

CSWupdate
JANUARY 2013

THINKING

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23rd Annual
Graduate Student
Research Conference

PREVIEW by Rana Sharif

january 2013

CSWupdate



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Rana Sharif is a Ph.D candidate in Gender Studies at UCLA and Thinking Gender Conference Coordinator for 2013. Her dissertation research explores pregnancy, labor and delivery in the West Bank, Palestine.

Thinking Gender 2013

CSW'S 23RD ANNUAL GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH CONFERENCE IS ON FEBRUARY 1

CSW IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE our 23rd Annual Graduate Student Research Conference, to be held on Friday, February 1, 2013 from 7:30 am to 6:30 pm at the UCLA Faculty Center. As in years past, the conference highlights the most cutting edge research on gender, sexuality, and women across all disciplines and historical periods.

This year's Thinking Gender promises to continue the tradition of bringing graduate students from far and near to discuss, engage and exchange ideas on a wide range of topics. Panelists will be reflecting a diverse array of both academic institutions and (inter)disciplinary teachings. Students from UCLA and several other California schools will be joined by

students across the country and international students traveling from as far as Austria and Norway. In all, 36 institutions and colleges will be represented including over 28 fields of study, ranging from Nursing and Law to Community Health Sciences and Gender Studies.

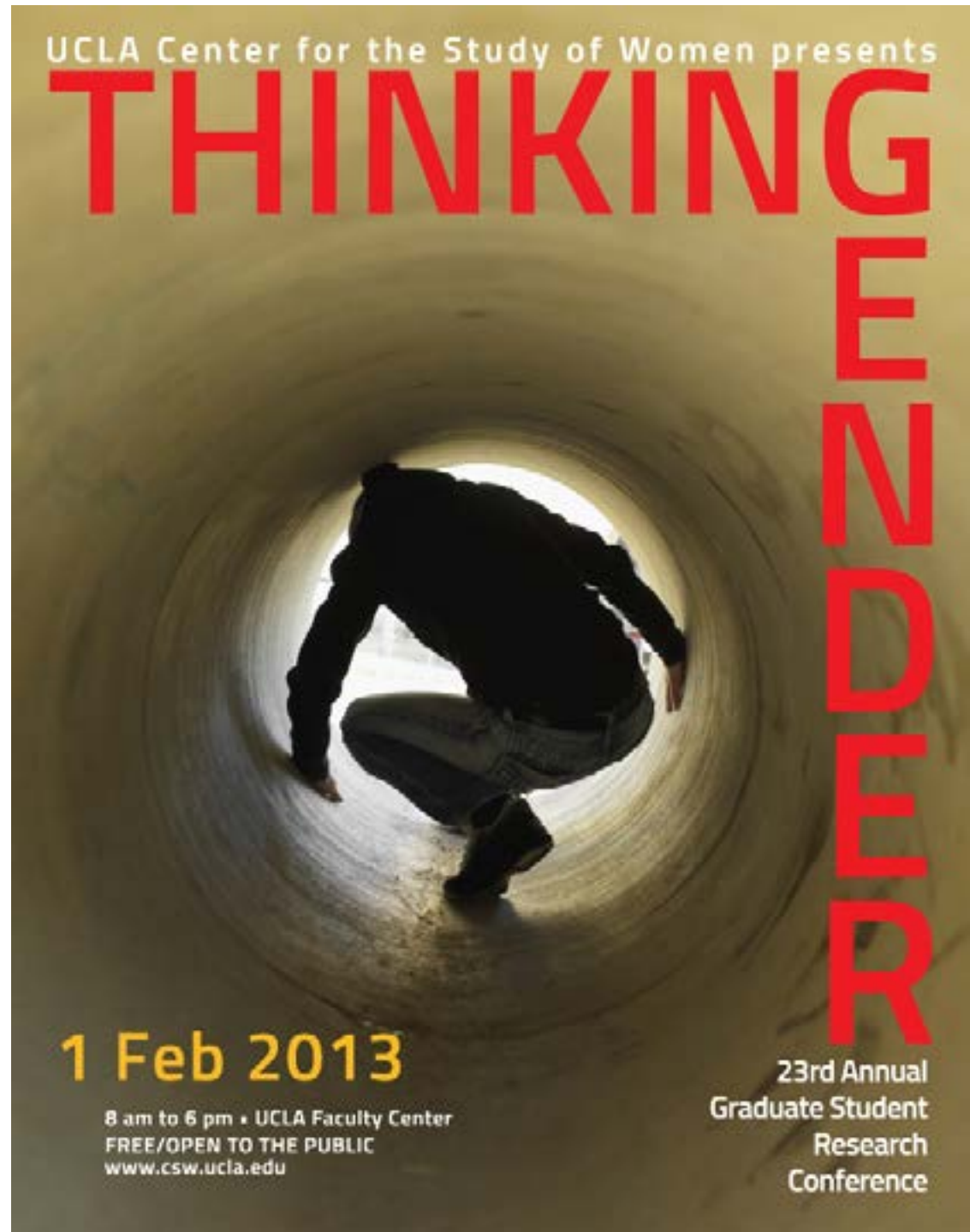
Given the diverse make-up of disciplines and geographies, this year's Thinking Gender conference will highlight the most cutting-edge research on the family, health, new directions in feminisms, affect theory, kinship, incarceration, criminality, space and place, and sexuality. With panel titles such as: "Animate, Animal and Chimeric Considerations," "Divas!" "Gendered Networks," and "Negotiating the Sacred and Profane," "Will to Health: Surveillance



and Activism of Rebellious Women,” and “Cuts & Clots: Queer Visual Art” this year’s panels and student presentations promise to generate a kinesthetic conversation and contribute to the exchange of new ideas, theories and methodologies.

This year, we are especially excited about our Plenary Session, “Surplus Life: Infrastructure, Architecture, and Temporality” which will be moderated by CSW Interim Director Rachel Lee. This year’s plenary will include the following presentations: “Toenail Polish on a Prosthetic Limb: Salience and Intersectionality in Chris Ware’s Building Stories” Margaret Fink, University of Chicago, English; “Whose Queerness? On Situated Knowledges, Queer Embodiment and No Future,” Jacob Lau, UCLA, Gender Studies; and “Valuing Milk, Care and Technology: Human Milk Banking and Sharing,” Krista Sigurdson, UCSF, Sociology. The plenary session will be held from 1 pm to 2:30 pm in the Sequoia Room at the UCLA Faculty Center.

Please join us for the 23rd Annual Thinking Gender Graduate Student Conference and be part of a day of networking, stimulating scholarship, and dynamic conversations. The day begins with pre-registration at 7:30 am and concludes with reception at 5:30 pm. The conference is free and open to the public, so please do not miss this opportunity!



UCLA Center for the Study of Women presents

THINKING GENDER

1 Feb 2013

8 am to 6 pm • UCLA Faculty Center
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23rd Annual
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Allison Carruth is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at UCLA. Her fields of research and teaching include post-1945 American literature, contemporary fiction and new media, food studies, science and technology studies, globalization theory, and the environmental humanities.



Q & A with Allison Carruth

Professor Allison Carruth recently joined the faculty of the Department of English at UCLA. She is also an affiliated faculty member at the Center for the Study of Women and at the Institute of the Environment and Sustainability. Last year, she served as a respondent at CSW's "Life (Un)Ltd" symposium on May 11, 2012. She is currently working with CSW Interim Director Rachel Lee on organizing "The Politics of Seeds," a symposium that will take place on May 17, 2013. She kindly agreed to talk with us about her research and the upcoming symposium.

What drew you to UCLA?

I have long admired UCLA as a public research university that has cultivated a strong culture of cross-disciplinary research and teaching and that has particular strengths in both the humanities and environmental science / studies.

What classes will you be teaching?

I hope to teach a wide range of classes, from "post-1945 American Fiction" and "Literature and Science" to "Food Writing and Food Politics," "Art/Science and 21st-Century Environmentalism," and "Contemporary Environmental Literature and Media."

How did you get involved with CSW?

