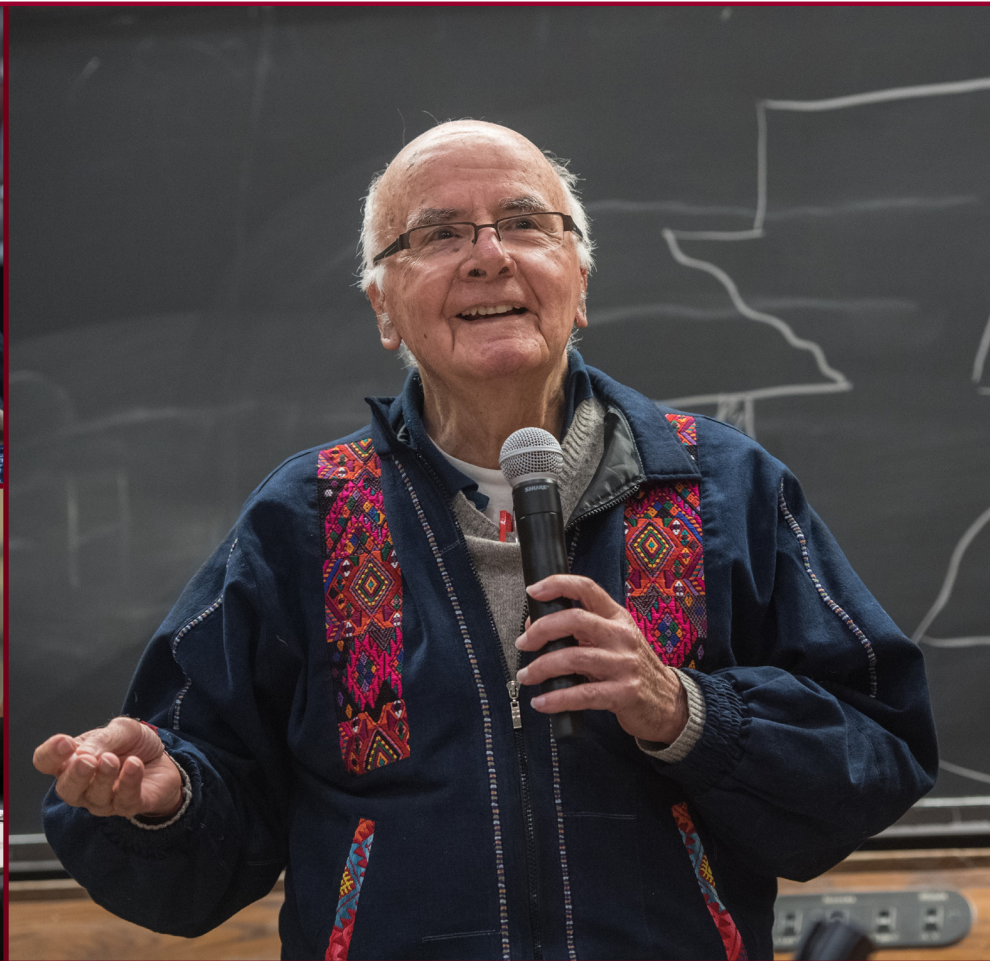


BOSTON COLLEGE  
 **CHRIJ** Center for  
Human Rights  
and  
International Justice

2019 Summer Newsletter and  
2018-19 Migration & Human Rights Project Annual Report



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# Letter from the Co-directors

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Dear Friends,

We write in the midst of unprecedented Trump administration assaults on basic norms of fairness, decency, and humanity in immigration enforcement and beyond. As many are now aware, brutally harsh, cynical tactics are especially acute at and near the borders of the US, but threats of major deportation operations and the internal expansion of “expedited removal” have also caused fear and stress in communities throughout the United States. As the administration continues to seek additional ways to be punitive and cruel to migrants trying to seek safety and livelihood in our country, it is hard to keep up with each new development. We struggle daily to not be daunted or overwhelmed by shock, sadness, and anger. Still, we are re-invigorated to sustain the mission of our Center and to collaborate with our students in ways that position them to meet an array of challenges. Among recent phenomena that have demanded responses are the following:

- The dangerous overcrowding in Border Patrol facilities in El Paso, as detailed in an emergency report by the DHS Office of the Inspector General in May 2019, with up to 900 people being held in a facility designed to hold 125. Along with other policies, this has contributed to the death of six children;
- Children in detention are being denied basic necessities like toothbrushes and towels, as a Department of Justice lawyer argued in court that those are not integral to providing “safe and sanitary” conditions;
- Over 2,600 children were forcibly separated from their parents at the border, significantly traumatizing families. Although the practice was verbally disavowed by the administration in June 2018, a recent ACLU report states that over 900 more children have been forcibly separated from their parents since then;
- The Trump administration has been restricting access to asylum proceedings in myriad ways, many of which are patently illegal under both US and international

law. These include a “Remain in Mexico” policy, long delays and practices of “turning back” potential asylum seekers at US ports of entry, leaving asylum seekers in perilous conditions in Mexican border cities such as Ciudad Juárez, where they are easily targeted for theft and violence while they endure significant wait times for a hearing date in the US. The administration is also pursuing a patently illegal – and historically peculiar – effort to turn Guatemala into a “safe third country” from which all migrants from Central America and beyond must apply to the US for asylum. The motivations of the administration are quite clear. As a National Security Council official stated in an email to Customs and Border Patrol, “My mantra has persistently been presenting *aliens* [sic] with multiple unsolvable dilemmas to impact their calculus for choosing to make the arduous journey to begin with.” (italics ours) Such policies violate the longstanding tradition of asylum in this country as a life-affirming tool to protect extremely vulnerable people from harm and death.

In the face of these developments, the Center has resolutely continued our work that lifts up and fights for basic human rights. We continue to collaborate with colleagues in Guatemala, frequently assisting in seeking detained or disappeared migrants from the Quiché region and beyond. We also celebrated the incredible legal victory that brought Wilmer García, a US permanent resident, back to the US after being deported to Honduras for 13 years away from his parents and family for a minor drug possession charge. This was made possible by years of work by our Post-Deportation Human Rights Project attorneys, aided by a substantial investment of pro bono legal work by Nixon Peabody BC Law ’07, an alumnus of the Center’s certificate program and Brianna Nassif, also a BC Law alumna. Such victories serve as a reminder that principles of due process and proportionality cannot be denied due to one’s lack of citizenship in a country, and that these rights can be

fought for and upheld in our courts of law. Read more about our recent celebration with García of this long journey to justice elsewhere in this report.

Center co-director M. Brinton Lykes also saw the publication of a book this year, co-authored with York University Professor Alison Crosby, which is a product of their partnership in the Center’s Gender and Reparations: Understanding Women’s Struggles for Justice, Historical Memory, and Redress project. The book, *Beyond Repair? Mayan Women’s Protagonism in the Aftermath of Genocidal Harm*, (<https://www.rutgersuniversitypress.org/beyond-repair/9780813598963>) explores Mayan women’s agency in their search for redress for harm suffered during the genocidal violence perpetrated by the Guatemalan state in the early 1980s at the height of the 36-year armed conflict in the country. The book documents eight years of the authors’ feminist participatory action research alongside 54 Q’eqchi’, Kaqchikel, Chuj, and Mam women seeking reparations for sexual and racialized gendered violence, as well as in partnership with an interdisciplinary team of feminist activists, psychologists and attorneys working with the authors for over a decade. Lykes and Crosby presented the book at events this past spring in Boston and Toronto, the former of which may be read about in an article in this issue and viewed at <https://tinyurl.com/LykesCrosbyBC>. The pair also traveled to Guatemala this summer to present the Spanish version of the book, *Más Allá de la Reparación: Protagonismo de Mujeres Mayas en las Secuelas del Daño Genocida*, translated by Megan Thomas and published by the Mayan publishers, Cholsamaj. Maya protagonists from the four major regions of the country participated in presentations in Huehuetenango, Nebaj, Cobán, and Antigua, Guatemala. The authors sought to return this collaboratively co-constructed understanding of Mayan women’s protagonism in a context of ongoing struggle for human rights and repairation.

