

LATINX PSYCHOLOGY TODAY

AN OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL LATINX PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

VOL 7 ISSUE 1

FALL 2020

LATINX IN A TIME OF ELECTIONS, SYSTEMATIC OPPRESSION & A PANDEMIC

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FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Querida NLPA,

Welcome to the Fall 2020 NLPA Newsletter, Latinx in Psychology Today! First of all, thank you to the NLPA Newsletter team for all their hard work. I especially appreciate that in response to concerns about anti-Blackness and gender inclusion brought up via the NLPA listserv that they chose to seek and prioritize work from authors with who identify as AfroLatinx/Black, Indigenous, LGBTQ+, undocumented, and individuals with disabilities. They have also created new sections of the newsletter that will be dedicated to these Special Interest Groups and topics in future newsletters. I hope that we can read and reflect on the impactful work in this edition and work to integrate it into our daily work and practice.

2020 has certainly brought challenges to the world and to each of us as we navigate new ways to conduct our work, new ways to stay healthy, and new ways to support each other. I am beyond impressed with Dr. Elizabeth Aranda, our 2020 Conference Chair who has pivoted gracefully and rapidly to be able to still offer a virtual conference for NLPA. I hope that you all join us on October 29th and 30th to hear about the work of our amazing members. Additionally, I am very much looking forward to our keynote speaker Dr. Amalia Dache, who will share her work on an Afro-Latina Theory of Black-*imiento*.

The theme of our conference is In Lak Ech, which is something I learned about through my work in Chicanx Studies. This is a Mayan indigenous philosophy and is portrayed through a poem "*Pensamiento Serpentino*" by Luis Valdez, found of El Teatro Campesino. I keep coming back to this philosophy this year as NLPA President because it reminds me that the heart of our work is our relationships with each other, and that the heart of this association is the members. It has never been more important to remind ourselves that "You are my other me" than it has this year as members have come forward to name moments when they have been harmed within our association and by other members.



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I would like to let our members know that I truly apologize on behalf of the association for the harm that has been experienced, ignored, or not yet remedied. I feel that we have been too slow to respond to identified problems this year. The Leadership Council has been engaged in additional meetings and critical conversations to come together on these topics. We agree that we need to bring systemic and sustainable change to NLPA in order to center an Anti-Racist agenda within our mission and structure of the association. We are at an inflection moment for NLPA and in order to remain true to our aspirations of social justice, we look to be guided by the work of our colleagues who provide in this issue a Toolkit for non-Black Latinxs who choose to address their anti-Blackness and the call for action for advocating for transgender and nonbinary Latinxs.

It is my hope that we can continue to learn together and work together to build a healthier community to support and sustain each other in these challenging times. I am grateful for the words of wisdom in this issue that remind us to care for ourselves and others.

Andrea Romero,
NLPA President

IN LAK'ECH

Tú eres mi otro yo.

You are my other me.

Si te hago daño a ti,

If I do harm to you,

Me hago daño a mi mismo.

I do harm to myself.

Si te amo y respeto,

If I love and respect you,

Me amo y respeto yo.

I love and respect myself.

Dr. Romero has a Ph.D. in Applied Social Psychology and is Professor in Family Studies and Human Development and currently Vice Provost of Faculty Affairs at the University of Arizona. Her research examines cultural, familial, and resilience factors associated with Latinx adolescent health disparities of mental health and substance use. She has been a leader in research to understand how navigating bicultural contexts is associated with stress among Latinx, Asian and White youth and young adults. A central element of Dr. Romero's methodological approach is that of participatory action research, which is done in dialogue and collaboration with community members for substance use prevention and creating college-going culture. She has been an NLPA member since 2002, where she was on the leadership council to develop the first website. She also served as Associate Editor for the Journal of Latinx Psychology for four years and recently co-edited a special issue for the journal on methods with Latinx populations. She is dedicated to growing NLPA for future generations of scholars.

OUR MISSION

To create a supportive professional community that advances psychological education and training, science, practice, and organizational change to enhance the health, mental health, and well-being of Hispanic/Latinx populations

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CHANGE IS GOOD: MOVING TOWARD DIVERSITY & INCLUSION BY LEARNING FROM THE PAST & EMBRACING THE FUTURE TOGETHER

FIGORELLA L. CARLOS CHAVEZ^{1,2}

Editorial

We, the new NLPA editorial team, are excited to bring you the Fall 2020 issue of *Latinx Psychology Today* (LPT). In the mist of global uncertainty, change is inevitable. Fear of the unknown is a human reaction, yet it is important to remind ourselves that we are not alone. We are the living forces of all those who have come before us, and likewise, one day we will also be that living force of all of those who remained united, as one. When we learn from one another, we are capable of growing stronger, together. We have our unique differences, flaws, and gifts, yet we remain together not in spite of them but because of them. I argue that change and togetherness may go hand-in-hand since they are both intentional, inclusive, proactive, and part of the cycle of life. Like the seasons (i.e., fall, winter, spring, and summer), change is inevitable and as such, may push us out of our comfort zones. However, when we remain united in the midst of change, the future is brighter and in return, it may also embrace us, with open arms. The current issue is a collaborative effort of graduate students, early career, mid-career, and established members from NLPA focusing on the theme, *Change is good: Moving toward diversity and inclusion by learning from the past and embracing the future, together*.

It is clear that the year 2020 has pushed our limits, tested our patience, and reminded us how invaluable life is. On one hand, we have learned that life is too short and too precious to be taken for granted. On the other hand, we have been “forced” to spend more time with our families and re-learned to enjoy (in case we have forgotten) the pleasure of our own company. We may wonder: What would future generations say about us and of our time in history during Black Lives Matter, Anti-Blackness Era, Lockdown, Covid-19 pandemic, and the upcoming 2020 United States Presidential Elections?

In our fall 2020 newsletter issue, we highlight the discussion of the following themes: the role of various systems of oppression in our community, on the ways in which our existence has been constantly challenged during this pandemic, and the implications of crucial upcoming elections in the U. S. We take the first step by acknowledging that change begins with us. In this issue, we aim to highlight the essence of our members by creating inclusive spaces that elevate the voices of those who often are not given a platform.

We recognize that we are living under extraordinary circumstances and therefore these stories and calls to action are much needed. We

present to you Dr. Hector Y. Adames, Nayeli Y. Chavez-Duenas, Maryam M. Jernigan, and Delida Sanchez's Toolkit for non-Black Latinxs who choose to address their anti-blackness. They provide us with Eight Steps to awaken our racial consciousness. Next, we present one of our NLPA elders, Dr. Melinda Garcia's testimony on *Cultivating Discernment* wherein she shares her words of wisdom, experiences as an Afro-Latinx psychologist with over 45 years of mental health service to underserved communities. In terms of the international migration crisis our country is experiencing, researchers from the Counseling Psychology Department at the University of San Francisco, Belinda Hernandez-Arriaga Ed.D. and Daniela G. Domínguez, Ph.D. present a study of asylum-seeking children in the US-Mexico borders using art/drawings testimonials. We also have a call for action advocating for transgender and nonbinary Latinx healthcare during the COVID-19 pandemic prepared by Aldo Barrita, Dr. Taymy Josefa Caso, Sam del Castillo, Dr. Kevin Delucio, and Dr. Dagoberto Heredia Jr. from *Orgullo Sig*. Furthermore, we bring to you a review on survivor's guilt during the Covid-19 pandemic by Rita Rivera, a Psy.D. student in Clinical Psychology at Albizu University. Finally, a powerful art piece by doctoral student Autumn Marie Chilcote at Duquesne University reminding us of the historical effects of pandemics on indigenous populations as well as the intersection of Indigenous and Latinx identities with *Frida Kahlo, a 2020 PowWow*.

To conclude, I want to say ¡Muchisimas Gracias! to the contributors to our fall 2020 newsletter, my editorial team for their dedication and hard work, the leadership council for giving us the opportunity to create inclusive spaces and

trusting us with this work, and to all our resilient membership community for making LPT a reality.

Fiorella L. Carlos Chavez

Editor

The mission of NLPA is to create a supportive professional community that advances psychological education and training, science, practice, and organizational change to enhance the health, mental health, and well-being of Hispanic/Latinx populations.

The NLPA newsletter fall 2020 edition aims to highlight the essence of our members by creating inclusive spaces that elevates the voices of those who often are not given a platform. We recognize that we are living under extraordinary circumstances and so these stories are much needed.

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WE MUST DO BETTER: A TOOLKIT FOR NON-BLACK LATINXS WHO CHOOSE TO ADDRESS THEIR ANTI-BLACKNESS

HECTOR Y. ADAMES¹

NAYELI Y. CHAVEZ-DUEÑAS

MARYAM M. JERNIGAN

DELIDA SANCHEZ

*“We do not dream that the world will change, we dream with a community that has awakened their racial consciousness. If racial consciousness is gained by the people, then dreams are not necessary”
(Subcomandante Marcos, 2002).*

Latinidad is often conceptualized and understood through racially homogenous and color-blind paradigms which serve to silence and make invisible the experiences of Black and AfroLatinx people (Adames, Chavez-Dueñas, & Jernigan, in press). In an effort to help us to collectively transgress the ways in which Latinx people have been socialized to uphold mestizaje racial ideologies, or the pervasive belief that we are all racially mixed and therefore skin-color and physiognomy do not matter (Chavez-Dueñas, Adames, & Organista, 2014), we developed the #WeMustDoBetter toolkit for members in the Latinx community. The goal of the toolkit is twofold—we seek to (a) describe the problematic ways Latinx avoid talking about race and anti-Blackness and (b) provide eight steps to awaken Latinxs’ racial consciousness. Overall, it is our hope that together we can begin or continue to address anti-Blackness within ourselves, the spaces we occupy, and in all that we do. Our Black siblings deserve better—let’s do better!

