



Relational Poverty Network

Connecting people and
ideas to challenge poverty
and inequality

Relational Poverty Network Launch Meeting October 10, 2014

PROGRAM

9:00 AM – 11:00 AM Opening Plenaries by Tim Harris and Frances Fox Piven
(*Location: HUB 250*)

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM Paper Session 1 (*All sessions in Samuel E. Kelly Ethnic Cultural Center and Theatre*)

Concurrent sessions:

Session I: Political Engagements with Urban Poverty
Room 203, Pacific Islander Room

Session II: Spaces of Alliance Politics Across Class and Difference
Room 206/208, Chicano/Native Room

Session III: Gendered, Legal, and Institutional Targeting of the 'Poor Other'
Room 306, Black Room

1:15 PM – 2:15 PM No Host Lunch

Lunchtime Discussion Groups (*see page 9 for details*)

2:30 PM – 4:00 PM Paper Session 2 (*All sessions in Samuel E. Kelly Ethnic Cultural Center and Theatre*)

Concurrent sessions:

Session IV: Health/Care Work
Room 203, Pacific Islander Room

Session V: Policy and Policymaking: Reforming Poverty?
Room 206/208, Chicano/Native Room

Session VI: Poverty and Home
Room 306, Black Room

Session VII: Lightning Talks
Room 308, Asian Room

4:30 PM – 7:00 PM Closing reception with food and drink – all participants are welcome! (*Location: Waterfront Activities Center*)

SESSION I: Political Engagements with Urban Poverty

11:30 AM -1:00 PM

(*Ethnic Cultural Center, Room 203, Pacific Islander Room*)

Urban Clash: Performance and Barangay San Roque, Quezon City, Philippines ***Vanessa Banta, Department of Geography, University of British Columbia***

This paper considers the recent aesthetic encounters produced, which then coalesce to project an image of new urbanized Manila. Using Filipina scholar Neferti Tadiar's conception of the Philippine State's 'fantasy production', this paper suggests that some urban (art) projects in their attempts to reconfigure the spatial configurations of the city still only end up marginalizing the already disenfranchised. Art, in this case, works to censor bodies and Manila's emerging 'creative class' finds itself complicit in such endeavors when the terms 'public' and the 'collective' become catch-all phrases for all city dwellers in their descriptions of their art and practice. Thus, this paper will turn to a performance that escape the radars of the creative class. I will discuss the work that went into putting up an exhibit entitled, Lugar: CounterMapping Mega Manila featuring performances and installations created by theater and urban planning students of the University of the Philippines. By only developing work drawn from interviews of residents of Barangay San Roque in Quezon City, the exhibit-event attempted to use performance in order to create "new itineraries" that would lead Manila residents to San Roque despite the state-led separation of the Manila urban elite and the poor. We ask: to what ends could we use performance and geography together to create a practice working towards the "reimagination of site and politics"? How can performance serve as bridge to re-connect the university and the communities, both spaces put under the state's repressive neoliberal schemes and privatization tactics?

Politics of affect: clientelism, 'the urban poor' and street vendor politics in Paraguay

Jennifer Tucker, Department of City and Regional Planning, University of California at Berkeley

How do relational understandings of the (re)production of poverty challenge the received liberal categories of mainstream social science scholarship? My research tracks how global networks of informal and illegal trade influence local urban development in Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, where the volume of unregistered border trade once exceeded the recorded GDP of the entire nation. The border economy is structured through complex links between state actors, street vendors, small-scale traders and big-time

frontier fortune hunters. Points of contact between entrepreneurs and state officials are key to making the active informal, contraband-inflected economy work.

With ethnographic evidence gathered through 12 months of on-site research, I offer the *politics of affect* as a relational alternative to liberal individualism and a de-ontological assessment of legality. I show how the liberal category of clientelism are used to assess Paraguay, and the political practices of the urban poor, as outside of modernity. Rather, I offer an alternate reading of street vendor politics by showing how they intentionally display their own vulnerabilities to incite an affective response in municipal officials in order to stave off eviction. I argue that pairing a theory of affect with Judith Butler's notion of the "precariousness of life" helps us see these tactics as political acts. Finally, I critique liberalism's de-ontological assumption that prioritizes following the rules over distributive justice. This approach is a wager on a politicized social becoming through a relational, affective notion of the social and personhood in lieu of a self-interested, autonomous, economistic individualism.

The Affective Ethico-politics of Slum Redevelopment, Displacement and Dispossession in Mumbai

Sapana Doshi, School of Geography and Development, University of Arizona at Tucson

Cities are critical sites for understanding the global politics of poverty and wealth accumulation. In Mumbai, city improvement and redevelopment projects have entailed the large-scale displacement and dispossession of thousands of low-income residents of informal "slum" neighborhoods. This paper discusses the affective and ethico-political dimensions of these urban projects in relation to the inequalities they engender. In particular it investigates how, why and to what extent displacement and dispossession of the urban poor incites a sense of outrage, desire or indifference towards redevelopment among differently positioned groups. In some cases, civic pride and desires for improved living result in the embrace of projects among upper and middle classes and the poor alike. In other instances, criminalizing discourses position the urban poor—especially marginalized ethno-religious minorities among them—as illegal encroachers that do not belong in the city. Here divisive notions of the deserving and undeserving poor contour the moral assessment of evictions among different groups. Recent mobilizations by slum residents and anti-displacement activists have disrupted and inverted these moral and affective registers. By exposing and critiquing collusions of state agents, developers and financiers advancing fraudulent land grabs in the city, these movements have displaced criminalizing discourses from the urban poor towards the elite. This paper also examines the opportunities and dangers of the new moral repertoires of outrage engendered by these movements.

