



BOSTON COLLEGE

CHRIJ

Center for
Human Rights
and
International Justicewww.bc.edu/humanrights

Gender Equality and Sexual Identity Equality: Journeys Just Begun and a Long Way Still to Go

On October 24, 2013, the Center proudly presented a special conversation entitled “Gender Equality and Sexual Identity Equality: Journeys Just Begun and a Long Way Still to Go,” with former President of Ireland Mary McAleese and Boston College Professor of Counseling Psychology Paul Poteat. Professor Poteat has written extensively about the psychological effects of bullying and homophobia on adolescents and how to best prevent bullying and homophobic attitudes in adolescents. McAleese has long been a strong and influential voice in concern for the rights of gay people and for gender equality in Ireland. McAleese served as President from 1997 to 2011 during which she sought to create a more inclusive and understanding culture in Ireland. Her experience as both a woman and a Catholic minority in Northern Ireland offers

insight into how systems of power and institutions create spheres that include some while excluding others but ultimately harm the whole of society. Through this intimate conversation-style presentation, McAleese and Poteat provided insight into their own experiences as activists and scholars while also illuminating important aspects of civil rights movements important for all to understand.

McAleese grew up and developed as a person during a time of conflict and civil discord in Northern Ireland. However, she also saw peace accords, attempts to heal a broken society and efforts to create a more tolerant system of government. During her tenure as president, she sought to create a culture in which the Irish people listened to one another. McAleese credits both the Gospel’s message to love and the writings and efforts of Daniel O’Connell—the great Catholic Emancipator of Ireland—in leading her to advocate for the most excluded members of society and to focus on the dignity of all humans. Given McAleese’s extensive background in law and government, much of the panel focused on how to best use law to change systems of power and promote inclusion rather than exclusion. Professor Poteat noted that in Massachusetts and in his own work, legislation that considers the experience of multiple marginalized groups and the commonalities of oppression has proven to be successful. McAleese echoed this by commenting on how her experience growing up as a Catholic woman in Protestant- and male-dominated Northern Ireland led her to advocate for the rights of gay persons.

McAleese related many obstacles she personally had to overcome on her path to becoming a lawyer and ultimately the President of Ireland.

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ABOUT US

The Center for Human Rights and International Justice addresses the increasingly interdisciplinary needs of human rights work through academic programs, applied research, and the interaction of scholars with practitioners. The Center’s Director is David Hollenbach, SJ, University Chair in Human Rights and International Justice. Associate Directors are Law School professor Daniel Kanstroom and Lynch School of Education professor of Community-Cultural Psychology M. Brinton Lykes. Mr. Timothy Karcz is the Assistant Director.

CHRIJ Review Contributor: Molly Holden

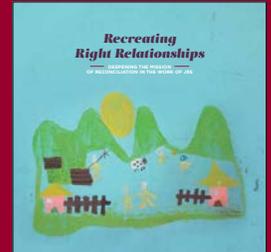


Center Notes & Events

Selected stories and events the Center hosted in collaboration with other Boston College departments and groups in the Fall 2013 semester.

Notes:

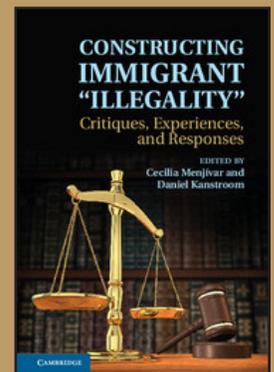
- » The Center's partnership with the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) has led to a new publication on reconciliation entitled "Recreating Right Relationships: Deepening the Mission of Reconciliation in the Work of JRS." The product of a workshop sponsored by this partnership in June 2013 in Siem Reap, Cambodia, the publication will be used to help deepen JRS staff's understanding of reconciliation from different faith perspectives as part of the work that they do. An electronic version of the publication is available on the Center's website.
- » BC undergraduate students that received summer research grants from the Center over the last year will be presenting their findings on campus at BC's Undergraduate Research Symposium on January 31, 2014.
- » The Center is looking for two BC undergraduate interns for the summer of 2014. Application deadline **March 12**. See website for details.
- » The Center is once again offering summer research grants to a select number of BC undergraduate and graduate students in 2014. Application deadline **March 19**. See details on the Center website.
- » To keep up with Center news and to receive reminders of upcoming events, sign up for the Center's listserv (electronic mailing list) at <http://www.bc.edu/humanrights/maillinglist>



