

International Workshop

Translatability of Genocidal and Mass Violence: Evidentiary Practices, Narratives of Remembrance, and Future Making

April 7 – 8, 2016

ABSTRACTS

1. Kjell Anderson

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Rethinking ‘The Intent to Destroy’: Socio-Legal Evidentiary Frameworks for the Establishment of Genocidal Intent

Many or even most perpetrators of genocide do not possess purpose-based genocidal intent. And yet the perpetration of genocide would not be possible without the participation of hundreds or even thousands of non-genocidal killers. How can we reconcile the facts with the current purpose-based interpretation of genocidal intent? How can we address the problem of participation in genocide?

The intent to destroy the group is the defining characteristic of genocide. This intent is what effectively separates genocide from other international crimes such as crimes against humanity. The intent to destroy an ethnic, racial, national, or religious group is at the heart of genocide. And yet proving this special intent is a notoriously difficult evidentiary problem. Absent the (rare) occurrence of direct statements from the Accused courts are left to determine the intent to destroy on the basis of the perpetrator’s actions or contextual factors.

Moreover, while there are many judgments seeking to interpret and apply the concept of genocidal intent, these almost exclusively draw from legal doctrine while giving relatively superficial attention to the significant body of social science research on the perpetration of genocide. In evaluating facts they utilise de facto socio-legal frameworks of analysis without fully considering whether these frameworks accord with research on the participation and motivation of individual perpetrators. This paper will synthesize social scientific and legal approaches in order to illustrate that the present interpretive concept of genocidal intent is wholly ill-suited to address the realities of the crime of

genocide. It will consider, in particular two elaborate frameworks for the interpretation of evidence of genocidal intent – those of The Milorad Trbic case in the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina (CtBiH) and the Popovic case in the International Criminal tribunal For the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). In drawing from social scientific understandings of perpetration it will argue that genocidal intent is complex and multidimensional, thus most accurately assessed through a knowledge-based approach.

Bio:

Kjell Anderson is a social scientist and jurist focused on collective violence and mass atrocities. He holds a doctorate in International Human Rights Law from the National University of Ireland, as well as an LLM in International Human Rights Law from Utrecht University, and MA and BA degrees in International Studies from Carleton University and the University of Saskatchewan, respectively. His work experience includes the National University of Ireland, National University of Rwanda, Hague Institute for Global Justice, Forum des Activistes Contre la Torture (FACT-Rwanda), and the Organization of American States. He has delivered Transitional Justice and International Criminal Justice training programs in South Africa, Morocco, and the United Arab Emirates, and been a visiting researcher at the University of the South Pacific (Fiji) and the West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences (India). Anderson is in the process of completing a book on perpetrators of genocide (*Killing without Consequence*, Routledge, 2016). He is currently a researcher/lecturer at the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust, and Genocide Studies, as well Vice President of the International Association of Genocide Scholars.

2. Ralph Buchenhorst

Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg

Fact and/or Fiction: How to translate difficult pasts into reliable representations for the future?

A huge number of emerging or established juridical, scientific and aesthetic practices constitute a powerful response to past genocidal and mass violence. At first sight, these practices produce or refer to a solid factual basis. They are generators or stabilizers of evidence. Among these the most important ones are international criminal prosecution, initiatives of restorative justice, new methods in forensics like genetics, the archiving of survivors' memoirs, artworks and memorial sites. Obviously, not all of these practices have the same objective and representational strategies. But - and this will be the main focus of the paper - it might be appropriate to distinguish two main categories: one that subsumes those practices generating reliable knowledge about genocidal violence, thus creating an integrated onto-epistemology, and one that relates to narratives generating a confusing array of world views and thus rather obfuscate the way we see the future of social interacting.

