**Experts on Central American Country Conditions**

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| **Name** | **Profession** | **Background** | **Contact Information** |
| Donna De Cesare | Professor at the University of Texas and Author | De Cesare is widely known for her groundbreaking coverage of the spread of gangs in Central America, specifically in Guatemala. She has extensively interviewed Salvadoran gang members and has lectured in the areas of gang membership and youth identity | Donna.decesare@austin.utexas.edu  512-471-1980 |
| Dr. Bruce Wilson | Professor of Political Science at the University of Central Florida | As a professor and researcher, Dr. Wilson has published many articles on country conditions in Costa Rica, specifically Costa Rican politics and the enforcement of rights in Costa Rican courts. | Bruce.wilson@ucf.edu  407-823-6772 |
| Dr. Cecilia Menjivar | Professor of Sociology at the University of Kansas | As a professor and researcher, Dr. Menjivar specializes in immigration, gender, family dynamics, gender violence, and the impacts on the laws Central American immigrants. Menjivar also accepts cases of women asylum seekers from Central America. | menjivar@ku.edu |
| Dr. Deborah Levenson | Professor of History at Boston College | Dr. Levenson has written extensively about country conditions in Guatemala, specifically focused on labor unions, violence, and gangs. She published *Living in Guatemala City* and *Adios Nino, The Gangs of Guatemala City and the Politics of Death*. | [levonsod@bc.edu](mailto:levonsod@bc.edu) |
| Dr. Debra Rodman | Asylum Expert Witness (Immigration and Refugee Liaison); Anthropologist | Dr. Rodman is an expert on Latin American immigrant communities, transnational migration, and gender and ethnic relations in Guatemala. She serves as an expert witness for U.S. Federal immigration courts, providing affidavits and testimony for Guatemalan migrants seeking political asylum in the United States. | drodman@rmc.edu |
| Dr. Elizabeth Kennedy | Doctor, author, and social scientist | Dr. Kennedy provides expert testimony in Central American asylum seekers’ cases, focusing on the experiences and needs of child, youth, and forced migrants. She has produced several publications on the issue, including *No Child Here: Why Central American Children Are Fleeing Their Homes*. | Egailk56@gmail.com |
| Dr. Ellen Moodie | Anthropology Professor and Author; Former Secretary and Co-Chair of Central America section of the Latin American Studies Association | Dr. Moodie has written numerous academic publications on country conditions in Central America, generally, and specifically in El Salvador. She has also written affidavits for, and has testified in, asylum cases for Central Americans fleeing violence. | emoddie@illinois.edu |
| Dr. Harry Vanden | Professor of Political Science and International Studies at University of South Florida, Tampa | Dr. Vanden has written and researched extensively on the issues of Central American political conditions and Central American Gang Activity. Vanden has served as an expert witness on country conditions in U.S. Immigration, Federal and State Courts regarding issues in Central America. | vanden@usf.edu |
| Dr. Jennifer Schirmer | Research Professor and Projects Director of Conflict Analysis; Published Author | Dr. Schirmer is an expert in both the historical and current country conditions in Guatemala. Dr. Schirmer’s research has specifically focused on the Guatemalan military and violence against women in Guatemala. | jschirmer820@gmail.com |
| Dr. Juan Ricardo Martin Gomez Hecht | Political advisor and public security expert | Dr. Hecht has conducted extensive research and recently spoke at a university regarding security threats in Central American countries. | ricardogomezhecht@gmail.com  yicabat@yahoo.com |
| Dr. Mo Hume | Lecturer in Politics at the University of Glasgow and co-convenor of the International Centre for Gender and Women's Studies | Dr. Hume has carried out extensive ethnographic research in El Salvador, where she worked for several years with the women's movement. Her publications include *The Politics of Violence: Gender, Conflict, and Community in El Salvador*. | Mo.hume@glasgow.ac.uk |
| Dr. Thomas Boerman | Expert consultant and expert witness on gang issues in Central America | Dr. Boerman specializes in Central American gangs, including the issues of initiation into gangs, maintaining affiliation in the gangs, and departure from gangs. Dr. Boerman has also provided expert testimony on the country conditions and human rights issues associated with countries in Central America. | boermanthomas@gmail.com  tboerman@comcast.net |
| Eric Hershberg | Director of the Center for Latin American and Latino Studies and Professor of Government at American University | As a researcher, Hershberg has extensively studied comparative politics of Latin America and the politics of development. Specifically, Hershberg analyzed the ways in which elites exercise power in Central America. | hershberg@american.edu |
| Galya Ruffer | Founding Director of the Center for Forced Migration Studies at Northwestern University | Ruffer is an expert on human rights issues, refugee rights and protection. She has written and published in the area of Central American women and asylum law. | g-ruffer@northwestern.edu  cfms@northwestern.edu  847-491-3759 |
| Geoff Thale | Program Director of Washington Office for Latin America (WOLA) | As the program director, Thale directs WOLA’s project on youth gangs, public security and human rights. Specifically, Thale monitors the gang situation in Central America and works on Central American human rights and policy issues in his work. | gthale@wola.org  202-797-2171 |