Events:

- » On **September 25, 2013**, the Center co-sponsored a presentation entitled "Justice for Some: Reflections on (Every) Americans' Right to Legal Representation", with Dawn Porter, producer and director of the award-winning documentary *Gideon's Army*. The presentation explored the concepts of race, class and legal representation in the US criminal justice system.
- » On **October 3, 2013**, the Center co-sponsored a lecture by John Baumann, SJ, entitled "Beyond Ignorance, Hostility, and Fear: Organizing for Justice by Embracing Religious and Ethnic Passion." The talk explored how directly engaging local faith communities across religious and ethnic boundaries addresses justice issues, creates solidarity, and improves quality of life for all.
- » On Thursday, **December 5, 2013**, the Center co-sponsored a screening at a filled to capacity Coolidge Corner Theater of the film *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom*, based on Nelson Mandela's autobiography.

Center Interim Director and BC Professor of Law **Daniel Kanstroom** is the co-editor of a new book, out in November 2013, entitled *Constructing Illegality in America: Critiques, Experiences, and Responses*. Edited along with Cecilia Menjivar, Professor of Social and Family Dynamics at Arizona State University, the book features chapters from a range of authors with expertise in a variety of disciplines such as anthropology, law, political science, religious studies, and sociology, looking at how immigrant illegality is constructed and lived. The authors build a case that the immigrant illegality, as currently understood, is in need of a thorough reconception, maintaining that a more thoughtful analysis of the concept will help in guiding US society toward a more just immigration policy.



Community Psychology & Participatory Action Research Program in El Quiché, Guatemala

In June 2013, Center Associate Director M. Brinton Lykes and Megan Thomas, a project consultant, developed and facilitated a diploma program in community psychology and participatory action research in El Quiché, Guatemala. The program, one contribution to the ongoing transnational collaborations sponsored by the Center, was designed in conjunction with INTRAPAZ, a research institute with social projection at the Jesuit University Rafael Landívar (URL) in Guatemala City. Thirty-three participants completed the two-week program, including four BC students (three undergraduates and a doctoral student), and six students and faculty from the URL's Quiché campus. The other participants were Mayan youth and adults from the Quiché and surrounding regions, identified by colleagues of the Center as active community members with potential to enhance their leadership capacities through this program. The formal education of the participants ranged from several who had completed elementary school through others with Master's degrees. The pedagogy of the workshop was participatory, complemented by topical lectures on violence, migration and power. Dr. Lykes sat down to answer a few questions about the program.



Participants in the community psychology program.

What is community psychology?

Part of a larger reform movement in the early 1960s, some psychologists questioned if institutional mental health services might not be better directed at the individual in his or her family and the family in its community, rather than exclusively at the level of the individual. This idea ultimately led to the creation of a sub-discipline called community psychology. Although limited in practice in the US, community social psychology has taken hold in the global South, particularly in contexts where people see themselves first and foremost as members of social groups and define their individuality through relationships. Thus, community psychology is preventive rather than curative, seeking to focus on resilience and resistance and intervening at the group level and in local communities in contrast to a primary focus on individual pathology. It is sensitive to cultural diversities while also focusing on structural oppressions, recognizing gender, homophobia, income inequality and racism as underlying causes of many problems facing local communities. A focus on the strengths each group brings to the table and an ecological approach support the recognition that we are all part of a natural and human ecology—ideas that also resonate with many Mayan beliefs.

With the wide range of formal education the participants had—how did you design a curriculum that is both challenging and accessible all?

