

Annex II

Anonymous interview to U.S. 2L student

Interviewer: Juan Sebastián Rodríguez

Paper on Critiques to Human Rights Legal Activism: THE INDUSTRY OF ADVOCACY

INTERVIEW/CUESTIONARIO DE ENTREVISTA

Review and sign inform consent form previous to the interview/Revisar y firmar el formulario de consentimiento informado antes de realizar la entrevista

1. Why did you decide to become a human rights legal activist? (personal history: what and where did you study, what motivated you)/ ¿Porque decidió convertirse en activista legal de derechos humanos? (Historia personal: ¿qué y dónde estudio? ¿qué lo motivó?)
 - She grew up in Western Massachusetts, liberal place, parents are anthropologist.
 - In High School, she lived in Buenos Aires and was very familiar with human rights violations in Argentina.
 - She was very involved with human rights activism.
 - She went to a top tier U.S. private college. School is co-ed and it is a progressive college.
 - Law was a way to make change and that's why she decided to go law school.
 - She could travel to Latin America extensively when she was younger.
 - She spent 3 summers in Mexico and her grandparents lived in Costa Rica. She was very close to political movements in Latin America.
 - Her parents are both academics and both went to grad school. Her Mom is a Mexican-American. She wanted to connect back with Latin America and that's why she decided to become a public interest lawyer. Her Dad travelled the world and became interested in international relations.
2. How long have you been working as a human rights legal activist? / ¿Cuánto tiempo lleva trabajando como activista legal de derechos humanos?
 - She started working as a human rights activist at the age of 16.
3. Can you describe the kind of organizations where you have worked as a human rights legal activist? (kind of organization, kind of job you have done (including internships and volunteer experiences), size of organization, is it national or international, what is a normal day of work for you, how big is your team, what area do you specialize in)/ ¿Puede describir el tipo de organizaciones en las cuales ha trabajado Como activista legal en derechos humanos? (tipo de organización, tipo de trabajo que realiza o ha realizado, tamaño de la organización, si es nacional o internacional, como es un día normal de trabajo para usted, cual es el tamaño de su equipo, en que área se especializa).
 - Internationally: international nonprofit based in New York.

- U.S. advocacy: small non-profits, she worked in housing. They work in family law. General legal clinic. Paralegal paid.
- She interned at domestic nonprofit, it was a 5-people organization. Their funding came from wealthier donors and organizations such as a private foundation. They relied a lot on foreign trained lawyers that came to volunteer, as well as local volunteers. It was a volunteer job. Translation, reports, grants. Unpaid internship. She did this under a government fellowship.
- Elite academic institutions provide funding to do internships and fellowships. However, people need to get there to access these programs. This means students need to have high GPAs, AP classes, afford SAT classes, and get to a good school. It's a cycle, and it's all about economic privileges.
- She speaks 3 languages.
- Her dream job is a global non-profit organization.

4. What expectations did you have about social justice when you decided to go to law school?/
¿Qué expectativas tenía sobre la justicia social cuando decidió estudiar Derecho?

- She had a romantic notion of what it meant to be an activist for social justice.
- She never considered working in a law firm.
- She knows it would be more practical to work in social justice.
- She received a merit based full-tuition scholarship from a top tier U.S. law school which gave her the financial freedom she needed to do what she wants.
- Perhaps when she has a family money might become a concern but now that she doesn't have financial responsibility she can pursue what she likes.
- Her school portrays as the school that is educating the next generation of public interest lawyers, many of them come with those expectations but once they start working, they have huge loans, so the most practical decision is to work in law firm that offer very attractive salaries.
- In most of the cases the path of becoming a lawyer means you'll have to fit in the practical path to survive it. Even if people are interested in human rights but have different kinds of experiences, job descriptions often require specific experiences that lawyers with corporate or transactional backgrounds won't have, which might discourage them from applying to these jobs. Even if they might be interested.
- Students that go to top schools are privilege in many ways. They are very smart, and that could come because of their position of privilege or because they are inherently smart. Great GPAs, great LSAT scores, good indicators, hardworking people, competitive.
- Often only top law schools offer human rights programs in the U.S.. At her law school there are many clinical courses.
- She is not entirely certain whether she would like to practice international human rights law because she doesn't feel if she is really going to make the most difference through this channel.

5. What expectations did you have when you started working as a human rights legal activist?/
¿Qué expectativas tenía cuando empezó a trabajar como activista legal de derechos humanos?

