



McGill Centre for Human
Rights and Legal Pluralism

Centre sur les droits de la personne
et le pluralisme juridique de McGill

2013



ANNUAL REPORT

McGill Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism

Created in September 2005, the Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism was formed to provide students, professors and the larger community with a locus of intellectual and physical resources for engaging critically with the ways in which law affects some of the most compelling social problems of our modern era, most notably human rights issues. Since then, the Centre has distinguished itself by its innovative legal and interdisciplinary approach to understanding and advancing human rights in a complex and legally plural global community.

www.mcgill.ca/humanrights

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2013

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January—December 2013.



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OPENING REMARKS

The Centre has continued to synergize its multi-dimensional human rights program and initiatives with its interdisciplinary, international and pluralistic research agenda. This past year, we welcomed a number of international scholars and human rights professionals as O'Brien Fellows in residence; they participated in teaching and research collaborations and liaised with graduate and undergraduate students. Synergy between research and teaching also occurred in our human rights internship program, as returning students contributed to our new human rights working paper series and seminars. Our research project for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was complemented by a research seminar, in which law students presented the results of their research to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Our disability rights seminar series enhanced our growing commitments to graduate studies on disability and the law, and emerging research work on the interface of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and access to justice. The Centre continues to be deeply enriched as we nurture the linkages between human rights and legal pluralism research and teaching, outreach and human rights programs.



Colleen Sheppard
Centre Director

The Centre continues to be deeply enriched as we nurture the linkages between human rights and legal pluralism research and teaching, outreach and human rights programs.



Yaoundé—Photo by Alexandra Bornac, summer 2013 intern at the Coalition of Non-Governmental Organizations and Community-Based Organizations of Cameroon.



Montreal—Guest speaker Marina Nemat, author and human rights activist, addresses the audience during the plenary session of the Echenberg Conference on Human Rights on March 21, 2013.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2013

Echenberg Family

Conference on Human Rights

Global Conference on Democracy, Human Rights and the Fragility of Freedom

The Third Echenberg Family Conference on Human Rights addressed key issues regarding democratic citizenship and the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, including the violent repression of democracy, institutional safeguards, economic and social rights, the role of women and youth in struggles for democracy, freedom of expression and assembly, as well as the impact of transnationalism, globalization (including the rise of new media) and foreign policy on democracy.

Speakers engaged with the complexities that arise both globally and locally in movements for democratic participation, and with different approaches to nurturing democratic institutions and engagement.

25
Activists from

24
Countries



Yaoundé—Photo by Alexandra Bornac, summer 2013 intern at the Coalition of Non-Governmental Organizations and Community-Based Organizations of Cameroon.

Launch of the Second Seminar Series on **Disability Rights**

Global Perspectives on Disability, Human Rights and Accessing Justice 2013-2014

Building on the success of the 2012-13 seminar series, “Disability, Human Rights and the Law,” the Centre launched its second series on disability rights issues, consisting of four seminars held over the 2013-14 academic year.

Over 1 billion people, or 15% of the world’s population, live with a disability. Persons with disabilities face physical, social, economic, and attitudinal hurdles that prevent them from participating as equal members of society and often keep them from accessing education, employment, social and legal support systems. Despite the passage of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, important issues, ignorance, as well as major legal and policy challenges remain. They stand as barriers to advancing full equality and the fundamental human rights of people with disabilities around the world.

The series, titled “Global Perspectives on Disability, Human Rights and Accessing Justice,” continues to engage in one of the most compelling human rights issues of our day, consistent with the Faculty of Law’s tradition of analysis, scholarship and promotion of human rights and social justice.



Yaoundé—Photo by Alexandra Bornac, summer 2013 intern at the Coalition of Non-Governmental Organizations and Community-Based Organizations of Cameroon.

Launch of the Interdisciplinary Research Network on Discrimination and Inclusion

New network gathers academics and practitioners from universities and community-based organizations to support **interdisciplinary research collaboration**

The Interdisciplinary Research Network on Discrimination and Inclusion was established in the Spring 2013 on the initiative of Colleen Sheppard, Director of the Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism, in the face of a growing interest for interdisciplinary dialogue on critical perspectives on discrimination, diversity and inclusion. The Network gathers researchers, practitioners as well as collaborators from community-based organizations. Its objectives are to promote interdisciplinary collaboration and reflection on discrimination and inclusion.

Members' research projects and practices span a wide range of themes, including, for example, systemic and preventive remedies in anti-discrimination litigation, comparative approaches to discrimination, educational initiatives regarding equity and diversity, diversity and leadership in public and private organizations, and the legal profession, ethno-cultural discrimination against immigrant communities, complexities of identity and identity performance, racial and social profiling, and socio-economic inequality and discrimination.

International Human Rights Internship Program **Working Paper Series**

Centre supports the writing and dissemination of student research papers inspired by field experience

The Centre's Working Paper Series enables the dissemination of papers by students who have participated in the International Human Rights Internship Program

Students enrol in a seminar, entitled "Critical Engagement with Discourses of Human Rights," that allows them to write a research paper through a peer review and support process. The papers in this series are intended to elicit feedback and to encourage debate on important public policy challenges.

The papers in this series are distributed free of charge in PDF format at the following site:

<http://www.mcgill.ca/humanrights/clinical/internships/working-paper-series>



Nandini Ramanujam
Executive Director

The Program continues to integrate experiential learning into the classroom, and the publication of Volume 1 of the Working Paper Series demonstrates our efforts to align programs, teaching and research.



Phnom Penh—Photo by Léa Pelletier-Marcotte, 2013 summer intern at the Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO) in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

The Centre Celebrates its First **Scholar at Risk** Welcoming O'Brien Fellow Semahagn Abebe



In 2013, the Centre was pleased to welcome O'Brien Fellow Dr. Semahagn G. Abebe, who came to McGill through the Scholars at Risk Network (SAR). Dr Abebe will be in residence from September 2013 to June 2014.

Dr. Abebe, a native of Ethiopia, received his LLM degree in International Economic Law and Human Rights Law from the University of Amsterdam, and also holds an LLM and PhD from the University of Goettingen.

He has extensive teaching and research experience. He was formerly a lecturer of law at several universities in Ethiopia. In 2012-2013, he was a Bank of Ireland post-doctoral fellow at the Irish Centre for Human Rights, National University of Ireland, Galway. During the fellowship at Galway, he taught International Trade and Human Rights Seminar course to LLM students.

Based at New York University, the **Scholars at Risk Network** is an international network of academic institutions organized to support and defend the principles of academic freedom and to defend the human rights of scholars around the world. SAR advocates on behalf of academics, writers, artists, and other intellectuals who are threatened in their home countries and arranges for positions of sanctuary at universities in the network for intellectuals fleeing persecution and violence.