Hector Y. Adames and Nayeli Y. Chavez-Dueñas,
The Chicago School of Professional Psychology;
Maryam M. Jernigan, Agnes Scott College; Delida
Sanchez, University of Texas at Austin.

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PROBLEMATIC WAYS LATINXS AVOID TALKING ABOUT RACE & ANTI-BLACKNESS

- Deny the impact of race, racism, and colorism within the Latinx community.
- Use of common phrases that obscure the racialized realities that Black Latinxs face including:
 - We are all *mestizos* (racially mixed).
 - In Latin America, social class “matters more” than skin color.
 - We have had Black presidents in Latin America.
 - There is no racism in Latin America.
 - Using language that deflects from or denies racial privilege (e.g., white passing, proximity to white/ness, white adjacent).
 - Race is a U.S. imposed construct, we don’t fit into the racial binary.
 - Latinx/a/o, Hispanic is a race.
 - They don’t know me.
- When Latinxs avoid naming whiteness and racial privilege it cannot be addressed.

EIGHT STEPS TO AWAKEN YOUR RACIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

1. See Color. Make a conscious effort toward seeing and acknowledging how skin-color and phenotype contribute to different experiences within the Latinx community. Accept that race is an integral part of who we are as Latinxs.

2. Acknowledge Anti-Blackness within yourself and in the Latinx community and how it has benefited you while negatively impacted the lives of Black Latinxs and Afrodescendants.

3. Engage in Self-Reflection about how you have benefited from anti-Blackness and what has allowed you to remain silent until now.

4. Feel and Sit with the Discomfort of knowing that you have contributed to the oppression of Black Latinxs before you jump into action.

5. The Change Begins with You. Before educating others, work on yourself by developing a plan for how you will address anti-Blackness in your personal, interpersonal, and professional life.

6. Do the Work. Before portraying yourself as an expert on race or anti-Blackness, spend time learning, reading, and

listening to the voices of the people who are affected by anti-Blackness.

7. Center the Voices of Black Latinxs. Black Latinxs can speak for themselves. Pass the mic, do not speak for them. Uplift their work and celebrate their contributions.

8. Do not Be an Opportunist. Addressing anti-Blackness within the Latinx community is more than a popular trending topic, it is a matter of human rights. Performative allyship is violent and deadly. If you find yourself speaking up as a way to deal with your feelings of discomfort, or to gain personal, or professional attention and reward, then you have not awakened. Refer to recommendations 2 – 4.

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We Must Do Better: A Toolkit for non-Black Latinxs Who Choose to Address their anti-Blackness

Hector Y. Adames, Nayeli Y. Chavez-Dueñas, Maryam M. Jernigan, & Delida Sanchez

"We do not dream that the world will change, we dream with a community that has awakened their racial consciousness. If racial consciousness is gained by the people, then dreams are not necessary."
(Subcomandante Marcos, 2003)

Problematic Ways Latinxs Avoid Talking About Race & Anti-Blackness

- Deny the impact of race, racism, and colorism within the Latinx community.
- Use of common phrases that obscure the racialized realities that Black Latinxs face including:
 - We are all *mestizos* (racially mixed).
 - In Latin America, social class "matters more" than skin color.
 - We have had Black presidents in Latin America.
 - There is no racism in Latin America.
 - Using language that deflects from or denies racial privilege (e.g., white passing, proximity to white/ness, white adjacent).
 - Race is a U.S. imposed construct, we don't fit into the racial binary.
 - Latinx/a/o, Hispanic is a race.
 - They don't know me.
- When Latinxs avoid naming whiteness and racial privilege it cannot be addressed.

How to Cite This Toolkit Use:

Adames, H.Y., Chavez-Dueñas, N.Y., Jernigan, M.M. & Sanchez, D. (2020). We must do better: A toolkit for non-Black Latinxs who choose to address their anti-Blackness. Retrieved from www.icrace.org.

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Eight Steps to Awaken Your Racial Consciousness

- 1. See Color.** Make a conscious effort toward seeing and acknowledging how skin-color and phenotype contribute to different experiences within the Latinx community. Accept that race is an integral part of who we are as Latinxs.
- 2. Acknowledge Anti-Blackness** within yourself and in the Latinx community and how it has benefited you while negatively impacted the lives of Black Latinxs and Afrodescendants.
- 3. Engage in Self-Reflection** about how you have benefited from anti-Blackness and what has allowed you to remain silent until now.
- 4. Feel and Sit with the Discomfort** of knowing that you have contributed to the oppression of Black Latinxs before you jump into action.
- 5. The Change Begins with You.** Before educating others, work on yourself by developing a plan for how you will address anti-Blackness in your personal, interpersonal, and professional life.
- 6. Do the Work.** Before portraying yourself as an expert on race or anti-Blackness, spend time learning, reading, and listening to the voices of the people who are affected by anti-Blackness.
- 7. Center the Voices of Black Latinxs.** Black Latinxs can speak for themselves. Pass the mic, do not speak for them. Uplift their work and celebrate their contributions.
- 8. Do not Be an Opportunist.** Addressing anti-Blackness within the Latinx community is more than a popular trending topic, it is a matter of human rights. Performative allyship is violent and deadly. If you find yourself speaking up as a way to deal with your feelings of discomfort, or to gain personal, or professional attention and reward, then you have not awakened. Refer to recommendations 2 – 4.

Visit

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ON CULTIVATING DISCERNMENT: REFLECTIONS FROM DR. GARCIA

TAYMY JOSEFA CASO, PH.D.
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA MEDICAL SCHOOL

Recently, I had the immense honor of speaking with Dr. Melinda Garcia, an Afro-Latinx clinical, community, and organizational psychologist of Mexican and Panamanian Indigenous, heritage and African and European descent. Dr. Garcia currently lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico and has a thriving post-colonial private psychotherapy practice. She has devoted herself to providing mental health services to underserved communities for over 45 years. As a trauma specialist, she has worked with a broad range of issues including acute and chronic mental illness, inter-generational grief and trauma, death and dying, community healing from disasters, colonization and liberation and strengthening communities. In addition to her clinical work, Dr. Garcia is a dedicated and fierce elder, advocate, community organizer, and social justice warrior. She is committed to living authentically, is solidly rooted, and unapologetic about her refusal to compromise her values for neoliberal, academic success and accolades. Our discussion was an honest, thought-provoking reflection on her life, how she found her professional path, and fostered accountability so that her work remains value driven.



Dr. Melinda Garcia

Dr. Garcia emigrated to the United States in 1972. In 1980, she received her M.Ed. in counseling and consulting psychology from Harvard University. She then went on to receive her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Southern California in 1988 specializing in children, the elderly, and epidemiology. She completed her graduate education in the midst of public-school desegregation, rampant racial violence, and school bus shootings. In those tumultuous times and within prestigious academic spaces, she faced institutional and structural racism and discrimination. She spoke unequivocally about the tokenizing spaces she had to navigate: *“At Harvard, they were just starting to wake up to the fact that they had to work harder on diversity. They gave themselves good press. But their numbers were so low that they trotted out the ethnic minority students and interns every time they had an audit so that their numbers would look better.”*

One of the most powerful moments in this conversation, centered around her explaining, *“I got trained by the smartest, racist, white people around.”* As she recalled her experiences, it was clear that ethnic minority students felt grateful to attend such a prestigious university, so much so that they were not vocal about the racism they experienced. She recalled feeling as though she was *“not acculturated enough to know what a prize had been bestowed upon me. They were surprised that I did not accept the honor of being there, sit down, and stay quiet. I felt like I’d been sold a bill of goods. This was an important step in developing discernment.”*

During her time in those spaces, she nurtured her voice, grounded herself in her decolonial activist roots, sought out community, and found ways to center her spiritual needs. Her biggest lesson was learning to recognize, survive, and confront “sneaky intellectual superior white racism.” After contemplating on the many lessons she has learned along her professional journey, *“The biggest takeaway was cracking that code of white, intellectual racism. You walk away with knowing how to recognize it and talk back to it.”*

When asked about words of wisdom she would like to share with students and early career professionals, she urged us to challenge and escape *“grind culture”* and *“cultivate discernment.”* She reflected on the inner conflict many students and early career professionals face – how to remain authentic and true to your values while surviving academia and having a thriving career. In her experience, this inner conflict is informed by the colonial narrative, that *“in order to do well in the United States you have to Americanize”* and assimilate into mainstream, white, culture. She argues that in so doing, Latinx folks *“brought their classist prejudices against indigenous and Black people from their countries”* because every country in Latin America has colonial wounds, some more prominent than others.