My approach to understand this constellation will focus on this dualism of representations. On the one hand, it will scrutinize efforts in the scientific field of dealing with mass atrocities as well as in contemporary genocide studies where experts have elaborated protocols for different forms of evidence provided by expert witnesses, survivors' testimonies, discourses on human rights, and forensic data. Their aim is to produce more robust evidence and establish unambiguous languages of humanity (von Schnitzler 2014). In the case of the Shoah, evidence created on the basis of these protocols has become so ubiquitous that it shapes the historical consciousness of different generations worldwide. Correspondingly, objectivist claims of this evidence are perceived as the most reliable defense against negationists. The paper will examine these claims to understand how they are bound to specific circumstantial parameters and how they are responding to attempts to falsification. On the other hand, I will discuss aesthetic representations like images or literature that are presented as powerful tools in coming to terms with the past and in protecting universal human rights. These manifestations do not always seem compatible with objectivist claims, they produce their own impacts and forms that sometimes rather tend to obfuscate and undermine bluntly objectivist claims by looking for disorientation and incitement.

Confronting both representational regimes, the paper claims that a somewhat contradictory picture unfolds: evidentiary practices attempt to establish a common understanding of mass violence and to create a shared narrative about the past, while other ways of dealing with violent pasts tend to propel the ever threatening discourses of the limits of representation, of relativism, of instrumentalization, and of the excess of images of the past.

Bio:

Ralph Buchenhorst is Senior Researcher at the Research Cluster „Society and Culture in Motion“, Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Vienna (Ph.D. thesis about Heidegger's philosophy of art and Paul Celan's theory of poetry) and his habilitation (German qualification for full professorship) from the University of Potsdam (on the philosophical discourse on the representation of the Holocaust). Buchenhorst has been a DAAD guest professor of philosophy and cultural studies at the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina (2002-2006), and at the European Forum of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel (2013). He is a specialist in Critical Theory, genocide studies and memory discourses on the Holocaust and on the victims of the last dictatorship in Argentina.

He is co-editor of “Memory and genocide: On what remains and the possibility of representation” (Routledge, forthcoming), and author of *Das Element des Nachlebens. Zur Frage der Darstellbarkeit der Shoah in Philosophie, Kulturtheorie und Kunst* (The Element of Afterlife. On the Limits of the Shoah's Representation in Philosophy, Cultural Theory and Art, Fink 2011) and has published extensively on aesthetic representation and remembrance.

3. Youk Chhang

Documentation Center of Cambodia & Rutgers University-Newark

ASEAN genocide education

Genocide is a shocking phenomenon but it has happened so often over the past century, and we have heard about it so much that it is as though we have become anesthetized to it. From the Armenian death marches to the Jewish extermination camps to the Cambodian killing fields and then the Darfuri massacre villages, we find out about genocide. We hear about it on television. We read about in newspapers and books. And what happens? We immediately recoil. And then we quickly turn our gaze away. And then we move on. And that is why genocide continues to rear its ugly head again and again. To combat it, we're going to need to modify our attitude toward it. It cannot be straightaway swept under the rug. In fact, we must embrace genocide. We must stare deeply into its infinite ugliness and realize it has insidiously managed to insinuated itself into the human condition. If we stare at it unflinchingly like this, we can learn what it really is, how ultimately antithetical it really is to the deeper parts of the human condition, and how, with this realization, we can finally learn how to fully eradicate it once and for all. This talk will consider the evolution of the public's perception of genocide. It will trace the history of this perception and then suggest how educating the public about genocide can and should change. We must embrace the history of genocide so that we may finally eliminate the scourge of genocide.

Bio:

Youk Chhang is the Executive Director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia and a survivor of the Khmer Rouge's "killing fields." Before leading Documentation Center of Cambodia, Chhang managed human rights and democracy training programs in Cambodia for the U.S.-based International Republican Institute and was an international staff member assisting the Electoral Component of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia. Chhang is a Senior Research Fellow at the Center for the Study of Genocide, Conflict Resolution, and Human Rights at Rutgers University-Newark. He was a member of the eminent persons group who founded the Institute for International Criminal Investigations in The Hague in 2003. He is also a Board Trustee of Air Asia. Chhang is the author of several articles and book chapters on Cambodia's quest for memory and justice and is the co-editor of *Cambodia's Hidden Scars: Trauma Psychology in the Wake of the Khmer Rouge* (2011), and the executive producer of a documentary film entitled *A River Changes Course* (2012).

