"Memory, History and Truth"

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Transitional justice is a conjunction of measures used to facilitate the transition from periods of political violence and massive human rights violations to more liberal democratic forms of government. One tool that has been widely used is that of a truth commission (or often a truth and reconciliation commission). International law establishes that after such transitions both individuals and society as a whole have a right to know the truth about what happened. Most truth commissions stress the importance of victims’ memories and participation. However, it has been clear for many years that there is a difference between history and memory. My project is to analyze the philosophical differences between history and memory in relation to the Peruvian experience. The Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission did not bring about a widely accepted national memory of the violence that took place between 1980 and 2000, nor has the political scene in recent years been noteworthy for political reconciliation. The research question is: Did the Commission ignore the difference between memory and history and, if it did, has that fact contributed to the lack of political reconciliation?