Promised Land, Contested Space: Canaan and the Geography of Reconstruction in Post-earthquake Haiti

Eli Marienthal, Department of Geography, University of California at Berkeley

The earthquake that rocked Port-au-Prince in January 2010 set in motion a massive international emergency response. Humanitarian and development organizations flooded the country, already host to a large UN peacekeeping mission and the world's highest per

capita presence of NGOs. In the four years since, the multiple failures and shortcomings of the official reconstruction project have been widely reported. As the former prime minister put it, “most everything went wrong.” The official reconstruction hews more or less closely to a set of elite professional aid and development projects, undertaken by the Haitian state, a consortium of UN agencies, international aid groups, humanitarian organizations, multilateral development institutions, and a few curious institutional hybrids. This study moves to destabilize conventional state- and NGO-centric accounts of reconstruction, insisting that the humanitarian-development apparatus be understood in relation, not only to its announced field of intervention, but to places, practices, and projects where it is officially absent as well. I turn to Canaan, an emergent city at the edge of Port-au-Prince, as a theater in which dynamics related to and disavowed by the official state-humanitarian project converge to produce a remarkable new geography of reconstruction. I argue that Canaan transgresses the official reconstruction project’s available spatial categories – IDP sites, tent camps, transitional shelters, relocation settlements, permanent housing – and links a historically salient politics of land and rent to the humanitarian category of internal displacement. In doing so, it offers a powerful counterpoint to the ahistorical and “anti-political” humanitarianism of official reconstruction.

Managing and producing poverty in private-sector affordable housing

Emily Rosenman, Department of Geography, University of British Columbia

This paper considers the political economic production and management of poverty through the lens of private-sector affordable housing development in the US. Through a case study of a property built to house formerly-homeless people in Oakland, California, I contrast the intentions and desires of the project’s developers and investors with tenants’ reflections on living in the project has affected their lives. I explore these tensions through reflecting on my participation in the development of a “social impact report” for the project’s investors, who have explicit social goals for their financial investments. I discuss how this reporting vehicle refracts tenants’ voices through investment discourse to conform with the economic and social goals of the US affordable housing policy. Two main themes are addressed: the performance of poverty and lifestyle ‘improvement’ for investors who self-identify as benevolent, and the translation of mainstream anti-poverty policies into an investment vehicle. This paper is based on ethnographic research within the industry that has developed around affordable housing finance and development in the US, and engages with literature on the financialization of everyday life and critical studies of philanthropy and community development.

SESSION II: Spaces of Alliance Politics Across Class and Difference

11:30 AM -1:00 PM

(Ethnic Cultural Center, Room 206/208, Chicano/Native Room)

The ‘sustainability’ of class relations in Bangalore, India

Manisha Anantharaman, Department of Environmental Science Policy and Management, University of California at Berkeley.

Sustainability scholarship is increasingly focusing on individual behavior change as a crucial component of engendering more sustainable societies. Practices like bicycling to work, recycling and reusing goods, eating organic food, or buying used clothes are heralded as both integral to, and generative of larger societal transformations. Scholars have begun to identify the individual and societal conditions that can help engender such practices; studying attitudes, social norms, and infrastructures. Less attention has been paid to the situated class politics of greening lifestyles, which is especially important as most ‘green’ lifestyle practices are also the very quotidian acts that sustain and support the livelihoods of the poor, especially in developing countries. In this paper, I draw on an ethnographic study of bicycling and waste management practices in Bangalore, India to ask critical questions about the links between middle-classness, poverty, and sustainability. I ask how middle class practitioners of bicycling and waste management in Bangalore relate to those poor others who bicycle and recycle; and define themselves in relation to both the urban poor in Bangalore, and to cyclists and recyclers in the USA and Europe. I argue that as middle class groups adopt and promote these practices, class distinctions are both transformed and reinforced. Class relations are mediated in new spatial territories like bicycle lanes and recycling centers, and around new discourses on global environmental problems like climate change. At the same time, familiar and embedded cultures of servitude and distinction pervade these new practices, limiting their transformative potential.

Waste Removal: the Middle class politics of informal recycle in San Francisco
Tony Sparks, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, San Francisco State University

Thanks to generous government incentives, recycling has, for decades, been a way for Californians to earn extra cash. For some, informal recycling (or scavenging) serves as a primary or important secondary source of income in the wake of both recession and skyrocket living costs. However, beginning in 2008 informal recyclers in San Francisco became the target of a negative press campaign that labelled them as “thieves”, “invaders” and “poachers”. This narrative came to a head in 2013 with the neighborhood association backed push to close one of San Francisco’s oldest and largest recycling centers. Since then, the city has closed down 3 more centers making recycling increasingly difficult for those without automobile transportation. Some have labelled this “class war” while others view informal “guerilla” recycling as a blight that threatens neighborhood livability. This paper draws upon public meeting transcripts and interviews with neighborhood associations and recyclers to better understand how ideas of recycling and informality function as sites of class-based identity and boundary formation in a starkly class-divided city.

Building Cross-Class Alliances Through Urban Food Provisioning
Lucy Jarosz, Department of Geography, University of Washington

This paper examines the role of relational poverty knowledge and the formation of cross-class alliances in urban farming and gardening. Gardening and farming leaders, gardeners, food bank managers and program directors in Seattle, Washington, and Vancouver, British Columbia, describe their garden and farm operations, and how they

contribute to food provisioning for most vulnerable people living in their cities. I argue that the structure of the garden and farm in its relation to the differing poverty knowledges of growers and consumers may or may not contribute to cross-class alliances. Leadership within the organization of the farm or garden is also pivotal to building or discouraging these alliances.