Phnom Penh—Photo by Léa Pelletier-Marcotte, 2013 summer intern at the Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO) in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

LEADERSHIP AND MEMBERS

Professor Colleen Sheppard
Centre Director

26

Full Members

Dr. Nandini Ramanujam
Executive Director and Director of
Human Rights Programs

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Associate Members

In 2013, the Centre hired Futsum Abbay (DCL 2012) as Research Associate for a one-year term in partnership with SPHERE-Québec (*Soutien à la personne handicapée en route vers l'emploi au Québec*), a non-profit created to foster the integration of disabled persons into the labour market.

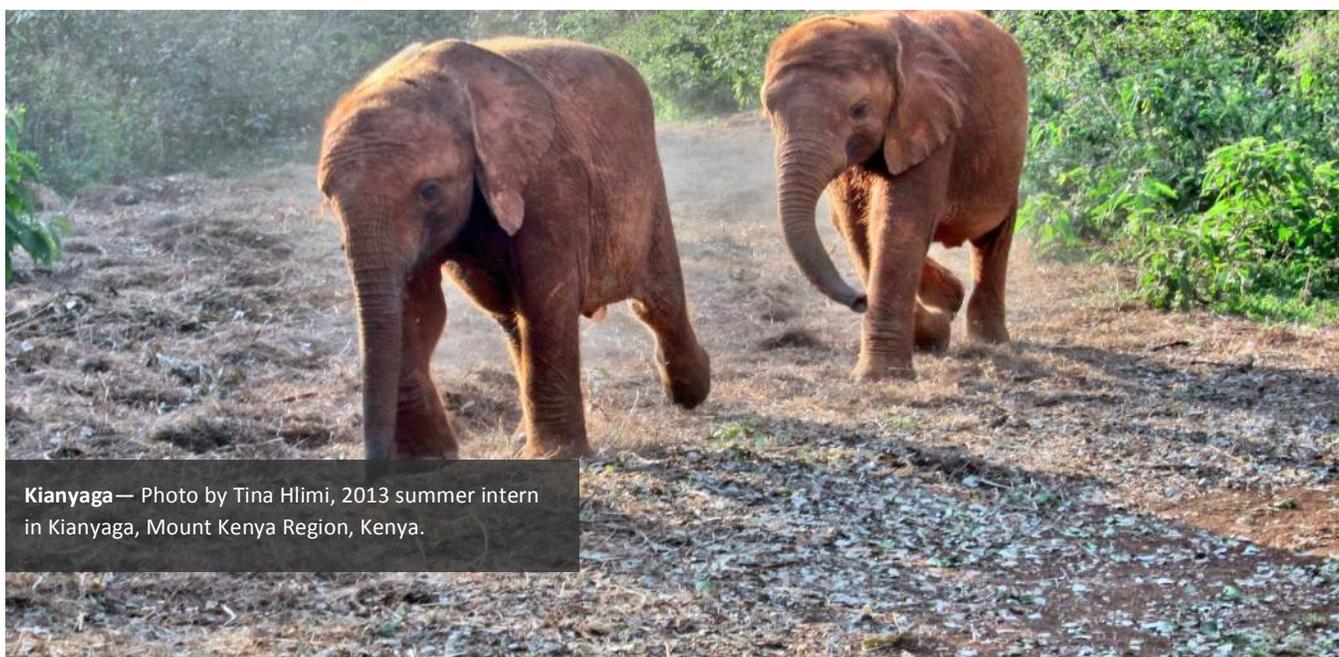
Anne-Claire Gayet (BCL/LLB 2013) was also hired as Research Coordinator from May-December 2013. Sharon Webb continues her role as Program Coordinator.

The Centre welcomed Allison Christians and Ronald Niezen as new members. Professor Christians is the H. Heward Stikeman Chair in the Law of Taxation at the Faculty of Law. Professor Niezen is the Katharine A. Pearson Chair in Civil Society and Public Policy at the Faculties of Law and Arts.



Futsum Abbay
Research Associate

I am thrilled to continue contributing to the intellectual life of the Centre as a Research Associate and I thank the Centre's directors for their endless support and guidance.



Kianyaga — Photo by Tina Hlimi, 2013 summer intern in Kianyaga, Mount Kenya Region, Kenya.



Yaoundé—Photo by Alexandra Bornac, summer 2013 intern at the Coalition of Non-Governmental Organizations and Community-Based Organizations of Cameroon.

FELLOWS

The Centre is host to O'Brien Fellows in Residence, O'Brien Graduate Fellows, Post-Doctoral Fellows, Visiting Fellows, Rathlyn Fellows, and Aisenstadt Fellows.

6

O'Brien Graduate Fellows

4

O'Brien Fellows in Residence

1

Post-Doctoral Fellow

4

Visiting Fellows

1

Rathlyn Fellow

4

Aisenstadt Fellows

O'Brien Graduate Fellows

Thanks to the generosity of alumnus David O'Brien, the Centre awards O'Brien Fellowships to a select group of graduate students. O'Brien Fellows are provided scholarship funds and office space within the Centre. They also contribute to the activities of the Centre as part of the terms of the fellowship. The Centre advertises the Fellowship Program in the Human Rights Quarterly and in the Legal Scholarship Network. In addition, the advertisement is circulated in English, French and Spanish on over 80 listserves. Selection of O'Brien Fellows is made pursuant to the recommendations of a committee chaired by the Executive Director of the Centre.

The Centre's current O'Brien Fellows are: Marika Giles Samson, John Hursh, Bethany Hastie, Sabaa Khan, Alvaro Cordova, and Shimelis Mulugeta Kene.

O'Brien Fellows in Residence

Established in 2011, the O'Brien Fellows in Residence program aims to provide opportunities for human rights professionals to visit and contribute to the Centre. The Centre invited applicants from a diverse pool of applicants such as journalists, activists, academics and practitioners in the field of human rights. The program is run separately from the O'Brien Graduate Fellowships Program, which are destined to students pursuing an LLM or a DCL degree.

The Centre hosted four O'Brien Fellows in Residence in 2013: Semahagn Abebe, Anne-Marie Mooney Cotter, Jeffrey Kahn, and Anthony Francis Tissa Fernando.

Dr. Semahagn G. Abebe was in residence from September 2013 to June 2014. He came to McGill through the Scholars at Risk Network. Dr. Abebe received his LLM degree in International Economic Law and Human Rights Law from the University of Amsterdam and studied Masters (LLM) and Doctorate Degree (PhD) at the University of Goettingen.

