SIXTH INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE:

Memory and Transitional Justice:
From a ‘duty to remember’ to pluralistic memory scapes?

25-26 October 2017

KU Leuven, Faculty of Law, Large Conference Room
(www.law.kuleuven.be)

Background

The last decades have witnessed an observable urge to commemorate the commission of serious human rights violations and international crimes. This has been driven by a ‘duty’ to remember past injustices and a global demand for remembrance captured in imperatives such as ‘never again’. In line with these developments, non-judicial and symbolic forms of justice aiming at memorialisation and memory-making are gaining prominence as significant building blocks in the expansion of the field of Transitional Justice (TJ). The mainstream TJ discourse concurs that memorialisation practices such as memorials, commemoration ceremonies, the renaming of schools or streets as much as history education will lead to reconciliation, democratisation and a ‘healing’ of society – and therefore contributes to justice-making through non-judicial measures of TJ.

However, the mechanisms through which memory practices facilitate these positive outcomes of transitions remain elusive. Indeed, critical voices have raised various concerns about this simplistic perspective on memorialisation as a symbolic form of reparations. Such scholarship has argued that memory of past injustices can easily turn into a ‘symbolic minefield’, can perpetuate victim-perpetrator hierarchies, can be instrumentalised by memory entrepreneurs in order to legitimise certain agendas or be used by political elites to (re-) build state sovereignty on the back of the memory of human rights abuses. Memorialisation as symbolic reparation is often a key site of contestation, which shapes processes of exclusion and inclusion of different groups of justice claimants and their various understandings of the past. The key problem therefore is to make narratives of the past ‘thick’ enough to capture the complexity of past injustices and at the same time to integrate different and often opposing versions of the past in order to make those accessible to a wide range of individuals and groups across an often fractured post-conflict/authoritarian society.

The seminar is organised as a closed expert meeting (by invitation only) of two half days where academics, practitioners and policy makers will discuss various aspects of the duty to remember and other forms of memorialisation in times of transition and beyond. It serves as the sixth one in a longer series of international seminars organised since 2008 by the Research Line on Human Rights and Transitional Justice of the Leuven Institute of Criminology, Faculty of Law,
University of Leuven - KU Leuven (Belgium). Earlier editions have focused on traditional forms of transitional justice, the rule of law, interdisciplinary approaches, victim reparation policies, and the right to truth, all designed to discuss cutting-edge issues in transitional justice from a global perspective.

Objectives and Structure

The expert seminar's key objectives are:

- Knowledge exchange of different conceptual frames at the intersection of memory studies and transitional justice;
- Furthering knowledge on the complex ways memory and transitional justice processes shape each other within various post-conflict/post-authoritarian contexts;
- Discussing possible ways of creating co-existing memories and thick narratives that reconcile different understandings of past abuses and embrace various victim groups.

For this purpose, the expert seminar is structured around four panels that each tackle different aspects of memory and transitional justice such as the normative framework, the politics of memory and its entrepreneurs, the problem of contested memories, and the practice of memory construction.

Paper presenters are encouraged to investigate the dynamics of memorialisation practices and the impact of changing social and political priorities on the meanings given to memory-making processes and their underlying rationales. A selection of the expert seminar papers will contribute to an edited collection on memory and non-judicial justice processes.

Programme

Wednesday 25 October

13:45 Welcome and introduction to the seminar
   Stephan Parmentier, KU Leuven and Julia Viebach, University of Oxford

Session I: Setting the Stage – ‘Never Again’, memory, symbolic reparations and human rights violations

Chair: Stephan Parmentier, KU Leuven
Rapporteur: Furtuna Sheremeti, KU Leuven

14:15 Keynote address
    Brandon Hamber, University of Ulster

14:45 Keynote discussant
    Berber Bevernage, Ghent University

15:05 Open discussion
    Moderated by Elisenda Calvet Martinez, University of Barcelona

15:30 Health break
Session II: The Politics of Memory - Between conflicting collective understandings of the past and memory entrepreneurs’ interests

Chair: Huma Saeed, KU Leuven
Rapporteurs: Miryam Rivera Holguin and Laura Vanduffel, KU Leuven

16:00 Introduction/Discussant
Johanna Mannerhagen Selimovic, Swedish Institute of International Affairs, Stockholm

16:15 Garnering local memories, healing communities: a case of Uganda’s memory dialogue(s) initiative
Chris Dolan and Jackson Odong, Makerere University, Kampala

Memorialisation between recognition and reconciliation
Ingrid Samset, Leiden University

16:45 Short health break

17:00 On victims and heroes in post-conflict Peru: how transitional justice shapes memory after civil war
Eva Willems, Ghent University