Public Kitchens, Private Lives: Community Kitchens and the End of the End-User Food Bank Model

Melora Koepke, Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University

Though food banks have been the norm in North American societies for at least the past two decades, recent research suggests that the "charity model" of emergency food distribution (food banks), while providing a necessary service of triage food provisioning, are limited in their ability to meet the population's food needs on an ongoing basis. Long-term dependence on such triage food-provisioning locations has been shown to reinforce patterns of social marginalization among frequent and habitual users, and has contributed to many ill effects (and causes) of being poor.

In contrast, a growing movement toward public food practices in neutral and horizontally-organized spaces such as collective and community "public kitchens", where healthy food, prepared collectively, can become an instrument of communication and transformation among populations usually separated by material, economic, and geographical factors. Activities include shared meals, cooking groups, community gardens, urban seed banks and community right-to-food advocacy groups, all of which have been shown to increase participants' interest and involvement in food practices, with has many desirable mental and physical health outcomes.

Taking into account previous research and preliminary observation in two public kitchens, this paper/presentation suggests that the time has come for a reimagining of the charity model of end-user food distributors.

This paper discusses the beginnings of field research in two food-related sites of encounter: The annual Public Kitchen put on by Boston's Design Studio for Social Intervention, and at The Stop in Toronto, one of Canada's Community Food Centre locations, where former "food bank users" at a re-imagined food bank have augmented their roles within the community as a result of increased participation in on-site food education, preparation, production, and advocacy programs. In this presentation, I'll discuss lessons learned and outline further research questions on how food-related sites of encounter can provide a movement towards spatial justice.

Discourses of Endangered Language, Disability, and Poverty: How Attitudes toward Deaf Signing Communities in Latin America Produce Poverty

Elizabeth S. Parks, Department of Communication, University of Washington

Language loss and decreased linguistic diversity is not only a loss of human knowledge, it is also strongly correlated to weakened socioeconomic structures in which languages become endangered or extinct and the environments of minority communities are at risk. Signed languages, in particular, are often considered endangered due to people's attitudes

toward a visual-gestural language mode, norms of transmission where signing is not passed down in family structures, number of speakers, and social pressures to conform to culturally hearing ways of being. Communication theorists argue that communities are organized and constituted by discourse; the discourses in Deaf Signing Communities both reflect and construct their ongoing vulnerability. In this paper, I explore how Deaf Signing Communities are constructing endangered social identities and managing endangered linguistic codes. Based on extensive linguistic fieldwork from 2006-2011 in 13 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, I argue that signed languages in Latin America and the Caribbean often exist in vulnerable states because they, and the Deaf Signing Communities that use them, are socially stigmatized. This, in combination with limited deaf educational opportunities, tends to marginalize Deaf Signing Communities. Finding employment by gaining and/or proving that they have the necessary skills to be gainfully employed is very difficult. Through dozens of interviews with Deaf signers, I discuss how Deaf Signing Communities understand their own socioeconomic situation and the first steps they suggest for constructing better ways of being, including greater acceptance and protection of their native signed languages in all of their social networks.

SESSION III: Gendered, Legal, and Institutional Targeting of the ‘Poor Other’

11:30 AM -1:00 PM

(Ethnic Cultural Center, Room 306, Black Room)

Revealing dependences: House Bill 87 and immigrant labor regimes in rural Georgia, USA

Lise Nelson, Department of Geography, Penn State University

This paper explores the day-to-day strategies used by “illegal” immigrant Latino workers and their white “legal” employers to evade the effects of anti-immigrant legislation passed in 2011. House Bill 87, like other state-level anti-“illegal” immigrant legislation that swept through the United States since the mid-2000s, was legitimated through narratives of repelling invaders who nominally drain public resources and take away jobs from (white) “Americans.” The ripple effects of the legislation within day-to-day life were unsurprisingly a little more complex than this narrative allows. Perhaps most obviously, the bill laid bare fundamental dependencies on illegal bodies in the state of Georgia, such as when newspapers reported that the state’s agriculture sector lost millions in 2011 and 2012 when migrant farmers avoided the state in response to HB 87. This paper draws on qualitative research in a rural Georgian community where the social relations of work, race and “illegality” weave together in comparatively less visible ways (in the context of dispersed and year-round service sector employment) but are nevertheless fundamental to the economic fabric of the community. It examines how, in the wake of HB 87 employers used a range of strategies to protect and hold onto their “illegal” labor force, as well as how immigrant workers responded to new terrains of fear and insecurity created by HB 87. Analyzing the tensions between economic dependence and political / social exclusion sheds light on the relational nature of the presence of “illegal” bodies and capitalism in the neoliberal era.

Devolution and Entangled Exclusions: Linking Immigration Enforcement and Mass Incarceration in Los Angeles, CA

Maegan Miller, Department of Geography, University of California at Los Angeles

“Walls and cages,” together, function as critical sites of state-craft and sovereignty (Lloyd & Burrige, 2012; Martin & Mitchelson, 2009; Mountz, 2013), serve as “spatial fixes” for the global crises of capital (Gilmore, 2007), produce racial castes (Alexander, 2010; Hernández, 2011; Provine, 2011) and perpetuate social insecurity (Coleman, 2009; Cowen, 2011). The enforcement, infrastructure, and implications of these regimes have become entangled through the devolution of immigration authority to local law enforcement agencies and the merger of criminal and immigration laws (Lloyd et al., 2012; Varsanyi & Nevins, 2007). In the state of California, the connections are more apparent as citizen inmates are currently being “realigned” from the state prisons to county jails under federal court order (Petersilia, 2013). Many of these county facilities are currently contracted to ICE, and now face greater threats of overcrowding.