The Center also brought many speakers and events to campus to elevate the profile of issues

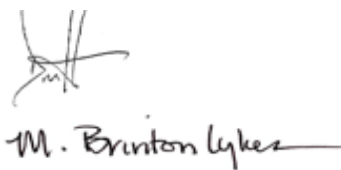
of human rights and international justice in the BC community. This past year, we hosted 24 speakers and workshops on campus that were also open to the wider public, the most in the Center's history in a given year, and co-sponsored several more. These included luncheon events as part of our "Rights in Conflict" series, which explores the ways in which conflicting rights claims can manifest themselves in different contexts, and inquires how to best evaluate and weigh them in searching for a just result. We also hosted renowned Guatemalan anthropologist Ricardo Falla, SJ, last fall for a pair of presentations reflecting on his life's work accompanying Mayan people throughout the decades-long Guatemalan armed conflict. Recaps of many of these events may be found in this issue and in our previous winter newsletter.

The Center continued its academic programs with its graduate-level seminar as the core course for our certificate program, which saw another crop of students achieve it again this year. As reported in another article in this issue, the ceremony in which we presented CHRIJ certificates included a presentation of the research findings of a soon to be published study on which Kelsey Rennebohm, a MA Mental Health Counseling student who was killed in a cycling accident in 2012, collaborated. An article based on the research Kelsey started with be published in the March 2020 issue of the journal *Community Psychology in Global Perspective*. The Center continues to support student research through, among other resources, the Kelsey A. Rennebohm Memorial Fellowship. In addition, we are adding to our website short profiles of alumni of our certificate program, highlighting the important human rights-related work many have gone on to do since graduation from BC. We are also excited to be launching a pilot program in the law school, where law students will complete an externship under the supervision of our Post-Deportation Human Rights Project's supervising attorney, Heather Friedman, and Center co-director and BC Law Professor Daniel Kanstroom, to work on asylum and other human rights cases in partnership with local law firms. Read more about this new initiative in the accompanying article in this issue.

The Center has also continued to expand its undergraduate internship program this past year, as its interns assisted in multiple research

projects across disciplines. They also helped to put on workshops on immigration and refugee issues, partnering with BC undergraduate service learning programs such as Arrupe and PULSE. The program has benefited the faculty researchers in their work and has provided a springboard for the graduating seniors to take the skills and knowledge gained into the future, with this year's graduates attaining a Fulbright placement in India and another taking a position at a law firm.

We at the Center look forward to continuing this essential work in the coming academic year, focusing our luncheon speaker series on issues of migration and rights in the US context. We will also continue our academic and research projects to explore various aspects of migration, forced and otherwise, to continue to explore its nuances and to provide formation to our students seeking to better understand the complexities of today's ever more challenging global context, and to push forward with the defense and promotion of human rights both in the US and beyond. We thank you for your continued interest and support.



Daniel Kanstroom and M. Brinton Lykes

*Co-Directors  
Boston College Center for Human Rights and  
International Justice*

## ABOUT US

The Center for Human Rights and International Justice addresses the increasingly interdisciplinary needs of human rights work through academic programs, applied research, and the interaction of scholars with practitioners. The Center's Co-Directors are Law School Professor Daniel Kanstroom and Lynch School of Education Professor of Community-Cultural Psychology M. Brinton Lykes. Mr. Timothy Karcz is the Assistant Director.

Additional newsletter contributors: Meredith Hawkins, Sarah Engelberg-Nolan, Mary Noal. Photos courtesy of Chris Soldt/BC Media Technology Services and Reba Saldanha.

## ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This publication contains material from the CHRIJ summer newsletter, produced biannually, and the annual report for the Center's annual report, combined into one publication to help widen dissemination of these important initiatives.

[www.bc.edu/humanrights](http://www.bc.edu/humanrights)

# Center News & Notes

## Center Welcomes New Affiliated Faculty Member Raquel Muñiz

The Center is pleased to welcome Professor Raquel Muñiz of the Lynch School of Education and Human Development as a new Affiliated Faculty member of the Center! Prof. Muñiz studies how education law and policy can create more equitable educational opportunities for all students, particularly students who have experienced substantial adversity. This research interest has led Muñiz to study laws and policies that contribute to the educational experience of different children, youth, and young adult populations.



## Center Visiting Scholars Dr. Özgür Erdur-Baker and Barbara Boschetti



The Center is pleased to be currently hosting two visiting scholars! Dr. Özgür Erdur-Baker (article on her research elsewhere in this issue) is a Fulbright scholar and Professor of the Psychological Counseling and Guidance department at Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey, here until fall 2019. Dr. Erdur-Baker is working on research into making mental health interventions with refugees more culturally- and gender-sensitive.



Barbara Boschetti is Professor of Administrative Law at Catholic University, Faculty of Political and Social Sciences in Milan, Italy, here at BC until September 2019. Her current work is investigating innovative, flexible, and rights-based regulatory approaches and procedures in European Union (EU) immigration/migration

law in the EU, EU Member-States and beyond.

Learn more about our visiting scholars at <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/centers/chrij/about/fellows.html>.

The Boston College Center for Human Rights and International Justice Presents:  
A "Rights in Conflict" Presentation

### SYRIAN AND AFGHAN REFUGEES IN TURKEY

*Gender-Sensitive Resilience Interventions and Challenges to Local Integration*

With Dr. Özgür Erdur-Baker, Center Visiting Scholar, and Professor of the Psychological Counseling and Guidance, working at Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey.

Turkey is now host to more than 3 million Syrian refugees in addition to its already existing refugee population. Fulbright Visiting Scholar and psychologist Özgür Erdur-Baker will explore both the needs of refugees and of locals, that is, those receiving them. The transforming nature of discriminatory attitudes in society and the issues of refugee receiving schools will be discussed.

Monday, April 8, 2019 | Campion 139 | 12:00PM

CONTACT: CHRIJ | 617.552.8491 | HUMANRIGHTS@BC.EDU | WWW.BC.EDU/HUMANRIGHTS

A LIGHT LUNCH TO BE SERVED.  
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# Migration and Human Rights Project

## *2018-2019 Annual Report*

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### ABOUT THE MIGRATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS PROJECT

The Migration and Human Rights Project is part of Boston College's Center for Human Rights & International Justice. It encompasses the following projects concerning deportation and forced migration in the United States and beyond, including:

- **The Post-Deportation Human Rights Project:** Through research, legal and policy analysis, as well as outreach to lawyers, community groups, and policy-makers, the project's ultimate goal is to reintroduce legal predictability, proportionality, compassion, and respect for family unity into the deportation laws and policies of the United States.
- **Human Rights of Migrants Project:** This partnership with community-based organizations in the Boston area brings together Central American immigrant members of community organizations, staff organizers from the groups, lawyers, psychologists, and social workers to document how immigration enforcement is affecting immigrants and their families and communities. The aim of this participatory action research (PAR) project is to develop human rights research and advocacy skills among immigrant community members within the United States while simultaneously generating action oriented data and educational and organizing resources for and with local communities. The project has included dozens of collaborative community-university meetings and multiple collaborative projects. Boston College faculty and students associated with the project have produced scholarly work in the fields of law, psychology, action research methodologies, and social work.