On the journey to earn tenure, academics are forced to make painful individual and spiritual sacrifices, and ultimately, compromise their values and beliefs to survive the ivory tower. Sometimes this means not speaking truth to power, engaging in respectability politics, not rocking the boat, accommodating anti-Blackness and white supremacy, and slowly silencing the voice inside that reminds you of the toxicity of the ivory tower. In that process there is a *“rewriting of history,”* telling yourself *“It’s not so bad. I’m not sacrificing that much, but by the end they are not recognizable.”* Once tenured, some are able to reclaim those parts of themselves that they put aside, but many are left with severe trauma and an inability to discern how they have become complicit in systems that perpetuate and enact trauma in its many forms.

As younger generations continue to engage in consciousness raising, demand accountability, and work toward cultivating our own sense of discernment, Dr. Garcia’s words remind us of what we have known all along. Power comes with a great cost and we have to decide for ourselves how much we are willing to sacrifice, what we are willing to give up, and who we are willing to step over to climb up the academic ladder to achieve tenure. Many of us see our professional success as a way to uplift our families from generations of poverty, strife, and oppression, but how can we reconcile the changes we must go through in order to secure our own piece of power and stability. Dr. Garcia’s musings serve as an important cautionary tale against institutional hierarchies and indoctrination into the white supremacist, neoliberal values of the academy.

I hope we can all take Dr. Garcia’s words of wisdom as a call to action to begin showing up differently for ourselves, our families, and our communities. Perhaps in doing so, we can move beyond cultivating discernment and toward an academy and professional community that engages in decolonizing practices and centers liberation, healing, and reparations.

In Solidarity,
Taymy Josefa Caso, PhD

Dr. Melinda García, Ph.D. is clinical, community, and organizational psychologist and trauma specialist who earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Southern California. Dr. Garcia is the oldest of five children born to a Panamanian mother (Panamanian Indigenous, European, and African descent) and Mexican-American father (Chichimec, Nahuatl and European descent). She currently works in an independent, post-colonial practice in Albuquerque, NM. She has worked in mental health for over 45 years with a special focus on culturally competent healing and support for life transitions across the life span. Her experience includes working with communities and individuals in the areas of substance abuse, domestic violence, death and dying, racism, inter-generational grief and trauma, ethnic identity issues, sexual identity issues, Queer issues, chronic and acute mental illness, spiritual emergencies, bilingual/bicultural education, community education, community healing from disasters, colonization and liberation, and strengthening children, families, the elderly and women.

CASO

Dr. García comes from a long line of (head)strong women and community-oriented people on both sides of her family. Her father was in the U.S. Army while she was growing up. This taught her discipline but did not cure her hard headedness. To honor her elders and ancestors, she is a musician, a seamstress, a writer, an activist, and a *tlamatini* (Nahuatl word for teacher). She has an Indigenous person's sense of humor which has both saved her life and gotten her into a lot of trouble with authority. She made it through graduate schools by relying on her family's indigenous traditional values as passed on by her grandmothers and great aunts and uncles, by learning the history of her peoples, by participating in *ceremonia*, and with the help of meditation, herbal medicine and The Course in Miracles. She does not like to hear "*it can't be done*" and has repeatedly started and received funding for community programs.

Dr. García has been married for 46 years and has a 31 year old son. Her house is a sanctuary for various rescue animals. In 2005, she reached the peak of accomplishments: a Blue Ribbon (in cookies) at the NM State Fair! Her favorite times of day are snack and lunch.

She is deeply grateful to all of her teachers and her family for their teachings.

Dr. Taymy Josefa Caso, Ph.D., (they/them) is the Randi and Fred Ettner Postdoctoral Fellow in Transgender Health in the Program in Human Sexuality in the Center for Sexual Health at the University of Minnesota Medical School's Department of Family Medicine and Community Health. Dr. Caso is also a researcher at the National Center for Gender Spectrum Health and is an adjunct professor at New York University. Dr. Caso earned their doctoral degree in Counseling Psychology from New York University and their master's degree in clinical Psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University. Their research focuses on minority mental health disparities, identity-based marginalization within LGBTQ+ BIPOC communities, gender, and sexual fluidity. Their advocacy work aims to utilize decolonizing pedagogy to deconstruct institutional and systemic barriers to equity for communities of color. They have been engaged in leadership at both regional and national organization. Dr. Caso initially joined NLPA in 2016 as a member of the Student Committee. They are currently serving as Volunteer Committee Co-Chair, Student Representative, a member of the Leadership Council, and co-chair of the *Orgullo* Latinx: Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity SIG. They have been the recipient of several grants and awards, including: the Outstanding Research Contribution Award, Research and Scholarship Showcase Award, César Chávez/Clara Hale Community Outreach Award, Ronald McNair/Arturo Alfonso Schomburg Academic Excellence Award, and the Arthur B. Zankel Urban Fellowship. These awards recognize scholarship, service, advocacy, and activism that support and empower marginalized and underrepresented communities.



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The NLPA Mentoring Program is recruiting student and professional members to be part of this important group in our association. As a student you can get advice from a professional member to help you navigate your educational and professional goals. As a professional you can guide a student member and help our community.

Email us at: mentoring@nlpa.ws

CHALLENGING TIMES FOR LATINX TRANSGENDER AND NON-BINARY PEOPLE

ALDO BARRITA, TAYMY JOSEFA CASO, SAM DEL CASTILLO, KEVIN DELUCIO & DAGOBERTO HEREDIA JR.

NLPA SIG *ORGULLO*

ALPHABETICAL ORDER, ALL AUTHORS SHARE 1ST AUTHOR

Transgender and gender non-binary (TGNB) communities in the United States continue to be disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Public data demonstrates that 22% of transgender people and 32% of transgender people of color do not have health insurance which limits their ability to adequately prevent and manage COVID-19 infection (HRCF, 2020). Given the cumulative case burden of COVID-19 and the subsequent strain on resources, many healthcare systems have triaged care to address rapidly increasing COVID-19 admissions resulting in treatment delays and deprioritization of gender-affirming services for TGNB people. Among healthcare institutions that historically categorized gender-affirming services as "non-essential" or "elective," TGNB communities continue to face access disparities that preceded the onset of the pandemic. The healthcare system's inconsistent approach to supporting TGNB people as the pandemic unfolds may set an adverse precedent for how systems prioritize gender-affirming services during times of crisis.

Although TGNB and Latinx communities have separately reported poor healthcare experiences, little is known about the healthcare experiences of Latinx TGNB people and how their experiences have shifted in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. To date, health systems have not gathered the data necessary to draw any final conclusions given that few states are reporting health data by race/ethnicity and even fewer are reporting by gender identity (e.g., one's internal sense of their gender). To increase the field's understanding of the unique needs of Latinx TGNB people, NLPA's *Orgullo* Latinx SIG recommends that federal and local governments coordinate with healthcare systems and electronic medical record (EMR) vendors to collect and report on racial/ethnic and gender diversity data.

Informed by existing population health reviews (HRCF, 2020; LULAC, 2020), we can surmise that the COVID-19 pandemic has catalyzed the following pre-existing risk factors among Latinx TGNB communities:

1. Poor access to healthcare
2. Poor access to health care interpreters and medical chaperones
3. Work providing "essential services"
4. Living in larger households with family of origin and/or chosen family
5. Living in households wherein gender diversity is pathologized, invalidated, minimized, or ignored
6. Living in households where interpersonal violence is present
7. Underlying health conditions (e.g., HIV, cancer, heart disease)

8. Mistrust of health providers and systems (e.g., delaying care, increased use of emergency services)
9. The cumulative physical and psychological impact of minority stress (e.g., gender invalidation, fighting to be heard)

Latinx psychologists are uniquely suited to support Latinx TGNB people regardless of their area of expertise and practice setting (e.g., research, private practice, counseling centers, academic medical centers). Their commitment to providing validating care can help address health disparities among Latinx TGNB people and can positively influence medical and behavioral health systems more broadly. Latinx psychologists seeking to advance their gender-affirmative professional skills can start by (APA, 2015; Chang et al., 2018):

1. Learning to recognize and address gender invalidation as it occurs across professional settings (e.g., clinical work, waiting areas, team meetings, professional association spaces)
2. Learning, using, and staying up to date on gender-affirming language and communications strategies (e.g., utilizing a person's affirmed name, pronouns, and terms such as "Latinx" or "Latine")
3. Prioritizing repair when gender invalidation occurs; resisting the urge to minimize or downplay the impact of in-person and online gender invalidation
4. Reflecting on and challenging their own histories with gender and privilege (e.g., gender-related biases, assumptions, and habitual ways of relating)
5. Understanding global landscapes of gender diversity
6. Learning options for social, medical, and legal gender transition
7. Understanding their role as behavioral health providers (e.g., assessment, letter writing, referral, gender and non-gender related psychotherapy)
8. Participating in continuous professional development trainings on gender-affirming psychotherapy
9. Empowering Latinx TGNB students, trainees, and professionals as they work to update and disseminate best practices for gender-affirming care

While this call is primarily directed toward providers, healthcare systems, and government agencies, we also hope to reach the general public whose influence plays a key role in advancing the wellbeing and quality of life of Latinx TGNB people. As elections in the United States approach, discussing these issues is more important than ever. Just recently, in June 2020, the current administration finalized a rule that would reverse an important regulation that protects transgender and gender diverse people from discrimination in accessing healthcare services, jeopardizing the lives and health of these communities. Therefore, it is imperative that everyone with the privilege to be able to vote engages in this process in November.