Against this backdrop, I ask: how and to what effect have systems of incarceration, detention, and deportation converged and relationally expanded in the past two decades? Through an examination of multi-scalar laws and policies, my goal is to situate LA within the larger U.S. “carceral state” and “deportation machine” while also tracing the site-specific socio-economic and legal context that has produced landscapes of criminalization and exclusion across LA. For this paper presentation, I will share preliminary findings from initial fieldwork (interviews, participant observation, and policy analysis).

Enduring Incarceration: Gender, Race, and Carceral Precarity

Anne Bonds, Department of Geography, University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee

How does incarceration circumscribe racialized and gendered urban futures? How do women negotiate and endure ‘prison life’ and the poverty and precarity engendered by the multiple state violences that (re)produce their vulnerability? This presentation explores how formerly incarcerated women in Milwaukee, Wisconsin negotiate and contest carceral precarity. I build from McKittrick’s (2011) notion of ‘prison life’ - defined as “the everyday workings of incarceration as they are necessarily lived and experienced, as a form of human life and struggle inside and outside of prisons (956)”- to explore the social and spatial processes shaping women’s re-entry. Through this framing, the proposed research investigates how formerly incarcerated women’s mutual aid operates as a site of intervention to carcerality, even as discourses of urbicide decry urban futures as already dead or dying (McKittrick 2011) and as racial capitalism devalues and contains surplus urban populations. Thus, the project asks how, in the context of urban dispossession, state abandonment, and poverty, formerly incarcerated women’s network of care in Milwaukee produces community and imagines alternative urban futures

Re-thinking the relationship between poverty and gendered violence: structural violence and vulnerability in Hyderabad, India

Amy Piedalue, Department of Geography, University of Washington

This paper explores relationships between poverty, structural violence and intimate gender violence. Drawing on five months of field research in Hyderabad, India, I consider the ways in which structural violence experienced by Muslims living in Hyderabad's urban slums shapes both women's experiences of domestic violence *and* community-organized responses to violence against women. I argue that this structural violence – produced at the intersections of widespread poverty, geographic exclusions, and particular manifestations of Islamophobia – significantly hinders the possibilities for victims of violence or their families to 'seek justice' through mechanisms of the criminal justice system. At the same time, however, these limitations also give rise to alternative models of response to and prevention of gender violence. I suggest that these alternative forms of response also create possibilities and spaces for new strategies of resistance to both intimate violence *and* structural violence. These analyses offer insight into understanding the complex relationship between poverty and vulnerability to violence, as well as a critical examination of the spatiality and interconnections between two forms of violence typically conceived of as operating at distinctive scales.

Battle for The Bronx: Exploring the relationship between rebuilding disinvested urban neighborhoods and gentrification

Katy Guimond, Department of Geography, University of California, Berkeley

There is little critical literature on rebuilding and reinvestment in disinvested urban neighborhoods which does not yet rise to the level of gentrification. But understanding the rebuilding process is crucial to illuminating histories of community activism and finding opportunities to intervene in the gentrification process earlier to prevent social and physical displacement. With this project, I contribute to the critical literature on the rebuilding of disinvested neighborhoods and the potential for social justice activism by using the concepts of uneven development and the rent gap to show how rebuilding is distinct from but related to gentrification. I explore this through the recent history of the South Bronx. The contradictions of state-sponsored revitalization in the South Bronx have created tendencies for the exclusion and displacement of poor and working class residents of previously disinvested neighborhoods, even as they provide affordable housing. The dominant forms of rebuilding use affordable housing programs to subsidize private (for-profit and non-profit) housing development in disinvested neighborhoods, creating complex, contradictory public-private partnerships. Like gentrification, the exclusionary effects of "revitalization" are due to processes of uneven development and the reintegration of stigmatized neighborhoods into metropolitan-wide processes. Unlike gentrification, the forces of uneven development are constrained both by the restrictions imposed by state subsidies used to finance this kind of reinvestment and legacies of community organizing and community-controlled development that continue to create opportunities for more just redevelopment.

LUNCHTIME DISCUSSIONS

1:15 PM – 2:15 PM

(Meeting locations TBD)

Open discussions will be held over lunch on the following topics:

- 1) Structural violence (facilitator: Amy Piedalue, Department of Geography, University of Washington)
- 2) Food and poverty (facilitators: Melora Koepke, Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University; and Nathan McClintock, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Portland State University)
- 3) Alliance politics (facilitator: Trevor James Wideman, Department of Geography, Queen's University)

SESSION IV: Health/Care Work

2:30 PM – 4:00 PM

(Ethnic Cultural Center, Room 203, Pacific Islander Room)

Food, poverty, encounter, and care: Geographies of the Dr. Peter Centre
Christiana Miewald, Centre for Sustainable Community Development (CSCD), Simon Fraser University

Rosalind Baltzer-Turje, Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation

Eugene McCann, Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University

Patrick McDougall, Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation

Cristina Temenos, Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University

Rani Wangsawidjaya, Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation

Alison McIntosh

The Dr. Peter Centre (DPC), located in Vancouver, BC, provides a holistic range of health-care services to low-income people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) including a healthy meal program. In this presentation, we explore how we might understand the DPC and its programs in terms of relational approaches to poverty. In doing so, we outline a nascent community based research project on the DPC's meal program and its efforts not only to provide healthy food for PLWHA but also to create a space of care and encounter between staff and program participants. We will map out the ways in which the DPC meal program supports not only physical health and well-being but also acts as a key node in the daily geographies of survival of its program participants.