Dr. Anne-Marie Mooney Cotter was in residence from September 2013 to February 2014. Dr. Cotter earned her Bachelor's degree from McGill University, her JD from Howard University School of Law, and her PhD from Concordia University.

Dr. Jeffrey Kahn was at the Centre from September to December 2013. He is an Associate Professor of Law at the SMU Dedman School of Law. Professor Kahn is a graduate of Yale College, Oxford University, and the University of Michigan Law School.

Justice Anthony Francis Tissa Fernando was in residence at the Centre from January to March 2013. He is a Justice of Appeal of the Court of Appeal of the Seychelles. Justice Fernando holds a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka and served as the Attorney General of the Seychelles from January 1999 to December 2008.



**Nicholas Calvano
Rathlyn Fellow**

The Fellowship has given me a space to think critically about some of the most compelling human rights issues of our time and engage with top experts in the field.

Post-Doctoral Fellows

The Centre is host to Post-Doctoral Fellow Hassan Razavi. He holds a PhD in law from the University of Neuchatel, Faculty of Law, in Switzerland and he wrote his doctoral thesis on international trade and WTO law.

Visiting Fellows

Each year the Centre welcomes a number of Visiting Fellows, who are in residence at McGill for a limited time period. In 2013, the Centre welcomed Christophe Golay (Coordinator, Project on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights at the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights), Geneviève Painter (doctoral candidate in Jurisprudence and Social Policy at the University of California, Berkeley), Aurore Schwab (doctoral candidate in the Department of History of Religions at the University of Geneva, Switzerland), and Béatrice Vizkelety (Director of the Legal Department and Secretary of the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse du Québec).

Rathlyn Fellow

For the second year, the Centre awarded a Rathlyn Fellowship to Nicholas Caivano, BCL/LLB Candidate at the Faculty of Law, to assist with initiatives related to human rights and disability law.

Aisenstadt Fellows

The Centre awards several fellowships to law students to spend a summer providing research and operations assistance. Aisenstadt Fellowships were attributed thanks to a generous gift from the Nussia and André Aisenstadt Foundation. This year, fellowships were awarded to Isabelle Bourgeois, Azinatya Caron-Paquin, Cécile Capela-Laborde, and Miatta Gorvie.

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Every year Members and Associate Members of the Centre, in Law and other disciplines, are invited to sponsor graduate students working under their supervision on issues related to the field of human rights and legal pluralism. The Centre is currently hosting 35 graduate and doctoral students.

CURRENT GRADUATE STUDENTS

Ayodele Akenroye
Enrique Boone Barrera
Julie Cousineau
Alvaro Cordova
Erin Crandall
Maria del Pilar Vanegas Guzman
Maude Choko
Isabelle Deschamps
Carlos Iván Fuentes
Marika Giles Samson
Kate Glover
Arthur Green
Jing Guan
Claris Harbon
Alexandra Harrington
Bethany Hastie
Róisín Hennessy

Edin Hodžić
John Hursh
Ivana Isailovic
Philipp Kastner
Shimelis Mulugeta Kene
Sabaa Khan
Vanessa Lentz
Isabelle Martin
Ugochi Nnadozie
Catalina Peralta
Matthew Pritchard
Anna Purkey
Hassan Razavi
Jeffrey Sachs
Mohamed Sesay
Mourad Shalaby
Jon Waind

PUBLIC DIALOGUE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Third Echenberg Family Conference: Global Conference on Democracy, Human Rights and the Fragility of Freedom

March 21-23, 2013

The objective of the Echenberg Family Conference on Human Rights is to bridge the gap between the theory of human rights and the complex social, political and economic realities of a turbulent and interconnected world. By bringing together scholars, lawyers, judges, activists, students, and a wide range of stakeholders from civil society, we hope that the dialogue, engagement and education fostered through the conferences will have a concrete social impact, develop pragmatic and innovative approaches to human rights, and address some of the most poignant and pressing concerns of the human condition.

Democracy has been widely endorsed as a core value in the international human rights community and viewed as essential to the realization and enhancement of basic dignity and human security. In the turbulent times in which we live, we stand as witnesses to widespread struggles for social justice and democratic inclusion—struggles both prompted and challenged by repressive authoritarian states, social exclusion and poverty, powerful transnational actors, environmental disasters, the trials of fragile and failing States and the difficulties faced by emerging ones. The Conference provided an interdisciplinary and international forum for exploring how to build and revitalize democracies, focusing on the protection of human dignity and the challenges of equitable participation and democratic accountability.

The Conference was made possible by the generous support of the Echenberg Family Foundation and 25 donors. The event was organized by the Centre and the Faculty of Law.



Montreal—Gordon and Penny Echenberg share a word with Heather Munroe-Blum, former Principal and Vice-Chancellor of McGill University, before the start of the plenary session of the Echenberg Conference on Human Rights on March 21, 2013.

Annual Lecture in Health and Law: Equality and Health: Reaching for Resolution in the Realms of Disability Rights?

30 January 2013

Speaker: Anna Lawson (Deputy Director of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Disability Studies, University of Leeds)

Professor Lawson's lecture reflected on the relationship between the concepts of equality and health in the disability context. It considered ways in which the demands of "health" have often been used to override those of "equality". As well as having profound implications for the lives of people with disabilities, this has had significant political and theoretical repercussions. Professor Lawson also considered the harmful impact of neglecting the demands of equality on the health of people with disabilities.

The lecture concluded by a reflection on the extent to which tensions between "equality" and "health" have been resolved, and on what factors, if any, are contributing to achieving greater reconciliation.

This discussion was set against the backdrop of international developments, and in particular, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The annual lecture was organized in collaboration with McGill's Research Group on Health and the Law.



Montreal—Professor Anna Lawson delivers the Annual Lecture in Health and the Law on January 30, 2013.

Cassin Lecture: Genocide Convention and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: What Have We Learned? What Must We Do?

6 February 2013

Speaker: Irwin Cotler (Canadian Member of Parliament, Special Counsel on Human Rights & International Justice, member of the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on International Human Rights, Co-Chair of the Canadian Helsinki Watch Group, former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada)

The Alliance Israélite Universelle established the René Cassin Lectureship in 1988 to mark the centenary of the birth of René Cassin, who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1968. The Alliance Israélite Universelle is one of the oldest and most distinguished human rights organizations, having been founded in Paris in 1860. René Cassin was its president from 1943 to 1969.