I definitely had some deep concern about this issue prior to the workshop—and the local project team in Zacualpa and I discussed this concern with our URL collaborators. Our goal was to develop a process that would be very participatory, in which facilitators, resource people and participants would have an opportunity to teach and learn together. In workshops such as this one, I strive to facilitate small group interactions that are both intellectually challenging and experientially based. Exercises are designed so that those with more formal education have an opportunity to engage with community members with deep local experiences who may have less formal education. Community participants, many of whom are farmers with little formal education, seemed not in the least bit intimidated about participating actively in all aspects of the program. One parish leader in particular from Santa María, clearly someone of great ability, was deeply interested in all that was being shared and also deftly able to apply what he was learning to his lived experiences. He listened deeply to others many years his junior as they brought academic learning into the mix—and then extended their insights with his own. It is truly wonderful to have someone like that in a workshop.

(continued on page 6)

Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo

Photos courtesy of BC Media Technology Services



On September 19, 2013, the Center invited the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo to share their stories of advocacy, courage and faith with the Boston College community. The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, as they were referred to then, formed during and in reaction to the Argentine “Dirty War” in the 1980s. In this time, the military junta overtook the Argentine government and carried out a campaign of state terrorism against political dissidents, kidnapping and clandestinely sequestering opponents in a manner that became known as “disappearing” a person. In these situations, pregnant prisoners often gave birth in captivity and had their child separated from them and given away in secret adoptions. In an effort to find their lost children and demand justice, the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo formed and engaged in public protests to demand the government reveal where their lost children had gone. Today, now known as the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, the group works to reunite families separated during the time of military repression. The organization offers psychological, legal, genetic testing and research resources to assist families in all efforts to find their lost family members.

Present at the event were the president of the organization, Estela Barnes de Carlotto, and treasurer Buscarita Roa. De Carlotto recounted her experience searching for her then-pregnant daughter, ultimately leading her to other mothers on a similar search, which led to the founding of the group. Despite years of work, de Carlotto still has not found her daughter or missing granddaughter. Roa related her experience following her son’s and her eight-month old granddaughter’s kidnapping. Through the work of the Grandmothers, Roa was reunited with her granddaughter 22 years later. Carlotto stated of their work, “It is a hard struggle, but full of love.” To date, the Grandmothers have recovered 109 missing grandchildren. In addition to their advocacy in Argentina, the Grandmothers have made their international presence known, contributing significantly to the International Convention on the Rights of a Child. Warning those in Argentina who simply want to forget and “move on,” de Carlotto noted “When history is erased, history repeats itself.”

Gender Equality *continued from page 1*

She noted that from her own experience with sexism that she began to become frustrated with the dominant discourse in Ireland and the nature of those in power telling those on the outskirts of society how it ought to be. Instead, McAleese sought to engage in discussions that placed all men and women of various ethnic, religious and social backgrounds on even footing. It is here that McAleese noted she became aware of the plight of gay persons. While studying in San Francisco, McAleese became acutely aware of the dark spaces gay men and women have been forced to occupy in society and how this pain impacts not only gay persons but also all persons. Drawing on the teachings of the Gospel and O’Connell, McAleese asserts that human beings must be aware of other people’s pain in order to create a right and just society. Just as women and Catholics had been ostracized and told they do not belong in Ireland, so too have gay persons. McAleese has effectively used law to probe the systems of power that historically have excluded many in society to spark conversations and create spaces where people feel safe to speak their mind. McAleese spent the last portion of her discussion examining the role of the Catholic Church in creating inclusive spaces for all. McAleese noted that while the Gospel demands the promotion of human dignity and the recognition of the humanity and equality of all, the Church has not traditionally been a champion of civil rights movements. While many grow frustrated with the Church to the point of inaction, McAleese continues to hold conversations and debates with clergy and lay persons about important social issues and seeks to promote a more inclusive Church for the coming generations.

McAleese also emphasized the importance of the individual voice in demanding equal rights and equal spaces for all. In order to achieve an inclusive society that promotes the dignity and growth of each person equally and fully, individuals must recognize the inequalities present in institutions and the must organize and demand a conversation that seeks ways to promote equality. McAleese has dedicated her life to advocating for the equality of all, especially for the marginalized in society, and continues to exercise passionately her sphere of influence in pursuit of this end.

