

HCRI PGR Conference Programme – 25th September 2020

Welcome to the annual HCRI PGR Conference for 2020! The conference brings together the excellent ongoing research undertaken by the PhD community in HCRI. A variety of different issues central to humanitarian affairs feature, from the complexities of refugeeism and the role of the state in turbulent times to the emergence of different modes of practices and sense-making amidst spaces ridden by conflict. The projects exhibited reflect the truly inter-disciplinary character of HCRI too, showing the importance of all manner of humanities and social-science perspectives for our exploration of humanitarianism more generally. And in so doing the conference aims to afford an open forum for the presentation and exchange of emergent ideas and debates stemming from empirical research from future scholars in the field.

Timeline

Arrive in Zoom waiting room **12.35pm – 12.50pm**

Introductory comments from Dr Nat O’Grady, PGR Director **12.50pm – 1.00pm**

PANEL 1: Humanitarian Responses and Interventions **1.00pm – 2.15pm**

Chair: Ria Sunga

Speakers:

1. Margot Tudor: ‘Historicising military humanitarianism: relief efforts by UN peacekeepers in Cyprus, 1964-1967’
2. Phoebe Shamburgh: ‘Imagining what futures: Education, displacement and futurity’
3. Juliano Fiori: TBC

Q & A (30 minutes)

15 MINUTE BREAK

PANEL 2: Lived Experiences of Conflict **2.30pm – 3.30pm**

Chair: Professor Larissa Fast

Speakers:

1. Ingri Bøe Buer: ‘One Man’s Peace, Another Man’s Warzone: Peace Processes in a Violently Contested Colonial City’
2. Rohi Jehan: ‘Reconstructing the Role of Gender in Kashmir Conflict: A Case Study of Parveena Ahanger’

Q & A (30 minutes)

15 MINUTE BREAK

PANEL 3: Institutions and Constructing Peace **3.45pm – 5.00pm**

Chair: Dr Louise Tomkow

Speakers:

1. Margaux Pinaud: ‘Civil Society Roles in Ceasefire Monitoring: An Example from Nepal’
2. Hanna Matt: ‘Soviet Humanitarianism? The Soviet Society of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, Disaster, Relief and Soviet Modernity in Central Asia’

3. Rana Khalaf: 'Local Governance in conflict inflicted areas of limited statehood: A theoretical framework'

Q & A (30 minutes)

Closing comments from Professor Mandy Turner

5.00pm – 5.15pm

Abstracts

PANEL 1: Humanitarian Responses and Interventions

Margot Tudor: 'Historicising military humanitarianism: relief efforts by UN peacekeepers in Cyprus, 1964-1967'

This paper historicises the blurring of humanitarian and military operations in conflict settings by examining the case study of the UN peacekeeping force in Cyprus during 1964-1967. Following an outbreak of inter-communal violence between Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities in December 1963, the UN secretary-general created the UN peacekeeping mission, UNFICYP, in April 1964 with a military mandate to 'prevent a recurrence of fighting'. However, due to this delay in response, the Force arrived on the ground to a state of humanitarian emergency that the Force Commander could not ignore. Thousands of Turkish-Cypriot civilians had been forcibly displaced from their 'mixed' villages by the leaders of the Turkish-Cypriot paramilitaries in order to create a de facto partition across the middle of Cyprus. Subsequently, the Greek-Cypriot army attempted to siege the displacement camps, hoping to 'starve out' the Turkish-Cypriot population. Attention to Turkish-Cypriot displacement has been focused on the post-1974 context and there remains a lacuna of studies exploring the longer history of displacement and humanitarian relief on the island. This paper argues that the UN troops' short-term and ill-resourced response amplified inter-communal tensions and insecurity within the refugee camps. Peacekeepers' activities also confused public perceptions of the mission as a military force as they assumed a humanitarian role, despite their lack of training, resources, or mandate. This case study highlights the security risks of palliative relief distribution in a context where political stagnation and civilian displacement facilitated the intensity of hostilities between the warring belligerents.