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2020 NLPA Conference

Presents:

Dr. Amalia Dache

An Afro-Cuban American scholar, Amalia Dache is an assistant professor in the Higher Education Division at the University of Pennsylvania. Her experiences as a Cuban refugee and student traversing U.S. educational systems— among them urban K–12 schools, community college, state college, and a private research-intensive university— inform her research and professional activities.

Dr. Dache's major research areas are postcolonial geographic contexts of higher education, *Afro-Latina/o/x* studies, community and student resistance, and the college-access experiences of African diasporic students and communities. She is lead editor of *Rise Up! Activism as Education*, published in 2019 by Michigan State University Press. Her most recent article, "Ferguson's Black radical imagination and the scyborgs of community—student resistance," appeared in *The Review of Higher Education* in 2019.

Dr. Dache was named a 2020 NAEd/Spencer Foundation Post-doctoral Fellow for her project, "Mapping Public Housing and Urban Higher Education Accessibility and Enrollment in Philadelphia." In 2019, she completed Rockefeller Institute's Richard P. Nathan Public Policy Fellowship where she conducted geographic research access to local postsecondary education in the Finger Lakes region of Upstate, New York. She received the Association for the Study of Higher Education's (ASHE) Bobby Wright Dissertation of the Year award in 2014.



**NLPA 2020
KEYNOTE
SPEAKER**

**OCTOBER 29, 2020
8 AM (PST)**

A Badge of Honor Not Shame: An Afro-Latina Theory of Black-*imiento*

In this lecture Dr. Dache will discuss the ways in which U.S. scholars and researchers of higher education conceptualize "race," shaping inquiry and dissemination of scholarship, research, and policy contributing to how we understand U.S. Latinx education access. This lecture will address the symbolic violence of what "passing for White" as Latinx mean for studies of colleges and universities, and how centering our African and Black identities calls these manifestations into question. The experiences of Afrolatina scholars demonstrate shortcomings of "passin' for Latinx," which is the under-theorization of the role U.S. anti-Blackness and Blackness plays in the construct of U.S. Latinidad. A conceptual framework of Black-*imiento* is provided that can help expand the Latinx construct, future research, policy, and practice.

DIBUJANDO EN TENT CITY: ART BY ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN IN THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER

BELINDA HERNANDEZ-ARRIAGA AND DANIELA G. DOMÍNGUEZ^{1,2}

Article

ABSTRACT

The existing Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), also known as the “Remain in Mexico” policy, have criminalized asylum and dehumanized asylum-seeking individuals. MPP requires asylum seekers who arrive at any U.S. port of entry across the entire southern border to wait in Mexico while their cases are processed in U.S. immigration courts. Using testimonio research, this study presents the artistic accounts of 7 Central American asylum-seeking children who are living in a “migrant camp” in Matamoros, Tamaulipas next to the Gateway International Bridge. Migrant camps are open-air tent encampments in which asylum seekers are living in unsafe and unsanitary conditions while they await their asylum interview. These hazardous conditions make them susceptible to respiratory diseases such as coronavirus (COVID-19). Sharing these experiences is critical to ensure that health professionals’ advocacy efforts reflect asylum seekers’ needs and life experiences. Given the violence inflicted by MPP and the risks associated with COVID-19, this manuscript demands the end of this policy to protect the psychological health of an already vulnerable community, asylum seeking children. Advocacy implications are also discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Asylum seekers are sometimes displaced from their home country due to the immediate dangers associated with violence, political turmoil, poverty, human rights violations, natural disasters, and forced gang-recruitment (Domínguez, 2019). Hoping to escape these immediate

risks, they often migrate across Mexico to pursue international protection at a United States (U.S.) port of entry (Leutert, 2020). The treacherous journey across Mexico often exposes asylum seekers to abuse from the Mexican National Guard, extortion from organized crime, physical injury, among other traumatic events (Domínguez, 2019). Although asylum seekers have “undeniable rights under both federal and international law to seek asylum in the United States (Bickelman, 2020, p. 57),” they are currently facing unique challenges due to the “Remain in Mexico” policy (Nielsen, 2019) and the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) (Garrett, 2020). In this manuscript, we use the term asylum seeker to describe a Latinx person who is seeking protection in the U.S. from persecution or other human rights violations in their country.

WHAT ARE MIGRANT PROTECTION PROTOCOLS (REMAIN IN MEXICO)?

In November 2018, the U.S. and Mexico negotiated the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), also known as the “Remain in Mexico” policy (Leutert, 2020). Officially implemented on January 28, 2019 by officials from two Department of Homeland (DHS) agencies, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), MPP requires asylum seekers who arrive at any U.S. port of entry on the southern border to wait in Mexico while their cases are processed in U.S. immigration courts (Nielsen, 2019). Prior to MPP enforcement, asylum seekers were allowed to wait in the U.S. while their asylum cases were pending. Some scholars argue that MPP and other “racist policies,” aim to “prevent the blackening and browning of America (McKanders, 2019, p. 21).”

THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF MPP DEPORTATION PROCEEDINGS

As of August 2020, approximately 67,000 individuals have been processed into the Migrant Protection Protocols program (TRAC, 2020). Of those, approximately

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33,000 individuals were given removal orders and were therefore barred from returning to the U.S. for a period of years, or in some cases permanently. According to TRAC 2020 data, the majority of asylum seekers were returned to Ciudad Juarez followed by Matamoros, two of Mexico's most dangerous border cities. Only 570 individuals were granted relief from removal and were allowed to enter the U.S. The rest of the cases are either pending, closed, transferred, or involved voluntary deportation orders.

The highest number of asylum seekers impacted by MPP are from Honduras (35%), Guatemala (24%), Cuba (14%), El Salvador (12%), and Ecuador (7.5%) (TRAC, 2020). Many of those who were removed from the U.S. have sought shelter in crowded tent encampments and are exposed to hazardous conditions such as flooding and intense heat. At the beginning of 2020 and before the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 3,000 asylum seekers were living across from Brownsville, Texas in a tent encampment in Matamoros, Tamaulipas next to the Gateway International Bridge (Sanchez, 2020a). According to an August 20, 2020 border report, approximately 1,000 of those living in the Matamoros camp were children (Sanchez, 2020b).

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND COURT CLOSURE

According to health professionals, the crowded and unsanitary conditions at tent encampments make asylum seekers susceptible to respiratory diseases such as COVID-19 (Brito, 2020). They explain, "with an average of 4 people per tent, communal cooking, meal distribution, and porta potties, any quarantine—self or enforced—is nearly impossible (Leiner et al., 2020, p. 143)." Asylum seekers' susceptibility may also be related to difficulties: (a) following recommended hand hygiene protocols because of poor access to clean water, (b) accessing healthcare services due to a lack of or limited health insurance coverage, and (c) paying for medications to treat underlying health problems and chronic diseases (Brito, 2020). As of September 2020, five migrants have tested positive to COVID-19 at the Matamoros tent encampment (Solis, 2020).

Citing concerns about COVID-19 transmission, on March 20, 2020, the Trump administration indefinitely suspended U.S. immigration court proceedings. This means that asylum seekers who enter the U.S. between ports of entry are no longer being placed in MPP proceedings but are rather expelled to Mexico without ever being processed. The closure of immigration courts are pressuring asylum seekers to swim across the Rio Grande river. Tragically, asylum seekers have drowned in search of a safer life in the U.S. (e.g., Guatemalan asylum seeker Rodrigo Castro; Sanchez, 2020b). Most recently, following Hurricane Hanna, three deaths occurred in the span of 24 hours (Sanchez, 2020b). In response to these deaths and the

inhumane treatment that asylum seekers are experiencing, psychologists must speak up and demand justice for their lives. Research that sheds light on the unique challenges that asylum seekers experience as a result of MPP is vital.

THE PRESENT STUDY

Although previous literature has highlighted the need to improve the quality of life and well-being of asylum-seeking children (Garcini et al., 2020; Warshaw, 2019), additional literature is needed to understand the unique experiences of the asylum-seeking children who are living in tent encampments. In this study, we used testimonio research in the form of asylum seekers' artistic accounts to explore their experiences as children living in "tent city." Our research took place at the Matamoros, Tamaulipas tent encampment, the largest encampment on the Southwest border (Sanchez, 2020). We completed our research prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and before border travel restrictions were implemented. We present participants' art to amplify their voices and to bring visibility to the inhumane conditions they have endured.

METHOD

Testimonio research, "a subjective, critical, and political methodological approach (Cervantes, Flores Carmona, & Torres Fernández, 2018; Domínguez & Noriega, 2020, p.7)," was used in this study to capture the experiences of 7 asylum seeking children who were going through the asylum application process in the U.S.-Mexico border. Emerging out of Latin American studies (Booker, 2002) and in reaction to Eurocentric and traditional research paradigms (Cervantes et al., 2018; Cervantes & Torres Fernández, 2016), testimonio research explores the stories, narratives, and first-person accounts of participants' lived experiences (Hernandez-Arriaga, 2017). Testimonios can be shared in written format (e.g., autobiography, journal entries, letters), oral form (e.g., spoken word, interviews), art, or other materials and are analyzed by the researchers to represent the meaning it has for its author (Domínguez, Hernandez-Arriaga, & Paul, 2020; Hernandez-Arriaga, 2017). This methodological approach "is not meant to be hidden, made intimate, nor kept secret. Rather, testimonio research is meant to catalyze creative dissent and bring to light a wrong, a point of view, or an urgent call for action (Reyes & Rodriguez, 2012, p. 525)." We relied on artistic testimonios as a decolonizing methodological approach to present the experiences of our participants.

