

ASA Section on Human Rights Newsletter Fall 2020



IN THIS ISSUE

A Note from the Chair, Christopher N.J. Roberts

Before sitting down to write this brief "Note from the Chair," I browsed through nearly a dozen previous Newsletters from our Section's online archives to take stock of where we've been as a community. I was struck by the numerous contributions from our members in each of the Newsletters and the continued involvement of all of those who have helped to create the Section's vibrant community. I was impressed by our Section's commitment to rigorous, pathbreaking scholarship that also matters so much to those far beyond our academic homes. I was moved by the many personal stories from our members who have traveled the world seeking answers to the vexing human rights questions that define our fields of inquiry while offering promising solutions to the human rights issues that affect so many.

It is a great honor to be the chair of such a vibrant and dynamic section—particularly in this current moment when so much is at stake.

As I scrolled through our previous Newsletters, I experienced three successive waves of familiarity. The first

wave was simply a rekindling of memory; that hazy, prior "sense of knowing" that one encounters when reading something once again, though forgotten, but now remembered. I was reminded, for instance, of how in 2015 the Section's chair, Manisha Desai, urged us away from the common assumption that human rights are for others in far-away lands. In "our own backyard," she offered presciently, is where the next round of battles are being fought. Then I thought to myself, "I've seen this before," as I re-read the 2014 Newsletter, when then-chair, LaDawn Haglund, asked us a most basic question of association, "Who are we?"

But unlike the first wave of familiarity which I had anticipated, the second wave sneaked up and carried me away to an experience I've had in various archives around the world. When researching the historical transformation of rights and human rights concepts I have, at times, encountered within a series of primary source materials, rapid discursive shifts in the language used by those on the front lines of historical rights struggles. One sees such shifts, for instance, in the early

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1940s when “the rights of man” suddenly became “international human rights.” One also sees rapid discursive shifts in the late 1940s when African Americans in the United States attempted—unsuccessfully—to place the massive injustices they were experiencing at home within the purview of “international human rights.” The subsequent backlash branded human rights as items for use in other places, but not here, in the United States.

Over the past several years, in our own Newsletter, one can feel a marked change in tone—a greater urgency surrounding discussions of ongoing human rights violations. The shock and alarm is palpable. The stark warnings offered in our Newsletter over the last several years seem to say in so many different ways: something has changed.

The volume of horrific examples offered over the past several years in our Newsletter has also increased. In the contributions from our members and in the Messages from Section Chair after Section Chair, one sees pointed and lengthy discussions of how the disparagement of expert knowledge threatens so much of what we seek to do, and how the repudiation of responsibility for human rights violations seems to not only be going unchecked but is now becoming institutionalized in our own governmental agencies.

As a section, our membership is comprised of none other than frontline warriors in countless ongoing human rights struggles. We must take seriously the changes that are so evident in our own archives. We must heed our own warnings.

Finally, the third wave of familiarity that I experienced when reading our previous Newsletters evoked a feeling that I believe is part of our collective experience as human rights scholars, researchers, activists, and thinkers. The seemingly endless series of intractable human rights problems that we face today represents nothing short of a generational—if not epoch defining—challenge. But it is also here, in the endless seas of human rights abuse and challenge, that we have chosen our

intellectual home. It just so happens that our contemporary moment is paying us a visit.

This is our moment. This is our home. Human rights is a responsibility for all. Thank you for your membership and your ongoing support.

Sincerely,
Christopher N.J. Roberts

Seeing How Black Lives Matter in a Super-Gentrified Neighborhood

Jerry Krase

Emeritus and Murray Koppelman
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Although there are many ways that neighborhoods such as my own, often described as Super-, or otherwise Gentrified (Halasz 2018), are privileged, the fact remains that many of their residents fall on the liberal and left-leaning spectrum of American politics. It is also a place that has been an area accurately described as exhibiting Super Diversity (Vertovec 2007). Although the area is “diverse,” People of Color, mostly a diverse collection of Latino residents, tend to dominate in sections that are slowly undergoing displacement pressures as the rapid construction of high-rise “luxury” apartments continues unabated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This creates opportunities for visual conundrums to appear on the streets. Since I had stayed close to home during Phase I of the New York State Lockdown, I limited my Visual Sociological explorations of urban neighborhoods to a few streets near my home that are close to Brooklyn’s largest park, Prospect Park, which has been an assembly point for several major Black Lives Matter marches and protests, some of which I participated in until they became, for me, even with universal masking, “too crowded.” What follows are a few photographs I took of those events. Each has a brief description, and some ask an important question about how images might be interpreted. Given the racial and economic privilege of the neighborhood in which these events took