## People

### FACULTY DIRECTORS

***Daniel Kanstroom***

**Boston College Law School**

Professor of Law

Director, International Human Rights Program

Co-Director, Center for Human Rights & International Justice

***M. Brinton Lykes***

**Boston College Lynch School of Education**

Professor of Community-Cultural Psychology

Co-Director, Center for Human Rights & International Justice

### AFFILIATED FACULTY

***Kalina M. Brabeck***

**Rhode Island College**

Department of Counseling, Educational Leadership & School Psychology

***Mary Holper***

**Boston College Law School**

Associate Clinical Professor of Law

***Rachel E. Rosenbloom***

**Northeastern University Law School**

Associate Professor of Law

### HUMAN RIGHTS FELLOW

***Heather Friedman***

Boston College

Post-Deportation Human Rights Project

### AFFILIATED ATTORNEY

***Aimee Mayer-Salins***

Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC)

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(organizations for identification purposes only)

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***Michael Wishnie***, Yale Law School

### REPORT DESIGN

***Gaurie Pandey***, Center for Centers

## Former PDHRP client García, now returned to the US, tells story after 13 years of being wrongfully deported

BY DAVID REICH

(reprinted with permission from BC Law Magazine)



On February 20, Wilmer García came to BC Law School to celebrate the end of a thirteen-year-long exile. A legal US resident since age 10, García was deported to his native Honduras in 2005, after pleading guilty to simple drug possession, an aggravated felony according to the immigration judge who heard his case. Speaking to an audience of some fifty lawyers, law school faculty, and others, he recounted the tale of his deportation and the fight to bring him back—a tale of government misfeasance, pettiness, and arbitrary rules that, owing to luck and extreme perseverance, ended justly.

Also speaking at the celebration were members of his legal team: Professor Daniel Kanstroom, founder and co-director of the Center's Post-Deportation Human Rights Project (PDHRP); Heather Friedman and Jessica Chicco, PDHRP staff attorney and former staff attorney, respectively; and Ronaldo Rauseo-Ricupero '07 and Brianna Nassif '17, pro bono lawyers from Nixon Peabody.

The effort to reopen García's case and rescind his deportation dates back to 2010. Languishing in Honduras, where he spoke the language poorly, struggled to find work, and lived in fear of his neighborhood's violent gangs, he discovered, via the internet, a 2006 Supreme Court ruling that simple drug possession was not, after all, an aggravated felony. Days later, he contacted PDHRP, which agreed to represent him.

To someone poorly versed in the immigration system, García's case might have seemed open and shut. But the immigration system is dotted with pitfalls, and in 2011 a judge handed García's lawyers a loss, citing the departure bar, a federal rule against reopening cases of those already deported. Later that year, the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) upheld the judge's ruling. "For thousands of deported individuals," said Jessica Chicco, "the [Supreme Court] decision really meant nothing."

The US 5th Circuit heard García's next appeal late in 2012. On Daniel Kanstroom's advice, Chicco argued the case on due process grounds, in addition to more technical arguments. In court she

evoked an image of the immigration system's arbitrariness: the BIA receives a letter and, noticing the foreign postmark, throws it out unopened. Voting 2-1, the court overturned the departure bar, a decision that applies to three US states including Texas, a hotbed of immigration cases.

García's own case had years more to run, though. In 2014, an immigration court denied his motion to reopen, finding that García had taken too long to file it after the 2006 Supreme Court ruling, a rationale undermined in 2015 by another US Supreme Court opinion. For two more years García's motions bounced back and forth between the BIA and immigration courts until, late in 2017, the BIA ordered the deportation case reopened.

Until then, García had remained in Honduras, but if he wanted his deportation undone, he would have to appear in immigration court. Getting permission for his return to the US presented another obstacle. It took Brianna Nassif four months of unsuccessful motions, unanswered letters, and unreturned and disconnected phone calls to federal bureaus and agencies. García didn't get the necessary papers until the day of his flight, and only after agreeing to be detained in the US until his hearing.

Other obstacles loomed. The lawyers had to fight to get a suit to García for him to wear in court. Lack of information on the site of his detention had the legal team scrambling to seek help from lawyers in Houston and New Orleans, though in the end he was detained, and his case was heard, in central Louisiana, many miles from either city. As Friedman put it, he'd found himself "on the wrong side of a power imbalance."

After eight years of legal wrangling, the hearing on May 7, 2018 was practically an anticlimax. Representing García were Friedman, Nassif, and Danielle McLaughlin, of Nixon Peabody. Five minutes in, the immigration judge, without explanation, cancelled García's deportation. García could resume his life in the US, as a legal permanent resident, after a 13-year interruption.

The 5th Circuit ruling set an important precedent, but García's restoration to lawful permanent resident status, while surely a cause for celebration, hardly represents a trend. It's more like the exception that proves the rule, one of "a handful of success stories," said Friedman, "for wrongfully deported people."

For a short video on this story, visit [tinyurl.com/WilmerHome](https://tinyurl.com/WilmerHome)



## Book talk: “Beyond Repair? Mayan Women’s Protagonism in the Aftermath of Genocidal Harm”

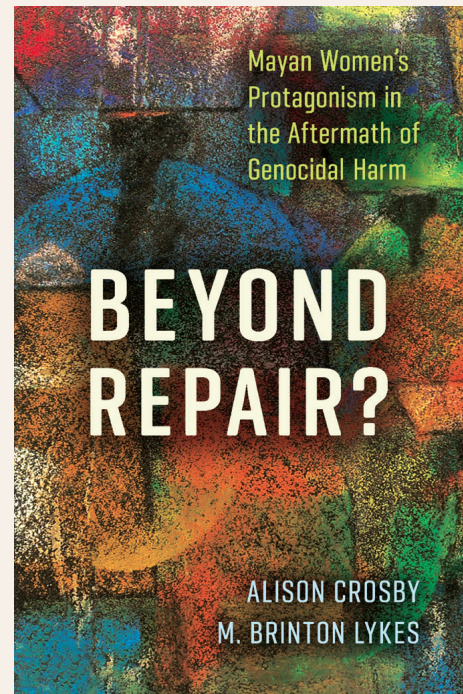
On April 25, 2019, the Center hosted M. Brinton Lykes, Center Co-director and Professor of Community-Cultural Psychology in the BC Lynch School and Alison Crosby, Associate Professor in the School of Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies at York University, to discuss their co-authored book, *Beyond Repair? Mayan Women’s Protagonism in the Aftermath of Genocidal Harm*. Katie Young, Professor of Law at BC Law School served as a moderator and María Elena Torre, Director of The Public Science Project at CUNY offered her responses as part of a panel.

The book centers around eight years of feminist participatory action research that took place between 2009 and 2017 with 54 Mam, Chuj, Popt’í, Q’eqchi’, and Kaqchikel women from various regions of Guatemala. These women, referred to as the protagonists by Lykes and Crosby, are survivors of sexual violence and gender specific violence that occurred in the 1980s during Guatemala’s armed conflict. The research also included the feminists, psychologists, legal aides, researchers, and others who had accompanied these women in their process of healing.

