



CONTACT
THE
HUMAN
RIGHTS
INSTITUTE



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DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

The Human Rights Institute continued to grow in 2021, despite the ongoing conditions of the pandemic which limited our in-person activities. In conjunction with the Kaschak Institute for Social Justice for Women and Girls, we hosted the President of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Judge Elizabeth Odio Benito, for her terrific talk on “My Experiences as a Judge on Three International Tribunals.” The talk drew over 600 participants and was broadcast simultaneously in Spanish and English. Transcripts are available on our website.

We launched our Human Rights Lab to foster public-facing and applied research. Support from the Research Division allowed us to add Stephen Perez, a terrific Graduate Assistant, to our team, and with Stephen’s help we started work in the Lab on the Far-Right Composite project to understand and publicly disseminate links between online and local far-right movements, the January 6th Capitol Riots, and New York State. Other Lab projects include work on Forced Labor in the Supply Chain with Dr. Laura T. Murphy of our partner institution, the Helena Kennedy Centre for International Justice at Sheffield Hallam University; and on coding survivor and perpetrator testimony on the human rights abuses at the Guantanamo Bay military prison in the War on Terror. We aim to release our first Human Rights Lab reports on these initiatives in 2022.

We welcomed many new faculty affiliates from across the university to the HRI. Faculty in our regular working groups continued to advance innovative, transdisciplinary initiatives to address issues ranging from food justice to the exploitations of capital to human trafficking and beyond. Members drawn from across different colleges and departments employed diverse methodologies, ranging from literary and cultural theory to data analysis, to develop academic and applied research. Our first institute-developed book project, *Technologies of Human Rights Representation*, edited by HRI co-director Moore and James Dawes, went to press.

We also grew our student-centered offerings with the approval of a new course as a gateway to the minor (to be offered for the first time in the 2022-2023 academic year) and multiple summer and semester-long human rights internship opportunities. As the Human Rights minor graduates its first students, we’re excited to see what they do next!

The Human Rights Institute sponsored or co-sponsored eleven events in 2021. Our *Passion into Work* series aimed to show students the diverse paths to feminist social justice-oriented careers, while events such as *Academic Publishing in a Time of Transition* promoted and supported faculty research.

We completed our move to our new space on the third floor of Academic A and look forward to hosting more in-person events this coming year.



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WORKING GROUPS

Technology and Human Rights: HRI's first working group began with a SUNY Conversations in the Discipline grant and conference on Technologies of Human Rights Representation. That successful conference in spring 2019 led to the development of an edited collection on the same theme. In 2021, the group completed its work with the submission of the book manuscript, *Technologies of Human Rights Representation*, edited by Moore and James Dawes, to SUNY Press's Studies in Human Rights book series. It includes the work of BU faculty members David Cingranelli (Political Science), Mikhail Filippov (Political Science), Elizabeth DiGangi (Anthropology), and Alexandra Moore (English) as well as faculty in law, criminology, women's and gender studies, and the humanities from the U.S., Canada, Ireland, Norway, and England.

Capitalism and Human Rights: Project leaders Diren Valayden and Jakob Feinig (both from Human Development) received a Citizenship, Rights, and Cultural Belonging Transdisciplinary Area of Excellence seed grant to develop and host a workshop at the end of spring semester on the Humanization of Money:

Because of its constitutive character, money is at the center of dehumanization processes but also the potential humanization of society. Recent neochartalist scholarship has revised our concepts and histories of racial exclusion, primitive accumulation, and colonial expansion. By lifting the veil over how money constitutes and organizes social relations, neo-chartalism deepens the understanding of dehumanization, understood as a situation in which people are denied the right to participate in defining who they can be in the world, when they are locked in place by custom, material arrangements, and law. Taking these transdisciplinary advances as a starting point, we ask: What would it mean to humanize money? We draw on theorists of humanization who define it as that which occurs when the dehumanized begin to collectively grasp their world-in-common and emerge as historical agents who remake it.

The project leaders have a forthcoming article, "Humanization as Money: Antiracism, the Job Guarantee, and the Promise of Neochartalism," developed from the workshop.

Cultural Representations of Human Rights: The project leader embarked on a new initiative with students and colleagues at Binghamton University focused on the testimony and artwork of Moath al-Alwi, who has been detained at Guantánamo without charge for two decades. The work includes Mr. al-Alwi's writing; inviting contributors to consider his work and testimony in multiple disciplinary and artistic contexts; and writing a book proposal for an edited collection. The book, *Deaf Walls Speak*, is under contract at Palgrave Macmillan. The project leader has also edited a dossier on the cultural production from and of Guantánamo. This is an invited contribution at *Humanity*, a transdisciplinary journal published by the University of Pennsylvania Press, and is forthcoming.