4. Anne Fleckstein

Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle

Quantifying Story-telling: The Database of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission

When we think of testimonies of human rights' violations, we think of witnesses telling their stories. Few people, however, will think of databases. This is the more astonishing as most testimonies of human rights violations are recorded and archived in databases. These databases serve on the one hand as archives that make testimonies transportable and accessible. On the other hand, quantitative databases make stories comparable, they allow establishing patterns and trends that can be represented as diagrams and statistics. They can even produce quantitative evidence, which sustain legal claims and form a sort of collective narrative.

One of the first quantitative databases of human rights' violations in the transitional justice sector was the database of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1996-2002). My paper will describe the procedures that transformed victims' stories into quantifiable data in the South African case. The South African experience turned out to be both a pilot project and a turning point in the implementation of quantitative capture of human rights violations. Following that, the paper will give a short outlook on the evolution of quantitative evidence in legal and historiographical aftermath of mass atrocities.

Bio:

Anne Fleckstein is a Ph.D. student at the International Max Planck Research School "Retaliation, Mediation and Punishment (REMEP)" and the Bauhaus University Weimar. Her dissertation deals with media and technologies of truth in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. She has been a member of the Research Network, Law, Organization, Science and Technology at the Martin Luther University in Halle (Saale) since 2011. From 2008 to 2014, she held stipends from the DFG Graduate Research Program "Media of History - History of Media" at the Bauhaus University in Weimar and the Graduate School "Society and Culture in Motion" at the Martin Luther University in Halle (Saale). She is currently in charge of the Africa program of the German Federal Cultural Foundation.

5. Wendelmoet Hamelink

Research fellow at Leiden University

Alternative stories about genocide and survival: Armenian survivors and their descendants from Sassoun, eastern Turkey.

Due to the century long denial of the Armenian genocide by the state of Turkey, evidence and testimonies have predominantly been produced outside of the place where the genocide took place, and most survivors were never able to return or even visit their place of origin. The physical displacement caused by mass violence was thus continued by a displacement of memory and testimony. A strongly nationalist Armenian narrative emerged that defined the Turkish state, and often also Turks, Kurds, and Muslims, as the

ultimate enemy.

For Armenians who continued living in Turkey after the genocide such a production of testimonies and narrative could not take place until only very recently. In the aftermath of the 2007 murder of Hrant Dink a new institutionalization and new forms of commemoration emerged within Turkey. Descendants of survivors began to openly present themselves as Armenians and looked for new ways to give meaning to their painful history. Since their narratives and testimonies emerged not outside, but inside, of Turkey, they display awareness of the complexity of continuing life in a society with a history of genocide and hostility.

In this paper I examine the recent testimonies and narrative-making of Armenians from Sassoun, eastern Turkey. How do they, after a century of silence, talk about their hidden histories? How do their narratives differ from those produced outside Turkey? What encounters take place between the earlier and newly emerging narratives, and how do descendants deal with the differences? I argue that the coming to light of new stories, even one century after the genocide took place, leads to a new and different process of personal and societal reconciliation that has the capability of informing and changing existing narratives also outside Turkey.

Bio:

Wendelmoet Hamelink, PhD, is a cultural anthropologist and works as a research fellow at Leiden University and a guest researcher at Research institute Fafo in Oslo. She is also an associate editor of the Kurdish Studies Journal. For her PhD she worked on Kurdish oral performers in Turkey (*The Sung Home. Narrative, morality, and the Kurdish nation*, Brill 2016). The book contributes to a better understanding of how power relations and everyday politics are articulated through and played out in cultural productions and cultural activism. As a postdoc researcher at the Max Weber Stiftung she worked on cultural memories of Armenians from Sassoun. She currently works in a Fafo research project on refugee experiences in Norway, and prepares new research on images and experiences of Kurdish women who escaped from Syria.

6. Jo-Marie Burt

George Mason University

From heaven to hell in ten days: The genocide trial in Guatemala

On 10 May 2013, before a packed courtroom, a Guatemalan court found former de facto president General José Efraín Ríos Montt guilty of genocide and crimes against humanity and sentenced him to 80 years in prison. The conviction was handed down for crimes committed against Guatemala's Maya Ixil indigenous population during Ríos Montt's 17-month rule in 1982 and 1983, the bloodiest period of Guatemala's 36-year armed conflict. Ríos Montt was sentenced to 80 years in prison—50 years for genocide and 30 years for crimes against humanity. His house arrest was revoked and he was immediately

transported to Matamoros Prison. Retired General Manuel Rodríguez Sánchez, the former head of military intelligence under Ríos Montt, was acquitted of the charges against him.

