2021 Summer Newsletter and 2020-2021 Annual Report

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Dear Friends,

As we write, there are signs of hope within New England. Growing numbers of people have been vaccinated against COVID-19. But inequitable access to health care and resistance to vaccinations persist within the US. And the lack of vaccinations is ever more debilitating beyond our borders.

This past fall, amid these health challenges and rising tides of racism and repressive authoritarianism across the globe (and some visible resistance to it), the US elected President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, overcoming attacks on our democratic processes in courts, in access to the ballot, and in the violent attacks on the Capitol itself on January 6. The change in administration, and in the Congress, offer hopes of a political environment where policies supporting the common good, and addressing areas such as racial justice, police reform, protection of voting rights, climate change action and less harsh policies towards immigration have a greater chance of becoming reality.

The new administration has worked to reverse human rights abuses of migrants by the Trump administration. Steps taken to date include ending the “Remain in Mexico” policy that forced vulnerable asylum seekers to shelter indefinitely in perilous conditions in Mexico while waiting for their claims to be adjudicated in an opaque process; raising the refugee admissions cap, which had been slashed to historic lows by the previous administration; and reining in some of the most aggressive immigration enforcement activities of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and US Customs and Border Protection (CBP). At the same time, human rights advocates have lamented the still robust funding of ICE proposed for the coming year, and high level messaging from the administration in response to humanitarian crises and political instability in Central America, Haiti and Cuba, with the Vice President, among others, urging people not to seek refuge in the US. Legislation remains essential to securing a path to legalization for migrants, including the “Dreamers,” who were brought to the US as children many years, even decades ago, with tenuous immigration status at best through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. A path for legislative reform and the legalization of millions in the divided Congress remains unlikely.

Amid this environment, we at the Center have forged ahead with our work. I, Dan, have been working on finishing my next book, titled Deportation World: Dynamic Sovereignty, Human Rights, and the Inevitable Evolution of Law, (to be published by Harvard University Press).

The book considers how deportation (broadly defined) has grown into a global phenomenon, swiftly and often mercilessly expelling immigrants to countries where they often lack a social support structure or economic opportunity, with increasing cooperation between countries to facilitate the process. And I, Brinton, have seen my most recent book, Beyond Repair? Mayan Women’s Protagonism in the Aftermath of Genocidal Harm, co-authored with Alison Crosby of York University, receive additional acclaim, having been recently awarded the 2021 Raphael Lemkin Book Award by the Institute for the Study of Genocide (ISG) (https://networks.h-net.org/node/6148/discussions/7805400/2021-lemkin-book-announcement-institute-study-genocide). In addition, my community-cultural psychology and anti-racist activist scholarship with Maya communities of Guatemala and with transnational mixed-status families there and in greater Boston has been recognized by the InterAmerican Psychological Association, which awarded me the Judith Gibbons InterAmerican Psychology Award and invited me to present a keynote address at their 70th Anniversary Convention this July. Finally, both through the CHRIJ and in our respective schools, Center co-directors have continued developing anti-racist programming alongside students, in curriculum revisions, and through continued pressures for inclusive and diverse policies and practices within and beyond the University. Students and faculty have participated in a range of on and off-campus programming designed to challenge white supremacy and the ongoing structures of racism within our society, legacies of colonialism, enslavement, patriarchy and neoliberal capitalism.

Online programming

This past year, the Center moved all of its programming online as dictated by physical distancing protocols from the COVID-19 pandemic. Though our events had a quite different feel in not having the connection of being together in person, there were certain advantages to hosting our events online, such as allowing people from a wide variety of locations to attend and participate in our events as well as facilitating bilingual presentations.

In addition to our fall 2020 events recapped in our previous winter newsletter, the Center hosted another slate of seven events online this past spring. These included a transnational event co-sponsored with science departments at BC, hearing the perspectives of an indigenous Arhuaca female Colombian judge, Belkis Izquierdo, who has been a part of a federal commission examining the ways that waterways were also damaged and violated alongside the human toll from the civil armed conflict there, and the ways that they too need reparation and justice as part of transitional justice processes. She and Liesolotte Viaene, Professor Department of Social Sciences, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, and Principal Investigator of the ERC project “RIVERS - Water/human rights beyond the human? Indigenous water ontologies, plurilegal encounters and interlegal translation” (2019-2024) joined us for a bilingual public event and then accompanied students in our CHRIJ interdisciplinary seminar for a lively discussion about the rights of territories and waters within the pluriverse, challenging EuroAmerican conceptions of human rights residing in individual human beings in contrast to embracing the rights of all living systems.

Continuing with the theme of Indigenous people while focusing on American Indians within the United States, we hosted Joseph Gone, Professor of Anthropology and Global Health and Social Medicine and Faculty Director of...
the Harvard University Native American Program, who spoke about the colonization of the US, massacres of Native Americans and the legacy of “historical trauma.” Examining some of the ways in which EuroAmerican psychologists have extended the field’s understandings of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder to American Indians’ current psychosocial experiences, he drew on his empirical research with American Indian tribal groups to argue for the importance of reclaiming Indigenous “traditional” practices and cultural identities as a key path to resistance to, and healing from, the horrific legacies of colonialism.

We also heard about efforts to defend the labor rights of immigrants from exploitation here in the US with a presentation from BC Law’s Professor Reena Parikh and the new Civil Rights Clinic she is leading. Presenting from Guatemala was Guatemalan-American filmmaker Luis Argueta, who gave an exposition of his newest upcoming film, AUSENCIA, which complements his earlier films on the brutal effects of detention and deportation on Mayan and Guatemalan migrants in the US, focusing on the strength and intelligence of Mayan women who are dealing with family separation due to migration, as they affirm “the right to remain” and speak about their efforts to build a life in their communities of origin in Guatemala. Finally, the Center co-sponsored the American Well Society annual conference’s keynote address by Elaine Scarry, Cabot Professor of Aesthetics and the General Theory of Value at Harvard University, whose keynote address, “Beauty and the Pact of Aliveness,” launched the three-day colloquium in late April. These and other events are recapped in this issue.