WORKING GROUPS

Carceral States: The pandemic hindered follow-up activities to the bi-national reading group on Racialized Policing held in fall 2020. However, conversations amongst participants continue, and two BU faculty members are developing a conference and possible book project that builds on the reading group discussions.

Food Justice Working Group: 2021 highlights include: meetings of subgroups (New York State Food Policy; Campus Food Security; Food Justice Reading Group on Research and Data Analysis; and Curriculum Development & Pedagogies around Food Justice); organizing a speakers' series at the nexus of food, racial, and environmental justice; conference presentations; grant writing and submission; participation on local and regional food policy coalitions; course-based community-engaged learning and research experiences; and established relationships with local Indigenous community members. Members of this working group also participated in the following conferences:

- “Just Food because it is Never Just Food.” 2021 Joint Annual Conference. Association for the Study of Food and Society (ASFS); Agriculture, Food & Human Values Society (AFHVS); Canadian Association for Food Studies (CAFS); The Society for the Anthropology of Food and Nutrition (SAFN). June 9-15. (Various Food Justice Working Group participants)
- “Let Us Dream: Ensuring Equity and Access for All.” 2021 Virtual Conference. November 19.
- Social Justice Panel: Supporting Food Justice and Immigration Rights (Organized by Brenton, Moderated by Imbruce)

Human Trafficking Data Project: Project leaders continue to meet regularly as they wait for the data they requested through the FOIA process. In the meantime, project leaders are preparing a paper based on the data they hope to receive. This paper will examine the unique research opportunities afforded by U.S. T-visas for scholars of trafficking.

HUMAN RIGHTS LAB

Our new initiative in 2021 was the launch of our Human Rights Lab to promote public facing and applied human rights research. We have three projects underway in the Human Rights Lab:

Far Right Composite

This project studies far-right social movements and monitoring agencies in the U.S. with a specific focus on the January 6 Capitol riots, the links between rioters and New York State, and our current moment (2020-2024). With undergraduate and graduate research assistants, we have embarked on two facets of the project.

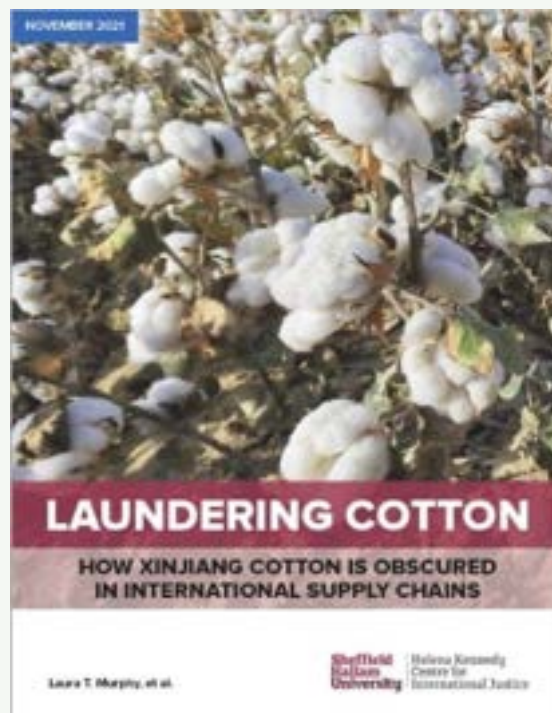
The first track, by way of an analysis of court records, has sketched the profiles of New York state-based Jan. 6 Capitol rioters. The goal is to create a political geography of Jan. 6 participants so as to identify the socio-political context that could explain why those present at the Capitol participated in a riot and attempted coup. Our aim is to determine how other political conflicts over race, gender, sexuality, class, COVID-denialism, etc. are shaping anti-democratic politics. At the analytical level, we frame this anti-democratic politics as a composite held together by loose affiliations created on the terrain of political contestation. In our view, distinct from dominant interpretations, anti-democracy is not a social movement (with clearly defined organizations and distinct ideological genealogies) nor the nationalization of political polarization (i.e., where the local merely reflects national political behavior). It is far more diffused. To understand this diffused character, we need to update our conceptual toolbox by eschewing some classical analytical distinctions such as local/national, urban/rural, left/right, physical/digital, etc. Secondly, to capture the processes of diffusion, we seek to avoid singular narratives such as white supremacy, hate, or authoritarianism. While conservative politics in the U.S. has always had an ambivalent relationship with democracy, the goal of this research is to understand how anti-democratic politics is shifting towards a far-right or fascist composite with implications for political representation, intellectual dissent, and social equality.

