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## Stories Told By, For, and About Women Refugees: Engendering Resistance

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### Abstract

In this paper I discuss some of the ways women's narratives reflect how they make sense of seeking asylum<sup>[1]</sup> and how narratives can become a means of resistance. The interview data comes from a qualitative study<sup>[2]</sup> looking at the in-depth narratives of seventeen women who had all made a claim for asylum in the United Kingdom (UK). The women who participated had been living in the UK for different periods of time, ranging from a couple of months to seven years. Aged between early twenties to mid-fifties, they came from fourteen different countries of origin. I utilised an in-depth narrative approach to interviewing women which offered a number of distinct advantages: allowing for women's narratives to be the focus of the study; capturing the particularity, complexity and richness of each woman's story; and highlighting women's agency in storytelling (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998, 2003). Interviews lasted between one and a half to three hours and were conducted in a wide range of different locations in the UK.

[1]The term 'asylum seeker' used in this study include women who have made a claim for asylum under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, regardless of the legal determination on their claim.

[2]This study was developed from PhD research that was funded by an Economic and Social Research Council studentship.

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Globally, women have fewer opportunities for economic participation than men, less access to basic and higher education, greater health and safety risks, and less political representation. Guaranteeing the rights of women and giving them opportunities to reach their full potential is critical not only for attaining gender equality, but also for meeting a wide range of international development goals. Empowered women and girls contribute to the health and productivity of their families, communities, and countries, creating a ripple effect that benefits everyone. The word gender describes the so Inspired by the stories of the women in this study and drawing on nuanced concepts of 'resistance', this chapter offers a narrative framework of resistance for better making sense of storytelling. I suggest that adopting a feminist narrative approach can allow us to make sense of how and why women might tell their stories in relation to particular dominant narratives. Stories told by, for and about women refugees: Engendering resistance. ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies, 14(4), 461–469. Google Scholar. Smith, K. (2015b). Europe under fire for refugee policy - English News Lessons: Free 26-page & 2-page lessons / online activities / 7 Levels... HRW spokesperson Judith Sunderland said: "The EU is standing by with arms crossed while hundreds die off its shores. These deaths might well have been prevented if the EU had launched a genuine search-and-rescue effort." Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi singled out Libya as the key problem and said efforts should focus on refugee boats leaving Libyan ports. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their countries / organisations aren't as good. Also, tell the others which is the worst-equipped of these (and why): the USA, the EU or the United Nations. Role D – The United Nations.