place, the background question I ask is “Is the social justice demanded by the BLM Movement possible without economic justice?”

On June 1, a large crowd of Black Lives Matter marchers assembled at the 9th Street entrance to Prospect Park. They then filed, about a mile long, to join many more others at Grand Army Plaza. These photos show its middle and end.



Middle of First Black Lives Matter March



End of First Black Lives Matter March

On June 7, a much very boisterous “Defund the Police” March paraded down the street in front of my house. The irony was the presence of those “to be defunded” leading and bringing up the rear of the mostly young marchers.



Defund the Police Marchers



Defund the Police Rear Guard

On June 8, there was a Family Black Lives Matter March which also assembled at the 9th Street entrance to Prospect Park. Children and carriages were in great evidence. One particular photo is of a child on the shoulders of an adult holding a sign which reads "Is MY Daddy Next?" The saddest thing about this photo is that some who might view it would say "I hope so."



Family Black Lives Matter March Assembly



"Is MY Daddy Next?"

Supportive sentiments about crimes committed by law enforcement officials against Black Americans could easily be found on my block. These few were especially poignant.



Enough is Enough



Their Names

All photos were taken by the author.

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Covid-19 and Anti-Chinese Racism in the U.S.

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In the United States, the blame for pestilence is often laid at the feet of recent immigrants, a population U.S. Americans often believe are awash with backwards and uncivilized cultural norms. Throughout U.S. history, the Chinese community has been scapegoated by political leaders and citizens during times of pandemic. Following several waves of immigration from China in the mid-1800s, communities along the west coast of the country moved to shut their borders to these new settlers (Lee 2019, Zhou 2012). Economic worry coupled with misplaced fear over immigrants as carriers of

disease rendered the Chinese an easy target for the disdain of the U.S. communities where they settled. In the case of the Black Death, discriminatory quarantine and investigation practices characterized the community of San Francisco's Chinatown for years (Lee 2019, Power 1995, Trauner 1978). Chinese people once again were met with fear and suspicion when SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) spread in late 2002/early 2003. Many individuals avoided Chinatowns in New York and Boston, viewing them as potential Petri dishes for pathogens to breed (Eichelberger 2007, Person 2004, Schram 2003).

In December 2019, news of a virus with SARS like symptoms began to surface. Though the Chinese government was quick to discredit the doctor who publicized this news, a new coronavirus was indeed confirmed (Larson 2020). Isolation of the virus has failed and at present the World Health Organization has reported 35,027,546 cases globally with 1,034,837 deaths (W.H.O. 2020). According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the United States makes up for about 1/5 of the global cases and deaths from Covid-19, with 7,359,952 cases and 208,821 deaths, as of October 2020 (CDC 2020).

On March 16, 2020, President Donald Trump began calling Covid-19 the "Chinese Virus" on his Twitter account. However, the World Health Organization announced coronavirus disease 19 (Covid-19) as the official name of the virus on February 11, 2020 (Lancet 2020). The President denies that his use of the term "Chinese virus" in his White House briefings or on his social media is racist. Public health experts and the WHO, on the other hand, have specifically cautioned against naming viruses after a region or people group, especially as it is likely to generate negative images about that population, in this case, the Chinese community (Somvichian-Clausen 2020). A spotlight is cast on "foreignness" when we name a pathogen after the location where it first comes into public consciousness, a practice not done when a virus is "native born" (Shah 2020). Yale Sociologist Grace Kao was questioned

about a tweet President Trump would issue saying that the Asian-American community should be protected. She noted that “the last two sentences of this comment still separate Asians from his collective ‘us’” and that the President’s use of “Chinese virus” is actually a way to mark Chinese Americans as separate from the U.S. population (Somvichian-Clausen 2020).