The victory was short-lived, however, as ten days later, under intense pressure from business elites and still-powerful sectors of the military, the Constitutional Court partially annulled the proceedings, effectively vacating the judgment. The retrial date was set for January 5, 2015, but the proceedings were collapsed when, in the face of a recusal motion of the presiding judge, the other two judges on the panel accepted the motion. Since then, the proceedings have been trapped in a legal morass.

Drawing on the author's work as an international observer to the genocide trial, interviews with those directly involved in the case, and archival research, this article suggests an alternative reading. By situating the genocide trial in relation to the broader transitional justice process in Guatemala and in the region more broadly, I argue that the setback in the genocide case should be viewed as a reaction to initial transitional justice success that is neither unexpected nor fatal to the accountability process.

Second, the paper argues that the genocide case is illustrative of a victim-centered approach to human rights prosecutions that hold important lessons for transitional justice theory and practice. The paper examines the way the direct testimonies of victims of sexual violence were incorporated into prosecutorial strategies and helped prove that genocide had taken place in Guatemala. In the presentation, I will draw comparisons to the recently celebrated trial in Guatemala, the Sepur Zarco trial, in which two military officers were convicted on charges of crimes against humanity in the form of sexual violence and sexual and domestic slavery, as well as for murder and enforced disappearance, to further elaborate this point.

Finally, I argue that despite undoing of the genocide verdict, the very fact that the trial took place is historically and politically significant, both for survivors and for historical memory debates in Guatemala and Latin America as a whole. I explore the ways victims' associations and human rights groups are resignifying the proceedings to highlight the moral, political, and historic victory represented by the genocide verdict, and their continued challenges of the decision that nullified the verdict at domestic and international levels.

Bio:

JO-MARIE BURT is associate professor of political science and director of Latin American Studies at George Mason University. She is also a Senior Fellow at the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), a human rights advocacy organization. Dr. Burt has published widely on state violence, human rights and transitional justice in Latin America. Her current research focuses on human rights prosecutions in Latin America, and she has served as an international monitor of key trials, including the trial against former Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori, the Ríos Montt genocide trial, and

the Sepur Zarco sexual violence trial in Guatemala. Dr. Burt has served as an expert witness in human rights cases in courts in the United States, Peru, and before the Inter-American Court for Human Rights, and was a researcher for the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission. She is a member of the Advisory Board of the Peruvian Forensic Anthropology Team (EPAF) and the Observatorio Luz Ibarburu, which monitors human rights prosecutions in Uruguay. She is currently writing a book about human rights prosecutions in Latin America. Dr. Burt holds a PhD in political science from Columbia University.

7. Fazil Moradi

Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology and University of Halle-Wittenberg

Evidentiary forms in memory of acts of genocide

In this contribution I look at *acts of translation* and discuss how in the aftermath genocide is irremediably transformed into drawings, exhibits of human skeleton and mummified bodies, literary works, remnants, and archival photographs. I examine how, as acts of translation they substitute for genocidal violence, how they act, and how they are understood as evidentiary forms to speak of memory and the future as evolving. This understanding differs from a future that becomes present and then descends into the past. In making visitors, viewers, and readers to bear witness in memory of genocide only through institutional, visual, and epistemic translation, these evidentiary forms are expected to preserve memory, stand against denial and possible future reoccurrence of genocide. This is transformative as the audience is turned into “witness *in* translation, witnessing *by* translation, and witnessing *through* translation”. Signifying the intersection of art and modernity, with science and technology at the forefront, they thus articulate testimonial evidence and memories. In order to elaborate on these acts of translation this paper encompasses four separate productive acts: (a) drawings of survivor testimony of the artist Osman Ahmad in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq; (b) human remains, mummified bodies, and visual evidence in Rwanda; (c) the question of testimonial story-telling in Maurice Blanchot’s literary work, *The Instant of My Death*, and Boubacar Boris Diop’s book, *Murambi: The Book of Bones*; and finally the memory of and the testifying ruins and archival photographs of the Armenian Surp Giragos Church in the Kurdish populated city of Diyarbakir in Turkey.

