

Screening Violence: a transnational approach to the local imaginaries of post-conflict transition

Thursday, 18 June 2020 12:00 (1h 30m)

“Screening Violence: A Transnational Study of Post-Conflict Imaginaries”, an AHRC-sponsored research project currently in progress, aims to map the local imaginaries of conflict and post-conflict transition in five locations across the globe (Algeria, Argentina, Colombia, Indonesia and Northern Ireland). Our decision to focus on the social imaginaries of conflict is based on the premise that it is within the imaginary that the meanings of these struggles is fixed. A key feature of the project is its interdisciplinary and participatory approach to knowledge production, which draws on popular culture and its reception as a way into the rich textures, ambiguities and inconsistencies of symbolic worlds. We work with the medium of film in a multi-faceted way: as a methodological tool designed to set up debates that allow us to chart social imaginaries; as an imaginary space itself, both reflective and constitutive of the popular imaginaries in question; and as creative expression, as we work with local filmmakers to co-create a cinematic cartography of the imaginaries that emerge in each site throughout the project. Focus groups and audience ethnography serve as a people-centred, participatory approach to the production of knowledge that goes beyond the screenings in our attempt to understand local imaginaries.

Reflecting on this complex work in progress, this panel seeks to engage conference participants in relation to four key areas of discussion:

- How do questions of scale affect the study of local social imaginaries? In other words, how do local understandings of conflict show the influence of the local, the national and the international?
- The first relates to the value of using film as both a conceptual frame (film as a popular imaginary space in itself) and methodological tool (film spectatorship and reception as a window into the imaginary) for carrying out field research that aims to map the local imaginaries of post-conflict transition;
- The second addresses the architecture of the project and the challenges of carrying out this study comparatively across five sites.
- The third concerns how best to ‘translate’ and communicate the results from our multidisciplinary research, rooted in what popular cultural expressions can tell us about the imaginaries of conflict, in a way that speaks to both academics and practitioners within the area of International Relations.

The roundtable will be structured and present findings as follows:

1. The role of the imaginary in understanding post-conflict societies.
2. Film reception and audience ethnography: From teaching to researching using film in IR (Diah Kusumaningrum & Simon Philpott)
3. Watching Indonesia and Colombia from Argentina (Philippa Page)
4. Watching Indonesia and Colombia from Algeria (Guy Austin)
5. Watching Indonesia and Colombia from Northern Ireland (Brandon Hamber)
6. The potential for Impact: Roddy Brett

Track Classification: #FutureIR @NclPolitics