

Review: ***A Sovereign State: Statelessness in the Western Hemisphere*** – Works in the Works  
A Talk by Prof. Javiela Evangelista  
Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Department of Humanities, City Tech, CUNY

For the Humanities Department's *Works in the Works* lecture series on Tuesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Prof. Javiela Evangelista introduced her research project on the revocation of the citizenship of thousands of Dominican nationals of Haitian descent. In her presentation, Prof. Evangelista discussed how she began her project on a 1991 Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) trip to Dominican Republic, where she started researching on Dominican discrimination against people of Haitian descent. She also shared with the audience her personal background that contributed to her research project.

Through a brief timeline of Haitians in Dominican Republic since its independence of Haiti in 1844, Prof. Evangelista described a picture of how anti-Haitian discrimination escalated in history. In recent decades, changes in migration laws are results of such discrimination. Changes in the General Law on Migration adopted in 2004, for example, put an end to granting Dominican nationality to people of Haitian descent by categorizing the Haitian immigrants as "in transit". The most devastating change was made by the Dominican Republic's Constitutional Court's judgment 168/13 in 2013, by which the citizenship of thousands of Dominican nationals of Haitian descent were retroactively revoked. This resulted in over 210,000 non-citizens, which is the largest stateless population in the Western Hemisphere to date and the fifth largest in the world at the time of revocation. Although the special Naturalization Law 169-14 was passed in 2014 in an attempt to adjust parts of the 2013 Constitutional Tribunal's ruling, nevertheless, deportation of Haitians started in 2015. Prof. Evangelista pointed out that these laws "demonstrate how anti-Haitian, anti-blackness and racialization are processes through which citizenship is measured and mobilized by states to reorder society and formalize hierarchies".

Prof. Evangelista also shared with the audience some of the projects she engages in as a public anthropologist and a participatory researcher, such as *Nos Cambió la Vida*. She also shared with the audience her recent talk at Loophole of Retreat: Venice and her research work done for the U. S. government to intervene Dominican Republic's operation on the issue of Haitian statelessness.

The lecture is related to Prof. Evangelista's forthcoming book manuscript that investigates this case of mass statelessness from ethnographic and anthropologic perspectives. Prof. Evangelista is currently an assistant professor of anthropology in the African American Studies Department at City Tech. She received her doctoral degree in anthropology from CUNY's Graduate Center and her MA degree from the Institute for Research in African American Studies at Columbia University.

Review by Zhijian Qian