Bio:

Moradi is currently completing his doctoral dissertation at Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology and Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg in Germany. He has carried out the first anthropological study of the Iraqi Ba‘thi state’s genocide (al-Anfāl operations, 1987–1991). He is a member of the International Max Planck Research School on Retaliation, Mediation and Punishment and the Research Network, Law, Organization, Science and Technology, University of Halle-Wittenberg. His research interest covers modern state formation, bureaucracy and archive, evidence, testimony,

and memory, modern evidentiary institutions and sites, symbols of everyday mourning, justice, forgiveness, forgetting, and visual and aesthetic translation in the aftermath of genocide. Moradi has published papers in international journals, has contributed book chapters for edited volumes, and is coeditor (with Maria Six-Hohenbalken and Ralph Buchenhorst) *Memory and Genocide: On What Remains and the Possibility of Representation* (Routledge 2016).

8. Nicky Rousseau

History department, University of Western Cape

Eastern Cape Bloodlines: Assembling and Producing the Human Nicky Rousseau, University of the Western Cape

In 2007, the Missing Persons' Task Team (MPTT) exhumed the remains of five anti-apartheid activists who had been 'disappeared' and killed by apartheid security police in two separate operations in 1982 and 1985. The MPTT is an official body, based in a unit established by the South African government as part of its obligations as a signatory to the International Criminal Court, but which also has responsibility for investigations arising from the work of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). This particular investigation centered on the grounds of a property, Post Chalmers, situated in the rural area of the Eastern Cape, where security police claimed to have killed the five men, burnt their bodies and thrown the remains into the Great Fish River.

This paper focuses on the practice of exhumation, and the drive to establish *identity*, a process that increasingly has come to rest on establishing genetic 'bloodline' or lineage via scientific, preferably DNA analysis. Yet even where this is possible, such analysis is merely the end process of a much longer one of investigation and exhumation, thus involving assemblages of persons, techniques and disciplines, working with different evidentiary practices through which evidence is produced, read and interpreted. Notably also some of these practices are affective, sensorial, aesthetic: for example, exhumation is also a practice of rehumanization, one that centers around hands and their handling of artifacts and bone. Following Zoe Crossland, it is also one in which a body is less recovered than produced.

In thinking about the particular 'bloodlines' associated with the exhumation at Post Chalmers, and the ways in which they are assembled (including here), this paper works with the tensions between exhumation as a project of recovery and recuperation for history, for nation and for justice, and exhumation as a practice open to other possibilities of future-making. In discussing this tension, the paper draws attention to the considerable work that is expended in stabilizing the exhumed body, upon which the claims of social history, nationhood and transitional justice rest. Part of this work necessarily returns us to modes of evidence, and how these translate across disciplines, technologies and practices.

Bio:

Nicky Rousseau teaches history at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa. She is a former researcher for the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and subsequently worked as a research consultant to South Africa's National Prosecuting Authority on post-TRC investigations, prosecutions and missing persons. Her current research interests include truth commissions, violence, histories of liberation, and human remains.

9. Victoria Sanford

Department of Anthropology, Lehman College

Documenting Human Rights Violations and Genocide to Support Survivor Claims for Justice & Asylum

When asked why exhumations of mass graves were important for human rights investigations, the late, great Dr. Clyde Snow famously said, "The bones don't lie." From Argentina to Guatemala, Iraq to Sri Lanka, Mexico to Congo, and many other corners of the world, Dr. Snow investigated massive human rights violations and trained a new generation of human rights investigators. In the process, he built a new role for anthropology and anthropologists to investigate and document human rights violations for legal processes in truth commissions and courts as well as for the production of historical memory for society and reclaiming of historical subjectivity for victims and survivors.

