

# CONFLICT AND FORCED MIGRATION

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STUDIES IN SYMBOLIC INTERACTION VOLUME 51

# **CONFLICT AND FORCED MIGRATION: ESCAPE FROM OPPRESSION AND STORIES OF SURVIVAL, RESILIENCE, AND HOPE**

EDITED BY

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Derick Abrigu is a Graduate Researcher completing a dual Master's degree in Public Administration and Latin American Studies with a focus on forced migration issues at San Diego State University, San Diego, USA. He holds a Bachelor's in Anthropology and Political Science from Concordia University, Montreal, Canada, his home.

He has been passionate with respect to the theme of irregular migration for several years now, a development that stems from his life experiences as a second generation Peruvian migrant to Canada. From an early age, he was exposed to the nuances of a flawed immigration system, as he witnessed the disappearance/deportation of family and friends. Filled with a determination to respond to these injustices, he has dedicated his vocation to address the fundamental flaws of our global immigration policy structure.

Currently, he is completing his thesis, a comparative ethnographic study of the Mexico-US borderlands, where he works with vulnerable populations in Tijuana and Mexicali, Baja California, Mexico, including repatriated Mexican nationals and in-transit migrants from various countries.

## **Joel Bergner**

*Brooklyn, USA*

Joel Bergner (aka Joel Artista) is an Artist, Educator, and Organizer of community-based public art initiatives with youth and families around the world. He works in acrylic and aerosol, creating elaborate paintings and public murals that explore social topics and reflect a wide array of artistic influences. Joel has facilitated community mural projects in Syrian refugee camps in the Middle East, juvenile detention centers in the US, and the shantytowns of Kenya, India, and Brazil. He earned his BA in Sociology from the University of Illinois, Chicago and has a background in counseling youth with various mental health issues. These experiences inform his current work addressing issues of trauma related to violence conflict, displacement, and social marginalization. For each project, he partners with local residents and organizations to give a platform to people in highly challenging circumstances to explore issues that are important to them, learn valuable skills and uplift their environment through public art. These social projects have featured partnerships with dozens of local and international institutions, including UNICEF, Mercy Corps, and the Open

Society Initiative. Joel's work has been featured extensively in media, including Al-Jazeera English, NPR (National Public Radio), Arise TV, Reuters, AFP (Agence-France Presse), Voice of America, the *New York Times*, *TIME* magazine, and the *Washington Post*, among many others. His work has also been published in the books *Street Art San Francisco* and *Mural Art Volume 3*.

**Alexandra Christian Budny**

*University of California, USA*

Alexandra Christian Budny, PhD, is a recent Graduate in Rhetoric, Interdisciplinary Humanities and the Arts through the doctoral Rhetoric program at the University of California, Berkeley. She received her BA in the Arts and International Studies from Northwestern University, with additional studies at the Università di Bologna, Italy, as well as an MA in Rhetoric at the University of California, Berkeley. Her research and teaching interests revolve around questions of narrative and the arts' capacities to not just reveal and reflect, but constitute, challenge, and change in arenas of understanding, identity, and community/belonging. After her training in the fields of agency, subjectivity and personhood, affect theory and aesthetics, and empathy and human rights through the arts, she arrived at the nexus of narrative and Refugee/Forced Migration studies. Her work here focuses on the particular project of the Refugee and Forced Migration *Bildungsroman*, as in her dissertation, honed on coming-of-age and coming-into-form through fictions of home and exile (narrative studies). Out of this project, she is further interested in considering the childhood experience, and narrative's role, in addition to its potential, in such cases.

**Erna Maria Rizeria Dinata**

*Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia*

Erna Dinata is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Social Welfare, University of Indonesia, where she completed her bachelor degree. She earned her Master's and PhD from the School of Social Service Administration, University of Chicago. Her interest in the intersection of policy and practice, public and private, institutional and organizational analysis led to her dissertation work in understanding organizational correlates of child welfare agencies under performance contracting. Her post-doctoral training contributed to her understanding of the crucial partnership between university and agency for implementing evidence-based practice, and its impacts to social policy. She continues in the pathway to understand the implementation of social policy for social justice and social inclusion in various populations and the modes of service delivery and provision in the context of decentralization and privatization of human services. She manages international collaborations with other social work schools and engages in building relationships with government agencies, elements of civil society, and private sectors.