The research started in 2009 with the creation of a state-sponsored National Reparations Program. Professor Lykes and Professor Crosby approached the research questioning what reparations mean in this context of irreparability. Reports about gender-based violence after the signing of the peace accords revealed that these cases are often underreported, which led the protagonists, their intermediaries, and other advocates to bring racialized gender violence to the center of discussions about justice and reparations. The book traces the protagonists’ engagement with transitional justice mechanisms, such as the Tribunal of Conscience, the Sepur Zarco case, and the controversial National Reparations Program.

Professor Lykes and Professor Crosby found through their research that the protagonists often situated their experiences of violence with structural forms of violence that affect their everyday lives. Moreover, the protagonists were not required to share their individual stories of violence. Professor Lykes stated that their work recognizes two levels of struggle: the exercise of collective rights and the enjoyment of individual rights. The inherent tension between these struggles presents a framework of transitional justice that formulates a dialogic rather than an individuated response. The authors ultimately argue that justice before the courts is a necessary but not sufficient element of indigenous struggles for remedy as they have been experiencing violence in various forms, such as colonial violence and forced displacement, for 500 years.

Through a discussion of these various mechanisms of transitional justice encountered by the 54 protagonists, the book highlights the paradigm of transitional justice itself and its guarantee of non-rep-



etition, truth, and justice yet its simultaneous provision of reparations for often irreparable experiences. Through a feminist participatory action research process that centers the experience and voice of these protagonists, *Beyond Repair* seeks to challenge more traditional mechanisms of transitional justice that promote end-goals of Westernized democracy and highlight, instead, a form that is grounded in the demands of these 54 Mayan women. Through embracing the vocabulary of “protagonist” and eliminating words like “victim” and “survivor,” cultivating spaces for critical reflexivity and active listening, and continuously working to deconstruct their authorial privilege to “spectate” given their identities as white, feminist, activists from the Global North, the researchers engaged in a commitment to identifying racialized gender as an analytical tool for locating and framing this particular social issue of sexual violence in this cultural context.

This commitment allowed for the co-construction of knowledge among the 54 Mayan protagonists and their intermediaries and the ultimate goal of a mutual creation of an intersectional feminist conception of the idea of *nosotras* per Gloria Anzaldúa. This idea highlights the tension and constant existence of a relationship between the “us” and the “other” and the notion that the two perspectives are inherently intertwined even in examples of extreme power imbalances. This research highlights a larger analogy for a methodology towards this idea of *nosotras*. More than that, it highlights the potential for the type of constructive social and transitional justice that can come about when, even in cases of analytically extreme identity differences, we work to create change that is grounded in the kind of active and open listening, mutuality, and reciprocity that melt away the distinction between colonized and colonizer, oppressed and oppressor, and us versus other.

Video of the event may be accessed at [tinyurl.com/LykesCrosbyBC](https://tinyurl.com/LykesCrosbyBC)



## Three Center representatives visit the US-Mexico border with the Encuentro Project

In May, Raquel Muñiz, Center affiliated faculty member and Assistant Professor in the Lynch School of Education & Human Development, M. Brinton Lykes, Center co-director and Professor of Community-Cultural Psychology in the Lynch School and Center assistant director Timothy Karcz traveled to El Paso, Texas for a border immersion experience with the Encuentro Project. The Encuentro Project is an inter-congregational, collaborative project that includes the Jesuits, the Marist Brothers, the Sisters of San Francisco of the Holy Family, lay people, and the Instituto Fronterizo Esperanza (Hope Border Institute).

The three-day trip gave them a brief view into a lot of what is happening at that part of the US-Mexico border. As part of a larger contingent, they heard from a Border Patrol agent on his views of the current wave of migrants coming to border seeking asylum; volunteered at a shelter for migrants who had just crossed over the border and been released from Customs and Border Protection after processing; heard from a leader of a women's collective in El Paso organizing workers for jobs with justice, and against a polluting metals recycling plant near a school, and against the negative effects of gentrification on their neighborhoods; visited an art installation at the University of Texas-El Paso memorializing the children's de-

tion facility on Tornillo with art created by the detained children themselves; and heard from a Jesuit involved in the Jesuit mission of Bachajón, Chiapas, Mexico-El Paso, which is a coffee and soap-making cooperative to provide indigenous people in Chiapas with livelihoods that help them to stay rather than migrate north.

They also heard from representatives from Diocesan Migrant and Refugees Services and the Hope Border Institute, who detailed how new policies such as the Migrant Protection Protocol ("Remain in Mexico") and "turn backs" of asylum seekers by Customs and Border Patrol on the bridges of ports of entry to the US were stifling asylum claims and causing danger to migrants being forced to wait in Juárez, on the Mexico side of the border, where they were particularly vulnerable to crime. As well, soon after the end of the trip, a report from a government watchdog agency revealed dangerous and inhuman overcrowding the Border Patrol's detention facilities, with one shelter designed for 125 people at one point holding 900.

The trip presented more about their trip and discussed with the BC community various current immigration issues and how we can respond, framed as "The Border Comes to Boston," in a presentation on campus on September 12.



Border immersion experience with the Encuentro Project

## *DACAmented and Undocumented Students in Higher Education: Working Toward Inclusion*

The Center hosted Raquel Muñiz, Assistant Professor in the Lynch School of Education and Human Development, and Liaison to the Law School, and two BC doctoral students, on March 29, 2019 to discuss “DACAmented,” or enrollees in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, and undocumented students in higher education and how to create inclusive communities on campuses. Using the working definition of inclusion as the overcoming of barriers to create environments suitable for presence, participation, and achievement, Professor Muñiz explored the challenges faced by undocumented and DACAmented students to create models for inclusion. She explained the institutional issues and highlighted the limited amount of services for DACAmented and undocumented students at places of higher education.

Hannah Dodge, a second year student at Boston College Law School, defined and explained some statistics about DACA, or the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. The undocumented population in the United States is composed of about 11.3 million people. It is difficult for undocumented students to be admitted into institutions of higher education and even more difficult to receive aid for tuition. DACA as a program has been scrutinized recently under the Trump administration but has not been declared unconstitutional. Around 900,000 people are DACA enrollees, with around 20% in high school and 18% in college. While these populations face similar structural challenges, there are unique challenges that come with different immigration status.

Next, Natalie Borg, a doctoral student in the Lynch School at Boston College, highlighted the specific challenges of DACA recipients as well as undocumented students in higher education. In both groups, there is a shared sense of constant anxiety. Uncertainties

and fear of “outing” of immigration status act as stressors. Experiences of shame and guilt, having limited access to opportunities, inability to receive federal aid, and limited access to receive state aid are some of those challenges faced by DACAmented students. For undocumented students, a fear of deportation, no state or federal aid, and the inability to apply for a job or for a bank account are specific challenges.

In order to break down these barriers, Natalie Borg suggested some best practices that we can adopt here at Boston College, which include both institutional and community-based changes. Some of these are to create safe spaces and designate allies, to increase and personalize counseling services, to implement consistent financial aid opportunities for DACAmented and undocumented students, and to denounce bigotry. It is also essential that available resources are visible and easily identifiable for students to access them. Her facilitation of group discussions about how to apply best practices at Boston College provided the audience with tangible ways to promote comprehensive changes and to create more inclusive spaces. Overall, the speakers’ presentation urged faculty at academic institutions to implement policies and services that are more effective, transparent, and inclusive of DACAmented and undocumented students.