Reconciling contested memories takes time: the case of Chile
Anita Ferrara, National University of Ireland, Galway

17:30 Remarks by discussant and open discussion
Moderated by Valerie Arnould, Egmont - Royal Institute of International Relations and KU Leuven

18:30 Concluding remarks
Mina Rauschenbach, KU Leuven and University of Lausanne

Thursday 26 October

Session III: Spaces of Recognition? Tensions between individual and collective memories

Chair: Maria Chiara Campisi, University of Roma Tre, Rome
Rapporteurs: Lene Guercke and Ellen Van Damme, KU Leuven

9:15 Introduction/Discussant
Erin Jessee (University of Strathclyde, Glasgow)

9:30 Grieving lost normalcy: a Kosovo case-study of social memory, incomplete transitional justice and political agency
Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Melanie Klinkner, Bournemouth University

Living and telling historical (in)justice: narrativity and action in ‘post-conflict’ Guatemala
Tessa Boeykens, Ghent University
Ordinary citizens’ responses to the official genocide commemoration in Rwanda (1994-2014)
David Mwambari, Ghent University

10:15 Remarks by discussant and open discussion
Moderated by Alexia Pierre, KU Leuven

11:00 Health break

Session IV: Roundtable with memory practitioners on case studies and lessons learnt

Chair: Silvana Mandolessi, KU Leuven
Rapporteur: Laura Hein, KU Leuven

11:30 Short presentations:
- Christophe Busch, Museum for Holocaust and Human Rights, Mechelen
- Martien Schotsmans and Clara Sandoval, RCN Justice et démocratie, Brussels
- James Smith, Aegis Trust, London

Concluding session

Chair: Pietro Sullo, KU Leuven

13:00 Final remarks
Ricardo Falla, Jesuit and anthropologist, Guatemala
Yasmin Sooka, Foundation for Human Rights, Johannesburg
Stephan Parmentier, Mina Rauschenbach and Julia Viebach

13:30 Close of the seminar

Organisation

The scientific organisation of this international seminar lies with Stephan Parmentier, Mina Rauschenbach and Julia Viebach, and all members of the Research Line on Human Rights and Transitional Justice, Leuven Institute of Criminology, University of Leuven – KU Leuven (Belgium).

The seminar enjoys the logistical and financial support of the Fund on Transitional Justice, University of Leuven, which was initiated in 2015 by the Research Line on Human Rights and Transitional Justice at KU Leuven and Intersentia Publishers Antwerp, and is administered by the KU Leuven University Fund. Its main objective is to serve as an interface between academic research on the one hand and practice and policy-making in transitional justice on the other hand. It organises seminars and lectures, is engaged in networking activities worldwide, and offers visiting opportunities to the University of Leuven for academics, policy makers and practitioners. It is also the home of the international book series on Transitional Justice, edited by Stephan Parmentier (KU Leuven), Jeremy Sarkin (Nova Law School, Lisbon - University of South Africa) and Elmar Weitekamp (University of Tuebingen).

More information about the Fund on Transitional Justice is found on the following web page: https://www.kuleuven.be/mecenaat/fondsen/rechten/fund-on-transitional-justice. Donations of 40 Euro and more are tax deductible.
Other events on transitional justice

The expert seminar is part of a larger series of events on transitional justice held in the week of 23 October 2017, all supported by the Fund on Transitional Justice:

- **Monday 23 October**, Faculty of Law, KU Leuven (Tiensestraat 41, Leuven): opening of the international exhibition ‘Huellas de la Memoria’ (an artistic project aimed at supporting the families’ search for their disappeared relatives in Mexico); see: https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/forty-pairs-shoes-go-display-london-highlight-student-disappearances-mexico; free entrance to all;

- **Tuesday 24 October** (18:00-19:30), Town Hall of Herent (Spoorwegstraat 6, 3020 Herent): ceremony for the Guatebelga Quetzal Prize for Human Rights and Democracy in Guatemala awarded to Mr. Ricardo Falla, Jesuit and anthropologist, Guatemala (advance registration required); see: www.guatebelga.be;

- **Thursday 26 October** (17:00-19:00), Aula Magna, Faculty of Theology, KU Leuven (Maria Theresia College, Hogeschoolplein 4, Leuven, room 00.10): Second Distinguished Lecture on Transitional Justice, delivered by Mrs. Yasmin Sooka, Foundation for Human Rights, Johannesburg; see: www.law.kuleuven.be/linc.

**More information:** Prof. Stephan Parmentier, University of Leuven - stephan.parmentier@law.kuleuven.be - www.law.kuleuven.be/linc