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TIDINGS: FROM THE DIRECTOR

Six Paradoxes on the Theme of Migration

BY MAX O. STEPHENSON, JR.

Director, Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance

One of the Institute's long-term areas of research interest is the status of asylees, refugees and migrants around the world. While these groups have always constituted vulnerable populations in the United States and in many other nations as well, Donald Trump has, since 2015, led a campaign in the U.S. to demonize these individuals in the eyes of a substantial minority of Americans. He used his campaign for office and the four years of his administration, beginning in 2016, to vilify this population by claiming that most were criminals, terrorists or wastrels. His assertions were uniformly false, but his use of such tropes was hardly new in American history. Immigrants have long been ostracized in this country as somehow less than and dangerous to those who already reside here. Paradoxically, these claims have often been offered by those, including Trump, whose parents or grandparents were immigrants themselves.

As I write, several leaders in European and Latin American nations have emulated Trump and have similarly scapegoated immigrants and refugees to gain or to retain power. This rhetoric and policy stance was exacerbated in some European nations by the exodus created by the Syrian civil war and Afghanistan's collapse. This turn has led the European Union and the United States to adopt policies temporarily to suspend or block the international right to asylum, a convention those nations had long supported. Overall, these leaders' decisions and practices have led to a reality that finds the international community's most fragile states, with least capacity to do so, shouldering a continuing disproportionate responsibility for the world's migrants, refugees and asylum seekers despite efforts adopted by the United Nations in 2018 to avoid just such a scenario.

[READ MORE](#)

ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Dr. Max Stephenson, VTIPG Director, has been selected for the **Academic Keys Who's Who in Social Sciences Higher Education** (WWSSHE). Academic Keys provides a jobs board for academic employment and leads a network of senior university faculty across the country.

Congratulations, Max!



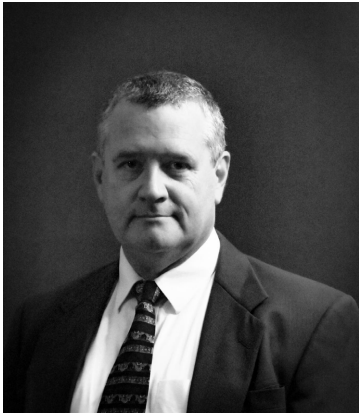
Dr. Jake Keyel, Planning, Governance and Globalization PhD alumnus (2019) and former Collegiate Professor in the Calhoun Center for Higher Education Innovation in the Virginia Tech Honors College, has accepted a new position!

Dr. Keyel is now serving as a Research Fellow with the Institute for Research in the Social Sciences at Colorado State University, in addition to being an affiliated faculty with that university's political science department. Dr. Keyel has already begun working remotely and will relocate to Fort Collins in July with his family.

Dr. Keyel has also accepted a 5-year editorial appointment with *The Sociological Review Journal*.

VTIPG Director Max Stephenson served as Chair of Dr. Keyel's doctoral advisory committee. During his PhD program, Dr. Keyel was also engaged with Community Voices, now Community Change Collaborative, and co-founded the graduate student journal, *Community Change*.

Congratulations, Jake!



Dr. David Moore, VTIPG Senior Research Faculty, has been appointed to the **Montgomery County Department of Social Services Board** by the County's Board of Supervisors. He will serve a four-year term. Social Services provides various benefits programs to local families including foster care, adoption, and day care services.

Congratulations, David!



School of Public and International Affairs Planning, Governance, and Globalization PhD program alumna **Dr. Anna Erwin** has published a third article based on her dissertation, entitled "Connecting Food Justice to Farmworkers through a Faith-Based Organization." You may find **details here**.

Dr. Erwin completed her doctorate in 2017 with Max Stephenson Jr. serving as her advisor. Dr. Erwin is currently serving as an assistant professor at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

Congratulations, Anna!



Lia Kelinsky-Jones successfully defended her dissertation, "Self-Reliance and Land-Grant Universities: An Exploration of the Impacts of USAID Policy on Agroecological Possibilities" in December 2021 in the Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education (ALCE) program. You may find [details here](#). Dr. Kim Nielwony (ALCE) chaired her advisory committee. Institute Director Max Stephenson Jr. also served on her committee. Dr. Kelinsky-Jones is now working as a Civic Science Fellow in the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University.

