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Conversations about Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Latin America: Co-Authored Writing

Félix Manuel Burgos, Les W. Field and Lara Gunderson

Monday, October 25 • 2:00 PM MDT • Register to attend at: bit.ly/3DA0Evt

During the markedly strange time for research and writing engendered by the pandemic, I came to realize that for many years I had noticed with alarm that utopian narratives and imaginaries, in written and visual media, had almost completely disappeared, whereas dystopian and anti-utopian imaginaries had everywhere proliferated. I initiated conversations with former and current students to co-theorize this historical moment in the ways alternative futures are conjured and represented. Out of those conversations the two projects presented here developed: on the one hand, a conversation with Lara Gunderson, (PhD in Anthropology 2018) about the utopian imaginary in Nicaragua was published in an article entitled “Solentiname’s Utopian Legacies and the Contemporary Comunidades Eclesiales del Base (CEBs)” based upon my own former research and Lara’s dissertation research about the CEBs. On the other hand, a conversation with Felix Manuel Burgos (PhD in Spanish and Portuguese 2013) developed around the anti-utopian world of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Colombianas (FARC) and Felix Manuel’s memories of living in the FARC controlled Zona de Despeje (1999-2002).

*Les W. Field (Ph.D. Duke University 1987), Professor of Anthropology at UNM has pursued research in Nicaragua, Ecuador, Colombia and Native California that hinges upon establishing collaborative relationships with communities concerning the goals, methods, agendas, products and epistemologies of anthropological work. His research is explored in *The Grimace of Macho Ratón: Artisans, Identity and Nation in Late Twentieth Century Western Nicaragua* (1999) *Abalone Tales: Collaborative Explorations of California Indian Sovereignty and Identity* (2008), and *Challenging the Dichotomy: The Licit and the Illicit in Archaeological and Heritage Discourses* (2016), edited with Cristobal Gnecco and Joe Watkins.*

Lara Gunderson (Ph.D. University of New Mexico 2018), focuses on community-based solutions to health disparities. Her dissertation centered on contemporary Christian Base Communities in Nicaragua who base their social justice activism on their particular interpretation of Catholicism. She previously co-authored several publications from research that used implementation science to address health disparities, two of articles award-winning. She currently applies her anthropology to address COVID-19 through testing and vaccination as Senior User Researcher at Curative.



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