

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the first issue of Volume 23 of the journal *Studia Territorialia*. This special issue is titled “Exploring Conflict and Political Violence through the Woman’s Lens.”

Although past and present armed conflicts have all had deleterious effects on women, the topic of those effects is still under-explored in academia from the women’s perspective. As Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf point out, “The situation of women in armed conflict has been systematically neglected.”¹ This lacuna persists even though women are almost always present in war zones, willingly or not, right up to the front lines. Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine and the 2022 feminist uprising in Iran offer new opportunities to engage with women’s experiences in the midst of conflicts and after their end.

There are a variety of reasons why the pain of women affected by armed conflict and political violence is frequently overlooked in recorded history and official celebrations of memory. Women’s voices and the memory of the ordeals they have suffered during conflicts and at the hands of oppressive regimes are often subsumed in a grand narrative of the suffering of the nation as a whole. The voices, testimonies, and claims of female victims, resisters, survivors, caregivers, fighters, and mediators have been stifled. Although men inarguably suffer greatly from the physical violence of political repression and armed conflict, women and girls are far more exposed to psychological torture and sexual violence. This happens because they are commonly regarded as the essential repositories of ethnic

¹ Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts’ Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women’s Role in Peace-building* (New York: UNIFEM, 2002), 1.

and cultural identity. Moreover, women are exposed to multiple, continuing, and intersecting forms of exclusion from society. In the aftermath of conflict, women's experiences in bearing the burdens of displacement differ considerably from those of men.

We at *Studia Territorialis* are proud to provide a platform for scholarly exchange on this neglected topic. This special issue of our journal features three full-length articles, each of which provides a distinct national or transnational perspective on the issues of gender, conflict, and violence. The first is a contribution to the study of the politics of memory in contemporary Spain. Kateřina Valentová and Marc Macià Farré show how female victims of the Spanish Civil War and the Franco dictatorship are depicted in the few contemporary Spanish graphic novels that address their roles. Laura Mues takes a critical look at post-unification East Germany in the 1990s. She analyzes the experiences and autobiographical narratives of women of color, a doubly marginalized social group in East Germany. Finally, Kirsty Campbell reviews from a feminist post-colonial perspective the role European white women played in shaping colonial violence. As examples, she draws on case studies of the British and German colonial empires.

On behalf of the editorial board,

Maria Alina Asavei, Lucie Filipová, and Jan Šír
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