**Students working with the Center**

We continued our internship program for three BC undergraduate research assistants this past year, conducted fully online. The students worked on a research project overseen by Center affiliated faculty member Professor Raquel Muñiz of the Lynch School of Education and Human Development, in collaboration with Professor Maria Lewis at Penn State University. The project involved research, collecting and coding amicus briefs submitted before the US Supreme Court regarding the DACA program. The students have co-authored two pieces, currently under review: 1) The Story of DACA as told by “Friends of the Court”: A Critical Policy Analysis and 2) The Social Context of the Law: A Critical Analysis of Reliance Interests in the Department of Homeland Security v. Regents of the University of California.

The students also engaged in advocacy efforts around current immigration issues, researching and presenting information to the BC community on current issues of concern regarding immigration in the US. The students supported several fundraising, outreach, and educational events of our partner project, the Martín-Baró Initiative for Wellbeing and Human Rights at Grassroots International.

Our students have contributed articles to this issue as well. The AY2021 undergraduate assistants, who have just graduated from BC, write on interviews they conducted with two Boston-area students: one who was undocumented but has benefited from the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, policy; and another undocumented student who is outside the current window of eligibility for DACA and how they have navigated life and educational options given their circumstances. And the new AY2022 interns, who have just started this summer, report on their experiences with the Ignatian Solidarity Network’s virtual Migration Justice Summit they attended in June and their ideas on how to build on it going forward.

Center co-director Brinton Lykes taught our graduate-level interdisciplinary Seminar in Human Rights and International Justice, the core course in the CHRIJ Certificate, this past spring. Participating students included those from across BC’s graduate and professional schools, as well as several BC undergraduates. Further, four more BC students completed their studies for the our interdisciplinary Certificate this past year, representing the Connell School of Nursing, the School of Theology and Ministry, the Lynch School of Education and Human Development and the School of Social Work. The certificates were presented to them in an online event via Zoom in May, and the students spoke about their research and some shared what the certificate program has meant to them, accessible through the video of the event available on the Center’s YouTube channel.

We at the Center look forward to continuing the multifaceted work that we do, advancing research and educating the next generation of human rights advocates and activist scholars with an interdisciplinary focus on where theory meets practice, as we lay the groundwork both to reimagine a more just world and to take concrete steps toward that hopeful end.

Sincerely,

M. Brinton Lykes & Daniel Kanstroom
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.

Center Projects

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.
Center News & Notes

Center welcomes new visiting scholar James Ferreira Moura Junior

The Center is excited to welcome James Ferreira Moura Junior as a visiting Fulbright scholar this coming ’21-’22 academic year, from September 2021 to January 2022. He is Professor of the Interdisciplinary Bachelor of Humanities at the University of International Integration of the Afro-Brazilian Lusophony (UNILAB) and of the Graduate Program in Psychology at the Federal University of Ceará (UFC), Brazil. He has recently been conducting research with African and Brazilian black, white, indigenous and quilombola undergraduate students at the International University of Afro-Brazilian Lusophony in Brazil, focusing on the panorama of the relationship between human rights and violence from the intersectional views of these undergraduate students. He is doing several public events this fall, presenting his research, leading a workshop on the use of music and the body as a tool for group integration in contexts of structural violence, and offering a seminar on the psychological implications of poverty.

Learn more about these events and how to register on our events page accessible at: tinyurl.com/BCCHRIJevents

Center welcomes four new undergraduate interns

The Center is pleased to add rising seniors Elizabeth Hargraves, Cat Hoff, Lai Lai Liu and Ivana Wijedasa as undergraduate research assistants to the Center this summer and AY21-22. Welcome to them! Read more about the new interns here.

Co-director Lykes wins Judith Gibbons Award

Center co-director Dr. M. Brinton Lykes was awarded the Judith Gibbons award by the Inter-American Psychological Society, recognizing a psychologist’s contributions to the field in the Americas. Congratulations!
BC Law International Human Rights Practicum: Experiential learning advocating for vulnerable populations’ human rights and social justice

BY DANIELA UROSA, PROFESSOR OF LAW, AND DIRECTOR, OF THE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICUM CLINIC, BOSTON COLLEGE LAW SCHOOL

Experiential learning in the International Human Rights Law field is essential in a globalized world. That is why in 2019, I proposed the foundation of the International Human Rights (IHR) Practicum at BC Law, with two main goals: to introduce the students to the study of the international human rights protection systems, particularly the Inter-American System on Human Rights (IASHR), and provide them with practical experience in advocacy to promote human rights and social justice.

The IHR Practicum gives particular attention to the IASHR because it is the regional system for protecting human rights in all the independent states of the Americas that are members of the Organization of American States (OAS), including the USA. Therefore, even though the USA has not ratified the American Convention of Human Rights, it is part of the IASHR. Through its principal entities, the IASHR constitutes a fundamental and progressive guarantee of protecting human rights in the region.

The experience of the practicum has been very enriching. Students have gained a solid understanding of International Human Rights Law, putting it into practice through research, writing, and submission of amici curiae before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IA Court), expressing passion and engagement in their work. So far, the practicum has submitted seven amicus briefs to the IA Court. The cases for amicus filings have been chosen with strategic litigation criteria, selecting those that reflect significant challenges for the protection of vulnerable populations: women, indigenous people, Afro-descendants, people with disabilities, children, LGBT individuals, journalists, and human rights defenders.

Most of the amicus briefs have been interdisciplinary work between BC Law students and BC School of Social Work (SSW) students, with BC SSW Professor Claire Donahue’s support. Both legal and social work perspectives enriched the experiential learning process immensely.