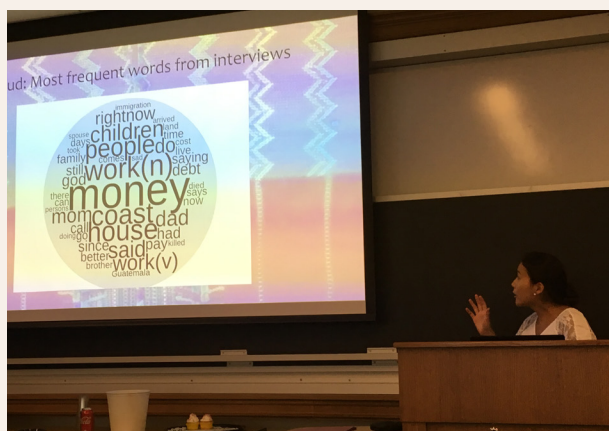


## *Honoring the Legacy of Kelsey Rennebohm by Continuing her Work*

**BY DR. GABRIELA TÁVARA**

Earlier this year I had the opportunity to collaborate on the Migration and Human Rights Project seeking to complete an endeavor that started almost a decade ago. In the summer of 2010 a team of Boston College graduate students – affiliated with the Center - travelled to the town of Zacualpa in the Quiché region of Guatemala. The team’s goal was to better understand the plight of Central American migrants, particularly how socioeconomic factors were driving people north and how sending communities made meaning of this transnational migration. Towards this end, the team conducted 10 interviews with families from one of the villages surrounding Zacualpa. During the next phase of the project, Kelsey Rennebohm, a mental health counseling student interested in mental health and human rights, started analyzing these 10 interviews as she prepared to travel to Zacualpa in the summer of 2012 and meet these families in person. Unfortunately, Kelsey never got travel to Guatemala, she was suddenly and tragically killed while riding her bike on Huntington Avenue in Boston on June 1, 2012. For some time these interviews and Kelsey’s analysis remained untouched. However, I believe that for those affiliated with the Center that they implicated a pending debt to Kelsey and her work.

Last year, motivated by the seventh commemoration of Kelsey’s passing, I was invited by Brinton Lykes, co-director of the Center, to build



on the work Kelsey had started and finish the qualitative analysis of these interviews. To do so, I opened the documents Kelsey had been working on in 2012 and read through her analyses and notes. It was quite interesting and insightful to read her reflections regarding issues of migration, poverty and armed conflict. Her comments revealed a profound sensitivity towards others' pain and a keen grasp on the complexities regarding the continuities and discontinuities of violence in Guatemala.

This qualitative analysis of the interviews was part of mixed-method study about families' experiences of migration in this village. In May of this year, together with Brinton Lykes, and former students of the Center, Erin Sibley and Kevin Ferreira, we submitted this study for publication. Also in May, we presented the results of this work in the Center's annual ceremony. Although I did not know Kelsey personally, I believe that for many members of the Center, doing this work was a way of bringing to fruition something that Kelsey started back in 2010. It was also a way of paying tribute Kelsey and keeping her interests and dreams alive through work that seeks to struggle in solidarity with those deeply affected by structural injustice and violations of human rights. I am confident that others to come will keep Kelsey's hopes and dreams for justice and wellbeing alive for many years through working with the Center.

## *Kelsey Rennebohm's Contributions to the Study of Maya K'iche' Migrant Families' Wellbeing and Human Rights*

Following the seventh anniversary of her passing, the Center celebrated the life and work of Kelsey Rennebohm, a former Boston College Lynch School student and researcher who contributed to the Center's Migration and Human Rights Project in Zacualpa, Guatemala. Lynch School alumna Dr. Gabriela Távara Vásquez and Center co-director Professor Brinton Lykes spoke in honor of Kelsey and presented the research of the exploratory study on May 16.

The project centered in the Zacualpa region of Guatemala in the town of Tablón. Ten families were interviewed, the questions being centered around and informed by the historical context of the region. Focused on the migration of family members, the return of such family members, and the experience while the migration was occurring, the study hoped to understand the impact of human migration in the village. In this community based survey, which was developed collaboratively between the Boston College research team and Zacualpa researchers, qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed and interpreted together. Kelsey's work was in the beginning phase of the analysis, the inductive first level coding, and was completed in 2012. From this, the team was able to create a conceptual model comparing the experiences in Guatemala with the experiences of migrants in the United States, both populations being connected by socio-economic experiences.

The findings of the project revealed the prevalence of migration from within the village of Tablón, and the intersection of resistance and solidarity that arose in an environment with ongoing violence and violations of human rights. Even when moving to the United States, the migrants remained grounded in Guatemala; succeeding in the United States was a main motivator but many still wished to contribute to their villages via remittances or other forms of economic support. Harsh experiences expected to be faced at the US border were balanced by hope of living a better life and economic opportunities.

The socio-emotional cost was widespread in the community: 46% of children lived in families with at least one migrated family member. This leads to transnational relationships with extreme sadness stemming from prolonged separation. As such, the economic benefit of remittances was not without the loss of caregivers and adults in the community in Tablón. This dynamic complicates conceptions that migration out of the country is the only route to success.

The research completed by the Center was presented back to the community in Tablón in 2013. Thanks to Kelsey Rennebohm's contributions to the study, the Center, with Távara and other students' efforts (refer to Távara's accompanying reflection in this issue) was able to conclude its research and create a comprehensive analyses on migration and its effects on the community.

## *Thank you!*

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Thank you to our supporters, staff, affiliated faculty members and to the following students who worked on Center projects this past year:

**Emilia Bianco** (School of Social Work, doctoral candidate)

**Melany Felix** (Morrissey College of Arts & Sciences, Class of 2021)

**Benjamin Grossman** (Law School, Class of 2020)

**Audrey Hersman** (Morrissey College of Arts & Sciences, Class of 2019)

**Virginia Manoyan** (Law School, Class of 2020)

**Michelle McElwaine** (doctoral student in Curriculum & Instruction, Lynch School of Education & Human Development)

**Tia Rashke** (Morrissey College of Arts & Sciences, Class of 2019)

**Benjamin Wishnie-Edwards** (Morrissey College of Arts & Sciences, Class of 2020)

**Martha Wendlandt** (MA in Mental Health Counseling, Lynch School of Education & Human Development, 2019)

**Elizabeth Wollan** (Morrissey College of Arts & Sciences, Class of 2019)

## *Inspired to make a tax-deductible donation to the Migration and Human Rights Project?*

*We welcome your interest and support in every form.*

### **Make a donation**

All donations are tax-deductible and greatly appreciated. Please send checks to the address below, made payable to Boston College and with "CHRIJ" in the memo line.

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Web: [www.bc.edu/postdeportation](http://www.bc.edu/postdeportation)

# Student Awards

## CERTIFICATE IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

On May 16, the Center hosted its year-end event at which it presented the Center's graduate Certificate in Human Rights and International Justice to its recipients. This year the certificate was earned by the below students. Congratulations to them and best wishes on their future endeavors.