Drawing on 25 years of experience investigating human rights violations and genocide in Guatemala, I will discuss the theory and practice of forensic exhumations, victim identification, archival and testimonial research and their interplay in legal processes and community desires for justice. I will explore the ways in which science, law and justice complement and collide with one another as investigations move forward from the field to legal courts and the court of public opinion. I consider the role of the researcher as both documentarian and participant in the production of history as well as legal precedents. From the international genocide case against the Guatemalan generals in the Spanish national court to Central American political asylum cases in the United States, I explore the myriad ways social scientists work with legal professionals to provide evidence and context to survivor claims in local, national, regional and international courts.

Bio:

Victoria Sanford is a professor and chair of anthropology and founding director of the Center for Human Rights and Peace Studies at Lehman College, City University of New York, and doctoral faculty at the Graduate Center (CUNY). She is the author of *Buried Secrets: Truth and Human Rights in Guatemala* (2003), *Violencia y Genocidio en Guatemala* (2003), *Guatemala: Del Genocidio al Femicidio* (2008), *La Masacre de*

Panzos: Etnicidad, Tierra y Violencia en Guatemala (2009), coeditor (with Asale Angel-Ajani) of *Engaged Observer: Activism, Advocacy, and Anthropology* (2006), among others, and coeditor (with Katerina Stefatos and Cecilia Salvi), *Gender Violence, Conflict and the State* (2016).

10. Shela Sheikh

Goldsmiths, University of London, London

Performing the Politics of Memory: Grupa Spomenik, the Bosnian Genocide and the Articulation of Justice

In their Pythagorean Lecture: Mathemes of Re-association (first performed in 2009), the art and theory collective Grupa Spomenik (Monument Group) take as their object of concern the role of forensic science in the process of the re-association of the disarticulated, hence unidentified, mortal remains of the victims of the mass killings of Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) in Srebrenica in 1995. While advances in forensic science and anthropology have undoubtedly contributed enormously to the search for justice and legal accountability, Grupa Spomenik's work brings to light the potential co-option and instrumentalization of such evidentiary and reconciliatory technologies and the manner in which the treatment of the victims by internationally sanctioned, humanitarian responses at times comes dangerously close to mirroring that of the original perpetrators.

At the heart of this paper is a questioning of the status of evidence, produced by forensic science, in investigations into violations of human rights. Through a reading of the Pythagorean Lecture, I affirm a social, cultural and scientific performance, as a mode of emancipatory political practice and will, that brings together (articulates) science, anthropology and the arts, and that sets forward (again, articulates) a critique of the positivism espoused by legal and scientific institutions and at the heart of various regimes of 'the governance of trauma'. Here, Grupa Spomenik's practice is viewed as an unique lens through which to re-view forensics' 'matter of fact' as a (Latourian) 'matter of concern'. Central to the paper are two conceptual and material motifs: performance and articulation. In the work of the Forensic Architecture project, the practice of forensics is re-imagined as that of *forensis*, Latin for 'pertaining to the forum' and origin of the term forensics. Here, the Latin forum's capacity as a potential space of politics is resuscitated. Evidentiary, inanimate objects necessitate animation, active interpretation and corroboration – the mediated speech (articulation) of what Roman rhetorician Quintilian called *prosopopeia*. In the case of the Pythagorean Lecture, the absent bones are quite literally animated and performed. Meanwhile, the deeply troubling fate of the disarticulated remains of victims demands a re-consideration of that which takes place in and escapes from the space of articulation between subject and object, speech and writing (traces), testimony and evidence, affirmation and denial, truth and fiction, epistemological openness and closure, with this unlocatable space of in-betweenness here conceptualized through Derridean *différance*, or what Grupa Spomenik name 'the stubborn remainder'. In this reading, Grupa Spomenik's performance opens up a

performative space of discourse that works to unhinge and complicate common assumptions about the application of contemporary (forensic) science within the realms of humanitarianism and the politics of memory.

Bio:

Shela Sheikh is lecturer at the Centre for Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London, where she convenes the MA Postcolonial Culture and Global Policy. Prior to this she was Research Fellow and Publications Coordinator on the ERC-funded “Forensic Architecture” project based in the Centre for Research Architecture, and lecturer in the Department of Visual Cultures, both at Goldsmiths. Sheikh completed a PhD in History at Goldsmiths in 2013. She is currently working on two research projects: a monograph about the phenomenon of the “martyr video-testimony” and its cultural representation, read primarily through the lens of deconstruction; and a multi-platform research project around colonialism, botany and the politics of planting.