The first amicus submitted before the IA Court was in the Azul Rojas v. Peru case. The students Milena Cuadra and Liliana Condori, with the support of BC Law Professor Susan Simone Kang, argued in favor of the human rights of a transgender person illegally detained and tortured. The BC Law Magazine posted a review about the decision and the amicus’ impact: http://lawmagazine.bc.edu/2020/04/bc-law-brief-influences-international-tribunals-decision/.

The practicum submitted another amicus in José Delfín Acosta v. Argentina, a case related to the illegal, arbitrary, and discriminatory detention and death of an Uruguayan Afro-descendant in Argentina. The students Amanda Hobson and Tamara Ghuneim focused on analyzing racial discrimination in arbitrary arrests, conventionality control of some Argentina criminal rules, and the right to judicial protection.

In November 2020, practicum students Marija Tesla and Nadia Bouquet submitted an amicus in Luis Eduardo Guachalá v. Ecuador. The victim in the case was a mentally disabled person who disappeared while interned in a public psychiatric hospital. The amicus focused on the direct judicial protection and scope of the right to health of mentally disabled persons and the potential forced disappearance situation. This decision now constitutes a landmark case on social rights protection in the IASHR.

The practicum also submitted its written considerations in the Advisory Opinion procedure about international standards on the particular condition of some vulnerable populations’ rights when in prison. The team of students - Josephine Shawver, Elizabeth Platonova, Isabella Alves, Mathew Victor, Erica Heinz, Samuel Paul, Emily Smith, and Juliana Lobo - with the support of the BC SSW students Nina Mitukiewicz, Teresa Marzilli, and Sarah McWhirter, researched the unique condition of incarcerated pregnant and postpartum women, indigenous people, LGBT individuals, and children. The IA Court invited the practicum team to participate in the public hearing.

The practicum team acted again as amici before the IA Court in Jineth Bedoya v. Colombia, a relevant case related to a female journalist’s kidnaping, torture, and rape while working on a journalistic investigation. Law student Julia Novak wrote the amicus focused on the state’s obligation to protect journalists’ right to freedom of expression in special risk situations with a gender perspective. Due to her remarkable practicum work, alongside her performance in other clinic courses, Julia earned the Award for Clinical Excellence at the 2021 BC Law Commencement.

Another significant practicum participation is in Maya Kaqchikel de Sumpango and others v. Guatemala. The case concerns the obstacles faced by some indigenous communities to operate community radio stations in freely exercising their right to freedom of expression and their cultural rights. BC Lynch School Professor, and CHRIJ co-director, Brinton Lykes gave great support to the practicum students’ team of Olivia Bender, Laura Noerdlinger, and Sarah McWhirter while writing the amicus.

Most recently, in June 2021, practicum students Maria Massimo and Yuan (Amy) Zhao, with the support of BC SSW student Teresa
Marzilli, submitted an amicus to advocate for journalists’ freedom of expression in the case of Emilio Palacio Urrutia v. Ecuador and the relevance of the protection of that human rights in the democratic context.

A remarkable experience of the IHR practicum team was a field trip to the IA Court headquarters in San José, Costa Rica, during Spring break 2020, just a few days before the COVID pandemic arrived in our lives! The students had the chance to learn first-hand the court’s work and review the court’s files, as Marija Tesla described in the blog post on BC Law’s impact: https://bclawimpact.org/2020/04/01/service-trips-inter-american-court-of-human-rights/. BC Law Professor, and CHRIJ co-director, Daniel Kanstroom joined us during the visit.

A central goal of the practicum is to expand its network with other human rights clinics, not only in the US but also in Latin American law schools. In April 2021, the practicum attended an invitation of the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law to join the novel Human Rights Clinics Network in support of the IA Commission’s Special Rapporteur for Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights. The BC Law IHR Practicum is so far the only human rights clinic in the United States that has joined this network, joining Latin American universities such as Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Colombia; Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, Venezuela; Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Santiago de Chile; and Universidad del Norte, Colombia; among other Jesuit universities.

To close, I want to note that I look forward with great enthusiasm to continuing practicum work during the Fall 2021 semester and leading the students in the fascinating journey of experiential learning and advocating for international human rights protection and social justice at BC.

On February 17, the Center hosted an online event on Colombia’s Special Jurisdiction for Peace’s (JEP) decision to recognize indigenous territories as victims of armed conflict. The JEP is an integral judicial part of the Colombia Peace Accords, investigating representative crimes within the Colombian armed conflict. Their recent decision regarding indigenous territories calls on scholars to rethink judicial assumptions about human rights based on Western and colonial judicial models. In this event, Belkis Izquierdo Torres, an indigenous Arhuaca lawyer, and Lieselotte Viaene, a Belgian anthropologist, explore a radically different understanding of what is owed in transitional justice processes, and what our place is in life systems including the natural environment.

Izquierdo, a jurist for the JEP and the coordinator of the Ethnic-Racial Panel in Colombia, spoke about her work in understanding patterns of micro-criminality and centering victims in productive dialogue. To the indigenous people and ethnic minorities of Colombia, ancestral land is alive and an integral part of the conflict. Classifying their accredited territories as yet another victim of the conflict recognizes the cultural, spiritual, and physical aspects of the land. Izquierdo contrasts this framework of indigenous collectivism with Western individualism. When territories are granted certain rights as part of the legal system, there is an interaction between these worldviews. While Western individualism understands the world through concepts of ecosystems, property, and ownership, the indigenous framework captures a truly interdependent relationship. The Arhuaco people are taught that “the first sacred land is the body.” Therefore, they would disappear as a people without a connection to the land. Izquierdo especially emphasized the native people’s role as guardians of life and “guardians of conserving the Pachamama, the motherland.” Through Izquierdo’s work to bring the indigenous logic of their territories to the judicial system, the JEP has sought to honor the inseparable connection between the people and their land.