Living with one's employer: Comparing the institutionalisation of live-in elder care in Austria, Canada, Switzerland and the UK.

Kendra Strauss, Labour Studies Program, Simon Fraser University

Karin Schwiter, Department of Geography, University of Zurich

In many countries of the global North, families increasingly rely on live-in caregivers to look after their elderly. Although much care work remains unpaid and informal, states have set up a variety of migration and labour regimes to guarantee a supply of workers to

provide paid care in the home. Taking live-in status as a key comparator, this paper analyses the markets for live-in care in Austria, Canada, Switzerland and the UK. We examine the ways in which live-in status is differentially institutionalized: in some cases live-in status is endogenous to migration regimes through which workers access care markets, in others live-in status is a *de facto* requirement because of low pay and higher levels of mobility. Using the theoretical perspective of social reproduction, we seek to identify the specific power relations and mechanisms that make these regimes function for employers and employees, and the consequences for the social reproduction of the workers. In particular, we argue that although different regimes suggest different degrees of ‘choice’ about whether to live-in, the gendered nature of social reproduction labour and the related political economy of live-in care work – especially low pay – in reality represent constrained agency.

How Well Does the “Safety Net” Work for Family Safety Nets? Economic Survival Strategies Among Grandmother Caregivers in Severe Deprivation

LaShawnDa Pittman, Department of American Ethnic Studies, University of Washington

There are more grandparent-headed households (GPHH) today than at any other time in American history (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). The number of children living with a grandparent has increased 77% since 1970, 22% since 2000 and spiked after the onset of the Great Recession (Livingston 2013; Taylor et al. 2010). Grandmothers shoulder the lion’s share of grandparent caregiving, comprising 64% of the 2.7 million grandparents primarily responsible for caring for their grandchildren (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). As a whole, 1/5 of GPHH are poor and 2/3 live below three times the federal poverty level (FPL). Moreover, poverty rates worsen for skipped-generation households (SGH), defined as GPHH where parents are absent, where 1/3 (32%) live below the FPL, which is nearly double the child poverty rates of parent-child families. SGH headed by custodial grandmothers fare the worst, with 2/3 of them living at or below the FPL (Generations United 2009). African Americans are overrepresented among every kinship care arrangement, including SGH. Despite their fragile economic status, current child welfare and kinship care policies and practices make grandmothers the primary safety net for children in need of out-of-home care.

Through secondary analysis of two unique qualitative data sets collected during and after the Great Recession supplemented with publicly available household finance data, I examine the financial needs of GPHH; the extent to which public safety net programs meet their needs; reasons for the hypothesized gap between program use, benefits, and need; and the economic survival strategies grandmothers employ to make ends meet. This work demonstrates that the failure of the “safety net” to perform for this growing population of families grappling with severe deprivation compounded by the erosion of the mutual aid system at the heart of black family survival has grave consequences for the financial well-being of caregiving grandmothers and the children in their care.

Exploring relational advocacy through the siting of harm reduction health services
Cristina Temenos, Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University

The siting of health services has been broadly considered in health geography, from exploring barriers of placement to understanding barriers of access. Much of this work has focused on the practice and politics of siting services for traditionally marginalized groups of people such as those with mental health diagnoses, and those recovering from addictions. This paper seeks to expand this body of knowledge by considering the siting of health services for people actively engaged in illicit drug use. I explore the siting of such 'harm reduction' health services considering the implications of active, illegal activity (drug use and insobriety) in the way that such services are advocated for, and discursively as well as physically constructed. Harm reduction health services, such as needle exchange programs, low-threshold drop in centers, and legal drug consumption rooms seek to provide non-judgmental health services in welcoming spaces. They do not have a specific mission of rehabilitation or require abstinence from drug use to access the services, and therefore remain highly contested health interventions. Drawing on recent work in urban social movements, critical global health, and urban policy motilities, this paper seeks to understand the relationships of harm reduction advocacy strategies within and among cities across the world.

Connecting for survival: Understanding the spatial implications of migrant women's survival strategies in two contexts

Colleen Hammelman, Department of Geography and Urban Studies, Temple University

Women worldwide carry out strategies to support themselves and their families that rely on connecting to physical resources, especially food, and to important social ties. This research seeks to better understand the spatial implications of this connectivity for food security in two contexts as made visible through mobility and social networks. For example, everyday experiences of food security can be bolstered by access to greater mobility, which can be provided through social networks. At the same time, a lack of mobility may inhibit a person's access to food, and is especially true when this need for mobility interferes with other social network obligations. This research relies on the qualitative GIS method of sketch mapping to better understand the spatiality of everyday lived experiences of food insecurity for displaced women in Medellin, Colombia, and Latina migrant domestic workers in Washington, DC. Sitting at the intersection of literature on poverty and survival strategies, mobility, and social networks, this research adds insight to the under theorized aspects of connectivity, how it influences the ability of women to meet their daily needs, especially obtaining food, and lessons that can be gleaned from contexts in both the global South and North. Focusing on different contexts of poverty allows attending to how they are similarly and differently integrated into globalized processes. This research also contributes a more nuanced understanding of the food insecurity experiences of individuals migrating into urban environments, enabling more effective policy making and service provision by governments, relief agencies, and community organizations.

