Call for Papers
Challenges for Researchers in Violent Environments
Summer 2018 Global School Seminar in El Salvador

Challenges for Researchers in Violent Environments

Purpose

The seminar brings together an interdisciplinary group of researchers working in a variety of violent environments to learn from one another's experiences in the field. In so doing, we hope to foster dialogue among scholars of different forms of violence (including but not limited to civil conflict, political repression, gendered violence, genocide, and criminal gangs) and introduce the idea of using a human rights framework to address key issues in research methodology, security and ethics. We also hope to foster dialogue among scholars across regions, while using El Salvador as a reference point for discussion of multiple, intersecting forms of violence. Finally, we hope to bridge academia, journalism and advocacy work in a discussion that explores human rights research beyond monitoring abuses. In seminar discussions, we will ask what fieldwork in El Salvador can teach us about how to conduct research in other violent contexts, and how research in other contexts can inform study in El Salvador. Ultimately, we will develop general advice about conducting research in violent environments, and we will explore the limits of our capacity to offer such advice. Papers should address issues related to ethical, logistical, political and methodological challenges of doing fieldwork on violence and human rights.

Structure

This workshop in El Salvador, scheduled for June 14-21 2018, invites academics and other researchers (journalists and human rights advocates) from different countries to explore themes related to fieldwork in violent and sometimes dangerous contexts. The seminar structure follows the traditional Cristosal Global School format, bringing
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together 10-12 US Americans with 10-12 Salvadorans/Central Americans. Each participant must register with Cristosal by March 15, 2018, and submit a paper abstract (200 words or less) by April 1, 2018. Final papers are due one month prior to the start date of the seminar, and will be circulated among the participants as the basis of discussion. Participants can opt to arrive one day early for an optional excursion/orientation day to learn more about El Salvador.

Output

The output of the seminar will be two-fold: 1) An English-language special edition of a peer-reviewed social science journal, to which participants will be invited to contribute; and 2) A bilingual applied guide for fieldwork that summarizes the findings of the seminar and disseminates these findings to academics, journalists and human rights advocates.

Organization of Five Interrelated Themes

Ethics
Example questions: What are the ethical responsibilities of researchers to the individual participants and to the broader community? When is consent of participants to share information not enough? Who, what and how does the IRB protect, and what ethical responsibilities does the IRB potentially obscure or disrupt? How do ethical responsibilities and protocols differ depending on the type of research conducted (i.e. journalism, academic, advocacy)? How could the principles of a human rights approach inform ethics in research?
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Access and Data
*Example questions:* What strategies permit entry to communities confronted by violence? How does the researcher’s own identity (gender, outsider/insider, nationality, ethnicity, etc.) create opportunities and constraints for access to information about different types of violence? In what ways does violence shape the data we collect, and what methodological strategies can we employ to cope with this inevitable influence? What silences emerge from these violent environments? How do different methodologies (i.e. ethnography, survey work, elite interviews, etc.) deal differently with the influence of violence on data and access? What can we learn about violence from the way it shapes research access and data, voice and silence?

Safety
*Example questions:* What strategies do researchers employ to safeguard themselves, emotionally and physically? What happens when these strategies fail? Are researchers ethically obligated to put the safety of their informants above their own? What special challenges do different forms of violence pose for researcher safety? What special safety challenges do different researchers face, depending on their own identity (gender, outsider/insider, nationality, ethnicity, etc.)?

Politics
*Example questions:* What are the political implications of our research in violent environments? What are the political implications of the silences and research gaps that emerge within violent environments? In the current global political moment, why do we conduct fieldwork in violent contexts?

Methodology
*Example questions:* How do we define and operationalize the concept of violence? How do we measure violence, and conversely, how do we know when violence is absent? How do binaries (e.g. political/criminal, victim/victimizer, legal/illegal, etc.)
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structure research on violence and with what impact on findings? What methodological challenges arise when dealing with criminal or criminalized informants? Conversely, how do we define, operationalize and measure peace?

Costs

For each US participant, the Global School seminar fees run $995 (including lodging, but not airfare). Travel scholarships may be available to some participants.