I was fortunate that Rachel Lee invited me to participate in last year's "Life (Un)Ltd" symposium as a respondent. The symposium was an intellectually exciting forum for re-thinking my own research on the literary and cultural history of industrial agriculture and on the contemporary food movements being developed through nonfiction, new media art practice, and environmental activism/policy. I was struck with how well the symposium brought together research on reproductive technologies and fertility politics with research on postindustrialism and environmental justice. I am delighted to be affiliated now with the Center

I think of the environmental humanities as a capacious field (comprised of historians, literature and new media scholars, philosophers, and art historians) that has opened up new areas of research on the profound importance of culture—and of cultural differences—in how societies define nature, understand particular ecosystems, and respond, both politically and scientifically, to environmental crises.

for the Study of Women and to be a participant in the “Life (Un)Ltd” research project, which are each pathbreaking in bridging work in the humanities, social sciences, and life sciences and, more specifically, in making gender studies and feminist theory central to both science and technology studies (STS) and environmental studies.

Environmental humanities is a relatively new field of study. How did you become interested in it? Why is it important that environmental humanities be interdisciplinary? Why is the Department of English at UCLA a good fit?

I think of the environmental humanities as a capacious field (comprised of historians, literature and new media scholars, philosophers, and art historians) that has opened up new areas of research on the profound importance of culture—and of cultural differences—in how societies define nature, understand particular ecosystems, and respond, both politically and scientifically, to environmental crises. My interests in the field in some sense originate with my undergraduate work in the 1990s in environmental policy as well as my civic engagement since the early 2000s with urban agriculture and food justice politics and my doctoral study of globalization theory and STS. The Department of English at UCLA

has tremendous strengths in both literary history and a number of interdisciplinary fields (such as seventeenth- and eighteenth-century studies, postcolonial studies, and literature and science). Professors Elizabeth DeLoughrey and Rob Watson have been leaders in the fields of ecocriticism and the environmental humanities along with Ursula Heise, who joined the faculty this year. Both the international reputation of the department and the opportunity to work with three senior scholars in the environmental humanities make UCLA an ideal intellectual and professional home. I also am delighted to have the opportunity to affiliate with both the Institute of the Environment and Sustainability and the Institute for Society and Genetics.

Can you tell us about “The Politics of Seeds” symposium that you are organizing with Rachel Lee and CSW? How does it fit into the “Life (Un)Ltd” research project?

The “Politics of Seeds” symposium builds on two prior events I organized: a conference at UCSB in 2009 on “Food Sustainability and Food Security” and a conference at the University of Oregon in 2011 on “Food Justice: Community, Equity, Sustainability.” Taking our inspiration from a conversation at the “Life (Un)Ltd” symposium last year on the “corporate-owned seed,” “The Politics of

UCLA CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WOMEN
presents

THE POLITICS OF SEEDS

A SYMPOSIUM

FRIDAY **May 17**
9 am to 5 pm • TBD



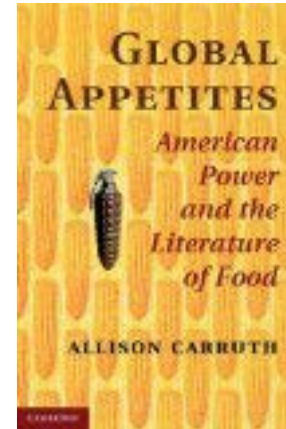
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the University of California Humanities Research Initiative,
Institute of the Environment and Sustainability,
Institute for Society & Genetics, Department of English
and Dean Scheberg and the Division of Humanities

The multi-year “Life (Un)Ltd” project addresses the question of what impact recent developments in the biosciences and biotechnology have had on feminist studies. In this year, we are exploring the rich connections between food, ecology, propagation, and metabolism. On May 17, 2013, CSW will host “The Politics of Seeds,” a symposium that will address how gender, ethnicity, and race shaped contemporary cultural and political movements related to seeds. How has global climate in relation to economic and cultural crises affected food systems and place-based heirloom seeds? What sociological, ethnographic, and humanistic methodological tools have we integrated into the study of food culture and food politics and to what ends? To what extent has research by corporations and engineers redefined the ecology of seeds and how have political and artistic forms of resistance intervened?

Taking our inspiration from a conversation at the “Life (Un)Ltd” symposium last year on the “corporate-owned seed,” “The Politics of Seeds” symposium aims to explore how particular communities of women as well as issues of gender and race have shaped contemporary social movements related to edible and medicinal seeds. In addition, we will discuss the opportunities and challenges that current seed development research (from the development of new GMOs to heritage wheat breeding) pose to agricultural communities around the world.

Seeds” symposium aims to explore how particular communities of women as well as issues of gender and race have shaped contemporary social movements related to edible and medicinal seeds. In addition, we will discuss the opportunities and challenges that current seed development research (from the development of new GMOs to heritage wheat breeding) pose to agricultural communities around the world. Finally, we will delve into the importance of cultural practices and traditions related to seeds, and we will compare political and artistic forms of response to seed patent laws, and GMO markets. Our speakers include scholars from anthropology, literature, gender studies, cultural geography, environmental studies, molecular biology, botany, crop and soil science as well as a small group of artists, policymakers, and activists. This event will highlight issues relevant to CSW and the “Life (Un)Ltd” research project in addressing current struggles to maintain cultural practices such as seed saving, medicinal plant harvesting, and community-supported agriculture in the face of the global markets in seed patents, commodity crops, and pharmaceuticals. Gender is central to this struggle for what scholars variously term “food sovereignty” and “food justice.”



Your book, *Global Appetites: American Power and the Literature of Food*, is being published in March by Cambridge. Can you tell us about it?

*It explores how both industrial agriculture and countercultural food movements shape U.S. prosperity and power in the century since World War I. I develop this argument by focusing on a wide-ranging “literature of food,” a body of work that comprises literary realism, late modernism, and magical realism along with culinary writing, food memoir, and advertising. From Willa Cather’s 1913 novel *O Pioneers!* and Toni Morrison’s 1981 novel *Tar Baby* to Novella Carpenter’s 2009 nonfiction work *Farm City* and the playful bioart installations of the Center for Genomic Gastronomy, I make the case that American food power is central to the story of how globalization impacts regional cultures and ecosystems. The book aims to speak to scholars of American literature and culture as well as those working in the fields of food studies, agriculture history, science and technology studies, and the environmental humanities.*

Kimberly Clair received her Ph.D. in the Department of Gender Studies at UCLA in June of 2012. She has published in the journal *Indonesia* and presented her research in Southeast Asia, Australia, Europe, and the United States. She received a CSW George Eliot Dissertation Research Fellowship in 2012.



The Art of Resistance

Trauma, Gender, and Traditional Performance in Acehese Communities, 1976–2011

BY KIMBERLY CLAIR

ACEH, which is located at the northernmost tip of the island of Sumatra, is one of thirty-four provinces that comprise Indonesia. In the sixteenth century, Aceh was known as a center of trade for Indian, Chinese, and Arab merchants and as a center of Islamic learning. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, however, Aceh gained a reputation for violence and disaster. From 1976 to 2005, rebel fighters known as GAM (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* or, the “Free Aceh Movement”) fought for independence from the Indonesian nation-state. This protracted political conflict came to a halt with the arrival of another trag-

edy; in 2004, the Indian Ocean tsunami devastated much of Aceh, leaving 170,000 people dead and 500,000 homeless.

My dissertation focuses on the conflict, the tsunami, and the aftermath of these events as sources of trauma that have affected Acehese communities in various ways. Rather than highlight the immediate economic and political impact of these tragedies, my research draws attention to the production of “gendered traumas”—the diverse ways in which Acehese men and women experience trauma and its effects—as well as the efforts Acehese communities have made towards trauma recovery. In

particular, my work interrogates the significance of Acehese performance traditions—including dance, music, and theater practices—as a resource for trauma survivors.

I understand trauma as “the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur.”¹ Because trauma is often considered an “unknowable” or “unclaimed” experience that defies linguistic expression, alternative mediums may be necessary for comprehending and communicating trauma. As a lived, physical experience that draws together a community of listeners, the performing arts are particularly receptive for

High school students perform
"Tsunami Dance," Aceh, Indonesia



traumatic expression² and may offer “a special kind of physical bond with others.”³ Moreover, “familiar dances,” such as folk or traditional dances, can be “a source of collective memory, tying together generations and giving meaning to the movement.”⁴ These theoretical contributions have guided my exploration of trauma and the arts within Acehese communities.