The second track of this research consists of an analysis of far-right monitoring organizations to determine their methodologies and theoretical assumptions. The goal is to understand how the response to a far-right threat is being evaluated and the kind of remedies that are being proposed. The guiding concern here is to understand how liberal democracy proposes to respond to an existential threat. This line of research is more diagnostic, in a first phase, than analytical.

HUMAN RIGHTS LAB

Forced Labor in the Supply Chain

Undergraduate and graduate students continue to work on this project under the overall direction of Dr. Laura Murphy (Sheffield Hallam University) and Dr. Moore. Their work has contributed to the published report, *Laundering Cotton: How Xinjiang Cotton Is Obscured in International Supply Chains* (2021) and a report currently being submitted to the United Nations.



Guantánamo Accountability Project (GAP)

This project examines allegations of abuse and illegal activity at Guantanamo and in the CIA's Rendition, Detention, and Interrogation program in the War on Terror. Activities include: 1) producing a public service announcement in partnership with North Carolina Stop Torture Now to call on the Governor and Attorney General of North Carolina to investigate the state's engagement in the RDI program; and 2) coding publicly available GTMO witness, survivor, and perpetrator testimony.

CURRICULUM

The Human Rights Institute submitted a proposal for HMRT 100: Human Rights to be taught by Dr. Cingranelli as a gateway course to the field and the minor. The course was approved and will be offered in Spring 2023.

In addition to cross-listing with other departments to provide essential courses for the HMRT minor and offering the portfolio course (HMRT 496) and internship, collaborative research and independent study courses each term, HRI offered its own courses in Winter and Summer sessions.

Thirteen students in Dr. Moore's spring 2021 course, HMRT 276, had their work published in the *Binghamton Law Quarterly*.

COLLABORATIONS

We continued to nurture our partnerships with the Helena Kennedy Centre for International Justice at Sheffield Hallam University, the American Civic Association in Binghamton, North Carolina Stop Torture Now, *Human Rights Quarterly*, the Association of Human Rights Institutes, and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. These collaborations take various forms, including internship and research opportunities for students, conferences attendance, shared conference planning, and publications.

EVENTS

"My Experiences as a Judge on Three International Tribunals" Judge Elizabeth Odio Benito, President of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

(Introduction by Patricia V. Sellers, International Criminal Attorney)
An exclusive webinar with the President of Inter-American Court of Human Rights and author/co-author of several publications on human rights, international humanitarian law and international criminal law. Judge Odio Benito has been a judge on the Inter-American Court since 2016 and brings to the presidency more than 50 years of experience defending human rights.

Webinar and Spanish and English translations available [here](#).
(Co-sponsored by the Provost's Office and the Kaschak Institute for Social Justice for Women and Girls)



Academic Publishing in Time of Transition

Friday, April 30, 2021

A conversation with leading academic publishers (focused on the humanities and social sciences) about how publishing is changing and what it means for prospective authors.

Fred Appel, Publisher, Princeton University Press

Ben Doyle, Publisher, Bloomsbury Academic

Michael Rinella, Senior Acquisitions Editor, SUNY Press

(Co-sponsored by the Citizenship, Rights, and Cultural Belonging TAE)



Passion (in)to Work: Feminist Approaches to Women and Employment

Soulful Reckonings: Work, Opportunity, and Preparation for 21st Century Women

Wednesday, November 3, 2021

A conversation with Elizabeth Swanson on translating feminist and critical race theory commitments to the workplace...and being prepared to act.

Elizabeth Swanson is Professor of English and Mandell Family Foundation Senior Term Chair in Literature and Human Rights at Babson College. Author of *Beyond Terror: Gender, Narrative, Human Rights* (2007), Dr. Swanson has co-edited four volumes on human rights and authored numerous essays and book chapters. She has served on an NGO board and as a Commissioner for the Barnstable County Human Rights Commission. She is a founding partner of Jane's Way, LLC, a training and consulting group that helps organizations elevate diversity, equity, and belonging.