Irwin Cotler is a Member of the Canadian Parliament, Emeritus Professor of Law at McGill University, and former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, where he introduced landmark legislation in the areas of human trafficking, children's rights and same-sex marriage. He is Vice-Chair of both the *Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights* and the *Subcommittee on International Human Rights* in the Canadian Parliament. A constitutional and comparative law scholar, Prof. Cotler has litigated every section of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* – including landmark cases in the areas of free speech, freedom of religion, women's rights, minority rights, and war crimes justice – and is the recipient of ten honorary doctorates and numerous awards for his pioneering work in peace law and human rights advocacy, including the Order of Canada.



Montreal—Canadian Member of Parliament Irwin Cotler delivered the Cassin Lecture at the Faculty of Law, McGill University on February 6, 2013.

Wallenberg Lecture

Law vs. Justice: How the Courts are Preparing the Way for One Last, Fatal, Round of Treaty Negotiations with Indigenous Peoples in Canada

25 September 2013

Speaker: Mary Eberts (Ariel Sallows Chair in Human Rights, University of Saskatchewan, College of Law)

Mary Eberts, a Toronto lawyer with a practice in constitutional law, equality rights, and Aboriginal rights, discussed how, in interpreting section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, the Supreme Court of Canada laid out a framework that relies on outmoded concepts of colonial law. The Court has expressed a preference, according to Eberts, that the major work of reconciling Canadian sovereignty with Indigenous sovereignty should be done at the negotiating table. She noted that the Court also emphasized “consultation” as the appropriate way for government to deal with conflicts between resource extraction and the historical claims of Indigenous peoples, but said that Indigenous peoples in those consultations can never simply say “no”. Eberts argued that, in an era of mounting pressure to squeeze every ounce of economic value from Indigenous land on an often breathtaking timetable, this Supreme Court doctrine condemns Canadian First Nations to take part in one last round of “Treaty” negotiations, where the stakes are sky-high, the cost of failure is potentially catastrophic, First Nations’ negotiating position has been undermined, and they may simply not have the resources to have lawyers and negotiators at the tables for as long as it takes.



Montreal—Mary Eberts delivers the Wallenberg Lecture at the Faculty of Law, McGill University on September 25, 2013.

Macnaughton Lecture Civil Society: Democracy, Dissent and the Law

23 October 2013

Speaker: Maina Kiai (UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association)

This year, the Macnaughton Lectures welcomed Maina Kiai, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association, who spoke on democracy, dissent and the law inside civil society.

A lawyer trained at Nairobi and Harvard Universities, Mr. Kiai has spent the last twenty years campaigning for human rights and constitutional reform in Kenya – notably as founder and Executive Director of the unofficial Kenya Human Rights Commission, and then as Chairman of Kenya’s National Human Rights Commission (2003-2008), where he won a national reputation for his courageous and effective advocacy against official corruption, in support of political reform, and against impunity following the violence that convulsed Kenya in 2008, causing thousands of deaths.

Funded by endowments from the Classes of '75 and '77 on the occasion of their 10th anniversaries and launched in 1994 thanks to the generosity of Senator Alan Aylesworth Macnaughton, PC OC QC (1903 – 1999), the bi-annual Alan Aylesworth Macnaughton Lecture is devoted to contemporary issues of public policy. Senator Macnaughton (BA'26, BCL'29, LLD'92) was Speaker of the House of Commons, founder and Honorary Chairman of the Canadian World Wildlife Fund, Counsel at Martineau Walker, and a member of the Faculty of Law Advisory Board.



Montreal— Maina Kiai, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association, delivered the Macnaughton Lecture on October 23, 2013.

ENGAGED LEARNING AND RESEARCH

International Human Rights Internship Program

The International Human Rights Internship Program remains a flagship program for the Centre. Many prospective and present students cite the Program as a factor in their decision to study law at McGill. The program provides an opportunity to integrate experiential learning into the Faculty's teaching and research on human rights, including collaboration with the Hans & Tamar Oppenheimer Chair in Public International Law, the Labour Law and Development Research Laboratory, and the Calcutta Research Group.

This year, twenty students participated in the Internship Program, with placements in Montreal, Quebec City, Toronto, Winnipeg, Iqaluit, New York City, Colorado, Kampala, Nairobi, Phnom Penh, Manila, San José, Accra, Yaoundé, Banjul, Mexico City, Mount Kenya Region, and Calcutta. Students receive bursaries to help defray the costs of the internship.





The Centre carefully selects law students for placements as interns with NGOs and tribunals for a period of twelve weeks. Partner organizations provide students with practical work experience in human rights investigation, monitoring, and reporting. The internships also provide exposure to the operation and implementation of international legal human rights instruments and norms. Following their summer placements, interns return to the Faculty with practical legal training and personal experience that enrich the intellectual and social life of the law school community.

The Centre was pleased to offer seven new internships for 2013 placements:

- Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa, Banjul*
- Oceans Beyond Piracy – One Earth Future Foundation, Colorado*
- Responsibility to Protect Program – One Earth Future Foundation, Colorado*
- Oppenheimer Chair Internship – Calcutta Research Group, Calcutta*
- LLDRL Internship on Decent Domestic Work – LAWA-Ghana, Accra*
- Avocats sans frontières Canada, Quebec City*
- Kianyaga, Mt. Kenya Region, Kenya*
(collaboration with Professor Matthieu Chemin, McGill Faculty of Arts)

Two new internships will be offered in 2014:

- Research and Development Internship – One Earth Future Foundation, Colorado, USA*
- Katharine A. Pearson Chair Internship in Civil Society & Public Policy, Akwesasne Justice Department, Cornwall, Canada*

2013 SUMMER INTERNS

Lia Bellefontaine
Ateneo Centre for Human Rights, Manila,
Philippines

Alexandra Bornac
CONGEH, Yaoundé, Cameroun

Diya Bouchédid
Avocats sans frontières, Quebec City, Canada

Jim Burman
Shuraako, One Earth Future Foundation,
Colorado, USA

Alyssa C. Clutterbuck
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, Toronto,
Canada

Linda El Halabi
EQUITAS, Montreal, Canada

Claire Gunner
Inter American Court, San José, Costa Rica

Emily Hazlett
Disability Rights International, Mexico City

Andrew Higdon
*Oceans Beyond Piracy, One Earth Future
Foundation*, Colorado, USA

Tina Hlimi
Kianyaga, Mt. Kenya Region, Kenya

Jean-Marc Lacourcière
IHRDA, Banjul, The Gambia

Charlotte-Anne Malischewski
Calcutta Research Group (CRG), Calcutta,
India

Lipi Mishra
LAPD and CEHURD, Kampala, Uganda

Silvia Neagu
Equality Effect, Nairobi, Kenya

David Nugent
Maliiganik Tukisiiniakvik Legal Services,
Iqaluit, Canada

Alexandra Olshefsky
Truth and Reconciliation Commission,
Winnipeg, Canada

Léa Pelletier-Marcotte
LICADHO, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Laura Rhodes
*Responsibility to Protect, One Earth Future
Foundation*, Colorado, USA

Angela Slater
LAWA-Ghana, Accra, Ghana

Marika Tremblay
Human Rights Watch, New York City, USA



Kianyaga— Photo by Tina Hlimi, 2013 summer intern in Kianyaga, Mount Kenya Region, Kenya.

