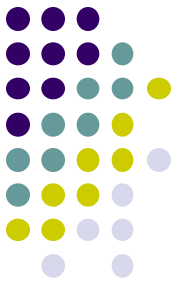
(Liebling & Slegh, 2011)



- Political context and security.
- Ensuring safety: care of participants and researchers.
- Sensitivity but challenging culture.



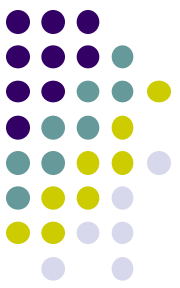
Research in eastern DRC



- **Managing competing demands.**
- **Being fully briefed.**
- **Managing researchers and participants feelings.**
- **Dealing with risk issues.**
- **Empowering participants.**
- **Use of research diary.**
- **Ethical processes and procedures.**

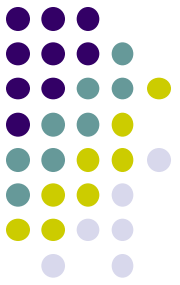


Ethical Framework



- **Close collaboration with organisations and community engagement essential.**
- **Special attention to feasibility of study**
 - **Safety.**
 - **Social value-benefits.**
 - **Selection of participants.**
 - **Awareness of vulnerability.**
 - **Informed consent.**
 - **Engaged in groups/services/organisations.**

Ethical Framework



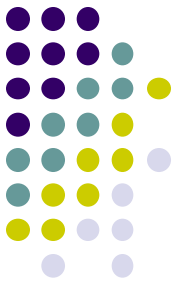
- **Harm/Benefit analysis of research**

- Importance of assessing this.
- Respect.
- Improvements to safety and service responses.

- **Political agendas**

- Being fully aware of these.
- Good briefing.
- Account for this in analysis.

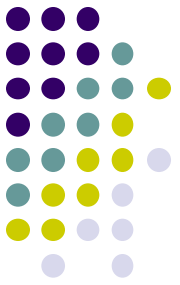
Ethical Framework



- **Ethical processes and procedures**

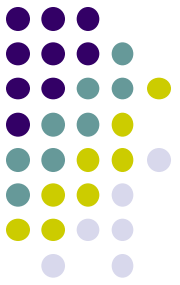
- **Independent reviews.**
- **Respect local systems formal and informal.**
- **Be sensitive and flexible.**
- **Support and protection of research team and participants.**
- **Build expertise of African colleagues and organisations.**
- **International networks and mentor.**

Ethical Framework



- **Sustainability and Impact**
 - Importance of good relationships.
 - Research owned and utilised by local organisations and key stakeholders.
 - Aim for full collaboration.

Ethical Framework



● Culture and traditions

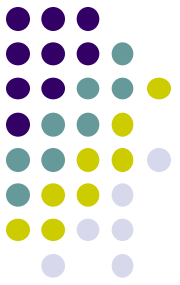
- Research may conflict with culture.
- Balance respect with challenge to improve practices and rights.
- Involve local leaders and organisations.

Summary



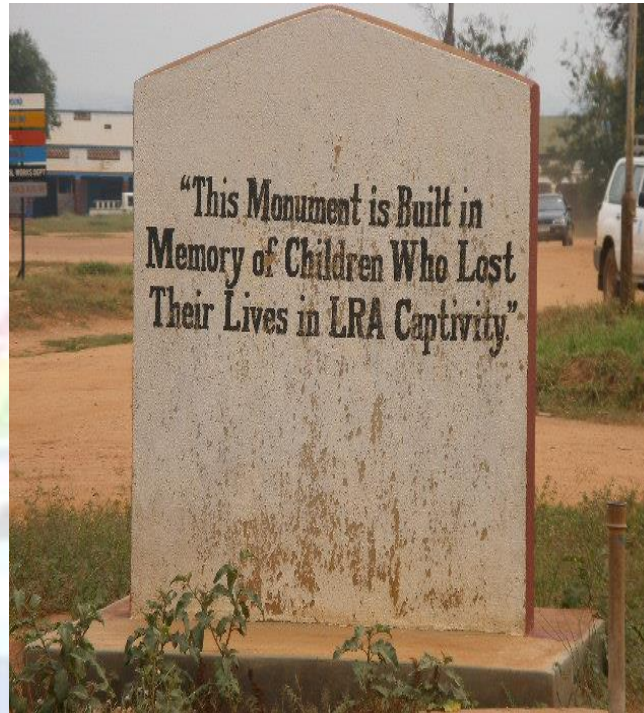
- **Research consistent with international human rights and strategies that strengthen efforts to combat impunity.**
- **Reflexivity and negotiation for challenging ethical issues: best interests of participants.**
- **International research strategy.**
- **Increased awareness, training and capacity building required.**
- **Methods that empower, protect rights and knowledge utilised to improve responses.**
- **Sharing practice and experience.**
- **Duty of care for participants and research team.**

Summary



- 1. Benefits of documenting sexual violence greater than risks.**
- 2. Research presents least risk to participants, good methods and builds on evidence.**
- 3. Basic care locally available.**
- 4. Safety and security paramount.**
- 5. Confidentiality when disclosure of human rights abuses must be protected.**
- 6. Informed consent always obtained.**
- 7. Research team carefully selected and trained.**
- 8. Additional safeguards if children are involved.**

World Health Organization (2007)



Thank you for listening
Any Questions?