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Imagining International Justice in Post-Genocide Cambodia (abstract)

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The Social Practice of Human Rights: Charting the Frontiers of Research and Advocacy

2015 Conference of the University of Dayton Human Rights Center

Oct. 1-3, 2015, Dayton, Ohio

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Research Panel: Justice and Judicial Systems

Presenters: Dr. Haley Duschinski; Katie Conlon; Elizabeth Cychosz; Samantha Rommel

Title: Imagining International Justice in Post-Genocide Cambodia

Abstract: Through an innovative student-faculty collaborative research externship program supported by the Ohio University Center for Law, Justice & Culture, several undergraduate students spent the summer of 2014 in Cambodia conducting independent ethnographic research on issues of law, memory, and justice in the aftermath of the Khmer Rouge genocide. Utilizing the students' research in Cambodia, this proposed panel session presents three case studies for a conversation regarding how ethnographic methods can inform transitional justice mechanisms by emphasizing local experiences. Much of the research is in light of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), a hybrid tribunal that began in 2007 to try senior leaders of the Khmer Rouge and those deemed most responsible for crimes committed between 1975 and 1979. Collectively, the projects explore connections between international justice and contemporary Cambodian society, including how international justice mechanisms produce global legal consciousness, how this consciousness is claimed and contested by local actors, and how legal categories shape collective identity, memories of the past, and imaginations of the future. The research projects reveal a spectrum of issues related to law, memory, and justice. One of the projects discusses the politics of the word "genocide" as it is used in the Cambodian case, drawing upon the experiences and perceptions of the Cham Muslim minority and Case 002/02 of the ECCC. Another project explores representations of victimhood at the Tuol Sleng Museum of Genocidal Crimes as they manifest in debates surrounding a new, ECCC reparations-related memorial on the site. The last project investigates the politics of the cultural production, representation, and translation in genocide exhibitions at three contrasting memorial museums across Cambodia.

Keywords: Transitional justice, law, memory, genocide, Khmer Rouge

Biographies:

Dr. Haley Duschinski is an Associate Professor of Anthropology and the Director of the Ohio University Center for Law, Justice & Culture. Her research specializations in legal anthropology focus on international justice, transitional justice, and law and conflict. She has conducted extensive fieldwork on human rights mobilizations in the highly militarized zone of Kashmir Valley, India, and she has developed a study abroad program on post-conflict transitions in Northern Ireland. In Summer 2014, Dr. Duschinski coordinated a pilot program in Cambodia, the Externship in Law, Justice & Culture.

Katie Conlon is a third-year student in the Honors Tutorial College (HTC) pursuing a major in History and a certificate in Law, Justice & Culture at Ohio University. She is co-founder of the organization Students for Law, Justice & Culture, and has participated in the Anthropology Study Abroad Program on Human Rights, Law & Justice in Northern Ireland in Spring 2013, as well as the History Study Abroad Program on Politics and Piety in Rome in Spring 2014 and the Externship in Law, Justice & Culture in Cambodia in Summer 2014. Katie has carried out internships with U.S. Representative Mike Kelly in Washington DC, with the Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh, and with the Athens County Historical Society and Museum. She is President of the Ohio University History Association, and she is on the editorial board of the Ohio University Undergraduate Journal of History.

Elizabeth Cychosz is a fourth-year student in the Honors Tutorial College (HTC) pursuing a double major in Journalism and Anthropology, and a certificate in Museum Studies at Ohio University. She is co-founder of the organization Students for Law, Justice & Culture, and participated in the Anthropology Study Abroad Program on Human Rights, Law & Justice in Northern Ireland in Spring 2013, and the Externship in Law, Justice & Culture in Cambodia in Summer 2014. For more than two years, she has carried out an internship at the Athens County Historical Society and Museum, where she has designed and installed an archaeology exhibition and also coordinated the museum's public relations activities through print marketing and social media. She is broadly interested in themes of cultural heritage, repatriation, identity, conflict, justice, memory, and memorialization.

Samantha Rommel is a fourth-year student pursuing a major in Anthropology, minor in History, and a certificate in Museum Studies. Samantha is a member of the Students for Law, Justice participated in the Anthropology Study Abroad Program on Human Rights, Law & Justice in Northern Ireland in Spring 2013 and the Externship in Law, Justice & Culture in Cambodia in Summer 2014. She was the co-chair of the Ohio University Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity Student Judiciary Board, and is a member of the Lambda Alpha National Anthropology Honors Society and Phi Beta Kappa National Honors Society. She is simultaneously carrying out two museum-related internships at the Kennedy Museum of Art and the Athens County Historical Society & Museum. She is generally interested in the role of museums in post-genocide and post-conflict societies.