Research Workshop

Transitional justice, reproduction & gender narratives:
Bosnia Herzegovina, Colombia, Estonia, Timor-Leste

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Abstract

Many (feminist) scholars have actively critiqued the lack of "gender lens" in transitional justice processes (Christine Bell, Catherine O'Rourke, Katherine M. Franke, Fionnuala Ní Aoláin). More specifically, Ramona Vijeyarasa wrote in her 2009 article, how reproductive rights and reproduction in general do not receive enough attention in post-conflict development agendas.

Our workshop is fuelled by the same concern – where are reproductive rights issues such as forced pregnancy, abortion, access to contraception, and reproductive violence in transitional justice conversations?
However, we set out to approach this question more broadly as we understand reproductive rights not just through lists of services and specific entitlements, but through power relationships and gender narratives.
Therefore, in this workshop we bring together the transitional justice experiences of Bosnia Herzegovina, Colombia, Estonia and Timor-Leste, and analyse, how specific constructions of "truth", "violence", "silencing" and "victimhood" have contributed to shaping the reproduction and health narratives currently present in these four societies.

We make observations about the existence and strength of feminist movements in these countries, and investigate how cultures and religions have shaped women's experiences during and after the conflict-, or occupation-related violence.
What has happened to women's bodies? Which roles are assigned to/enforced on women? We explore gaps and disconnects between legislation, implementation of laws, and women's lived experiences and larger societal narratives. We show, how in transitional justice one size does not fit all, and how some of the experiences are different if not completely opposite.