To Apply

Scholars interested in participating must register with Cristosal at https://www.cristosal.org/global-school by March 15, 2018, and should send a paper abstract and CV to Noelle Brigden at Noellebrigden@marquette.edu by April 1, 2018. All available travel scholarships will be awarded and recipients notified by May 1, 2018. Please feel free to contact Dr. Brigden with any questions about submission.

Current Partners

Cristosal

Cristosal is a nongovernmental organization that promotes human rights in Central America through research, learning, and rights-based programming. We seek to build common means to empower communities and groups affected by social and structural violence to act for justice, human rights and more democratic societies.
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The Cristosal Center for Research and Learning (CEA) contributes to better public policy in protection of human rights by fostering informed dialogue among key actors and partners in Central and North America. We contribute to better understanding of the reality of vulnerable and at-risk populations working together in participatory-action-research, seminars, workshops and publications.

The Center seeks to share learning tools and analysis with community and religious leaders, civil society organizations and activists, professionals, academics and decision-makers so that they can be more effective promoters of human rights. The publication of research findings will contribute to greater interchange and dialogue on key human rights issues especially for the affected communities and groups who participate in the studies.

The Global School, as part of the Center, facilitates experiential seminars with North and Central Americans on important human rights issues affecting vulnerable communities. These seminars include reading, dialogue and a week-long intensive learning experience in El Salvador. The seminar process generates new ideas, proposals, and actions by engaging individuals from different cultures and backgrounds in dialogue, shared learning, and capacity-building to address universal human rights issues. The Global School equips people who feel compelled to act for justice locally and globally with powerful tools for action.

The Center for Transnational Justice at Marquette University

In the new millennium, individuals, societal groups, nongovernmental organizations, governments and international organizations all have intensified calls for justice. Some seek to address the legacies of past abuses while others envision a step toward the broader redistribution of rights, privileges and obligations on a global scale. While few would deny that justice is a desirable goal, numerous interpretations exist concerning its meaning, the challenges it faces, and paths toward its realization.
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These contending interpretations become more extensive as one moves to economic, political and social relations that extend beyond national borders.

Established in the spring of 2004, the Center for Transnational Justice supports innovative scholarly research, teaching and community outreach initiatives on justice issues that extend beyond national borders. These initiatives focus particularly on:

- Migration: including issues of immigration policy, refugees and asylum seekers, migrant workers, forced migration and human trafficking, and immigrant incorporation
- Economics, Politics and Justice: including issues of hunger, environmental policy and practice, global economic crises, and development
- Human Security: including issues of human rights challenges and protections, health care and pandemic diseases, and transnational crime

The Marquette University Center for Transnational Justice strives to facilitate greater understanding of the challenges and paths to achieving justice in issues that bridge local, national, and global communities. Through fostering intellectual inquiry, the center seeks to discover and share knowledge that can be utilized in the service of others to realize a more just world.

Human Rights Center at the University of Dayton

The Human Rights Center (HRC) aims to lead the global human rights community in the search for transformative solutions to systemic patterns of injustice that will affect real change in the lives of the poor and the persecuted.

Building on the legacy of the university’s innovative Human Rights Studies program, the Human Rights Center advances the University of Dayton’s mission to promote respect for the inherent dignity of all persons through dialogue, research and education.

As we continue conversations at the center of a global, dynamic research and advocacy community, the HRC have set in motion programs and projects with diverse
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partners to deepen our vital commitment to advancing the theory and practice of human rights advocacy through education, research, and dialogue.

In dialogue with the Catholic social justice tradition, the HRC:

Promotes communication and collaboration between human rights researchers and advocates.
Conducts critical research to advance the theory and practice of transformative human rights advocacy.
Prepares human rights researchers of the future with the knowledge, skills and values to effect real change in the lives of the poor and the persecuted.
Partners with human rights nongovernmental organizations, learn from them and provide them with the analytical support to strengthen their capacity to respond to existing and emerging threats to human dignity.

Planning Committee

Jeanne Rikkers, Director of Center for Research and Learning, Cristosal
Elba Moreira, Coordinator of the Global School, Cristosal
Dr. Noelle Brigden, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Marquette University, and Visiting Associate Research Fellow, Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies
Dr. Miranda Cady Hallett, Assistant Professor of Cultural Anthropology, University of Dayton