SESSION V: Policy and Policymaking: Reforming Poverty?

2:30 PM – 4:00 PM

(Ethnic Cultural Center, Room 206/208, Chicano/Native Room)

The Politics of Knowledge and Poverty: A Case Study of Recent Policy Reforms of the General Assistance Program in Washington State

Yu-Ling Chang, Department of Social Work, University of Washington

Substantial anti-poverty programs have experienced severe budget cuts in response to states' revenue shortfalls due to the Great Recession (2007-2009). In contrast to Institutional Rational Choice Theory which argues that policy makers base their decision on the costs and benefits assigned to the policy outcomes, Social Construction Theory argues that policy designs are the products of social construction and the power resources of target populations. Through the lens of the Social Construction Theory, my research examined the role of knowledge in shaping and transforming the General Assistance (GA) program in Washington State, an anti-poverty program providing income support for poor people who fall outside other federally-funded income support programs. Using qualitative content analysis of written and electronic documents of legislative activities, I investigated how scientific, professional, and political knowledge were used by policy participants to inform policymaking from 2009 through 2011, during which the GA program was substantially revised and eventually eliminated. Research findings show that GA-recipients were stigmatized as undeserving poor with multiple medical and behavioral problems. This negative social construction influentially led policy reform to an elimination of cash benefit and a conditional housing service for the unemployable poor. This study suggests that the stigma attributed to poor people negatively affects the policy choices and consequences. Future advocacy work and research should consider challenging the negative social construction of the target population as well as offering convincing evidence on positive social outcomes of anti-poverty programs.

Poverty wages and the 'Fight for 15': Reimagining fast food through feminist economic geography

Yui Hashimoto, Department of Geography, University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee

Over the past year, fast food workers have staged protests across the United States and the world to demand a \$15 an hour livable wage and the right to unionize without reprisal. These demands have arisen from the reality that one in five households with a family member working in fast food lives below the poverty line and approximately half of all front-line fast food workers are recipients of various forms of welfare. At the same time, fast food companies and their CEOs report record profits (Allegretto et al., 2013). Fast food worker labour politics disrupts scholarly and popular imaginations of fast food that focuses attention on the alternative/local food movement or fast food's contribution to food deserts and the so-called obesity epidemic. These foci have foreclosed upon rich opportunities to examine the complex gendered and racialized dimensions to fast food, food labour, poverty, precarity, and social reproduction. In this paper, I propose feminist economic geography as a framework through which to examine these issues. As I will argue, feminist economic geography is particularly well positioned to tackle these questions through its emphasis on a multi-scalar analysis that highlights people, labour and places outside of the formal, waged economy; its blurring of the distinction between production and social reproduction; and, its methodological focus on marginalized voices, agency, and resistance.

The Role of Framing and Communication in Policy Publications on Poverty and Economic Security

Olivia M. Little, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, University of Wisconsin at Madison

Although much research has been devoted to understanding poverty and economic insecurity in the United States, relatively little work focuses on how such information can be effectively translated to affect policy change. Contrary to the approach taken by many researchers, the facts rarely “speak for themselves” when it comes to value-laden issues such as poverty. How poverty is understood by the public, and framed by society, shape what policies are conceived, how they are designed, and whether they are widely supported and adopted. Representations of poverty are socially constructed within the confines of existing beliefs about the causes of poverty, who is poor, who is deserving of aid, the role of government, and so forth. Increasingly, evidence demonstrates the power of such beliefs in shaping public attitudes toward the poor and determining the course of policy debate. For research translators, it becomes essential to take these attitudes into account, particularly when conveying information that may conflict with prevailing beliefs. This study examines how poverty and economic security issues are framed in recent, policy-oriented publications produced by top-level think tanks and research institutes. The organizations included are recognized as having policy impact, and represent a range of political and value orientations. Using qualitative content analysis, this paper describes how poverty issues are represented in these publications. Subsequent author interviews explore how personal, institutional, and societal factors intersect to shape authors’ writing. Implications are drawn for how poverty and economic security research could be more effectively communicated to policy audiences.

Illustrating Poverty in Constitutional Litigation

Lisa R. Pruitt, Department of Law, University of California at Davis

While the U.S. Constitution guarantees no socioeconomic rights, the realities of socioeconomic disadvantage—what it means to live in poverty or to be low-income—arise in various contexts in constitutional litigation. One of these contexts is when courts must apply a balancing test—typically balancing the state’s reasons for regulating a constitutional right, e.g., the right to vote, the right to have an abortion, against the weight or significance of the burden that the regulation places on those who seek to exercise that right. In these contexts, federal courts are sometimes forced to grapple with the lived, day-to-day realities of poverty, e.g., how hard would it be for a poor person to get to the Department of Motor Vehicles to get a photo ID; how difficult would it be for a poor, rural woman to get an abortion when regulations targeting abortion providers force the closure of clinics so that she must travel 200 miles from her home to reach one? My paper will look at cases in which courts have examined and assessed such regulations’ burdens on the poor, and it does so in an effort to assess the strategies that are most successful in eliciting judicial empathy for the lives of the poor.