GENDERED TRAUMAS

Acehese men and women experienced the conflict, the tsunami, and the aftermath of these events in different ways. During the conflict, Acehese women were subjected to sexual violence and other forms of harassment that men were less likely to experience. The National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM) found that 120 women were raped, 3,000 women had been widowed and 20,000 children had lost their fathers due to the conflict between 1989 and 1998.⁵ In addition, women were detained as hostages and tortured by rebel leaders for information. Reports following the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami indicate that the natural disaster killed four times as many women as men. Those women who survived were at risk of being sexually harassed or abused within temporary living shelters established for the homeless.⁶ In 2006, the Indonesian Ministry of Health estimated that 400,000 Acehese

could be suffering from trauma-related stress disorders and that the majority of sufferers are women.⁷

The aftermath of the conflict and the tsunami engendered a socio-political climate in which women were made to feel unwelcome, unsafe, or disrespected within public spaces. The implementation of syariah (Islamic) law in 2003 led to incidents of harassment and abuse towards Acehese women who did not wear their headscarf “properly” or who wore pants considered to be too tight by the syariah police. Further, Acehese women’s demands for greater political participation and for inclusion within the peace negotiations and the tsunami reconstruction process were repeatedly ignored. This conservative post-tsunami environment had a direct impact on Acehese women’s relationship with the performing arts. As social expectations increasingly emphasized women’s responsibilities to their family and careers, women found fewer recreational activities in which they could take part without condemnation. Women were also discouraged from pursuing Acehese performance on a professional level. For Yusrizal Ibrahim, society’s view of Acehese women who pursue performance as a career is “very negative,” as these women may be seen as “inong biduen [female entertainers].”⁸ As a result, most Acehese girls

and women who participate in arts activities do so only as a “hobby,” which does not extend beyond their university years.

TRADITIONAL PERFORMANCE AND TRAUMA RECOVERY

Efforts to use traditional performance as a resource for Acehese conflict and tsunami survivors took three primary forms: performance programs initiated by international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), workshops and performances conducted by local NGOs, and performances held by local artists. Although these efforts were largely successful in creating a safe space for creative expression, strengthening feelings of community and solidarity among participants, and revitalizing participants’ relationship with the arts, my research suggests that Acehese girls and women were not able to fully benefit from these performance-based trauma recovery efforts and are unlikely to view performance as a tool for trauma recovery in the future.

Performance workshops developed by international NGOs, such as UNESCO and the International Red Cross, were limited by the duration of their programs and their exclusive focus on children (ages 5-18). Because these programs were designed to teach performance activities for several months or



Informal dance rehearsal, Aceh, Indonesia

to result in a single, final performance, many of the participants were not able to continue their performance activities in the absence of these organizations. For example, UNESCO's "Rising Above the Tsunami" (RAT) program gave children little opportunity to continue their education in Acehese music and dance once it ended in June 2006. Further, there were no female Acehese instructors and only a handful of non-Acehese women involved in this program. The lack of female role models may have signaled to female participants that

performance is the realm of men and that their participation in the RAT program was a one-time opportunity to engage in arts performance.

Local NGOs also incorporated the performing arts into trauma recovery activities. The traveling performance troupe, Tikar Pandan, visited remote areas to perform interactive theater pieces that aimed to entertain and educate villagers. Fozan Santa, a co-founder of Tikar Pandan, commented, "Both the viewers and the conflict victims were actively involved in the performance, letting go of all the troubling

issues that had, up to this point, affected their lives."⁹ Another local group, the Traditional Arts and Lectures Organization (Taloe), taught participants specific dances, which were later performed at public events. Although these programs offered a safe environment in which all community members could explore and express feelings of trauma, local NGOs were ultimately limited by their ability to secure long-term funding and to address gendered attitudes towards performance. For Taloe member Mor Murtala, "There is definitely a difference between men and women. Boys usually consider dancing to be women's work, and it is usually very easy to teach girls to dance. However, for children with trauma it was more difficult [to teach] the girls because their activities are usually in the house and it was difficult for them to forget things, and because usually they are not as free as the guys."¹⁰ This comment highlights the need for greater attention to gendered traumas within performance-based trauma recovery activities.

In addition to programs established specifically for purposes of trauma recovery for Acehese conflict or tsunami survivors, creative efforts by individual Acehese performers also may have facilitated healing and recovery. Marzuki Hasan, Agus Nur Amal, and Rafly are well-known Acehese performers who have cre-

ated dance, theater, and musical works, respectively, that aim to reconstruct social memory of the conflict and the tsunami. In his one-man hikayat (traditional story-telling) shows performed on the street, in refugee camps, and in front of mosques, Agus Nur Amal facilitated conversations about military occupation, the tsunami, Acehese elections, and other sensitive topics, defying the kinds of repressive military tactics that Acehese faced during the separatist conflict.¹¹ Amal also encouraged villagers to perform their own hikayat stories; however, few women took advantage of this opportunity. Even though some of the best hikayat performances he has seen were performed by women, Amal observed, “Those who perform hikayat...are all men because men have the courage to perform in public...There are a lot of women who can perform hikayat, but they are too shy to perform in public.”¹²

Acehnese performance can bring community members together in a safe space, strengthen individuals’ sense of cultural identity, and facilitate the expression of grievances, all of which are important for dealing with trauma. Nevertheless, my research suggests that performance-based trauma recovery efforts largely failed to address the gendered nature of traumatic experience and to combat negative social attitudes towards women’s involvement in performance



Pak Uki’s Acehese dance class, Jakarta, Indonesia

activities. As a result, Acehese women and girls may have developed a sense of doubt or anxiety about their participation in public performances, preventing them from taking full advantage of what their performance traditions have to offer, either as a form of recreation or a tool for resisting trauma.

REHEARSAL SPACES

Shifting my research to Acehese communities living in Jakarta, the nation's capital, revealed other ways in which the performing arts can benefit trauma survivors. Jakarta is home to a vibrant Acehese arts community, due in part to the degree of creative experimentation with "tradition" that is permitted in the capital city but discouraged within Aceh, and in part to the large number of Acehese students who have created informal performance groups in an effort to spread awareness about Acehese culture and combat homesickness. Further, Acehese and non-Acehese alike can study Acehese performance at an advanced level at the Jakarta's Arts Institute, taking traditional dance and music classes with Marzuki Hasan (known to many as Pak Uki). My observations of Pak Uki's dance classes and the informal rehearsals of Acehese dance troupes based in Jakarta suggest that Acehese girls and women

can find in rehearsals an alternative space for trauma recovery.

As spaces that invite dancers to practice rather than perform, rehearsals give individuals the opportunity to experiment with different movement combinations, to make mistakes, to socialize, and to joke around. In contrast, performances require individuals to have attained a certain level of skill and to showcase their skills without error for a discriminating audience. My observations suggest that Acehese dance rehearsals can create a nonjudgmental, democratic space in which practitioners strengthen social bonds and experiment freely with creative, physical expression. In this way, Acehese dance rehearsals can alleviate feelings of isolation, distrust, and powerlessness—an important step in the process of resisting trauma.

The freedom to discover new physical movements is particularly significant for Acehese. Within the conservative political environment of Aceh, there are few opportunities for Acehese men to bond in physically intimate ways without being labeled "feminine" or "gay." Acehese women are also confined in the kinds of physical movements that they can perform. Debra Yatim, an Acehese woman's rights activist, poet, and arts enthusiast, believes that syariah law has both diminished Acehese women's confidence in their ability to perform

and restricted their movement vocabularies. Yatim observed, "If you're not fixated with syariah, obviously you can explore your body movements. If you go to Aceh, they're more restrained. For example, sometimes the tempo gets into a crescendo. But [in Aceh] they do not go to that crescendo because it's unseemly. They do not spread their legs, which means you don't explore anything..."¹³

In rehearsal spaces, dancers learn to build friendships and trust their peers, to empathize with one another, and to engage in collective decision-making. They also learn how to let down their guard and to laugh at their mistakes—an attitude that sharply contrasts with the nervousness and anxiety many female Acehese dancers feel before a formal performance. These lessons are particularly useful to Acehese women living in a society that discourages them from sharing their opinions and exploring new physical movements. In addition, Acehese dance rehearsals tend to be gender-segregated, thus offering Acehese girls and women a "safe space" in which to gather together without male scrutiny.