(Co-sponsored by Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Department of Public Administration, & the Fleishman Center)



EVENTS



Passion (in)to Work: Feminist Approaches to Women and Employment

Approaches to Reproductive Healthcare and Reproductive Justice

Friday, November 5, 2021

A roundtable webinar featuring representatives of Upstream, USA working on reproductive healthcare from policy, education and training, assessment, and community partner perspectives.

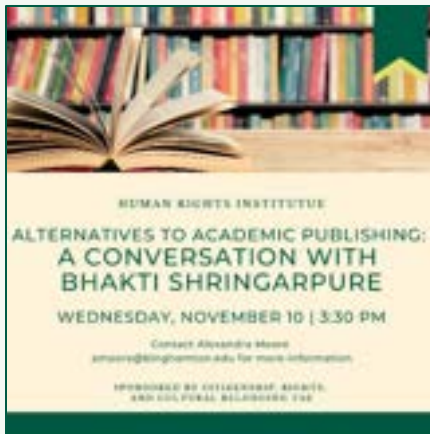
Jill Sergison, Director of Policy & Strategy (Jill is also a still practicing CNM)

Michela Garrison, Director of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Katresa Jones, Program Implementation Advisor

Catherine Read, State Director of Partnerships (North Carolina)

(Co-sponsored by Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Department of Public Administration, I-GMAP, Human Development)



Alternatives to Academic Publishing: A Conversation About Decolonizing Knowledge Production

Wednesday, November 10, 2021

Featured Speaker: Bhakti Shringarpure

Bhakti Shringarpure is Associate Professor of English & Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies; Faculty for Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies, and the Indigeneity, Race, Ethnicity & Politics program; Affiliate faculty for the Digital Humanities and Media Studies program and the Asian and Asian-American Studies Institute, University of Connecticut. She is also the founding Editor-in-chief of **Warscapes** magazine, founder of the Radical Books Collective, and Series Editor of Decolonize That! Handbooks for the Revolutionary Overthrow of Embedded Colonial Ideas, OR Books (New York).

HUMAN RIGHTS INTERNSHIPS

Nine Binghamton University undergraduate and graduate students took part in HRI internships in 2021. The placements included Human Rights Quarterly, HRI's own Human Rights Lab, the Broome Community Land Trust (now the Southern Door Community Land Trust), the American Civic Association, and the Refugee Hub at the Helena Kennedy Centre for International Justice at Sheffield Hallam University in England. Students worked on topics ranging from forced labor to refugee family reunification to housing rights to far right militias, and in the process they gained valuable experience in research and human rights practices.

Stephen Perez (MA student, Sociology) worked as a citation and content editing intern for the *Human Rights Quarterly (HRQ)*, which runs out of the University of Cincinnati College of Law in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University. He worked directly on manuscripts accepted for publication for the upcoming issue of the HRQ, which included verifying Bluebook legal citations and research accuracy. Interns are integral to the publication process and have a direct say in how manuscripts are edited and revised. Stephen had the opportunity to make a direct impact working with with scholars from across the country on topics such as the history of torture, deafnicity, China's one-child registration policy, and the Geneva Conventions.



Shruti Jain and Kaushik Tekur, both second-year Ph.D. students in the Department of English, worked on a far-right extremism project within the **Human Rights Lab** of the Human Rights Institute. They studied and sharpened their understanding of the far-right militias in the US with special focus on the January 6 Capitol riots. Studying the riots in conversation with relevant scholarship about the rise of right-wing groups in the US and Europe with Prof. Diren Valayden from the Department of Human Development also helped them deepen their own respective research on race and surveillance.

Leah Wardlaw (pursuing her B.S. in Human Development) and **Johanna Seppala** (Political Science) also interned in the **Human Rights Lab** to work on a project with Dr. Laura Murphy of our partner institution, Sheffield Hallam University. Leah writes: "The experience allowed me to conduct research on Uyghur forced labor in Chinese corporations and contribute to projects that will have real-world impacts, such as social media strategies for engaging with the global community on the issues we were studying and reports that will inform the establishment of economic sanctions against China by countries like Canada, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States. I continued developing critical research and writing skills that I originally cultivated while working with Dr. Murphy and Dr. Alexandra Moore in the Source Project last Spring. In addition, I learned so much about the research process as a whole, which helped me realize which parts of the research process I love (digging, writing, and distributing findings) and which parts I do not love as much (copying and pasting data). The entire experience was amazingly rewarding, and I gained new skills, learned about myself, and further developed a relationship with Dr. Murphy, who continues to be a wonderful mentor and resource.