Congratulations, Lia!



Zuleka Woods successfully defended her preliminary examination in the Planning, Governance, and Globalization (PGG) Program in SPIA in November 2021. Her next step is her dissertation proposal defense. Special thanks to her committee: Chair and IPG Director Max Stephenson Jr., Professor Laura Zanotti of VT's Department of Political Science, Professor Ralph Hall of SPIA, and Professor Michelle Soledad of Mankato State University.

She is also the current President of the Community Change Collaborative.

Congratulations, Zuleka!



Eric Bendfeldt successfully defended his dissertation proposal in December 2021. He serves as an Extension Specialist and Associate Director for VT's Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation. Special thanks to his committee: Chair Dr. Kim Niewolny of the ALCE Department and Director of the Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation, Dr. Tom Archibald of the ALCE Department, Dr. Anne Stewart of James Madison University, and IPG Director Max Stephenson Jr.

Congratulations, Eric!



Marcel Worphy Pambo successfully completed his qualifying review in the Planning, Governance, and Globalization (PGG) Program in November 2021. His next step is his preliminary examination. Special thanks to his committee: Chair and IPG Director Max Stephenson Jr., Professors Laura Zanotti and Yannis Stivachtis, Department of Political Science, and Professor Onwubiko Agozino, Department of Sociology.

Congratulations, Marcel!

PROJECT UPDATES

VTIPG to Conduct Triennial Community Needs Assessment for Total Action for Progress



Total Action for Progress (TAP) has selected VTIPG to assist with its triennial Community Needs Assessment (CNA) to cover the following localities in its Virginia service area: the

counties of Alleghany, Bath, Botetourt, Craig, Roanoke, and Rockbridge, and the cities of Buena Vista, Covington, Lexington, Roanoke, and Salem. TAP will use the assessment results to guide the continued development and improvement of its programs and services based on the Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) cycle. The final Needs Assessment will align with Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Organizational Standards, and include statistical data, survey data, and qualitative information. The Needs Assessment will identify the top priorities in the service area including individual, household and community-level needs. It will also include information concerning the underlying causes of those needs. Finally, the Assessment will consider the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the communities TAP serves.

New River Valley Community Services and Mount Rogers Community Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration CCHBC Expansion Grant Updates

IPG's Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) Evaluation Team, led by IPG's Associate Director, **Mary Beth Dunkenberger** and IPG Research Associate, **Liz Allen**, continues to provide program evaluation and data management support to New River Valley Community



Services (NRVCS) and Mount Rogers Community Services (MRCS) for their on-going CCBHC grants. Each agency received 2-year SAMHSA CCHBC Expansion Grants in May 2020, with grants running through April 2022. The team provided similar services for NRVCS' previous 2018 SAMHSA CCBHC grant, which ended in fall 2020. These grants provide funding for expansion of mental health (MH) and substance use disorder (SUD) services to the uninsured and underserved in the regions the two agencies serve.

Fall team members include **Laura York** (data team manager), who recently completed her master's in public health (MPH) and has joined IPG as a research associate; and a data team comprised of IPG GRAs **Rabita Bane** and **Aparajita Sengupta** (PhD students in Public Administration and Public Affairs) and **Leslie Toney** (PhD student, Sociology).

Peer Empowered Addiction Recovery Living Program Opens Recovery House for Pregnant and Postpartum Women



Monica Flora, the Treatment and Recovery Coordinator at Piedmont Community Services (PCS), and her team of clinicians and peer recovery specialists have opened a new recovery house called the Grace House for pregnant and postpartum women (PPW) in Rocky Mount as part of the Peer Empowered Addiction Recovery Living

(PEARL) program. Safe and stable recovery housing is sorely needed in the service area, particularly for vulnerable populations such as PPW who want to stay with their children. PPW transitioning to recovery from substance use benefit from specialized ob-gyn/addiction medical care, which will be provided by PCS in partnership with physicians at Carilion Clinic. Mothers enrolled in the PEARL program can also access local childcare, workforce development, nutrition, wellness, and transportation resources. Virginia Tech faculty **Mary Beth Dunkenberger** and **Lara Nagle** of VTIPG, as well as **Mel Jones** and **Andrew McCoy** of the Virginia Tech Center for Housing Research, have provided technical assistance and capacity building to support the renovation of the house and to help to initiate the PEARL program during the past year with funding provided by a Virginia Opioid Response (SOR) grant.

Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology Grant Focuses on Promotion of Civil Discourse

Courtney Surmanek, VTIPG graduate assistant, dual degree Master's student in Urban and Regional Planning and Theatre Arts and adjunct instructor for the Center for Communicating Science, has been working on a grant from the Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology (ICAT) to develop new tools and practices to promote civil discourse through the social sciences. Her collaborators include **Todd Schenk** (SPIA, Virginia Tech), **Bob Leonard** (SoPA, Virginia Tech), **Taylor Wood** (SoPA, Virginia Tech), and **Dilksha Pilania** (MFA in Theatre and M. Arch Candidate, Virginia Tech).



To date, the team has staged a virtual production called *The Race 2020* that reached over 800 participants, has offered five workshops on civil discourse with more than 300 participants, and has developed an online version of 'Civility 101' training (www.civility.vt.edu). This year, the team is continuing to develop its interactive website, to create more advanced workshops (e.g., on anti-oppression), and a concept for an event in The Cube that will utilize its technical possibilities to facilitate an interactive, multidimensional conversation on civility.

You may watch an ICAT Playdate with team members [here](#).

CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Dr. LaDale Winling's CCC Faculty Forum Talk: "Racial Segregation and Community Engaged Research"

The Community Change Collaborative (CCC) at Virginia Tech hosted a faculty forum with **Dr. LaDale Winling** on December 3rd, 2021. Dr. Winling is an associate professor of history and core member of the public history program at Virginia Tech. His research and teaching explore urban and political history in the United States, especially how space, architecture, and geography shape politics, economic life, and daily experience. His book, **Building the Ivory Tower**, examined the role of American universities as real estate developers in the twentieth century.



Professor Winling uses spatial data tools in both his print and digital work. With collaborators, in 2016 he launched **Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America**, on the work of the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) to map and grade the credit worthiness of neighborhoods in cities across America. In 2018, he launched **Electing the House of Representatives, 1840-2016**, on Congressional elections, which has been featured in *The Atlantic*, *The New York Times*, and on *National Public Radio*, among other outlets.

You may watch Dr. Winling's Faculty Forum talk on YouTube [here](#).

~

CCC Faculty Forums are open to all students, faculty and community members. They provide a venue to learn about the community change work of Virginia Tech faculty and to engage in discussions concerning it. For more information and to join in this process of exchange, please contact Joong Won Kim, jkimsy@vt.edu.

An archive of recent CCC events featuring Lily Yeh, Alia Malek, Sage Crump, and Jiang Nengjie, among others, is now streaming on multiple platforms, including SoundCloud, iTunes, and Spotify. Please visit the [CCC website](#) for more information.

Community Change Journal Call for Submissions is Open!



The COVID-19 pandemic has illuminated the many ways that the virus can be transmitted. The coronavirus and efforts to mitigate it have become primary foci for many actors in numerous sectors of society. Their efforts have been complicated by the fact that the transmission of (mis/dis)information and stories, including many related to efforts to address the pandemic, have become central features of life during the COVID-19 era.

The fourth issue of *Community Change* seeks submissions that speak to the what, why and how of how ideas concerning community change are transmitted and attain

saliency. Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

- Modes of communication (e.g., social media, film, print, music, diplomacy, financial assistance). In what ways does a medium of communication help to reduce, sustain or expand social inequalities? Who are the gatekeepers of these communication channels and what influence have they exercised in shaping the message(s) that mobilize populations to change their governing ideas?
- Content of communication. What messages successfully shift the attitudes and behavior of a community and why?
- How does information transmission uncover (or hide) latent forms of socioeconomic inequality?
- How real, imagined and digital spaces/communities respond, adapt and challenge racism, class inequality, political polarization, sexism, homophobia and the power of the neoliberal project in the COVID-19 era.
- We also encourage reflections on other linked issues including (mis/dis)information, censorship, sensationalism, bias and corporate influence.