Phoebe Shamburgh: 'Imagining what futures: Education, displacement and futurity'

My project is broadly speaking looking at education for displaced populations, ideally refugee groups in Kenya. This project has evolved significantly from the original proposal, which focused on gender, schooling and security in refugee and emergency education. As currently framed, the project proposes to explore education in refugee contexts as a space of divergent and potentially contested 'imagined futures' between refugees, humanitarian and NGO workers, and political actors. I will engage with issues around uncertainty in displacement, temporality of (humanitarian/development) interventions, and education as futurity. My question is: Whose visions for the future shape what it means to be educated in refugee camps?, though it will undoubtedly shift as fieldwork uncertainty continues (particularly the specificity of 'refugee camps'). This presentation will outline the main points of my conceptual lit review, and likely a discussion of the potential avenues for fieldwork.

Juliano Fiori: TBC

PANEL 2: Lived Experiences of Conflict

Ingrid Bøe Buer: 'One Man's Peace, Another Man's Warzone: Peace Processes in a Violently Contested Colonial City'

This article considers the meaning of peace in a violently contested city in a (post)colonial democracy. It offers a new consideration of peace processes that engage with the needs and challenges of marginalised, racialised populations living through urban violence in the expanding peripheries of the postcolonial world. The research draws on the perspectives of favela community leaders and activists on the challenges to their work in reducing violence in their communities, gathered during eight months qualitative fieldwork in and around the favelas in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Through a critical lens, the article considers Rio de Janeiro as a colonial city where the historical and continuous state exclusion, criminalisation and murder of favela residents feed a violent cycle of drug related crime and violence in the favelas. The paper questions the meaning of peace and top-down pacification processes in a colonial city where the favela residents have since slavery been considered a violent people to be pacified and controlled. It thus critiques the militarised state security operations in the favelas as one man's peace, another man's warzone; noting that in a colonial city these pacification attempts effectively conduct urban warfare against the majority black favelas in order to increase a sense of security in the whiter, wealthier areas. The article therefore proposes and discusses favela peace formation as a concept to describe the alternative processes in the favelas working to reduce manifest and structural violence: a nonviolent, favela grassroot, locally legitimate peace process that navigates various blockages and opportunities within and outside the state in its construction of a future with more social justice and less violence.

Rohi Jehan: 'Reconstructing the Role of Gender in Kashmir Conflict: A Case Study of Parveena Ahanger'

In more than 30-years of conflict in Kashmir, women have been reduced to mere victims by mainstream media. When we talk about women's voice, they are shown as wailing mothers, mourning over the death of their loved sons, or lamenting widows, sorrowing over the death of their husbands. However, attempts are made by women groups and organisations to draw attention to the differently situated experiences of oppressed groups like women in Kashmir. Encouraging a refocusing of the conflict away from the traditional domains of representations and aesthetics, these groups have given importance to the multiple and diverse experiences and voices of women, which were previously excluded from the mainstream discourse. However, the contribution of women's groups in shaping political landscape of the region lies not simply in its potential to disseminate liberal ideas but its ability to form a counterpublic sphere, where the attitudes and interests of ordinary women are increasingly defined and shaped.

Nancy Fraser (1990) has criticized the original conception of the public sphere for its alleged exclusion of women. In place of it, Fraser puts forward the concept of counterpublics of subordinated groups (mainly of women and minorities) with an inherent purpose to challenge the hegemonic male narratives. Taking cues from the narratives of Parveena Ahanger, who is known for extensively taking up issues of those women whose family members got disappeared in more than three-decades conflict in Kashmir, my work would try to investigate how such narratives function as counterpublics within Kashmiri society.