REFLECTIONS ON TRAUMA, GENDER, AND ACEHNESE PERFORMANCE

Acehese performance can facilitate trauma recovery by offering practitioners a means to

represent or reconstruct cultural identity; to develop close friendships and build support networks; to resist conservative political and religious policies; to express feelings of trauma, pain, and suffering through verbal and non-verbal expression; and to gather together in a “safe space” that facilitates collective decision-making. However, funding, resources, and social attitudes can significantly limit the efficacy of performance as a tool for trauma resistance. Although international and local organizations may have sparked participants’ interest in the traditional arts, their workshops were short-lived and did not provide participants with resources to sustain their arts practice. Individuals who wish to pursue performance activities are further disadvantaged by the fact that there are few opportunities to formally study performance in Aceh.

In addition, efforts to incorporate performance into trauma recovery methods must acknowledge the ways in which experiences of trauma in Aceh are informed by individual histories and identities. The conflict, the tsunami, the implementation of syariah law, and societal attitudes toward Acehnese women’s roles as leaders and decision-makers have produced particular experiences of trauma for Acehnese women that may cause them to feel unsafe, unwelcome, or disrespected within public space.

As a result, Acehnese girls and women do not approach performance activities with the same freedom or confidence as Acehnese boys and men.

Finally, the extent to which performers feel anxious about performing in public also must be taken into consideration. The virtual absence of female instructors and performers within NGO-initiated trauma recovery programs may have conveyed to Acehnese girls and women that performance is, or should be, a male-dominated space. Further, prevailing social attitudes that discourage women from pursuing professional dance and theater opportunities may cause Acehnese girls and women to feel uncomfortable in performance activities and prevent them from seeking performance for future healing needs. With greater financial support for formal and, especially, informal arts activities, greater social acceptance of women’s participation in performance practices, and a heightened awareness of gendered experiences of trauma and trauma recovery, Acehnese traditional performance will be most effective as a mechanism for resisting both large-scale, recognizable forms of trauma and less visible, “everyday” traumatic experiences.

NOTES

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5. Lesley McCulloch, *Aceh: Then and Now* (London, UK: Minority Rights Group International, 2005), 20.
6. Rhona MacDonald, “How Women were Affected by the Tsunami,” *PLoS Medicine*, 2:6 (June 2005): 0474-0475.
7. McCulloch, *Aceh: Then and Now*, 57.
8. Yusrizal Ibrahim, “Elly Zuarni: Meniti Seni di Tengah Bada Aceh,” *Journal of Indonesian Performing Arts* 12(2003-2004), 161-62.
9. Fozan Santa, email message to author, October 11, 2009.
10. Mor Murtala, email message to author, May 16, 2010.
11. Iwan Amir, “Sing, Adapt, Persevere: Dynamic of the Tradition Vocal Performance in the Islamic Region of Aceh from the Late 19th to the Early 21st Century” (PhD diss. Monash University School of Music, Melbourne, 2006), 193.
12. Agus Nur Amal, interview with author, Jakarta, Indonesia, April 20, 2010.
13. Debra Yatim, interview with author, Jakarta, Indonesia, May 12, 2010.

Annie Fehrenbacher is a doctoral student in the Department of Community Health Sciences at the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health. She received a CSW Travel Grant to present this research at the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting in Washington, DC, in 2011. Annie is the co-founder of the UCLA Anti-Trafficking and Human Rights Coalition, a student group that trains graduate students to conduct health literacy programs at a local trafficking shelter.

First, do no harm

DESIGNING A MODEL OF TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE FOR SURVIVORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY



Garment workers from El Monte sweatshop. Photo by Rick Meyers, Los Angeles Times

BY ANNIE FEHRENBACHER

ON AUGUST 2, 1995, a police task force led by the California Department of Industrial Relations raided a compound surrounded by razor wire in El Monte, California.¹ Inside the compound, the police discovered 72 Thai garment workers who had been forced to work 18-hour days for less than \$2 an hour.² The workers had been held in debt bondage for more than eight years, sewing tirelessly to pay off the cost of their journey to the United States.³

In the aftermath of the raid, images of the El Monte sweatshop drew international attention and began to galvanize a modern anti-human trafficking movement. Within a few years, human



Apartment building in El Monte where 72 Thai workers were held for 8 years.

trafficking became a priority for governments and human rights organizations alike. In 2000, the U.S. passed the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act (also known as the Trafficking Victims Protection Act or TVPA),

the first piece of federal legislation to provide visa benefits for victims of human trafficking.⁴ That same year, the United Nations amended the Convention on Transnational Organized Crime to include the Protocol to Prevent, Sup-

press and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.⁵ The UN Protocol was the first global legally-binding instrument with an agreed upon definition of “trafficking in persons” although trafficking remains a

highly contested term among scholars. According to the UN Protocol, “trafficking in persons” shall mean:

*The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.*⁵

Locally, the El Monte case prompted community activists in Los Angeles to form a working group to aid the Thai workers leading to the creation of the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST) in 1998.⁶ CAST was the first social service organization in the United States dedicated exclusively to providing case management and legal advocacy to survivors of human trafficking. Today, CAST is a human rights organization that has been internationally recognized for its dedication to identifying trafficking survivors, educating the community about trafficking, and providing direct services to survivors.⁶

Since its founding, CAST has expanded its services to the operation of a shelter for traf-

ficked persons and the establishment of community partnerships with the Venice Family Clinic and Saban Free Clinic to provide primary care for survivors of trafficking.⁶ Between 2005 and 2011, Dr. Susie Baldwin, Chief of Health Assessment and Epidemiology at the Los Angeles Department of Public Health, worked as a volunteer physician to see eight to twelve trafficking survivors per month who were referred to Saban by CAST.⁷ Unfortunately, because of budget cuts during the recession, the trafficking clinic at Saban ended in January 2012 and has yet to find a new site. This article details my work with Dr. Baldwin at the Saban Free Clinic to document the social and occupational histories of trafficking patients between 2010 and 2012. Our effort to create a collection of case studies regarding the experiences of individuals in post-trafficking health care settings led to the development of a model of trauma-informed care to educate medical personnel providing services to trafficked persons.

Due to the diversity and specialized needs of her patient population, Dr. Baldwin felt it imperative that Saban staff receive training on trafficking and trauma-informed care.⁸ Tracking and referral systems needed to be improved to ensure that trafficking survivors had access to a comprehensive continuum of health services to aid them on their path to

recovery.⁹ Together we sought to identify gaps in health care delivery for trafficking survivors in Los Angeles as well as propose solutions to improve the efficiency and cultural competency of health systems providing care to patients with a history of trauma. Patient characteristics and case studies discussed here were drawn from key informant interviews and experiences recorded during medical appointments at Saban.¹⁰ (Names have been changed to protect the safety and confidentiality of the patients.)

CHARACTERISTICS OF TRAFFICKING PATIENTS

The trafficking patients seen at Saban were diverse in age, gender, national origin, language, and trafficking experience. Patients came from all continents except Australia and Antarctica, and ranged in age from late teens to 66 years of age. A large majority of the patients were immigrants, although persons born in the U.S. who had been trafficked within and outside of the country were also seen. The majority of patients were women; however, the gender distribution was less skewed than often purported in the academic literature, in which trafficking is frequently described as a form of gender-based violence.¹¹ Most patients spoke either English or Spanish—both of which are spoken

by Dr. Baldwin—but interpreters were used in appointments for patients speaking Russian, Korean, Mandarin, Tagalog, and American Sign Language, among other languages.^{6,12}

The forms of trafficking experienced by our patients differed widely, with the most common form being domestic servitude. The types of abuse experienced tended not to be exclusively correlated with a specific type of labor exploitation. For example, sexual abuse was not necessarily more likely among commercial sex workers versus those who worked as nannies, maids, or home health aides.¹³ This observation was particularly important to document to dispel the myth that sex trafficking is inherently more severe or traumatic than other forms of labor exploitation. Assumptions about patients based on the type of trafficking experienced may cause medical staff to overlook or mischaracterize the needs of patients, leading to substandard care.