In the weeks and months since COVID-19 has emerged, racist acts of discrimination, harassment, and violence have increased. Such hate-crimes have not been unique to the United States, but the numbers reported here have been staggering. On March 19, 2020, an organization known as Stop AAPI (Asian American Pacific Islander) Hate was formed by a coalition of activist organizations. Their website has been set up as a way for Asian Americans to record incidents of verbal and physical violence (Zhou 2020). According to their press release, this was a necessary response to “alarming escalation in xenophobia and bigotry resulting from the coronavirus/Covid-19 pandemic” (AAPI 2020). Many of the professors and political leaders quoted in the press release specifically point out President Trump’s use of the term “Chinese Virus” as a statement that could “incite racist and xenophobic acts of violence” (AAPI 2020). Between March 19-April 15, 2020, almost 1,500 reports of coronavirus-related discrimination were reported has been submitted (Jeung and Nham 2020). Sonia Shah, a science journalist who authored the book *Pandemic: Tracking Contagions from Cholera to Ebola and Beyond*, recently addressed the rising tide of global xenophobia against the Asian community in an article for *Time* magazine. Shah (2020) points to the rise in populist rhetoric by right-wing leaders which “single[s] out foreigners as vectors of crime, terror, and disease.” Yale Historian Frank Snowden, author of *Epidemics and Society*, was recently interviewed about the spread of coronavirus. He argues that the rejection of scientific explanation and the acceptance of Covid-19 as “something foreign...leads to violence and ethnic conflict” (Karma 2020). In a recent interview, too, Historian Erica Lee,

author of *America for Americans*, highlights the general feeling of anxiety that comes with headlines which highlight sickness and death surrounding Covid-19 and the very typical but problematic racist scapegoating that often goes hand in hand with the rise of a pandemic (Escobar 2020).

In an allegedly post-racial era, the idea that such archaic views still exist, not just at the fringes of society, but, at the forefront, is a difficult situation with which to reckon. The Trumpian era should illustrate that we do not live in a post-racial world. His campaign, his election to presidency, his time in office all remain illustrative of the fact that racism remains prominent and consequential within U.S. society (Stein and Allcorn 2018, Terrill 2017). The Covid-19 pandemic unfortunately shows that racism towards Chinese communities also remains present. Snowden believes that as a species, human beings have come to a proverbial fork in the road. We must use coronavirus as an opportunity to build a world which becomes more just, rather than as a way to justify “xenophobia, ethnonationalism, and tribalism” (Karma 2020). It is vital that scholars and activists shine a light on continuing forms of racist behavior shaping our society and “find way to correct the historically entrenched pattern of using cultural reasoning to blame infection on the ‘Other’” (Eichelberg 2007:1294).

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Femicide in the Time of COVID-19: A view from Latin America

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The COVID-19 pandemic has had a [devastating impact](#) on the human rights of women and girls around the world. The problem of violence against women – so often hidden behind closed doors – is one of the gravest issues confronting societies worldwide, an issue which has become even less visible (or [harder to detect](#)) in communities which implemented strict lockdown policies throughout the early months of the pandemic. Most of Latin America [followed this pattern](#) – closing borders, shutting down businesses, and enforcing curfews even before we did so in the United States. [Nicaragua](#), however, is one of a handful of countries which chose to ignore the potential impact of the virus, arguing that such measures would jeopardize its already highly precarious economic position (a substantial portion of the country's workers are employed in the informal sector). Furthermore, the Nicaraguan government has repeatedly argued that its health care sector is more than equipped to deal with any potential [outbreaks](#).

