Gender Strategies

What?

This research examined how women work in practice to leverage inclusion in the space of the 'formalised political unsettlement'. It had two distinct components – one relating to gender norms as a tool for leveraging change, and the other relating to the ways in which institutionalising gender gains plays out. The first 'gender norms' component examined the extent to which, and under what domestic conditions, international norms for gender equality provide leverage to non-elite groups (in this case women's movements and organisations) to bargain over inclusive political settlements. It also considered the role of feminists in transnational non-governmental and inter-governmental organisations in supporting or potentially impeding these interventions. The second part of the project examined the trajectory of establishing and implementing new institutions in periods of transition. Bringing a gender lens to institutionalist theory, this component considered how the 'nesting' of new 'engendered' institutions in wider power structures operates to consolidate, or undo, gender mainstreaming gains achieved in that institution.

How?

Both parts of the project involved desk-based review. The gender and norms project also involved qualitative research in four countries, two of which are key case studies; namely the DRC, Colombia, Philippines, and Sierra Leone. The second feminist institutionalist component of the work drew on the work of Mackay and her collaborators in the Feminist and Institutionalism International Network.

Why?

Little is known about effective strategies for transformation, and by examining how women engage with domestic reform processes, and use international norms or moments of institutional reform to do so, we hoped to understand effective strategies for change.

Who?

Catherine O'Rourke (Transitional Justice Institute), Fiona MacKay (GJA, UoE)

Key Publications

- O'Rourke, C. (2019). *International Gender Equality Norms and their Fragmented Protection in Conflict.* Feminists @ Law, 9(1).
- O'Rourke, C. (2015). *Law, Governance and Development: A Case Study of Women's Social Mobilisation and Transitional Justice* (PSRP Briefing Paper No. 5). Edinburgh: Global Justice Academy, University of Edinburgh.
- O'Rourke, C. (2017). *International Gender Equality Norms and the Local Peacemaking Political Settlement* (PSRP Working Paper No. 6). Edinburgh: Global Justice Academy, University of Edinburgh.
- O'Rourke, C. (2017). Gendering Political Settlements: Challenges and Opportunities. *Journal of International Development.*

For a full list of publications, search our publications database.