Our patients experienced varying levels of control and mobility while in a situation of trafficking. Few were forcibly held against their will, but many were subjected to coercion and threats that made them feel psychologically trapped despite no physical barriers. Some lived with their traffickers for several years, while others left or were removed by force, through actions such as police raids, in less than a year.

The health outcomes and barriers to care experienced by our patients often resembled those of other marginalized groups, such as undocumented migrants, exploited low-wage workers, victims of sexual or domestic violence, and survivors of torture.¹⁴ The health statuses of our patients were highly variable and unique to their lived experiences, though some patterns in symptomology were common between patients. Somatization related to past trauma was frequently reported by patients for whom no physical diagnosis could account for symptoms such as phantom pain, dizziness, or incessant nausea.¹³ Although psycho-somatic responses to trauma may have been a shared experience among our patients, the physical expression of the “hurt” and each patient’s interpretation of its causes and consequences were culturally dependent.¹⁵ As a result, Dr. Baldwin could not rely strictly on allopathic medical techniques, which were often ineffective for diagnosing and treating trafficking survivors.¹⁶ Additionally, many had lived far from home for several years and had limited knowledge of their family histories. A reliance on routine medical histories proved insufficient for documenting the experiences of our patients who often revealed crucial details about their health through informal conversations about their social and occupational experiences, rather

than through questions directly posed to them concerning health conditions or symptoms.

After leaving a trafficking situation, patients’ feelings toward their pasts and their traffickers were as varied as the experiences themselves. It was not uncommon for patients to express feelings of remorse or regret for leaving their traffickers.¹⁷ Some expressed that they loved their traffickers or had romantic connections to someone involved in their trafficking. On the other hand, some wished never to speak of or see their traffickers again. Several returned to their traffickers when faced with a hostile economic and social climate towards immigrants in the U.S., while others unknowingly found themselves in exploitative working conditions once again due to limited job opportunities. Finally, some patients in re-trafficking situations understood that they were being exploited but felt compelled to stay for economic reasons, out of loyalty, or because they felt that they were receiving some justifiable benefit.

Many of our patients revealed details of wage theft or new exploitative working and living conditions during their appointments (*see sidebar on page 20 for Maricel’s story*). Although the patients referred by CAST to Saban were presumed to be “free” of their traffickers, many found themselves in situations that mirrored their initial experiences of trafficking. For

CASE STUDY: MARICEL

Maricel is a woman in her fifties who was trafficked from Asia along with many other people from her home country to work in a healthcare facility in Los Angeles. She and the others were eventually discovered and referred to CAST for shelter and rehabilitative services. Maricel received a temporary visa to stay in the United States and find other employment. She eventually found work as an in-home aide providing assistance for an elderly man who was homebound. Maricel was referred to Saban to receive primary care with Dr. Baldwin.

During a follow-up appointment in spring 2010, Dr. Baldwin asked Maricel about her current job. Maricel commented that she was happy working for the man, but she needed to talk to him about getting paid. “How long as it been since you’ve been paid?” Dr. Baldwin asked. “He’s never paid me!” Maricel replied. “How long have you been working for him?” “I’ve been with him for two years, and he’s never paid me.” During this same appointment, Maricel reported excitedly that she had recently finished school to receive her certification as a nurse’s assistant indicating her ability and qualification to obtain stable employment. Nonetheless, she said she didn’t want to leave because her employer needed her and wouldn’t have anyone to take care of him if she were to leave. He had also been providing her with housing in exchange for her free around-the-clock labor. Maricel felt obligated to stay because of the emotional bond she had formed with her employer and a lack of other viable housing options.

many of these patients, Dr. Baldwin was one of the most trusted advocates in their day-to-day lives, so it was crucial that resources for occupational and social services be made available in the clinical setting.^{13,18}

TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

Despite the progress made by CAST and Saban over the last decade, several social and structural barriers to care limit trafficking survivors in Los Angeles County from attaining a high standard of health. Patient referrals between CAST, Saban, and other safety-net providers were often lost due to staff shortages and the lack of a tracking system to monitor patient progress.¹² Patients routinely missed medical appointments if they were not accompanied by a CAST employee, particularly in the case of first appointments at Saban. Additionally, many patients traveled several hours through multiple means of public transportation just to see a doctor, and they were frequently turned away if they arrived late for an appointment. Finally, some patients preferred complementary and alternative medicine, acupuncture, and mental health services but had trouble finding services that were linguistically, culturally, and financially accessible for them.¹² As a result of these factors, our patients frequently fell between the cracks of the health care and social service system in Los Angeles.

In addition to problems in physical, geographic, and financial access, our patients often faced major psychosocial barriers to obtaining needed medical services. Although the health-care system is meant to aid survivors on their path to recovery and reintegration, many of our patients experienced anxiety in medical settings. Some viewed medical examinations and procedures as invasive or reminiscent of past abuses, such as torture or persistent physical or sexual abuse.¹⁹ Some were uneasy waiting in a room full of people they did not know and trust, while others feared that practitioners would force them to divulge details about their trafficking situations or would not believe their stories.²⁰ Patients were particularly reluctant to attend referral appointments at other health-care facilities after becoming emotionally invested in their relationship with Dr. Baldwin.²¹

Clinical staff lacked training on trauma-informed care which focuses on creating a healing environment from the front desk and the waiting room, to the intake area and the doctor's office, and all the way out the door to the pharmacy.²² Several studies have indicated that within a given clinic waiting room, a significant proportion of patients may have a history of abuse or trauma which may or may not be documented in their medical records.²³ A study conducted by researchers at UCLA and RAND