International Clerkships

Alongside New York University, Columbia, Yale, Michigan, Geneva and Strasbourg, the Faculty of Law is a participant in the Judicial Assistants Programme of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA). This offers a rare opportunity for McGill students or recent graduates to work at some of the world's most important legal institutions. Judicial Assistants are chosen to work directly with one judge, helping him or her in the preparation for hearings and the drafting of judgments. Work takes place in The Hague, Netherlands. In 2013, Jean-Paul Saucier Calderon was selected to clerk at the ICJ, and Daniel Litwin was selected to clerk at the PCA. This program is supported by the generosity of the Ministère des Relations internationales, de la Francophonie et du Commerce extérieur du Québec and the Faculty of Law, McGill University.

McGill/Hebrew University Summer Program in Human Rights: Reimagining Economic and Social Rights

The third edition of the McGill/Hebrew University's International Summer Program in Human Rights took place in Jerusalem in 2013, chaired by Professors René Provost (McGill) and Tomer Broude (Hebrew University). Twenty students—ten students from each university—were selected through a process that included written applications and interviews with program directors.

The topic for this year's program was "Re-Imagining Economic and Social Rights," an issue that has become central in both Canada and Israel in this time of global economic recession. The significant financial implications of enforcing socio-economic rights, coupled with limited public budgets, casts a shadow over the legitimacy of asking unelected judges to render decisions that affect social policy. The summer program was designed to inspire imaginative insights, by bringing the Canadian and Israeli contexts together, in order to imagine new ways of addressing social and economic rights.

Since the summer of 2011, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Minerva Center for Human Rights and McGill University's Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism have collaborated on a joint annual international summer program in human rights for Canadian and Israeli law students. The program, taking place over three weeks in late July and August, alternates between Montreal and Jerusalem. Each summer, the program explores a different area of human rights of relevance to both societies through both courses and field trips.

Student Statement to the Truth and Reconciliation Commissioners

On April 26th, 2013, students from Professor Colleen Sheppard's seminar on "Truth, Reconciliation and Indigenous Peoples" presented a poster presentation of their research papers to the Truth and Reconciliation Commissioners at the Montreal National Event. One of the students had the honour to make a statement to the Commission on behalf of the class, restating the importance for university students to learn about Indigenous history and knowledge.

Critical Human Rights Reading Group

Organized by O'Brien Doctoral Fellow Bethany Hastie, and supported by the Centre, the Human Rights Critical Reading Group met six times over the course of the 2012-13 academic year, engaging graduate students from the faculty in discussions readings such as Joseph Slaughter's "Narration in International Human Rights Law," Jack Donnelly's "The Relative Universality of Human Rights," and Upendra Baxi's "Voices of Suffering and the Future of Human Rights."

Third Echenberg Family Conference Young Leaders Program

18-21 March 2013

A Young Leaders Forum took place in conjunction with the Third Echenberg Family Conference. The Forum brought together 25 human rights activists and advocates from 24 countries, chosen from a pool of over 350 applicants from 67 countries, in order to provide bright young activists from the around the world with an opportunity to engage with these issues, develop practical skills in advocacy and social change, and network with the Conference's renowned speakers.

The Forum was created to give Young Leaders the opportunity to develop practical skills in human rights advocacy, including in the use of social media and community-building to effect change. One of the main goals of the Forum is for the Young Leaders to share practical tools and experiences while engaging with the themes of the Conference.

The Forum consisted of a series of workshops, roundtable discussions, and cultural events aimed at engaging with the spectrum of themes related to Democracy, Human Rights and the Fragility of Freedom. The Young Leaders addressed key issues around democratic citizenship, the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, including the violent repression of democracy and economic and social rights, as well as the role of transnationalism, globalization and foreign policy in democracy.

350
Applicants
from

67
Countries



Montreal—The 2013 Young Leaders met at the Faculty of Law, McGill University on March 18-21, 2013 for a series of workshops, roundtable discussions, and cultural events.

FOSTERING COMMUNITIES OF SCHOLARSHIP AND REFLECTION

Seminar Series on Disability Rights

In 2013, the Centre hosted two seminars as part of its 2012-2013 seminar series on “Disability, Human Rights and the Law”:

Beyond Stigma and Exclusion: International Reforms for Mental Health in the Workplace (January 30, 2013)

Resource Persons: Anna Lawson (Senior Lecturer, University of Leeds), Colleen Sheppard (Professor, Director, CHRLP), Derek J. Jones (member, Research Group on Health and Law, CHRLP)

‘Mainstreaming’ Disability: Inclusive Education (February 18, 2013)

Resource Persons: Tara Flanagan (Assistant Professor, McGill Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology), Cristobal Vignal (Chairperson, Governing Board, Mackay School), Frédéric Fovet (Director, McGill Office for Students with Disabilities)

The Centre also launched its second series, entitled “Global Perspectives on Disability, Human Rights and Accessing Justice,” which consists of four seminars over the 2013-14 academic year:

Human Rights and Inclusive Development: Integrating the Disability Perspective (October 2, 2013)

Moderator: Jonas-Sébastien Beaudry (Boulton Research and Teaching Fellow, McGill)

Resource Persons: Anne-Marie Mooney Cotter (O’Brien Fellow, CHRLP), Ravi Malhotra (Associate Professor, University of Ottawa), Lipi Mishra (Intern, Legal Action for Persons with Disabilities)

Mental Health Disabilities and Access to Justice: Recognizing and Reinforcing Capacity (November 6, 2013)

Moderator: Derek J. Jones (member, Research Group on Health and Law, CHRLP)

Resource Persons: Robert Dinerstein (Professor, American University Washington College of Law), Emily Hazlett (Law Student Intern, Disability Rights International)

Proactive Approaches to Inclusion: Legislative and Policy Developments (January 27, 2014)

Moderator: Colleen Sheppard (Professor, Director, CHRLP)

Resource Persons: Arlene Kanter (Professor, Syracuse University), David Lepofsky (Chair, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Alliance), Aurélie LeBrun (Researcher, Quebec Human Rights and Youth Rights Commission)

Dignity, Self-Determination and End of Life Care (March 19, 2014)

Moderator: Colleen Sheppard (Professor, Director, CHRLP)

Resource Persons: Joseph Arvay (human rights lawyer, partner at Farris Law), Justine Farley (medical doctor, St. Mary’s Hospital), Derek J. Jones (member, Research Group on Health and Law, CHRLP)

Commentator: Jonas-Sébastien Beaudry (Boulton Research and Teaching Fellow, McGill)

The Seminar Series is hosted by the Centre and the McGill Law Students Human Rights Working Group (Disability and the Law Portfolio), and supported by the Aisenstadt Community Justice Initiatives and a generous grant from the Rathlyn Fund for Disability Rights.