**Susana Ferrín Pérez**, Master of Laws, Law School; (photo)  
**Olivia Grace Flynn**, Juris Doctor, Law School

## SUMMER RESEARCH GRANTS

The Center again awarded summer research grants to both undergraduate and graduate students at Boston College this year. Here are this summer's awardees and their research topics:

**Julia Bloechl**, B.A. in International Studies, Morrissey College of Arts & Sciences '20  
"The Catholic Church and the Rwandan Genocide: Problems of the Past and Prospects for the Future"

**Zoe Fanning**, International Studies - Concentration: Ethics/Social Justice, Morrissey College of Arts & Sciences '20  
"Effects of Armed Conflict on Civilian Health"

**Ellen Gutowski**, PhD candidate, Counseling Psychology, Lynch School of Education & Human Development  
"Coercive Control in the Courtroom: Litigation abuse and its consequences"

**Javier Reyes Martínez**, PhD candidate in Social Work, School of Social Work '20  
"Social, Economic and Cultural Rights in a Context of Violence and Poverty, a Case Study of Artists in Acapulco"

**Justin Schnebelen**, B.A. in English, Morrissey College of Arts & Sciences '21  
"Renaming the World: the Lakhóta and New Ways of Seeing"

## KELSEY RENNEBOHM MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP

This year marks the seventh annual award of the Kelsey Rennebohm Memorial Fellowship, to honor the memory of Kelsey Rennebohm, a student in the Lynch School of Education who passed away suddenly in 2012. To reflect Kelsey's passions, the award goes to a student whose proposed research or activist scholarship is at the interface of psychology, mental health, gender, social justice, and human rights. This year's recipient and topic of study are:

**Dale Maglalang**, MSW student in School of Social Work  
"Experiences of Asian American Immigrant Women Home Care Workers in New England"

*An article on a recent continuation of research Kelsey had initiated in Guatemala appears on page 11 of this issue.*

## Center Events

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### *Holding Corporations Accountable for Human Rights Abuses: Lessons from Corporate Campaigning*

On January 31, 2019, Irit Tamir, Director of the Private Sector Department of Oxfam, presented on the organization's efforts to hold transnational corporations accountable in the face of human rights and development issues. In accordance with Oxfam's mission to end global poverty, Tamir is the director of a team of people working to change the way "businesses do business" through combating the existing power structures that maintain various human rights abuses. Rather than focusing on things like corporate social responsibility or the company's philanthropy efforts, Tamir and her team at Oxfam are interested in holding big businesses accountable for the ways in which, directly and indirectly, their day-to-day business practices constitute a human rights violation and permit the perpetuation of poverty.

Tamir highlighted three guiding lines of work within Oxfam America that warrant engagement with a wide array of companies: hu-

manitarian-focused efforts particularly among refugees, a food justice sector, and the "Power and Money" sector related to accountable development finance practices. Within each sector, Tamir offered examples of Oxfam's efforts to address the existence of human rights abuses all while maintaining a gendered perspective that aims to uplift and support women.

The main issue that Tamir emphasized in her presentation was that companies are becoming more concentrated and internationalized. This has created a "governance gap," with corporations gaining more power while many governments fail to regulate company activities for a variety of reasons. Due to the human rights abuses committed by corporations on a global scale, Oxfam tries to engage companies in several ways, including partnering, suggesting new ways of doing business, and "naming and shaming" to hold companies more accountable publicly.

Some methods that Oxfam has used to collaborate with companies have been online petitions, public "stunts," social media, direct engagement, and shareholder advocacy. Tamir noted that each company operates differently, so it is important to evaluate what the most effective method will be in order to pressure companies to comply with human rights standards and pay their fair share of taxes. Another effective strategy is the creation of public indices of extractive companies and food retailers. This method encourages transparency and allows other stakeholders besides investors to hold companies accountable. Oxfam's "Behind the Brands" scorecards have had a strong influence on investors and consumers. Overall, Oxfam strives to bring awareness to the human rights abuses of large corporations through partnerships and public campaigns in order to engage companies and give consumers a voice in this process.

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### *The April Rebellion in Nicaragua: Origins, Protagonists, and Effects*

**SPEAKER: DR. JOSÉ LUIS ROCHA**

On April 10, 2019, Dr. José Luis Rocha, a researcher at *Envío*, journal of the Central American University (UCA) in Managua, Nicaragua and associate researcher with the Brooks World Poverty Institute at the University of Manchester, discussed the imperative impact of the Nicaraguan youth on the 2018 April Rebellion and their utilization of the past to tear down the current corrupt regime. Per the title of the lecture, he traversed the early origins of discontent among the opposition, the methods they used, and the resulting impact of their continued fight.

With increased financial difficulty beginning with Ortega in 2007, marked resistance to the proposed canal linking the Caribbean Sea to the Pacific across Nicaragua, evidence of electoral fraud, and growing social movements in the face

of repressive laws like that of prohibiting abortion in all circumstances, the youth-led movement of 2018 capitalized on this deeply-seeded and simmering unrest. With the imposition of Ortega's social security reform that increased taxes and decreased benefits, the youth of Nicaragua and their allies began to mobilize in various ways against the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) government. They set up barricades around Managua as an attempt to block transportation and industry efforts, employed massive demonstrations, erected 134 "trees of life" around the city as symbols of resistance, and relied on multiple social media platforms to help spread their message.

In response to these acts of resistance, the government used paramilitary groups to terminate the rebellion. This resulted in a military tri-

umph for the FSLN, which led to the dismantling of the barricades as well as the death of 300 to 500 anti-Ortega individuals. In addition, 700 were imprisoned and 35,000 Nicaraguans were exiled to Costa Rica, Spain, and other countries. However, there were other outcomes that were in favor of the opposition, such as international pressure and reports from organizations such as the OAS and the UN denouncing human rights abuses committed against protesters. In addition, more opposition organizations were created and the country went into a deep fiscal crisis as a result of the rebellion. Overall, Dr. Rocha's analysis of the recent April Rebellion highlighted intense government repression and human rights abuses in response to peaceful demonstrations led by university students in Nicaragua.

## *Syrian and Afghan Refugees in Turkey: Gender-Sensitive Resilience Interventions and Challenges to Local Integration*

Dr. Özgür Erdur-Baker, a Fulbright recipient and Center Visiting Scholar, presented her research with Syrian and Afghan refugees in Turkey on April 8th in an event co-sponsored by the Lynch School's Applied Developmental and Educational Psychology program. Of the 5.6 million Syrian refugees worldwide, 50% have resettled in Turkey. Since the beginning of the Arab Spring in 2011 specifically, Turkey has accepted 3.6 million Syrian refugees, constituting around 5% of the total Turkish population. And while 140,000 have been hosted in camps, the remaining 3.5 million have settled throughout the country resulting in patterns of internal migration of native Turks as well. Turkey's open-door and nonrefoulement policy towards refugees means it will not send the migrants back to Syria, but their policy towards refugees does not allow for Syrians to be designated as such (only European descendants can qualify for this per the Geneva Convention of 1951). Syrians are therefore under Temporary Protection Status in Turkey rather than classified as refugees.

Dr. Erdur-Baker first completed a qualitative study of Syrian refugees, analyzing their integration process and the intersection of gender with adjustment. Within this study, Dr. Erdur-Baker found that Syrian women were offered more tolerance and acceptance overall and that they could be both resilient and vulnerable simultaneously. Her original hypothesis was that, with increased difficulty accessing resources as a result of gender discrimination, Syrian women would be more likely to come from lower socioeconomic status or education levels and therefore less hopeful in their adjustment process. However, Erdur-Baker found that, with the provision of basic resources covered, women were taking advantage of and seeking out psychosocial interventions in a way that Syrian men were not. She found that Syrian men faced more criticism and resentment from the local Turkish populations that translated into a different adjustment processes and experience.