| Jacqueline Bhabda | Professor of Human Rights at Harvard T.H. Chan School and Lecturer in Law at Harvard Law School; Director of Research for Health and Human Rights; Founded Human Rights Program at the University of Chicago | Bhabda’s research examines the factors contributing to the recent surge of child migration into the United States, including the contributing factor of violence in Central America. Bhabda has published extensively on issues of transnational child migration, refugee protection, children’s rights and citizenship and authored *Child Migration & Human Rights in a Global Age* | Jacqueline\_bhabha@harvard.edu  617-384-7743 |
| Jeannette Aguilar | Director of the University Institute of Public Opinion in El Salvador | Aguilar has published work in areas Central American politics and security, gangs and criminals, and juveniles. Her work has specifically focused on the current situation of gangs and country conditions in El Salvador. | 615-343-3101 |
| Jon Wolseth | Community Development Specialist in Community and Economic Development at Iowa State University | While a professor of anthropology, Wolseth published articles in the Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology and Latin American Perspectives, as well as chapters in Youth Violence in Latin America and Anthropological Perspectives on Learning in Childhood. In addition to his work on violence in Honduras, Wolseth has done extensive research on interpersonal and social violence, drug issues among children and youth, and human social development in Central America. | jwolseth@gmail.com  jwolseth@iastate.edu |
| Jose Cruz | Social Psychologist in Public Policy in El Salvador | Cruz has conducted numerous research projects regarding the country conditions in Central America, specifically the violence, crime, political culture, and youth in Central America. Cruz’s most comprehensive work includes an eight-year-long research project on gangs in the Central American region. | 615-343-3101 |
| Patrick McNamara | Professor in the Department of History at the University of Minnesota | McNamara specializes in Latin America, and has conducted numerous fact-finding missions to El Salvador to study the evolution of gang activity in that region. Professor McNamara has appeared as an expert on Central American gang activity numerous times before the Fort Snelling, MN immigration court. He has provided The Advocates with an expert statement regarding gang activity in El Salvador, and gang perceptions regarding political opinion. | pjm@umn.edu |
| Richard Steel | Immigration Attorney and Expert Witness | Steel as served as an expert witness on issues of immigration law and has authored numerous publications on U.S. immigration law | 215-486-4175  rsteel@sdglawgroup.com |
| Robert Brenneman | Assistant Professor of Sociology at Saint Michael’s College | As a professor, Brenneman’s research focuses on the impact of violence and violent social structures on humans. His book, *Homies and Hermanos: God and Gangs in Central America*, focuses on gang violence in Central America and the long-term impacts it has. | rbrenneman@smcvt.edu |
| Sonja Wolf | Researcher and Fellow at the Center for Inter-American Studies | Wolf’s research focuses on the gang phenomenon in Central America, specifically in El Salvador, particularly as it pertains to transnationalism. | Sc.wolf@gmx.de |
| Thomas Ward | Anthropology Professor at USC | Professor Ward is an expert in Central American gangs, especially in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras), the origin and causes of gangs, and youth violence. Ward has been used as a consultant and expert witness in criminal and immigration courts in California and spoke as a keynote speaker at the National Youth Gang Center symposium. | [tww@usc.edu](mailto:tww@usc.edu) |
| Susan Cruz | Forensic social worker; advocate for female victims of gang violence | Susan Cruz works as a forensic social worker for the public defender’s office of the District of Columbia. In that capacity, she provides psychosocial assessments, individualized treatment plans, and sentencing recommendations on these cases. She provides consultations to judges and attorneys on issues of criminal law. She recently acted as coordinator to the Solutions to Violence Network, in order to facilitate communication and implementation of knowledge-exchange network, with the goal of preventing violence in the Northern Triangle. She has worked with at-risk Latino youth on both coasts in several capacities, including in high risk pregnancy prevention, and a variety of gang violence prevention and intervention initiatives. In addition to the youths themselves, she has engaged in education and advocacy on behalf of children at risk of gang violence and victimization. She has conducted numerous trainings and consultancies on issues of transnational and local gang violence facing Latino youth, and on gender and gangs, including for the State Department, U.S. AID, the Google Ideas conference, the National District Attorney’s Association, the Conference on Latin American Migrants in Mexico, and for the Central American Forum in San Salvador, El Salvador, among many others. She continues to act as an advisor to several gang violence prevention initiatives. | (213) 219-1044; [susanncruz@gmail.com](mailto:susanncruz@gmail.com) |
| Sarah England | Anthropology | Gender and Sexuality in Latin America: covers how the history of conquest and colonization created ideologies of race/class/gender and their associated systems of inequality; how state legislation has reinforced gender inequality; ideologies and practices of homosexuality; ideologies and practices of masculinity and how they contribute to a “rape culture;” analysis of social movements and state efforts to eliminate gender inequality and gender violence; transnational migration to the US and how that is changing conjugal gender relations. | Sarah England [SEngland@soka.edu](mailto:SEngland@soka.edu) |
| Linda Green | Associate Professor  School of Anthropology  University of Arizona | Gender violence and indigenous rights in Guatemala | [lbgreen@email.arizona.edu](mailto:lbgreen@email.arizona.edu) |
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