Submissions may take the form of scholarly articles, book reviews and multimedia presentations. Book reviews are encouraged for the following publications in particular:
Hungry Translations: Relearning the World through Radical Vulnerability by Richa Nagar (2019)
Surging Democracy: Notes on Hannah Arendt's Political Thought by Adriana Cavarero (2021)
Antiblackness by Moon-Kie Jung and João H. Costa Vargas (2021)

Key Dates:

CCJ will publish this issue on a rolling basis.

Deadlines for manuscript/presentation submissions:

- January 31, 2022
- February 28, 2022
- **Final Submission Deadline - March 31, 2022**

More **information about Submission requirements can be found here.**

Upcoming Conferences & Events

Poetry Cafe: "Planting the Seed"



The Community Change Collaborative has partnered with the Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation and several organizations to support a program of events on February 2, including an open mic night and **creative writing workshop** led by **Mr. Josephus Thompson III**, founder of the **Poetry Cafe** and host of 90.1 FM's "The Poetry Cafe" program. The creative writing workshop will be held from 1:00-2:30 p.m. at a location to be determined on Virginia Tech's campus with pre-event registration required. The reception preceding the open mic will be held at the Black Cultural Center from 5:00-6:00 p.m., followed by the main

event at Haymarket Theatre in Squires Student Center from 6:00-8:00 p.m. The program features the cultural art form of social transformation through creative expression and community weaving. Further event details can be found [here](#).

IPG Invites You to Our Open House!

The IPG building has been renovated! We are excited to reconnect with you in our updated office. Please save the date of **Thursday, March 17, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm** for an Open House at 201 West Roanoke Street, Blacksburg, VA, 24060. We will send any event updates via the IPG email listserv.



COMMENTARIES, ESSAYS & PUBLICATIONS

SOUNDINGS

A commentary series authored by VTIPG Director Max Stephenson.

January 10: **On 'Mending Wall' in Politics and Otherwise**

November 29: **Journalists Must Understand Nihilism and Democracy are Not Morally Equivalent**

November 15: **"Campaign Strategy", Lies and the Contest For America's Soul**

November 1: **Two Writers Illuminate the Nation's Governance Crisis**

October 18: **Imagination, Individual Will, Difference and Democratic Politics**

October 4: **"A Triumph of Techniques Over Purpose"***

September 20: **Taking Stock and Giving Thanks After Nearly 12 Years**

September 9: **Practicing Cruelty in the Quest for Power**

Books

Book contributions and publications by VTIPG Director Max Stephenson.

- *Maré from the Inside: Arts, Culture and Politics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil*, Editor with Nicholas Barnes and Desiree Poets. Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Tech Publishing, 2021. Paperback 978-1-949373-54-7; PDF 978-1-949373-55-4.
- Also: for that volume, Max Stephenson Jr., "Truth-telling, Meaning Making and Imagining the Future" (Chapter 6) and "Conclusion: On the Struggle for Freedom and Dignity" (Chapter 7). To accompany the Art Exhibit: *Maré from the Inside* shown at Virginia Tech Newman Library, April 19, 2021-September 30, 2021 and virtually as well.
- This book also was published in Portuguese, *Maré de Dentro, A exposição | Favelas do Rio de Janeiro | Complexo da Maré | Policiamento no Rio de Janeiro*, Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Tech Publishing, 2021.
- *Conversations in Community Change: Voices from the Field*. Editor with Cathy Grimes. With Introduction, Foreword, Afterword and Index, 250 pages. Blacksburg, VA: Virginia

Tech Publishing, 2021. ISBN: EPUB 978-1-949373-40-0; Paperback, 978-1-949373-38-7; PDF 978-949373-39-4.

Articles

Article contributions and publications by VTIPG Director Max Stephenson.

