



Inter-Age Relations in Post-Conflict Anti-Violence against Women and Girls Activism

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Abstract

This doctoral research into anti-VAWG (Violence against Women and Girls) activism relations in post-conflict societies was informed by life history interviews with twenty women activists in Namibia and Northern Ireland. The study examined how activists navigate through deep ethnic and ethnonational post-conflict division to come together to campaign towards feminist conceptions of justice. Findings reveal the importance of relations among and between feminist activists of different ages on two distinct levels. Firstly, inter-age relations impact activism in the here-and-now as activists of different ages develop in solidarity with each other and learn from different situated knowledges and experiences. This solidarity can bridge division and foster relational agency to strengthen contemporary activism practices. Secondly, in activist groups and networks that sustain over time, cross age relations can help transmit knowledge about complex, gendered legacies of conflict. Conflict-related VAWG is politicised and historicised in ways that can remain contentious post-conflict. Transmitting such knowledge is vital to enable younger activists make sense of oppressive aspects of post-conflict political culture and resolve to collectively resist them. However, some activists with lived experience of conflict are reluctant to campaign publicly about intra-group VAWG perpetrated by conflict actors, despite having privately intervened in support of violated women. Concern about damaging relations among anti-VAWG activists contributes to reluctance to highlight this under-acknowledged and contentious issue. Insight into these activists' perspectives deepens our understanding of slowness in activism addressing the harms of the past, which can be discordant with the pace of transitional justice and political processes.

Keywords: Ethnicised division, feminism, human rights, relational agency, solidarity