PARTICIPANTS

Seven asylum seekers representing 2 countries were recruited for this study. Five identified as female and 2 identified as male. Ages ranged from 7 to 9 years with an average age of 8 years old. Participants were living at a

migrant camp known as “tent city” in Matamoros, Mexico after: (a) being forcibly displaced from their home country due to a combination of violence, political unrest, absolute poverty, and human rights violations, (b) traveling under cruel conditions and exposed to serious threats across Mexico (e.g., extortion, robbery, physical and sexual assault, etc.), (c) and experiencing long delays in the processing of their asylum claims. All participants were impacted by the implementation of MPP. Participants were given pseudonyms, and all identifying markers were removed from this study (e.g., names blurred from drawings). See Table 1 for more detailed demographic information about participants.

PROCEDURE

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects at the University of San Francisco [#1145]. Following receipt of IRB approval, we traveled to Matamoros, Mexico. Prior to conducting any interviews, we reviewed the ethics code for psychologists in Mexico, a product of the Mexican Society of Psychology (i.e., SMP). Once we arrived at “tent city,” two Mexican psychologists were available by phone for consultation during the study. To ensure that our collaboration with the children was not influenced by a colonial or hegemonic approach, we interacted with participants over several days to build rapport and to first address food, clothes, and bedding needs. In addition, local humanitarian volunteers traveled to “tent city” with us to offer supervision. These humanitarian volunteers were familiar with the children and had established a close and trusting relationship with them. The inclusion criteria for this study was the following: (b) ages 7-18 years old, (b) asylum seeking child, (c) Latinx-identified, (d) impacted by MPP. All participating children were accompanied by at least one parent during the study.

Given the sensitive nature of this study, interviews were conducted in Spanish and audio-recorded by the first author, a bilingual/bicultural licensed social worker with qualitative and trauma-informed training. The second author was available by phone during and after the interviews to offer support and assistance to the first author. The interviews were conducted individually under a tent with art supplies, tables, chairs, snacks, toys for play, and coloring book kits.

Prior to drawing their artistic testimonio, the first author reviewed the informed consent form with parents, received assent from children, and stressed that participation was voluntary. Parents and children were told that their names and any identifying information would not appear in any documents or publications. The children and their parent(s) understood that participation was voluntary and that they could discontinue participation at any time. In addition, demographic questions were used to collect data on age, gender, nationality, immigration status, and length

of time living in tent city. Once parents consented and children assented to participate, they were invited to share their artistic testimonios. Participants were told that at the conclusion of our time together, they would have the option to keep their drawing or share their art with others. We explained that their drawings would be showcased at professional presentations and published in academic journals.

Subsequently, participants were asked by the first author to reflect and respond in art form to the following prompt- Using these art supplies, please draw a message that you would like to share with others regarding your experiences here in the camp. The prompt was broad to allow asylum seeking children to explore their experiences freely. Although this study focuses on the experiences of asylum-seeking children, both parents and children were given a small canvas to draw and paint. Some participants requested a second canvas. It is important to note that mental health services were not provided at any point during the study.

All testimonios were drawn and collected in October 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic. The audio recordings and drawn testimonios were stored by the first author in an encrypted and locked file. The second author was responsible for de-identifying the drawn testimonios prior to sharing them with others. In addition, both authors committed to continued follow up with the families and children beyond the conclusion of our study. We have maintained ongoing phone communication with all participants and continue to speak with them.

TESTIMONIOS

Attached to each artistic testimonio, we include a brief description of the drawing. In some cases, we also include information about interactions we may have had with participants and their parents during our trip in Matamoros or during subsequent phone conversations after we returned to the United States.

DRAWING 1. AMA A TU PRÓJIMO

The first art piece was drawn by Mariposa, a nine-year-old female from Honduras. She came with her younger sister and both parents to participate in the study. She first drew a river in the middle of the white canvas. On one side of the river, the U.S. side, she drew her “tía” [aunt]. On the Mexican side of the river, she drew her parents and two siblings with a smile and tears streaming down their face. While drawing, Mariposa voiced her dream of being reunited with her tía. Swimming in the river, she drew alligators, the same river in which she bathes-in daily.

When the first author asked Mariposa and her parents about the alligators in the drawing, her father indicated that they both had witnessed their presence in the river. At the far-right end of the river, Mariposa drew a

picture of a police vehicle, which she identified as “la migra.” Under “la migra,” she drew a “puente” [bridge], the same bridge that Mariposa and her family have stood on repeated times to attend their multiple asylum court dates. In her drawing, she also wrote the words, “You’re your neighbor as yourself. My name is [blurred to protect confidentiality] and I want to leave here [i.e., leave tent city] because I cannot be happy, and I cannot sleep.”

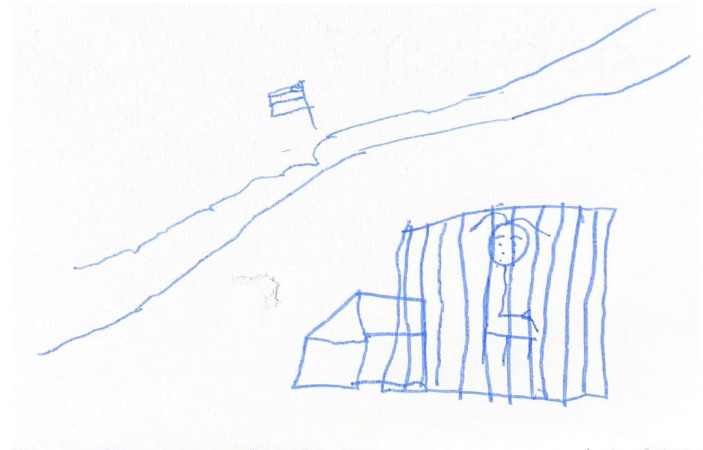
While she continued drawing, she told the first author, “Queremos llegar a los Estados Unidos, ya no quiero estar aquí. [We want to arrive in the United States. I don’t want to be here anymore.]”



DRAWING 2. LA PESADILLA

This art piece was drawn by Luna, a seven-year-old female from Honduras. She came to our study in the company of her father. At a diagonal angle on the canvas, Luna drew the U.S. flag across the Rio Grande. She drew herself on the Mexican side of the river inside a cage. Next to the cage, she drew a tent and explained that this is the same tent in which she sleeps every night. While drawing, she shared, “Extraño a mi mamá y mi casa, pero no estaba segura en mi país [I miss my mom and home, but I wasn’t safe in my country].”

After our return to the U.S., we continued having phone conversations with Luna’s father. During one of our conversations, he indicated that Luna was forced to shelter in isolation with him because they were both exposed to COVID-19. He reported that as a result of the “increased stress” and “isolation” she experienced, she began sleepwalking and experiencing frequent night terrors. According to her father, her time in isolation in addition to the fact that Luna witnessed the removal of a couple of bodies from the river, has haunted her memory.



DRAWING 3. LA TIERRA PROMETIDA

This art piece was drawn by David, a seven-year-old male from Honduras. He came to our study in the company of his mother. While carefully grabbing a marker with his small hands, he proudly shared “Soy de Honduras.” He drew the U.S. on one side of the Rio Grande river and tall trees on both sides of the border. While drawing, he shared quietly with his eyes down, “Esta es America, a donde no me dejan ir [That is America, where they are not letting me go].” He explained that “la migra” had sent him to live in the camp because “no nos quieren [they don’t like us].” In his drawing, he named the U.S., “La Tierra prometida [The promised land].” He elaborated on his hopes to be able to “cruzar la frontera un día con mi familia [cross the border one day with my family]” and discussed his dreams of going to school in the United States, “quiero estudiar [I want to study].” According to his mother, David has not had access to consistent school or learning since they arrived at the tent encampment.



DRAWING 4. NUESTRAS CARPAS

This art piece was drawn by Paolo, a seven-year-old male from Honduras. He came to our study in the company of his mother. With his small hands, he reached over to grab a canvas and asked for markers. Slowly and with focus, he drew tents of different shapes, colors, and sizes, representing the camping tents where asylum seekers sleep and wake up every night and day. Paolo also drew a blue truck on the other side of the river and said, “Aqui esta [here is] la migra.” While he was drawing, his mom shared that Paolo cries at night because his back is in pain from sleeping on a thin mat.



DRAWING 5. FLORIDA

This art piece was drawn by Angelica, a nine-year-old female from Guatemala. She came to our study in the company of her mother. She wrote the word “Florida” on the U.S. side of the border where her “primos [cousins]” are waiting for her. While drawing, she explained that “la migra” policed asylum seekers, “cachando a los que cruzan el río [catching those that crossed the river].” Angelica explained, “Esta es mi familia llorando, ya queremos irnos de aquí porque las condiciones donde vivimos son muy difíciles. Ya no aguantamos [This is my family. They are crying. We want to leave this place because the conditions where we live are very difficult. We can’t tolerate it anymore].”

While she drew, Angelica’s mother shared they both had left their home in Guatemala to escape violence. She explained that the flag that her daughter had drawn, represented “nuestro sueño para cruzar y estar con mi familia [their dream to cross and be with her family].”