Based on the Nicaraguan government's actions, one might assume that rising cases of violence against women – and its most extreme manifestation, femicide (the murder of a woman on the basis of her gender) – were not as likely to occur here as in their counterparts across Latin America during the pandemic. Tragically, this is not the case. Although Nicaragua's femicide rates are consistently lower than their [Central American neighbors](#), in the first 17 days of September 2020 alone, [seven women](#) were murdered, three within a span of just 24 hours. The Nicaraguan chapter of Catholic for the Right to Decide has documented 60 total femicide cases in Nicaragua thus far in 2020, which is already well above the total number of femicide cases for each of the previous several years.

These numbers cannot be understood in isolation. They are part of a larger pattern of state indifference and neglect to the plight of women and girls – and open hostility to the feminist and human rights groups who most vocally advocate for them – which I have documented in my [research](#) going back to at least 2013 (findings echoed by other scholars like [Karen Kampwirth](#)). In 2012, following in the footsteps of many [other Latin American countries](#), Nicaragua passed its most comprehensive legislation addressing gender-violence in its history, which also included the codification of femicide as a distinct crime for the first time. Since then, however, Nicaragua has taken numerous steps to undermine this law, beginning with a legislative reform in 2013 that required mediation (arbitration) for all first time and “minor” gender violence cases, followed by an executive order in 2014 that circumscribed the definition of femicide to count only those murders of women committed in the private sphere as “femicide”. Further exacerbating matters was the closure of the country's specialized women's police stations in 2016 (last year the government said it was reopening these spaces, but no independent confirmation of this claim is available). In 2018, a broader political uprising in Nicaragua was met with [widespread government repression](#), leading hundreds of women (including [feminists](#) and human rights activists) to flee the country.

Given these aforementioned events, pandemic or no pandemic, it is perhaps little wonder that women in Nicaragua continue to be brutally murdered with impunity.

Thirty-Year Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act:

A Conversation with Lex Frieden

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This past summer marked the 30-year anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), legislation that

has been critical in expanding rights of people with disabilities. I had the privilege of speaking with Lex Frieden, known as a chief architect of the ADA, about his perspectives on ADA, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and future directions for disability rights. Lex Frieden is Professor of Biomedical Informatics and Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. He is Adjunct Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Baylor College of Medicine. Additionally, Frieden directs the Independent Living Research Utilization Program at TIRR Memorial Hermann Hospital in Houston, Texas. From 1984 to 1988, Professor Frieden served as Executive Director of the National Council on the Handicapped (now the National Council on Disability). In this role, he was instrumental in conceiving and drafting the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Professor Frieden was asked to reflect on the greatest accomplishments of the ADA: *The area in which people observe the most impact is that of accessibility to public accommodations. I think the kind of things that are most obvious to people are ramps, curb cuts, wider doorways, larger bathrooms and disabled parking spaces - those are representative of the type of visible changes that have occurred over the last 30 years. Another very dramatic and very significant change is access to public transportation. Almost overnight, after the passage of the ADA, every transit system in the country began purchasing wheelchair accessible buses and started providing services to people with disabilities whom they were not serving before. Before 1990, and the ADA, there were only four transit systems in the country with significant commitments to accessible public transport. Those were New York, Los Angeles, Washington DC and Houston. A year after ADA was enacted, every transit system in every city in the United States was beginning to integrate accessible public transit. And not long afterwards, all the systems were well on the way to becoming fully accessible.*

Professor Frieden also acknowledges an overall change in attitude toward people

with disabilities as a result of the ADA: *Before 1990, the public did not observe folks with disabilities in the community very much. And those who were in the community, were regarded as abnormal. In some cases, you know, the term "super cripp" was applied to people with disabilities who were comparatively active. And while those of us who were in the public were sometimes applauded, nobody did anything to remove the barriers that prevented us from having full access. So, attitudes have changed a lot. I think the majority of the public view folks with disabilities as a part of society. We are accepted now in ways that we were not accepted before.*

When asked about the ADA and human rights on a more global scale, Professor Frieden highlighted the international impact of ADA: *When we worked on the ADA, we knew it had international implications.* Professor Frieden then went on to describe how the United States had hosted visitors from other countries including Finland, Japan and China who documented the work that was being done on the ADA. According to Professor Frieden, *If you go back and listen to or read President Bush's comments, he acknowledged in his remarks when he signed the ADA, and he has often said, during his life when he talked about it, that one of the things that made him happiest about enacting the ADA was the impact that it had internationally.*