The Price of Truth: Honduran Human Rights Since the Coup

On October 9, 2013, Fr. Ismael Moreno Coto, S.J., popularly known as “Padre Melo,” spoke to a group of BC students and faculty on the violence and ongoing human rights violations in Honduras, sometimes referred to as the “Murder Capital of the World.” Padre Melo gave a presentation which addressed the struggles and success of building a fair and inclusive society in his native Honduras. Drawing on his own experience as a human rights activist in Honduras and elsewhere, Padre Melo’s discussion offered an in-depth analysis into the systemic reasons for the continued violence and widespread impunity in Honduras. Padre Melo is the director of Radio Progreso, a Christian based radio station that is a leader in investigative reporting and advocacy. In addition, he is the director of the Center for Reflection, Research and Communication, a think tank that studies societal trends and public opinion in Honduras.

Since the 2009 coup, over 25 journalists and social activists have been murdered and many more have been kidnapped, tortured and intimidated by the military government. Padre Melo has been the target of government censorship multiple times. At the event, Padre Melo was critical of the United States’ role in Honduras. In his testimony before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Committee of the US Congress in 2012, Padre Melo asked members of the committee how freedom of expression could “be defended in a country like Honduras where the biggest violators of this fundamental freedom are the friends and partners of a ‘democracy’ backed by the policies and agencies of the US government?” Padre Melo stated that around 80% of cocaine imported to the United States comes through Honduras by way of Colombia. However, US attempts to combat drug trafficking in Honduras (and elsewhere in Latin America) place power and money in the hands of Honduran military officials and politicians who are deeply tied to the drug lords. In other words, drug traffickers, weakening the rule of law and increasing violence, control the Honduran government at all levels. Through his work with the Center for Reflection, Research and Communications, Padre Melo and his colleagues look for ways to defend and support human rights organizations and grassroots groups threatened by the Honduran government. The event raised awareness about not only the current human rights violations in Honduras but also shed light on the power of advocacy and the importance of speaking out in the face of injustice.



Photo courtesy of BC Media Technology Services

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Bolivia’s Processes of Social Change



Photo courtesy of Media Technology Services

On October 30th, the Center hosted Bolivian activist Felix Muruchi to discuss the processes of social change in Bolivia. Muruchi’s personal experience includes time as a mine worker, soldier, student and union activist, non-profit organization worker, political prisoner and later candidate, and most recently, an indigenous rights lawyer, giving him a unique perspective with which to view Bolivia’s struggle for social justice. Born in Potosí to a Quechua mother and Aymara father who were both trapped in a system of semi-feudal social relations and debt peonage known as *ponguégaje*, Muruchi’s experience is similar to the story and struggle of many poor Bolivians. He worked as an illegal miner in the tin mines in Bolivia before serving in the military at age 17, where he witnessed the first of 18 military coups. Muruchi’s discussion focused on his past and present experience in Bolivia and also touched on his book *From the Mines to the Streets: A Bolivian Activist’s Life*.

Muruchi described his life and role in the Bolivian labor movement that occurred during from 1964 until the early 1980s, the many challenges that miners faced during the neoliberal era since the 1980s and the current challenges under Evo Morales, Bolivia’s first indigenous leader. Muruchi lived through many crucial events in Bolivia’s history. In 1952 Muruchi saw the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) party lead a movement to nationalize the tin mines, break up the hacienda system and to promote universal suffrage. However the MNR government’s efforts did not address the root problems that plagued Boliviaia and ultimately the MNR government fell in 1964 when General Rene Barrientos’ military coup took over and ushered in decades of chaotic military rule. At this time, Muruchi became an important union leader and social activist. His prominent position made him an easy target for torture and exile. Muruchi is also acutely aware of the role ethnic and racial tensions played in shaping the Bolivian labor movement generally and specifically how they have impacted his own role. His personal testimony engages the audience and pushes one to consider the larger historical context his story is placed in. Through his vivid descriptions of the mining camps and the living conditions, Muruchi provided a compelling narrative that highlights his role as a committed and passionate social activist that continues to advocate for the rights of the least well-off in Bolivia.

Interview: Lykes *continued from page 3*

What were some themes that emerged in the workshop?

Luis Mario Martínez and Aldo Magoga, researchers from INTRAPAZ, began their presentation by asking participants some questions about their experiences of violence, about things they feared in their daily lives. What came back from the participants was higher reported experiences with violence in the Quiché than the researchers' data suggested. Additionally, there was consensus in the group that most people are afraid to go to Guatemala City—a site of much reported violence in the research presented.