Aisenstadt Equality and Community Initiative

The primary objectives of the initiative include: generating insights and new knowledge about the contextual realities of inequality, social and economic exclusion, and obstacles to effective access to justice within local communities; strengthening the capacity of community-based organizations to identify and contest the systemic and recurrent violations of equality and social and economic rights; and promoting transformative human rights education, which engages students, professors and community-based organizations.

The initiative is bringing together an interdisciplinary network of university researchers and students, as well as community-based advocates, working on issues related to the effective protection of equality and economic and social rights. It also seeks to provide a forum for exchange across diverse fields of expertise and different disciplinary backgrounds, including law, social work, education, and community development. The initiative supports the Centre's collaboration with the Barreau du Québec, as well as a number of workshops, seminars and roundtables.

Collaboration with the Barreau du Québec: Project on a More Inclusive Profession

Researchers: Colleen Sheppard, Isabelle Bourgeois (Aisenstadt Fellow), Anne-Claire Gayet (Research Coordinator)

This collaborative projects aims to contribute to the Barreau du Québec's research on how to create a more inclusive legal profession. The project focuses on identifying programs and strategies that have been adopted by other jurisdictions, including other provinces in the rest of Canada as well as those in the United States and Europe, in the aim of curbing discrimination within professional bodies.

Workshop on Civil Society: Democracy, Dissent and the Law

October 23, 2013

Prior to the Macnaughton Lecture featuring speaker Maina Kiai, leading academics and civil society members met for a private, one-day workshop on challenges to fundamental rights in relation to civil society in Canada. Participants examined emerging norms with respect to an enabling environment and explored how civil society and academia can collaborate to address these challenges, including by identifying key areas for policy and regulatory reform. Workshop outcomes will be published in the form of a summary paper.

The workshop was a collaboration between the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC), Voices-Voix (a Canadian non-partisan coalition dedicated to defending advocacy, dissent and democratic rights), Centre member Pearl Eliadis, and was hosted by the Centre. *(funded by the Aisenstadt Equality and Community Initiative and the Katherine A. Pearson Chair in Civil Society and Public Policy)*

Law, Rights and Public Spaces

November 12, 2013

Speakers: Nicholas Blomley (Professor and Chair, Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University), Marie-Eve Sylvestre (Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa), Celine Bellot (Professor, École de service social, Université de Montréal), William Damon (MA Candidate, Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University), Véronique Fortin, (PhD Candidate, University of California Irvine)

(Co-sponsored by the Aisenstadt Equality and Community Initiative)

From the Field to the Faculty: Experiential Learning through Human Rights Internships

This speaker series provided an opportunity for the Centre's human rights interns of summer 2012 to share their experiences with the McGill community.

Truth, Justice and Reconciliation (February 15, 2013)

Speakers: Chris Durrant (Maliiganik Tukisiiniakvik Legal Services), Molly Joeck (Refugee Law Project), and Will Colish (Human Rights Watch)

Anti-discrimination and Alternative Means of Justice (February 27, 2013)

Speakers: Melissa Austen (Ateneo Centre for Human Rights), Edward Béchard-Torres (CONGEH/CIAH), Anne-Claire Gayet (Inter-American Court of Human Rights), and Eloïse Ouellet-Décoste (LICADHO)

Health, Disabilities and Human rights: Perspectives from Home and Away (March 20, 2013)

Speakers: Roger Bill (Disability Rights International), Miatta Gorvie (Legal Action for Persons with Disability), and Rosel Kim (Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network)

Legal and Extralegal Strategies for Combatting Discrimination and Violence against Women and LGBT Minorities (March 27, 2013)

Speakers: Celina Kilgallen-Asencio (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada), Jacqueline Madden (The Asia Foundation's Access to Justice Program), Jeanne Mageau-Taylor (EQUITAS), and Shantha Priya Morley (Equality Effect)

Interdisciplinary Research Network on Discrimination and Inclusion

The Interdisciplinary Research Network on Discrimination and Inclusion explores crosscutting research themes that include four axes:

- Systemic and Structural Discrimination and Institutionalized Inequality
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Complex Identities and Intersecting Discrimination
- Unconscious or Implicit Bias

A list of selective thematic bibliographies as well as some current research projects can be found under each axis on the Centre's website:

<http://www.mcgill.ca/humanrights/network-discrimination-and-inclusion>

ROUNDTABLES AND FOCUS GROUPS

An Informal Conversation with Hagai El-Ad, Association for Civil Rights in Israel

September 23, 2013

Moderator: Nandini Ramanujam

Speaker: Hagai El-Ad (Executive Director of Association for Civil Rights in Israel)

Hagai El-Ad is the foremost human rights activist in Israel and the Executive Director of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI). ACRI is Israel's oldest and most established human rights organization and the only one dealing with the entire spectrum of rights and civil liberties in Israel. Hagai spearheaded Jerusalem's LGBTQ movement and, in 2002 launched what has now become Jerusalem's Annual Pride and Tolerance march.

Roundtable on International Legal Theory

January 13, 2013

Moderator: Alana Klein (McGill)

Speakers: Jeff King (UCL), Evan Criddle (Syracuse), Evan Fox-Decent (McGill), Colleen Sheppard (McGill), Frédéric Mégret (McGill), Daniel Weinstock (McGill)

The focus of this roundtable was to discuss recent work on socio-economic rights and the foundations of international law. The speakers used the following materials as a starting point for their discussion: Jeff King's *Judging Social Rights*, Evan Criddle's "Creating Fiduciary States", and Evan Fox-Decent's "The Fiduciary Constitution of Cosmopolitan Citizenship."

Focus Group on the proposed Québec Charter of Values

October 30, 2013

Moderator: Daniel Weinstock

Under the auspices of the McGill Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism, this focus group seeks to engage in a deep conversation on the issues related to, but also surrounding this proposed Charter of Values. The event revolved around four axes: (1) Religion as Heritage; (2) Values and Charter Values; (3) Access to Justice; and (4) Difference as Special Privilege.