Viaene then spoke about her work in Guatemala with indigenous survivors of genocide, as well as her collaboration with Izquierdo on her article “A legal im-possibility: the Territory-living being, victim of the armed conflict.” Once again, the common thread between these subjects was the transformative indigenous understanding of their land. Bringing in testimonies, short stories, and poems, Viaene demonstrated the importance of understanding different practices and models of thinking. For example, her interlinguistic investigation into the native Q’eqchi’ language revealed an understanding of violation or muxuk that is “far beyond meaning in Western

Spring 2021 Events

Transitional Justice and Indigenous Peoples: Justice and Reparation for Multiple Life Systems

Belkis Izquierdo Torres
language.” To the Q’eqchi’, a violation of the land is an extension of bodily violation. Viaene briefly addressed concerns regarding how the “Territory-living being” can be represented, and how science is formalized. Ultimately, she calls for interlegal dialogue, cultural dialogue, and a new legally pluralistic transitional justice.

At the end of the event, Izquierdo and Viaene participated in a Q&A moderated by the Center co-director and Professor of Community-Cultural Psychology at the BC Lynch School, Brinton Lykes. They left the audience with much to reflect on, and a call to action. Indigenous knowledge must not only be respected but also implemented in the process of transitional justice. In their final answers, Izquierdo and Viaene explained that such a reckoning is essential to reinforce indigenous identities and rights. A system of diverse knowledge benefits everyone, calling jurists and academics to question assumptions and create new visions of peace.

According to Parikh, a major rights violation that workers are susceptible to is wage theft. Wage theft is used to characterize all kinds of wage law violations by employers, including failure to pay wages at all, failure to pay minimum wage or overtime, and unlawful reductions in pay. To put the scale of this issue in perspective, Parikh noted that $700 million in wages are stolen from 350,000 low-wage workers each year in Massachusetts. Wage theft and other workers’ rights violations are associated with problems of enforcement of the law at both the federal and state level. The onus is put on low-wage workers to file a complaint with the Department of Labor or state attorney general, which is time-intensive, costly, and risky to the workers.

In January 2021, Parikh launched a new civil rights clinic at Boston College Law School, using a multi-pronged approach to address issues faced by immigrants, low-wage workers, and communities of color. In their litigation docket, the clinic handles issues of immigrants’ rights and racial justice. The docket also includes workers’ rights cases concerning wage theft and discrimination that are closely intertwined with immigrant rights. Furthermore, in the community advocacy docket, students in the clinic work for an organizational client. Most organizational clients are worker centers and unions that organize low-wage immigrant workers and train them to assert their rights.

At the end of her presentation, Parikh answered questions from the audience.

This event was co-sponsored by the Environmental Studies program, the Biology Department, the Schiller Institute for Integrated Science and Society, and the Applied Developmental and Educational Psychology program at the Lynch School.

Workers’ Rights are Immigrant Rights: Supporting Low Wage Immigrant Workers in Massachusetts

On March 2, the CHRIJ hosted Reena Parikh, the Assistant Clinical Professor and Director of the Civil Rights Clinic at Boston College Law School. The talk was moderated by Professor Daniel Kanstroom, Center co-director and a Professor of Law at BC Law School. Parikh started her presentation by analyzing statistics of immigrants and workers in Massachusetts. In Massachusetts, immigrants compromise 17% of the population and 20% of the labor market. Numerous low-wage, essential industries are disproportionately made up of an immigrant workforce: 65% of all domestic workers and 31% of all farmworkers are immigrants in the state. With these numbers, Parikh demonstrated how immigrants are embedded in the workforce, especially in the low-wage sector. To understand the cases of workers’ rights that Parikh’s team litigates in the clinic, she described the framework of some labor laws. The federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) sets minimum wage, overtime, and anti-retaliation provisions. However, certain groups of workers have historically been excluded from these benefits due to systemic racism: for example, farmworkers were excluded from minimum wage and overtime provisions as a way to further marginalize black farm workers during the Jim Crow era. The Massachusetts Wage Act (MWA) guarantees minimum wage and overtime provisions in Massachusetts, but it also excludes agricultural workers and hotel workers. Lastly, the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights provides additional rights and protection to domestic workers, but the enforcement of these laws has been challenging and has left workers vulnerable to rights violations.

In their litigation docket, the clinic handles issues of immigrants’ rights and racial justice. The docket also includes workers’ rights cases concerning wage theft and discrimination that are closely intertwined with immigrant rights. Furthermore, in the community advocacy docket, students in the clinic work for an organizational client. Most organizational clients are worker centers and unions that organize low-wage immigrant workers and train them to assert their rights.

At the end of her presentation, Parikh answered questions from the audience.
American Indian Historical Trauma: Retrospects and Prospects

On March 10, the Center hosted Professor Joseph Gone, Professor of Anthropology and of Global Health and Social Medicine at Harvard University as well as the Faculty Director of Harvard University’s Native American program. Gone is an enrolled member of the Aaniiih Gros Ventre tribal nation of Montana and has collaborated with tribal communities for the past 25 years to advance indigenous well-being. In his presentation, Gone discussed the concept of “historical trauma” as a way to frame the mental health inequities of indigenous people that are a result of the legacy of colonization.

Gone began the presentation with a brief orientation to American Indian and Alaskan Native (AIAN) people who are the surviving descendants of indigenous peoples in the current-day United States. Prior to European arrival in North America, there were approximately 5-10 million indigenous people. By 1890, the number of indigenous people decreased to 240,000 due to colonization and genocide. As a result, Gone emphasizes the importance of recognizing American Indians and Alaskan Natives as colonized people that have been subject to violent dispossession throughout the history of the U.S. The violence that indigenous people endured has community impacts that continue today and span all domains of life, especially mental health. Although there are mainstream professional ways to talk about mental health, indigenous “historical trauma” offers an alternative explanatory account.