In order to try test this same level of vulnerability and resilience among other immigrant groups, Erdur-Baker's team conducted a similar, secondary study with Afghan women in Turkey. When speaking with these women, Dr. Erdur-Baker found that, due to the fact that many Afghan refugees arrived in Turkey after initially immigrating somewhere else, their past immigration experience had a significant impact on their adjustment process. Many Afghan women cited the fact that, prior to coming to Turkey, whether in Afghanistan or in the country that had immigrated to before Turkey, many felt a lack of personal freedom. Upon arrival in Turkey, however, Erdur-Baker's team found that the provision of psychosocial services and the lack of gender-based legal barriers towards women actually helped to propel them forward in their psychosocial and emotional wellbeing during the adaptation process. Although there were instances and testimonies of a resulting change in power dy-

namics of the family amidst Afghan men and women as a result of women beginning to foster this new level of independence, Dr. Erdur-Baker concludes that the case of the female Afghan refugee also exemplifies the ability of refugee women to be both resilient and vulnerable in times of incredible transition.

The results of these studies allowed Dr. Erdur-Baker and her team to conclude that, in general, psychosocial interventions seem to be working amidst refugees in the face of changing socio-political and contextual influences. However, the striking gender-based difference among both populations indicates that these psychosocial intervention efforts must have a strong foundation in the community as the local population is implicated significantly in the integration process. Additionally, trauma, stressors, and measures of resilience must be measured and understood from a culturally-biased standpoint in order to best cater to the needs of the population at hand.



## *The Right of Privacy for Poor Mothers v. The Right of Children to be Free of Abuse and Neglect*

On March 18, 2019, the Center hosted Khiara Bridges, a professor of Law and Anthropology and an Associate Dean for Equity, Justice and Engagement at Boston University as a part of the "Rights in Conflict" luncheon series. In her book, *The Poverty of Privacy Rights*, Professor Bridges explores how poor mothers are deprived of their constitutional right to privacy. Dividing the idea of "privacy" into multiple dimensions, Professor Bridges argues that poor mothers are denied informational, familial, and reproductive privacy.

Professor Bridges explains privacy as a generator of value; if society identifies a problem with an individual, the same level of privacy will not generate the same level of value, which is why, in some cases, enjoyment of privacy is dangerous to the individual or others (probation or incarcerated folks). Within the moral construction of poverty, poverty is an individualist flaw and occurs because the individual is deficient. This argument ignores the structural and systemic causes of poverty and renders it completely the fault of the individual. Within this paradigm, privacy is no longer valuable and



Khiara Bridges



Laurie Johnston

will rather be dangerous, hence the deprivation of privacy rights to poor mothers. These perceived “flaws” also implicate their children and work in the greater theme of the informal disenfranchisement of poor folks in the United States.

The rights that are in conflict within privacy rights are the freedom of the mother to have privacy rights versus the child’s right to be free from maltreatment. However, this argument presents a false dichotomy. In this framework, it is the assumption that poor mothers will neglect their children that is problematic. Wealthy mothers engage in the same behavior as poor women, but poor mothers, in the individualistic explanation of poverty, are seen as de facto flawed and therefore are overly monitored by state agencies that aim to protect children.

The state assumes that if mothers are unable to meet the material needs for their children, these children are at a higher risk of neglect and abuse. As a result, poor women and other people who receive state-sponsored services, such as Medicaid, experience a high level of intrusiveness as a result of their dependence on the state for essential services. Overall, Professor Bridges argues that this blanket surveillance of poor mothers is an unconstitutional violation of privacy due to the fact that the state has erected bureaucratic tools only to protect some children, those born to poor mothers, and their right to be free from maltreatment.

## *Conflicting Religious Freedoms? Catholics and Muslims in Secular Belgium*

Hosted by the Center on February 14, Associate Professor of Theology and Religious Studies and Director of Fellowships and Scholarships at Emmanuel College Laurie Johnston presented her research on the treatment of Muslim students in predominantly Catholic institutions in the predominantly secular country of Belgium. Beginning with three main questions, Professor Johnston focused her research on whether or not Catholic institutions remain true to their

teachings of religious freedom, how changing demographics alter what it means to be a Catholic school, and in what ways Catholic institutions are or are not mediators in religious conflicts.

Johnston gathered data through interviewing administrators and principals of Catholic institutions in Belgium. Approximately 70% of children in Belgium are enrolled in Catholic schools; there is a large institutional presence of Catholicism, but the country is overwhelmingly secular with a sizeable Muslim minority. In her research, Johnston found a wide range of acceptance and accommodation to Muslim students in Catholic institutions. The Catholic schools largely were not accommodating of Muslim prayer practices but Jesuit schools were reported as being more hospitable among these.

In Belgium, debates over the veil have not led to the creation of a national law prohibiting it, such as exists in neighboring country France; rather, the question falls to the school directors. Many in Belgium view the veil as a sign of oppression and the permission of religious practices as a way of opening the door to extremism. While there have been some examples of tolerance of the veil in schools, most administrators in Belgium are reluctant to allow this due to widespread anxieties regarding such a religious public display by Muslims in their schools.

Johnston also recounted varying responses to the presence of Muslims in Catholic schools. While the default response is nationalist or “culturally Catholic” in nature, where administrators assume that Catholicism is the norm and where straying from it challenges the idea of Belgian national identity, Catholic schools in the region of Flanders take a different approach. In a “dialogue-school” model, Flemish Catholic schools strive to be places of interreligious dialogue. With this approach, Catholic educators aim to create spaces for students to express what they believe so that they can come to a deeper understanding of their own beliefs. Johnston stated she sees this model is aspirational, as it is difficult to discern how well it is working in practice. Overall, the significant presence of Muslims in Belgian Catholic schools has forced administrators to think more deeply about the goals of their institutions, which can sometimes be rare places of genuine interreligious dialogue in a polarized and primarily secular society.



## Learning through listening: An Experience in Student Programming

BY TIMOTHY KAR CZ AND ELIZABETH WOLLAN

On April 1, 2019, the Center hosted “Rights and Resources in Refugee Camps” in the Heights Room. The event was conceived as a means to convey information to the BC student community about the often-dire condition that refugees around the world endure living in camps, often for periods as long as decades. The experience was also contextualized with information about the scope of the forced displacement crisis globally and presented opportunities for advocacy. Using the module “Walk a Mile in My Shoes” by the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) as a model to loosely organize the event around, the evening included engaging activities around the lives of refugees in camps such as access to water, adapting despite insufficient educational resources, and physical representations of the minimum shelter requirements that were included in the module.

In the planning stage, we intended to use again the title of the module “Walk a Mile in My Shoes” in the second year of the Center presenting the program. However, leading up to the event after the title was publicized, I, Elizabeth, undergraduate research assistant for the Center who helped organize the event, began to hear conversations from BC students around the event’s title and structure. Criticisms from the students revolved around some key points: first, the event’s title intimated that one could virtually experience the life of a refugee by attending. They were also concerned that a significant segment of the BC student population which they see as predominantly white and relatively complacent on issues of social justice, would be invited to take on the persona of refugees, the majority of whom are people of color, at the event and engage in hands on activities which could be construed as being for the BC students’ entertainment.

I, Elizabeth, brought these concerns to Center Assistant Director Tim Karcz, who was overseeing the event coordination. Although as part of the event planning team we intentionally took steps to present the material in a sensitive and evidence-based manner, we nevertheless revis-

ited the ways in which the event title reflected on the event’s content based on this feedback. We then moved to adjust the program to reflect better the research and intended outcomes of the event. With the event date approaching, we removed references to the “Walk a Mile in My Shoes” module while still giving credit to JRS and their featured advocacy tools to avoid giving the false impression, never intended, that one could feel they truly experienced the life of a refugee after participating in the event. We also adjusted activities that might have been perceived as “game-like” or entertaining to address the concern that the activities could trivialize the real plight of the refugee experience.