DRAWING 6. LA JAULA

This art piece was drawn by Esperanza, a seven-year-old female from Honduras. She came to our study in the company of her mother and father. She appeared excited to share her thoughts as part of this study. She took her time focusing intently on drawing the Rio Grande. Then, she drew a small U.S. flag next to her tia [aunt] on the U.S. side. On the Mexican side, she drew herself all alone trapped in a cage. She explained, “Yo ya me quiero ir de aquí. Quiero que el Presidente de Estados Unidos nos ayude. Tengo miedo. Ya quiero dormir en una cama. [I want to leave this place. I want the President of the United States to help us. I am afraid. I can’t wait to sleep in a bed].”

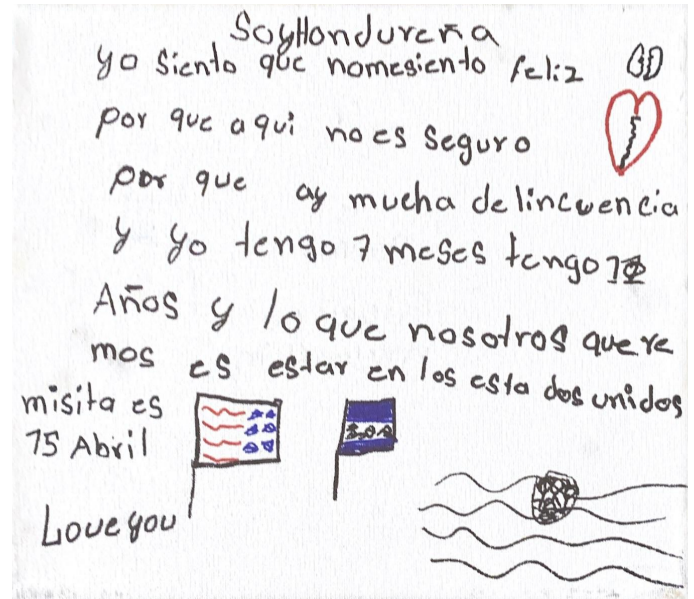
After our return to the U.S., we continued communicating with her father using group messaging (i.e., Whatsapp). In one of those messages, he stated “lo que ella

está viviendo es puro sufrimiento [what she is living through is pure suffering].”



DRAWING 7. MIS PALABRAS

This art piece was drawn by Luz, a nine-year-old female from Honduras. She came to our study in the company of her mother and father. To start, Luz wrote down on the canvas her national identity, “Soy Hondureña [I am Honduran].” On the bottom right corner of the canvas, she drew the river and explained, “Este es el río y aquí hay un familia cruzando para Estados Unidos [Here is the river and there is a family crossing to the United States].” She drew the U.S. and the Honduran flags side by side and wrote her family’s asylum court date. Rather than using additional images, Luz focused on using words to share her message in Spanish. She explained that she wanted others to understand what she is living through, “I do not feel happy because it is not safe here. There is a lot of violence and I have seven months here and I am seven years old. What we want is to be in the United States.” Next to these words she drew two broken hearts, one on top of the other. On the bottom left corner, she signed off, “Love You.”



DISCUSSION

Using testimonio research, we explored the experiences of 7 Central American asylum-seeking children in a “migrant camp” in Matamoros, Mexico. The testimonios were collected in an open-air tent encampment, where asylum seekers have lived in unsafe, unsanitary, and hazardous conditions while they await their asylum interview. We presented their testimonios in the form of drawings to bring to light the human rights violations taking place every day that MPP is in effect. The art pieces show images of the Rio Grande, bridges, cages, alligators, tents, tears, broken hearts, and representations of “la migra.” While drawing, children recounted repeated experiences of fear, isolation, and inhumane conditions. Their drawings display the pain and suffering caused by the U.S. and Mexican governments’ failure to protect asylum seekers, especially children. Through their drawings, we can see that they are calling on others to witness their harrowing journeys.

LIMITATIONS

The testimonios in this study should be understood within the context of certain limitations. The asylum-seeking children in this study were only from one “migrant camp,” the Matamoros, Tamaulipas tent encampment. In addition, artistic testimonios were collected only once; therefore, this study does not report on how participants’ experiences may have changed over time. Future studies may benefit from including asylum seeking children from a variety of areas across the U.S.’s southern border to explore how their experiences may be different based on geographic location or border crossing and should explore how their experiences change days and even months after living in “tent city.” Although these limitations exist, the current

study provides initial information that can help health professionals better understand the experiences of children who are impacted by the “Remain in Mexico” policy.

ADVOCACY IMPLICATIONS

Psychology research has shown that psychological stress in disadvantaged communities can be reduced through access to safe housing, economic security, adequate nutrition and education, affordable health care, and quality childcare (Bullock, 2019), all resources that asylum seekers in “tent” city are lacking due to MPP. Therefore, we demand the eradication of MPP. To accomplish the eradication of MPP and other racist immigration policies, a broad coalition of health associations and experts such “as health economists, health policy groups, and policymakers” will have to boldly protest the ways in which these policies harm the physical and psychological health of asylum seekers, especially children (Domínguez et al., 2020, p. 2). Psychologists from the National Latinx Psychological Association (NLPA), for example, should collaborate with other health associations and build interdisciplinary partnerships to hold the federal government accountable to protect those who are most vulnerable. We also propose that all members of NLPA must leverage their power to explain how oppressive policies such as MPP are rooted in racism, anti-Blackness, nativism, and xenophobia (Domínguez & Noriega, 2020).

MPP and other racist policies will not be eradicated unless psychologists move beyond the comfort of the therapy room, the classroom, and the research lab. Psychologists will have to adopt a boots-on-the-ground approach and participate in an active national effort around migrant justice. Such participation can be accomplished by participating actively in grassroots and humanitarian efforts that work to improve the lives of asylum seekers. Active participation requires ongoing struggle, conviction for change, and the political will to speak-up against oppressive systems of power such as Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Those of us who have witnessed the relentless fear and helplessness that asylum seeking children are living through, as portrayed in their artistic testimonios, must speak out, uplift their voices, and amplify their stories to demand change. As professionals in the field of mental health, we must demand the immediate eradication of MPP.

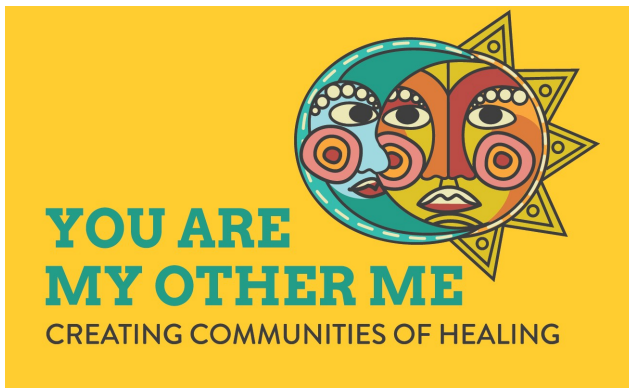
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Dr. Belinda Hernandez-Arriaga identifies as a Mexican social worker and dissenter who fights for the abolition of racist immigration policies and carceral systems. **Dr. Daniela G. Domínguez** author identifies as a Queer Latinx psychologist, abolitionist educator from Mexico, and activist who is fighting in collaboration with others to abolish Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Both authors are assistant professors at the University of San Francisco and volunteer members of the Bay Area Border Relief, a humanitarian organization that serves and advocates for children and families seeking their right to asylum. Drs. Belinda Hernandez-Arriaga and Daniela G. Domínguez are also health professionals with a special interest in trauma and migrant justice. Between 2018 and 2020, they took multiple trips to the U.S.-Mexico border to support asylum seekers with first-aid crisis supplies distribution, fundraising efforts (e.g., crowdfunding to pay for tents and showers), and referrals for legal support and housing. Their pre-existing relationship with asylum seekers at “tent city” in Matamoros, established a foundation of trust and facilitated participants’ support of this research study.



TAKING NLPA 2020 VIRTUAL #NLPA2020

ELIZABETH ARANDA¹

As you know, the NLPA Conference is one of the highlights of our association, providing a time and space where we can all be together; however, the Covid-19 pandemic has made us rethink our plans for the 2020 Conference. We understand that health and safety are the priority at this time and do not want to compromise these by hosting an in-person conference. Thus, the National Latinx Psychological Association has moved its 2020 annual conference to a virtual format, currently scheduled to take place October 28-30.

The theme of the conference is “You Are My Other Me: Creating Communities of Healing.” This theme, inspired by the Mayan precept *In Lakech*, reminds us that just as the night does not exist without the day, everything is connected, and we are all a part of the same universal vibration. It is these values of unity, collectivity, and respect that we hold as the foundation for our event.

We all long for the opportunity to connect, and while the details of the virtual format are still being finalized, be assured that the experiences which we have come to know and love at the NLPA conferencia will remain the same. We are

excited to continue our traditions of celebrating the achievements of our various communities, honoring the spirit of collaboration with an amazing scientific program, offering opportunities for continuing education credits, and creating spaces for social connection and networking. We will be infusing the heart and spirit of our comunidad into an uplifting and unforgettable online experience. We look forward to our familia coming together and joining in this restorative space.

To our familia in Denver, we saddened to miss out on your beautiful city this year. We are planning to visit next year for the 2021 Conference.