The term “historical trauma” was coined by Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, a Lakota social work researcher, who adapted “historical trauma” from its association with the offspring of Holocaust survivors to apply to indigenous people. Gone describes “historical trauma” as being composed of both historical oppression and psychological trauma. The purpose of this concept for understanding indigenous mental health issues is to explain health disparities, contextualize health problems within historical contexts, resolve paralyzing self-blame, and promote indigenous therapeutic practices. According to Gone, there are four “C”s of “historical trauma”: originating in colonial injury, being collectively experienced, cumulatively escalating, and cross-generationally transferred.

Historical trauma is linked with an expansion of therapeutic possibilities. It is a health discourse that is focused on healing and therapeutic practices drawn heavily from indigenous cultural traditions. The reclaiming of indigenous “traditional” practices and cultural identities is a key part of healing from post-colonial anomic. The “AlterNative Indigenous Psy-ence of Mental Health,” as Gone refers to it, challenges traditional ways of studying mental disorders through the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) of Mental Disorders and moves towards historical trauma. It relies on indigenous ways of knowing and indigenous forms of self and personhood located within webs of kinship to restore well-being.

However, there are some unforeseen consequences of the historical trauma approach in how it essentializes indigeneity and does not address the immense diversity within indigenous communities. Additionally, it participates in biologizing suffering and medicalizing the social by turning histories of injustice into medical problems that can be treated individually. In his responses to questions from the online attendees, he also noted that the historical trauma approach does not take into account material reparations such as land for indigenous people. Despite its shortcomings, Gone presents historical trauma as a useful foundation for making claims. It offers us an alternative way to view the legacy of colonization in mental health inequities and affords a novel rhetorical strategy for the longstanding demands by indigenous peoples for remedy and redress.

Event co-sponsored by the Applied Developmental and Educational Psychology program, BC Lynch School of Education at Human Development, and the Psychological Humanities and Ethics Initiative at BC.

The Effects of Current Immigration Policies in the United States and in Santa Cruz: Understanding violence

On March 30, the Center hosted Regina Langhout, Professor of Psychology at UC-Santa Cruz and Visiting Scholar at Boston College in the 2020-2021 academic year. At this event, Langhout presented the findings of her Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) project with Latinx 9-12-year-olds, focused on the violence against immigrant communities and responses to that violence in Santa Cruz, California. After sharing her decades-long research and its application to the 2017 ICE raid in a Santa Cruz community, Langhout engaged in a Q&A with attendees.
Langhout began with an overview of Galtung’s Violence Model, a conceptualization of violence that sees direct, structural, and cultural violence as components that mutually support each other. For example, direct violence takes the shape of raids, detention, and deportation. Structural violence is the production, maintenance, and reproduction of oppression. Cultural violence, which she described as any aspect of culture used to justify violence, ranges from language and ideology to narratives about a social group. All three components are then analyzed in the incident and aftermath of the 2017 Santa Cruz ICE raid. Ultimately, violence against immigrants (or another social group) reduces community cohesion, solidarity, and mobilization.

In February 2017, a violent ICE raid was conducted in Santa Cruz County. Langhout provided a political context for these deportations and presented the limited knowledge available about the effects on deportees and their families. Today, immigration policies have broadly increased administrative authority and decreased judicial oversight. And while little is written about individual deportees, a large amount of research has centered on their families and communities. There are striking economic and emotional effects on both the family unit and broader community.

Langhout went on to explain how we could understand the violence of the 2017 Santa Cruz ICE raid through Galtung’s Violence Model. The direct violence of arresting individuals and terrorizing the community was perpetuated through structural and cultural violence as well: Langhout takes the example of their community’s key local paper, The Santa Cruz Sentinel. After each of the two City Council meetings held to hear testimony regarding the raid, the Sentinel used coded language to reinforce an “Us vs. Them” ideology and narratives that criminalized immigrants. They also excluded eyewitness testimony in their reporting. In this way, the Sentinel practiced “percepticide,” which occurs when a population is “not allowed to acknowledge the violence taking place around it.”

However, Langhout also offers several ways to counteract violence locally. She gives examples of her own local work, such as engaging with conceptual and ideological scholarship, advocating with multiple organizations, the most significant for her being the Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) with the “Change 4 Good” organization in Santa Cruz. The fourth- and fifth-grade students in “Change 4 Good” used a model of Healing Justice to address the raid in their community. With Langhout and other researchers’ assistance, these students used artwork and documentary-making to hold the police accountable for their actions and rebuild the fabric of the broader community.

At the end of the event, Langhout took questions from the audience, speaking about her general work in developing useful tools for working with young people. She stressed the importance of listening to children’s concerns and ideas. In the U.S., children are often conceptualized as innocents, when in fact, they can also be victims of poverty and violence. Through her YPAR with “Change 4 Good,” Langhout demonstrates how centering young voices helps us counteract violence that hinges on silence.

Another Side of Migration: Absence and the Agency of Women

On April 20th, 2021, the Center hosted a conversation with Luis Argueta, a Guatemalan-American filmmaker and the 2021-2022 Lund-Gill Chair at Dominican University, to discuss his upcoming documentary film, Ausencia.

The documentary follows three women from immigrant families, Sara, Elma, and Cleotilde, in Chanchol, Huehuetenango, Guatemala, as they experience the absence created by migration in their day-to-day lives. The film explores why these women chose to stay in their hometown and work to build lives for themselves and for the rest of the community with what has been “left behind.” Their stories stem from a local one-room library that was essential to their education and growth. The library serves as a symbol of hope and illustrates the role that education and communication play in the narratives of each of the three women. At its core, the film explores not reasons why migrants leave, but what those who stay do with the emptiness that is left behind.

Following a viewing of the film’s trailer, Argueta discussed how he came to tell the story of the three featured women, the importance of their stories, and their relation to the title of the film. Through his involvement with migrants crossing from the so-called Northern Triangle countries of Central America through Mexico and into the U.S., Argueta met a woman named María who was deported from the U.S. to Mexico and was separated from her husband and children. When Argueta went to visit María in her community of Huehuetenango, he saw the one-room library, learned the story of its creation, and the involvement of Sara, Elma, and Cleotilde. Argueta saw the way that all three women had experienced migration differently in their daily lives, and the loss they had to grapple with because of the migrations of parents, siblings, and community members. Argueta chose the title Ausencia, meaning “absence” in Spanish, because of the empty spaces he saw in the lives of these women as a result of living without their loved ones, and the life these women had been able to create in those empty spaces.