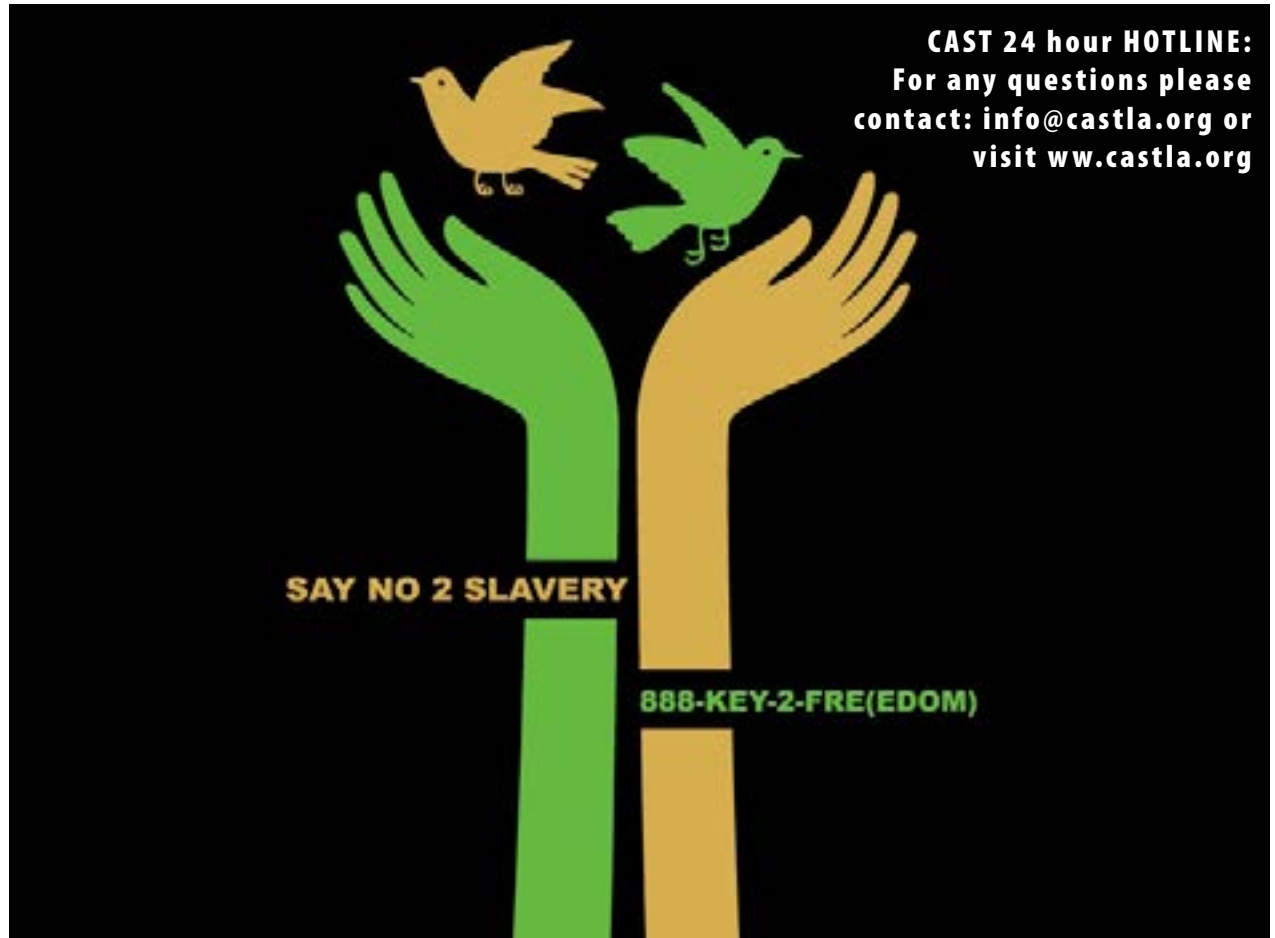




CAST potluck with staff, volunteers, and clients/residents

found that 54% of adult Latino primary care patients reported history of political violence in their home countries, of which 8% reported torture.²⁴ Since the Saban patient population mirrors the study population, it is likely that many patients beyond those seen by Dr. Baldwin may also have experienced traumatic life events.²⁵ As a result, it is crucial that all patients be treated with a level of sensitivity and respect that may not be afforded to them in other aspects of their lives. The clinic should be a place of respite and restoration for patients, not a reminder of the hardships or abuse that may contribute to their need for care.

When a health services organization implements a trauma-informed model of care, every aspect of the management, training, and service delivery must be assessed and modified to incorporate an understanding of how trauma affects the health of individuals seeking services.²⁶ A skilled and compassionate provider can create a comforting environment recognizing the ways in which past traumas may influence patients' behaviors and perceptions of their bodies. However, training on trauma-informed care must incorporate all clinical staff that interact with a patient, including clerical workers, medical assistants, and phlebotomists. Even a brief callous remark or judgmental stare at the front desk can change the course of a patients'



recovery or care, particularly if that patient decides not to return for follow-up as a result of perceived mistreatment.²⁹

Creating a clinical environment in which human trafficking survivors felt safe and respected was crucial to ensuring successful recovery and reintegration of our patients. By viewing the recovery process as a partnership between patient and doctor, we hoped to instill a sense of empowerment in our patients rather

than propagating the perception that patients are merely passive recipients of care. Our work at Saban aimed to create conditions in the health care setting that validated the experiences of each patient and helped them feel a sense of dignity and ownership of their bodies.²⁷

Credits; All photos courtesy of CAST except photo on page 16, which is courtesy of the Los Angeles Times.

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7 Myths about Undocumented Immigration

BY CAITLIN PATLER



Carlos Amador with the author at Dream Act hunger strike in 2010.

I have spent the last 13 years working with undocumented communities in Los Angeles and have witnessed, time and time again, how the ripple effects of living without formal immigration status can tear apart the lives of some of the people I hold dearest. And so part of my personal, professional and political life's work has been to fight alongside undocumented folks in the struggle to gain rights, recognition, and respect.

Immigration—especially undocumented immigration—is a loaded topic in this country. The President is talking about it, Members of Congress are debating about it, pundits are complaining about it, and everybody has an opinion about it. However, as I have engaged in

this work over the past decade, I have met hundreds of people who are confused and/or misinformed about undocumented immigration, in large part due to negative representations of immigrants in the media. This article attempts to address some of the most common misconceptions about undocumented immigration.¹

MYTH #1: It's OK to use the i-word

As a sociologist, I am taught to think about the *structural* and *social* conditions that impact our lives, and one important way that structural inequality impacts individuals and communities is through language. I'm sure you can think of several examples of words (especially those used to describe individuals with limited access to



March for immigrant rights

power or resources) that are discriminatory and dehumanizing. The term “illegal(s)” is racist, promotes hate, and is also factually inaccurate.² *Colorlines* and the Applied Research Center launched a campaign to encourage journalists, academics, and others to eliminate the i-word from their vocabulary. I encourage all people (academics, journalists, parents, clergy, teachers, humans) to drop the term and to instead use words that are more factually accurate and promote dignity. Many academics, for instance, choose “undocumented” or “unauthorized.”

Myth #2: My family came the right way so those people should just get in line

Unfortunately, for most would-be immigrants, there simply is no such “line” for immigration. Current immigration policy allows three main paths of entry to the U.S.: through direct family ties, skilled employment, and humanitarian considerations: in other words, through blood, sweat, or tears.³ While the first category is sensible and relies on a principle of family reunification, the second category is simply out of sync with the realities of the labor market.

First of all, employment visas are generally only available for skilled jobs—that is, software developers in Silicon Valley or company executives who can invest over \$1 million into their firms. Not surprisingly, most people do not meet the criteria for such jobs. In fact, only 10,000 visas per year are allocated to jobs considered ‘unskilled.’⁴ Yet, 94% of undocumented men between the ages of 18 and 64 had jobs as of 2004, and most were in low-skilled industries.⁵ Talk about a mismatch between policy and reality!

A population of over 11 million undocumented people (roughly one-third of the entire foreign-born population)⁶ does not emerge because of an impatience to “wait in line.” Rather, the source for such disproportion is *policy failure*. Congress needs to reexamine its admissions criteria so that it more accurately reflects the needs of the country (and its immigrants).

Myth #3: Undocumented immigrants are, by and large, Mexican men

Undocumented immigrants are an incredibly diverse group, yet they are not often presented as such. This myth is fueled by stereotypical media representations of undocumented immigrants as Mexican men working in “unskilled” jobs. This falsely uniform image is worth dissecting piece-by-piece.



RACE & NATIONALITY: The Pew Hispanic Center reports that undocumented immigrants hail from all over the world: Mexico (representing 58% of undocumented immigrants, or 6.5 million), other nations in Latin America (23%, or 2.6 million), Asia (11%, or 1.3 million), Europe and Canada (4%, or 500,000), and African and other nations (3%, or 400,000).⁷

SETTLEMENT TRENDS: While California, Texas, Florida, and New York have been traditional destinations for undocumented immigrants,

undocumented families now live and work in every state in the nation.⁸ In addition, while some undocumented immigrants have been in the country only a short time, many have lived here for decades. Professor Veronica Terriquez and I conducted a survey of undocumented students (aged 18–30) across California and found that the vast majority of respondents had been in the U.S. for over a decade: 85% came to the U.S. before the age of 12, with 54% arriving before the age of 6.⁹

GENDER AND FAMILIES: The Urban Institute reported that in 2004, females made up 42% of undocumented immigrants nationwide (and 47% in California and Los Angeles). In addition, “1-in-10 California residents lived in an unauthorized family—i.e., a family where either the head or spouse is an unauthorized immigrant—compared with 1-in-20 nationally.... In Los Angeles, 14% of all residents lived in unauthorized families.”¹⁰ This means that immigration is not only about the individual; entire families are impacted by undocumented status. In many cases, citizens, legal residents, and undocumented immigrants can all live in one household. Yet, U.S. citizen children (as minors), have virtually no legal rights to petition for their undocumented parents to stay in the country. As a result, the threat of deporta-

tion creates real fear and trauma in the lives of undocumented immigrant families.¹¹

SEXUALITY: Many undocumented immigrants do not identify as heterosexual or straight. However, U.S. immigration laws only acknowledge certain types of heteronormative relationships in determining immigration benefits: namely, immigration laws do not allow gay couples to petition for immigration benefits. Although recent case law has granted some rights to transgender couples, it has still upheld the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), maintaining that marriage is between one man and one woman.¹² However, queer undocumented immigrants (and those who love them) may have more equal access to marriage rights in 2013 when the Supreme Court hears a case challenging DOMA.