Professor Frieden's advocacy for people with disabilities did not stop after the ADA was passed. He directed his efforts to a global cause: *When I was appointed by President George W. Bush, in 2002, to be the chair of the National Council on Disability, one of the first things I did was go to the United Nations and propose an International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). I did that in conjunction with other colleagues around the world with whom we had been networking. And clearly, that convention was a collaborative international effort by disability leaders and advocates from all over the world.* When asked about his thoughts concerning the United States' failure to ratify the UNCRPD, Professor Frieden replied: *I think it's ridiculous. I*

think it's political. There's no rationale for it. I used to get angry about it. But then when I looked at the history of the U.S., and its relationship to the United Nations, I realized the U.S. has not ratified a number of other international conventions. I don't think it's a statement about people with disabilities. The argument that opponents give is that the U.S. should not be held to international standards. Which is ridiculous because the UNCRPD was modeled after the ADA, and our regulations are stronger than those of any other country that has ratified the UNCRPD. Another, almost opposite, argument against ratification is that we already have laws here that exceed the provisions of the CRPD. So why do we need to subject ourselves to some international scrutiny? My response to that is, why not?

Despite success of the ADA, people with disabilities continue to face barriers. Professor Frieden acknowledges that the ADA largely focuses on civil and political rights, but falls short of ensuring economic, social and cultural rights. Reduced employment and institutionalization are primary examples: *There are tens of thousands of people in the United States who are living in nursing homes, or other congregate settings, who would prefer their own homes. And yet, we do not have accessible housing available to accommodate people. And we do not have a community-based system of services and supports that will provide assistance to people in the community. There are no reasonable community-based alternatives for people who otherwise require institutionalization. Yeah, that's a shame. And I think that's at the very least, a violation of the spirit of the ADA.* When asked whether ADA 2.0 is necessary, Professor Frieden replied: *No, I would never be associated with an ADA 2.0. In fact, I think the foundation that we have now is solid; I would not do anything that might compromise it. However, I do think there are a number of things that need to be done to complement and to ensure the ADA is fully enforced, and then fully implemented. Among those things, there's a need to make community-based, long term services and support programs available in every city and town. Frankly, I think the President should*

appoint a panel to work out the details of doing so, and make it a national priority. There are 76 million baby boomers, half of those people right now have a disability, and more will have in the next 10 or 15 years. So, it's critical—it's a critical need. And we need to invest time and effort in it. That is not strictly an ADA issue. But it is a related issue – it has to be addressed in order for the ADA to be fully implemented.

Toward the end of our conversation, Professor Frieden reflected on current events and issues of inclusion: *Here in the United States, the recent Black Lives Matter initiative has begun to affect the way the public relates to all of us who are disenfranchised because of characteristics over which we really have no control - that being most types of disability, color, race, gender and sexual orientation. The BLM movement has really begun to affect the way people think about inclusion. I think there is a kind of a coattail effect, beneficial to all groups, including people with disabilities, who are sometimes regarded as being separate or distinguishable. The rhetoric is changing dramatically! But, most importantly, in the near future, I hope the rhetoric will generate constructive, transformative action that gives substance to good intentions.*

Q&A With 2020 Section Award Winners

**Book Award Winner: Robert Braun
Assistant Professor, UC Berkeley
"Protectors of Pluralism: Religious Minorities and the Rescue of Jews in the Low Countries During the Holocaust"**

Q: Can you tell us a little bit about your background and where you're at now?

A: I am an Assistant Professor of Sociology and Political Science at UC Berkeley. I grew up in the Netherlands before moving to the US for grad school.

Q: How did you become interested in this topic?

A: My interests are closely intertwined with my family history. Growing up, I

heard many heroic stories of family members who fought or escaped the Nazis during WW2. However, I was always more intrigued by family who told me that they refrained from stepping up? People who confessed they were afraid to do so. People who chose their own life over that of others. This led me to ask a simple but important question: Why do some local communities protect victims of genocide while others do not?