For up-to-date information and registration details please visit our conference website: www.nlpaconference.org

*In Lak Ech, tu eres mi otro yo,
Estamos contigo en estos momentos,*

Elizabeth Aranda, PhD
2020 Conference Chair



1. Elizabeth Aranda (she/her) is a counseling psychologist, educator, and co-conspirator in the pursuit of collective liberation. Active in various NLPA leadership positions since 2014, she served our organization through her roles as a member of the Orgullo collective, chair of the Name Change Task Force, LDI fellow for CNPAAEMI, and ECP representative. She currently serves as the Chair of the 2020 Conference Planning Committee in collaboration with NLPA President Andrea Romero and Conference Consultant Cynthia Guzman. Navigating the unique experiences and challenges of a first-generation QWOC in Texas inspired her passion for developing practices that center on holistic wellness and healing. It is within this framework that she is inspired to infuse NLPA 2020 with the spirit of empowerment, resilience, and comunidad.

#NLPA2020

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CREATING COMMUNITIES OF HEALING

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Coronavirus Pandemic: A Trigger for Survivor's Guilt?

Rita M. Rivera^{1,2}

Department of Clinical Psychology, Albizu University

ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic is a collective traumatic phenomenon that is experienced differently by millions of individuals across the world. As the situation continues to unfold, mental health experts warn of the possibility of experiencing symptoms of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Whereas many individuals experience these conditions due to the loss of loved ones, others feel guilt of surviving the novel virus. Survivor's guilt is a syndrome that is generally experienced by those who have survived a life-threatening event while others have not. Regarding the coronavirus, individuals across the globe wonder why they were able to survive the disease while their family and friends passed away. Others also feel guilty because they are asymptomatic and do not have to endure the repercussions of the pandemic like their loved ones. Many may experience inappropriate guilt regarding socio-economic circumstances, such as having employment while their friends have lost their source of income. Survivor's guilt can result in psychological and physical symptoms, such as sleep disturbances, suicidal ideation, heart palpitations, and gastrointestinal issues. Moreover, survivor's guilt can exacerbate feelings of depression and anxiety and lead individuals to experience fear, confusion, and feelings of disconnection. This paper focuses on describing how the coronavirus pandemic can trigger survivor's guilt. The author highlights the psychological and physiological symptomatology of this syndrome and provides strategies and interventions that can be applied to reduce these effects.

Keywords: coronavirus, pandemic, survivor guilt, trauma

Coronavirus Pandemic: A Trigger for Survivor's Guilt?

The Covid-19 pandemic has unleashed both physical and mental distress throughout the world. The situation has become a collective traumatic experience that has disrupted the lives of millions across the globe in unprecedented ways. These disruptions have also manifested widespread stress and anxiety levels that can be conducive to inappropriate feelings of remorse, which can lead to survivor's guilt. Survivor's guilt, also known as survivor's syndrome, is a condition that can occur when an individual survives a traumatic or life-threatening event that others do not. Survivors of traumatic events struggle with incessant questions regarding the meaning of their survival, as well as the role they may have played in the death and tragedy of others. For example, those who experience survivor's syndrome may believe their survival came at the expense of those who died (Murray, 2018). Regarding the Coronavirus pandemic (CP), individuals can experience overbearing guilt when they hold the belief that they exposed family members or loved ones to the virus. Furthermore, others may question why they were able to survive while family and friends became victims of the novel disease.

SYMPTOMATOLOGY OF SURVIVOR'S GUILT

Those who experience survivor's guilt can endure debilitating psychological and physiological symptoms. The symptomatology often resembles that of traumatic-stress disorders, such as PTSD. Some of these symptoms include obsessive thoughts or rumination, irritability, anger, feelings of helplessness and/or hopelessness, confusion, feelings of disconnection, suicidal ideation, sleep disturbances, headaches, heart palpitations, nausea and/or stomachache. Survivor's syndrome can also exacerbate preexisting mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, obsessions, and compulsions (Hutson et al., 2015). In addition, these symptoms can cause significant impairment of individuals' ability to function across different domains, such as occupational and social. For example, distress experienced from both psychological and physiological symptoms can negatively impact a person's work performance or productivity. Also, the intense psychological distress from the experienced trauma can encourage an individual to avoid those who they may

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psychological distress from the experienced trauma can encourage an individual to avoid those who they may associate with the event, thus hindering the individual's interpersonal relationships.

Covid-19 as a Trigger for Survivor's Guilt

Covid-19 can trigger survivor's guilt in different ways. Whereas many experience fear and remorse about the possibility of spreading the virus to their loved ones, others feel guilt when comparing their socio-economic circumstances to that of others. Individuals may feel upset at the notion that they were able to continue working during the pandemic while their friends became unemployed. People can also experience distress at the fact that they are working remotely from home while others, such as frontline workers, are unable to do so and are more likely to be exposed to the virus. In many cases, frontline workers choose to quarantine at home away from their loved ones as a method to avoid infecting them. In these cases, the family members and friends may experience guilt from observing the frontline workers bear this fear and psychological burden. Moreover, survivor's guilt may also manifest among health care workers and mental health practitioners. For example, medical providers, such as doctors and nurses, may experience remorse when they believe they could have done more to save a patient's life (Maguen & Price, 2020). Surviving the novel Coronavirus while others have not may also lead medical providers to feel helpless, specifically after witnessing the deaths of many patients and colleagues. Concerning mental health practitioners, such as psychologists and therapists, these individuals may experience remorse and guilt after losing a patient to Covid-19 or when feeling unable to help patients with the psychological toll of the pandemic.

Covid-19 has also altered how individuals mourn and grieve their loved ones. This interruption in the grief process may also trigger and exacerbate survivor's syndrome. For example, Covid-19 deaths may be considered "bad" deaths due to their distressing nature, specifically if they violate cultural or religious expectations for peaceful death (Carr et al., 2020). People may feel guilt after observing their loved ones experience a painful and unexpected death. Furthermore, in most cases, governments have introduced regulations that prevent people from practicing memorial and funeral services. As part of their sanitary regulations, hospitals and medical institutions may prevent individuals from saying goodbye to loved ones. The loss of face-to-face memorial services and rituals can lead individuals to feel as if they have not properly honored the dead, as well as experience a lack of social support and comfort from other family members and friends. All of these circumstances can give rise to psychological distress and mental exhaustion.

SURVIVOR'S GUILT IN LATINX POPULATIONS

Survivor's syndrome can be experienced by individuals across different ethnicities and cultures, including those who identify as Latinx. Research has shown that one of the most pervasive values in Latinx culture is the importance of family, which leads these individuals to experience a heightened sense of responsibility for their loved ones (Skogrand et al., 2005; Clark, 2018). Due to the notion that Latinx populations tend to be family oriented, many of these individuals place emphasis on family gatherings and group activities. The regulations imposed to control the spread of the virus, specifically measures involving social distancing and limitations regarding group gatherings, could be leading Latinx individuals to experience feelings of remorse and guilt for not being able to spend time with their families. Furthermore, those who have unfortunately lost their jobs or sources of income may feel responsible and guilty for being unable to financially provide for their family members, including their extended families or loved ones who live in other countries. Latinx individuals who have lost loved ones during the CP may also be experiencing survivor's syndrome, especially if unable to participate in burial ceremonies and traditions or if they were barred from saying goodbye to their loved one in person.

COPING WITH SURVIVOR'S GUILT

Despite limitations regarding the understanding of the psychological impact of the CP, previous and current research on survivor's guilt has identified several strategies and interventions that can be implemented to cope with both the physical and psychological symptomatology of the syndrome. Those who are experiencing inappropriate guilt or remorse should start by accepting and acknowledging their feelings (Leonard, 2019). Recognizing these feelings as normal responses to trauma can help people process the experience as well as the guilt, remorse, and loss. Moreover, mindfulness and grounding techniques can help treat the physical and psychological symptoms of survivor's guilt. Also, practicing breathing exercises has been recommended when experiencing overwhelming anxiety or distress. During these troubling times, it is particularly important for individuals to incorporate self-care practices that can foster self-appreciation and promote overall health (Leonard, 2019). Some recommended activities include meditation, journaling, creating art, exercising, maintaining a healthy diet, and getting enough sleep. Lastly, those experiencing survivor's guilt should consider seeking professional help. Individual therapy and support groups can help people identify the cause of their distress, process their experiences, and learn coping strategies. Although these are indeed unprecedented times, and traumatic experiences can lead to great psychological distress, healing and recovery are possible.

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Rita Michelle Rivera is originally from San Pedro Sula, Honduras. Rita is currently pursuing a Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology at Albizu University in Miami, Florida with a concentration in neuropsychology. She is Chair of the Florida Psychological Association of Graduate Students (FPAGS), President-elect of the Florida Graduate Coalition for Medical Psychology, President of the Student Council at Albizu University, and Co-chair of several working groups of the APA's Interdivisional Covid-19 Taskforce. Rita's areas of interest include trauma, psychoneuroimmunology, and depressive disorders. She has experience working with Hispanic patients and high-risk populations both in the United States and in Honduras.

With Frida Kahlo, a 2020 PowWow

Autumn Marie Chilcote

Duquesne University



canvas, and

With Frida Kahlo, a 2020 PowWow.

Size: 17" x 29" (image size 7.5" x 19.5")

Medium: Recycled materials, mixed media.

PowWow dress L-R: Arapahoe, Arapahoe/Northern
Cheyenne, Chippewa/Sisseton.