Suburban Poverty, Drug Policy, and the Relational Politics of Place: The Case of Surrey, Canada

Andrew Longhurst, Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University

Despite evidence that low-income and service-dependent groups are increasingly located outside inner city areas in Canadian and US cities, there has been little attention paid to the territorial and relational politics associated with *suburban* and *city-regional* geographies of poverty. Drawing on recent fieldwork in Surrey, a rapidly changing suburb of Vancouver, Canada, this paper examines the management of addiction and low-income health and social services through local policymaking. The relational politics of place and policymaking shape suburban and city-regional geographies of poverty and the institutional spaces of survival where street-involved drug users may access life-saving ‘harm-reduction’ supplies and services (e.g. clean needles, overdose kits, counselling). Examining policy responses towards illicit drug use provides a particular lens to explain how suburban poverty is managed and how institutional spaces of care and survival for stigmatized groups are produced and contested.

SESSION VI: Poverty and Home

2:30 PM – 4:00 PM

(Ethnic Cultural Center, Room 306, Black Room)

Occupying for Survival: Legitimizing Homeless Space

Stephen Przybylinski, Department of Geography, Portland State University

This talk focuses on Right 2 Dream Too, a contested rest site in downtown Portland, Oregon that has been providing the homeless community with a safer place to sleep since October 2011. I am concerned with how this rest site has mobilized to sustain itself despite long-standing relocation efforts from the City of Portland, private developers and neighborhood groups. Through the continued occupation of prime space within the downtown landscape, it has been slowly institutionalizing itself as a viable emergency housing service via a self-organizing principle. Drawing on ethnographic work with the rest space, I suggest the particular socio-spatiality of the site has reversed the notion of the homeless as politically illegitimate actors. I therefore consider this rest space as a grounded alternative to the lack of housing accommodations for this population.

Framing their Mission: An Analysis of *Habitat for Humanity* and Discourses of Poverty & Place

Judith Kenny & Anne Bonds, Department of Geography, University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee

In the last several years, the housing nonprofit *Habitat for Humanity* has ranked among America’s top ten builders as recorded by the BUILDER magazine survey. While this material contribution to the country’s affordable housing stock warrants study in itself, the organization’s assumption of a leadership role in the articulation of “poverty housing” as a national concern also deserves analysis given its foundation in and contribution to America’s discourses of poverty and place.

Our paper evaluates the dominant and competing threads of meaning with the country's political culture as it relates to the discourse of poverty in general and affordable housing in particular. Jason Hackworth's study of faith-based nonprofits and their mobilization within a neoliberal context shines some light on Habitat's ideological framework, particularly its appeal to both conservatives and liberals given its underpinnings in the discourse of government failure. This paper furthers the analysis as it situates the nearly forty-year old *Habitat's* "foundation story" in a relatively more progressive discourse of shared responsibility for racial inequalities. – And, it interrogates the deterioration of this message as the southern-based organization grew in its number of affiliates, scaled-style of management, professionalization, and new emphasis on "building" neighborhoods. In addition to examining the symbolic shifts in the national organization's rhetoric, we contrast two affiliates' (Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Portland, Oregon) framing of their mission as the organization's southern roots adjust to new regional cultures.

Housing First and the ambiguous politics of homelessness

Tom Baker, Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University

This paper focuses on a policy and service model known as Housing First. Targeting 'chronic homelessness', a term commonly applied to long-term homeless individuals with complex support needs, Housing First programs involve the provision of permanent housing linked to comprehensive, client-directed support services. Such programs are often hailed as progressive responses to homelessness—particularly in their opposition to traditional emphases on client passivity, sobriety and moralized deservingness—yet their popularity depends in large part on consistency with economically conservative political imperatives. Despite the rapid globalization and high public profile of Housing First, it has received little attention within critical policy and homelessness literatures. In response, this paper discusses the spread of Housing First. Focusing on its political ambiguity in particular, the paper explores how Housing First is changing popular understandings of homelessness and reshaping the governance of contemporary poverty.

Visualizing multi-scale poverty: Seattle neighborhoods 1990-2010

Chris Fowler, Department of Geography, The Pennsylvania State University

The very nature of relational poverty makes it difficult if not impossible to quantify or to map in all its complexity. While the desirability of quantifying such complicated relations may be legitimately contested, there is value in considering how relational poverty might be rendered visible in this way; both as a means for comprehending some of the inherent complexity and as a means of making a political statement about how and why relational poverty affects people and places (Plummer and Sheppard 2001; Wyly 2009). Recent work on residential segregation has proposed re-imagining segregation in neighborhoods as a multi-scalar phenomenon reflecting the fact that processes that are both larger than and smaller than the neighborhood are relevant for individuals' experience of segregation (Fowler in review). This paper explores a similar method for quantitatively representing poverty as multi-scalar and considers the implications for contributing to the idea of relational poverty. The study focuses on neighborhoods in the City of Seattle and covers the years 1990 to 2010.

A Quiet Politics of Spatial Solidarity: Faith and Middle Class Place-Making
Samuel Nowak, Department of Geography, University of California at Los Angeles
Katherine Hankins, Department of Geosciences, Georgia State University
Andy Walter, Department of Geography, University of West Georgia

In this paper, we examine the process of ‘intentional neighboring’—a national movement of faith-motivated, middle class (MC) individuals and families to high-poverty neighborhoods to live in solidarity with the marginalized and to self-consciously develop place-based relationships with existing residents to effect social change. Drawing on work from relational poverty scholars, we analyze how intentional neighbors encounter class difference and the types of poverty politics that ensue to better understand the reproduction of normative MC places and identities, as well as possible alternatives. We extend the relational poverty literature by asking how faith and faithful practices mediate encounters with difference as MC actors make place. Further, we ask whether can faith can disrupt hegemonic discourses of those in poverty, force recognitions of MC privilege, and/or lay the groundwork for a cross-class urban politics. Drawing from a multi-year study involving interviews with intentional neighbors from across the country and highlighting the efforts of intentional neighbors in the neighborhood of South Atlanta in Atlanta, Georgia, we show how intentional neighbors work to make and remake their neighborhoods. In particular, we highlight the ways in which faith informs both their place-making efforts and their encounters with social difference. We find that their theologies hold potential for enacting a poverty politics that challenges dominant narratives of who is poor, why, and what to do about it. We argue therefore that faith should be conceptualized as a multi-dimensional social force in cities, capable of both reinscribing class boundaries as well as opening up spaces for more intentional cross-class engagement.

