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Advice for Future Truth Commission Architects: How to Gender-Mainstream and Intersectionality- Mainstream Consultations, Operations, and Final Reports to Improve Outcomes in Healing, Justice, and Empowerment

Natalie Romeri-Lewis

Brigham Young University, nataliemilan@gmail.com

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Research Panel: Dynamics of Transitional Justice and Advocacy

Presenter: Natalie Romeri-Lewis, Brigham Young University

Title: Advice for Future Truth Commission Architects: How to Gender-Mainstream and Intersectionality-Mainstream Consultations, Operations, and Final Reports to Improve Outcomes in Healing, Justice, and Empowerment

Abstract:

Intersectionality theory identifies some females at higher risk for experiencing silencing and human rights abuses than others (Crenshaw 1989) and calls for analyzing discrimination among interconnected identities (e.g. ethnicity, level of education, urban-rural residence). Thus, we ask, have truth commission designers gender-mainstreamed or applied intersectionality theory when respectively designing, promoting, taking statements at, and writing the final reports and recommendations of truth commissions?

First, this project identifies the level of gender and intersectionality awareness of academic truth commission studies and the more than 20 existing transitional justice datasets found in Mallinder and O'Rourke (2016). Second, this project aims to capture whether and when truth commission architects have used gender and intersectionality lenses while crafting different aspects of the truth commission: the mandate, statement-taking, hearings, professional services offered, final report, and recommendations. To answer these questions, this study draws upon the intersectionality variables in a new dataset on women as statement-makers and as staff (e.g. commissioners, psychologists) in all 33 TCs to have operated and their experiences. The dataset presents gender and intersectionality at the institutional design, statement-taking, and report and recommendation phases. Third, the author will convert the above qualitative data into quantitative data, design original scales, and then scale all variables across truth commissions. These scales will allow future truth commission architects to compare and embed best practices into their own commissions and better appoint commissioners, hire staff, and recruit statement-makers.

About the presenter:

Natalie W. Romeri-Lewis, J.D., M.Sc., Cert. teaches international development and transitional justice at Brigham Young University and is a senior project associate at The WomanStats Project. After studying international development, refugees, and law, Romeri-Lewis explored judicial reform and women's informal power in developing nations and lived in Asia, Europe, and Latin America. She worked in judicial chambers and NGOs, consulted internationally, and presented to new staff at UN permanent missions. She In addition to studying domestic violence laws, women in parliament, and peacemaking, Romeri-Lewis analyzes how truth commissions can better provide human rights victims with an experience that leads to healing, empowerment, and justice outcomes.