In the ensuing question and answer session, Argueta discussed the role the U.S. plays in migration, the criminalization of migration, and how access to education factors into one’s choice to stay. Argueta also addressed the duality of migration, highlighting
the tendency of the U.S. to fund governments, think tanks, and capital cities instead of grassroots initiatives in communities like Huehuetenango, and the “doublespeak” surrounding migration, with migrants being both praised and criminalized. Argueta also answered questions that spoke on a more personal level, specifically about the way he conducts interviews and forms honest working relationships with the subjects of his films. He stressed the importance of conducting interviews in the native language of the subject, emphasizing that the story he is telling is theirs. Argueta ended the talk by commenting on the effects of the pandemic on immigrant lives and notes how much more important these stories are in the wake of the last 18 months.

Luis Argueta

Beauty and the Pact of Aliveness

On April 21, 2021, the Center hosted Elaine Scarry, the Cabot Professor of Aesthetics and the General Theory of Value at Harvard University, as the keynote speaker for the conference “Simone Veil on Spirituality, Beauty, and Justice” sponsored by the BC Institute for the Liberal Arts and the American Weil Society. Scarry’s work centers around two concepts: physical injury and human creation. Scarry’s keynote address titled “Beauty and the Pact of Aliveness” delved more deeply into her work by discussing the interrelated themes of beauty, justice, and injury.

Scarry explained the title of her talk, “Beauty and the Pact of Aliveness,” by describing the relationship between beauty and aliveness. Beauty has a shared pact with the notion of aliveness in that there is a direct link between the beauty we see and experience and our ability as human beings to thrive. Scarry cited studies that show hospital patients are more likely to recover faster when given a view of a garden or nature than others facing a wall or industrial setting. The connection between beauty and aliveness influences the ways in which human beings act and can have implications in the pursuit of the eradication of injustice.

Furthermore, Scarry asserted that beauty and justice share the common opposite of injury. When there is a lack of justice, beauty, a quality that will always exist, serves as an example for what the world should strive toward. Beauty then urges us as human beings to pursue justice. Scarry articulated three ways in which beauty calls us toward justice: our affinity to symmetry, the “radical de-centering” beauty causes, and the connection between beauty and our wish to create.

The first way Scarry argued beauty relates to justice is through the concept of symmetry. Studies have shown that human beings tend to find that things that are symmetrical are more beautiful than things that are not symmetrical. The symmetry humans are innately drawn to mirrors the fairness that is found in a just society. Scarry contended that American society today is not symmetrical but asymmetrical as seen in the two examples Scarry gives: racial injustice and the overwhelming size of its nuclear weapons capacities.

Next, Scarry described how in their natural states humans are self-obsessed but at the sight of beauty, whether it be a field of wildflowers, the sunrise, or the flight of birds, we “radically de-center” ourselves and are better able to consider the entire world. In this way, beauty forces human beings to not only be concerned about ourselves but about each other, thereby opening a pathway toward justice.

Last, exposure to beauty leads to human creation which is essential in the pursuit of justice because justice does not occur naturally. Justice must be constructed by humans and thus beauty aids in the creation of justice.

In conclusion, Scarry applied her ideas of beauty, justice, and injury to the world’s current situation. Scarry warns of two main dangers the world faces: climate change and nuclear destruction. Scarry cautions that both threats are a result of injustice and asymmetry, and would necessarily result in a massive loss of beauty on Earth. Therefore, in order to maintain beauty and prevent injury, we as humans must work towards justice using beauty as our guide.

Elaine Scarry

Event recaps written by Elizabeth Hargraves, Cat Hoff, Lai Lai Liu and Ivana Wijedasa, AY21-22 Center Undergraduate Research Assistants
The Undocumented Student Experience in Higher Education: the perspectives of two Boston-area students

BY GRACE CAVANAGH, EMMA KANE, TUGCE TUMER, AY20-21 CENTER UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) is a policy created as an executive action by President Obama in 2012. The policy provides young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the US before 2012 access to legal work permits and some temporary protections from deportation. Applicants remain enrolled in the program by renewing their status every two years and meeting other eligibility requirements, including extensive background checks. Although the policy has been refortified under the Biden administration after significant efforts to rescind it under the Trump administration, it still faces legal challenges in US District Courts of Appeals and enrollees ultimately rely on a legislative remedy to make protections under DACA more permanent.

Over 450,000 undocumented students are currently enrolled in higher education, making up about 2% of all students (Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, 2020). Each one of those students has a unique story to tell, encompassing tales of community, hardship, triumph, and resilience. This semester, we interviewed two Boston-area university students, one undocumented and one “DACAmented” (that is, enrolled in the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program), to hear their stories, with the hope of learning more about what it’s like to navigate higher education as an undocumented student in both contexts.

“Enrique” (a pseudonym), the DACA beneficiary we interviewed, came to the United States when he was three years old and grew up with the knowledge that he was undocumented. His mixed-status family kept their legal status private while attempting to help their kids fully integrate into their community. It wasn’t until he was unable to access a dual-credit course through a local community college in high school that he realized the significant obstacles that his undocumented status presented.

“Miguel” (a pseudonym), the undocumented student we interviewed, also came to the U.S at a young age, just ten years old. He migrated with his parents and two siblings, who entered the country with tourist visas and stayed after they expired. Although his family’s undocumented status limited his parents’ employment opportunities, Miguel recalled not thinking much about his status until in high school, when it presented itself as an issue in the process of applying to college.