In the meantime, groups of queer and undocumented activists have been working hard to educate and organize the community about the double discrimination they face. For example, the UCLA Downtown Labor Center’s Dream Resource Center has launched a program to “address the intersectional experiences of LGBTQ immigrant youth [who] have distinctive experiences as a part of two politically controversial and socially stigmatized communities.”¹³ This issue took center stage in June

2011 when Pulitzer Prize–winning journalist Jose Antonio Vargas came out as undocumented and gay in the *New York Times* magazine and subsequently in *Time* magazine.¹⁴

Myth #4: Border Enforcement Works

Annual apprehensions by the U.S. Border Patrol, which was created in 1924, peaked in 2000, with nearly 1.7 million arrests.¹⁵ By 2011, Border Patrol arrest figures had dropped to just over 340,000. This drop is likely correlated with the economic downturn in the U.S., as well as sharp declines in circular migration patterns. In addition, Operations Gatekeeper and Hold-the-Line have pushed migration into more and more treacherous terrain.

Although arrest rates have decreased over the past decade, death rates along the border have actually increased, *by a factor of thirty*.¹⁶ Indeed, it is estimated that over 5,600 people have died along the border since 1998—and the remains of thousands more are simply never found.¹⁷ Common causes of death along the border are dehydration, hyperthermia, and hypothermia.¹⁸ During recent volunteer work along the U.S.-Mexico border, I encountered several migrants who had not had any food or clean water for up to 6 days.

Abuse of migrants by Border Patrol agents is also far too common along the border and in



Altar for unknown dead found along U.S.-Mexico border



detention centers. The Tucson-based humanitarian organization No More Deaths recently released a report documenting 30,000 incidences of abuse.¹⁹ Among other findings, the report documents the Border Patrol's systematic denial of water to detainees, in particular to children. Physical abuse by Border Patrol agents was also reported in 10% of cases.

Policy changes in the past twenty years have curtailed many due process rights for undocumented immigrants, especially those who are arrested at the border. These laws have

allowed for the expedited removal of non-citizens (essentially deportation without trial). They have also allowed for measures such as Operation Streamline, which brings federal criminal charges to nearly everyone caught crossing the border. I recently observed Operation Streamline proceedings in a Tucson federal courtroom. Under this policy, seventy people each day are charged and tried at once. The defendants are shackled from the ankles to the waist to the wrists and forced to answer in unison (via simultaneous translation) to an immigration judge at the head of the courtroom. Overcrowding is such that some defendants must sit in what would normally be the jury box. In many cases, defendants are ordered to serve time in jail. Perhaps not surprisingly, many immigration detention centers are run by for-profit corporations who stand to gain from each jailed individual.²⁰

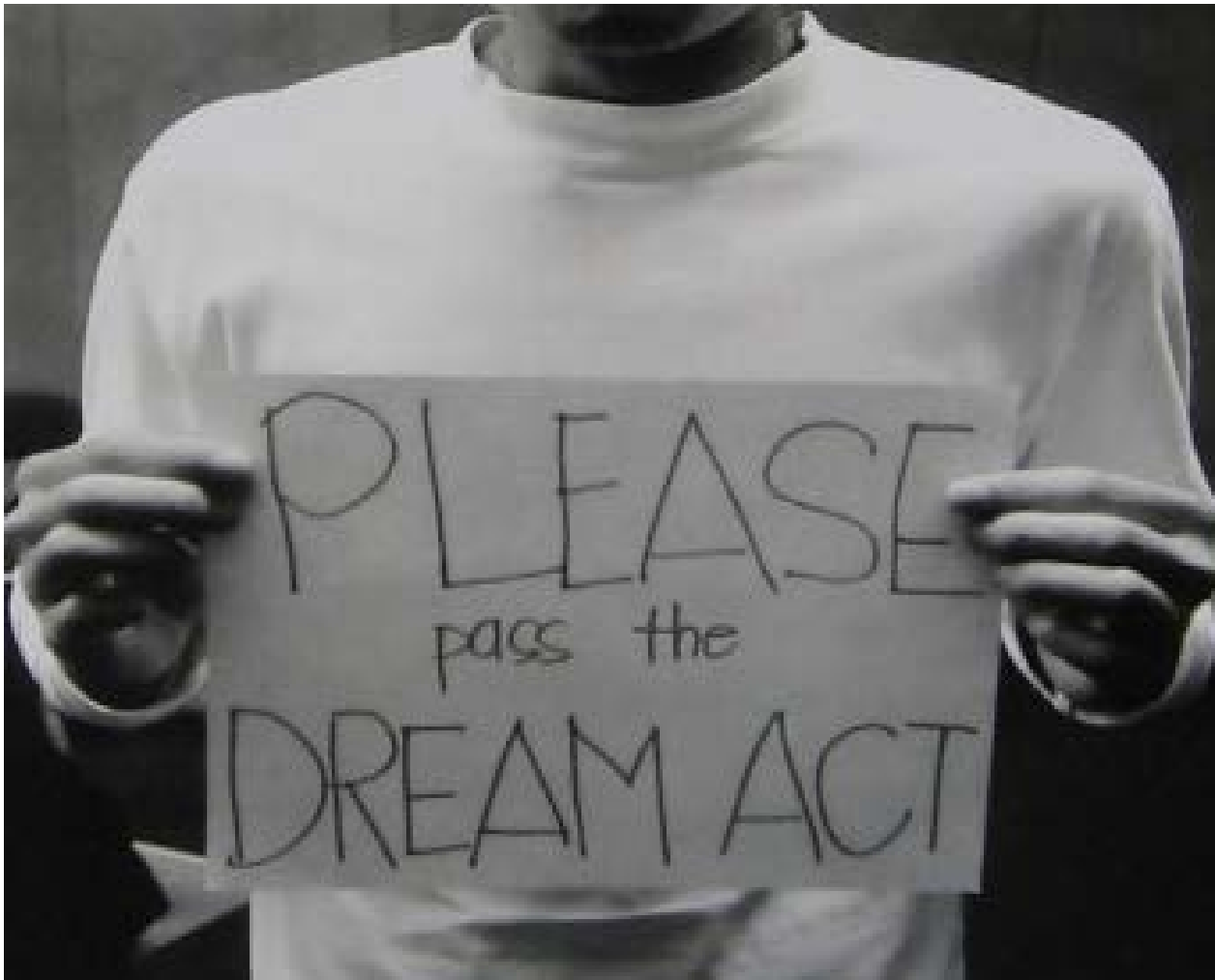
Myth #5: Undocumented immigrants don't have rights

As I have shown, while there is no doubt that living in a precarious legal status causes serious challenges, it is also important to point out that undocumented immigrants do have access to some rights, particularly in the realms of education and labor law. Undocumented immigrants are also leading struggles around the

country to increase access to rights, citizenship, and freedom from discrimination.

EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS: *Plyler v. Doe* was a 1982 Supreme Court case that ruled that K-12 school districts cannot limit access to education for undocumented children. In most states, undocumented immigrants are also able to attend colleges and universities, though state laws determine their level of access to tuition benefits and financial aid. On one hand, states like Georgia and South Carolina have passed policies banning universities from enrolling undocumented youth. On the other hand, 13 states have passed legislation allowing undocumented students to pay in-state tuition rates at public colleges and universities, though these laws do not provide access to financial aid. California's Assembly Bill 540 (A.B. 540), signed into law in 2001, is an example of such a policy. However, though in-state tuition lowers costs, most undocumented youth still cannot afford college.²¹ Two states (California and Illinois) passed legislation in 2011 allowing undocumented students access to certain types of financial aid.