**Karen Gordon***Rockville, USA*

Karen Gordon earned a Masters in Social Work at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1970. She has served as a therapist for individuals, families, and groups. Among her clients are those who address mental illness, physical debilitation, addiction, and terminal illness. Ms. Gordon has been a social worker for hospice, taught for two years at the School of Social Work at Catholic University, and supervised social work trainees. She facilitated a therapy group bringing together Holocaust survivors with adult children (not their own) whose parents also survived the concentration camps. The parents had not shared their feelings with their own children but talked openly with the children of other parents who also had held back their stories.

**Edward Ou Jin Lee***Université de Montréal, Canada*

Edward Ou Jin Lee is an Assistant Professor at the School of Social Work at the Université de Montréal and is a regular member of an FRQSC-funded health and social service focused research team titled *Migration et ETHnicité dans les Interventions en Santé et en Services sociaux (METISS)*. Edward's research and practice interests are within the realms of (1) critical, decolonizing and anti-oppressive social work, (2) critical, participatory and digital media research methodologies, and (3) social policy advocacy and community organizing with Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous and other People of Color (QTBIPOC) communities and in particular queer and trans migrants with precarious status. Having published numerous publications about LGBTQ refugee experiences in Quebec and Canada, Edward recently completed a scoping review about the state of knowledge about LGBTQ migrants living in Canada in relation to an emerging global LGBTQ rights agenda. Edward is also presently involved in a number of research projects about the intersectional experiences of trans youth, in particular, those who are migrants, racialized and street-involved as well as the realities of MSM of color, in particular Black and Latino MSM. Presently responsible for graduate student field education, Edward is leading a SSHRC-funded project about the challenges and possibilities of transformative learning with graduate student field education. Edward is also involved in a number of community-based initiatives in Montreal.

**Abelardo León***Université de Montréal, Canada*

Abelardo León is currently conducting Post-doctoral research at the School of Social Work of L'Université de Montréal, under the direction of Dr Edward Lee in partnership with the Montrealais social organization REZO, for examining the relationship between immigration and sexual behavior in MSM Latinos. His goal is to better understand how "migratory grief and loss" acts, and how we can improve social services for MSM Latino immigrants in Montréal.

Dr León completed his PhD in Humanities from Concordia University (2016), in which he examines the symbolic dimension expressed in the discourse of the LGBT civil rights' movement in Chile. Dr León is Bachelor of Fine Arts, Bachelor in Education (Chile) and Masters in Educational Research (Mexico). He has extensive experience as teacher and researcher on issues such as visual discourse analysis, qualitative research methods, sexual diversity and social movements in Chile, Latin American art, immigration, and studies on HIV prevention/treatment based upon community-based research approach. His interdisciplinary background allowed Dr León to integrate interdisciplinary fields for developing research projects which engage individuals with their own community and culture; integrating artistic sensibility with the social sciences and the field of sexual health.

**Mari Malek**

*New York, NY, USA*

Since she fled South Sudan as a refugee 18 years ago, Mari Malek, aka DJ Stiletto, has become a successful Model/DJ and Actress in New York City. She is also the founder of "Stand For Education," a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering girls and providing access to education for underprivileged children. When Malek first escaped South Sudan with her mother and siblings, they spent four years in Egypt where they applied for asylum and were granted refugee status. Mari and her family then moved to Newark, New Jersey before they found their relatives and relocated to San Diego, California. One day on a walk to school, Malek was approached by a modeling scout, and in 2006, Malek moved to New York to pursue a career in the field. She now uses her status as a platform to bring light to an often-ignored plight, and helps to inspire and introduce opportunities to South Sudanese women and children whose lives have been torn apart by the violence and inhumanity of war.

**Myrna McNitt**

*Central Michigan University, USA*

Myrna McNitt has experienced a rich social work career in child protection and juvenile justice that includes front line work in Africa and other developing countries, as well as in the US and England. She served on the Board of the International Foster Care Organization (IFCO) and continues to work with IFCO's Training and Development Committee. Her work with IFCO has included project work to develop foster care as an alternative to institutions in Kosovo, Azerbaijan, and Sri Lanka. She has served as a foster parent and kinship provider. Myrna has worked collaboratively on a research agenda concerning kinship care, social identity, and resilience. Myrna has served as affiliate faculty in Social Work and Sociology in Michigan and Illinois. Currently, Myrna is a Faculty at Central Michigan University Social Work Program. Myrna has extensive experience in supporting students and practicing professionals working in child protection. Myrna has developed global learning

experiences for students in Guatemala and Ecuador. As a Social Work Faculty, Myrna is committed to applying research to good practice and sharing those practices with her students. She was awarded the Teaching Excellence Award by Spring Arbor University.