Without legal status, students seeking higher education face significant financial barriers. Undocumented students do not qualify for federal aid, and thus rely on institutional aid to help cover the high cost of higher education. Many higher education institutions, however, do not offer aid or scholarships to undocumented or DACAmented students. Miguel, the undocumented student we interviewed, was lucky enough to attend an undergraduate institution that had substantial funding for undocumented students. Enrique, the DACA recipient, on the other hand, was not so lucky. After completing three years of his undergraduate degree, the costs of higher education proved too high, and he had to take three years off to work to save money.

For both our interviewees, they reported some of the biggest challenges their undocumented status has posed have been the barriers to pursuing higher education and career opportunities. As college students, they struggled to obtain internship opportunities in their fields of interest as these positions tended to be unpaid, and they needed paid employment to support their families. Without work authorization and Social Security numbers, both faced difficulties obtaining employment.

In 2012, however, Enrique heard rumors about the Dream Act and President Obama’s proposed Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, which would potentially give him work authorization and the ability to continue his education. He reapplied to his local public university. Upon finishing his undergraduate degree, he was granted DACA. Thanks to his new legal protection, he was able to pursue a year of teaching followed by a year in his professional field of interest. He later enrolled in graduate and post-graduate programs. He credits DACA with allowing him the flexibility and security to pursue his passions.

Miguel, however, was not as lucky. He entered the United States just one year too late to be eligible for DACA under the program’s eligibility guidelines. Though he would have liked to have pursued traditional employment to gain professional experience, his options were limited to the academic realm as he graduated without a legal status or work authorization. He enrolled in a graduate program, hoping a viable pathway to work authorization might emerge while completing his degree. He mentioned feeling burnt out after so many consecutive years of school and emphasized that financing his degree remained an obstacle. He plans to take the next year off from his studies to work to save for tuition and figure out what he wants to do with his degree.

Both interviewees highlighted the importance -- and difficulty -- of finding support networks and community both at college and in general. The precarious nature of an undocumented status necessitates caution when considering whether or not to fully disclose one’s legal status to other people. Still, both interviewees stressed the important communities they have found in family, community organizations, and the undocumented community at large. Although Enrique initially found it more difficult to find mentors and a sense of community after moving across the country to Boston for his graduate degree, he eventually found mentorship among professors working with the undocumented community.

Unfortunately, both of our interviewees spoke about the various social and political hurdles that they have faced as undocumented students. They described the four years of living under the Trump
administration as a time of increased insecurity, fear, and anxiety. For one, this insecurity negatively impacted his mental health, academic performance, and personal relationships. For the other, the anti-immigrant rhetoric used during this time seemed to increase instances of discrimination and racism against him and his family.

Ultimately, both interviewees expressed their commitment to continued social justice work with the undocumented population in the United States. They seek to challenge mainstream misconceptions about undocumented immigration and wish for institutional immigration reform, with the hopes that a pathway to citizenship will be created for undocumented immigrants. When asked what he would like to share with our readers, one interviewee challenged the notion that immigrants take away from the economy, explaining that many immigrants want to contribute to their communities and give back. He also noted that many undocumented immigrants face significant barriers when trying to apply for legal status, either because of the proliferation of misleading or false information, or because there is simply no accessible pathway to citizenship. The other stressed that there is no single story about being undocumented and stressed the need to listen to the experiences of the United States’ diverse undocumented population. He also encouraged members of the Boston College community to participate in activism by educating themselves and reaching out to political representatives to advocate on behalf of the undocumented community.

The first day of the Summit began with introductions as we met the facilitators of the Summit as well as our fellow participants. We were then introduced to Marcos Gonzalez, Director of Trauma-Informed Education at Chicago Jesuit Academy, who spoke on Ignatian Spirituality and our “call to advocate.” Mr. Gonzalez connected the social justice work demanded by the Jesuit tradition to actual migration justice issues we see in the world today. In this way, we can continue to be migration activists while remaining rooted in the Jesuit tradition.

On the second day of the Summit, Sister Tracey Horan, Assistant Director of Education and Advocacy at the Kino Border Initiative, was the keynote speaker and throughout her talk Sister Horan gave participants actionable tools for organizing their communities in pursuit of migration justice such as reaching out to community members, talking with politicians to make policy changes, and delegating organizing efforts. However, before beginning her talk, Sister Horan encouraged all participants to connect back to the reason they are involved in migration justice work and then share it out in small groups thereby fostering community among all of us at the Summit. This task, while small, was incredibly influential in forming the Summit into a safe and brave space for all participants as well as calling us back to the reason we have committed ourselves to fighting for social justice.

The third day of the Summit centered on providing organizing skills for the attendees through a panel of student activists who had experience in creating immigrant rights organizations and hosting events centered on the migration journey. As DACA recipients themselves, some of the panelists reflected on how important it was to spread awareness about the challenges of being undocumented and to create a safe space for these students on campus. The discussion by the student activists was followed by a broader presentation addressing current US immigration policies and how the context for migration policies is rooted in capitalism, colonialism, and anti-Blackness.

The last day of the Summit provided us with the opportunity to reflect on all that we had learned and to create an action plan to develop our Summit experience into potential campus organizations and events. In pursuing the next steps of migration activism, we were drawn to the concept introduced by the student panelists of an Undocu-Week, a week of events centered on undocumented status, and we hope to host one in the upcoming year. As we continue to grow in our capacities as student activists, we are excited to develop other events through the Center such as talks from DACA recipients and a Know Your Rights night that engage the undergraduate student body in issues of migration. Overall, the Migration Justice Summit facilitated by the Ignatian Solidarity Network was incredibly influential on us as interns both personally and professionally as we begin our work with the Center.