6. Where those expectations fulfilled? Explain/ ¿Fueron sus expectativas iniciales cumplidas? Explique.
7. What obstacles have you encountered as a human rights legal activist? (financial, type of job, supervision, organizational, bureaucratic)/ ¿Que obstáculos ha enfrentado en su carrera como activista legal de derechos humano? (financieros, tipo de trabajo, supervisión, organizacional, burocracia).
- Funding is the biggest challenge. On one side because of the problem that was described above, but also because often organizations don't have the funding to hire entry-level positions, jobs are very few, and are extremely competitive so you must do human rights for forever if you want to get these kinds of jobs/fellowships.
 - Many people don't have the resources to do that.
 - At smaller non-profits, these don't have the organizational capacity to train lawyers. They just need free labor force and often throw interns into a project, even though they might not know what they're doing.
 - The Global NGO are very well-funded. Her experience at a Global NGO is that they have an organized program where she has a detailed work plan of products she feels confident enough to handle. The capacity of the organization in terms of human resources is big enough so that each person has a specific and detailed oriented job at the organization.
8. How do you think those obstacles could be overcome?/ ¿Cómo sobrepasaría esos obstáculos?
- Lack of funding.
 - No time or resources to train people.
 - She hasn't come across with people that work in this field but are more interested in themselves or their own achievements. Because it's a competitive field she thinks it's hard to find people that act that kind of way or that are making, relatively, little money. They won't do that unless they believe on what they're doing.
 - As an undergrad, when she worked with a professor she had a good mentoring experience. She was very well known and very well connected, she went to the embassy and the president of the country, but she also went to the community and shared spaces with the community. She felt exposed by working alongside with the communities, she felt the professor had a connection with this community.
 - At her school there are many small seminars on different social justice issues. She has found that at these spaces there are high-level conversations that never involve the voices of the communities.
 - She saw that, she is a member of the Bickel and & Brewer Latino Institute for Human Rights, there was a conference on the latino children, when they were planning the conversation they were looking for fancy key note speakers. Thus, she organized a panel about undocumented youth. 6 undocumented adolescents came to NYU to speak about their own experiences, age 16 to 22. She was surprised because she volunteered at smaller organization who was deeply interesting in empowering communities and teaching legal and community tools to make law more accessible. But she wasn't allowed to do this at the

school. Law doesn't allow you to engage with communities. Is more of a top down approach and paternalistic approach?

- International human rights are a replica of that model. A model that looks more like colonialism, people use benevolent tools to replicate structures of power.
9. To what extent do you consider the work you has a real impact on the human rights of the communities/groups you work on?/ ¿Hasta qué punto considera cuál es el impacto que tiene su trabajo sobre los derechos humanos de las comunidades/grupos que defiende?
- She has the privilege to pick the type of legal work she does.
 - If she decides to work in legal aid she can have more access to communities. Or if she does international law, that sounds more of a colonialist approach to addressing social justice issues.
 - When she decided to intern for a global nonprofit she was concerned that was what her job was going to be about. Not engaging with people or not caring and thinking carefully about the communities the organization is advocating for.
 - As an intern, she has only been seated at an office. But she wishes that lawyers at international NGOs and international organizations would work with partner organizations, not just thinking about impact litigation but also thinking about advocacy strategies and communication strategies. We can always do that kind of thing more. We should work on creating more relationships with people on the ground.
 - Often there is a misconnection between organizations doing advocacy work that do fact-finding reports, send lawyers to awful places, gather the information they need and then come back and write fact-finding reports that allows to tell the world how awful the place is but without having some sort of social responsibility for those communities. Are they building connections? She would like to work in a place where she has access to build those relationships, although she recognizes that model would conflict with the idea of impact litigation.
 - When there's people trying to create systemic change is hard to care about your individual client. It is inevitable. You use the client. You use their perfect case and then you go and work from the top. Is hard to judge that dynamic, there will always be pros and cons.
 - Law as a field automatically reproduces patriarchal logics.
10. What is your relationship with those communities?/ ¿Cuál considera es la relación con esas comunidades?
11. What is the thing you enjoy the most about your work?/ ¿Qué es lo que más disfruta de su trabajo?
12. What is the thing that you like the least about your work?/ ¿Qué es lo que menos disfruta de su trabajo?
- She has done grassroots organizing and provide direct services.
 - To start learning about impact litigation you need to understand about individual stories. There's a gap between both.

- Some questions remain unresolved: Is the point of impact litigation to try to educate people on the ground? Not really.
- Do we need all types of strategies to do impact litigation?
- Do the clients care about not being involve but feel their case can create an impact? Those are unresolved questions.