When we focused on migration, each regional sub-group was asked to discuss and present the history of migration to and from the department from which they came. The diversity and range of intergenerational stories recounted was impressive. Two young women from the Ixil area talked about three generations of migration out of the area, including migration to the US. Although the latter is more recent than is that from other regions of the Guatemalan countryside, migration to the Southern Coast to work on plantations was depicted as important within and across all three generations they described. After each region had presented, Ruth Piedrasanta, a researcher from INGEP, situated themes of current migration presented by participants within a national panorama, followed by a discussion about migration to the United States and multiple issues, including detention and deportation policies and practices, affecting families in both countries.

How do you think the BC students benefitted from the program?

I would definitely not want to speak for them but I think it was an opportunity for them to learn more about Guatemala and about life among some rural and small town Maya. Moreover they learned about participatory and action research. All of them are interested in research and all had been involved in community research to some degree but only the Ph.D. student had skills in working with participatory action research. Thus this was an opportunity for the others to acquire new resources for future community research endeavors. They were challenged to explore how to go about developing and designing research that is initiated by the community rather than the university-based researcher in isolation. When we returned to Zacualpa each of the students had an opportunity to apply some of what they had learned—albeit in a very limited way—with the staff of our Migration and Human Rights Project (MHRP) there.

What were some of the outcomes that emerged from the program?

I think the program was considered to be a big success locally by the regional URL campus in Santa Cruz del Quiché, by those in the capital who collaborated in the process, and by those of us affiliated with our Center. It strengthened leadership of the local project staff of our MHRP in Zacualpa. They were able to initiate contact with people in other communities from whom they learned and could better value their own work. Megan Thomas has facilitated a follow up workshop in Zacualpa with participants from Zacualpa and Santa María Chiquimula, the parish in which Ricardo Falla, Guatemalan anthropologist and Jesuit priest who helped initiate this work, now lives. Part of our idea was to reinforce the new skills that had been learned in the workshop, knowing that people need to practice them when they are initially learned, use them in context, and then be able to reflect upon what they have done to more fully incorporate the strategies into their work. They also need to get feedback about these processes, and encouragement to adapt the resources to their local realities. Thus this follow up workshop was important to the overall program.

It is not clear where the initiative will lead in long run—there is plenty of interest in continuing but it's challenging to coordinate and to finance. I teach a short course on community psychology in another university in Guatemala that is offered every other summer. My goal in both of these contexts is to contribute, however modestly, to building local capacity in Central America, and, more particularly, in Guatemala. Through exchanges such as the diploma program, we were able to collaborate in strengthening local resources while also giving BC students the opportunity to learn alongside local Maya.

To read the complete interview with Prof. Lykes about the program, go to http://www.bc.edu/humanrights/projects/Rights_and_Migration/interview/.

The Guatemala Genocide Trial

Photo courtesy of BC Media Technology Services



On October 31, 2013, Guatemalan human rights activist Claudia Samayoa discussed her experience growing up in a Guatemala torn apart by racism, repression and violence. In the face of mass hatred, Samayoa decided to absorb the crimes and violence around her and use it to change not only her reality but also the reality of all in Guatemala. In her presentation, Samayoa described the social and political conditions that allowed the “extermination ideology” to take hold among the Guatemalan oligarchy and how this ideology grew into an extermination campaign leading to genocide and the deaths of over 200,000 people. Samayoa described the efforts of Efraín Ríos Montt and his head of security in the 1980s to cleanse Guatemala of communism by way of exterminating thousands of Mayan peasants who opposed the military government. At this time any instances of justice or retribution were unheard of. Rather, Samayoa described how between the years of 1981-1983 any lawyer involved in or thought to be involved in seeking justice for the victims was abducted and “disappeared.” However, thanks in large part to Samayoa and the commitment of lawyers and human rights activists in Guatemala

and internationally, those responsible for the genocide in Guatemala have been brought to trial. Samayoa described the many mechanisms and individuals involved in bringing those responsible to justice. The appointment of Claudia Paz y Paz as Attorney General marked an important shift in Samayoa’s and others’ efforts in seeking justice. Paz y Paz, a human rights lawyer by training, immediately eliminated preexisting prohibitions that made convictions difficult. Moreover, Paz y Paz allowed prosecutors to make individual and specific cases for genocide within certain time frames rather than requiring prosecutors to prove national genocide over a larger time period. Samayoa noted that the current partnership between lawyers and human rights activists has shifted the current trial from being a singularly Guatemalan concern to a concern for all of humanity, emphasizing the importance of the international community in seeking justice for those who lost their lives in the Guatemalan genocide.