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**Center Undergraduate Research Assistants Participate in ISN’s Migration Justice Summit**

**BY ELIZABETH HARGRAVES, CAT HOFF, LAI LAI LIU, AND IVANA WIJEDASA, AY21-22 CENTER UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS**

Over a span of four days this summer, we, the four new undergraduate interns of Center, attended the virtual Migration Justice Summit held by the Ignatian Solidarity Network (ISN). The ISN was founded in 2004 and is a lay-person led non-profit organization that provides social justice education grounded in Catholic Social Teaching. The mission of ISN is to “network, educate, and form advocates for social justice” through the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola and the Jesuit martyrs of El Salvador.

The Summit, which ran from June 15 to June 18 and was held on Zoom, specifically caters to college students by providing programming that centers around initiating migration activism on campus. The Summit is open to all, but the majority of the students who participated attend Jesuit colleges and universities. Each day of the summit began with a short prayer and reflection session that called the participants to center themselves on Jesuit values and to reflect on why they were at the summit. The reflection was followed by sessions and talks that addressed social justice work rooted in Jesuit tradition, strategies on how to actively advocate for migration rights, and ideas on how to engage the campus community in migration activism. The Summit offered the opportunity for students from various universities interested in migration to not only learn more about the context of migration and the power of organizing, but also to connect with others and create a community of student activists.

The first day of the Summit began with introductions as we met the facilitators of the Summit as well as our fellow participants. We were then introduced to Marcos Gonzalez, Director of Trauma-Informed Education at Chicago Jesuit Academy, who spoke on Ignatian Spirituality and our “call to advocate.” Mr. Gonzalez connected the social justice work demanded by the Jesuit tradition to actual migration justice issues we see in the world today. In this way, we can continue to be migration activists while remaining rooted in the Jesuit tradition.

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**Student Awards**

**CERTIFICATE IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE**

On May 20, the Center hosted its year-end gathering online via Zoom. We virtually presented the Center’s graduate Certificate in Human Rights and International Justice to the following Boston College students who completed the certificate. Congratulations to them on their accomplishment and best wishes for their future endeavors!

Amy Howard, Master of Social Work, School of Social Work, ‘21

Minh Hai (Alisha) Nguyen, PhD candidate, Curriculum & Instruction, PhD candidate, Lynch School of Education and Human Development, ‘24

Antonio Taiga Guterres, Master of Social Work, School of Social Work and Master of Arts in Theology & Ministry, School of Theology & Ministry, ‘22

Jane Hopkins Walsh PNP-BC, RN, PhD candidate in Nursing Science, Connell School of Nursing, ‘22

**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:

Madison Ciaffone, PhD candidate in History, Morrissey School of Arts & Sciences ‘24

“Borders of the Absurd: Performing the Border in New Mexico and Northern Ireland, 1850-2000”

Urwa Hameed, BA in Political Science and International Studies, Morrissey College of Arts & Sciences, ‘22

“Economic, Social, and Cultural Human Rights of Women in Pakistan and Across the globe”

Jane Hopkins-Walsh, PhD candidate in Nursing Science, Connell School of Nursing, ‘22

“Exploration of Life Pattern of Emerging Adult Immigrants from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador”

Luke Trinka, Master of Divinity, School of Ministry & Theology ‘23

“The Christian Case for Prison Abolition”

Mckayla Yoo, BA in History and English, Morrissey College of Arts & Sciences, ‘23

“Sentencing Reform for Sex Trafficking Survivors: Past, Present, and What Could Be”

**KELSEY RENNEBOHM MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP**

This year marks the ninth 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:

Laurel Potter

Doctor of Philosophy candidate in Systematic and Comparative Theology, Morrissey School of Arts & Sciences ‘23; and Licentiate in Sacred Theology, School of Theology & Ministry, ‘23

“Liturgical Variation among Ecclesial Base Communities in El Salvador”
People

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We are also grateful to the staff of the BC Center for Centers for their support throughout the year, in particular to Jacqueline Delgado, Susan Dunn, Peter Marino, and Gaurie Pandey.

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Guatemalan Jesuit anthropologist

REPORT DESIGN  Gaurie Pandey, Center for Centers

Thank you!

Thank you to the following students who worked on Center projects this past year:

Grace Cavanagh (Morrissey College of Arts & Sciences, Class of 2021)

Brianna Díaz (Lynch School of Education and Human Development, PhD, 2026)

Meredith Hawkins (Morrissey College of Arts & Sciences, Class of 2020)

Abigail Iafolla (Morrissey College of Arts & Sciences, Class of 2022)

Emma Kane (Morrissey College of Arts & Sciences, Class of 2022)

Paulina Martinez (Lynch School of Education and Human Development, 2021)

Liliana Mamani Condori (Law School, LLM 2019., and School of Theology & Ministry, MTS 2017)

Nicole Rodriguez-Rowe (Lynch School of Education and Human Development, 2021)

Tugce Tumer (Morrissey College of Arts & Sciences, Class of 2021)

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Boston College
Stokes Hall N410
140 Commonwealth Avenue
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16
Structural violence & human rights in Brazil: decolonial and intersectional relations between race, ethnicity and gender
With James Ferreira Moura, Professor at the Federal University of Ceará (UFC), Brazil, and Visiting Fulbright Scholar of the Center 2021-2022
12:00 PM • McElroy 237 and online via Zoom

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19
Screening of “Stateless,” a documentary about racism and immigration in Haiti & the Dominican Republic
With introduction and background from Franciscka Lucien, Executive Director of the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti
4:30 PM • Gasson Hall, 100

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21
Crossing: How we Label and React to People on the Move
With Rebecca Hamlin, Associate Professor of Legal Studies and Political Science at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Discussant: Serena Parekh, Associate Professor of Philosophy, Northeastern University
4:30 PM • East Wing, 120, Newton campus and online via Zoom

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8
Negotiating belonging and citizenship in Southern contexts
With Urmi Dutta, Associate Professor of Psychology, University of Massachusetts-Lowell; and Ronelle Carolissen, Professor of Community Psychology, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa.
12:00 - 1:00 PM • McElroy 237 & online via Zoom

Visit our website at www.bc.edu/humanrights for updates, event details, and to join our mailing list.