Q: Can you explain some of your book's main findings?

A: The book argues that local religious minorities are more likely to save persecuted groups. Two reinforcing mechanisms link minority status to rescue operations. First, religious minorities are better able to set up clandestine organizations because their members are more committed. Second, religious minorities empathize with targets of purification campaigns, imbuing their networks with preferences that lead them to resist genocide. A geo-referenced dataset of Jewish evasion in the Netherlands and Belgium during the Holocaust is deployed to assess the minority hypothesis. Spatial statistics and archival work reveal that Protestants were more likely to rescue Jews in Catholic regions while Catholics facilitated evasion in Protestant areas. Post-war testimonies and secondary literature demonstrate the importance of minority groups for rescue in other countries and Genocides, underlining that it is the local position of church communities -and not something inherent to any religion itself- that produces networks of assistance to threatened neighbors.

Q: What surprised you most in your research?

A: The original research was set up to explore differences in Jewish-Christian relationships between the Netherlands and Belgium. I anticipated that Belgian Catholics would behave differently than Dutch Catholic because of their distinct state-society relationships. However, after a year of research I discovered I had the comparison all wrong. It was the border between Rome and Reformation

which transcended the Low Countries that was much more important in shaping the emergence of empathy and social networks.

Q: What are you working on now?

A: I am currently working on a book manuscript tentatively titled "Bogeyman". It explores the relationship between the rise of the nation-state and the production of fear in modern societies. Based on archives of folklorists I am mapping the geographic and temporal spread of bogeyman in Central-European children stories through the 19th and 20th century. Bogeymen can take many different forms. They can be gendered (witches), ethnic (Jews), urban (the man in the suit), animals, hybrid or rooted in fantasy altogether. Why do some bogeymen cluster in some times and places but not others and what does this tell us about society? The analysis so far reveals that children's fright (1) is largely shaped by and located at major social cleavages that constitute the nation and (2) has long lasting effects on political behavior, long after the original social fault lines producing fear have been transformed.

**Best Article Winner: Nicole Iturriaga
Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Max
Planck Institute on Religious and
Cultural Diversity**

**"At the Foot of the Grave: Challenging
Collective Memories of Violence in
PostFranco Spain" in Socius**

Q: Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and where you're at now?

A: I am Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute on Religious and Cultural Diversity in Gottingen, Germany. I am a political sociologist with a focus on science and technology, social movements, collective memory, gender, and human rights. My research agenda is broadly about examining the conditions under which social actors use science and technology to voice their political grievances, goals, and resist state power. I am also an avid climber, potter, baker, and gardener. I am lucky that the MPI has let me shelter from home in Southern California, which has allowed me to

further develop new COVID hobbies like raising monarch butterflies!

Q: How did you develop an interest in this topic?

A: This may sound strange, but I have always had an interest in dictators and political violence. It may have to do with my father being from Chile. In any case, as long as I can remember I was drawn to understanding how violent regimes work. I found my way to this particular topic by reading the literature on human rights movements in the Southern Cone. From there I became especially interested in the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo in Argentina and their use of forensics in their fight for justice. The project developed from there.

Q: Why have recent Spanish governments been so reluctant to address the Franco regime and the state terror it deployed?

A: Great question! This reluctance to address the Franco regime and its use of state terror derives from the Spanish democratic transition (1975-1978). The elite political powers (on both sides) made a deal known as the El Pacto del Olvido, or the pact of forgetting, which gave blanket amnesty to regime members. The pact also pardoned old Republican fighters (the losing side) who were still languishing in prison; in the post-war period the regime sentenced thousands to death and many more to long term prison sentences often ranging from 30-40 years. Effectively, the Pact enshrined the idea that for Spain to smoothly transition to democracy the past had to be forgotten. This was seen as the preferred model for democratic transitions until the mid 1980s. Additionally, it is important to remember that the regime had almost 40 years to terrify people with the idea that the violence of the war and early postwar years could come back at any moment. This was reinforced by the 1981 coup attempt. So, in some ways it was easier and politically expedient for the various democratic governments that followed to ignore the past as long as possible.