Large-Scale Land Acquisitions and Human Rights in the Developing World

December 10, 2013

Moderator: Nandini Ramanujam

Speakers: Semahagn Abebe, Christophe Golay, Devlin Kuyek, Ester Wolf

This conference, held to mark Human Rights Day, was co-organized with and featured O'Brien Fellow in Residence Semahagn Abebe and Visiting Fellow Dr. Christophe Golay discussing the various human rights implications of large-scale land acquisitions – also called land grabbing – in the global south, with a focus on Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. Devlin Kuyek, from the non-profit GRAIN, and Ester Wolf, who worked for the non-profit Bread for All, will bring a civil society perspective to the discussion.

COLLABORATION IN RESEARCH INNOVATION

Centre members are engaged in a wide range of team-based research as well as book projects. Beyond the team-based initiatives listed below, our Centre members also have extensive research funding based on individual research grants as well as affiliation and engagement with other team grants. Additional information is posted on individual Centre member webpages.

Legacies of Injustice and Residential Schools: Responsibilities and Relationships through the Lens of Law

Researchers: Colleen Sheppard, Kirsten Anker, Mark Antaki

Three working papers were finalized and submitted to the Truth and Reconciliation in conjunction with this research project. The working papers examine the legacies of injustice and Indian Residential Schools in Canada. The primary objective of the research was to assist the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and to enhance understanding of human rights abuses that occurred during the Indian Residential Schools era through advanced legal and interdisciplinary research. We examined how these human rights violations implicated both constitutional and international law and how to recognize and redress historic wrongs without creating or perpetuating further harms. *(Funded by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission)*

Economic Justice and Human Rights

Research Project

Researchers: Nandini Ramanujam, Colleen Sheppard, Allison Christians, François Crépeau, Jane Glenn

Collaborators: Frédéric Mégret, Alana Klein, Catherine Lu

This research project examines how pervasive socioeconomic inequality and poverty create a critical challenge to human rights in an increasingly globalized world. The project reconsiders the human rights and economic justice debate through four interrelated research axes: 1) how the law contributes to the creation and maintenance of socioeconomic inequality; 2) how inequality and unrealized socioeconomic rights in turn undermine civil and political rights; 3) how to develop effective human rights strategies to realize economic justice when the state is no longer the exclusive actor and territorial boundaries are less determinative of unjust outcomes; and 4) how endemic poverty represents a critical challenge for current human rights discourse and approaches. A *Fonds de recherche du Québec - Société et culture* (FRQSC) Emerging Team grant application was submitted in October 2013.

Course on Economic Justice in a Globalized World: Role of State and non-State Actors

Instructors: Nandini Ramanujam, Colleen Sheppard, Allison Christians, Christophe Golay, Alana Klein

Executive Director Nandini Ramanujam and new Centre member Allison Christians designed and taught this 1-credit course in the Fall 2013. The course was conceived as a forum for some of the researchers on the project to explore individual and group interests around the issue of economic justice. Colleen Sheppard, Alana Klein, and Christophe Golay each taught an individual module.

Course Outline: A paradigm shift is taking place in the global discourse on social and economic rights. As traditional rights-based approaches have failed to deliver economic wellbeing to a large part of the global population, new stakeholders are exploring alternative approaches to the challenges of economic growth and its distribution within and across societies. These stakeholders seek to influence the course of global economic security, trade and development by asking how the state, the market, and civil society interact in an economically integrated yet politically divided world. The re-emergence of the State as a central player in pushing domestic and international economic agendas, now alongside a panoply of watchful, wary, and vocal non-state actors, challenge us to reimagine our conceptions of the roles played by the state, the market, the third sector and the fourth estate, in the allocation of the world's resources. This course highlighted some of the emerging themes in this emerging global economic order.

Rule of Law and Economic Development Project

Principal researcher: Nandini Ramanujam

Research collaborators: Julia Betts, Nicholas Caivano, Kuzi Charamba, Marcus Moore, Mara Verna

The Rule of Law and Economic Development Research Group (ROLED) conducts interdisciplinary research across Brazil, Russia, India, and China (the to compare the systems and structures in which law operates, and evaluate the current climate of rule of law and its relationship to economic development within each country. The year-long research culminated in a report entitled “Rule of Law and Economic Development: A Comparative Analysis of Approaches to Sustainable Economic Development Across BRIC.”

On October 25, 2013, a research panel composed of two undergraduate law students (Julia Betts and Nicholas Caivano), a McGill law alum (Mara Verna) and faculty member (Nandini Ramanujam) presented at the 3rd Global Conference on Transparency Research at HEC Paris, France. The panellists explored the link between formal and information institutions and economic development in the context of rule of law in transition economies.

ROLED is planning a Phase Two proposal for a micro-level study with a focus on the use of information technology and its impact on combating retail corruption and poverty alleviation.



Paris—A panel composed of Julia Betts, Mara Verna, Dr. Nandini Ramanujam, and Nicholas Caivano presented at the Global Conference on Transparency at HEC Paris on October 25, 2013.

Transformative Justice: Mental Health and Human Rights in the Workplace

Centre Researchers: Colleen Sheppard, Derek J. Jones

As part of the Centre's emerging commitment to examining the rights of persons with disabilities, this research initiative focuses on mental health and the workplace. It assesses issues related to privacy and equality rights at various stages of work relationships, including, pre-employment and/or entry into a profession, reasonable accommodation at work, return to work policies. The research explores the dilemma of difference whereby individuals are stigmatized if they disclose their mental illness, but denied necessary accommodation if they do not.

(Funding Proposal being prepared for submission to the federal Privacy Commissioner)

Centaur Jurisprudence Research Project

Researchers: René Provost (CHRLP), Kirsten Anker (CHRLP), David Howes (Concordia), Eric Reiter (Concordia)

The encounters of law and culture within legal institutions are complex and dynamic, intersecting at multiple sites. We have identified three distinct sites, understood as normative sites in which legal knowledge is produced. The project proposes to critically analyze each of these sites by combining legal and anthropological perspectives. The first site, "translation of cultures," relates to the process of representing cultures as facts that fall into categories known to law. The second, "acculturation of justice," centres on the ways in which legal institutions react and adapt in an attempt to be culturally sensitive. This includes experimenting with alternative modes of conflict resolution, where legal processes are adapted to local cultural exigencies. The third, "pluralized narratives of law and cultures," touches on the impact within a given community of the narrative created by legal institutions in the process of applying legal norms. In this respect, the project seeks to assess the rayonnement of legal culture beyond the boundaries of legal institutions and, by the same process, analyze the extent to which legal culture itself is shaped through these encounters.