11. Victor Toom

NUCFS Research Associate

Leverhulme Trust Early Career Research Fellow

Technolegal realities in the wake of the Srebrenica genocide

Wars and other violent conflicts are never without victims, and the hostilities in the former Yugoslavia throughout the 1990s are no exception to this rule. The Srebrenica genocide—the massacre of approximately 8,000 Bosnian Muslims, or Bosniaks, by the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS) in July 1995—is the bloodiest example of this statement in post-WWII Europe. In the months and years after the massacre, attempts, using various sources and methods, were made to determine how many people were killed. This paper describes, juxtaposes and contrasts various technoscientific and legal, or “technolegal,” mechanisms that helped to determine how many persons were killed. More specifically, I consider the practices of “counting,” “estimating” and “forensics” to articulate the various post-genocidal realities that became and become enacted through these technolegal mechanisms. As such, I’m addressing ontologies and politics of accounting practices in the wake of the Srebrenica genocide.

Bio:

In years past, I’ve studied and published about the identification of persons. I first focused on the use of forensic DNA technologies to solve crimes, and later shifted attention to the identification of disaster and atrocity victims. My current social science research project documents the forensic and legal, or technolegal, aftermath of the 1995 Srebrenica genocide. I just finished a three-year research project about the disaster victim identification operation in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in NYC. I’ve received funding from the European Union Research Executive Agency (2016-2017, EUR 160

000), the Leverhulme Trust (2012-2015, GBP 87 000) and Nuffield Foundation (2011, GBP 11 000). I'm now working at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main, worked at the Northumbria University Centre for Forensic Science from 2010 until 2015, was a PhD candidate at the University of Amsterdam from 2004 until 2010, and was a research assistant at the Universities of Amsterdam and Twente from 2002 until 2004. I was visiting fellow at the Institute for Public Knowledge, New York University (2013-2015) and the National University of Singapore (September and October 2011).

12. Jennifer Trowbridge

Department of Anthropology, New York University

Do Bones Talk? Interpretation and the Social Construction of Forensic Evidence in Transitional Justice Latin America

How do dead bodies in post-war settings produce meaning through scientific and social registers? This paper will question how are bones made to “tell their stories” in post-war or “transitional justice” contexts through two contrasting evidentiary regimes, namely, forensic scientific accounts of death events, and testimonial narratives produced by witnesses. Bringing an ethnographic Science and Technology Studies perspective to the forensic sciences – in particular the fields of forensic anthropology, forensic archaeology, and forensic genetics – I aim to show that forensic sciences are in fact important and dynamic sites of scientific knowledge production. I argue that forensic scientific data are not self-evident; rather, they must be interpreted by the scientists that produce them. Moreover, findings from each of the different forensic fields must be compared and amalgamated in each case to produce a comprehensive narrative of the death event, which then becomes evidence for criminal justice trials. This often-obscured process is highly social in nature, and complicates assumed boundaries between “natural” and “cultural” ways of knowing the past.

I will also question whether victims’ relatives esteem the sciences in the same way as those working on transitional justice from more strict evidentiary institutions such as courts of law. What importance, for instance, do families of the dead place on forensic scientific findings versus on the return of bodies for reburial? How are narratives of what happened co-constructed between forensic scientists and the relatives of the deceased with whom they work? I will draw from my current fieldwork in Colombia as the country nears an historic peace agreement, as well as my previous four years of work as a forensic anthropologist in Guatemala. Ultimately, I hope to expose some ways in which an intra-disciplinary approach within forensic investigations could lead to increasingly holistic interventions on matters of violence, forensic science, and social memory.

Bio:

Jennifer Trowbridge is a PhD Candidate in Sociocultural Anthropology at New York

University. Her research centers around forensic science knowledge production processes in post-conflict Latin America, particularly Colombia where she is currently conducting ethnographic research on the topic. Before beginning her graduate studies, Jennifer worked as a forensic anthropologist for 4 years at the Guatemala Forensic Anthropology Foundation. She is committed to an interdisciplinary approach that considers forensic anthropology within the broader social context of transitional justice and postwar restoration.