Q: Do you have any sense of how Spanish schools talk about the Franco regime, the

Civil War, state terror, and the murder and disappearances of Republicans?

A: I have not explicitly studied how Spanish schools discuss the past, but I can go off of some of what I saw in the field, which was mostly shock. It seemed that younger people who visited the exhumations had no idea that Spain is second only to Cambodia in terms of mass graves. The lead archeologist would often say that he didn't know this either until *after* obtaining his degrees in history and archeology, because it was never taught. I do believe that there has been a push by civil society groups to have this history included in school curricula, but these decisions are still very much decided by local and regional governments some of whom still hold to the idea that the 'past should stay in the past.'

Q: Your data and methods are very impressive. How were you able to gain access to the Spanish Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory (ARMH) and engage in such a close ethnographic study of their work throughout the country?

A: Thank you! I gained access by sending the ARMH an email asking if I could do an ethnographic study of their work. Let that be a lesson! Don't ever think something is impossible. I sent an email from my grad student office to strangers on the other side of the world and it worked. I also offered to do volunteer work in exchange for access; it seemed only fair. Due to this, I was able to attend all their public events, excavations, exhumations, and reburials. The ARMH also trains their volunteers to participate in the exhumation process, which was really an incredible and powerful experience. Being in the graves and participating in the technical work really added to the ethnography. I am deeply indebted to them for letting me be a part of their team during my fieldwork.

In terms of positionality and talking to locals, I think there were benefits to me being a foreign woman. I wasn't seen as an insider who was on any particular side or had family who fought in the war. Rather, I was an outsider, which provoked a lot of educational type

conversations where people were trying to explain things. The other thing is that technical work is painstaking, so you have a lot of spare time to hang around and talk to people who are watching the excavation/exhumation. I was also a source of curiosity for a lot of people especially in smaller villages. In some cases, I was the first American some people had ever met. Many were also interested in hearing about Los Angeles and California which helped build some immediate rapport.

Q: Can you tell us about the main findings from your paper?

A: The main findings of the paper are that the ARMH use multiple tactics during the forensics classes given to local visitors at exhumations that provide a powerful counter-memory of the Spanish Civil War and Franco regime. Specifically, the ARMH frame their work as being grounded in de-politicized science (e.g. the science and its outcomes are unbiased by political leanings). They also let the action-oriented objects 'speak' their truths. What I mean by that is a skeleton with a hole in the cranium tells a particular story of violence. The bodies themselves thus have the capacity for action in their materiality, as do the personal objects found in the graves. Objects such as a red earring or cufflinks can further embody the imagined lives of the dead, which heightens the emotionality of the classes' framing. Due to the combination of these tactics, ARMH workers are then able to make moral and transitional justice claims about the past, present, and future memory politics of the country.

Q: With the extensive work of ARMH, have their activities changed the conversation in Spain regarding the extent of state terror under Franco?

A: I think the impact of the ARMH on changing the conversation in Spain cannot be understated. The ARMH did the very important work of initially and continually breaking the repressive and sanitized silence of the past. Since their inception in 2000, a national historical memory movement began, which led to the formation of hundreds of other

groups around the country. Due to the larger memory movement's work a flawed but useful law (the Law of Historical Memory) was passed in 2007, which ordered the removal of all Francoist monuments and street signs and gave some state support to memory organizations. In 2010, an Argentine judge began a universal jurisdiction case investigating Franco era crimes (the ARMH is part of the case), which has led to multiple exhumations and identifications, as well as the international arrest warrants for over 20 Franco regime officials. Moreover, due to these many different actions, the socialist government finally exhumed Franco from the massive Fascist monument The Valley of the Fallen and reburied him in a private cemetery last October. Importantly, there are now many actors, including regional governments, who have taken up this cause. There is still much work to be done, but the progress is undeniable.

Q: Was there anything that surprised you during the course of your research?

A: Oh my goodness, yes! For one, I am constantly surprised at the resiliency of people. I encountered so many examples in my research (not just in Spain) of people who, even after experiencing unspeakable hardship, still kept fighting for justice.