(SSHRC Standard Research Grant)

NEW BOOKS

Human Rights and Diverse Societies: Challenges and Possibilities

Editors: Colleen Sheppard, François Crépeau
(Cambridge Scholars Press, 2013)

This book project emerged from the Echenberg Global Conference on Human Rights and Diverse Societies, held in the fall of 2010. Scholars and activists from around the world convened to discuss complex issues linked to human rights and social diversity. In engaging with theoretical perspectives that question the "universality" of human rights as well as the practicality of diverse applications of human rights, this collection of essays explores how human rights can be employed to empower historically excluded/marginalized groups. It also examines how human rights can be invoked to further social inclusion. The essays reveal that the claim for universality of human rights is far from complete when faced with diverse (and diversifying) societies; in this way, the question is no longer about attaining universality, but much more about the discourse and challenges that surround it in the twenty-first century.

(Funded with the assistance of the Echenberg Family Conference Fund)

Disability Rights in Africa: Towards A Citizenship Approach

Author: Futsum Abbay
(Scholars' Press, 2013)

This book evaluates the status of the rights of persons with disabilities in the African context drawing from international, regional and national perspectives. It assesses the adequacy and effectiveness of the existing legal frameworks in Africa for achieving the full citizenship rights of persons with disabilities. It uses the concept of citizenship to justify and advocate for the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities. In the African context, it argues that the existing regional legal framework in Africa does not provide adequate legal protections and guarantees for safeguarding the human rights of persons with disabilities. The African regional human rights instruments often portray persons with disabilities as recipients of care, assistance and rehabilitation services, replicating the perspective of the individual/bio-medical model. It maintains that persons with disabilities should be reasonably accommodated to meet their needs in all circumstances in order to attain their full citizenship status. Otherwise, the exclusion, marginalization and discrimination experienced by persons with disabilities will remain unabated.

Sister Wives, Surrogates and Sex Workers - Outlaws by Choice?

Author: Angela Campbell
(Ashgate, 2013)

Did she choose that?' Or, more normatively, 'Why would she choose that?' This book critiques and offers an alternative to these questions, which have traditionally framed law and policy discussions circulating around controversial genderized practices. The book develops an analytical framework that aims to discern the meaning and value that women may ascribe to morally ambiguous practices. An analysis of law's approach to polygamy, surrogacy and sex work, particularly in Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia, provides a basis for evaluating the choice-coercion binary and for contemplating alternate modes for assessing, from a law and policy standpoint, the palatability of social practices that appear pernicious to women. Weaving together interdisciplinary research, an innovative analytical framework for assessing choices ostensibly harmful to women, and a critique of the legal rules governing such choices, this book bears relevance for students, scholars, practicing jurists and policymakers seeking a richer understanding of conduct that moves women to the margins of law and society.

Ways of Sensing: Understanding the Senses in Society

Authors: Constance Classen, David Howes
(Routledge, 2013)

Ways of Sensing is an exploration of the cultural, historical and political dimensions of the world of the senses. The book spans a wide range of settings and makes comparisons between different cultures and epochs, revealing the power and diversity of sensory expressions across time and space. The chapters reflect on topics such as the tactile appeal of medieval art, the healing power of Navajo sand paintings, the aesthetic blight of the modern hospital, the role of the senses in the courtroom, and the branding of sensations in the marketplace. Howes and Classen consider how political issues such as nationalism, gender equality and the treatment of minority groups are shaped by sensory practices and metaphors. They also reveal how the phenomenon of synaesthesia, or mingling of the senses, can be seen as not simply a neurological condition but a vital cultural mode of creating social and cosmic interconnections. Written by leading scholars in the field, *Ways of Sensing* provides readers with a valuable and engaging introduction to the life of the senses in society.

Dialogues on Human Rights and Legal Pluralism

Editors: Colleen Sheppard, René Provost
(Springer, 2013)

Human rights have transformed the way in which we conceive the place of the individual within the community and in relation to the state in a vast array of disciplines, including law, philosophy, politics, sociology, and geography. The published output on human rights over the last five decades has been enormous, but has remained tightly bound to a notion of human rights as dialectically linking the individual and the state. Because of human rights' focus on the state and its actions, they have very seldom attracted the attention of legal pluralists. Indeed, some may have viewed the two as simply incompatible or relating to wholly distinct phenomena. This collection of essays is the first to bring together authors in the fields of legal pluralism and human rights, to explore the ways in which these concepts can be mutually reinforcing, delegitimizing, or competing. The essays in this book reveal that there is no facile conclusion to reach but that the question opens avenues which are likely to be mined for years to come by those interested in how human rights can affect the behaviour of individuals and institutions.

Speaking Out on Human Rights : Debating Canada's Human Rights System

Author: Pearl Eliadis
(MQUP, 2014)

Canadians like to see themselves as champions of human rights in the international community. Closer to home, however, the human rights system in Canada - particularly its public institutions such as commissions and tribunals - has been the object of sustained debate and vehement criticism, based largely on widespread myths about how it works. In *Speaking Out on Human Rights*, Pearl Eliadis explodes these myths, analysing the pervasive distortions and errors on which they depend. Canada's human rights system, a unique legal tradition operating within a powerful modern constitution, is a fundamental mechanism for ensuring the practical application of our national commitment to tolerance and inclusion. Drawing on in-depth interviews with Canada's leading human rights experts and extensive original research, Eliadis explores the evolution of commissions and tribunals as vehicles of public policy and considers their mandate to mediate rights conflicts in such contested areas as hate speech, religious freedoms, and sexuality. She provides a frank assessment of how Canada's human rights system functions and argues that misplaced critiques have prevented urgent and necessary discussions about the reforms that are needed to improve fairness and equality before the law and to ensure institutional independence, impartiality, and competence. *Speaking Out on Human Rights* shows how our human rights system plays a unique and important role in the rights revolution both in Canada and internationally and offers promising avenues for its future development.

CONCLUSION

The Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism builds on the legacy of enormous scholarly engagement with human rights in the McGill Faculty of Law. Rooted in the Faculty of Law's fundamental and overarching mission in legal traditions, comparative law and legal pluralism, the priority of human rights reflects McGill's distinctive strengths in understanding law as a social phenomenon that transcends territory and state-based institutions. The Faculty currently offers approximately fifteen courses centred specifically on issues of human rights and social diversity. Moreover, human rights and cultural diversity is also an area of concentration within the Graduate Law Program. The Centre, therefore, provides an important source of enrichment to course-based learning on human rights.

In 2013, the Centre made significant progress to better position McGill as a central international hub for research and programs on human rights. The Centre's activities are not only directed towards staff and students at the Faculty of Law; its lectures and conferences are attended by students and faculty from other disciplines as well as the public at large.

McGill Centre for Human
Rights and Legal Pluralism

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ANNUAL REPORT 2013