

Youth Conflict-Related Trauma through Generations: An Ethnography on the Relationship between Health and Society in Post-Conflict Northern Ireland

Authors : Chiara Magliacane

Abstract : This project aims to analyse the relationship between the post-conflict Northern Irish environment and youth trauma in deprived areas. Using an anthropological perspective and methodology, the study investigates the possible contribution that a socio-cultural perspective can give to the current research on the field, with a special focus on the role of transgenerational trauma. The recognition of the role that socio-economic determinants have on health is usually a challenge for social researchers. In post-conflict Northern Ireland, the overall lack of research about connections between the social context and youth trauma opens the way to the present project. Anthropological studies on social implications of mental disorders have achieved impressive results in many societies; they show how conditions of sufferance and poverty are not intrinsically given, but are the products of historical processes and events. The continuum of violence and the politics of victimhood sustains a culture of silence and fear in deprived areas; this implies the need of investigating the structural and symbolic violence that lies behind the diffusion of mental suffering. The project refers to these concepts from Medical Anthropology and looks at connections between trauma and social, political and economic structures. Accordingly, the study considers factors such as poverty, unemployment, social inequality and gender and class perspectives. At the same time, the project problematises categories such as youth and trauma. 'Trauma' is currently debated within the social sciences since the 'invention' of the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in 1980. Current critics made to its clinical conception show how trauma has been mainly analysed as a memory of the past. On the contrary, medical anthropological research focuses on wider perspectives on society and its structures; this is a new and original approach to the study of youth trauma considering that, to author's best knowledge, there is no research of this kind regarding Northern Ireland. Methods: Qualitative interviews, participant observation. Expected Impact: Local Northern Ireland organizations, i.e. specific charities that provide mental health support. Ongoing and present connections will ensure they will hear about this research.

Keywords : health and social inequalities, Northern Ireland, structural violence, youth

Conference Title : ICTTP 2018 : International Conference on Trauma: Theory and Practice

Conference Location : Vienna, Austria

Conference Dates : June 14-15, 2018