Parveena Ahanger, chairperson of Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP), whose 17 years old son was picked up from her house 25 years ago, and till now his whereabouts

are not known. Despite being barely educated, she has developed a discourse that unravels the different layers of both patriarchal and state oppression. Ahanger has formed a counterpublic by developing a narrative which would challenge the patriarchal setup as well as state apparatus within Kashmir. Taking samples from such voices, this work also tries to study the nature of patriarchy that draws its technicalities from the strategic power relationship within the Kashmiri cultural framework.

PANEL 3: Institutions and Constructing Peace

1. Margaux Pinaud: "Civil Society Roles in Ceasefire Monitoring: An Example from Nepal"

This article argues that involving civil society in ceasefire monitoring can help create a cooperative environment around preliminary ceasefires that allows ceasefires to last and to evolve into durable peace agreements in civil wars. It develops four causal pathways through which, in theory, civil society can affect ceasefire outcomes, namely by: exposing noncompliance; facilitating intra- and interparty communication; promoting the political engagement between the parties; and mobilising people outside the ceasefire. It then looks at whether and how these four causal pathways apply empirically, through the case of the civil society-led National Monitoring Committee for the Ceasefire Code of Conduct (NMCC) appointed to monitor the ceasefire between the Maoists and the government of Nepal in 2006. Based on unique data from interviews conducted in Nepal in 2019, the author finds evidence that the NMCC helped prevent major violations of the ceasefire and create a supportive environment for the parties to reach the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in November 2006 through the four causal pathways outlined in the theory. Yet, in introducing three major constraints faced by the NMCC related to the lack of impartiality, resources and diversity, she calls for nuance in discussing the role of civil society in ceasefire monitoring.

Hanna Matt: 'Soviet Humanitarianism? The Soviet Society of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, Disaster, Relief and Soviet Modernity in Central Asia'

I have been fascinated by the history of the Soviet Union, and in particular the notion of an alternative Soviet modernity since the first semester of my undergraduate history degree. My PhD seeks to explore this concept through the lens of humanitarianism. Though the history of humanitarianism is increasingly well studied, our grasp of non-western forms of humanitarianism, particularly in 'illiberal' environments remains incomplete. In considering the case study of the Kazakh Famine of 1930-1933 I hope to better understand how modernity and disasters were experienced in the context of Soviet Central Asia and how responses to 'domestic' crises contributed to the development of relief practises in the Soviet Union. The activities of the Soviet Red Cross and Red Crescent act as a starting point for the exploration of Soviet relief in Central Asia. I am further interested in local responses to and personal experiences of famine in Kazakhstan. Though historians have begun to consider these, I think further research is necessary into how differential access to resources led to a multiplicity of experiences in order to challenge the perceived binary between the state and people in Soviet Central Asia. In my conference presentation I will give a brief overview of my literature review and discuss the avenues for further research I have identified and how I might approach them.

Rana Khalaf: 'Local Governance in conflict inflicted areas of limited statehood: A theoretical framework'

During conflict, states may be without functioning governments, but not without governance. New orders, interactions and forms of power emerge to create patterns of local governance. Especially under such contexts where the “normal” institutions of governance –governments– are compromised, such local governance formations can impact peace and state formation. However, this impact remains understudied.

When local access is not the issue, the tendency to securitize governance is. This is as the study and praxis of governance becomes subservient to mainly western security interests. Such has been the case with dominant studies, particularly under the banner of “rebel governance”. These rarely engage critically with the processes that lead to emancipatory peace, or that impact state formation. Meanwhile, research on local governance in relation to peace and state formation, including in the Peace and Conflict literature, remains in its infancy.

This paper seeks to cover this gap in its focus on the Middle East region. It looks into: 1. how local governance practices and formations emerge and change in conflict inflicted areas of limited statehood; and 2. how such local governance comes at the intersection of peace and state formation. In this scope, I cover just part of much broader systems and conflicts. Yet often transnational and globalized, common trends are evident and focus on one part can inform relevant practices and debates.