Liberation Psychology and Social Change

On November 11, 2013, Center Associate Director and Professor of Community-Cultural Psychology M. Brinton Lykes presented and engaged the audience in a dialogue on some of the key ideas developed by social psychologist and Jesuit priest, Ignacio Martín-Baró. Lykes maintained that Martín-Baró’s life’s work and death present many challenges for psychologists and activist scholars. Martín-Baró dedicated much of his work to de-ideologizing the official stories perpetrated by the government of El Salvador, where he lived and worked for years until his murder, and the country’s economic elites. As well, he sought to re-conceptualize the effects of war, state-perpetuated violence and trauma on both individuals and the community. Through working with individuals situated in their communities, Martín-Baró urged psychologists to understand the social situatedness of their praxis within the larger context of the historical political and economic powers. His work has greatly influenced and shaped social and liberation psychology today and continues to offer psychologists and activists new ways to think about trauma, violence, suffering and war.



Photo courtesy of BC Media Technology Services

Lykes spent the first portion of her presentation discussing Martín-Baró’s specific contributions to the field before delving into her own work in liberation psychology and her reflection on Martín-Baró’s impact on her work. Martín-Baró was intensely aware of the need for Latin American psychology to focus on the needs of majority population rather than on its scientific and social status. In order to focus on the needs of the Salvadoran majority, Martín-Baró called for both a new epistemology and a new praxis that would work with the people in their communities and build the truth from the bottom up. By changing the way psychologists think about violence and suffering, Martín-Baró was able to change the lens through which one understands and treats mental health. Rather than viewing mental health as an individual phenomenon, Martín-Baró urged psychologists to view mental health as the result of relations between individuals and groups. Thus an appropriate treatment would address the relationship between systems and people that dehumanize both the oppressor and the oppressed. Using the ideology and the praxis influenced by Martín-Baró’s work, Lykes discussed her own work with rural Mayan women in Guatemala. In her discussion of her experience working with these women in Guatemala it is evident that the work and practice of Martín-Baró shines through. Lykes noted that by placing women in communities and giving them spaces to speak through art, music and acting, the women valued the feeling of togetherness as a way to heal and understand their trauma. Moreover, by using art as a tool of expression, the women’s trauma was no longer an individual commodity but was shared and recognized by the larger community. Martín-Baró notes the importance of subverting the hegemonic dialogue that dominates both national and local narratives. By publicly recognizing their trauma and engaging in a dialogue about the trauma, the women were able to expose the very systems and structures of violence that gave rise to their trauma while also shifting the narrative. Lykes has thus been able to use the work and legacy left by Martín-Baró to shape and direct her work with women in Guatemala as well as elsewhere.



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Upcoming Spring 2014 Events

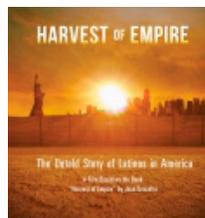


WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15

Korea Peace Day

Screening of *Memory of Forgotten War* and special performances from percussionist, dancer, and vocalist Dohee Lee; hip hop and soul artist Skim; and Berklee College of Music Korean Traditional Music Society *Sigimsae*

7:00 PM • Boston College,
McGuinn Hall, Room 121



MONDAY, MARCH 17

Harvest of Empire: the Untold Story of Latinos in America

Feature-length documentary that examines the direct connection between the long history of U.S. intervention in Latin America and the immigration crisis faced today

7:00 PM • Boston College,
McGuinn Hall, Room 121

Visit BC.EDU/HUMANRIGHTS for the latest information and events or to view videos of past events.



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and simply enter your email address to join.