I am Chicana, granddaughter of Yuman California Native peoples (Digueño/ Kumeeyay) from Baja and Alta California who were displaced as part of the Urban Relocation program. Like many other Indigenous people on this continent, the PowWow is the important coming together, offering continuity of culture and ceremony, marking our resilience, and a celebration of that which was outlawed in the US until 1978 as part of the colonial project. This year as public gatherings- including PowWow- have been cancelled due to COVID-19, we are reminded of the generations before us that were killed by the diseases of the colonial encounter: smallpox, flu, tuberculosis, diabetes, addictions, racial trauma, in light of the particular effect that COVID has had on Native, Chicana, and Latinx peoples. Frida Kahlo engaged with similar ideas of health disparities and injustices of the colonial project, using her own gendered and sexualized body as both literal and figurative

I believe much of her work represents her own difficulties negotiating her intersectional experiences as both privileged and disempowered. Her works included appropriating Native costume and imagery, a paradox wherein she integrated essentialized cultural markers of indigeneity to amplify externally-determined inequities (such as those of the Brown and Black Indio). In this piece, I take up both the problematics of essentializing, and the necessary preservation of cultural markers from what would be an imperial genocide. Frida Kahlo herself has become a monolithic allegorical artist and activist, symbolic rather than flesh and blood, relatable to so many Natives including myself, and indeed part of the perseverance of PowWow as ceremony: that which has become essential and is problematically essentialized, an expanded lived experience of both the colonial and the critical decolonizing

With Frida Kahlo, a 2020 PowWow

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Chippewa/Sisseton

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MEET YOUR NLPA NEWSLETTER EDITORIAL TEAM



Fiorella L. Carlos Chavez, Ph.D.
Editor

Fiorella L. Carlos Chavez is originally from Lima, Peru. She left her family when she was 18 years old to pursue her undergraduate education in the United States. She believed that a degree in economics and business would provide her with a happy, fulfilled life. However, that was far from being true. While working as a bilingual therapist in Southern California, Fiorella realized that true happiness and fulfillment lies in the human capacity to touch and improve the lives of others, especially those at the margins of society. She graduated with her Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Science from Florida State University and has successfully secured a two-year national competitive post-doctoral fellowship in Human Development and Family Science at the University of Missouri, Columbia.

As an immigrant Latina, Fiorella's research focusses on the well-being of Latino immigrant families and youth in the U.S. She is particularly interested on the implications of family, work, and cultural-related stressors on Latino migrant youth' mental health and development. For her dissertation titled: "Family Decisions, Stressors, And Health Challenges Among Latino Emancipated Migrant Farmworker Youth: A Mixed-Methods Approach," Fiorella was awarded a two-year initiatives grant from Kappa Omicron Nu (KON), the National Honor Society for the Human Sciences. In 2019, Fiorella was awarded with the 2019 Small Grants for Early Career Scholars Program from the Society for Research in Child Development [SRCD]. Her grant application examines the adult-like behaviors and unique characteristics of Latino emancipated migrant youth (EMY) in agriculture through the application of a parallel mixed-method design. Fiorella loves mixed-methods research and learning things on her own. She has a passion for traveling, learning new cultures, and mentoring students from diverse backgrounds.

Aldo Barrita (he/his/el) was born in Mexico City, and raised in Oaxaca, immigrated to US at age of 17. He is currently a doctoral student for the Experimental Psychology Ph.D. Program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). He received his Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of California, Berkeley in 2017 with high honors. Additionally, he has worked for over 2 years at rehabilitation centers with individuals suffering from substance use disorders in Southern CA as Program Director. Aldo Barrita completed an honors thesis that focused on the effects of inequality on social decision making and has 4 years of experience working in clinical and social psychology research labs. Aldo Barrita currently serves as a member of the Diversity & Inclusion Psychology Faculty/Student committee at UNLV, as the media coordinator for the National Latinx Psychological Association (NLPA), Media Chair for the 2020 NLPA Convention and as president of the Experimental Student Graduate Committee at UNLV.

As a queer Latinx immigrant, Aldo's research investigate the impact of oppressive systems on Latinx immigrants, and LGBTQ+ BIPOC communities using a intersectional approach. Specifically, his research focus includes how different forms of discrimination, primarily microaggressions, impact the well-being of individuals from marginalized communities.



Aldo M. Barrita, B.A.
Associate Editor



Loíza DeJesús, B.A.
Assistant Editor

Loíza DeJesús (she/her/ella) is in her 2nd year in the MA General Psychology program at Roosevelt University in Chicago. She is an APA Campus Ambassador and member of Psi Chi. She graduated from DePaul University in 2016 with a BA in Power & Identity Studies. She will be applying to doctoral programs in the Fall of 2020.

Currently, Loíza serves as a Schweitzer Fellow under the supervision of Dr. Bibiana Adames. Her fellowship project, a collaboration with the Segundo Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center, is a community-based, culturally rooted, positive youth development intervention for high school students from the Northwest Side of Chicago. Her research interests include the role of culture as a protective factor in youth development, the impact of intergenerational trauma and structural violence on BIPOC communities, and community-based praxis. In her tenure as an Assistant Editor, Loíza hopes to bring a greater voice to all NLPA student members and provide space for students, especially in their undergraduate and master's years to find a home in NLPA.

Dr. Sanchez is an AfroLatina licensed psychologist and Associate Professor in Educational Psychology at the University of Texas at Austin. Her research focuses on the effects of racism and health inequities on mental and behavioral health outcomes of diverse Black and Latinx populations. She received her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from Columbia University and her Ed.M. in Human Development and Psychology from Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Central to her work is identifying and incorporating cultural-specific protective constructs into her research design and interventions for youth of color.

Dr. Sanchez is currently the Area Chair of the Counseling Psychology and Counselor Education programs at the University of Texas and is a member of American Psychological Association's Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA). She teaches courses in multicultural counseling, Latinx psychology, practicum, counseling skills and psychotherapy to undergraduate, master and doctoral students.



Delida Sanchez, Ph.D.
Column Coordinator



Chris Rodriguez, M.Ed.
Assistant Editor

Chris Rodriguez is a third-year doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology program at Lehigh University. She earned her Bachelor's in Psychology and Master's in Mental Health Counseling at Florida Atlantic University. She currently serves as a member of the Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Committee and as Graduate Assistant of the Office of Multicultural Affairs at Lehigh. Her interests' centers around examining cultural factors related to parent-child relationships and attachment within Latinx families. She is passionate about social justice, community engagement and providing culturally competent therapy. She joined NLPA in 2019 and has been inspired by the sense of community and advocacy displayed by its members. She is excited to be joining the NLPA newsletter as assistant editor and to share the contributions of our NLPA members and bring to the forefront prevalent matters of our community.

Paola Mendoza (she/her/ella/la) is pursuing a Master of Arts degree in Counseling Psychology with a concentration in Latinx Mental Health at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology in Chicago, Illinois. Originally from the state of Oregon, Paola completed a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and a Bachelor's degree in Sociology with a concentration in Crime and Justice from Oregon State University. For the last few years, Paola has been immersed in the field of Maternal and Perinatal Mental Health—the period encompassing pregnancy, birth, and postpartum. She's worked alongside Latina mothers and the Latinx population to help them in the process of discovering their strengths and learning healthy coping mechanisms that work for them. Her research interests lie within the intersection of Latinx Mental Health, BIPOC cultural identity, and Intergenerational Trauma, particularly as it pertains to systemic racism and discrimination experienced by these communities. Paola is an APA Campus Ambassador and has been a member of the collective community that is the NLPA since 2019. During her time as Assistant Editor and Social Media Coordinator Assistant, Paola will use her passion for psychology and justice to amplify the voices of the NLPA student population, professionals, and the Latinx community at large; simultaneously shedding light on the strengths of the community, social justice issues, and racial injustice.



Paola Mendoza, B.A.
Assistant Editor



Antonella Bariani, M.A.
Assistant Editor

Antonella is a fourth-year doctoral student in the Clinical Psychology PhD program at Alliant International University, San Diego. She previously attended John Jay College of Criminal Justice where I obtained my Bachelor's and Master's degree in Forensic Psychology. Through her academic career, she discovered a passion for social justice and developed clinical and research interests in the intersection of trauma, posttraumatic outcomes, and cultural identities. She joined NLPA in 2019 and was thrilled at the sense of support provided within this organization. Academic organizations may feel intimidating to graduate students who are beginning to mold their professional identity; however, it was immediately obvious that this was not the case with NLPA. As such, she was eager to jump on the opportunity to contribute to this community through joining the NLPA newsletter 2020-2021 board. While holding leadership positions within her own programs and schools, she is excited to learn more about the work that goes into creating a newsletter with the team this year. She hopes to contribute to the collective vision of the team to utilize the newsletter as a platform to highlight the diversity and strengths of the community. Particularly, she envisions the newsletter to be an outlet for students and others alike to feature their work and to emphasize important social justice issues that impact our community and the world at large. She hopes to help foster a newsletter that will serve as an accurate representation of the compassionate and driven community that is NLPA.



**THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION IS PROUD TO PUBLISH
THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL LATINX PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION**



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Clark University

The National Latinx Psychological Association (NLPA) and the Journals Program of the American Psychological Association (APA) have joined together to launch the *Journal of Latinx Psychology* (JLP) a peer-reviewed journal. JLP is committed to publishing scholarly writing on research, practice, advocacy, education, and policy relevant to Latinx communities. The journal publishes empirical, theoretical, methodological, and applied research.

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