**Gil Richard Musolf**

*Central Michigan University, USA*

Gil Richard Musolf is Professor Emeritus from the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work of Central Michigan University. He has published in a variety of journals, including *Symbolic Interaction*, *Studies in Symbolic Interaction*, *The Sociological Quarterly*, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, and *Contemporary Justice Review*. His book *Structure and Agency: An Introduction to Social Psychology* is in its second edition.

**Michael Papa**

*Central Michigan University, USA*

Michael J. Papa (PhD, Temple University) is a Professor of Communication at Central Michigan University. He has previously been affiliated with Uppsala University (Sweden), Michigan State University, Bangkok University, Ohio University, and University of North Carolina-Greensboro. Two central areas of research have been the design and evaluation of organizations promoting social change initiatives and economic development in the US, Bangladesh, India, and Thailand, and the resolution of violent conflict with a particular focus on the conflict within and between Sudan and Uganda. He has also conducted research on conflict management, group decision-making processes, management selection and development, and technology diffusion in organizations. In addition to four books, Papa has published over 40 scholarly articles, essays in edited volumes, and technical reports. Michael Papa has received 10 research awards for top papers from the International Communication Association and is a recipient of Central Michigan University's President's Award for Scholarly and Creative Activity.

**Wendy Papa**

*Central Michigan University, USA*

Wendy H. Papa (PhD, Ohio University) is a professor of Communication and Director of the Basic Course at Central Michigan University. She has previously been affiliated at Hong Kong Baptist University, Bangkok University, Ohio University, and University of North Carolina-Greensboro. She has conducted research on organizations promoting social change initiatives in the US and India, and in the areas of conflict management and technology diffusion in organizations. In addition to two books, Papa has published four scholarly articles in communication journals and five essays in edited volumes. She has also received a top paper award from the Organizational Communication Division of the International Communication Association.

**Nafije Krasniqi Prishtina***Shining Stars Connect, USA*

Her given name, Nafije (Naa-fee-ya), means the Creator of Good and this is her purpose in life, each and every day. Founder of Shining Stars Connect, Nafije leads a successful life/business-coaching practice working with clients locally and remotely. She empowers her clients to design and achieve success in life, using her skills as a certified Life Coach, helping them to master leadership and time management skills. Nafije designed a comprehensive life planner/organizer and it is a vital tool her client's utilize to increase productivity and balance, both at home and at work. Devoting attention and developing others to stay focused and motivated toward creating and executing a plan for a successful life has always been a passion for Nafije. When in her 20s, Nafije's personal plan for her successful life was altered when she had to leave everything behind, including most of her family, due to war in her homeland, Kosovo. In 1999, she came to the US as a refugee and launched a new plan beginning with learning English and learning about American culture. Working to make a living while attending college were a few of the challenges the new life presented. Nafije now has a degree in Business with a focus in Human Resources Development. After many years working in corporate America, Nafije created a new plan for herself and opened her own consulting business. Besides her life coaching business, she is pursuing goals as a mom, wife, and graduate student studying Cognitive Science.

**Kim Schultz***Chicago, USA*

Kim Schultz is a Writer, Actor, and Activist specializing in comedic and authentic storytelling. She has worked at many national theaters as an actor and writer. And in 2009, she was commissioned to travel to the Middle East as an artist/activist to meet with Iraqi refugees and write a play inspired by the trip. She ended up falling in love with a refugee, forever changing her life. Out of that came the play "No Place Called Home," which performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC as part of World Refugee Day and off Broadway in NYC in 2010, as well as a national tour. Compelled to further share her story and advocate for refugees worldwide, Kim authored the recently released memoir, *Three Days in Damascus* (Palewell Press, 2016). Now also available on [www.kimschultz.net](http://www.kimschultz.net).

**María Silva***University of San Diego, USA*

María Silva was born and raised in Nogales, Sonora, a few miles south of the US-Mexico border. Growing up in the borderlands instilled an understanding of the overwhelming cultural, economic, and political interdependence of the two neighboring countries.