Session VII: Lightning Talks

2:30 PM – 4:00 PM

(Ethnic Cultural Center, Room 308, Asian Room)

Representations of Child Poverty

Dena Aufseeser, Department of Geography and Environmental Systems, University of Maryland – Baltimore County

I will discuss how representations of child poverty both reinforce and potentially challenge more mainstream attitudes about the deserving poor and the independent self-made man. I will examine some of the tensions between ways in which children are assumed to be deserving of help, and how recognition of children's agency, especially among older children and teenagers, may remove them from this category of 'deserving'. I will conclude by thinking about how recognition of children's dependency can resolve some of this tension, and challenge the myth of the self-made man.

Key words: child poverty, deserving poor, agency, neoliberal subject.

Working children and rural poverty

Kacy McKinney, Department of Geography, Middlebury College

While my own work is focused on children engaged in agricultural wage labor in India and Brazil, I am interested in sparking a broader discussion on how we can think about

shifting landscapes of rural poverty through the lens of children's and young people's experiences and understandings of work and economies.
(Keywords: children, labor, rural spaces, development)

Middle class and poor youth in India

Stephen Young, Department of Geography, University of Wisconsin at Madison

This talk will focus on how young men in some of India's more provincial cities are both reacting to and reworking processes of economic liberalization. I highlight moments of alliance and accommodation among different youth, as well as more nefarious forms of private enterprise that reinforce social inequalities. Key themes that emerge in the research are enterprise, inequality, gender/masculinities, mobility, and improvisation/adhocism.

“We belong together”

Kristy Copeland, Department of Geography, University of Washington

This presentation discusses alliances within the movement to frame U.S. immigration reform as a women's issue.

Thinking Relationally about Structural Racism

Magie Ramirez, Department of Geography, University of Washington

Discussing race and racism in the United States can be a challenging feat due to the dominant ideology of American society having reached a "post-race" or "colorblind" era. It can be particularly difficult to engage privileged subjects in a conversation about structural racism due to their reluctance to feel responsible, guilty or uncomfortable. How might we invoke a relational lens to understand how we are all implicated and paralyzed by structural racism, and how we could all benefit from anti-racist organizing and scholarship?

The Poetry of Poverty: Voice and Visibility

Jane Wong, Department of English, University of Washington

In the poem “Penny Men” by Rigoberto Gonzalez, he writes: “They come to live like loose change//in a country that drops its pennies/and leaves them there; in a country whose jingle of coins muffles the sound of backbones cracking.” This poem acts as a dedication for migrant workers, through the act of poetic witness. Many Americans facing poverty feel the desire for “pennies,” for a life more than “loose change”. I am proposing a short, 5-minute lightning talk to discuss the impact of poetry engaging poverty. Moving away from the academy, what can poetry offer as an alternative mode of discussing poverty? What kind of communities can poetry create in response to poverty? Through examples of poems on poverty and youth organizations committed to discussing poverty through poetry, I argue that poetry strengthens visibility through safe, open expression (to say “we exist”). In this way, the poetry of poverty is both an act of

personal expression and responsibility to witness. I hope to end my short talk with my own poem, in which I recall my upbringing.

Seattle's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness

David Giles, Department of Anthropology, University of Canterbury

Residential gardening and eco-gentrification in Cascadia: Preliminary results from Portland

Nathan McClintock, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Portland State University

In this lighting talk, I present preliminary results from ongoing research on the intersection of urban agriculture, social reproduction, and processes of displacement occurring in Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver. I present preliminary results from GIS mapping and a mail survey of residential gardeners in Portland, in order to highlight both urban agriculture's imbrication in processes of gentrification and its important (highly gendered) role in contributing to household sustenance for many low-income people.

Keywords: gentrification, social reproduction, sustainability, urban agriculture

Mapping Alternative political Futures: Neighborhood Assemblies and cross-class alliances in neoliberal Buenos Aires

Monica Farias, Department of Geography, University of Washington

The proposed research focuses on 'successful' *asambleas populares* (popular assemblies) in Buenos Aires to understand their durability and to explore their potential for renegotiating class differences, advance cross-class alliances, and rework middle-class actors poverty politics. I have conducted ethnographic work in two *asambleas* that have persisted as part of post-crisis urban politics in order to explore the ways in which class identities, values, norms and representations of poverty are being renegotiated through long-term encounters between people from different class extraction. The objectives of this research are to understand what are the conditions of continuing existence for the these two cases, particularly after 2003; how class borders are blurred, privileges acknowledged and what sorts of new political subjects are being produced through interactions in the *asambleas*; and what's the relationship that *asambleas* have with political institutions and what kinds of political practices and alliance politics are emerging and being enacted in these spaces.

CLOSING RECEPTION

4:30 PM – 7:00 PM

(Waterfront Activities Center)

All participants are welcome to join for food and drink!