Another thing that surprised me, and something we do not talk about enough in ethnographic research, was the emotional toll. Honestly, I did not feel it when I was in the field, with one exception. But I think when you are in the field there is a sort of compartmentalization process mixed with the practicality of, 'Did I write everything down? Where is my recorder/camera?' that sort of protects you. I did really feel it, however, when I was writing and that surprised me because I wasn't expecting it.

Q: What are you working on now?

A: I have a couple things in the works. Currently I am finishing up my book manuscript, which more extensively explores the ARMH and their tactics in

rewriting the Spain's violent past (under contract with Columbia University Press). I am also starting my next major project, which will investigate the emergence and use of biometrics in policing and surveillance and how activists are engaging these issues. Additionally, I am collaborating with Dr. Aaron Panofsky at the UCLA Institute of Society and Genetics on a project that seeks to understand how white nationalists are reacting to, negotiating, and appropriating genomic science to further their goals.

Best Graduate Student Paper Winner:
Jeffrey Swindle
"Pathways of Global Cultural Diffusion: Media and Attitudes about Violence against Women"
Post-doctoral Fellow
University of Texas at Austin
Population Research Center

Q: What sparked your interest in violence against women and the cultural diffusion of human rights scripts in Malawi?

A: I came to graduate school with interests in gender and the global spread of ideas about development and human rights. I turned to Malawi after reading other sociologists' work there, like Jenny Trinitapoli, Susan Watkins, Ann Swidler, and Maggie Frye.

Q: One interesting finding in your paper is how men's attitudes towards VAW tend to shift more in response to newspaper articles about VAW "cases" rather than "campaigns". What might be some of the implications of this finding?

A: Yes, in response to a reviewer's request, I did subsequent analyses and found that men's probability of stating that they reject violence against women increases when more newspaper articles documenting specific cases of such violence have been published recently, but not when articles about campaigns broadly condemning violence against women are published. I find that both types of articles influence women. It is difficult to generalize these findings beyond this context, but it is worth investigating elsewhere. I think the difference lies in the types of feelings

such articles may activate. Men may empathize more after hearing stories of named women, whereas calls for structural change against patriarchy may be less motivating among men.

Q: Under what circumstances can transnational organizations focused on women's rights effectively combat dominant cultural scripts that normalize gender-based violence through the media? What do you see as the main limitations of relying on the media to change attitudes about VAW?

A: In my study and in several other experimental studies in other contexts, targeted media campaigns condemning violence against women seem to lead women and men to declare their objection to violence against women. So in that sense, transnational organizations' efforts are "working." My paper explains the benefit of thinking about media content before assuming that media use generally will spread human rights attitudes. Global entertainment media--especially the movies and music that reaches global audiences--is chalk full of gender stereotypes.

Q: What do you think are the main lessons that development practitioners, human rights activists, and/or researchers of VAW in other cultural contexts might be able to draw from your research?

A: I think my study could provide motivation to practitioners to continue using media campaigns. Activists could try to work with entertainment media corporations to embed human rights messages into their content, and shame them in getting rid of gender stereotypes. In terms of research, scholars of globalization could examine the content of media (as well as other theorized diffusion mechanisms of human rights) prior to assuming their relationship with people's expressed human rights attitudes will be positive.

In the News

"In 2017 ... Republicans trumpeted a radically different truth about human nature when they pronounced that cutting taxes on the wealthy would incentivize them to work harder, invest more and spur rapid economic growth," wrote **Margaret (Peggy) Somers**, professor emerita of sociology. "But how is it that extra money incentivizes the rich to become paragons of moral virtue and economic rainmakers, whereas for working people it incentivizes them to become social parasites and economic saboteurs?" [*The Guardian \(U.K.\)*](#)



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Schmidt, Steven, and Jason C. Mueller. 2020. "The Emergence of Participatory Budgeting in Mexico City." Pp. 286-298 in *The Routledge Handbook of Planning Megacities in the Global South*, edited by Deden Rukmana. London: Routledge. Available at: <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/e/9781003038160/chapters/10.4324/9781003038160-21>

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