María's career in community-based work started in an indigenous village in the Copper Canyon of Mexico in 2007, where she facilitated continuing education for adults and oversaw operations and administrative duties at an elementary school. She moved to San Diego in 2008 to attend the University of San Diego (USD) and began her work with immigrant communities on both sides of the Tijuana-San Diego border, providing direct services as well as advocacy. She completed her undergraduate studies in 2012.

In 2018, María completed Master's in Migration Studies at the University of San Francisco. Her thesis focused on asylum seekers in the Nogales Sonora-Arizona border. She brings expertise in issues regarding the US-Mexico border region to her current role as Director of Neighborhood and Community Engaged Partnerships at the University of San Diego. She facilitates collaboration with community stakeholders along the border region to co-create campus–community engagement through reciprocal partnerships.

### **Leticia Villarreal Sosa**

*Dominican University, USA*

Dr Leticia Villarreal Sosa is an Associate Professor at Dominican University's School of Social Work. She earned her PhD at The University of Chicago. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, School Social Worker (PEL), and has an Addictions Certificate. Her research focuses on immigrant adaptation, international social work, and school equity. She is an Editor-in-Chief of the the journals *International School Social Work Journal* and *Children and Schools*. In addition, she serves as a Board Member of the School Social Work Association of America. Currently, she is working on international projects focused on the development of social work education in Azerbaijan and Ecuador, and local community projects in Chicago focused on adult education the Irish diaspora. She has published articles related to interdisciplinary collaboration, models of school social work practice, gang violence and trauma, and accompaniment. Most recently, she published a book which was selected for the Book of the Year Award by SSWAA, *School Social Work: National Perspectives on Practice in Schools*. Her current book projects focus on the needs of Latino students in the schools, and oral histories of Mexican and Puerto Rican women activists in Chicago, a book focused on the collection of Queer Latina narratives.

### **Ulaş Sunata**

*Bahçeşehir University, Turkey*

Ulaş Sunata is an Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology of the Bahçeşehir University (BAU). She received her BSc in Statistics and MSc in Sociology from Middle East Technical University, Ankara. She was invited to be a Visiting Scholar in the Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies (IMIS) in Germany for her work in migration studies and was awarded scholarships by DAAD and Hans-Böckler Foundation. Professor Sunata completed her PhD in Sociology at the University of Osnabrück and joined the

BAU academic staff in 2010. She has published numerous works in the fields of migration, globalization, diaspora, urbanization, and gender studies including two books while in Germany. Her research deals with contemporary diasporas of Turkey and focuses on the complex migratory relationship between Turkey and Germany. Her recent work includes an oral-history project on the Circassian diaspora in Turkey. Since 2013, she has expanded her research toward developing and conducting academic projects about Syrian refugees. Her research method combines theoretical policy analysis with large-scale corpora and data-driven methodologies. Professor Sunata established the Center of Migration and Urban Studies (BAUMUS) in order to empower interdisciplinary teamwork and foster collaborative projects.

### **Gail Vignola**

*Seton Hall University, USA*

Gail Vignola, before starting her teaching career, earned a BFA in Photography from Virginia Commonwealth University and learned Spanish – her fourth language – while working as a Photographer, Publicist, and Graphic Designer in Miami. Her graduate work was at Barry University (Miami), the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and the University of California, Berkeley, from which she holds Master's degrees in Education, Applied Linguistics, and a certificate in TESOL, respectively. She has been teaching photography, writing, and languages (English and Spanish) to domestic and international students for over 25 years. She grew up in the US and Germany and has also lived and worked in New Jersey, Texas, Virginia, North Carolina, California, and Indiana.

Besides teaching, Gail is a committed activist for the cause of displaced Syrian students and, with her students at the University of Evansville, started a nonprofit – Scholars for Syria – in 2015 to increase awareness, promote advocacy, and raise funds for Syrian students and their families. She received a 2016–2017 Global Scholar Award from the University of Evansville for this initiative. In 2017, Scholars for Syria was granted the UE Student Organization of the year and the UE Diversity Awards based on their advocacy work and on the social awareness course designed to place Syrian students in local schools to form cultural alliances and dispel negative rhetoric about the conflict. The work of Scholars for Syria can be found on the organization's website [www.scholars-forsyria.com](http://www.scholars-forsyria.com) and on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Gail travels frequently and in her spare time enjoys dance, music, photography, autumn leaves, snowstorms, and learning Arabic. She has relocated to her home city of New York and is currently teaching on the faculty of the Seton Hall University Department of English while continuing her advocacy work on behalf of Syria.