LABOR RIGHTS: Undocumented immigrant workers are able to access most (though not all) labor law protections, including wage and



hour, health and safety, and equal protections laws. These protections are critical, given that undocumented workers tend only to have access to jobs that are wrought with labor law violations.* However, especially in unregu-

* Bernhardt, Annette, Ruth Milkman, Nik Theodore, Douglas Heckathorn, Mirabai Auer, James DeFilippis, Ana Luz González, Victor Narro, Jason Perelshteyn, Diana Polson, and Michael Spiller. 2009. "Broken Laws, Unprotected Workers: Violations of Employment and Labor Laws in America's Cities." Center for Urban Economic Development, National Employment Law Project, UCLA Institute for Research on Labor and Employment.

lated or under-regulated industries, asserting these rights becomes very difficult. My master's thesis focused on the extent to which workers in low-wage industries were able to assert their rights. I found that although most workers reported making verbal complaints to employers and co-workers about workplace conditions, few had taken any formal action. Undocumented workers regularly reported "putting

up with" bad working conditions because they were afraid of the potential immigration consequences of reporting violations. Employers know and exploit this fear.

Myth #6: Obama's New Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy is the DREAM Act

In June 2012, President Obama announced that his administration would de-prioritize the deportation of certain undocumented youth and young adults who came to the U.S. as children, attended school here, have no criminal record, and meet other criteria.* These youth would be granted temporary permission to remain in the U.S., which allows them to apply for a work permit. However, DACA is *not* an amnesty or a permanent legalization program. In contrast, the DREAM Act and other more comprehensive legislation would not only provide access to education and employment but also a path to citizenship.

Myth #7: This issue is too big, there's nothing I can do about it

Archbishop Desmond Tutu once said: "We think of ourselves far too frequently as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the

* For more on DACA eligibility, see: <http://nilc.org/FAQdeferredactionyouth.html>

whole World. When you do well, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity.” With the words of this extraordinary freedom fighter in mind, I encourage you to go out and work toward a vision of a more just and humane world. If you’re upset about the way that immigrants are portrayed and treated in this country, you can join forces with a growing movement for immigrant rights. There are many organizations in Southern California fighting for immigrant rights—Dream Team L.A., Orange County Dream Team, the California Dream Network, and the Immigrant Youth Coalition are just a few. Remember that it is also a myth that undocumented immigrants are powerless and need citizens to fight *for* them—they aren’t and they don’t. Rather, they need citizens to fight *with* them. Get involved! In the words of Arundhati Roy: “another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.”

NOTES

1. In June 2012, my friend and colleague, Professor Roberto Gonzales of the University of Chicago, wrote an excellent piece in the *Washington Post* entitled “Five myths about the Dream generation” to address the false stereotypes that exist about undocumented youth. I add to his list here.
2. <http://colorlines.com/droptheword/resources/en/toolkit.html>
3. For more thoughtful scholarship on admissions category

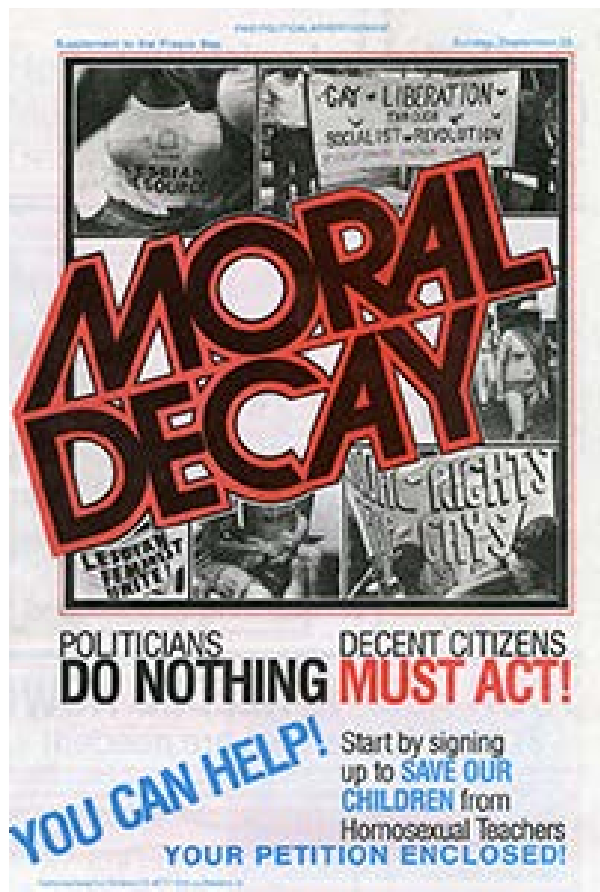
ries, see Sarah Morando’s article “Gendered Recourse in Humanitarian Paths to Citizenship” in the June 2011 CSW Newsletter: http://www.csw.ucla.edu/publications/newsletters/2010-2011/article-pdfs/Jun11_Morando.pdf.

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8. See Passel and Cohn 2011, Appendix Table A3
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18. For a thoughtfully written account of the tragedy at the U.S.-Mexico border, I recommend *The Devil’s Highway* by Luis Alberto Urrea.
19. No More Deaths/No Más Muertes. 2011. “A Culture of Cruelty: Abuse and Impunity in Short-Term U.S. Border Patrol Custody.” (<http://nomoredeaths.org/cultureofcruelty.html>)
20. For more on the links between Operation Streamline and for-profit prisons, see: <http://www.justicestrategies.org/publications/2012/private-operated-federal-prisons-immigrants-expensive-unsafe-unnecessary>
21. See Terriquez and Patler 2012 for some of the economic challenges undocumented students face.

LESBIAN SCHOOLWORKER RECORDS

IN 1978, Proposition 6 was presented on the California State ballot. This initiative, proposed by conservative legislator John Briggs as well as California Defend Our Children (CDOC), and later nicknamed the Briggs Initiative, rallied to ban gays and lesbians from teaching within the public school system. This later extended to possibly include any supporters of gays or lesbians as 'advocates of homosexuality.' A CDOC pamphlet in circulation at the time argued that the purpose of the initiative would not deny gays or lesbians their human rights, but instead "protect the rights of innocent children from people who choose their position as a teacher," maintaining that "there is no inherent right for an individual to hold a teaching job."





One of the first (and smallest) collections I processed was the Lesbian Schoolworkers Records, which contained information regarding its organizational history, principles of unity and structure, press releases, newsletters, flyers,

paste-ups, and photographs. With a commitment to “fighting racism, sexism, class and oppression within our own movement and this society,” the Lesbian Schoolworkers organized in 1977 to defeat the Briggs Initiatives,

Propositions 6 and 7. While this organization was among the many to rally against the anti-lesbian and gay bill, it was uniquely also actively campaigned against the anti-lesbian and pro-death penalty laws, and sought identify the



relationship between Third World oppression and the oppression of all lesbians. Throughout the election fight, the Schoolworkers emphasized that the struggle against Proposition 6 was not a single campaign issue or just a fight for civil rights, but instead, “that we are all suffering at the hands of a common enemy.”

Comprised of a core group of twenty, and over seventy participants, the Schoolworkers planned educational activities, sponsored cultural events, and produced leaflets and newsletters aimed at defeating the legislation and educating voters. Representatives often went before various civic groups, councils and educational organizations

to speak against the measures, and were notorious for their slideshow, “Don’t Let It Happen Here.” Designed to inform others of the dangers of the Briggs Initiatives, the slideshow drew together such crucial struggles as abortion, death penalty, and of course, women and lesbian oppression. Amber Hollibaugh, political activist from San Francisco, traveled throughout small but crucial Northern California towns presenting the slideshow and participating in public debates.

Within this collection there is also information about both pro and anti-Briggs organizations; a San Francisco Board of Education study on the possibility of including “gay lifestyle” into school curriculum on family and health studies; and a Oregon State Task Force of 1977 report, which collected “information on homosexual men and women in Oregon in order to make recommendations on legislation and administrative policies that would ensure the civil rights of all Oregonians.”

In end, the Briggs Initiative failed miserably, even after first receiving overwhelming support. With the help

from Harvey Milk, public opinion was soon swayed; groups seen as traditionally heterosexual, such as the trade union movement, the teachers’ associations and unions, child-care workers, health-care workers, and even churches, largely opposed Proposition 6 in end. While the defeat of the Briggs’ Initiative did not solve the discrimination of California’s gay and lesbian citizens, it did for the first time—as explained by Hollibaugh in a 1979 interview—“expose sexual dynamics as central in this society” by discussing homophobia as an intrusion of basic human rights.

—Kimberlee Granholm

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—Rylan Ross

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