HUMAN RIGHTS INTERNSHIPS

Johanna said of her experience, “I investigated individual Chinese companies for evidence of participation in Xinjiang forced labor. This was done by reading over company reports and articles, and by searching for key terms (which have been proven to be euphemisms for forced labor schemes). Additionally, I mapped out entire supply chains (subsidiary, customer, and supplier relationships) for Chinese companies using forced labor. Furthermore, I found the addresses for all companies that were investigated, and mapped their locations on Google Earth, in order to determine their proximity to known forced labor sites and detention camps. Finally, I created social media posts to educate the public about the forced labor crisis in Xinjiang.”



Jabari Randolph is an incoming 4+1 graduate student in the CCPA human rights program. They worked as a summer intern for the **Broome Community Land Trust (BCLT)**. The BCLT is a newly established nonprofit organization looking to cooperatively buy and own land with a focus on racial and housing equity. Over the 8-week period Jabari assisted with social media across Facebook and Instagram and research on other land trusts in the region. In addition, they organized two of the monthly housing justice talks. They look forward to working with the BCLT in the future.

Sarah Vener, an undergraduate student with majors in English and Political Science, had a meaningful experience interning at the **American Civic Association (ACA)** this summer where she learned about the US immigration system, working with migrant clientele, non-profit work, and fundraising. She is so grateful to the ACA and the Human Rights Institute staff for supporting her experience.

Two BU undergraduates, **Samantha DeProspo and Luz Velazquez**, did an intensive, virtual internship at the **Refugee Hub at the Helena Kennedy Centre for International Justice** at Sheffield Hallam University. They focused on refugee family reunification petitions and on research about barriers to successful reunification in Britain. Student responsibilities in this internship varied from interviewing refugees to gathering evidence such as birth and marriage certificates, photos, to filling out visa forms for family members. In addition, the student interns were able to engage and lead live client interviews via Zoom. The internship offered a much better look at the nuances of refugee and asylum law while also providing a hands-on learning experience in the British legal system. This internship was also supported by the Harpur Law Council.

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

CIRIGHTS Data Project and the “Measuring Human Rights” Data Project

The goal of the CIRIGHTS data project is to generate numerical scores for the full range of human rights included in the International Bill of Human Rights using content analysis. Numerical scores measuring human rights are necessary to compare the human rights practices of different countries to develop and test theories of why states violate human rights, to evaluate the human rights consequences of policy interventions, and to determine whether government protection of various rights is improving or declining. The data generated by the activities of this project are widely used by policymakers, teachers, and scholars in the disciplines of political science, sociology, and economics. The Co-Directors of the project are David Cingranelli and Mikhail Filippov of the Binghamton University (BU) Department of Political Science and Skip Mark, a BU Ph.D., who is the Director of the Center for Nonviolence & Peace Studies at the University of Rhode Island (URI).

The working group is productive. In May of 2022, an article by David, Skip, James Harvey, Jordan Hutt, and Yuri Lee titled “A Brutality-Based Approach to Identifying State-Led Atrocities” was published in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. James, Jordan, and Yuri all began their work on this project while they were undergraduates at BU. During the 2021-22 academic year, several other projects were conducted that involved the Co-Directors along with various combinations of BU graduate and undergraduate students. Two other collaborative papers were published over the past year: “Labor Rights in Comparative Perspective” in *International Interactions* and “Quantifying and Visualizing Human Rights: The CIRIGHTS Data Project” in Alexandra Moore’s co-edited book, *Technologies of Human Rights Representation*. Several other papers are also under review: “Broken Promises: The Gap Between Domestic Human Rights Laws and Practices” (Cingranelli, Mark, and Almira Sasykova) or at an advanced stage in the research and writing process: “Out-Group Discrimination, Harsh Prisoner Treatment, and Racism” (Cingranelli, Mark, and Stephen Perez), and “Gender Values: Public Opinion and Public Policy (Cingranelli, Mark, Lea Frankel, and Leah Wardlaw).

The working group also contributes to the quality of education at BU. Students at BU and the URI, who enroll in seminars taught by the Project Co-Directors, assist in the collection and analysis of the data. We treat these seminars the same way faculty in the natural sciences use their laboratories. Students enroll to learn and produce new knowledge. In addition, a team of students enrolled in the Masters of Science in Data Analysis directed by Manoj Agarwal of the SOM, will work on a data analytics project in June 2022 using the CIRIGHTS data titled, “Applying Data Analytic Techniques to National Human Rights Scores.”