Though we sacrificed some of the interactive and engaging nature of the event for more of a presentation of information, we judged it to be a worthwhile trade-off to avoid diminishing the gravity of the content. Ultimately, the experience was revelatory of the challenge to educators and researchers face to make material accessible and engaging to a wider audience while trying to remain as reflective, sensitive, and educated along the way by valuing and incorporating input from students already deeply committed to ideals of social justice.

I, Elizabeth, think it was incredibly reflective of the Center’s commitment to growth and working with students; I find it rare to find a BC organization that is as responsive to student feedback and that committed to growth, change, and lifelong learning as the Center. And I, Tim, was very appreciative of Elizabeth’s facilitation of the dialogue with the students; she heard them out with an open mind and we were then able to adjust to alleviate some of the concerns. It was a great example of student leadership, and a learning experience for all of us.



Elizabeth Wollan

*The Center also hosted the following events this past spring:*

On January 20, the Center held a workshop aimed at BC students in service programs entitled “Immigrant rights and public benefits in Massachusetts,” which explored how access to basic necessities such as housing, food, healthcare and education are available to immigrants in Massachusetts depending on type of, or lack of, legal immigration status.

On February 28, the Center hosted Alyshia Gálvez, cultural and medical anthropologist and professor of Latin American and Latino Studies at Lehman College of the City University of New York for a presentation based on her book “Eating NAFTA: Trade, Food Policies, and the Destruction of Mexico.”

## Center Launches New Externship Program This Fall at BC Law

In the 2019 fall semester, the Center is launching a new externship program. In conjunction with the BC Law School, the Center will offer law students enrolled in Center Co-Director, and BC Law Professor Daniel Kanstroom's Immigration Law class the opportunity to work on humanitarian immigration cases with attorneys at Boston-area law firms – including Nixon Peabody and Demissie & Church -- and non-profit organizations – including the Irish International Immigrant Center and DOVE (Domestic Violence Ended). The externship will give students practical experience and exposure to some of the most pressing legal issues currently confronting immigrants in the US. At the same time, the externship will provide much-needed assistance to attorneys handling *pro bono* immigration cases, who have seen demand for *pro bono* services soar under the Trump administration. Kanstroom and CHRIJ Supervising Attorney Heather Friedman will partner with the firms and non-profit attorneys to supervise student work. The Center hopes to expand the externship program to students from other academic disciplines in future semesters.



Heather Friedman

## BC Law Students Report Back from Honduras Trip

On April 4, 2019, BC Law students Julia Novak and Audrey Cleaver-Bartholomew presented on their trip to Honduras in March where they spoke to locals about the context, reality, and legal technicalities behind the asylum seeking process in the US. Their first presentation, conducted in English, was for a group of university students at La Universidad Tecnológica Centroamericana (UNITEC) in San Pedro Sula. While the demographic makeup of this audience was generally of individuals from higher socioeconomic status and education levels, much of this conversation focused on explaining the procedure and grounds for seeking asylum status in the United States.

Novak and Cleaver-Bartholomew highlighted that an asylum claim will only be considered if one can provide a well-founded fear of persecution due to one of five grounds: race, national origin, religion, political opinion, or membership of a particular social group. In their presentation, they highlighted that their findings showed that many of the individuals arriving at the border seeking asylum, in fact, are not aware of the critical importance of grounding their petition in one of these criteria. Instead, according to Novak and Cleaver-Bartholomew, many arrive at the border saying that they are experiencing poverty and seeking opportunity. While the law students validated those claims, they encouraged individuals to look at the root cause of their experiencing poverty, and to hire an attorney who could help make the case that it was due to one of the established grounds for asylum in US immigration law. They also highlighted that many individuals considering being a part of the migrant caravan are shocked to find out that asylum seekers do not receive the same material benefits or assistance upon arrival as those classified as refugees.

In their presentation for community leaders from displaced communities, humanitarian organizations, and people more integrally linked to migrants, Novak and Cleaver-Bartholomew faced different questions. The presentation, offered in Spanish, was received more personally than at the University; it was closer to their lives. When speaking with the community, they emphasized the importance of consistency in story, having certain documentation, and how to maneuver the legal difficulties when crossing the US border. When giving this presentation, Novak and Cleaver-Bartholomew stated how it was challenging for them to balance their giving legal advice with contextualizing it with the truth of how difficult the migration would be for the potential asylum seekers. Overall, Novak and Cleaver-Bartholomew's trip to Honduras helped them to understand better the root causes of migration while also offering opportunities to advise migrants on their rights.

## Alumni

Meet some of our students



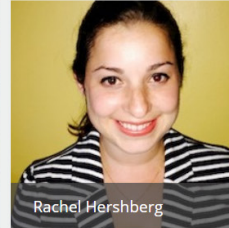
Chris Bauer



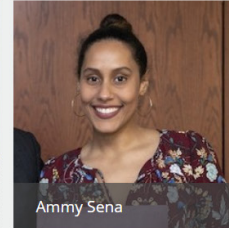
Jim West



Makeda Eshete



Rachel Hershberg



Ammy Sena



Kelly Morgan

Catch up with some of our certificate alumni on our certificate program webpage:  
<https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/centers/chrij/academics/certificate.html>





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## Fall 2019 Events



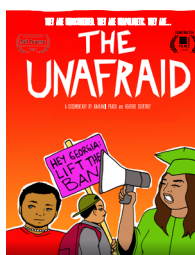
**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12**  
*Responding to our Experiences on the US-Mexico Border with the Encuentro Project*

With **Raquel Muñiz**, Assistant Professor, Lynch School of Education & Human Development, and Liaison to the Law School  
 12:00 PM • Boston College, McElroy, Room 237



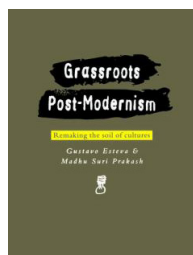
**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24**  
*Between Hope and Despair: The Politics and Challenges of Humanitarian Assistance at the Border between Mexico & the U.S.*

With **Alejandro Olayo Méndez, SJ**, Assistant Professor, BC School of Social Work  
 12:00 PM • Boston College, McElroy, Room 237



**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2**  
*Film Screening of "The Unafraid"*  
 Commentary and Q&A with **Raquel Muñiz**, **Armando Guerrero Estrada**, and **Carlos Aguilar**

7:00 PM • Boston College, Stokes (South), Room S195



**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5**  
*Beyond Human Rights, Under the Storm, while Living World(s) Apart*

With **Madhu S. Prakash**, Professor Emerita of Education, Pennsylvania State University; and **Gustavo Esteva**, Universidad de la Tierra, Mexico  
 Reception: 6:00 PM / Lecture 7:00 PM  
 Boston College, Higgins, Room 300



**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8**  
*Fighting Back against Family Separation at the Border*

With **Emma Winger**, staff attorney with the American Immigration Council

12:00 PM • Boston College, Barat House (Newton campus)



**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21**  
*Commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the Martyrs of El Salvador*

With **James McGovern**, US Representative for Massachusetts' 2nd Congressional District, and **Walberto Tejeda**, Fundación Centro Bartolomé de Las Casas (CBC), San Salvador, El Salvador  
 MBF Grantee

7:00 PM • Boston College, Gasson, Room 100  
 A reception to follow

Visit our website at [www.bc.edu/humanrights](http://www.bc.edu/humanrights) for updates, event details, and to join our mailing list.