

Can you hear the Screaming?: Locating silences for transcultural research

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This poster is based on the theoretical framework underpinning my PhD. The research study focused on black Caribbean men's sexual decisions and was conducted explicitly by myself as a Black Caribbean, female sexual health professional. A central issue in the methodology was the role played by social scripts in framing the experiences of individuals in society. The study explored the ways in which socially determined sexual scripts impact on the lives and health experiences of Black individuals in British society at a particular point in time. In investigating these issues the notion of 'screaming silences' was developed to unite the theoretical and philosophical approaches that underpinned the research and the experiences of the researcher and participants involved. Screaming silences applied in this study exposed the way in which social scripts shape, influence and inform individual and group understanding of sexuality and sexual expression in Britain today. Thus acting as a contextualising feature to sexual interaction and negotiation.

While the term screaming silences was specifically applied to a sexual health and ethnicity context it provides a potentially useful basis for developing a theoretical framework for ethnicities based research in general. Screaming silences are defined as areas of research and experience which are little researched, understood or silenced (Serrant-Green 2004). Whether or when they are heard is determined by the listener and they are exposed through the voices of the marginalised in specific contexts. The intent here is to present the notion of screaming silences and begin to map out the possibilities for its wider application to ethnicities based research.

Serrant-Green, L (2004): Black Caribbean men, sexual health decisions and silences: A qualitative study. Unpublished PhD. University of Nottingham