Accepted

- “Community Agency, Cultural Development and Sustainable Tourism.” *Annals of Tourism Research*, Accepted November 11, 2021. With Neda Moayerian* and Nancy McGehee. * Primary Author.
- “Considering the Deep Story: Imagination, Politics and Democratic Possibility,” book chapter for Meaghan Dougherty and Gillian Judson, eds. *Imagination’s Role in Educational Leadership*, New York: Columbia University Teacher’s College Press, 2022.

Published

- “Towards Defining and Advancing ‘Made in Africa Evaluation,’” *African Evaluation Journal*, ISSN: (Online) 2306-5133, (Print) 2310-4988, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v9i1.564>, Published November 9, 2021, Dayo Omosa,* Thomas Archibald, Max Stephenson, Jr., Kim Niewolny, James C. Anderson, II,. * Primary author.
- “Tacit Knowledge, Vulnerability and Agential Possibility in Rural Haiti,” *Community Development Journal*, 56 (4), October 2021, pp. 663–678, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsaa017> With Laura Zanotti.
- Review of “Spirit of the Spice of Life,” Alan Blum, published in *Academia: Letters*, 2021, Article 505, https://www.academia.edu/45576602/Spirit_as_the_Spice_of_Life.
- Review of the documentary film, *Sky and Ground* (Syrian refugee crisis) (2018), *Refuge: Canada’s Journal on Refugees*, 37(1), Spring 2021, <https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.40872>, With Neda Moayerian.

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



Professor Bob Leonard is a theatre maker, writer, teacher and arts organizer at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA, where he is the primary advisor for the MFA program in Directing and Public Dialogue. His work includes:

- Organizing projects and programs contributing to Virginia Tech’s celebration of its 150-year history as a land grant institution

- Building an on-line digital platform for neighbor-to-neighbor, peer-to-peer communications and knowledge sharing amongst the emerging field of community cultural development, grassroots and community-based art making, and people working in partnerships for economic and social justice.
- Leading ensemble-developed new plays as an expression of the public voice;
- Facilitating interactive theater techniques to generate, express and animate public dialogue and civic imagination in partnership with the New River Valley Regional Commission's comprehensive planning initiative and Montgomery County's Dialogue on Race.

Professor Leonard has been a longtime collaborator with VTIPG and Director Max Stephenson. For the past 15 years, the two have co-taught the graduate seminar "Arts, Culture, and Society." This annual Fall semester course has attracted students from a wide array of graduate programs, including Agriculture, Leadership and Community Education (ALCE), Urban and Regional Planning, ASPECT, Planning, Governance and Globalization, Theatre Arts, Forestry, Material Culture and Public Humanities, Business, Hospitality and Tourism Management and Landscape Architecture. The exchanges that emerge out of the dialogue in the seminar from these disparate perspectives have consistently been exciting, provocative and forward-facing. The seminar consists of discussions on emerging thought leaders and practitioners in the field who join in the seminar exchanges. The class has become an exploration of remarkable practices in the field grounded in critical thinking that connect theory with the actions and programs of professionals and active citizens across the country and around the globe.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Joong Won Kim received his BA in Sociology from Southern Illinois University Carbondale and MA in Sociology from DePaul University with distinction. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Sociology at Virginia Tech. Joong Won's research explores how racialization/ethnicization and language use become a catalyst for the global and transnational construction of race with Korea as an extension of the United States empire. Overall, his research is informed by his perspective as a 1.5 generation Korean American and his field work as an ethnographer.

Joong Won's scholarship is rooted squarely in the scholar-activist tradition: "I value the wealth of opportunities to engage with the community through scholarship and praxis. This has been a real highlight for me as I serve in my role as a graduate assistant for the Community Change Collaborative and the Institute for Policy and Governance. It has also been a privilege to serve and assist in organizing a place and space where intellectual curiosity can lead to praxis." Joong Won loves the Vermont jam band, *Phish*, "I simply find their music relatable with the aesthetic implicit in my professional work; that is, it's all about the balance between esoteric structure leading to a cathartic improvisational peak." He has seen *Phish* in concert 83 times and has co-authored an article regarding the group's fanbase and culture as those relate to racial framing. Joong Won has published in several academic peer-reviewed journals including, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *American Behavioral Scientist*, *Sociological Inquiry* and *Sustainability*.

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